

Rugby in Madagascar: A Lever for Personal, Educational, and Cultural Development

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Abstract— Rugby in Madagascar is more than just a sport: it is a powerful tool for personal, educational, and cultural development. Introduced in 1896 by French colonists, it gradually took root in Malagasy culture and played a key role in national emancipation. Today, mass rugby is seen as a tool for social transformation, enhancing self-esteem, cultural integration, and educational skills. However, several obstacles hinder its growth, such as limited media visibility (55%) and lack of qualified coaching (30%). Despite this, the benefits are clear: 95% of surveyed players reported improved self-confidence, 80% noted positive impacts on their mental and physical health, and 55% of educators actively integrate Malagasy cultural elements into their teaching. This study highlights three key variables to maximize rugby's impact: the quality of coaching, integration of local traditions, and individual development. To address current challenges, the authors recommend developing coach training, incorporating traditional rugby into the education system, and establishing a support fund for sports infrastructure. Malagasy rugby holds great potential to contribute to the social and educational development of its participants. Its cultural integration, educational role, and community-building capacity make it a force for progress that deserves greater structure and promotion.

Keywords— Rugby, Madagascar, personal development, education, cultural integration, social cohesion, coaching, Malagasy traditions, sport for development, self-esteem, mental and physical health.

I. INTRODUCTION

Rugby was introduced to Madagascar in 1896 by French colonial troops and gradually established itself as a unique cultural and social phenomenon in Africa. Initially played by military personnel and colonists, it was quickly adopted by the Malagasy elites of the Highlands, who saw it as a tool for national emancipation. The first matches, organized in 1905 in Mahamasina between French soldiers and local players—nicknamed "Zanaky ny maraina" (Sons of the Morning)—marked the beginning of an enthusiasm that culminated in the historic 1957 tour of the Malagasy team in France. After gaining independence in 1960, rugby became more democratic, expanding from the Merina elites to the lower classes of the Highlands. Since its introduction during the French colonization, rugby in Madagascar has played a significant role

in the country's social, cultural, and socioeconomic development. Initially limited to military and colonial circles, it was embraced by Malagasy elites as a means to support national emancipation (Combeau-Mari, 2011). Over the past few decades, rugby has significantly expanded in Madagascar, transforming not only the sports landscape but also influencing various aspects of Malagasy society. This process has turned rugby into a flagship sport of Malagasy culture, though it remains marked by social and economic challenges related to the marginalization of its players.

This dynamic reflects a global trend in which sport is increasingly seen as a powerful vehicle for development. International organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and UNESCO emphasize the impact of sports—including rugby—on personal, socioeconomic, and cultural development, as well as the promotion of peace and social cohesion (UNESCO, 2017). In Madagascar, this vision materializes through grassroots sports programs centered around rugby, which is increasingly adopted as a tool for social transformation. Sport-driven development highlights several crucial dimensions. Studies show that playing rugby helps individuals develop psychosocial skills (Carron & Brawley, 2008) and resilience to social and economic challenges (Coalter, 2013). Furthermore, rugby education, when approached in a structured way, seems to foster socio-affective and cognitive development in youth. The impact of rugby goes beyond sport itself, contributing to personal development, cultural enrichment, and socioeconomic progress. Major rugby events, such as the Rugby World Cup, have demonstrated positive economic impacts on host regions, primarily through spectator spending (Barget & Gougnet, 2010a). These events also stimulate local tourism, with strategies developed to attract and manage tourist flows (Charrier & Jourdan, 2014).

As a sport, rugby is a space of socialization through values such as integrity, fair play, solidarity, discipline, respect, and passion—values that are essential for civic education in Madagascar, i.e., integrating individuals into society. Moreover, as a team sport, rugby fosters communication and

teamwork among athletes. In a sports group, achieving a common goal requires information sharing, interaction, and communicative influence that lead to a shared perception (Galliena Andreeva, 1984). This is even more relevant in mass rugby, where self-esteem and determination contribute to civic education, thus promoting personal, cultural, and socioeconomic development. According to Jean-Pierre de Sardan, development is a form of change that cannot be understood in isolation. Yet, several blocking factors and problems prevent the valorization of rugby practice.

