ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Validation of the sexual prejudice in sport scale in Brazil and Portugal

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ABSTRACT

This study examines sexual prejudice in sport within Brazilian and Portuguese contexts, cross-culturally validating the Scale of Sexual Prejudice in Sport (SPSS). The study included 618 university student-athletes (348 Brazilian; 270 Portuguese). Confirmatory factor analysis corroborated the three-factor structure of the instrument in both countries, with adequate fit indices. Male athletes demonstrated greater sexual prejudice in both countries ($p < .05$), reinforcing the heteronormative nature of the sporting environment. Right-wing political orientation emerged as a significant predictor of negative attitudes in both samples, while religiosity proved significant only in Portugal ($\beta = .185$, $p < .01$). Important differences were observed regarding political interest: in Brazil, greater interest was associated with elevated levels of prejudice ($\varepsilon^2 = .033$, $p < .01$), contrasting with Portugal. Hierarchical regressions revealed that attitudes toward lesbians and gays constituted the strongest predictor of sexual prejudice in both Brazil ($\beta = -.475$, $p < .001$) and Portugal ($\beta = -.256$, $p < .001$). The results contribute to the understanding of sexual prejudice in sport in Portuguese-speaking countries and suggest the need for specific interventions considering the sociocultural particularities of each context.

Keywords: Sexual prejudice, University sport, Cross-Cultural studies, Gender attitudes, Scale validation.

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INTRODUCTION

Sexual prejudice refers to collectively negative attitudes and stereotypes directed toward individuals who identify as or are presumed to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT), as their behaviour is perceived as unnatural (Herek and Capitanio, 1996) and immoral (Sartore and Cunningham, 2009). Studies demonstrate that maintaining traditional gender role beliefs is associated with a greater tendency to develop negative attitudes toward those who do not conform to traditional gender expectations and, consequently, to express sexual prejudice (Cunningham and Melton, 2013; Lee and Cunningham, 2016; Mullin et al., 2024).

The sporting environment is described as inherently heterosexist and structured to defend the principles of hegemonic heteronormative masculinity (Sartore-Baldwin, 2013; Denison et al., 2020; Knoester and Allison, 2021). Heteronormativity refers to a culturally shaped view that presumes heterosexuality as the normal and natural standard, based on essentialist biological notions about the distinct and complementary roles of males and females (Butler, 2016). LGBTQ+ athletes face constant pressure to conform to these traditional gender roles and sexual orientation expectations, resulting in documented negative consequences such as distress, social withdrawal, mental health problems, and low self-esteem (Scandurra et al., 2019; Symons et al., 2017).

Research examining LGBTQ+ individuals in sports has expanded but remains concentrated in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Portuguese-speaking countries lack validated instruments to measure sexual prejudice in sporting contexts (Oliveira et al., 2013; Piedra et al., 2017). The Sexual Prejudice in Sport Scale (SPSS) provides a comprehensive and contemporary psychometric measure of negative attitudes toward sexual minorities in sporting environments (Baiocco et al., 2020). This study aims to translate and cross-culturally validate the SPSS for use in Portuguese, as well as apply it to university student-athletes to measure levels of sexual prejudice in this population.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

This study included 618 higher education students, of whom 348 were Brazilian and 270 were Portuguese. The mean age of Brazilian participants was 25 years (*SD* = 7.0) and Portuguese participants was 23 years (*SD* = 5.0). The distribution of sports modalities presented marked differences between Brazil and Portugal. In Portugal, track and field stood out as the most practiced modality (n = 113; 41.9%), followed by karate (n = 45; 16.7%), soccer (n = 40; 14.8%), volleyball (n = 28; 10.4%), and tennis (n = 16; 5.9%). In Brazil, a distinct distribution was observed, with handball showing the highest participation (n = 87; 25.0%), followed by indoor soccer (n = 65; 18.7%), volleyball (n = 58; 16.7%), basketball (n = 42; 12.1%), and a tie between soccer and running (both with n = 18; 5.2%).

Table 1 presents the complete sociodemographic characteristics of the sample.

Instruments

Sociodemographic Questionnaire: Gathered participant information including age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, level of political interest, general political views, religion, and religious importance.

