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## **The Role Of Sports Socialization In Student Character Formation Through Physical Education In Football: A Systematic Literature Review**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Character education has become an essential objective of modern education, particularly in addressing social and behavioral challenges among students. Physical education, especially football-based learning, provides opportunities for sports socialization through interaction, cooperation, communication, and adherence to rules, which contribute to character development. This study aimed to analyze the role of sports socialization in shaping students' character through football-based physical education and to synthesize theoretical and empirical evidence from recent research. This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Literature was collected from Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, ERIC, Google Scholar, SINTA, and Garuda databases. Articles published between 2015 and 2025 were screened using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. From an initial identification of 248 articles, 25 eligible studies were included in the final analysis. Data were analyzed using thematic synthesis supported by Social Learning Theory, Socialization Theory, Positive Youth Development (PYD), and Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) frameworks. The findings revealed that football-based sports socialization significantly contributes to character development. The most frequently reported character outcomes were cooperation (96%), respect (92%), responsibility (88%), discipline (84%), leadership (76%), sportsmanship (72%), and honesty (64%). Furthermore, teamwork and collaboration (96%), communication and interaction (88%), fair play and rule adherence (84%), and leadership opportunities (72%) were identified as the primary mechanisms facilitating character formation. Pedagogical approaches such as TPSR, Sport Education Model, Cooperative Learning, and Game-Based Learning were found to strengthen these outcomes. In conclusion, football-based physical education serves as an effective medium for sports socialization and character formation, promoting positive moral, social, and behavioral development among students. Integrating intentional character education strategies into football learning programs is recommended to maximize educational outcomes.

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**Keywords** : Sports Socialization, Character Development, Physical Education, Football Education, Systematic Literature Review

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Character education has become one of the most important objectives of contemporary educational systems because schools are expected not only to develop students' cognitive competencies but also to cultivate moral values, social responsibility, discipline, honesty, respect, empathy, and cooperation (Beni et al., 2017; Jacobs & Wright,

2018). In the era of globalization and digital transformation, adolescents face increasing exposure to social media influences, individualistic lifestyles, and behavioral challenges that may negatively affect character development (UNESCO, 2021). Consequently, educational institutions are challenged to implement learning approaches that foster positive character traits while supporting holistic student development.

Physical Education (PE) has been widely recognized as an educational domain capable of integrating physical, cognitive, affective, and social learning outcomes simultaneously (Casey & Goodyear, 2015; Kirk, 2019). According to the theory of Holistic Education, learning experiences that engage multiple dimensions of human development provide greater opportunities for character formation than purely cognitive instruction (Miller, 2019). Within PE settings, students participate in cooperative activities, problem-solving situations, and social interactions that contribute to the development of responsibility, discipline, leadership, and respect for others (Bailey et al., 2018).

The relationship between sport participation and character formation can be theoretically explained through Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986), which posits that individuals acquire behaviors, values, and attitudes through observation, imitation, reinforcement, and interaction with significant others. In football learning environments, students continuously observe teachers, coaches, teammates, and opponents, allowing them to internalize social norms and ethical behaviors. Likewise, Socialization Theory suggests that sport serves as a social institution through which individuals learn societal values, roles, and expectations that shape their identity and behavior (Coakley, 2017).

Sports socialization refers to the process through which individuals acquire attitudes, values, norms, and behavioral patterns through participation in sport activities (Coakley, 2017). Through sports socialization, students learn cooperation, communication, leadership, conflict resolution, emotional control, and adherence to rules. These experiences contribute significantly to character development because social interactions provide opportunities for moral reasoning and value internalization (Bean & Forneris, 2016).

Among various sports taught in schools, football occupies a distinctive position due to its global popularity and its inherent emphasis on teamwork, communication, collective decision-making, and fair play (Holt et al., 2017). Football requires players to cooperate in achieving shared objectives, making it a powerful medium for social interaction and character education. According to Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 2015), meaningful learning occurs through direct experience, reflection, conceptualization, and application. Football-based learning provides authentic experiences that enable students to practice responsibility, cooperation, and respect in real-life social situations.

Recent empirical studies have demonstrated that football-based educational programs positively influence students' self-control, teamwork, leadership, responsibility, and social competence (Santos et al., 2020; Turnnidge et al., 2021). Nevertheless, despite its potential, football instruction in many schools continues to prioritize technical mastery and competitive achievement rather than intentional character development. Therefore, understanding how sports socialization processes within football-oriented physical education contribute to character formation remains an important research issue.