The development of mass rugby in Madagascar faces several major structural obstacles that limit its transformative potential. According to our data, 55% of respondents lament the lack of media visibility, while 30% point to insufficient qualified coaching. These constraints are particularly unfortunate given that the benefits of rugby in terms of personal and cultural development are clearly established: 95% of players report improved self-esteem, 80% note significant progress in their mental and physical health, and 55% of educators actively incorporate Malagasy cultural elements into their instruction. In this context, we ask: How does the practice of mass rugby contribute to the personal and cultural development of Malagasy people, and what factors condition this impact? We hypothesize that regular rugby practice positively influences the personal and cultural development of Malagasy individuals, based on two key variables: the quality of coaching and the integration of Malagasy cultural elements.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research adopted a mixed-methods approach to provide a nuanced analysis of rugby's contributions in Madagascar. It began with a literature review to examine prior studies and available data. Researchers also conducted participant and direct observations, and used Android phones to collect photographic evidence.

Two types of survey forms were used:

- Form #1 for teachers and coaches
- Form #3 for members of the Malagasy Rugby Federation and department heads within both institutions

Case studies were also conducted in different regions to observe the effects of rugby in various local contexts. The distribution of these survey forms took place between August 24 and September 1, 2024, at the following locations:

- Maki Stadium in Andohatapenaka
- Malacam Stadium in Antanimena
- National Sports Academy in Ampefiloha
- Manjakaray
- Tongarivo Stadium
- Ministry of Youth and Sports in Ambohitajato
- Ministry of National Education in Anosy

Data analysis combined the results of surveys, interviews (via Google Forms), and case studies to identify trends, impacts, and mechanisms through which rugby contributes to development in Madagascar. Based on this analysis, the study also offers recommendations to maximize these benefits.

III. RESULTS

The analysis of data collected via Google Forms and testimonies from rugby players shows that rugby contributes significantly to personal, social, and socio-economic development in Madagascar. However, challenges remain, and recommendations are needed to achieve effective development.

A. Impact of Rugby on Personal Development

a. Influence of Rugby on Self-Esteem

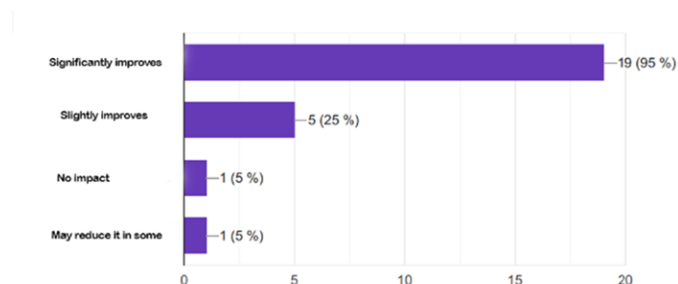


Figure 1: Self-Esteem

This figure illustrates the impact of rugby on self-esteem. Interpretation of the results:

- Significantly improves self-esteem (95%): 19 out of 20 respondents believe that rugby has a very positive impact on self-esteem. This indicates that most practitioners see rugby as a way to boost their self-confidence.
- Slightly improves self-esteem (25%): 5 respondents consider that rugby has a positive but moderate impact on self-esteem. This suggests that while they experience benefits, these are perceived as less intense.
- No impact (5%): 1 person believes that rugby has no particular effect on self-esteem. This may stem from individual experiences or a neutral perception of the sport.
- May reduce self-esteem in some cases (5%): 1 respondent feels that rugby can sometimes negatively affect self-esteem. This result could be due to factors such as competition, social pressure, or failure within the sport.

Conclusion:

A vast majority (95%) consider that rugby significantly enhances self-esteem. A small portion (5%) report potential negative effects, which could be linked to specific contexts such as the demands of the sport, comparison with others, or injuries. Overall, this study confirms that rugby is widely perceived as a confidence-building sport that supports personal development.

b. Influence of Rugby on Mental and Physical Health

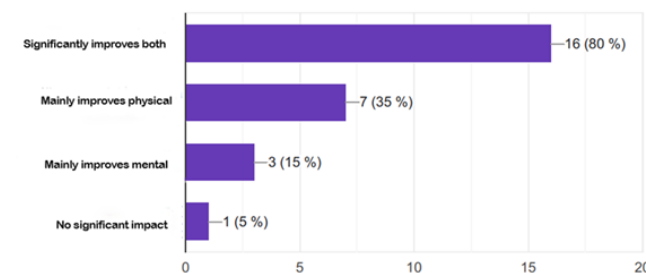


Figure 2: Mental and Physical Health

This figure presents the impact of rugby on mental and physical health.

