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**What keeps them kicking the ball? – Young female footballers' reasons to not to quit.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Youth sport participation decreases as the age. Research indicates there is a larger decrease noted in females compared to males, particularly in football. The number of youth female players participating in football decreases by half between ages 12 and 14.

This study is designed to evaluate different changes in youth life, both physical and mental as well as the influence of significant others, and how these factors might affect the motivation of young female football players to participate in youth football. The reasons why adolescence dropout has been a focus of many studies. In this study the reason why they do not drop out are studied. This study will focus on what keeps youth to continue with sport also during puberty and what are the meanings of internal and external influencers to one's sport participation.

The main objective of this study is to identify the key factors, which motivate young female players to continue to participate within their sport compared to those who choose to dropout. Both internal and external motivators are studied. Results of this study may be used to provide athletes, coaches, parents, and teammates with tools to counter act the major factors, which hinder female participation to ideally encourage further participation within the sport of football.

The research data was collected with online questionnaires in fall 2016. The participants in this study were female footballers in the Tampere Area of Football Association of Finland between ages 13-15 and currently have the Finnish playing pass (pelipassi). Altogether 94 players took part in this study. There are 626 players in the area, who fit the requirements of the study, hence the answer rate was 15%. SPSS statistics was used to analyze collected data.

The results show that there are many different steps that can be taken to motivate young female footballers, with no significant differences noted based on age. Key findings include athletes need more support from significant others during adolescence as well as athletes identify a lack of knowledge within themselves and their significant others in relation to issues they experience during adolescence. Players and their significant others need to understand that it is normal during adolescence to feel tired and overwhelmed. Players also need to understand the importance of being able to discuss their feelings and doubts with their coach or parents.

Keywords: football, females, motivation, dropout, adolescence

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This master's thesis study is designed to determine the factors which contribute to the motivation of young female players to continue to participate in sport as opposed to dropping out throughout the difficult year of adolescence. The research evaluates participants' self-image, internal motivators, and the influence of others around them to continue with sport participation. The goal is to provide resources for athletes, coaches, parents, and teammates to utilize during the key developmental years resulting in increased participation of female athletes passed adolescence.

Dropout is a well-known phenomenon within adolescence. The concept of dropping out has been studied extensively over the past several years, particularly related to youth sport, however there have been some studies evaluating dropout within high school populations as well. In sport, dropout is defined as a withdrawal from a particular sport, most commonly identified to occur around 14-17 years old. (Virtanen, 1999.) However, in this study instead of studying dropout the factors why they do not dropout are studied. The study focuses on the factors that motivates youth to participate in sport also during puberty. During puberty many interests and attitudes toward sport and other aspects of life may change. Previous studies have identified reasons behind this phenomenon including lack of motivation, lack of interest, lack of time, and friends no longer participating on the same teams (Rottensteiner, 2015). The concept of sport dropout has been evaluated worldwide as well as within different sports, with some variation within sports based on a financial aspect. However, each study further confirms the same major contributing factors to sport dropout.

The concept of sport dropout continues to be of high interest particularly in youth sport related to physical activity and the physical and mental development of youth. Sport provide a sense of teamwork and belonging, which are important for a one's self-esteem and well-being. Sport and physical activity have a positive effect on one's social, mental, and physical well-being (Hakkarainen et al., 2009). A study conducted in 2017, on the importance of girls' football, identified playing football had a positive effect on girls' self-esteem (Appleton, 2017). Children who are physically active are less likely to

have health related issues such as type two diabetes, cancer, or depression. Furthermore, children who are physically active have reduced stress, better communication skills, increased ability to follow rules, and increased concentration. (Mustajoki, Välimaa, Eskola & Kannas, 2014.)

Currently no clear solution to avoid or decrease dropout in sport has been identified, hence, the need to study what could be done to motivate youth to participate in sport longer. There are a few studies related to continuing to pursue sport, such as, *Young Finnish athletes' participation in organized team sports* (Rottensteiner, 2015). However, questions such as “What are the actions that could be taken to keep athletes with sports longer?” and “What should people around young athletes: teammates, coaches and parents do to help and motivate them to continue participating in their respective sport?” have yet to be answered.

Every young athlete is different. People are motivated differently. There are both internal and external factors that affect one's motivation. Internal motivation is defined as achieving a goal gives personal satisfaction compared to external motivation which is defined as achieving a goal is driven by an outside source, such as money, price, coach, parents, etc. (Jaakkola, 2015.) This study will not only identify youth physical and mental changes during adolescence which may hinder motivation but also the influence of significant others around the athletes.

In this study data was collected with an online questionnaire from girls between ages 13-15 in the area of Tampere Region of Football association of Finland (future referenced as Tampereen Piiri). The questions in the questionnaire evaluated participants' internal and external motivators of sport participation and how they feel those motivators affect them. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS statistics and the a few open-ended questions were analyzed separately by using Microsoft word.

The next few chapters provide a literary review of the changes that youth go through during their adolescence, provides information about external influencers on youth sport participation, and an overview of the development of women's football and development of Tampereen Piiri.

Chapter five presents the theoretical framework and the methods used within the current study. Self-determination theory was used to understand the importance of motivation. This chapter also explains the type of methods used in the quantitative questionnaire, and how the data was collected and analyzed. The questionnaire included seven different parts. For data collection Webropol online surveys and emails were used. The main data-analyzing tool was SPSS statistics. Altogether 94 responses was collected giving 15 % answer rate.

The results of the study are presented in chapter six. Chapter seven discusses of the results and how they can be implemented into girl's football in the future.

## **2. IMPACT OF LIFE CHANGES OF YOUNG FEMALES ON SPORTS**

Female children experience physical and mental changes as they age from children to adolescence and through puberty. These changes may play a contributing role in their physical activity and sport participation (Holopainen, 1990). It is identified children between ages 8 – 11 years old are more likely to use their leisure time by playing at home or outdoors, compared to youth around 14 years old whom are more likely to hang out by malls, participating in activities which require less physical activity (Helve, 2009). As Finnish youth age their level of physical activity decreases drastically, more than other countries in the world (WHO-koululaistutkimus, as cited in Husu, Paronen, Suni and Vasankari, 2011).

### **2.1. Impact of physical changes on sports**

Different body types and biological age affect individuals differently for different types of physical activity, such as motor coordination, strength, and speed, which all play an important role in sport. For example, football athletes might start to feel clumsy because of the changes they are experiencing due their biological age. During ages 11-14 females may undergo changes in body weight and amount of fat in their body. The amount of fat in the body may affect one's speed and strength. (Holopainen, 1990.) There is also a psychological component in which female athletes may feel like they are simply not good enough to compete at the level they are competing in their respective sport. It might be even possible that athletes have setbacks during puberty which they may not be used to experiencing. For example, a female figure skater going through puberty might struggle completing a particular jump which she has mastered in the past. The psychological aspect of self-doubt becomes heightened during puberty and may make previous tasks more difficult. (Autio & Kaski, 2005.)

Girls also tend to be very critical of their body image compared to boys at the same age (Ojala, Välimaa, Tyjälä, Villberg & Kannas, 2016). They easily compare themselves to their peers. It is common for a female to compare herself to her teammates when going through the various biological changes associated with puberty. Each female is different and go through puberty at their own time. Girls biological age differs from their real age

and do not develop identically. For that reason, some might feel that they are not good enough compared to some of their teammates, who are not going through these changes yet. (Mero & Laine, 2012.)

During these ages there is an increased expectation to train more to keep up with good conditions. This may be an adjustment for some girls whom previously did not have to work as hard before. Also, improving certain skills may become more difficult or highly specialized. During puberty some girls may want to quit because they do not want the increased workload or effort. While one area of skill may become more difficult during puberty, other skills may be much easier to develop. Therefore, it is important to identify these key areas and emphasize their strengths as well. (Mero & Laine, 2012.)

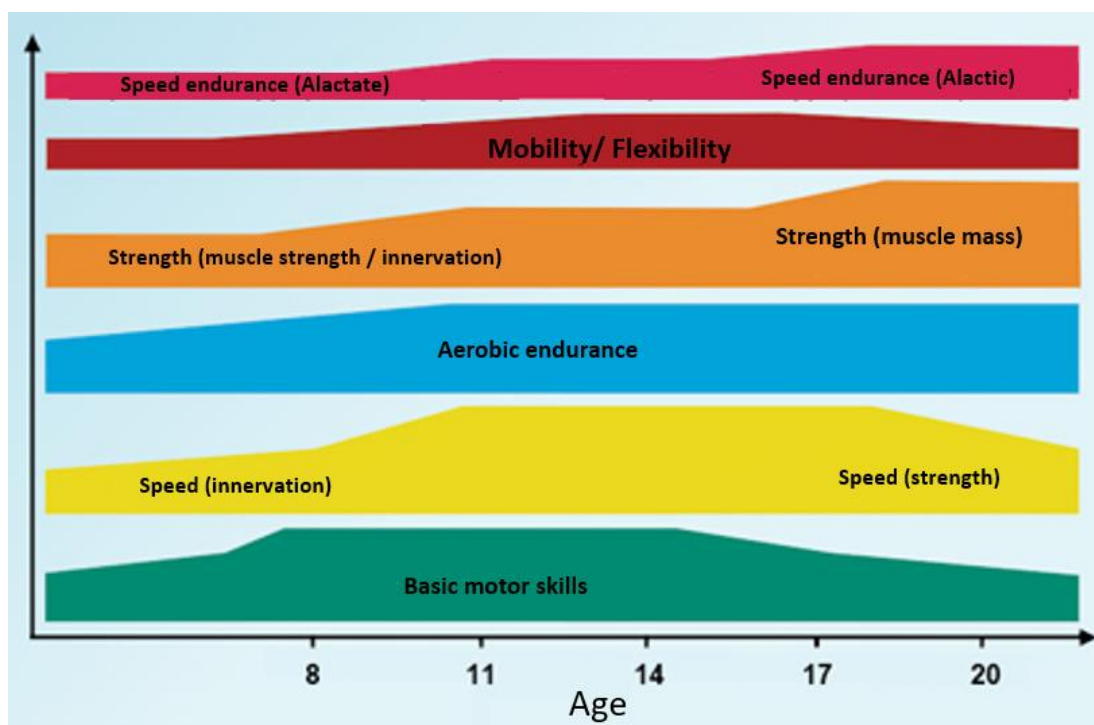


FIGURE 1. Emphasis in learning in different ages (Hakkarainen et al., 2009)

## 2.2. Impact of mental changes on sport

It is important to keep youth participating in sport, allowing them to train at the level they desire, not to push them too much or too hard against their will, particularly during puberty. A coach of youth may play a key role in providing those youth who are struggling with their interest toward sport or time management during puberty by offering more lenient training schedules. By not pressuring athletes to train too much



during puberty coaches may be able to help keep youth in sports longer. (Autio & Kaski, 2005.)

During puberty youth go through many psychological changes. They will start to establish their own individuality and start refusing authorities (Mero & Laine, 2012). While both males and females go through various changes during puberty. The study also focuses on today's youth generation, generation Z. Generation Z includes people, who are born late 1990s or later. Common characteristics for generation Z include innovation, freedom, and co-operation. They are also eager to get information quickly and investigate the information they get. (Tapscott, 2010.)

During adolescence, girls start to rebel against authorities such as parents, teachers, and coaches. This must happen to help them to build themselves as who they are; the thoughts and behaviors of their parents do not feel like their own. Adolescents feel confident and want to create life how they see fit. For that reason, the rules that parents set may cause anger. However, it is very important that parents as well as coaches and teachers set boundaries to help adjust with societal norms. While there are things that young females can decide on their own, there are many aspects of their lives that they need parental guidance. (Mero & Laine, 2012.) It has become increasingly difficult for parents to find a balance between setting boundaries and allowing an adolescent freedom to explore their own individuality.

On the contrary, adolescents may also feel that their parents give them too much responsibility, such as providing their own transportation to and from practices or remembering to provide their own nourishing snack. This overwhelming sense of responsibility may hinder a one's motivation to continue with sport as they feel they cannot handle the responsibility. (Mero & Laine, 2012.) If a child is made responsible for his own participation in their respective sport they may feel isolated, with no support from their parents.

Youth today do not value the work needed to reach a goal or standard of living. The adolescents, view work as a challenge with the possibility to improve themselves. Instead of waiting what employees has to offer to them they are telling what they can offer to employees. They are not willing to work in a disciplined way but prefer more

freedom. This generation is highly motivated to try new things in all aspects of their lives. They want to get new experiences and see life as an exciting adventure. (Tabscott, 2010.)

When trying to determine their identity, girls tend to want to excel in all aspects of life, including academic, athletic, and within their own relationships. This puts them into a difficulty situation where they might not have enough time or have too much pressure on them. (Mero & Laine, 2012.) Girls also start to be more self-conscious, questioning why they think a certain way, or what their peers may think, constantly comparing themselves to their peers. Comparing themselves to their peers may cause self-doubt, depression, and the feeling of not being good enough. At this particular age it is imperative to emphasize a one's strengths and encourage athletes not compare themselves to others. (Autio & Kaski, 2005.)

During puberty girls will begin to develop a greater understanding of their own training schedules and will be able to plan trainings for themselves. Typically, they may feel more self-empowered believe they can take care of themselves. Coaches should be encouraged to listen to the input of their athletes and allow some freedom in planning their own trainings. By providing them with a sense of responsibility in their success a player may feel more ownership in her own success, which may motivate her to continue to participate in, sport longer. However, there is still a need for feedback and motivation from the coach. Girls are more motivated from verbal feedback, where they can see where they succeeded and where they still need to improve. (Mero & Laine, 2012.)

### **3. INFLUENCE OF OTHERS ON SPORT PARTICIPATION**

Many different aspects of life may influence an athlete's career and the choices they make during it. The biggest influencers are friends, family and coaches. Youth internal and external influencers are key factors in their motivation. Youth relationship to their parents, coaches and teammates are studied to better understand how those affect their motivation.

#### **3.1. Influence of parents on sport participation**

The biggest influencer of sport performance over a child's lifetime is their parents (Donohue, Miller, Crammer & Cross, 2007). At a young age most parents sign their children up for sports they have chosen for them or a child may want to try something, which they have seen that their parents do. Today "family sports" or "children and adult" groups are becoming increasingly popular. Therefore, a child's first sport is usually something their parents enjoy. As children age and they start to develop their own interests, their parent's influence may decrease in particular sport. (Autio & Kaski, 2005) Parents continue to have influence over creating a well-rounded individual, encouraging children to have a variety of hobbies and to try new things. An emphasis on trying new things does not stop at adolescence but rather parents should encourage their adolescent children to have several different hobbies. It is not good for their physical development if they need to specialize to one sport too early. Diversity in training help youth also build their personality. (Westergård & Ikonen, 1990.)