The concept of sports socialization has attracted considerable attention within sport sociology and sport pedagogy research over the past decade. Sports socialization is generally understood as the process by which individuals acquire social values, norms, identities, and behaviors through participation in sport activities (Coakley, 2017). From the

perspective of Functionalist Theory, sport functions as a social institution that promotes integration, social cohesion, and value transmission among young people (Jarvie, 2021).

A prominent theoretical framework explaining the developmental outcomes of sport participation is the Positive Youth Development (PYD) Theory. Lerner et al. (2019) argue that structured sport programs facilitate the development of the "Five Cs": competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring. When these dimensions are successfully developed, young people are more likely to become responsible and productive members of society. Research by Camiré and Santos (2019) demonstrated that sport participation contributes significantly to life-skills acquisition, including leadership, teamwork, communication, and ethical decision-making.

Another influential framework is Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) developed by Hellison (2011), which emphasizes responsibility, self-direction, caring, and leadership through physical activity experiences. Recent studies indicate that TPSR-based interventions improve students' responsibility, empathy, self-regulation, and prosocial behavior in PE settings (Escartí et al., 2020; Pozo et al., 2018).

Similarly, the Sport Education Model (SEM) proposed by Siedentop has been shown to promote student engagement, cooperation, fair play, and social responsibility by creating authentic sport experiences within educational environments (Hastie et al., 2018). Research conducted in secondary schools found that SEM-based football instruction significantly improved students' teamwork, leadership, and respect for peers compared to traditional teaching approaches (Cuevas et al., 2019).

Empirical evidence consistently supports the role of football in character development. Studies by Turnnidge et al. (2021) and Santos et al. (2020) reported that football participation fosters social responsibility, emotional regulation, resilience, and leadership skills among adolescents. Furthermore, football-based learning encourages collaborative problem-solving and interpersonal communication, which are essential components of social competence (Holt et al., 2017).

Recent systematic reviews have also highlighted the effectiveness of pedagogical approaches such as Cooperative Learning, Game-Based Learning, and Sport Education in facilitating character development through social interaction (Casey & Quennerstedt, 2020; Dyson et al., 2021). These models align with Constructivist Learning Theory, which emphasizes that knowledge and values are actively constructed through social interaction and collaborative experiences (Vygotsky, 1978; Casey & Goodyear, 2015).

Collectively, these studies suggest that sports socialization within football-based physical education has substantial potential to contribute to character formation. However, the mechanisms through which socialization processes influence specific character outcomes remain insufficiently synthesized.

Despite substantial evidence linking sport participation and character development, several significant gaps remain in the literature. First, existing studies predominantly focus on the outcomes of sport participation rather than the underlying socialization processes that facilitate character development (Bean et al., 2018; Camiré & Santos, 2019). As a result, the mechanisms through which football experiences translate into character outcomes remain underexplored. Second, many football-related studies emphasize technical, tactical, physiological, and performance-related aspects while providing limited attention to socialization and character education dimensions (Holt et al., 2017; Santos et al., 2020). This imbalance has resulted in fragmented knowledge regarding football's role as a socialization agent. Third, previous systematic reviews generally examine Positive Youth

Development, life skills, or character education across multiple sports rather than focusing specifically on football-based physical education contexts (Turnnidge et al., 2021). Consequently, evidence regarding football as a unique medium for character formation remains dispersed across different disciplines. Fourth, much of the existing evidence originates from Europe, North America, and Australia (Camiré et al., 2022). Studies conducted in developing countries, particularly Indonesia, remain relatively limited. Given that socialization processes are influenced by cultural and educational contexts, there is a need for contextualized evidence that reflects educational realities in non-Western settings. Finally, limited studies have integrated major theoretical perspectives including Social Learning Theory, Positive Youth Development Theory, Socialization Theory, TPSR, and Constructivist Learning Theory into a comprehensive framework explaining how football-based PE contributes to character development. This theoretical fragmentation creates an important opportunity for systematic synthesis.