Sexual Prejudice in Sport Scale (SPSS): The SPSS (Baiocco et al., 2020) consists of 19 items measuring attitudes toward gays and lesbians in sporting contexts using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), with higher scores indicating more negative attitudes. Baiocco et al. (2020) established the factorial structure of the scale through two Italian studies: an initial study with 297 heterosexual athletes,

followed by reliability and validity tests with 311 heterosexual athletes and 160 gay or lesbian athletes. Exploratory factor analysis revealed three subscales – open rejection, denial of visibility, and gender performance – that explain 62.73% of the variance. The instrument demonstrated strong internal consistency, with α = .71 to .93 for heterosexual participants and α = .77 to .90 for LGBT participants across subscales and total scores. Test-retest reliability coefficients indicated adequate temporal stability: r = .92 (total score), r = .91 (open rejection), r = .71 (denial of visibility), and r = .88 (gender performance).

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics (N = 638).

Variable/Category	Brazil (n = 348)	Portugal (n = 270)
Gender		
Female	211 (60.63)	112 (41.48)
Male	137 (39.37)	158 (58.52)
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	233 (66.95)	155 (57.41)
Bisexual	60 (17.24)	94 (34.81)
Homosexual	55 (15.80)	10 (3.70)
Other/Pansexual	0 (0.00)	11 (4.07)
Ethnicity		
White	237 (68.10)	224 (82.96)
Black/African	72 (20.69)	22 (8.15)
Hispanic/Latino	39 (11.21)	21 (7.78)
Mixed/Romani	0 (0.00)	3 (1.11)
Socioeconomic status		
Very low/Low	72 (20.69)	39 (14.44)
Middle	259 (74.43)	217 (80.37)
High/Very high	17 (4.89)	14 (5.19)
Religion		
None	131 (37.64)	116 (42.96)
Christian/Catholic	166 (47.70)	130 (48.15)
Evangelical	20 (5.75)	16 (5.93)
Spiritist	23 (6.61)	4 (1.48)
Others	8 (2.30)	4 (1.48)
Level of religiosity		
Not religious	75 (21.55)	47 (17.54)
Moderate	209 (60.06)	201 (75.00)
Very religious	64 (18.39)	20 (7.46)
Political positioning		
Left	184 (52.87)	235 (87.04)
Centre	143 (41.09)	32 (11.85)
Right	21 (6.03)	3 (1.11)
Political interest		
None	20 (5.75)	122 (45.19)
Little	141 (40.52)	130 (48.15)
Moderate	134 (38.51)	12 (4.44)
High	53 (15.23)	6 (2.22)

Multidimensional Scale of Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gays (Escala Multidimensional de Atitudes em Relação a Lésbicas e Gays- EMAFLG): Developed and validated in Portugal by Gato et al. (2012), the MSALG contains 27 items rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). The

instrument includes three negative subscales: Homopathologization (5 items), which assesses pathologization and moral judgments about homosexuality; Rejection of proximity (10 items), which measures avoidance and discomfort with lesbians and gays; and Modern heterosexism (7 items), which examines contemporary prejudices regarding conjugality and parenthood. A positive subscale, Support (5 items), evaluates attitudes toward advocating for lesbian and gay rights. The scale demonstrates adequate internal consistency (total scale α = .87; subscales α = .79 to .91).

Data analysis

The construct validity of the SPSS was investigated through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using structural equation modelling (SEM). Several fit indices were evaluated: chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), goodness of fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and 90% confidence interval for RMSEA. The criteria suggested by Xia and Yang (2019) for good fit were considered: χ^2/df ≤ 5; SRMR ≤ .08; GFI, CFI, TLI ≥ .90; RMSEA ≤ .08, with the 90% confidence interval of RMSEA containing 0.

Discriminant validity was assessed using Fornell-Larcker criteria and heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT ≤ 0.85) (Henseler et al., 2015). Additional evidence was obtained through cross-loading analysis, examining standardized factor loadings (≥ 0.50) and average variance extracted (AVE ≥ 0.50) (Hair et al., 2019). Internal consistency was verified by Cronbach's alpha coefficients (≥ 0.70) and composite reliability (≥ 0.60).

Spearman correlations between SPSS scores and MSALG results were used to evaluate convergent validity, in addition to descriptive statistics. Parameter stability was verified by bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. Levels of sexual prejudice in demographic groups were examined by non-parametric Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests (Rani Das, 2016). Associations between sexual prejudice in sport and demographic variables were analysed by Spearman correlations. A hierarchical multiple regression was performed to analyse the predictive effects of demographic variables and attitudes toward gays and lesbians on sexual prejudice in sport.