While parents generally have a positive influence, but they may also have a negative influence young athletes' playing. Parents may be at fault for providing too much pressure, criticism, false expectations, and low amount of physical and social support (Gould, Urdy, Tuffey & Loehr, 1996). When athletes feel pressure from their parents they may not enjoy the sport anymore and that will drive them to quit the sport. Athletes may start feeling anxiety of going to training, because they are afraid of what their parents will tell them next. They also may stop talking about their sport with their parents, because of pressure from the parents.

Parental involvement in a child's sport varies. The involvement of parents has an impact on the positivity and enjoyment of sport for youth. Higher parental encouragement was linked to greater perceived competence for youth. Perceived competence is a self-perception of an individual in their capabilities and ability to control their environment and situation. (VanYperen, 1995.)

In many cases the role of parents is perceived as only a financial role or mode of transportation. However, parents also play a big role in a child's participation in a sport by providing encouragement and a support system (Autio & Kaski, 2005). Parents of boys and parents who are more active with their children's sport are more likely to encourage their children to be physically active and participate in sport, compared to parents of girls or parents who themselves are not a bring part of their children's physical activities (Brustad, 1993). It would be important also for parents who are not as involved with their own physical fitness to support their children to be active. Also, children who get more support from their parents are more likely to have a higher perception of competence, intrinsic motivation and sport enjoyment. (Babkes & Weiss, 1999.)

Positive parental support not only increases the enjoyment and perceived competence, but it also affects children's involvement. Teenagers and children are more likely to enjoy their involvement with their sport when they have less parental pressure and more parental support from their parents. Children's perceptions of what their parents do, and think are more significant to children psychological responses than parents claim to do and think. Children whose parents believe in their athletic ability are more likely to have better intrinsic motivation, greater self-perception of sport ability and greater enjoyment. (Babkes & Weiss, 1999.) There is no significant difference between father or mother support noted. A parent's support also has a positive effect on youth behavior in trainings. Athletes who are told by a coach that they are performing worse than average are less likely to have conflicts with their teammates if they have parental support. (VanYperen, 1995.)

Studies indicate not only parents' behavior and involvement in their one's athletic career but also their parents background may have an influence on youth sport participation. Parents' level of education has an impact to youth physical activity

behavior. Children of parents with higher education are more likely to be physically active during weekends and leisure time than children of less educated families. However, during school time there was no correlation between parents' education and physical activeness of youth in school. (Määttä, Nuutinen, Ray, Eriksson, Weiderpass, & Roos, 2014.)

### **3.2. Influence of coaches on sport participation**

The coaches' role and their relationships with athletes has been studied for many years and from many different angles. A coaches' behavior has influence on young athletes' participation behavior in sport. During puberty adolescents are often more likely to listen to their coach than their parents. Girls are more likely to follow a coach's' rules more detailed than boys which may be beneficial as a girl may concentrate better at practice. However, it may have some negative effects such as they will train too hard. Girls tend to do everything their coach tells them to do, without listening to their body. It would be encouraged for a coach to understand the psychological aspect of the changes occurring during puberty and to account for additional breaks or rest periods. (Autio & Kaski, 2005.)

The relationship between an athlete and a coach is also dependent on the environment that the coach creates. There are two different types of environments a coach can create: task-involving and ego-involving. A task-involving environment allows for an individual to make mistakes and uses the mistakes as an opportunity to learn to do it better at the next time. Compared to an ego-involving environment in which a person is punished after making a mistake. (Smith, Quested, Appleton, & Duda, 2016.) It has been studied that task-involving environments create athletes' perception of feeling close, being committed, and interacting in a complementary fashion, whereas in ego-involving environments those same variables are lacking (Olympiou, Jowett & Duda, 2008). Overall in team sport a task-involving environment has been proven to have a more positive affect compared to an ego-involving (Grearity & Murray, 2011). Furthermore, the environment that the coach creates plays a huge role in decreasing the dropout rate of sport participation. As players reach adolescence, they become more involved in responsibilities related to academics making the continuation of sport too difficult or a burden. At that time, it is important that they have a good environment

that satisfies their basic needs. They need an environment in which they feel significant to attend. (Quested et al., 2013; Autio & Kaski, 2005.)

Coaches have a huge effect on the overall enjoyment of the experience associated with participating in sport teams. Creating the right level of a challenging practice session increases the enjoyment of a sport. (Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel & Simons, 1993.) Athletes would like to have exercises that challenge them but at the same time are not too hard to perform. As previously mentioned, the current youth generation wants to see life as an exciting adventure, where the coaches' trainings are also part of what they want to be more exciting. One of reasons to dropout from sport is to lack of interest towards it. That might be simply because the trainings are not attractive and challenging enough anymore. (Lindner et al., 1991.)

Since, adolescents are quick to rebel against authorities, a very strict and controlling way of coaching may not be the best approach to keep youth in sports longer. The most successful coaching style should be based on equality. Adolescents' self- initiative and creativity should be highlighted. (Itkonen, 1990.) If coaches allow adolescents more responsibility to participate in trainings, trainings may become more meaningful and the players may be more motivated to attend (Autio & Kaski, 2005).

As a child's mind develops, they become more interested in why something is done and may need further explanations from coaches about the process (Autio & Kaski, 2005). They want to know why they do certain trainings and how those training can be implemented in games. When coaches' actions support athletes' needs, also their self-determined motivation will develop (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

During puberty it is very important that the coach creates an environment where youth enjoy participating in a particular sport. It is further part of the coach's responsibility to provide a positive environment in which physical activity does not create a negative self-image. Aspects such as negative feedback, sitting on the bench, and excessive control can have a strong influence on an athlete's decision to withdrawal from sport. (Grearity & Murray, 2011.)

A coach's feedback is more influential to the behavior of the athletes at the age of 14-15 compared to those at a younger age. During those ages a coach's feedback is the most frequent source of information that leads to development of self-confidence. Poor coaching and negative feedback lowers an athlete's self-esteem, which might have long-term effects. Some athletes will have self-doubt even after moving to another team and getting a new coach. (Grearity & Murray, 2011.) This does not mean that coaches cannot provide constructive criticism. Research indicates that sports that give a great deal of direct feedback after performance due the nature of the sport influence in more positive ways to an athlete's self-image. These types of sports, such as gymnastics, where the athlete knows right away if the outcome of their performance. However, it is important that the coach explains how the athlete can do it better next time and that the coach takes care to create positive experiences. In every situation it also important for coaches to acknowledge the effort an athlete puts in, and applaud their effort compared to succeeding at everything they do. (Liukkonen, 1990.) In conclusion, adolescents want to feel they are good enough in what they do, and they have the ability to overcome the obstacles in front of them (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

### **3.3. Influence of teammates on sport participation**

While having some influence over an individual, the influence of their peers has the least effect on one's sport performance compared to their parents and coaches (Donohue, 2007). For athletes who play at a more recreational level, teammates and peers play a larger role than for those athletes who participate in a higher level of competition or have aspirations to play at the professional level (Lindner, Johns & Butcher, 1999). Teammates influence an individual in a variety of ways (Donohue, 2007). Peers of youth have had a great impact on youth withdrawing from sport, particularly among girls. It has been identified that females value the social aspect of sport more than their female counterparts. Girls tend to place a higher value on the socialization during trainings as well social evenings with the team outside of trainings. The reasons for dropout might have been lack of team spirit, which is also related to peers and teammates. (Virtanen, 1999.)

The social relationships developed in sport plays a big role in the development of a child is likely to influence one's beliefs and behaviors. Athletes with stronger friendships and

group acceptance are more intrinsically motivated and committed to continuing with their sport. (Weiss & Smith, 2002.)

Social relationships are very important when children are transitioning from elementary school to middle school (13-15 years old). There is a shift during this time period in which conformity to parental influence declines and youth began to conform more to the influence of their peers. (Stuntz & Weiss, 2009.) This transition of influence may affect their behavior toward sport. Adolescents might rely more on their peers when making decisions or make some decisions based on what their peers have decided to do. Adolescents generally desire to be accepted by their peers often times making decisions based on their peers' decisions. It makes it difficult for one to continue to participate in a sport when all of their friends are no longer playing. (Lappalainen & Nissilä, 2007.)

Peers are also important influencers in creating a motivational environment in a sport setting as youth learn from each other. Adolescents do not only want to please their teammates or mirror themselves to them, but they also learn from them by observing what they do. Key behaviors, values, and skills can be learned based on observation of their peers, however, there is no evidence that physical skills can be learn strictly by observing. The environment that peers of youth create can have a positive impact on one's self-esteem and perception of a sport. (Seunghyun, Moe, & Youngjun, 2007.)

In schools, peer influence has been known to have a positive affect. Particularly for girls it is very important to have good friends at school, as they need an ally to share their issues or their gossip. Youth report friends are one of the most important factors for students when identifying why they like to go to school. (Linnakylä & Brunell 1996 as quoted in Pirhonen 2000.) Similar influences can be identified with girls participating in sport. Adolescents want a sense of belonging and that they are part of a group. Sport is also seen as a tool to develop and maintain friendships. Even though there are not many studies conducted related to friendships in athletics, developing friendships seems to be one of the most important factors for participation in sport. Primary reasons for enlisting in sport include positive team interactions, support and opportunities to develop friendships. (Donohue et. al, 2007.)



## **4. DEVELOPMENT OF GIRLS' FOOTBALL AND THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF FINLAND IN THE TAMPERE REGION**

Within the past 50 years girls' football has grown tremendously. It is no longer considered a "men's only" sport, and more females have identified the sport as one of their favorite hobbies. The popularity and the good state of women's football can be seen in many ways. Women's football is well publicized in the media and the first female vice president to Football Association of Finland was chosen in the spring of 2018. Respect and stature toward women's football is increasing all the time.

### **4.1. Development of girls' football in Finland**

There is some evidence of women's football in Finland dating back to 1930-1940. The actual operation of women's football started in the 1960s. The first steps in Finland were taken in Mikkeli, where women had a small recreational league. They had little talent and often did not train for games. (Tuunainen, 2007.) In the summer of 1970s football started to increase in interest in other municipalities all over Finland. Civic change during 1960-1970s also had a great effect on the development of women's football. Overall women's football participation has developed much hand in hand with the civic change. Women started to have more freedom, steering away from their typical role of a housewife. Women able to educate themselves as well as have a paying job, allowing them more freedom and independence of previously being dependent on their husbands' income. (Meinander 1999 as quoted in Vehviläinen & Itkonen 2009.) Women's life became much easier in many other ways as well, such as, short skirts, short haircuts, tampons, and birth control were acceptable (Utrio, 2006).

Vehviläinen and Itkonen (2009) divided the development of women's football in Finland into four different phases between 1971-2008: initial enthusiasm and organization, stabilization phase, the rise of girls' football, and the leap into popularity (Vehviläinen & Itkonen, 2009).

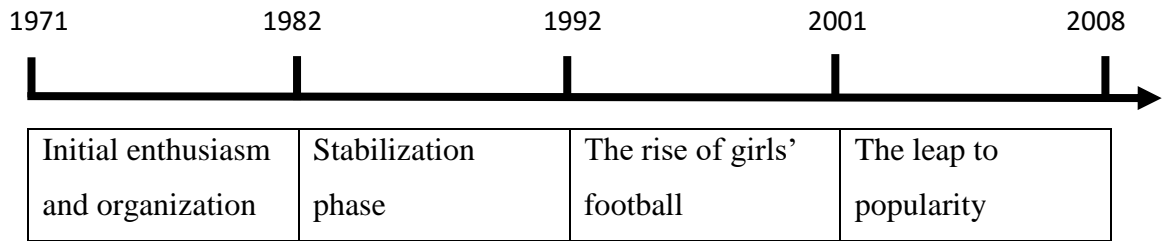


FIGURE 2. Phases of development of female football (Vehviläinen & Itkonen, 2009).

Due to the decision of the board of Football Association of Finland in 1970, a temporary women's football committee was established to organize women's football. In 1971, the first organized women's football competitions started. While there was an increase in females interested in participating, little was done to spread the sport during the first years of the organized league. The seasons were short, making the sport less attractive. During those years the number of players was slowly growing. Most of the players were in the Helsinki area, as other regions tended to struggle to find enough female players. In some parts of Finland, the number of players even dropped. There were also difficulties finding a good game system for the league. Overall women's football continued to grow as it neared the 1980s, despite the slow pace of growth. During the first phase, *initial enthusiasm and organization*, the growth in numbers in Tampereen Piiri was 80 to 230 registered players. (Paavola 2007; Vehviläinen & Itkonen, 2009.)

By 1982 women's football made its place in Finnish society. In 1983 the first women's committee was established. It included three individuals, just as all the other committees (youth, men's first league, and other leagues). The women's committee also spread to local levels and the regional football federation all (excluding one) had their own women's committee by 1985. Many changes were made trying to make visibility and the state of women's football better. In 1987 the first strategic development plan was made, but the biggest step was in 1991 when the first person was hired to take care of the development of women's domestic football. Creating this new position made the development process more systematic than it has ever been. 1991 was also named theme year of girls' football. During the stabilization phase, girls' football continued to slowly increase however, the number of female players was decreasing. The sport was still not attractive enough and the playing conditions were not good for girls. Some

matches even got cancelled due to poor field conditions such as no lines on the fields or missing nets in the goals. (Vehviläinen & Itkonen, 2009.) The social aspect of playing was important for female players. The transition from B-girls to women's teams usually included a change in players on the team. Some people who participated in the sport in order to socialize with their friends may no longer be on the same team, resulting in some dropout of the sport. Other reasons for dropout include the game became too competitive, women did not have enough incentive to continue as they do not get paid from playing, and other aspects of life become more of a priority. (Virtanen, 1999.) During the stabilization phase years, 1982 to 1991, the number of registered players in Tampereen Piiri showed a small increase from 230 to 300 players (Paavola, 2007).

Girls' football became the most popular from 1992 to 2000 as the number of players started to increase faster than before. The Women's committee was replaced with the Development Group of Girls' Football. After extensive research the Development Group of Girls' Football identified the current state of women's football and created the five main developmental points to be implanted to improve women's football. The first point was to change the attitude towards women's football by making positive campaigns, also inside of the football association. The second point was to get a person hired in the football association who would be responsible for girls and women's football. The third point was to reorganize both the girls and women's league competitions. The fourth point was to improve regional monitoring to make sure that all the talented players had a chance to make it to national team trainings. The fifth and final point was to invest in school football. Football needed to be part of a girl's syllabus. The development steps accepted positively from the football association. The football association started to combine regional associations to make the development of girls' football more efficient. Likewise, clubs began to put more emphasis on the development of women's football which increased the number of players around that area. For instance, in Tampereen Piiri the number was second highest in Finland after Helsinki and Uusimaa area due to the great work that Ilves was doing to develop girls and women's football. From 1992–2000 the number of players has increased in Tampereen Piiri from about 1,250 to 2,000. (Paavola, 2007; Vehviläinen & Itkonen, 2009.)