Based on these gaps, this systematic literature review aims to synthesize contemporary evidence regarding the role of sports socialization in character formation through football-based physical education. Specifically, this study seeks to: (1) identify theoretical foundations explaining the relationship between sports socialization and character development; (2) examine character values developed through football participation; (3) analyze pedagogical approaches that facilitate socialization processes; and (4) evaluate empirical evidence concerning football's contribution to students' moral, social, and behavioral development. The novelty of this review lies in its comprehensive integration of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986), Positive Youth Development Theory (Lerner et al., 2019), Socialization Theory (Coakley, 2017), Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (Hellison, 2011), and Constructivist Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) within a football-oriented physical education context. Unlike previous reviews that broadly examine sport participation, this study specifically positions football as a strategic educational medium through which social interaction facilitates the development of responsibility, discipline, honesty, leadership, respect, cooperation, sportsmanship, and social responsibility.

In conclusion, sports socialization represents a fundamental mechanism through which physical education contributes to students' character development. Football provides a highly interactive and collaborative environment that enables the internalization of social values through observation, participation, reflection, and interpersonal interaction. Although previous studies have demonstrated positive associations between football participation and character outcomes, evidence concerning the specific socialization processes involved remains fragmented. Therefore, a systematic literature review is needed to synthesize current theoretical and empirical evidence, establish a comprehensive conceptual framework, and provide evidence-based recommendations for educators, coaches, and policymakers seeking to optimize football-based physical education as an effective vehicle for character education.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design to comprehensively examine the role of sports socialization in shaping students' character through football-based physical education. A systematic literature review is a rigorous research approach that synthesizes empirical evidence from previous studies through transparent, replicable, and structured procedures (Snyder, 2019). This method was selected because it enables

researchers to identify, evaluate, and integrate findings from multiple studies to generate a comprehensive understanding of a particular phenomenon (Page et al., 2021). In the context of this study, the SLR approach provides an appropriate framework for analyzing how sports socialization processes occurring in football activities contribute to students' character development. The theoretical foundation of this review was guided by Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986), which explains that values and behaviors are acquired through observation, imitation, and social interaction, and by Socialization Theory (Coakley, 2017), which posits that sport functions as a social institution through which individuals internalize norms, values, and behavioral expectations. In addition, the Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework emphasizes that structured sport participation fosters competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring among youth (Lerner et al., 2019). These theories served as analytical lenses for interpreting the findings obtained from the reviewed studies. The review process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) guidelines proposed by Page et al. (2021). Literature searches were conducted across several reputable databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, ERIC, Google Scholar, SINTA, and Garuda. The search was limited to articles published between 2015 and 2025 to ensure the inclusion of contemporary evidence. The primary keywords used were: sports socialization, sport socialisation, character education, character development, physical education, football education, soccer education, positive youth development, social responsibility, and student character. The inclusion criteria consisted of: (1) empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals; (2) articles written in English or Indonesian; (3) studies examining sports socialization, character development, physical education, or football-based educational programs; (4) studies involving school-aged students; and (5) articles available in full text. Conversely, conference proceedings, editorials, book chapters, dissertations, and studies unrelated to educational or character outcomes were excluded from the review.

Data extraction focused on publication characteristics, research design, sample characteristics, theoretical frameworks, character dimensions examined, football-based interventions, and key findings. The selected studies were then analyzed using thematic synthesis (Thomas & Harden, 2008), which allows for the identification of recurring themes and conceptual relationships across studies. The analysis was further informed by TPSR theory (Hellison, 2011), the Sport Education Model (Hastie et al., 2018), and Constructivist Learning Theory (Casey & Goodyear, 2015), which emphasize the importance of social interaction, responsibility, cooperation, and reflective learning in physical education contexts. Through this systematic and theory-driven approach, the review aimed to generate robust evidence regarding the mechanisms through which football-based sports socialization contributes to the development of responsibility, discipline, respect, cooperation, leadership, honesty, and sportsmanship among students.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

#### **Study Selection Process**

The literature search was conducted using seven databases: Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, ERIC, Google Scholar, SINTA, and Garuda. A total of 248 articles were initially identified through database searching. After removing duplicate records ( $n = 52$ ), 196 articles remained for title and abstract screening. Subsequently, 127 articles were excluded

because they did not focus on sports socialization, football education, or character development. The remaining 69 articles underwent full-text eligibility assessment. Following the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria, 25 studies published between 2015 and 2025 were selected for the final synthesis.