Interpretation of the results:

Significantly improves both mental and physical health (80%): 16 out of 20 respondents believe that rugby significantly enhances both mental and physical well-being. This indicates that rugby is seen as a comprehensive sport, beneficial for both the body and the mind.

Primarily improves physical health (35%): 7 respondents consider that rugby mainly impacts physical health. This is logical, given the physically demanding nature of rugby, which requires endurance, strength, and agility.

Primarily improves mental health (15%): 3 individuals feel that rugby mainly benefits mental health. This may be attributed to the values inherent in the sport: team spirit, self-discipline, stress management, and resilience under pressure.

No significant impact (5%): 1 respondent perceives no notable effect of rugby on either mental or physical health. This could stem from personal perceptions or a different experience with the sport.

A large majority (80%) recognize the positive impact of rugby on both mental and physical health. The physical benefits are slightly more acknowledged than the mental ones. Only a small percentage (5%) does not perceive any significant benefit. These results confirm that rugby is regarded as a sport that contributes to overall well-being, fostering physical development as well as mental balance.

c. Influence of Rugby on Stress Management

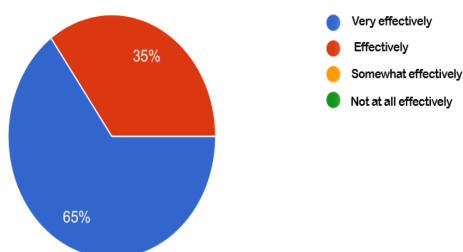


Figure 3: Stress Management

This figure presents the responses of 20 individuals regarding the extent to which rugby helps manage stress.

Analysis of the results:

- 65% of respondents (13 people) believe that rugby is *very effective* in helping to manage stress.
- 35% of respondents (7 people) think it is *effective*.

Interpretation:

Rugby is broadly perceived as an excellent stress management tool, with 100% of respondents finding it either effective or very effective. The majority (65%) consider it very effective, suggesting that rugby may play an important role in emotional regulation and mental well-being. The absence of negative responses indicates that rugby is unanimously recognized as beneficial for stress management among the participants.

Rugby is widely acknowledged as an excellent means of managing stress. Its influence goes beyond physical activity, extending to emotional regulation, mental wellness, and social

cohesion, making it a valuable discipline for personal development.

d. Influence of Rugby on Self-Awareness

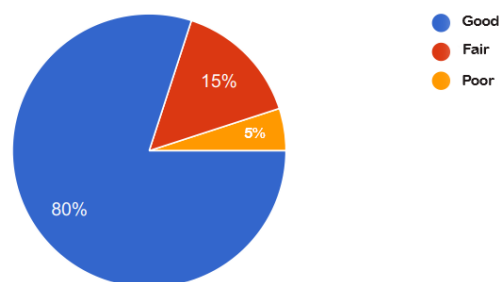


Figure 4: Self-Awareness

This figure illustrates the responses of 20 individuals regarding the influence of rugby on self-awareness.

Analysis of the results:

- 80% of respondents (16 people) believe that rugby has a *positive influence* ("Good") on self-awareness.
- 15% of respondents (3 people) consider that it has a *moderate influence* ("Fair").
- 5% of respondents (1 person) feel that rugby has a *negative impact* on self-awareness.

Interpretation:

- The majority (80%) see rugby as a beneficial factor for self-awareness, suggesting that the sport helps players better understand themselves, build confidence, and strengthen their self-esteem.
- A smaller proportion (15%) finds its impact to be moderate, which may indicate that, for them, the effects of rugby on self-awareness are less pronounced.
- Only one person (5%) perceives rugby as having a negative effect on self-awareness, which may be due to a specific personal experience or a different perception of the sport.

These results show that rugby is generally regarded as a sport that contributes positively to personal development and self-awareness, thus reinforcing its educational and individual growth potential.

e. Rugby and Language Skills Improvement

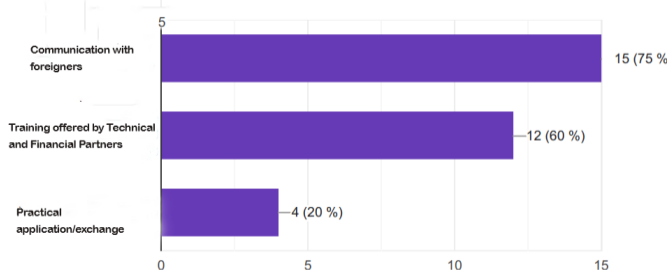


Figure 5: Linguistic Skills

This chart presents the responses of 20 individuals regarding the means that promote linguistic understanding.