The fourth phase, *the leap to popularity*, includes huge improvements in the development of women's football in Finland such as the Football Association's own project to support girls and women's football, an explosive increase in the number of registered players, the success of the women's national team, and the subsequent interest towards football related to the national team's success. (Vehviläinen & Itkonen, 2009.) The project to support girls and women's football was called FUN, from the Finnish words F = futaa (= play football), U = unelmoi (= dream), and N = nauti (enjoy). All these three concepts included more concrete goals. The term *Futaa* described the main goal of the project, which was to increase the number of players. There were several different ways to increase the number of participants, including increasing the number of clubs offering girls football, develop girls' skills through the school setting, and by bringing girls and women's football to municipalities where there was not yet a possibility to play. The second term *unelmoi* was describing the possibilities that football brought. The goal was to bring up the idea that football could create a new athletic career. Also, cooperation with other female sports was another concrete goal. The goal was to unify all female sports in order to create more respect and appreciation for female athletes. The third and final term *nauti* described the development of communication and public relations, in order to create a new and more positive representation of female football. The project began in 2004 and continued for two extra years. (Paavola, 2007.) During those years, various events for coaches, other employees, and players were arranged to support their work and add a sense of community. During the final phase, the number of registered players in Tampereen Piiri increased from about 2,100 to 3,100. (Paavola, 2007; Vehviläinen & Itkonen, 2009.) In conclusion, girls' football has become increasingly popular among youth since its initial beginnings.

#### **4.2. The Football Association of Finland in the Tampere Region**

The Football Association of Finland in the Tampere region was established in 1934. At this point it was called Hämeen Piiri (Häme Region). Tampereen Piiri was first established in 1945 in Valkeakoski, slowly teams from Hämeen Piiri started moving to Tampereen Piiri. By 1996 Hämeen Piiri no longer existed and all teams were members of Tampereen Piiri. Tampereen Piiri stretches from Virrat in the north, to Padasjoki in the east, Loppi in the south and Vammala in the west. Altogether the region includes 45

municipalities, Tampere being the biggest of them. The Football Association of Finland includes 11 regional federations. The role of Regional Federations is to organize regional leagues for youth and adults. Domestic leagues (organized for B-girls, B-boys, A-boys, women and men) are organized by the Football Association of Finland. Because football is considered the biggest sport in Finland, it is important to have a regional federation to help the Football association to organize the sport. (Seppänen & Runsas, 2005.)

Organized girls' football has existed in Tampereen Piiri's league since 1973. Tampereen Piiri had its own women's committee from 1986-2002. Since 2002 women's football has been part of the whole football organization in Tampereen Piiri, therefore all discussions about youth, women's or men's leagues has equal opportunity for both genders. Female players from Tampereen Piiri have been very successful in many ways. There have been many players succeeding in quality competition (taitokisat). There have also been many national team players from the area. Already from the 1973 when the first women's national team match was played there was a player from Tampereen Piiri. Hundreds of players have played both youth and women's national teams games from the area of Tampereen Piiri. (Seppänen & Runsas, 2005.)

The most successful club in the area has been Ilves (Seppänen & Runsas, 2005). Since 1989 Ilves has had their own department for girls' football and girls started to have their own age group teams, which would train more and have more quality in training. In 1985 Pirkkahalli was completed and that gave a massive opportunity for quality indoor training during the winters. Ilves has also succeeded well in the women's domestic league, by winning three bronze medals and winning silver in 1993 and 2014. Since 1979 girls have had their own league in Ilves Futis-Liiga regional league inside of Tampere, which made it easy for girls to start playing football. (Sjöstedt, 2011.)

In Tampereen Piiri the number of players is increasing all the time in both girls and boys football. There is still a big difference between boys and girls. There is a noted increase in the number of females playing at a younger age, however the increase of players starting younger seems to be counteracted by the increase of females dropping out of the sport during adolescence. Research indicates girls are quitting much earlier than they used to. The number of starting players is great due to the new opportunities

in many municipalities in Tampereen Piiri as well as the possibility for girls to start playing with girls instead of with boys' team. In table one the change in number of players in girls' football during the ages where they dropout is presented. Between 2008-2012 only 62 players dropped out when moving from D (12-13 years old) to C (14-15 years old) girls and 103 when going from C to B (17-18 years old). Next 2010-2014 when moving from D to C girls the number of players even increased but when going to B girls 333 dropped out from football. During years 2012-2014 there is an even more drastic decline as 260 players quit when moving from D to C. (Pihlaja, Tampereen Piiri, 2017.) The pattern of dropping out is changing quickly and continues to decline for the worse. Tampereen Piiri has identified this continued dropout rate and has begun to work toward creating continuity in the female game. They have hired part-time employees to develop girls' football for the summers of 2015 and 2016. While these changes may not alter the pattern of increasing dropout rate, it shows promise that Tampereen Piiri wants to be a part of the solution, and the clubs in the area are willing to continue to develop girls' football.

TABLE 1. The change in number of players from 2008-2014 in Tampereen Piiri (Pihlaja, 2015).

	<b>change within girls born 1995-1996</b>		<b>change within girls born 1997-98</b>		<b>change within girls born 1999-2000</b>	
	Change (-)		Change (-)		Change (-)	
D-girls	632		506		524	
C-girls	570	62/9,8 %	530	24/4,7 % (+)	264	260/49,6 %
B-girls	529	103/16,3 %	168	333/66 %	158	106/40,2 %

## 5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this master's thesis is to identify what motivates girls to continue to participate in football compared to those who choose to dropout. Furthermore, the purpose is to provide tools for female football teams, coaches, and parents to use in order to help increase girls' motivation to play longer. The given tools are based on the results of the current study of female footballers, 12-15 years old, in Tampereen Piiri of the Football Association of Finland. The data was collected by using a quantitative online questionnaire.

### 5.1 Self-determination theory

Self-Determination theory (SDT) is a theoretical framework that has been successfully applied in order to understand the psychological processes likely to impact engagement across many contexts, including youth sport. It is an approach to understand motivation and behavior in sport. Deci and Ryan (2000) suggest that a person can be simultaneously motivated by multiple factors. "Specifically, in SDT, three psychological needs—for competence, relatedness, and autonomy—are considered essential for understanding the what (i.e., content) and why (i.e., process) of goal pursuits." (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

In Self-Determination theory, SDT, one of three basic needs is *relatedness*, which represents the need to feel connected with others and a secure sense of belonging. The second of the three basic needs of SDT is *competence*, which reflects the need to feel effective. This simply means one wants to participate in an activity in which they can succeed. The final basic needs in Self-determination theory is *autonomy*. Autonomy represents the need to feel personal control over one's actions. (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

In SDT often self-determined and controlled forms of motivation are studied. Controlled motivation is fueled by pressure from others. Athletes with high level of controlled motivation tend to experience more negative outcomes. They may dropout from sport, burnout, or experience negative affects. Self-determined means to act with a sense of self-direction and choice, an athlete who is self-determined participates because that athlete finds a sport enjoyable or interesting or values the benefits of sport

participation Self-determined motivation produces positive outcomes. Athletes perform at a higher level and experience more positive emotions (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The three elements of SDT are identified in figure three.

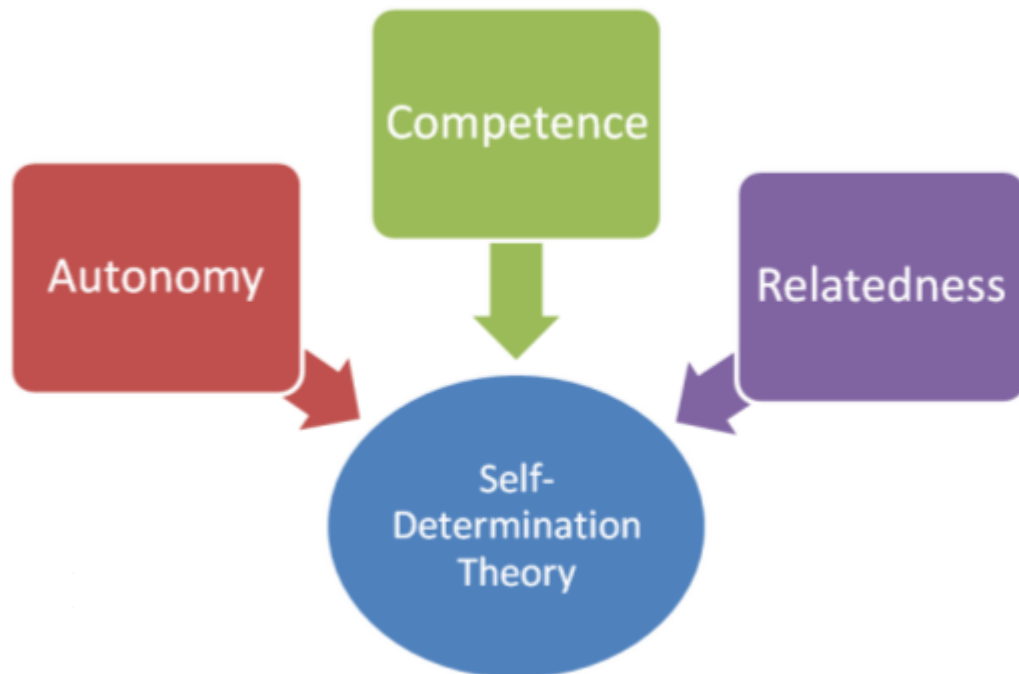


FIGURE 3: Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

## 5.2. Research task

The following research question and sub-questions are discussed in this study:

Research questions:

What keeps 13-15 years old girls to continue participating in football?

Sub-questions:

What is the meaning of internal factors to one's sport participation?

What is the meaning of external factors to one's sport participation?

## 5.3. Methods

Quantitative research method was used to collect data. The questionnaire is a quick way of collecting data, it is effective to analyze (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara, 2004). The questionnaire included six different sections. Table two identifies how all the different questions answered relate to the research questions of the study. The first sections



included background information such as age and any additional hobbies. This section also included questions related to football. Participants were asked how long they have participated in the sport, have they changed their team within the past three years and how often they train football during the week. Also, the participants were asked what league their team is currently playing in. These questions were used to identify their commitment to the sport and level of competition they are currently participating in.

The second section included the Finnish version of Enjoyment Scale (ES, Liukkonen 1998), which included only four questions. The questions were put in its original form of using a specific sport, in this case football. These questions were used to examine participants' enjoyment towards football.

The third section included the Finnish version of the Sport Motivation Scale (SMS, Jaakkola 2002). The questionnaire consists of 28 questions and includes questions of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. The questionnaire is based on Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). These questions evaluated players' motivation towards football. There were questions related to both external and internal motivation.

The next section was shorter. The Finnish version of Perceived Physical Competence Scale (PPCS, Lintunen, 1995) included 10 questions. The participants were asked to rate themselves in each component compared with those of other players of the same age. A 5-point Osgood scale was used. These questions were used to examine their self-image and how they see themselves compared to others at their age. These questions were also used to identify the participants' self-esteem. It has been noted that better self-image may indicate higher self-esteem.

The fifth section evaluated the participants' perceived most important factors in success. The Finnish version of Perceptions of Success Questionnaire (POSQ) included eight questions (Rottensteiner, 2015). These questions were used to determine what makes participants feel successful in sports. Are those reasons more related to themselves or the people around them? When people feel successful in sports it increases their motivation.

In the final section, the questions studied players' relationships with their coaches, parents, and peers. Student Athlete Relationship Instrument, SARI, (Donohue, Miller, Crammer & Cross, 2007) was used to examine these variables. The original study included four different sections, where peers and teammates were separated. In the current study only the part including teammates was used. Each of the three remaining sections had 17-19 questions. In the original version scale "strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree" was used. In this study a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (i.e. "strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree") was used to keep a clear structure for the questionnaire. The study is only done in English therefore the questions had to be translated in Finnish. The author translated these questions. She was qualified to do so because she has completed a Bachelor's Degree in English and has lived in an English speaking country for four years.

There are several studies conducted on coach-athlete relationship and the coach's role in the training and playing environment. There are only a few studies done that examine the influence of all significant others in the same study. Significant others have a great affect on an adolescent's life as an external influencer, therefore their role to one's motivation is very important to study.

TABLE 2. How the questionnaire was used to answer research questions:

<b>Purpose / Research questions</b>	<b>Questions of the questionnaire</b>
<b>Background information</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Age?</li> <li>2. How many years you have played football?</li> <li>3. In what league your team is playing in?</li> <li>4. Do you have another hobby in addition to football?</li> <li>5. How often do you train football?</li> </ol>
<b>Internal influencer to motivation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Enjoyment of football</li> <li>7. The reason why I play football...</li> <li>8. How am I physically compared to others at my age?</li> <li>9. When I am doing sports, I feel myself the most successful when I ...</li> </ol>
<b>External influencer to motivation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Influence of external factors.</li> <li>11. Influence of parents.</li> <li>12. Influence of coach.</li> <li>13. Influence of teammates.</li> <li>14. Have you changed your team within the past three years?</li> </ol>

#### 5.4. Data collection and analysis

The research data was collected by using an online quantitative questionnaire with several open-ended questions. Webropol online questionnaire tool was used to conduct the survey. Tampereen Piiri has rights to use the service, therefore, their account was used to collect the survey data. Before sending the questionnaires out, a pilot study was conducted. Ten girls, ages 13-15, answered all the questions and marked questions that were not clear for them. The practice questionnaire was filled out on paper. Volunteers

also stayed in the room after filling out the questionnaire to provide constructive criticism as to why some questions were not clear. After the discussion, changes were made to make the questionnaire comprehensible. Also, several overlapping questions were deleted from the questionnaire.

The questionnaire included seven sections. The questionnaires were distributed through an email list to coaches, which they then forwarded on to their players. No option to send an email directly to players was available. The email included a letter that informed participants of the purpose of the study, instructions for completing the questionnaire, and contact information. All questionnaires were anonymous, and their information was kept confidential. The players were informed clearly that their name would not appear anywhere. The author of the study has previously worked during the summer with the development project of girl's football and therefore had personal interactions with possible participants. The researcher's involvement may possibly affect the answers or answer rate of this time.