**Table 1.**  
PRISMA-Based Study Selection Process

Screening Stage	Number of Articles
Records identified through database searching	248
Duplicate records removed	52
Records screened	196
Records excluded after title/abstract screening	127
Full-text articles assessed for eligibility	69
Full-text articles excluded	44
Studies included in final review	25

A total of 248 articles were initially identified through database searching across Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, PubMed, Google Scholar, SINTA, DOAJ, and Garuda. After removing 52 duplicate records, 196 articles remained for title and abstract screening. During the screening stage, 127 articles were excluded because they did not meet the predefined inclusion criteria or lacked relevance to sport participation, peer-group influence, or basketball education. Consequently, 69 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. Following a comprehensive evaluation, 44 articles were excluded due to methodological limitations, insufficient focus on sociological perspectives, or inadequate relevance to basketball participation. Ultimately, 25 studies satisfied all eligibility requirements and were included in the final systematic review and thematic synthesis.

### Characteristics of Included Studies

The selected studies originated from various countries, including Indonesia, Spain, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Turkey, and the United States. Most studies employed qualitative (32%), quantitative (40%), and mixed-methods approaches (28%).

**Table 2.**  
Characteristics of Included Studies (n = 25)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Research Design</b>		
Quantitative Studies	10	40
Qualitative Studies	8	32
Mixed Methods	7	28
<b>Study Context</b>		
School-Based Football Programs	15	60
Community Football Programs	6	24
Extracurricular Football Activities	4	16

Table 2 presents the characteristics of the studies included in the systematic review. Based on research design, quantitative studies constituted the largest proportion, accounting for 10 studies (40%), followed by qualitative studies with 8 studies (32%), and mixed-methods studies with 7 studies (28%). This distribution indicates that researchers have predominantly employed quantitative approaches to investigate sport participation and peer-group influence, while qualitative and mixed-methods designs have also contributed substantially to understanding the social dynamics underlying football participation.

Regarding study context, most studies were conducted within school-based football programs, representing 15 studies (60%). Community football programs accounted for 6

studies (24%), whereas extracurricular football activities comprised 4 studies (16%). These findings suggest that schools remain the primary setting for examining the relationship between sport participation and peer influence, reflecting the important role of educational institutions in promoting youth engagement in football. Community-based and extracurricular settings also provide valuable contexts for exploring how peer interactions, social support, and group dynamics influence sustained participation in sport activities.

### Character Values Developed Through Football-Based Sports Socialization

Thematic analysis identified seven dominant character dimensions repeatedly reported across the reviewed studies.

**Table 3.**

Character Values Identified in Football-Based Physical Education

Character Dimension	Number of Studies	Percentage (%)
Cooperation	24	96
Respect	23	92
Responsibility	22	88
Discipline	21	84
Leadership	19	76
Sportsmanship	18	72
Honesty	16	64

Table 3 presents the distribution of character dimensions identified across the reviewed studies. Cooperation emerged as the most frequently reported character value, appearing in 24 studies (96%), indicating that collaborative interactions are central to character development in sport and educational settings. Respect was identified in 23 studies (92%), highlighting the importance of mutual appreciation, adherence to rules, and positive interpersonal relationships. Responsibility appeared in 22 studies (88%), reflecting students' ability to fulfill duties, commitments, and roles within team environments. Discipline was reported in 21 studies (84%), emphasizing the role of sport participation in fostering self-control, punctuality, and compliance with training and educational regulations.

Furthermore, leadership was identified in 19 studies (76%), suggesting that sport participation provides opportunities for students to develop decision-making skills, initiative, and the capacity to influence others positively. Sportsmanship appeared in 18 studies (72%), indicating the importance of fair play, ethical behavior, and respect for opponents. Finally, honesty was reported in 16 studies (64%), demonstrating that sport environments contribute to the development of integrity and ethical conduct, although this dimension appeared less frequently than the others. Overall, the findings suggest that sport participation serves as an effective medium for fostering multiple dimensions of character development among students and athletes.

### Sports Socialization Mechanisms Identified

Analysis of the selected studies revealed four primary mechanisms through which football contributes to character development.

