

ABSTRACT

COMPARISON OF TEAM COHESION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORKS OF FEMALE SOCCER ATHLETES IN COEDUCATIONAL VERSUS SINGLE-SEX ENVIRONMENTS

This study examines differences in cohesion and the perceptions of social support of female student-athletes. Participants were women's soccer players from Division III coeducational and single-sex colleges. The results determined significant differences between groups on both variables. More specifically, the groups differed on two scales and one subscale, with the single-sex population consistently scoring higher for each subscale of cohesion. In terms of social support, the groups differed on six of the eight scales. The single-sex group reported they derived support from teammates, whereas the coeducational group received support from friends. Significance demonstrated by this sample reinforces the viability of Division III athletes and the single-sex population in future sport research. Suggestions for further study focus on relationships between living groups and social climate and the effects on cohesion and social interaction between teammates, as well as the relationship between self-esteem and developing effective support networks for female athletes.

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