The first email was sent out at the beginning of October 2016. Participants had three weeks to answer the questionnaire. Due to the amount of answers the email was sent out again after the three weeks period and two more weeks were given to encourage greater participation. All together the questionnaire was out for five weeks. During this period a substantial number of questionnaires had been received and there was no need to wait for more answers.

Participants in this study were twelve to fifteen-year-old female football players in Tampere Area of the Football Association of Finland. The players needed to have an official playing pass to be eligible for the study. The area included 626 female players who fulfilled the requirements for the study. After sending out the questionnaire out twice 94 players had responded, with a response rate of 15 %. All the participants of the study were volunteers. The participants did not receive any benefits from completing the study.

Data was analyzed by using SPSS Statistics Data Editor. Answers were easily moved from Webrpol to SPSS. Some of the variables needed to be changed before the analysis due to the form of the questions in the questionnaire. Players were asked in an open-

ended question in what league they are playing in. The answers were categorized in four different groups depending on the size of the league: Futis-Liiga (league inside of Tampere, Piiriliiga (area that includes area of Tampereen Piiri), Alueliiga (includes the area of Länsi-Suomi and Ahvenanmaa Regions and Tampereen Piiri) and Etelä-Länsi liiga (includes all the areas from Alueliiga and Helsinki, Uusimaa and Kakkois-Suomi). Questions with yes and no answers were given numeric meaning (yes = 1) and (no = 2). Those were questions such as “*Do you have another hobby in addition to football*” and “*Have you changed your team during past three years*”.

Webropol and SPSS statistics, were used to analyze the quantitative data. From SPSS statistics data editor mainly, One-way ANOVA and Bivariate correlation were used. In addition, the mean of different questions was used to compare differences.

The questionnaire included several open-ended questions, which were analyzed separately. There were such a small amount of answers and the answers were short that no specific data-analyzing tool was needed to analyze qualitative data. The answers were analyzed in excel by looking at all the answers as an individual answer as well as searching for similarities between answers.

When analyzing the data, the background information was first analyzed to find any variation between participants. Participants’ perceived self-image, reasons for playing, and what makes participants feel successful were studied. Parents,’ coaches’ and teammates’ influence on sport enjoyment was also examined. Answers of various questions were also compared between different age groups and the amount of trainings the participants have.

## 6. RESULTS

Altogether 94 surveys were received. None of the questions were mandatory, hence the responder was able to skip questions. Two participants had left almost all the questions blank, therefore, most of questions had 92 responses. Over all the amount of answers varied between 89-94 responses per question.

### 6.1. Background information

There were responders from all three age groups. In this study 41 % of the participants were 13 years old, 32 % were 14 years old and 27 % were 15 years old. The age of participants is presented in table 3

TABLE 3. Age of participants

AGE	n	%
13	39	41 %
14	30	32 %
15	25	27 %
Total	94	100 %

Almost all participants had played football more than three years and the average years played was approximately 5.8 years. The range of competitiveness was also wide. There were players from local leagues in Tampere (Futis-Liiga), Regional League (Tampereen Piiri-liiga), wider regional league (Alueliiga) and even wider are more competitive league (Etelä-Länsi Liiga). Some participants played in more than one league. Table 4 identifies the level of competitiveness of the various leagues where one is the least competitive league and four is the most competitive league. The question was an open-ended question, which some players left blank, some did not know, and some said that they do not play anywhere right now (since the questionnaire was conducted off-season). The players who participate in more than one league have been marked in the table to the most competitive league, in which she plays in. For future research, it would have been better and easier to give alternatives to participants to make the question clearer.

TABLE 4. Level of competitiveness

<b>Competition level of a league</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
1 “ <i>Futis-Liiga</i> ”	13	15 %
2 “ <i>Piiriliiga</i> ”	38	44 %
3 “ <i>Alueliiga</i> ”	18	21 %
4 “ <i>Etelä-Länsi -liiga</i> ”	17	20 %
Total	86	100 %

The number of trainings was also split into different categories. The participants had different numbers of trainings. In table five, the participants are divided into groups based on the number of trainings per week.

TABLE 5. Number of trainings per week

<b>Amount of trainings</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
1-2 times per week	16	17 %
3-4 times per week	49	52 %
more than 4 times per week	29	31 %
Total	94	100 %

The number of trainings per week and level of competition have a very strong correlation indicating higher levels of competition coincide with more trainings per week compared to lower competition leagues coincide with fewer trainings per week.

The participants were also asked if they have other hobbies besides football. Almost half of all participants had another hobby and most of the hobbies included physical activity. Other hobbies included track and field, gym, dancing, volleyball, horse riding, etc. Only two of all participants indicated they had another hobby which did not include physical activity.

TABLE 6. Other hobbies

<b>Other hobbies</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
----------------------	----------	----------

Hobby that includes physical activity	33	36 %
Hobby that does not include physical activity	2	2 %
no other hobbies	56	62 %
Total	91	100%

This study identified a correlation between the levels of competitiveness of the league in which the athletes participated in compared to the likelihood of having additional hobbies. For example, 44 % of participants who play on the lowest or the second lowest league indicated they have another leisure time activity compared to only 24 % of the participants who play on the highest level have another leisure time activity. Figure 4 clearly shows the relationship between level of competition and additional hobbies.

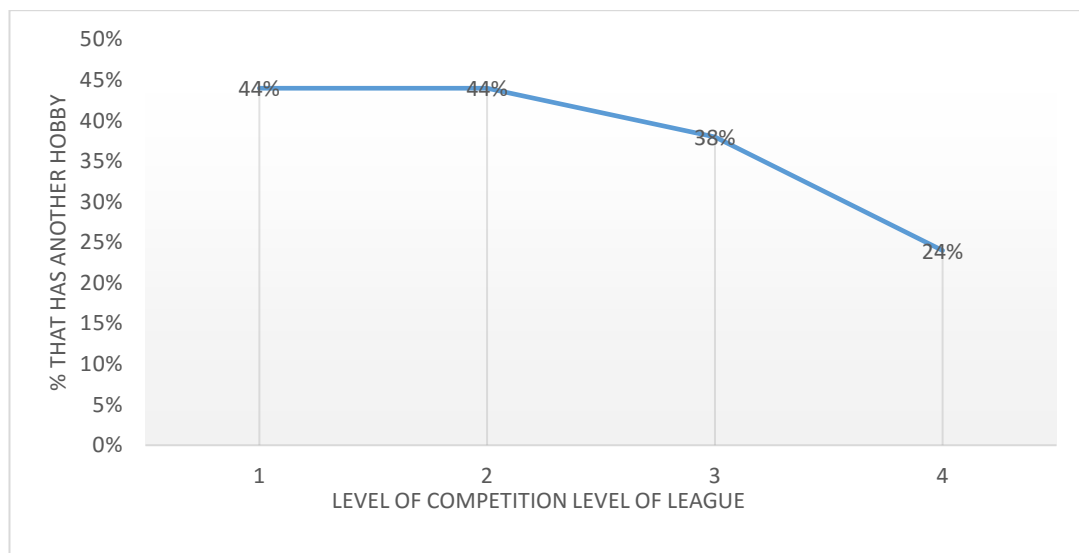


FIGURE 4. Other hobbies vs. competition level of the league

## 6.2. Internal and external factors to one's motivation

This study aimed to examine both external and internal influences on one's motivation in football participation.

### 6.2.1. Self-image of participants

All the participants had pretty good perceived self-image. They saw themselves as athletes when comparing themselves to others in their age group. Table 7 shows



participants perceived self-image. There were no significant differences identified between age groups. The scores that varied the most were related to questions “*I am stiff – flexible*”, “*I am too short – tall*” and “*I am too skinny – fat*”. The mean for the statement of participants’ satisfaction on their outlook was 3.47, indicating they were more positive than negative, however, 17 % still had either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

TABLE 7. Perceived self-image.

	1	2	3	4	5		N	Mean
1. I cannot do sports well	0	1	9	31	51	I am good in sports	92	4.43
2. I am clumsy	1	2	19	44	26	I am agile	92	4
3. I am stiff	4	21	27	27	12	I am flexible	91	3.24
4. I get easily tired in sports	2	1	11	50	28	I am in good condition	92	4.1
5. I am slow	1	3	16	44	28	I am fast	92	4.03
6. I am weak	0	5	18	47	22	I am strong	92	3.93
7. I am not satisfied with my outlook	5	11	29	30	17	I am satisfied with my outlook	92	3.47
8. I am too short	4	17	59	10	2	I am too tall	92	2.88
9. I am too skinny	2	7	66	15	2	I am too fat	92	3.09
10. I am bad at football	1	4	18	45	23	I am good at football	91	3.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>211</b>		<b>918</b>	<b>3.71</b>

#### 6.2.2. Reasons for playing and indicators of success

Figure 5 presents the results to the questions related to a participants’ motivation to continue with their sport. The least motivating reason is shown on the left side while the most motivating is located on the right side of the figure. As seen from the figure, participants agreed more with internal motivators than external motivators. In reasons for playing the least important factors were: “*I had before good reasons to play, but I*

*have thought should I continue playing anymore*” and *“because the people around me think that it is important stay healthy”*. The most important factors were *“The pleasure I feel, when I learn new things”* and *“The pleasure I feel, when I get to develop my abilities”*. In figure five there is comparison of means for some of the reasons for playing.



FIGURE 5. Comparison of means for between reasons for playing.

In addition to reasons for playing, participants were asked what makes them feel most successful. All the alternatives what makes participants feel successful had high averages. The lowest answers were in statements related comparison to teammates: *“I am better than others”* and *“I can do something that others cannot do”*. In both the mean on a scale from one to five was 3.6, which indicates participants still agree more with the statement than disagree. Participants felt most successful when they are capable of doing something they have not been able to do before, with a mean score of 4.6 on 5-point scale

### 6.2.3 Enjoyment of football

Overall the enjoyment factor showed that all the participants really enjoyed football. The average for all four factors was close to strongly agree. Figure 6 presents the data related to enjoyment of playing football. Green indicates the answers in which participants stated they “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement while red indicates participants stated they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statement.

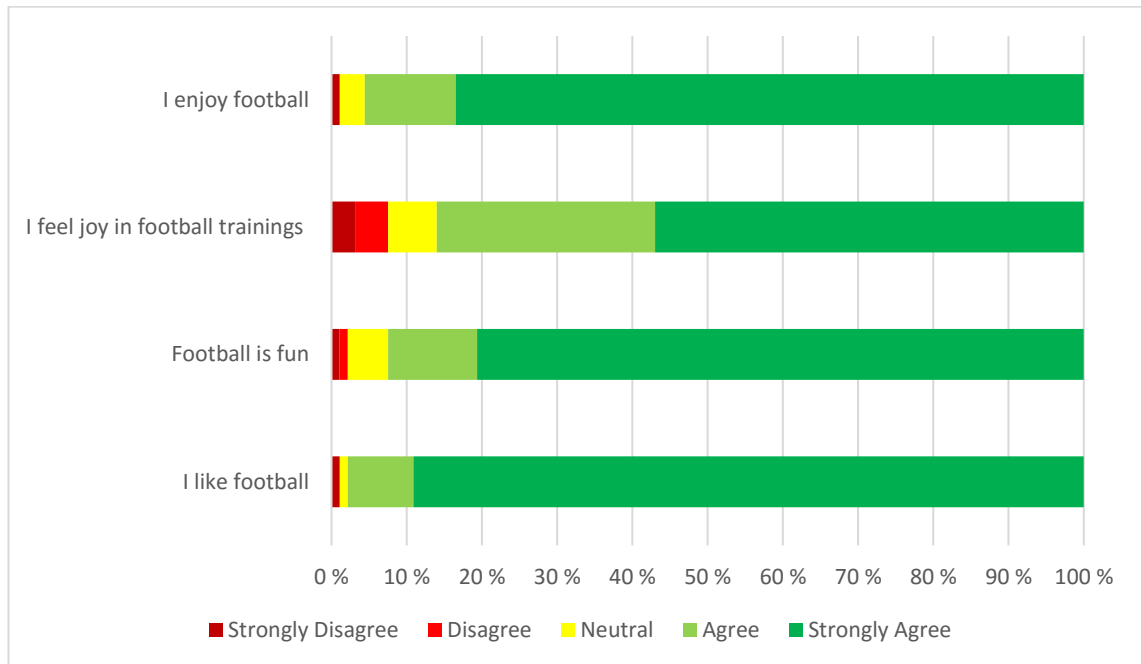


FIGURE 6: Enjoyment of football

This study also examined a possible correlation between changing teams during the past three years and the enjoyment of football, which found no significant correlations. Interestingly, those that had changed teams in the past three years had more positive answers in the enjoyment scale. In the following table “yes” means that the player had changed her team during past three years and “no” means that the player had not changed her team during past three years.

TABLE 8. Difference in enjoyment between those who had changed teams within the last three years and those who had not.

<b>Changing team vs. enjoyment of football</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
I like football	Yes	28	4,96
	No	64	4,80
	Total	92	4,85
Football is fun	Yes	28	4,89
	No	64	4,66
	Total	92	4,73
I feel joy in football trainings	Yes	28	4,57
	No	64	4,27
	Total	92	4,36
I enjoy of football	Yes	28	4,79
	No	64	4,69
	Total	92	4,72

The correlation between enjoyment of football and external influences was also examined. Using the Bivariate Correlation analyzing tool, there was correlation between enjoyment of football and parents', coaches' and teammates positive influence on sport performance. All the different questions related to enjoyment had a statistically significant correlation, but the strongest correlation was identified between the statement "*I enjoy football*" and the positive influence of coaches (0.398), parents (0.554), and teammates (0.496). However, these findings do not differentiate if the positive enjoyment of football has impacts on the fact that the external influence is more positive or if the positive impact of external factors makes the enjoyment of football more positive.

### **6.3. Internal and external influencers of motivation in participation in different age groups**

Many players quit football between the ages of 13-15 years old. Therefore, variances in answers between those years are examined.

This study indicated that age does not have any significant affect related to enjoyment. Reasons for playing were different in different ages. Significant differences between

ages were identified in questions such as “*I had before good reasons to play, but I have thought should I continue playing anymore*”  $p=0.007$  ( $p<0.01$ ) and “*I think that I can succeed in football*”  $p=0.008$ ). The question “*Because it helps me to improve myself in other areas of my life*” had meaningful differences between age groups, but it was not statistically significant  $p=0.017$  ( $p<0.05$ ).