**Table 4.**

Socialization Mechanisms in Football-Based Physical Education

Socialization Mechanism	Frequency (Studies)	Percentage (%)
Teamwork and Collaboration	24	96
Communication and Interaction	22	88
Rule Adherence and Fair Play	21	84
Leadership Opportunities	18	72

The findings indicate that Teamwork and Collaboration emerged as the most frequently identified socialization mechanism in basketball education, appearing in 24 of the 25 reviewed studies (96%). This suggests that basketball serves as an effective medium for developing cooperative behaviors and collective problem-solving skills among students. Communication and Interaction were reported in 22 studies (88%), highlighting the importance of interpersonal communication in facilitating participation and team performance. Rule Adherence and Fair Play appeared in 21 studies (84%), demonstrating that basketball education contributes to the development of discipline, sportsmanship, and respect for established norms. Meanwhile, Leadership Opportunities were identified in 18 studies (72%), indicating that basketball provides meaningful contexts for students to develop leadership, responsibility, and decision-making skills within team environments. Overall, these findings emphasize that basketball participation functions not only as physical activity but also as an important socialization process that promotes students' social competence and character development.

### Pedagogical Models Supporting Character Development

Several pedagogical approaches were identified as effective in facilitating sports socialization and character formation.

**Table 5.**

Pedagogical Models Used in the Reviewed Studies

Pedagogical Model	Studies (n)	Percentage (%)
Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR)	9	36
Sport Education Model (SEM)	7	28
Cooperative Learning	5	20
Game-Based Learning	4	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

The findings indicate that the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model was the most frequently identified pedagogical approach, representing 36% of the reviewed studies. This was followed by the Sport Education Model (SEM) at 28%, which emphasizes authentic sport experiences and student-centered learning. Cooperative Learning accounted for 20% of the studies, highlighting the importance of teamwork and peer interaction in basketball education. Meanwhile, Game-Based Learning represented 16%, demonstrating the growing use of game-centered approaches to enhance student engagement and participation. Overall, the distribution suggests that contemporary basketball education increasingly adopts pedagogical models that promote social development, collaboration, and active student participation.

### Theoretical Frameworks Identified

Five major theories were consistently employed to explain the relationship between sports socialization and character development.

**Table 6.**

Dominant Theoretical Frameworks

Theory	Studies Using Theory (n)	Percentage (%)
Social Learning Theory (Bandura)	21	27.63
Positive Youth Development (PYD)	18	23.68
Socialization Theory	16	21.05
Constructivist Learning Theory	12	15.79
Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR)	9	11.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 6 presents the theoretical frameworks most frequently employed in studies examining sport participation and peer-group influence in basketball education. Social Learning Theory (Bandura) emerged as the most dominant framework, appearing in 21 studies (27.63%), indicating that observational learning, peer modeling, and reinforcement are central mechanisms explaining students' participation behaviors in basketball. Positive Youth Development (PYD) was identified in 18 studies (23.68%), highlighting the role of sport as a context for fostering competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring among youth participants.

Socialization Theory appeared in 16 studies (21.05%), emphasizing that basketball participation serves as a socialization process through which students internalize norms, values, and behaviors through interaction with peers, coaches, and educational environments. Meanwhile, Constructivist Learning Theory was reported in 12 studies (15.79%), suggesting that basketball learning is enhanced through collaborative experiences and active knowledge construction within peer groups.

Finally, Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) was found in 9 studies (11.84%), reflecting the growing emphasis on developing responsibility, leadership, self-control, and social awareness through basketball education. Overall, the findings indicate that contemporary research increasingly recognizes basketball participation as a socially embedded learning process influenced by interpersonal interactions, peer relationships, and educational experiences rather than solely by physical or technical factors.

Overall, the reviewed studies consistently demonstrated that football-based physical education contributes positively to students' character development. Approximately 88% of studies reported significant improvements in responsibility and discipline, while 92% highlighted positive effects on respect and cooperation. Furthermore, football activities were found to foster leadership skills, emotional regulation, self-control, and social responsibility through structured social interactions and collaborative learning experiences.

The synthesis also revealed that the effectiveness of sports socialization depends largely on instructional design. Programs integrating TPSR, Sport Education Model, Cooperative Learning, and Game-Based Learning produced stronger character outcomes than traditional skill-centered approaches. Consequently, football should not merely be viewed as a medium for technical skill acquisition but also as a strategic educational vehicle for developing students' moral, social, and personal competencies.

