

## Perspectives and Importance of Social Sports in Women with Experiences of Gender Violence

Kelly Mercedes Diaz Theran<sup>1</sup>, Blanca Flor Pérez Contreras<sup>2</sup>, Susan Karola Santamaría-Campo<sup>3</sup>, Rosana Martínez Carazo<sup>4</sup>, Carmen Aleida Cadrazco Salcedo<sup>5</sup>, Joseimar Garrido Marín<sup>6</sup>

### Abstract

*This study aims to analyze the perspectives and importance of social sport in women with experiences of gender violence, understanding the role of sport in the process of empowerment and self-improvement from gender and feminist theories, which highlights sport as a space of resistance and social transformation for women. The methodology was quantitative approach, descriptive in scope to a sample of 163 women victims of violence who have used sport to face their recovery process, quantitative analyses were used using IBM SPSS and R-Project 4.2.3, for the analysis of the data began with analysis of measures of central tendency. In addition, a CLUSTER analysis was used to expose the inferential results, using interview and questionnaires as data collection techniques. The results revealed that sport not only helps women to improve their self-esteem, but also to rebuild support networks and strengthen their resilience. In conclusion, social sport emerges as a tool to overcome violence and build stronger and more secure identities, demonstrating that, when carried out in a supportive environment, it can have a lasting impact on women's lives.*

**Keywords:** *Social Sport, Gender Violence, Women, Empowerment.*

### Introduction

Violence against women is a global problem with profound repercussions on the physical, emotional and social health of the victims. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately one in three women has experienced physical or sexual violence at some point in her life (WHO, 2021). This type of violence not only has a devastating impact on women's mental health and general well-being, but also perpetuates gender inequality and limits opportunities for personal and professional development (Tokar, V. 2024).

According to Mujika-Alberdi et al. (2024), the understanding of femininity and masculinity is not based on rigid and universal categories, but on ideas and concepts that are formed, intertwined and transformed throughout the process of change that characterizes social life. In this sense, sport is an integral part of this complex framework. Furthermore, as established in the first article of the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport, the practice of physical education and sport is a fundamental right: "Every human being has the fundamental right of access to physical education and sport, which are indispensable for the full development of his or her personality, the right to develop physical, intellectual and moral faculties through physical education and sport must be guaranteed both in the education system and in other aspects of social life" (UNESCO, 2018, p. 1).

However, the impact of social sport as a coping strategy for women victims of violence against women is not homogeneous; several studies have pointed out that the effectiveness of these interventions depends on factors such as program design, cultural context and power dynamics within sport groups (Fonseca, 2022, p.1107), for example, Flores (2022) highlights that, although sport can be a space for empowerment, it can also reproduce gender norms and perpetuate exclusion if internal group dynamics are not adequately

<sup>1</sup> Corporación Universitaria del Caribe CECAR, Sincelejo, Sucre, Colombia. Correo electrónico, Email: [kelly.diaz@cecar.edu.co](mailto:kelly.diaz@cecar.edu.co), <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5893-1439>

<sup>2</sup> Corporación Universitaria del Caribe CECAR, Sincelejo, Sucre, Colombia. Correo electrónico, [hptt://orcid.org/0000-0003-2958-6183](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2958-6183).

<sup>3</sup> Corporación Universitaria del Caribe CECAR, Sincelejo, Sucre, Colombia. Correo electrónico, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6356-0561>.

<sup>4</sup> Corporación Universitaria del Caribe CECAR, Sincelejo, Sucre, Colombia. Correo electrónico, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0087-8377>.

<sup>5</sup> Corporación Universitaria del Caribe CECAR, Sincelejo, Sucre, Colombia. Correo electrónico, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5729-9571>

<sup>6</sup> Corporación Universitaria del Caribe CECAR, Sincelejo, Sucre, Colombia. Correo electrónico, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8711-6844>

managed, stating that gender violence in sport is registered in a patriarchal model that subordinates women (p.808 ), perpetuating culturally and ideologically eternalized models of hegemonic masculinity, which reinforces that violence against women is manifested in various spheres, including social, educational and labor, presenting multiple forms and degrees of intensity, by men who seek social power in any context (Kopelovich, 2022).

In response to this problem, community social sport emerges as an effective strategy for the empowerment of women and the development of gender equality, sport is an ideal social tool for the dissemination of human values, which are expressed through fair play, teamwork, respect and solidarity (Posso, 2022, p 240). This approach is based on the definition of social sport as an organized physical activity with social, educational and community development objectives, which transcends mere competition (Medina Cascales et al., 2019, p. 55). Through participation in sports activities, women can develop leadership skills, improve their self-esteem and create support networks, which is fundamental to confront and overcome experiences of violence, promoting socialization behaviors for democratic coexistence and in the long term helps to achieve social transformation (Gutiérrez, et al., 2022, p. 12).