The section of the questionnaire identifying “*Reasons for playing*” also included questions related to external influences for playing. The older they were, more the meaningful the external influencer was. In all the questions 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree”. In the first two statements for reasons why I play football 1. “*...because it makes to people I know to respect me*” (mean = 2.95) and 2. “*...because the people around me think that it is important stay healthy*” (mean = 2.90) the means were less than three, indicating more participants tended to disagree than agree with the statements. The last statement “*...to show others how good I am*” had a mean greater than three, (3.2) which means that 15-years old participants are more agreeing with the statement. Figures 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3 identify the trends within these questions and possible correlations can be seen.

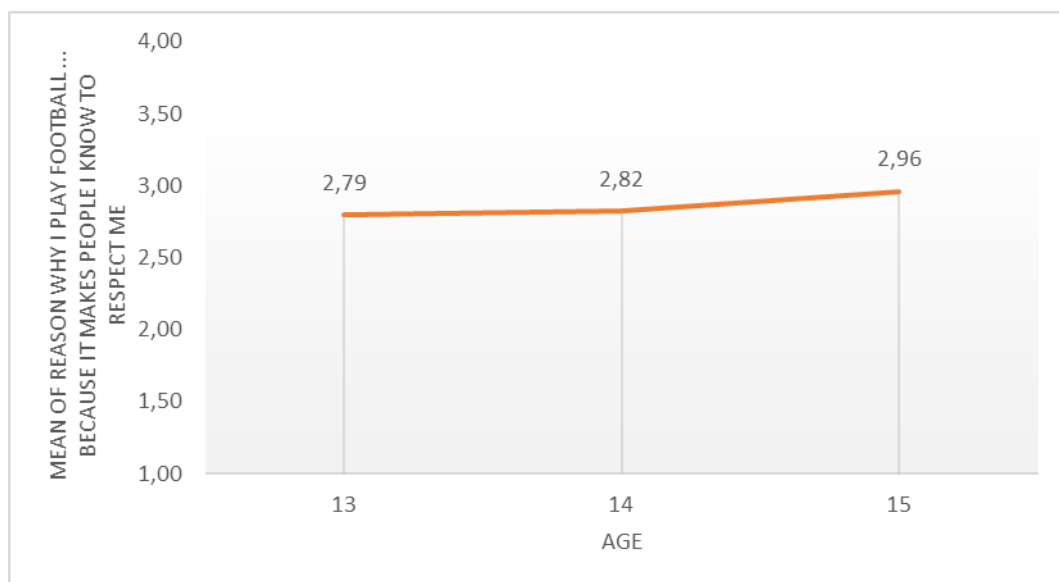


FIGURE 7.1. Age difference in Mean of reason why I play football ... because it makes people I know to respect me.

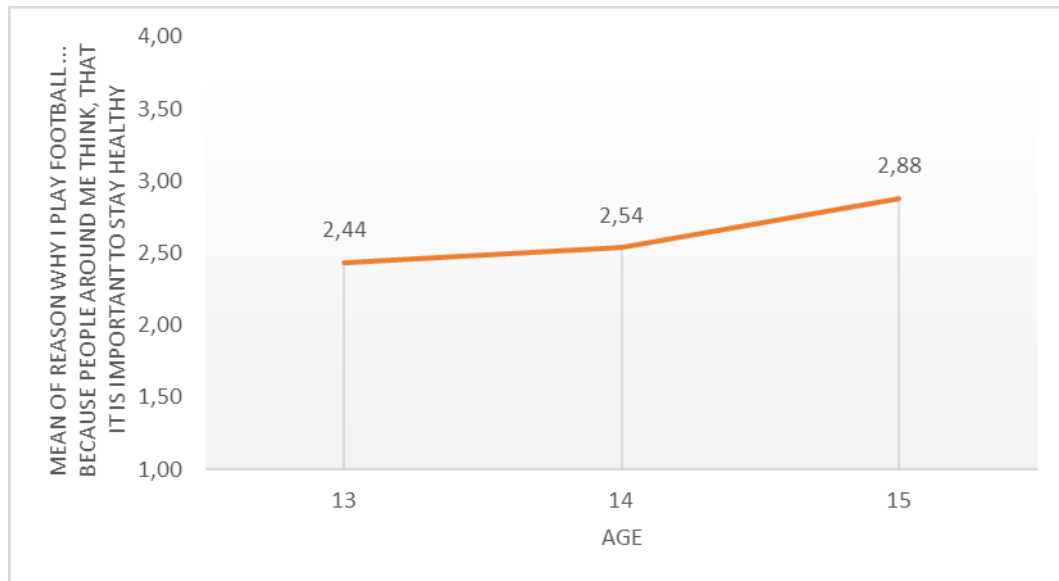


FIGURE 7.2. Age difference in Mean of reason why I play football ... Because people around me think that it is important to stay healthy.

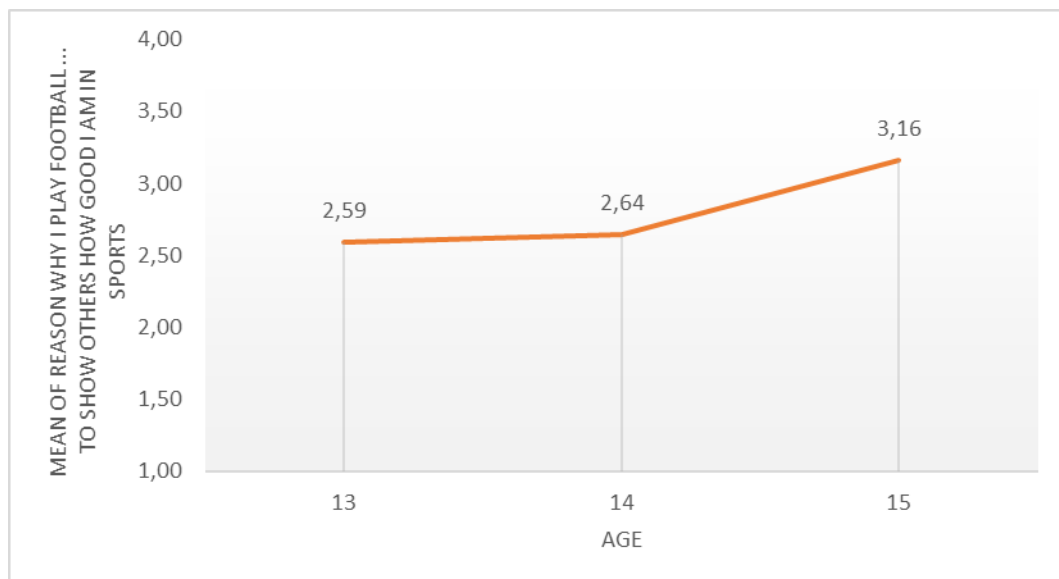


FIGURE 7.3. Age difference in Mean of reason why I play football ... To show others how good I am in sports.

There are no significant differences identified between the participants' age and parents, coaches or teammates positive influence on sport performance. Interestingly, the positive affect was lowest in all sectors among 14-years old. Table 9 provides data

related to external influences having a positive influence on sport performance based on age.

TABLE 9. External influencers are a positive influence on sport performance.

<b>Positive influence on sport performance</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1. Parents have positive influence on my sport performance	13	39	4,26
	14	28	4,04
	15	25	4,20
	Total	92	4,17
2. My coach has positive effect to my sport performance	13	39	4,03
	14	28	3,89
	15	25	4,20
	Total	92	4,03
3. My teammates have positive effect to my sport performance	13	39	4,31
	14	28	3,82
	15	25	4,40
	Total	92	4,18

The POSQ questionnaire included questions evaluated how participants feel the most successful. The only significant results between age groups was found in the questions “*I feel myself the most successful when I can do something that others cannot do*”  $p = 0.009$  ( $p < 0.0.1$ ) and “*I feel myself the most successful when I defeat others*”  $p = 0.043$  ( $P < 0.05$ ). For 13-year old, it was found as less important to defeat others or to be able to do things that others cannot do than compared to 14 or 15-year old. Participants aged 13- and 14-years old agreed the most with the statement “*I feel myself the most successful when I succeed in something that I have not been able to do before.*” Mean 4.5 and 4.6 respectively. The same statement was the second most agreed to for 15-year old (mean 4.6), but there were a few more agreed with “*I reach the goals I have set*” (mean = 4.7).

In relation to external influences on female adolescent athletes, this study evaluated the differences between parents, coaches and the athlete’s peers. There were no significant

changes in questions related to positive influence of external factors between age groups and amount of trainings.

There were no significant differences in the means of any age groups, when looking at parental influence, however there was still interesting variation. All the answers were below three (=neutral), indicating that the participants were satisfied with the parental support they received in all age groups. Different questions had more meaning for each age group. For instance, 15-years-old participants disagreed the most with the statement *“At least one of my family members doesn't show interest.”* (mean = 1.3), whereas the mean for 13 and 14 years old was 1.6. 14-year old felt that their parents were putting more pressure on them (mean = 2.2) than 13-year old (mean = 1.8) and for 15-year-old (mean = 1.7). Table 10 identifies statements, that has the most differences between age groups, related to parental influence on sport participation in relation to age.



TABLE 10. Difference between age groups in parents' influence.

<b>Parents influence between age groups</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1. At least one of my family members needs to praise me more often.	13	39	2,69
	14	26	2,42
	15	25	2,72
	Total	90	2,62
2. At least one of my family members does not show interest.	13	39	1,56
	14	26	1,58
	15	25	1,32
	Total	90	1,50
3. I don't get enough encouragement from my family members	13	39	1,69
	14	26	1,62
	15	25	1,88
	Total	90	1,72
4. At least one of my family members does not support me after I have performed poorly.	13	39	1,95
	14	26	1,77
	15	25	1,92
	Total	90	1,89
5. At least one of my family members pressures me to participate in a sport when I do not want to participate.	13	39	1,85
	14	26	2,23
	15	25	2,08
	Total	90	2,02
7. At least one of my family members disagree with me about my decisions.	13	39	2,08
	14	26	2,27
	15	25	2,40
	Total	90	2,22
8. At least one of my family members is too demanding with me.	13	39	1,85
	14	26	2,00
	15	25	2,08
	Total	90	1,96
9. At least one of my family members puts too much pressure on me.	13	39	1,82
	14	26	2,19
	15	25	1,72
	Total	90	1,90
12. At least one of my family members makes rude or embarrassing comments about me.	13	39	1,41
	14	26	1,19
	15	25	1,48
	Total	90	1,37

Using One-way ANOVA there were no significant differences between age groups when looking at coach's effect on one's performance. Also, in all the questions coach's role was seen more positive than negative. However, some differences were found between age groups. In the questions "*My coach has a negative attitude toward me*", the older the players were, the more they felt that the coach has a negative attitude towards them. The players at the age of 15 were also less likely to have a good relationship with their coach. The players at the age of 13 did not feel as much pressure from their coach compared to older players. Table 11 identifies the most significant answers of the coaches' influence based on age.

TABLE 11. Difference between age groups in coach's influence.

<b>Coach's influence between age groups</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1. I have a good relationship with my coach.	13	39	4,03
	14	27	4,00
	15	25	3,56
	Total	91	3,89
2. My coach has a negative attitude toward me.	13	39	1,72
	14	27	1,89
	15	25	2,04
	Total	91	1,86
3. I disagree with the decision of my coach.	13	39	1,82
	14	27	2,22
	15	25	2,28
	Total	91	2,07
4. My coach doesn't support me after I have performed poorly.	13	39	2,41
	14	27	2,63
	15	25	2,44
	Total	91	2,48
6. My coach does not provide enough encouragement for me.	13	39	2,00
	14	27	2,07
	15	25	1,72
	Total	91	1,95
7. My coach needs to praise me more often.	13	39	2,13
	14	27	2,44
	15	25	2,20
	Total	91	2,24
8. I feel left out or isolated from my coach.	13	39	2,10
	14	27	2,37
	15	25	2,04
	Total	91	2,16
11. My coach is not demanding enough with me.	13	39	1,92
	14	27	2,15
	15	25	1,96
	Total	91	2,00
13. My coach puts too much pressure on me.	13	39	1,54
	14	27	1,96
	15	25	1,80
	Total	91	1,74

During puberty it is common to start arguing with authorities. Also, during those ages adolescents are more likely to listen to their coach than their parents. Figure 8.1 demonstrates that the older participants, the more likely they were to disagree with their parents. In the second figure (Figure 8.2) the same question was asked in relation to a coach, where the trend is similar, but the amount of disagreement is lower. The most significant difference between coach and parents was noted for participants 13 years of age.

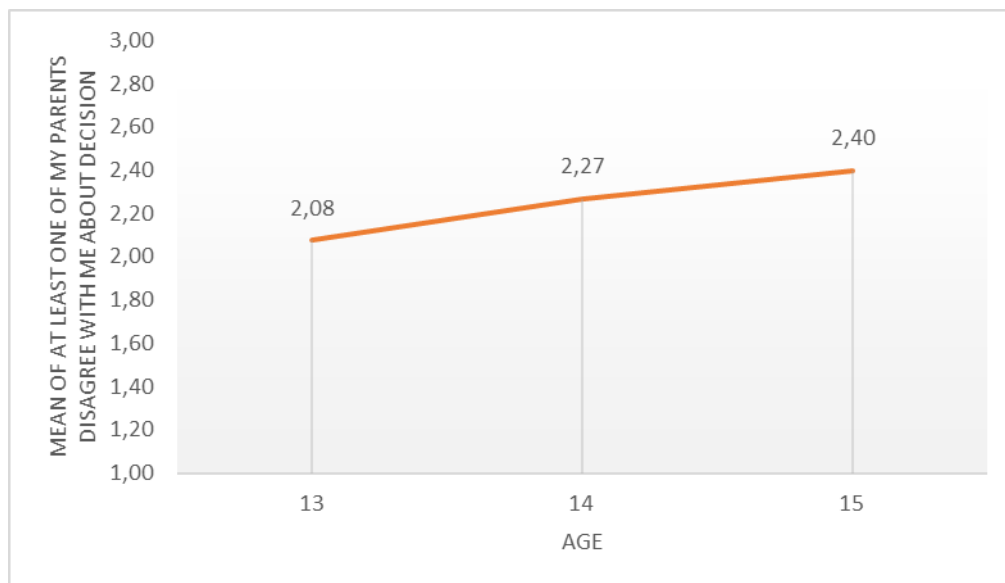


FIGURE 8.1. Age difference in disagreeing with parents.