RESULTS

Psychometric properties

The psychometric properties of the SPSS were examined for both samples (Table 2). Model fit indices proved adequate in both the Brazilian sample (χ^2/df = 1.06, SRMR = .05, GFI = .99, TLI = .997, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .014, 90% CI [.000, .029]) and the Portuguese sample (χ^2/df = 0.60, SRMR = .07, GFI = .97, TLI = 1.02, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .000, 90% CI [.000, .000]).

Internal consistency, assessed by Cronbach's alpha, showed distinct values across subscales in both countries. In the Brazilian sample, the Open Rejection subscale presented α = .930, Gender Performance α = .810, and Denial of Visibility α = .580, with a total score of α = .870. In the Portuguese sample, the values were α = .926 for Open Rejection, α = .902 for Gender Performance, α = .676 for Denial of Visibility, and α = .910 for total score.

Subscale means indicated similar patterns in both countries, with higher values for Denial of Visibility (Brazil: *M* = 2.13, *SD* = 0.95; Portugal: *M* = 2.67, *SD* = 1.18) and lower values for Open Rejection (Brazil: *M* = 1.42, *SD* = 0.76; Portugal: *M* = 1.53, *SD* = 0.84). The total scale scores were *M* = 1.68 (*SD* = 0.72) for Brazil and *M* = 1.95 (*SD* = 0.85) for Portugal.

Table 2. Psychometric properties of the SPSS by country.

Indicators	Brazil (n = 348)	Portugal (n = 270)
Fit indices		
χ^2/df	1.06	0.60
SRMR	.05	.07
GFI	.99	.97
TLI	.997	1.02
CFI	.99	1.00
RMSEA [90% CI]	.014 [.000, .029]	.000 [.000, .000]
Internal consistency		
Cronbach's Alpha (α)		
OR	.930	.926
GP	.810	.902
DV	.580	.676
Total	.870	.910
Composite reliability (ρ)		
OR	.940	.940
GP	.850	.920
DV	.710	.770
Subscale means		
OR	1.42 (0.76)	1.53 (0.84)
GP	1.70 (0.87)	1.86 (1.00)
DV	2.13 (0.95)	2.67 (1.18)
Total	1.68 (0.72)	1.95 (0.85)

Note. OR = Open Rejection; GP = Gender Performance; DV = Denial of Visibility; CI = Confidence Interval. Means presented as M (SD). All fit indices significant at p < .005.

Table 3 presents the key validity indicators of the SPSS. The Fornell-Larcker criterion was satisfied in both countries, with the Open Rejection (OR) subscale showing the most robust square root of AVE values (Brazil and Portugal: .83). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) proved adequate for OR (Brazil and Portugal: .92), while the GP (Brazil: .46; Portugal: .63) and DV (Brazil: .37; Portugal: .41) subscales showed values below or near the recommended threshold of .50.

Correlations with the MSALG demonstrated convergent validity, with notable associations between Homopathologization and the OR (Portugal: $r = .52$, $p < .001$) and GP (Portugal: $r = .58$, $p < .01$) subscales. The HTMT indices remained below .85 in the Portuguese sample, while in the Brazilian sample, the GP ratio approached this limit (.85), indicating potential challenges to discriminant validity.

Table 4 presents the analysis of sexual prejudice in relation to sociodemographic variables. Significant gender differences were observed in both samples, with male participants showing higher levels of sexual prejudice in Brazil ($U = 12983$, $p < .05$, $rb = .102$) and in Portugal ($U = 7379$, $p < .05$, $rb = .166$). Regarding sexual orientation, no significant differences were found in either country.

Political positioning showed significant associations in both countries, with right-wing participants presenting higher means in both Brazil ($H(2) = 9.10$, $p < .05$, $\varepsilon^2 = .026$) and Portugal ($H(2) = 7.25$, $p < .05$, $\varepsilon^2 = .027$). Concerning political interest, significant differences were observed only in the Brazilian sample ($H(3) = 11.55$, $p < .01$, $\varepsilon^2 = .033$), where participants with high political interest showed significantly higher levels of prejudice compared to those with no political interest. Religiosity did not demonstrate significant associations with sexual prejudice in either sample.

Table 3. Discriminant and convergent validity of the SPSS by country.