In addition, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize sport as a key ally in achieving these goals, highlighting its role in shaping inclusive societies and promoting peace (Añorve Añorve & Flores Palafox, 2021). In line with this perspective, Lukianets-Shakhova et al. (2023) point out that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is not only an explicit goal of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, but also a fundamental driving force for sustainable development in all its dimensions, in regions and countries where women and girls are disadvantaged, progress is inevitably slowed down, jeopardizing the realization of the 2030 Agenda as a whole (Lukianets-Shakhova et al, 2023, p. 3).

In this sense, it is crucial to analyze what are the perspectives and importance of social sport in the self-protection of women with experiences of gender-based violence and how this can influence their ability to resist and denounce situations of violence, by studying these perceptions, it is possible to identify the key variables that determine the success of these initiatives, such as the level of inclusion and gender equity, the quality of facilitation and community support.

### *Theoretical Analysis*

Gender violence continues to be an issue of great relevance and concern at a global level, this phenomenon manifests itself in multiple forms and contexts, and its understanding requires an analysis from different theories, which is why, in recent years, several studies have provided valuable perspectives to address these issues more comprehensively and effectively.

### *Gender Violence Theoretical Approaches*

In recent years, violence against women has been recognized as gender violence, which must be addressed as a social scourge that violates human rights (Chirino, 2020, p.74), and authors even describe it as a pandemic, framing the discourse in the sustained concern as an extreme manifestation of inequality and abuse imposed by toxic power relations between men and women (Jaiven, 2022, p. 244), from a holistic perspective, gender is a social construction that, although linked to identity elements determined by biology and genitalia, goes beyond these basic categories, according to the authors Velásquez et al (2020), most people have a clearly defined sexual physiology as male or female and identify with this sexual identity in accordance with their biology. This assignment, which is usually made at birth, is only the beginning of a complex identification process that develops throughout life.

From a gender perspective, violence against women is a complex and multidimensional social problem that involves human rights and violence related to power inequality in societies (Calsin, 2023, p. 154), in this way, the author Araujo-Cuaro (2018, p. 131) defines gender violence as “any act of physical, or psychic, aggression based on the superiority of one sex over another” highlighting its social nature and the behaviors of hatred and contempt that perpetuate it. From this perspective, feminist theory is fundamental for

understanding gender violence. In a paper written by the author Guzmán (2021), she presents a metatheorization that highlights how the different currents of feminism address gender inequalities from different perspectives, approaching their discourse from liberal feminism, which seeks equity through political reforms and rights. The authors Lukianets-Shakhova (2023), associate themselves with this theory of liberal feminism by referring to how gender policy in several countries is far from ensuring gender equality between men and women, this lack of equality creates risks of lower quality and efficiency in the implementation of relevant management decisions.

On the other hand, there is radical feminism, which emphasizes the need to transform deeply rooted structures such as sexuality, family and intersectional feminism, which analyzes how multiple directions of oppression affect women differently (Guzmán, 2021).

Cerva (2017) describes gender violence as a vicious circle where power relations that perpetuate gender inequality are produced and reproduced, this process manifests itself in forms of economic or patrimonial violence, where men use the economic threat to maintain their domination, likewise, Suarez - Sierra (2018), adds that the influence of the environment, dependence and lack of leadership and participation contribute to women facing various forms of violence, physical, economic, verbal, psychological, institutional or sexual, without being limited to the psychological aspect as stated by Orozco et al. (2020), considering that many forms of violence are often less visible, but equally harmful.

In sports, gender violence manifests itself in various forms, perpetuating stereotypes that limit women's equal participation, and despite some advances, preconceived ideas persist that associate certain sports with men, such as soccer and contact sports, while others, such as volleyball, and skating, are considered more appropriate for women, these stereotypes influence sport choice and reflect a greater concern of women for body image, in contrast to the competitive focus that usually motivates men (Méndez, et al. 2023, p. 817). Diverse studies have analyzed the impact of these stereotypes on differences in sport choice, authors such as Heidrich & Chiviakowsky, 2015; Hermann & Vollmeyer, 2016, highlight that, although health is a common reason for women to start practicing physical activity or sport, their motivations are usually markedly related to concern for body image and improvement of physical appearance, associating with motives of beauty and social recognition, in contrast, for men, the concern is framed in competition as one of the main incentives for sports practice (Sánchez et al., 2023). Other studies describe how machismo and the culture of violence against women are identified as fundamental causes of gender violence, Chávez et al. (2020) recognize that, although there are cases of simultaneous violence and violence by women against men, the differences in attention, concentration and understanding of content between women and men also contribute to perpetuate inequality, in the same sense, Hermosillo (2017) highlights the persistence of labor inequality, the blaming of women victims of rape and impunity in the face of femicides, as well as the prevalence of macho discourse, in this sense, despite advances in human rights and security, patriarchal conceptions have not undergone significant changes (Guarderas, 2014).