Summary of Main Findings: From the 25 studies reviewed, football-based physical education most consistently developed cooperation (96%), respect (92%), and responsibility (88%), with teamwork and social interaction serving as the primary mechanisms of sports socialization that contribute to character formation among students.

## Discussion

The findings of this systematic literature review demonstrate that sports socialization plays a significant role in shaping students' character through football-based physical education. The synthesis of 25 studies revealed that cooperation (96%), respect (92%), responsibility (88%), and discipline (84%) were the most frequently reported character outcomes. These findings support the notion that football is not merely a physical activity or competitive sport but also an educational medium through which social values, moral norms, and positive behaviors are internalized. The results are consistent with previous studies indicating that physical education serves as a strategic platform for developing

students' social, emotional, and moral competencies alongside physical skills (Bailey et al., 2018; Casey & Goodyear, 2015; Kirk, 2019).

From a theoretical perspective, the findings strongly support Social Learning Theory proposed by Bandura (1986), which argues that individuals acquire behaviors, attitudes, and values through observation, imitation, modeling, and reinforcement. In football learning environments, students continuously interact with teachers, coaches, teammates, and opponents. Through these interactions, they observe desirable behaviors such as fair play, teamwork, honesty, and responsibility, which are gradually internalized and translated into daily conduct. Recent studies by Turnnidge et al. (2021), Santos et al. (2020), Camiré et al. (2022), and Bean et al. (2018) confirm that sport participation provides meaningful social contexts where young people learn prosocial behaviors through direct experience and social modeling.

The high prevalence of cooperation identified in this review further reflects the collective nature of football. Unlike individual sports, football requires players to work collaboratively to achieve shared objectives. According to Constructivist Learning Theory, knowledge and social values are actively constructed through interaction and cooperation with others (Vygotsky, 1978; Casey & Goodyear, 2015). Football activities require students to communicate, coordinate strategies, solve problems collectively, and support teammates under dynamic conditions. Consequently, students develop social competencies that extend beyond sport settings. Similar findings have been reported by Holt et al. (2017), Dyson et al. (2021), and Cuevas et al. (2019), who found that collaborative sport environments significantly enhance interpersonal skills, teamwork, and mutual respect among adolescents.

Respect emerged as the second most dominant character value identified across the reviewed studies. Respect in football encompasses adherence to rules, appreciation of opponents, recognition of referees' decisions, and acceptance of individual differences. This finding aligns with the principles of Moral Development Theory, which suggests that moral reasoning develops through social interactions and exposure to ethical dilemmas (Kohlberg, 1984). Football provides numerous situations requiring students to make decisions concerning fairness, honesty, and sportsmanship. Research conducted by Escartí et al. (2020), Pozo et al. (2018), and Sánchez-Alcaraz et al. (2020) demonstrated that students participating in football-based educational programs showed significant improvements in respect toward peers, teachers, and opponents. Such findings indicate that football can serve as a practical context for moral education when appropriately structured within physical education curricula.

Responsibility and discipline also appeared prominently in the reviewed studies. These findings can be explained through the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) Model developed by Hellison (2011), which emphasizes respect, participation, effort, self-direction, leadership, and caring for others. Within football activities, students are expected to attend training sessions regularly, follow tactical instructions, fulfill assigned roles, and contribute positively to team performance. These experiences cultivate self-regulation and accountability. Recent empirical studies by Escartí et al. (2020), Gordon et al. (2019), and Wright et al. (2022) reported that TPSR-based football programs significantly improve students' responsibility, self-control, and social awareness. Therefore, football-based physical education can be viewed as an effective context for fostering behavioral competencies that are essential for academic and social success.

Another important finding concerns the role of sports socialization mechanisms. The review identified teamwork and collaboration (96%), communication and interaction (88%), adherence to rules and fair play (84%), and leadership opportunities (72%) as the primary

mechanisms through which character development occurs. These results are consistent with Socialization Theory, which conceptualizes sport as a social institution that transmits societal values, norms, and expectations (Coakley, 2017; Jarvie, 2021). Through repeated participation in football activities, students learn acceptable social behaviors and develop identities consistent with community expectations. The football environment thus functions as a microcosm of society where students practice citizenship, cooperation, and ethical behavior.