Measure	Brazil (n = 348)			Portugal (n = 270)		
	OR	**GP**	**DV**	**OR**	**GP**	**DV**
Fornell-Larcker						
Open Rejection (OR)	**.83**	-	-	**.83**	-	-
Gender Performance (GP)	.78	**.68**	-	.76	**.79**	-
Denial of Visibility (DV)	.74	.71	**.61**	.65	.67	**.64**
Convergent validity						
MSALG total score	.33***	.20***	.32***	.38***	.23**	.39***
Rejection of proximity	.18***	.20***	.22***	.22**	.09	.14
Homopathologization	.24***	.29***	.26***	.52***	.58**	.57***
Modern heterosexism	.19***	.23***	.32***	.30***	.28***	.44***
Support	-.17***	-.25***	-.18***	-.25**	-.45***	-.40***
Extracted variance						
AVE	.92	.46	.37	.92	.63	.41
HTMT Ratio	.82	.85	.84	.81	.73	.69

*Note. Values in bold on the diagonal represent the square root of AVE. OR = Open Rejection; GP = Gender Performance; DV = Denial of Visibility; HTMT = Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio; AVE = Average Variance Extracted. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.*

Table 4. Analysis of sexual prejudice by sociodemographic variables.

Variable	Brazil (n = 348)			Portugal (n = 270)		
	***M* (*SD*)**	**Statistic**	***ES***	***M* (*SD*)**	**Statistic**	***ES***
Gender						
Male	1.70 (0.65)	U = 12983*	rb = .102	2.16 (0.81)	U = 7379*	rb = .166
Female	1.60 (0.56)			1.93 (0.65)		
Sexual 0rientation						
Heterosexual	1.67 (0.66)	$H(2)$ = 1.53	ε^2 = .004	2.03 (0.71)	$H(3)$ = 1.30	ε^2 = .005
Bisexual	1.65 (0.53)			2.11 (0.79)		
Homosexual	1.49 (0.36)			1.96 (0.89)		
Pansexual/Other	—			2.14 (0.75)		
Political positioning						
Left	1.63 (0.64)	$H(2)$ = 9.10*	ε^2 = .026	2.09 (0.75)	$H(2)$ = 7.25*	ε^2 = .027
Centre	1.57 (0.47)			1.78 (0.74)		
Right	2.12 (0.79)[a]			2.32 (0.74)[a]		
Political interest						
High/Very high	2.03 (0.87)[a]	$H(3)$ = 11.55**	ε^2 = .033	1.52 (0.54)	$H(3)$ = 5.64	ε^2 = .021
Moderate	1.64 (0.67)			1.87 (0.62)		
Low/Little	1.65 (0.52)			2.08 (0.83)		
None	1.44 (0.38)[b]			2.07 (0.67)		
Religiosity						
Very religious	1.56 (0.40)	$H(2)$ = 0.52	ε^2 = .015	2.48 (1.37)	$H(2)$ = 1.95	ε^2 = .007
Moderate	1.63 (0.61)			2.06 (0.69)		
Not religious	1.73 (0.74)			1.89 (0.56)		

*Note. Values presented as Mean (Standard Deviation) for the total SPSS score. ES = Effect Size; rb = point-biserial correlation; ε² = epsilon squared. Different superscript letters (a,b) indicate groups that differ. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.*

Table 5 presents the results of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis predicting sexual prejudice in sport in both countries. In Brazil, Model 1, including basic sociodemographic variables, was not statistically significant, explaining only 1.6% of the variance (R^2 = .016, F = 1.86, p > .05). Model 2, with the addition of variables related to religiosity, political positioning, and political interest, explained 4.3% of the variance,

representing a significant increase (ΔR^2 = .027, F = 3.18, p < .05). In this model, political interest emerged as the only significant predictor (β = -.130, p < .05). Model 3, incorporating the EMAFLG Total Score, explained 25.7% of the total variance (R^2 = .257, ΔR^2 = .214, F = 98.05, p < .001), with this variable emerging as the strongest predictor (β = -.475, p < .001).

In the Portuguese sample, although Model 1 did not achieve statistical significance as a whole (R^2 = .024, F = 2.17, p > .05), gender emerged as a significant predictor (β = .151, p < .05). Model 2 explained 6.4% of the variance (R^2 = .064, ΔR^2 = .040, F = 3.75, p < .05), with religiosity (β = .170, p < .01) and gender (β = .149, p < .05) as significant predictors. Model 3 explained 11.9% of the total variance (R^2 = .119, ΔR^2 = .055, F = 16.24, p < .001), maintaining religiosity (β = .185, p < .01) and gender (β = .123, p < .05) as significant predictors, with the addition of the EMAFLG Total Score (β = -.256, p < .001).

Table 5. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis predicting sexual prejudice in sport in Brazil and Portugal.