In this sense, the authors Vélez & Palacios (2017), suggest that gender violence allows reflecting on gender relations, health and disease, and access to state services for women, for example, the past pandemic by Covid -19 and the consequent social confinement exacerbated situations of gender violence, these authors emphasize the need for a situational analysis with a gender perspective, because although laws can modify legislation, changing society requires addressing cultural, educational and ideological problems (Velásquez, et al., 2020), the authors Cardona & Guarín (2021), advocate for legislative reforms in criminal matters that protect women's rights, especially in cases of aggression by ex-partners, proposing to include situations in the grounds for aggravation, that promote the elimination of all forms of violence and of all harmful practices against women and girls (Entidad de las Naciones Unidas para la igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de las mujeres ONU -MUJERES, 2020).

### *Social Sport Theoretical Approaches*

Social sport is conceived as a sociocultural phenomenon accessible to all, which, through exercise, physical activity, play and competition, promotes the relationship between people, integration and community inclusion, with the purpose of improving the quality of life, well-being, and the phenomenon of gender

identity as a bodily experience (Daza et al., 2021). This approach is supported by authors such as Fonseca (2022); Porto (2021); Sánchez (2023); Vergara et al. (2022), who highlight the value of social sport in the construction of a more inclusive and equitable collectivity; however, sport is not immune to the manifestations of violence that traverse all societies and institutions. Although it is often considered a tool for the prevention of violence and the promotion of a culture of peace, it can also be a scenario where various forms of violence are manifested. This duality in the relationship between sport and violence has been the subject of analysis by different authors in recent years.

In relation to violence in sporting events, particularly in the violent behavior of men in sports such as soccer, terms such as fans, and hooligans are used to describe groups of violent fans in different national contexts, authors such as Sáenz et al. (2019) have analyzed the causes of these violent behaviors, highlighting how honor codes and hegemonic models of masculinity within sport validate and privilege gender violence, by connecting this relationship with Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence, it is argued that dominant power structures are reproduced and legitimized through symbols, languages and cultural practices that are often perceived as natural or normal. This form of violence is particularly insidious because it is not perceived as such; instead, it is internalized and accepted as part of the cultural norm (Fernández-Castrillo, C. , & Lara López-Arza,, 2022), this theory allows us to understand how traditional gender roles and expectations are reinforced through sports narratives and representations, both in the media and in popular culture, an example of this is how sports often celebrate tributes such as aggressiveness and competitiveness, which are traditionally associated with masculinity, while women may be evaluated according to different standards, more focused on elegance, delicacy and aesthetics (Rodríguez et al. , 2022).

From a semantic and discursive perspective, it is essential to understand the mutual implications between violence and sport, Ramírez-Muñoz & Zamarripa (2024) point out that, beyond considering sport as a simple physical context, it is essential to recognize it as a social phenomenon that allows social violence to be expressed through it, this implies that violence in sport should not be limited to incidents occurring during sporting events, but should be understood in the broader framework of the social structure of sport, which is constantly being redefined. In Colombia, Article 4 of Law 181 of 1995 establishes that sports, recreation and the use of free time are social rights that are an integral part of the public educational service. This legislation reflects a strong social sense of sport, recognizing it as a right that contributes to the well-being and quality of life of people.

Similarly, social sport implies a sport for all, which promotes the social relationship between people, inclusion and participation, and the improvement of the quality of life according to social policies, by recognizing social sport as a diversified structure, where human actions and participation schemes focused on the construction of cultural values prevail, the concern arises about how professionals are being trained in the area of sport, this becomes more important when observing that Article 67 of the Political Constitution of Colombia (1991) establishes that education is a public service with a social function.

Therefore, sport is a polysemic concept that has been interpreted in various ways: as a social phenomenon, expression of culture, popular tradition, subcategory of physical activity, global language, business, identity, political tool or human practice, therefore, from the social dimension of sport, we can recognize the characteristics of society and evidence the perspective of the institutions in which it is developed (Desiderio et al., 2021), consequently, it is shown that social sport, especially when using the instrument of education, produces significant effects on the forms of human life, such as integration, socialization or, in some cases, violence.