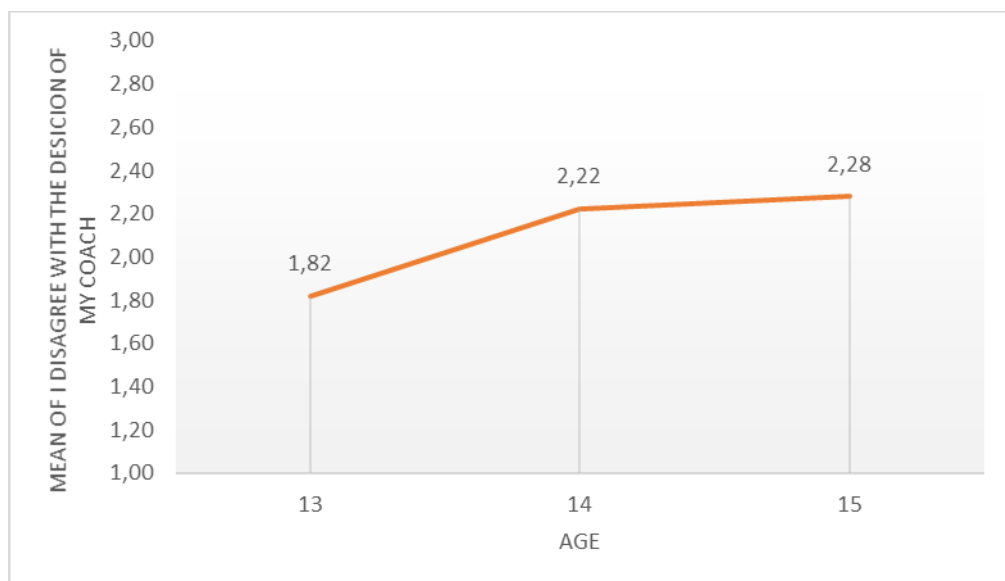


FIGURE 8.2. Age difference in disagreeing about decision with coach.

Age did not have statistical significance on the influence of teammates on an athlete's motivation. Over all when comparing with parental support and coaches support the teammates were identified as more negative influencers, but not significantly. Some questions followed a pattern: the older participants were the more negative the answer was. The questions that followed that pattern were "*Many of my teammates don't support me after I have performed poorly*", "*My teammates need to praise me more often.*", "*I consistently disagree with decisions of my teammates during competition and training.*", "*Many of my teammates interfere with my athletic performance during competition.*". Table 12 evaluates the influence of teammates on an athlete based on age.

TABLE 12. Difference between age groups in teammates influence.

<b>Teammates influence between age groups</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1. Many of teammates don't support me after I have performed poorly.	13	39	2,10
	14	26	2,27
	15	25	2,60
	Total	90	2,29
2. Many of teammates doesn't provide enough encouragement.	13	39	2,00
	14	26	1,92
	15	25	2,52
	Total	90	2,12
3. Many of my teammates puts too much pressure on me.	13	39	1,69
	14	26	2,12
	15	25	1,76
	Total	90	1,83
4. My teammates needs to praise me more often.	13	39	2,38
	14	26	2,85
	15	25	3,04
	Total	90	2,70
6. I consistently disagree with decisions of my teammates during competition and training.	13	39	1,28
	14	26	1,38
	15	25	1,68
	Total	90	1,42
7. Many of my teammates are not competitive enough for me.	13	39	1,62
	14	26	1,88
	15	25	2,32
	Total	90	1,89
8. Many of my teammates are not team players.	13	39	1,82
	14	26	1,62
	15	25	2,36
	Total	90	1,91
10. Many of my teammates have negative attitude toward me.	13	39	1,64
	14	26	1,46
	15	25	1,84
	Total	90	1,64
12. Many of my teammates interferes with my athletic performance during competition.	13	39	1,67
	14	26	2,15
	15	25	2,56
	Total	90	2,06

#### 6.4. Internal and external influencers of motivation on participation based on amount of trainings

Differences between results depending on amount of trainings per week and competition level were examined to see if that has influence on answers. Adolescents may get bored by trainings if there are too many trainings per week or during puberty they might start feeling that there is too much going on at once and they feel overwhelmed. The amount of training in a sport has been of recent interest in the last several years. Respected junior football coach, Abdi Mohamed stated in Aamulehti that Finns train too much. A Spanish coach who had visited Finland a few years ago said, “with the amount of trainings you have in Finland you should be the best team in the world” (Luotola, 2017).

When comparing the amount of trainings in the questions for reason for playing, the only significant difference by using One-way ANOVA was found in the question “*I think I can succeed in football*”  $p = 0.003$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). This can be an obvious answer because those who train only 1-2 times a week might not even think about succeeding in football. Football may just a second hobby for them. Overall the reasons for playing had some differences when comparing the amount of trainings. The most important factor for players who train more than four times per week was: “*The pleasure I feel, when I get to develop my abilities.*” (mean = 4.3). The most important factor for players who train 3-4 times per week was: “*The pleasure I feel, when I learn new things.*” (mean = 4.3). The most important factor for players who train 1-2 times per week was: “*Because it is important to play sports, if you want to stay in good condition*” (mean = 4.1). The least important factor for those who train 3-4 times per week (mean 2.5) or more than 4 times per week (mean = 2.5) was “*Because people around me think that it is important to stay healthy*” and for those who train 1-2 times per week (mean = 2.6) “*To show others how good I am in sports*”.

When looking at the questions related to more controlled motivation, the amount of trainings had no certain pattern in answers. The answers varied between questions. One significant finding was that the mean for the participants who train 1-2 times per week in the question “*...Because people around me think that it is important to stay healthy*” was greater than three. This means that they agree with the statement more. However, as

mentioned before the question “*It is important to play sports, if you want to stay in good condition.*” played a large role in the reason for playing football. All the other answers were less than three (3 = neutral). Therefore, the participants did not find it as important to please others when playing football. Figures 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3 present the data collected identifying controlled motivation in relation to number of trainings per week.

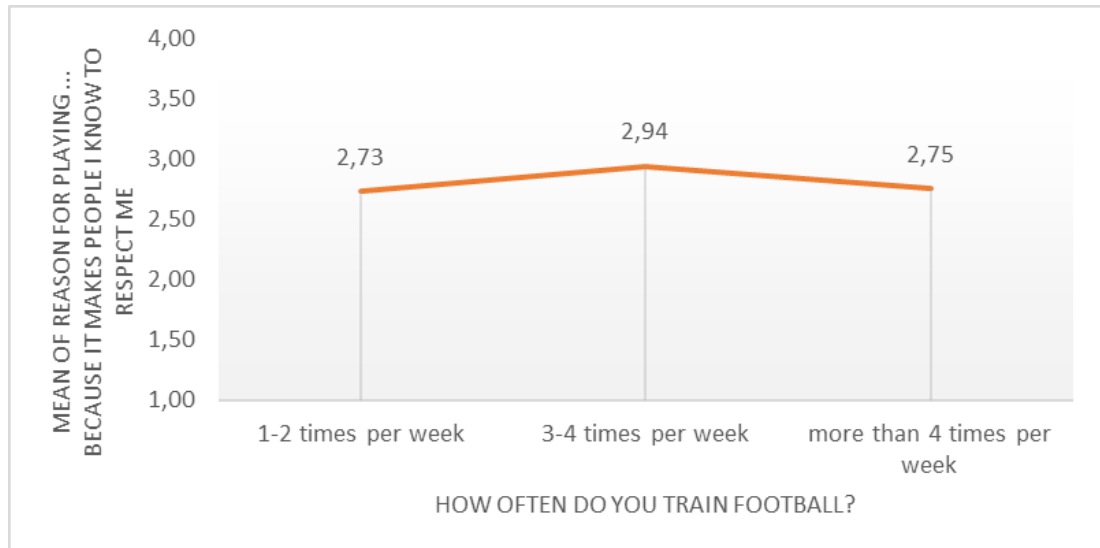


FIGURE 9.1. Difference in training amounts in Mean of reason why I play football ... because it makes people I know to respect me.

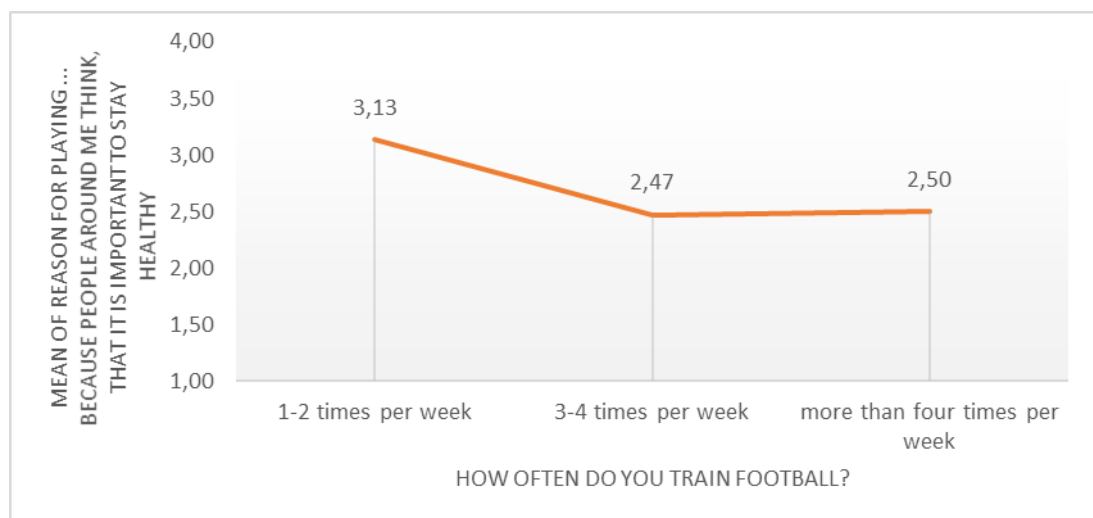


FIGURE 9.2. Difference in training amounts Mean of reason why I play football ... Because people around me think that it is important to stay healthy.



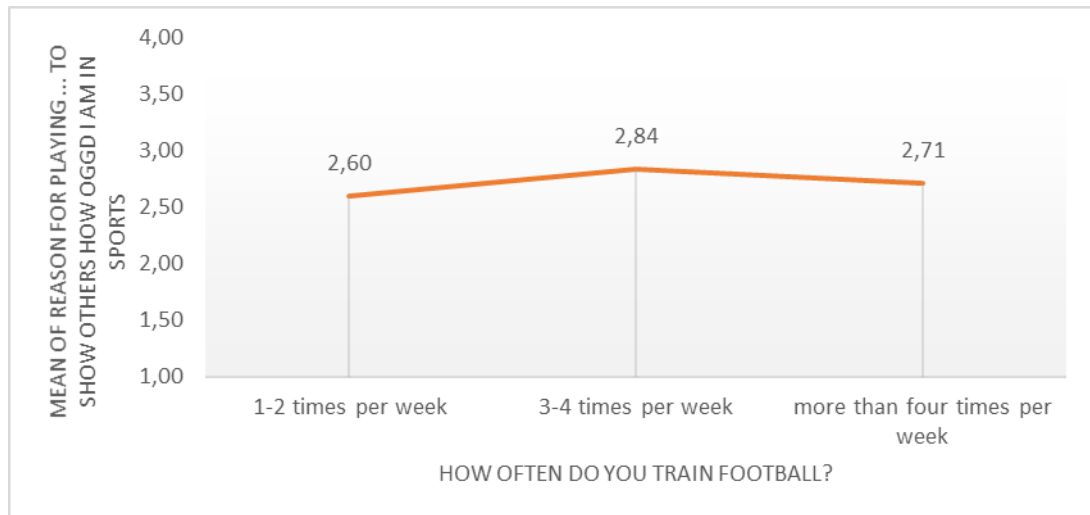


FIGURE 9.3. Difference in training amounts in Mean of reason why I play football ... To show others how good I am in sports.

There were no statically significant differences between the number of trainings when evaluating what athletes feel makes them most successful. Players who trained more during a week felt more successful when accomplishing their goals, whereas those who trained less during a week found it more important to do everything as well as they are capable off. The statement “*I succeed in something than I have not been able to do before*” had the highest mean for those who train 3-4 times per week (mean = 4.63) or more than four times per week (mean = 4.68). But for those who train 1-2 times per week the highest mean was in the statement “*I do everything as well as I am capable off*” (mean = 4.33).

There were no significant differences in the answers based on the number of trainings per week when looking at parental influence. However, some differences between the groups were found. The participants who trained 1-2 times per week agreed most with the statements: “*At least one of my family members needs to praise me more often.*” (mean = 3), “*At least one of my family members is too overprotective.*” (mean =2.8), “*At least one of my family members pressure me to participate in a sport when I don’t want to participate.*” (mean 2.53) and “*At least one of my family members disagree with me about my decisions.*” (mean 2.53). Participants who train 3-4 times a week or more than 4 times per week agreed most with the same statements as those participants training 1-2 times per week. Even though most agreed were the same, the means were lower

compared to participants training 1-2 per week. One difference in answers was in the question “*At least one of my family members is too demanding with me*”. Participants who trained more often agreed more with the statement “*At least one of my family members is too demanding with me.*” than those who trained less. The statements, that were the most significant, of parental influence on sport participation can be seen divided by the amount of trainings in table 13.

TABLE 13. Difference in parents influence between the amount of trainings.

<b>Parents influence between amount of trainings</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1. At least one of my family members needs to praise me more often.	1-2 / week	15	3,00
	3-4 / week	48	2,56
	more than 4 / week	27	2,52
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>2,62</b>
3. I don't get enough encouragement from my family members	1-2 / week	15	2,27
	3-4 / week	48	1,56
	more than 4 / week	27	1,70
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>1,72</b>
4. At least one of my family members doesn't support me after I have performed poorly.	1-2 / week	15	2,33
	3-4 / week	48	1,75
	more than 4 / week	27	1,89
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>1,89</b>
5. At least one of my family members pressures me to participate in a sport when I don't want to participate.	1-2 / week	15	2,53
	3-4 / week	48	1,88
	more than 4 / week	27	2,00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>2,02</b>
6. At least one of my family members is too overprotective.	1-2 / week	15	2,80
	3-4 / week	48	2,27
	more than 4 / week	27	2,33
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>2,38</b>
7. At least one of my family members disagree with me about my decisions.	1-2 / week	15	2,53
	3-4 / week	48	2,04
	more than 4 / week	27	2,37
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>2,22</b>
8. At least one of my family members is too demanding with me.	1-2 / week	15	2,47
	3-4 / week	48	1,77
	more than 4 / week	27	2,00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>1,96</b>
9. At least one of my family members puts too much pressure on me.	1-2 / week	15	2,00
	3-4 / week	48	1,83
	more than 4 / week	27	1,96
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>1,90</b>
12. At least one of my family members makes rude or embarrassing comments about me.	1-2 / week	15	1,87
	3-4 / week	48	1,25
	more than 4 / week	27	1,30
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>1,37</b>

This study found all participants had a good relationship with their coach. Those who train 1-2 times per week, mean = 3.7, those who train 3-4 times per week, mean= 4.0, and those who train more than four times per week, mean = 3.7. Players who train more than four times per week were more likely to disagree with the decision of the coach with a mean score of 2.5 whereas the mean for 1-2 trainings per week was 2.0 and 1.8 for those who train 3-4 times per week. Of the 13 questions within this section eight questions identified participants who train 3-4 times per week have the best relationship with their coach. Players who train 1-2 times per week agreed more with the statement “*My coach puts too much pressure on me.*” than the players who trained more. The mean for the players training 1-2 times per week was mean = 2.2, for the players training 3-4 times per week mean = 1.6, and more than four times per week mean = 1.8. The statements, that are the most significant, related to the coach’s influence on sport participation divided into groups based on the amount of trainings per week is presented in table 14.