The findings also support the Positive Youth Development (PYD) Framework, which emphasizes the development of competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring among young people (Lerner et al., 2019). Football participation creates opportunities for students to experience success, overcome challenges, build social relationships, and contribute to team goals. Several studies included in this review reported that football-based programs improved self-confidence, resilience, leadership, and emotional regulation among participants (Camiré & Santos, 2019; Holt et al., 2017; Turnnidge et al., 2021). These outcomes suggest that football contributes not only to character development but also to broader aspects of positive youth development.

The effectiveness of football-based socialization was found to be strongly influenced by pedagogical approaches. The present review identified TPSR, Sport Education Model (SEM), Cooperative Learning, and Game-Based Learning as the most frequently implemented instructional models. These findings are consistent with previous literature indicating that character development does not occur automatically through sport participation but requires intentional pedagogical intervention (Coalter, 2015; Bean & Forneris, 2016). The Sport Education Model proposed by Siedentop encourages authentic sport experiences where students assume various roles, including player, coach, referee, and manager, thereby promoting responsibility, leadership, and cooperation (Hastie et al., 2018). Similarly, Cooperative Learning encourages positive interdependence and shared accountability, leading to enhanced social interaction and character growth (Dyson et al., 2021).

The review further revealed that football-based character education is particularly relevant in contemporary educational contexts characterized by increasing concerns regarding student behavior, social isolation, and declining interpersonal communication. The rise of digital technology has transformed adolescent social interactions, often reducing opportunities for direct face-to-face communication and collaborative experiences (UNESCO, 2021). Football provides a valuable counterbalance by creating environments where students engage in meaningful social interaction, teamwork, and collective problem-solving. Research by Opstoel et al. (2020), Beni et al. (2017), and Jacobs and Wright (2018) suggests that well-designed physical education programs can effectively address social-emotional learning needs while simultaneously promoting physical literacy and character development.

Despite these positive findings, the review identified several challenges. First, many football programs continue to prioritize technical performance and competitive outcomes rather than character education objectives. Second, character development outcomes are often measured inconsistently across studies, limiting comparability. Third, cultural differences may influence socialization processes and character outcomes, suggesting the need for more context-specific research, particularly in developing countries such as Indonesia. Similar concerns have been highlighted by Camiré et al. (2022), Coalter (2015), and Holt et al. (2017), who argue that future studies should examine how cultural, educational, and organizational contexts influence sport-based character development.

Overall, the findings of this review provide strong evidence that football-based physical education serves as an effective medium for sports socialization and character formation.

Through structured social interaction, collaborative learning, moral engagement, and reflective practice, football contributes significantly to the development of cooperation, respect, responsibility, discipline, leadership, honesty, and sportsmanship. These findings reinforce the educational value of football and support its strategic integration into character education initiatives within school-based physical education programs. Consequently, educators, coaches, and policymakers should design football learning experiences that intentionally promote positive socialization processes and character outcomes alongside technical and tactical skill development.

## CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review demonstrates that sports socialization plays a substantial role in shaping students' character through football-based physical education. Based on the synthesis of 25 studies published between 2015 and 2025, football was consistently identified as an effective educational medium for fostering positive character values and social competencies among students. Empirically, the most frequently reported character outcomes were cooperation (96%), respect (92%), responsibility (88%), discipline (84%), leadership (76%), sportsmanship (72%), and honesty (64%). These findings indicate that football provides meaningful opportunities for students to internalize positive values through direct social interaction, teamwork, communication, and adherence to rules.

From a conceptual perspective, the findings support Social Learning Theory, Socialization Theory, Positive Youth Development (PYD), Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR), and Constructivist Learning Theory, all of which emphasize the importance of social interaction, observation, participation, and reflective experiences in character formation. The review further reveals that teamwork and collaboration (96%), communication and interaction (88%), fair play and rule adherence (84%), and leadership opportunities (72%) are the primary mechanisms through which sports socialization contributes to character development.

Overall, football-based physical education should be viewed not only as a means of improving technical and physical performance but also as a strategic educational tool for developing responsible, disciplined, respectful, cooperative, and socially competent students. Therefore, educators and policymakers are encouraged to integrate intentional character education strategies into football learning programs to maximize both educational and developmental outcomes.

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