## Methodology

This research was framed in a quantitative methodology, focusing on objective processes that rely on previously validated scientific aspects, for the process of data collection and analysis, this methodology allowed to investigate how women perceive social sport as a tool for empowerment and overcoming violence, as well as the formation of a sense of community among women victims of violence, this paradigm

adopted was positivist, with a non-experimental design, aimed at exploring, describing and understanding the experiences and experiences of the participants in their life context (Hernández et al., 2014).

The sample consisted of 163 women, aged between 18 and 65 years, all with experiences of violence in different contexts (family, socio-community) and who practiced physical activity from a sport category, focused on community social practice rather than competitive.

**Table 1.** Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=163)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<b>Marital status</b>	Married	22 (13, 5%)
	Divorced	11 (6, 7%)
	Single	96 (58, 9%)
	Unmarried	33 (20, 2%)
	Widowed	1 (0, 6%)
<b>Educational level</b>	Bachelor's Degree Completed	62 (38, 0%)
	No	1 (0, 6%)
	Graduate	15 (9, 2%)
<b>Employment status</b>	Elementary school	1 (0, 6%)
	Technician, technologist or professional	84 (51, 5%)
	Homemaker	28 (17, 2%)
	Unemployed	22 (13, 5%)
	Part-time employment	10 (6, 1%)
<b>Stratum or socioeconomic level</b>	Full-time job	26 (16, 0%)
	Student	58 (35, 6%)
	Self-employed	18 (11, 0%)
	Pensioned or retired	1 (0, 6%)
	1 (Low)	97 (59, 5%)
2 (Low)	48 (29, 4%)	
3 (Medium)	13 (8, 0%)	
4 (Upper middle)	3 (1, 8%)	
5 (High)	2 (1, 2%)	
<b>Ethnic group</b>	Afro-Americans	60 (36, 8%)
	Indigenous	81 (49, 7%)
	Mestizo	1 (0, 6%)
	Raizal	21 (12, 9%)

The sample consisted of 163 women between the ages of 18 and 65, all with experiences of violence in different contexts (family, socio-community) and who practiced physical activity from a sports category, focused on community social practice rather than competitive practice, the sociodemographic characteristics and the type of sport practiced by the participants are detailed below (Table 1.)

#### *Instruments and Procedures for Data Collection*

An interview questionnaire was used as an instrument, which was validated by expert judgment, with 4 judges participating in this process, in order to evaluate and review the items in terms of relevance, appropriateness, clarity and dissemination, for the focus group, a guide of open questions was designed, consisting of the following items: Sport has given you security and confidence (DSC), Sport has helped you improve self-esteem and resilience (DAR), Sport has helped you strengthen your body and mind (DCM), Sport has helped you learn self-defense skills (DHA), Sport has helped you develop a greater awareness of your body and your limits (DCCL), and Sport gives a sense of community and support (DCA). In addition, statistically, the reliability of the instruments was measured using Cronbach's alpha, yielding an internal consistency of 0.91.



The research was approved by the ethics committee of the institution, handling prior to participation in informed consent ensuring the confidentiality of the data and their voluntary participation.

### *Data Analysis*

The quantitative data were processed and analyzed with IBM SPSS Statistics 29.0.2.0 and R-Project 4.2.3, employing a comprehensive analytical approach that allowed us to delve deeper into the relationships between the variables investigated. First, an analysis of the measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode) and dispersion (standard deviation) was performed to describe the distribution of the quantitative variables, thus obtaining a preliminary view of the nature and patterns of the numerical data.

For qualitative variables, frequency tables and percentages were generated to identify the prevalence and distribution of specific categories in the sample. These descriptive data provided an initial context and were fundamental to understanding the composition of the sample and the presence of key characteristics in the groups studied.

In addition, cluster analysis (CLUSTER) was performed as an inferential technique to identify grouping patterns among the variables. The CLUSTER analysis made it possible to classify individuals into homogeneous groups according to the characteristics observed, which facilitated the interpretation of complex relationships and patterns of similarity in the sample. This approach identified subgroups with common characteristics, revealing interactions and associations between variables that would not have been evident with conventional analyses.

### *Ethical Considerations*

The present study is based on the principles of respect for the dignity and rights of the participants, for which each and every one of the women who took part in the process knew the objectives and important aspects of the research, and signed an informed consent form granting prior permission for their voluntary participation, in accordance with the declaration of Helsinki, guaranteeing the confidentiality and anonymity of the data collected. In addition, the research received financial support from the University Corporation of the Caribbean CECAR, which was reserved for the collection and analysis of the data, as well as for the publication and dissemination of the results.