TABLE 14. Difference in coach's influence between number of trainings per week.

<b>Coach's influence between the amount of trainings</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1. I have a good relationship with my coach.	1-2 / week	15	3,73
	3-4 / week	48	4,06
	more than 4 / week	28	3,68
	<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>3,89</b>
3. I disagree with the decision of my coach.	1-2 / week	15	2,07
	3-4 / week	48	1,81
	more than 4 / week	28	2,50
	<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>2,07</b>
4. My coach doesn't support me after I have performed poorly.	1-2 / week	15	2,53
	3-4 / week	48	2,54
	more than 4 / week	28	2,36
	<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>2,48</b>
5. I don't like training with my coach.	1-2 / week	15	1,87
	3-4 / week	48	1,75
	more than 4 / week	28	2,21
	<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>1,91</b>
6. My coach doesn't provide enough encouragement for me.	1-2 / week	15	1,80
	3-4 / week	48	1,88
	more than 4 / week	28	2,14
	<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>1,95</b>
7. My coach needs to praise me more often.	1-2 / week	15	2,00
	3-4 / week	48	2,15
	more than 4 / week	28	2,54
	<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>2,24</b>
9. My coach has me do things that could result me being injured or worsen existing injuries.	1-2 / week	15	1,60
	3-4 / week	48	1,27
	more than 4 / week	28	1,68
	<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>1,45</b>
11. My coach is not demanding enough with me.	1-2 / week	15	2,27
	3-4 / week	48	1,79
	more than 4 / week	28	2,21
	<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>2,00</b>
13. My coach puts too much pressure on me.	1-2 / week	15	2,20
	3-4 / week	48	1,58
	more than 4 / week	28	1,75
	<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>1,74</b>

Adolescents during puberty often want to be accepted by their peers and teammates. There were no significant differences in the answers of the impact of their teammates when comparing the amount of trainings per week. However, there were some differences. The participants who train more than four times a week do not need as much praising from their teammates (mean = 2.3) as the players who train 1-2 (mean 2.9) or 3-4 (mean = 2.8) times per week. Also, players who train 1-2 times per week agreed more with the statement *“Many of my teammates put too much pressure on me.”* (mean = 2.4) than the players who trained more (3-4 times mean = 1.7. and more than four times mean = 1.8). Furthermore, it can be seen, that those who train 1-2 times per week have a lack of support from their teammates compared to those players who train 3-4 times per week or more than four times per week. Players who trained 1-2 times per week tended to agree more with statements such as *“Many of teammates don’t provide enough encouragement.”*, *“Many of my teammates are not team players.”*, *“My teammates say things that make me feel guilty.”*, *“Many of my teammates have negative attitudes toward me.”* and *“Many of my teammates interfere with my athletic performance during competition.”*. Nevertheless, again all the means were less than three indicating players have a good relationship with their teammates. Almost all the statements had answers which varied between “1 = strongly disagree” to “5 = strongly agree”. One exception was the statement *“I consistently disagree with decisions of my teammates during competition and training.”* where all participants who trained 3-4 times gave an answer 3 or below, indicating no one agreed with the statement. The statements, that are the most significant, related to the teammates’ influence on sport participation divided in groups by the number of trainings per week can be seen in table 15.

TABLE 15. Difference in teammates influence between the amount of trainings.

<b>Teammates influence between the amount of trainings</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	
1. Many of teammates don't support me after I have performed poorly.	1-2 / week	14	2,64
	3-4 / week	48	2,44
	more than 4 / week	28	1,86
	Total	90	2,29
2. Many of teammates don't provide enough encouragement.	1-2 / week	14	2,64
	3-4 / week	48	2,02
	more than 4 / week	28	2,04
	Total	90	2,12
3. Many of my teammates put too much pressure on me.	1-2 / week	14	2,43
	3-4 / week	48	1,71
	more than 4 / week	28	1,75
	Total	90	1,83
4. My teammates need to praise me more often.	1-2 / week	14	2,93
	3-4 / week	48	2,81
	more than 4 / week	28	2,39
	Total	90	2,70
6. I consistently disagree with decisions of my teammates during competition and training.	1-2 / week	14	1,79
	3-4 / week	48	1,23
	more than 4 / week	28	1,57
	Total	90	1,42
8. Many of my teammates are not team players.	1-2 / week	14	2,36
	3-4 / week	48	1,71
	more than 4 / week	28	2,04
	Total	90	1,91
9. My teammates say things that make me feel guilty.	1-2 / week	14	1,93
	3-4 / week	48	1,81
	more than 4 / week	28	1,86
	Total	90	1,84
10. Many of my teammates have negative attitude toward me.	1-2 / week	14	2,29
	3-4 / week	48	1,52
	more than 4 / week	28	1,54
	Total	90	1,64
12. Many of my teammates interferes with my athletic performance during competition.	1-2 / week	14	2,36
	3-4 / week	48	1,83
	more than 4 / week	28	2,29
	Total	90	2,06

## 6.5. Reason to almost dropout

The final questions in this study asked if the players had thought of quitting football. Of all participants, 55 % answered “yes”. At the age of 15 the number was already 70 %. It is alarming that 50 % of female football athletes’ dropout of football during those years and of the remaining players, another 50 % are thinking of dropping out. The next open-ended question asked for reasons why. There were many different reasons identified for thinking about quitting football as several participants offered two or more reasons behind the potential to no longer continue to play football. Some of the answers were repeated more often than others. For example, lack of motivation was mentioned in 11 out of 46 answers, (24 %). Some of the responses are listed below:

- *Coaching problems, trips, motivation, best friends quit. (“Valmennus ongelmat, matkat, motivaatio, parhaimmat kaverit lopetti.”)*
- *Sometimes I feel that I am not good enough and I do not learn anything, sometimes also a lack of motivation. But you need to work to achieve dreams and if you want to improve yourself you need to train in ways according to that and this is what I will do in the future. (“Joskus tuntu, että en oo riittävän hyvä enkä opi mitään, ollu joskus myös motivaation puutetta. Mut unelmien eteen pitää tehdä töitä ja jos halua kehittyä ja pärjätä ni pitää harjotella sen mukaisesti ja niin ainakin mä aijon tehdä jatkossa.”)*

Coaching was mentioned ten times (22 %). Some of comments related to coaches were very critical while some just said that they do not like the coach. Especially, in this section it was noticed that the participants knew the author and it had a small influence on the answers.

- *Because before there was a coach who did not encourage enough and for that reason I was not very motivated. (“Koska aiemmin oli vähemmän tsemppaava valmentaja ja en siksi ollut kovin motivoitunut”)*
- *My coaches forget me sometimes and I feel I am failing because none of them say anything even though I succeeded in something. (“Valmentajat unohtavat minut joskus ja koen epäonnistuvani kun heistä kukaan ei yleensä sano mitään hyvää vaikka onnistunkin.”)*
- *Coaches sometimes criticize face to face and they are not very nice, that lowers motivation and interests towards football. (“Valmentajat joskus haukkuvat päin*



*naamaa eivätkä muutenkaan ole erityisen kivoja/mukavia joka myös laskee motivaation ja kiinnostuksen jalkapalloon.”)*

Friends and the team were mentioned nine times (20 %). The reasons included that the athlete's best friends quit; that the team has been separated into different teams; or the atmosphere on the team was not good enough.

- *Because of a leg injury, and also because it was not good to be on the team, because the team spirit was not as it should be always in a team and in addition to that I felt lonely on the team. (“Jalan takia ja myös sen takia, että joukkueessa ei ole ollut hyvä olla, koska ei ollut sellaista yhteishenkeä mitä joukkueessa aina pitäisi olla ja lisäksi tunsin olevani yksinäinen joukkueessa”)*
- *Because a few years ago I did not have any friends on the team and another hobby (name of the hobby has been deleted to ensure anonymity) took too much time. (“Koska muutama vuosi sitten minulla ei ollut kavereita jalkapallossa ja toinen harrastus (harrastuksen nimi poistettu nimettömyyden varmistamiseksi) vei liikaa aikaa”)*

Having different hobbies was mentioned five times (11 %) while injury was mentioned six times (13 %).

- *Due to many injuries and continuing injuries. For example, groins and knees. (“Monien loukkaantumisten ja vammojen jatkumisen takia. Esim. nivuset ja polvet.”)*
- *Another hobby (name of the hobby has been deleted to ensure anonymity) is my main interest and I should focus on it more. (“Toinen harrastus (harrastuksen nimi poistettu nimettömyyden varmistamiseksi) on päälajini, ja pitäisi keskittyä siihen enemmän.”)*

Also, many players noted having problems with self-confidence due to teammates, coaches or themselves. Open-ended answers also included answers, where participants stated they continued with the sport due to the motivation of the sport.

All the answers were given in Finnish and translated to English by the author. The Finnish answer is in parenthesis.

## 6.6. Summary

The answer rate was acceptable, and the background, age, and level of competition varied well between participants. The participants provided comprehensive answers for all questions. Overall, the answers gave a clear picture of the status of the internal and external motivators of playing football. No clear negative aspects were found.

Participants were all still playing football. They saw themselves being physically in good shape and had a positive self-image. Players also enjoyed playing football and almost all the players seemed to have good self-esteem, seeing themselves as good footballers. These answers suggest that participants of this study have good internal motivation.

The external factors that influence their motivation was generally good. Overall the answers were positive and gave a feeling that the influence of parents, coaches and teammates was a positive influence. The question that rose above others being more negative was support from significant others. In all the age groups the most agreed statement was *“My teammates/parents/coach needs to praise me more often.”* In figure 10, there is the average of other answers compared to answers of the statement of praise more often.

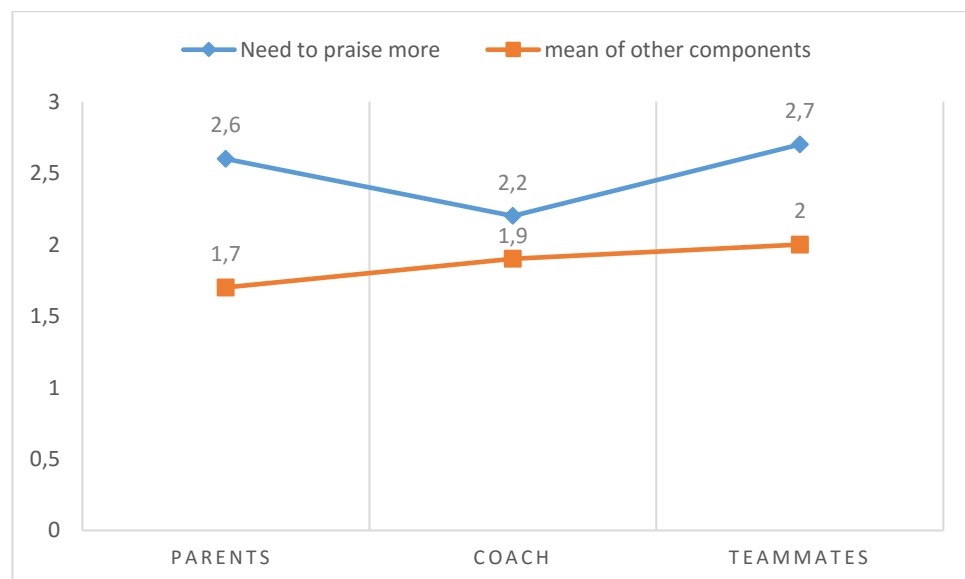


FIGURE 10. Need to praise more vs. other components.

When looking at differences between age groups, not many significant differences were found. At the age of 14, the participants felt they received less support from people around them. They also felt that their parents are putting too much pressure on them. As players age, it was identified that it became more important to please others, especially their coach. They were also agreeing with their coach more than with other significant others (parents or teammates), concluding that the role of coach increases as the players age.

The number of trainings per week had more significant differences between answers. The internal motivators varied depending on the age groups. Players who trained more were more likely to set goals whereas players who trained less were satisfied when they gave their best at practice. Furthermore, those who trained more did not feel that they would need encouragement from their teammates, compared to those who trained less who stated support from teammates was more appreciated. The reason behind this is likely related to the fact that those who trained more played in more competitive levels and were personally more motivated with football.

## 7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The key word to keep adolescents in sport longer is motivation. Players who know what they want, who want to succeed, and who are ready to face any possible obstacle to reach their goals usually have self-driven motivation. Other players may need help staying motivated, especially during puberty. When motivating people, particularly during adolescence, it is important to remember that adolescents are motivated by different factors based on their personality. Some are more driven by external influencers and some by internal influencers. The current study did not give any clear negative remarks that could be resolved easily. However, there are many different steps that can be taken into consideration when coaching young female athletes. There were not clear differences between participants from different age groups or with the level of competition of athletes.

All the participants in this study were still participating in football. They saw themselves athletic and thought that they are good at sports. However, 55 % of them had gone through thought about quitting. They go through similar thoughts as their peers who have quit football. The difference is that they are motivated enough to not withdraw from sport. The results of the study showed that the players who participated in the study had good self-esteem, which has possibly helped them to continue with football even though they have thought about quitting. To keep youth motivated to remain in sport, it would be important to remind these youth that it is normal for their age and during puberty to face difficulties. They will need to understand, that it is natural to have setbacks, not being able to do something that they were before or become slower. It is similarly important to understand that even though a player has a setback in one area of football she might be able to excel in another. Players also need to understand that it is normal during adolescence to feel tired and overwhelmed. It is imperative that coaches and parents encourage their athletes to discuss their fears and doubts with a positive role model.