Variables	Brazil (n = 348)			Portugal (n = 270)		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	β	*β*	*β*	*β*	*β*	*β*
Age	-.033	-.026	-.039	-.059	-.037	-.035
Gender	.081	.086	.050	.151*	.149*	.123*
Sexual orientation	-.090	-.041	.033	.042	.038	.019
Levels of religiosity		.071	-.018		.170**	.185**
Political positioning		.042	-.005		-.089	-.047
Political interest		-.130*	-.069		-.045	.099
EMAFLG Total Score			-.475***			-.256***
R^2	.016	.043	.257	.024	.064	.119
F for change in R^2	1.86	3.18*	98.05***	2.17	3.75*	16.24***

*Note. Values presented are standardized beta coefficients (β) for each model. EMAFLG = Multidimensional Scale of Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gays). *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.*

DISCUSSION

This investigation extends the understanding of sexual prejudice in Portuguese and Brazilian sporting contexts, as well as its associated factors. The three-factor structure of the Sexual Prejudice in Sport Scale (SPSS) – open rejection, denial of visibility, and gender performance – was confirmed in both samples, aligning with findings obtained in Italy (Baiocco et al., 2020). The robust fit indices observed in both contexts support the construct validity of the instrument (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003).

In the psychometric analyses, the open rejection and gender performance subscales demonstrated adequate internal consistency, composite reliability, and convergent validity in both countries. The denial of visibility subscale, however, presented limitations regarding discriminant validity in relation to gender performance. These difficulties were more pronounced in the Brazilian sample, where Cronbach's alpha values (.58) and average variance extracted (.37) fell below recommended parameters. According to Henseler et al. (2015), such challenges can be attributed to conceptual overlap between the factors, making their empirical distinction difficult. These methodological concerns constitute a limitation of the present investigation and suggest the need for refinement of the scale in future studies. The original structure proposed by Baiocco et al. (2020), despite these limitations, maintains its utility for evaluating sexual prejudice in sport across different cultural contexts.

The lowest mean scores were observed in the open rejection factor in both countries, suggesting a lower prevalence of explicit expressions of sexual prejudice. This result corroborates the perspective that overt manifestations of prejudice face increasing social disapproval in contemporary Western societies (Crandall and Eshleman, 2003). Denial of visibility, on the other hand, presented the highest means in both the Portuguese and Brazilian samples. This pattern indicates a persistent resistance to the recognition of LGBT athletes in the sporting culture of both countries, even when more explicit expressions of prejudice are less frequent.

The convergent validity of the SPSS was established through significant correlations with the Multidimensional Scale of Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gays (MSALG) in both countries. In the Portuguese sample, the strong correlation between the open rejection subscale of the SPSS and the homopathologization dimension of the MSALG (r = .52) was particularly notable. The correlations in the Brazilian sample, although significant, presented lower magnitudes (ranging from r = .18 to r = .33), suggesting possible cultural differences in the manifestation and expression of sexual prejudice between the two contexts.

Significant gender differences were identified in levels of sexual prejudice. Male participants demonstrated higher scores, corroborating results from previous studies (Sartore and Cunningham, 2009; Cunningham and Melton, 2013). This pattern reflects the traditionally male dominance of the sporting environment, where adherence to hegemonic gender norms holds substantial value (Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). A distinctive aspect between the samples refers to the scope of these differences: in the Brazilian sample, they were significant only in the open rejection (rb = .102) and gender performance (rb = .135) subscales, while in the Portuguese sample, the difference was also significant in the total scale score (rb = .166).

Analyses related to sexual orientation did not reveal significant differences between groups in either country, partially contrasting with the findings of Baiocco et al. (2020). The absence of significant variations may indicate two distinct phenomena: the possible internalization of heteronormative beliefs among non-heterosexual athletes in sporting environments or the development of more inclusive attitudes among heterosexual athletes. In the Portuguese sample, a moderate positive correlation was observed between sexual orientation and prejudice (r = .219), suggesting higher levels of prejudice among heterosexual athletes. In the Brazilian sample, this correlation was not significant, indicating distinct dynamics in the experiences and expressions of sexual identity in the two cultural contexts.

Regarding religiosity, the results expand the literature associating traditional religious beliefs with negative attitudes toward sexual minorities (Cunningham and Melton, 2012). Highly religious participants in the Portuguese sample demonstrated elevated levels of prejudice, particularly in the open rejection dimension. In the Brazilian sample, although differences did not reach statistical significance (ε^2 = .015), a similar trend was observed. This pattern establishes a relationship between increased religiosity and greater manifestation of prejudice, especially in the domains of open rejection and denial of visibility.