## **Results**

### *Analysis of Quantitative Variables*

**Table 2.** Analysis of Quantitative Variables Age, Stratum or Socioeconomic Level, Sport Practice.

<i>Descriptive</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Standard error
<i>VARIABLES</i>						
Age	18	65	29,84	11,743	,416	,378
Stratum	1	5	1,56	,817	3,473	,378
Duration of sports practice	45	120	84,85	27,708	-1,479	,378
Frequency of sports practice	2	7	3,98	1,207	-,671	,378
Days of Practice	1	6	3,36	1,658	-1,295	,378
Number of Children	0	5	1,12	1,293	-,419	,378

In the analysis of the data collected, it was observed that the mean age of the participants was 29.84 years, suggesting that the sample was mostly composed of young adults, with an age range that fluctuated between 18 and 65 years. In terms of socioeconomic stratum, the mean was 1.56, indicating that most respondents came from lower strata, ranging from stratum 1 to stratum 5. In relation to the duration of sports practice, participants reported an average of 84.85 minutes, reflecting a significant level of dedication, with variations ranging from 45 to 120 minutes. Regarding the weekly frequency of sports practice, the mean was 3.98 days, indicating that respondents practiced sports approximately four times a week. In terms of the number of children, the mean was 1.12, suggesting that most participants had at least one child, although some did not.

### *Frequency of Qualitative Variables*

**Table 3.** Frequency the Type of Violence and Sport Practice.

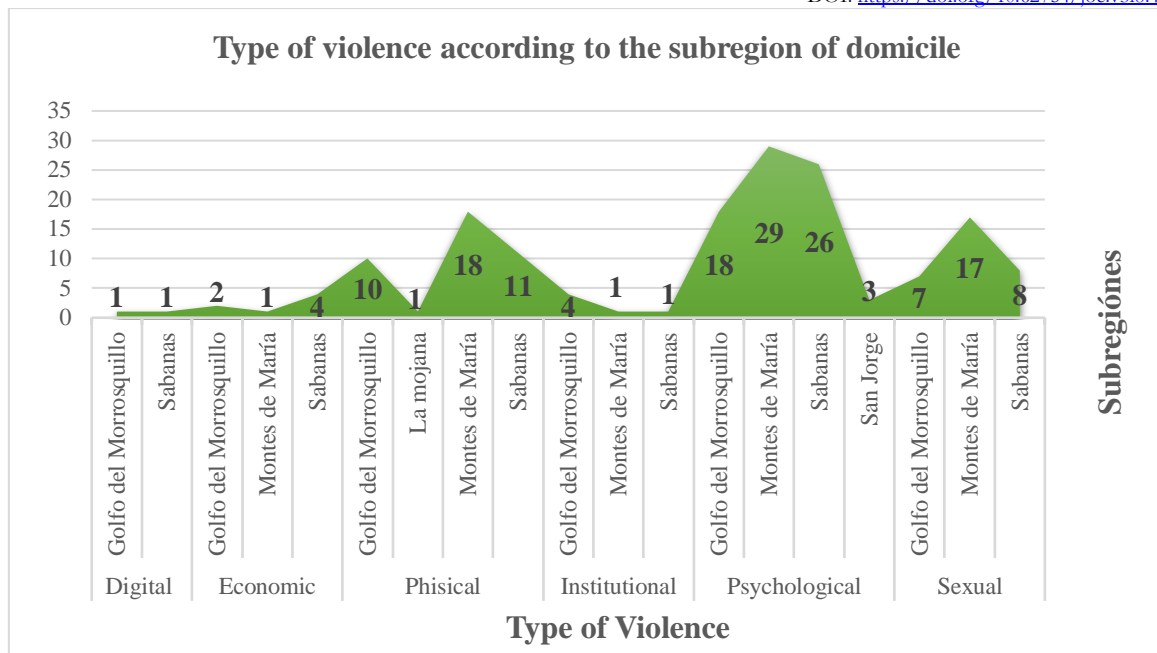
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>(%)</i>
Type of violence (TV)	Digital violence	2	1,2%
	Economic violence	7	4,3%
	Physical violence	40	24,5%
	Sexual violence	32	19,6%
	Institutional violence	6	3,7%
	Psychological violence	76	46,6%
What sport do you practice (D_PRACT)	Aerobic	67	41,1%
	Basketball	7	4,3%
	Cycling	16	9,8%
	Soccer	31	19,0%
	Running	34	20,9%
	Volleyball	8	4,9%

The table 2 shows that the activity most practiced by the respondents (41%) is aerobics and running (20.9%), which combines physical, mental and emotional benefits. Running, in particular, is recognized for its ability to promote endurance, self-discipline, and the strengthening of self-esteem, crucial elements in the process of recovery and empowerment after experiences of violence.