During adolescence youth will need more support from people around them than they may have needed before. One of the biggest topics that rose during the study was the matter of support. The athletes need more support from their parents, coaches and teammates. Support does not only mean praise player after they have excelled but also

help them to stay motivated when they have doubts. Parents need to be interested and involved in their child's sport participation and not leave them alone with the sport. Coaches play a key role in helping youth to understand their own strengths. Particularly during adolescence, females become more self-aware, more critical toward herself, and may have difficulty identifying her own personal strengths. They want to succeed in everything. When they compare themselves to their peers and cannot beat them in everything this may cause feelings of doubt or that they are not good enough.

In the quantitative questions completed by this study, the coach's role did not appear to be significantly different than the role of parents or teammates in relation to motivation. However, in the open-ended questions coaches' effect on youth participation seemed to have a bigger influence. Players' motivation has dropped because of lack of support or negative feedback from a coach. This study strengthens previous studies about coaches' negative attitude driving dropout rates. A key component to being motivated is the feeling that an athlete is a good player, she learns new tricks, and she can improve herself as a player. It is important that players themselves understand the changes they go through but even more important would be that the coach understands them as well. Coaches need to know that coaching girls is different than coaching boys, especially during adolescence. Coaches cannot just dismiss the difficulties that girls are facing during puberty. It is very important that coaches try to find and emphasize the strengths that each athlete has. During puberty players are also more likely to listen to their coach than their parents, therefore, how a coach interacts with a player in trainings plays a huge role the one's motivation to continue with the sport.

The differences between age groups and the amount of trainings per week are mostly related to coaching. Older players are more willing to have competitions during practices and compete against each other compared to younger players. Different types of competitions at practice can motivate them more. With competitions it is important that there is variation between the competitions to allow all players on the team to succeed in them. For younger players learning new tricks or skills is more important, hence they are more willing to compete against themselves.

The parents' role in helping the athletes to control time and stress is valuable. Over the decades one of the main reasons for girls to dropout is that they feel that they are too

busy. They start to become much more independent and taking care of their school and hobbies for themselves. Although adolescents appear as they want to be more independent, they do not want to be left entirely alone. They want their parents to be interested in their trainings and their games, and occasionally help with time management to give them a ride to or from practice. However, it is important to remember that this does not mean that parents should force them to go trainings or to be overprotective. The study showed that 21 % of participants either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement: “*At least one of my parents is overprotective*”. For adolescents it is important that they have the opportunity to make their own decisions. The parents’ role is to help them to understand why they would want to go trainings, and to be present when their children need help.

Even though, it has been identified a major contributing factor to quitting was the fact that many of a child’s friends are no longer in the same team, this study showed some differing results. Those who had changed their team during past the three years seemed to enjoy football more than those who were still playing on the same team. Also, teammates seemed to have the least positive influence on players’ performance, however, their influence for the participants was still positive. Therefore, more important than emphasizing friends quitting would be to emphasize the possibility of making new friends. It may also be important to remind athletes that even though the team rosters may change, new players may join another team and create a new experience and talent level for the team.

Based on this research, the information can be used to help motivate young female players during adolescence and puberty to continue to pursue athletics.

### **7.1. Reliability and validity of the study**

Surveys give possibilities to reach greater number of responses, it is effective to analyze (Hirsjärvi et al., 2004). In this study there were 94 responses, but answer rate was only 15 %. The conduct more comprehensive study, the amount of responses need to be higher. Also, the questionnaire could be distributed all over in Finland instead of using only one area to conduct more valuable study.

When using online questionnaire there cannot be certainty that the responder is truthful when giving answers. The responders may give false answers, or they may not focus on the question and miss understand them. However, all the parts of the questionnaire were used in different studies before, which increases the reliability and validity. Also, before conducting this study, a pilot study was done. The pilot study was used to ensure that they study is suitable for the target participants.

Some of the participants also may know the author while filling out the questionnaire. This may have affected the answer rate as well as on the responses given.

## **7.2. Evaluation of the study**

Conducting this research has widen my perspective about girls' football. I gained larger understanding of the difficulties during puberty and how significant other around athletes can help them to stay motivated. Hence, it was important to include the influence of all significant others to this study, even though it has not been done before in studies related to youth sport participation.

Beginning of this study I thought that quantitative online questionnaire is the best way to get responses, because youth are not willing to spend much time filling out a questionnaire. However, looking the responses of the one open-ended question in the questionnaire, for future studies the structure of the study could be altered as more heavily qualitative based study to identify girls' internal motivators. Many questions that would need to be studied may trigger a more of an emotional response that could be easier to express by using interview or open-ended questions than with a quantitative study.

For future, it would be also interesting to study the differences between team sport players and individual athletes, to determine if the same information, can be applied to individual sports.

In conclusion the concept of sports dropout is an area of high interest and further research is warranted. While dropout of sports is inevitable, taking key steps in helping female athletes understand the changes they may be experiencing through puberty, and

providing ongoing support from parents, coaches and teammates may help in reducing the dropout rate of female football players in Finland.



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## APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

### 1. Taustatiedot

Rengasta parhaiten sopiva vaihtoehto:

Ikä	13	14	15
Kuinka monta vuotta olet harrastanut jalkapalloa?			
Oletko vaihtanut joukkuetta viimeisen kolmen vuoden aikana?	Kyllä	En	
Missä sarjassa joukkueesi pelaa?			
Harrastatko muuta urheilua seurassa?	Kyllä	En	
Kuinka usein harjoittelet jalkapalloa?	1-2 /vko	3-4/vko	
Oletko harkinnut lopettavasi jalkapallon?	Kyllä	En	useammin kuin 4 krt/vko
Jos kyllä, mikä sai sinut jatkamaan?			

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### 2. Jalkapallosta nauttiminen

1. Täysin eri mieltä
2. Jokseenkin eri mieltä
3. En osaa sanoa
4. Jokseenkin samaa mieltä
5. Täysin samaa mieltä

1.	Pidän jalkapallosta	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Jalkapallo on hauskaa	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Jalkapalloharjoitukset tuovat minulle iloa	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Nautin jalkapallosta	1	2	3	4	5

### 3. Motivaatio jalkapallon harrastamiseen

Syy miksi harrastan jalkapalloa..

1. Täysin eri mieltä
2. Jokseenkin eri mieltä
3. En osaa sanoa
4. Jokseenkin samaa mieltä
5. Täysin samaa mieltä

1	Mielihyvän takia jota saan jännittävistä kokemuksista	1	2	3	4	5
2	Mielihyvän takia jota tunnen, kun opin uusia asioita	1	2	3	4	5
3	Minulla oli aikaisemmin hyviä syitä harrastaa, mutta mietin pitäisikö minun enää jatkaa	1	2	3	4	5
4	Mielihyvää jota tunnen, kun löydän uusia harjoittelutapoja	1	2	3	4	5
5	Uskon, että pystyn menestymään jalkapallossa	1	2	3	4	5
6	Koska se saa minulle tutut ihmiset arvostamaan minua	1	2	3	4	5
7	Koska se on mielestäni yksi parhaista tavoista tavata ihmisiä	1	2	3	4	5
8	Koska on todella tarpeellista harrastaa urheilua jos haluaa pysyä kunnossa	1	2	3	4	5
9	Koska se auttaa minua kehittymään myös muilla elämäni osa-alueilla	1	2	3	4	5
10	Jännityksestä jota tunnen, kun osallistun peliin ja/tai harjoituksiin	1	2	3	4	5
11	Koska minun täytyy harrastaa urheilua, jotta voin olla tyytyväinen itseeni	1	2	3	4	5
12	Tyytyväisyydestä, jota koen, kun pääsen kehittämään kykyjäni	1	2	3	4	5
13	Koska ihmiset ympärilläni ajattelevat, että on tärkeää pysyä hyvässä kunnossa	1	2	3	4	5
14	Voimakkaiden tunteiden takia joita tunnen, kun harrastan jotakin mistä pidin	1	2	3	4	5
15	Mielihyvää jota tunnen vaikean tehtävän suorittamisen jälkeen	1	2	3	4	5
16	Näyttääkseni muille kuinka hyvä olen urheilussa	1	2	3	4	5
17	Koska se on yksi parhaista tavoista ylläpitää kaverisuhteita	1	2	3	4	5
24	Koska pidän tunteesta olla täysin syventynyt toimintaan	1	2	3	4	5

#### 4. Millainen olet verrattuna ikäisiisi tyttöihin.

1.	Osaan vähän liikunnassa	1	2	3	4	5	Olen taitava liikunnassa
2.	Olen kömpelö	1	2	3	4	5	Olen ketterä
3.	Olen jäykkä	1	2	3	4	5	Olen notkea
4.	Väsyn helposti liikunnassa	1	2	3	4	5	Olen kestävä
5.	Olen hidas	1	2	3	4	5	Olen nopea
6.	Olen heikko	1	2	3	4	5	Olen voimakas
7.	Olen tyytymätön ulkonäkööni	1	2	3	4	5	Olen tyytyväinen ulkonäkööni
8.	Olen liian lyhyt	1	2	3	4	5	Olen liian pitkä
9.	Olen liian laiha	1	2	3	4	5	Olen liian lihava
10.	Olen huono jalkapallossa	1	2	3	4	5	Olen hyvä jalkapallossa

#### 5. Menestykseen vaikutus

Kun urheilen, tunnen itseni onnistuneimmaksi silloin kun...

1. Täysin eri mieltä
2. Jokseenkin eri mieltä
3. En osaa sanoa
4. Jokseenkin samaa mieltä
5. Täysin samaa mieltä

1	Voitin toiset	1	2	3	4	5
2	Yritin kovasti	1	2	3	4	5
3	Huomasin todella kehittyväni	1	2	3	4	5
4	Pärjäsin paremmin kuin toiset	1	2	3	4	5
5	Onnistuin sellaisessa, mitä en ollut aikaisemmin osannut	1	2	3	4	5
6	Pärjäsin sellaisessa asiassa, mitä toiset eivät osanneet	1	2	3	4	5
7	Tein kaiken parhaan kykyni mukaan	1	2	3	4	5
8	Saavutin itselleni asettamani tavoitteen	1	2	3	4	5

## 6. Ulkopuolisten tekijöiden vaikutus

1. Täysin eri mieltä
2. Jokseenkin eri mieltä
3. En osaa sanoa
4. Jokseenkin samaa mieltä
5. Täysin samaa mieltä

1	Vanhempani vaikuttavat positiivisesti urheilusuoritukseeni	1	2	3	4	5
2	Valmentajani vaikuttavat positiivisesti urheilusuoritukseeni	1	2	3	4	5
3	Joukkuekaverini vaikuttavat positiivisesti urheilusuoritukseen	1	2	3	4	5

### 6.1. Vanhempien vaikutus

1. Täysin eri mieltä
2. Jokseenkin eri mieltä
3. En osaa sanoa
4. Jokseenkin samaa mieltä
5. Täysin samaa mieltä

1	Vähintään toisen vanhemmistani pitää kehua minua useammin.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Vähintään toista vanhemmistani ei kiinnosta harrastukseni.	1	2	3	4	5
3	En saa tarpeeksi kannustusta vanhemmilltani.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Vähintään toinen vanhemmistani ei kannusta minua huonon esityksen jälkeen.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Vähintään toinen vanhemmistani painostaa minua harjoitukseeni vaikka en haluaisi.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Vähintään toinen vanhemmistani on ylisuojeleva.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Vähintään toinen vanhemmistani on eri mieltä päätöksieni kanssa.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Vähintään toinen vanhemmistani on liian vaativa minua kohtaan.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Vähintään toinen vanhemmistani aiheuttaa minulle liikaa paineita	1	2	3	4	5
10	Vähintään toinen vanhemmistani painostaa minua tekemään asioita, jotka saattavat johtaa loukkaantumiseen tai pahentaa sen hetkistä loukkaantumista.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Vähintään toinen vanhemmistani painostaa minua lopettamaan.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Vähintään toinen vanhemmistani sanoo hävettäviä tai pahoja kommentteja minusta	1	2	3	4	5
13	Vähintään toisella vanhemmistani on koko ajan negatiivinen asenne minuun.	1	2	3	4	5



## 6.2. Valmentajan vaikutus

1. Täysin eri mieltä
2. Jokseenkin eri mieltä
3. En osaa sanoa
4. Jokseenkin samaa mieltä
5. Täysin samaa mieltä

1	Minulla on hyvä suhde valmentajaani.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Valmentajalla on negatiivinen asenne minua kohtaan.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Olen erimieltä päätöksistä valmentajani kanssa.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Valmentajani ei kannusta minua huonon suorituksen jälkeen.	1	2	3	4	5
5	En pidä harjoittelusta valmentajani kanssa.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Valmentajani ei luo minuun tarpeeksi uskoa.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Valmentajani pitäisi kannustaa minua useammin.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Valmentajani ei ota minua huomioon tarpeeksi hyvin.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Valmentajani pakottaa minua tekemään asioita, joiden johdosta saatan loukkaantua tai pahentaa jo olemassa olevaa loukkaantumista.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Valmentajani ei kannusta joukkuepelaamiseen.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Valmentajani ei vaadi minulta tarpeeksi.	1	2	3	4	5
12	En täytä valmentajani odotuksia.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Valmentajani asettaa minulle liikaa paineita.	1	2	3	4	5

### 6.3. Joukkuekavereiden vaikutus

1. Täysin eri mieltä
2. Jokseenkin eri mieltä
3. En osaa sanoa
4. Jokseenkin samaa mieltä
5. Täysin samaa mieltä

1	Useat joukkuekavereistani ei kannusta minua huonon suorituksen jälkeen.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Useat joukkuekavereistani ei luo minuun tarpeeksi uskoa.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Useat joukkuekavereistani luo minulle liikaa paineita.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Joukkuekaverini voisi kannustaa minua useammin	1	2	3	4	5
5	Olen läheisissä välissä vain harvojen joukkuekavereideni kanssa	1	2	3	4	5
6	Olen jatkuvasti erimieltä joukkuekavereideni kanssa harjoituksissa tai peleissä.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Useat joukkuekavereistani ei ole tarpeeksi kilpailukykyinen mielestäni.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Useat joukkuekavereistani ei ole joukkuepelaajia.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Joukkuekaverini sanovat asioita, jotka saavat minun tuntemaan syyllisyyttä.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Useilla joukkuekavereistani on negatiivinen asenne minua kohtaan.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Vähintään yksi joukkuekavereistani kannustaa minua juomaan alkoholia.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Useat joukkuekavereistani puuttuvat suoritukseeni pelin aikana	1	2	3	4	5

**7. Oletko harkinnut joskus lopettavasi jalkapallon?**

Kyllä

Ei

Jos kyllä, kerro lyhyesti miksi: \_\_\_\_\_