Results concerning political orientation presented consistent patterns between the two countries. In both Brazil (ε^2 = .026) and Portugal (ε^2 = .027), participants identified with right-wing political positions demonstrated higher levels of sexual prejudice. A notable difference, however, was observed: while in the Portuguese sample the left-wing group presented high scores in the open rejection dimension, this phenomenon was not found in the Brazilian sample. This contrast introduces important nuances in relation to previous studies that consistently link conservative political positions to negative attitudes directed at sexual minorities (Cunningham and Melton, 2012; Piedra et al., 2017; Hoyt et al., 2018).

A significant contrast between countries emerged in the analysis of political interest. In the Brazilian sample, participants with greater political interest presented higher levels of prejudice ($\varepsilon^2 = .033$), while in Portugal an inverse relationship was observed, with lower levels of political interest correlated with increased sexual prejudice. This divergence may reflect the different political and social dynamics present in the two countries, particularly regarding the framing of LGBT issues in contemporary political discourse.

The significant associations between sexual prejudice and political-religious variables in both countries highlight the importance of ideological factors in shaping attitudes toward sexual minorities (Anderson and Mowatt, 2013; Piedra et al., 2017; Ferros and Pereira, 2021). Higher levels of religiosity and right-wing political positioning corresponded to greater manifestations of prejudice, reflecting traditional conservative principles incorporated in right-wing religious and political ideologies.

The hierarchical multiple regression analysis demonstrated that incorporating political positioning, religiosity, and attitudes toward gays and lesbians substantially increased the predictive power of the model, beyond basic demographic variables. In the Brazilian sample, attitudes toward gays and lesbians emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = -.475$), explaining an additional 21.4% of variance. In the Portuguese sample, in addition to attitudes toward gays and lesbians ($\beta = -.256$), religiosity ($\beta = .185$) and gender ($\beta = .123$) remained significant predictors in the final model, suggesting a more complex interaction of sociocultural factors in the formation of sexual prejudice in this context.

CONCLUSIONS

This investigation provides important evidence regarding sexual prejudice in the sporting context in two Portuguese-speaking countries, revealing both similarities and significant differences. The Sexual Prejudice in Sport Scale (SPSS) proved to be a valid instrument in both contexts, maintaining the three-factor structure originally proposed by Baiocco et al. (2020), with satisfactory psychometric properties.

The results revealed a consistent pattern of greater sexual prejudice among male athletes in both countries, reinforcing the understanding of sport as a traditionally heteronormative environment. Right-wing political positioning also emerged as a significant predictor of negative attitudes in both countries, albeit with distinct manifestations across different dimensions of prejudice. These findings contribute to the understanding of ideological factors that influence attitudes toward sexual diversity in the sporting context.

Important differences between the two countries were identified, especially regarding the role of religiosity and political interest. In the Portuguese sample, religiosity proved to be a significant predictor of sexual prejudice, while in Brazil this relationship did not reach statistical significance. Regarding political interest, contrasting patterns emerged: in Brazil, greater political interest was associated with higher levels of prejudice, while in Portugal the trend was opposite. These variations highlight the importance of considering sociocultural specificities in understanding and addressing sexual prejudice.

The practical implications of this study are diverse. For the Brazilian context, the results suggest the need for educational programs that promote more effective dialogue between political participation and inclusive attitudes in sport. In the Portuguese context, interventions targeting the intersection between religiosity and prejudice seem particularly relevant. In both countries, strategies to transform traditionally masculine sporting cultures into more welcoming environments for sexual diversity are necessary.

The study presents methodological limitations that should be considered. The use of non-probabilistic convenience samples in both countries restricts the generalization of results. Differences in the demographic composition of the samples – with female predominance in Brazil (60.6%) and male predominance in Portugal (58.5%) – may have influenced some of the observed contrasts. Additionally, the denial of visibility subscale presented reliability indices below recommended values, particularly in the Brazilian sample.

Future research should employ more robust sampling methods and include greater diversity of participants for better understanding of the dynamics of prejudice in sport. Revision of the denial of visibility subscale is also necessary to improve its psychometric properties. More comprehensive cross-cultural studies could explore the underlying reasons for the observed differences between Brazil and Portugal, analysing how macrostructural factors – including public policies and legal rights – influence attitudes in the sporting context.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

This manuscript is a collaborative work of two authors who reviewed and approved its final version. The contribution of each author includes: Vivianne Oliveira Gomes: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Visualization, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing. Henrique Pereira: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Methodology, Supervision, Writing - review & editing.

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