Another interesting element is the fact that 81.6% of the participants indicated that sports practice has helped them feel more in control of their body and mind. This result underlines the importance of body empowerment and the mind-body connection in the recovery of personal control after traumatic experiences, the ability of these women to feel in control of their bodies again is in line with theories that emphasize the importance of sport and physical activity in the recovery of a sense of autonomy and personal power. In addition, 81% agreed with the capacity of sport to offer a sense of community and support, which emphasizes its role not only as a physical activity, but also as a social space where women can build networks of support and solidarity, critical aspects in the fight against the isolation and vulnerability associated with gender-based violence.

### *Analysis of the Geographical Distribution of Violence*

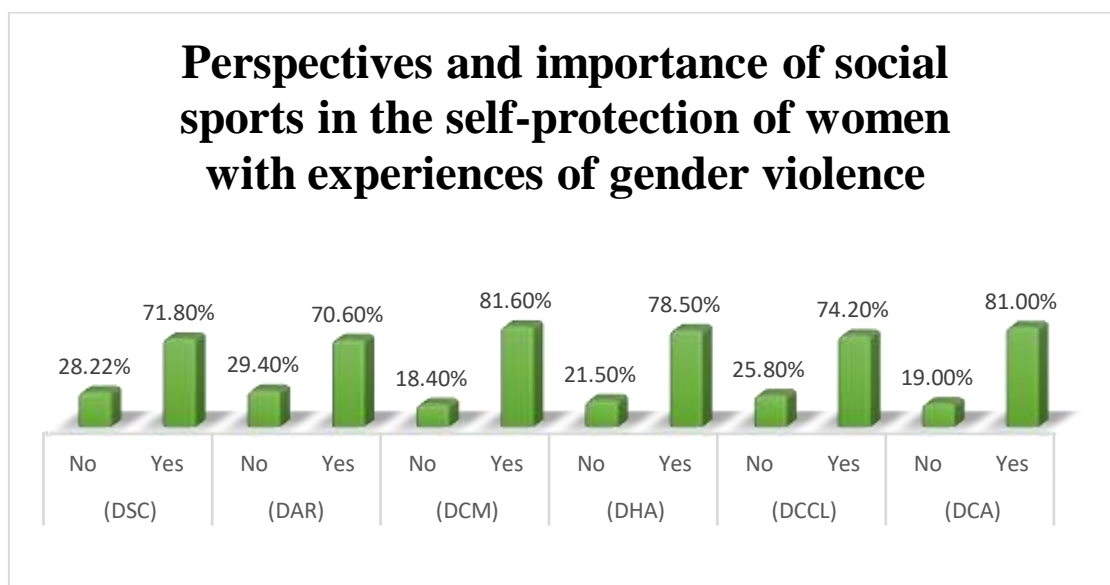
**Illustration 1.** Type of violence according to the sub region of the department of Sucre.



The illustration shows how the different types of violence are distributed according to the subregions of the department of Sucre (Colombia). In this sense, psychological violence has a high incidence in the subregions of Sabanas and Montes de Maria where the highest counts are registered. Physical violence stands out in the Montes de Maria and La Mojana subregions where there is a higher concentration of cases.

**Analysis of women's perceptions of the importance of social sports as a tool to confront and overcome violence.**

**Illustration 2.** Women's perceptions of the importance of social sport as a tool for coping with and overcoming violence.



The graph shows a quantitative analysis of the perspectives and importance of social sport in the self-defense and empowerment of women who have experienced gender-based violence, these data suggest that most women find support in sport for different areas of their lives. With regard to the question “Sport has helped you strengthen your body and mind” (DCM), 81.6% of the respondents said yes, while 81% of the

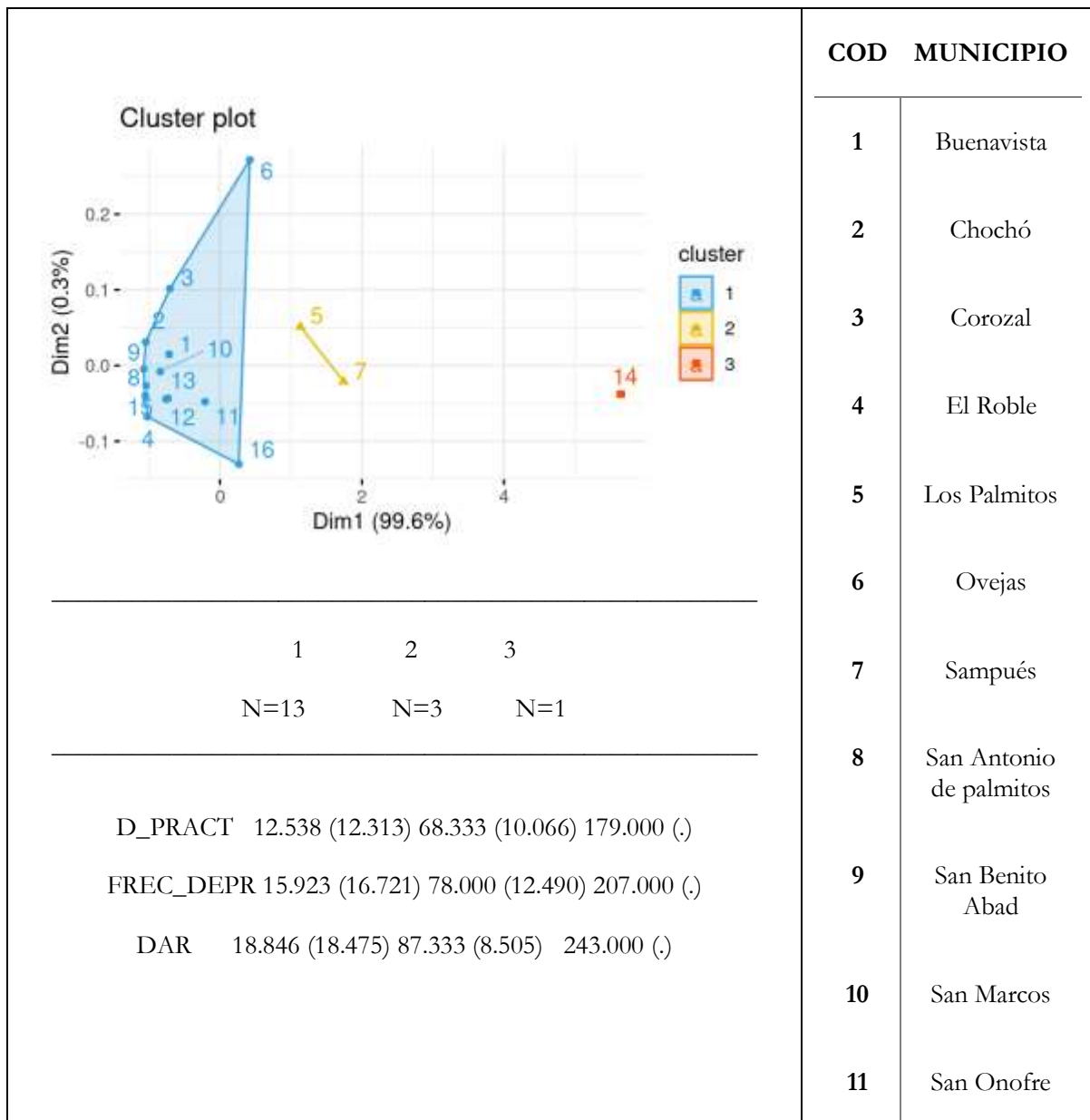


participants indicated that sport has provided them with a sense of community and support (DCA) and 78.5% stated that sport has helped them learn self-defense skills (DHA).

On the other hand, regarding the strengthening of self-esteem and resilience (DAR), 70.6% of the women consider that sport has contributed in this aspect, perceiving sport as a tool that has allowed them to develop a greater awareness of their body and its limits (DCCL) in 74.2% of the cases, which is relevant to avoid future situations of vulnerability. Similarly, 71.8% stated that sport has given them security and confidence (CSD), again highlighting the crucial role of sport in empowerment and self-advocacy.

**Cluster analysis between sport practice variables and the perception of resilience and autonomy.**

**Ilustración 3.** CLUSTER between the variables of frequency of sport, days of sport practice and improvement of self-esteem and resilience from sport practice.



	12	Santiago De Tolú
	13	Since
	14	Sincelejo
	15	Sucre Sucre
	16	Tolú

Fuente: R-Project 4.2.3

Figure 3 shows three clusters formed from the distances between the means of the variables days of practice (D\_PRACT), frequency of sports practice (FREC\_DEPR), and the question “Has practicing sports helped you develop greater self-esteem and resistance to violence” (DAR). Cluster 1 (blue color) groups most of the municipalities: Buenavista, Chochó, Corozal, El Roble, Ovejas, San Benito Abad, San Onofre, Santiago de Tolú, Since, Sucre Sucre, and Tolú. These municipalities are close to each other in dimensions, which indicates that they share similar characteristics related to sports practice.

It is worth noting that they are clustered to the left, close to zero in Dim1, suggesting that women in these municipalities tend to practice sport with less frequency and dedication, resulting in a lower average of resistance, with an approximate mean of 18.85. Cluster 2 (yellow color) includes the municipalities of Los Palmitos and Sampués, which are relatively close to each other but somewhat distant from Cluster 1. This suggests that these municipalities show a different behavior in the indicators, with higher sport participation. Women in this cluster dedicate more time to sports practice, with a mean of 68 practice and a frequency of 78, which translates into greater endurance, with a mean of 87.33.

In addition, Cluster 3 (red color) is composed only of the municipality of Sincelejo, which is notably distant from the other groups in Dim1, indicating very different characteristics. Women in the municipality of Sincelejo present an average of 179 days of sports practice, which is reflected in a higher frequency of participation in sports (mean of 207) and a higher index of resistance to being violated, with a mean of 243. This makes Sincelejo an atypical municipality, with an extreme behavior in comparison with the other localities. Finally, in Cluster 1 are the municipalities with the lowest averages in the variables analyzed, being the municipalities with the least interaction with sports: El Roble, Sucre Sucre, Palmitos, San Benito Abad, and Chochó.

## Discussion

The results of this study, which analyzes the perspectives and importance of social sport in the self-protection of women with experiences of gender-based violence, are consistent with the existing literature that highlights the role of sport as a tool for empowerment, the construction of social skills, and the

improvement of self-esteem and resilience in contexts of vulnerability (Ramírez et al., 2020). Upon analyzing the responses obtained, it was identified that sport acts as a positive agent in the lives of these women, as pointed out by Vergara et al. (2022), who found a significant correlation between sport practice and the development of social skills, which allows participants to better cope with the challenges of daily life and situations of violence.

Additionally, the study by Daza et al. (2021) highlights that gender identity is a social construction that can be modified through sport, especially in terms of the deconstruction of hegemonic masculinities. In this context, the present study provides evidence that sport not only influences physical skills, but also the ability of women to rethink and redefine their gender roles, strengthening their self-esteem and resilience.

Thus, in line with Ramírez-Muñoz & Zamarripa (2024), who emphasize the importance of creating safe environments within sports clubs to prevent violence, these findings reinforce the need to guarantee spaces in which women can participate in sports activities without risk of suffering physical or emotional violence. This study evidenced that many women experienced a sense of safety and support within these sports spaces, contributing to their emotional and psychological well-being.

On the other hand, when analyzing the influence of sport on self-esteem, the findings coincide with the study by Denegri et al. (2022), where it is reported that gender violence and emotional dependence have a significant impact on women's self-esteem, affecting their personal and social valuation. In the current study, it was observed that participation in sports helped women to partially recover their self-esteem and develop a greater awareness of their body and its limits, which is crucial for overcoming violence.

Likewise, the analysis by Porto et al. (2021) on social support in sport emphasizes that family members and coaches are key sources of emotional and informational support, something that was also relevant in this study. The women who participated in sports activities indicated that the support received from their peers and coaches was fundamental in strengthening their sense of belonging and resilience, which contributed to their emotional recovery after the experiences of violence.

However, the findings also reflect the need for greater attention to the gender inequalities that still persist in sport practice, as noted by Rodríguez et al. (2022). Although social sport has provided a space for empowerment for these women, there is still a need to address stereotypes and barriers that limit their full participation in sport activities, which could further strengthen their sense of self-advocacy and community.

Among the limitations of this study is the fact that the data were obtained through self-reported interviews, which may introduce recall or social desirability biases. In addition, the sample, although significant in size, is limited to a specific population of women who have had access to sports programs, which may not be representative of all victims of violence in the region. Another important limitation is the lack of longitudinal follow-up to assess the long-term impact of sport.

Finally, we suggest that future research explore the impact of social sport on other vulnerable groups, such as adolescents or women in rural areas, and that longitudinal studies be conducted to assess the long-term effects of sport on the mental and emotional health of participants. In addition, it would be valuable to compare the effects of social sport with other forms of intervention, such as psychological therapy or community support networks, to identify the most effective strategies for post-violence recovery.

## Conclusions

This study evidences the transformative potential of social sport in the lives of women who have been victims of violence; beyond its impact on physical improvement, sport becomes a tool for empowerment and resilience, providing a safe space where women can rebuild their self-esteem, strengthen their capacity to face adversity and redefine their relationship with their bodies and their environment. These findings highlight the importance of integrating sport as a key component in intervention and recovery programs for women in contexts of vulnerability, recognizing its capacity to foster both emotional well-being and a sense of community.

However, the results also underscore the need to address the gender barriers that persist in these spaces, which is crucial for sport to be not only a means of individual self-improvement, but also a tool for social transformation. In this sense, it is essential to promote inclusive policies that guarantee equitable and safe access to sport for all women, regardless of their socioeconomic status or experiences of violence.

In conclusion, social sport emerges as a fertile field for overcoming violence and building stronger and safer identities, showing that, when carried out in a supportive and respectful environment, it can generate a positive and lasting impact on the lives of women who have faced traumatic experiences.

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