Analysis of the results:

- 75% of respondents (15 people) believe that *communicating with foreigners* is the main way to improve language comprehension.
- 60% of respondents (12 people) consider that *training provided by Technical and Financial Partners* plays an important role.
- 20% of respondents (4 people) think that *practicing the subject and participating in exchanges* is a key factor.

Indeed, linguistic immersion and interaction with foreigners are perceived as the most effective methods (75%). This suggests that direct exposure to the language through real-life interactions is crucial for learning. The training offered by a technical and financial partner (60%) is also widely recognized as beneficial. This indicates that structured programs with technical and financial support are well-received and considered effective. The practice of the subject and exchanges (20%) are mentioned less frequently. This may suggest that, although practical, these methods are viewed as having a more limited impact compared to other approaches.

The study highlights that direct exposure to the language and formal training are the two main methods considered effective for promoting linguistic comprehension. While exchange programs and self-directed practice are mentioned less often, they can still serve as valuable complements to the learning process.

B. Impact of Rugby on Cultural Development

a. Integration of Malagasy Traditions and Culture into Rugby

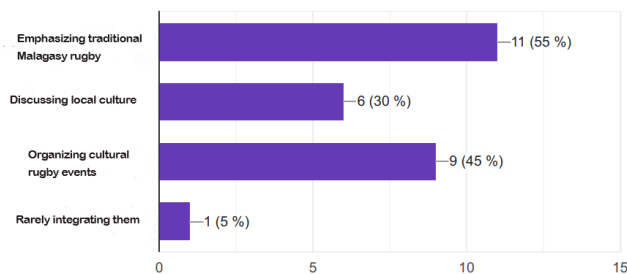


Figure 6: Tradition and Malagasy Culture

This chart illustrates how 20 respondents incorporate Malagasy traditions and culture into their rugby lessons.

Analysis of the results:

- 55% of respondents (11 people) emphasize *traditional Malagasy rugby* as a way to integrate local culture.
- 45% of respondents (9 people) organize *cultural events* related to rugby.
- 30% of respondents (6 people) include Malagasy culture through *discussions about local traditions*.
- 5% of respondents (1 person) reported *rarely integrating* cultural elements into their lessons.

More specifically, traditional Malagasy rugby is the most common method (55%) used to promote cultural integration. This reflects a clear intention to preserve and pass on the local identity of the sport. Cultural events (45%) also play an important role, offering opportunities to bring players together around shared values and traditions. Speaking about local

culture (30%) is less common, possibly because verbal discussions are perceived as less immersive than physical practice or events. Only a small portion (5%) of respondents does not include cultural traditions in their teaching, indicating a strong commitment to incorporating Malagasy heritage in rugby education.

Rugby in this context goes beyond being just a sport — it acts as a cultural and identity-building tool by integrating local traditions. The majority of respondents strive to adopt an active approach in transmitting and promoting Malagasy culture through their rugby lessons.

C. Context and Perception of Rugby in Sports Education

a. What is the main role of rugby in the sports education of youth?

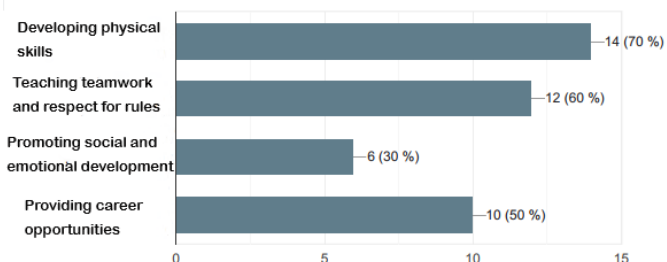


Figure 7: Role of Rugby in Education

This chart illustrates respondents' perceptions of the primary role of rugby in the sports education of youth in Madagascar, based on a sample of 20 participants. The results are interpreted as follows:

1. Development of physical abilities (70% – 14 respondents) → The majority of participants view rugby primarily as a sport that enhances the physical capabilities of young people. This highlights the importance of the athletic dimension of rugby in Madagascar.
2. Teaching teamwork and respect for rules (60% – 12 respondents) → A significant proportion of respondents also acknowledge rugby's role in teaching social values such as discipline, cooperation, and respect for the rules.
3. Providing career opportunities (50% – 10 respondents) → Half of the respondents believe that rugby can serve as a professional springboard, reflecting the perception that the sport can offer career prospects for youth, both locally and internationally.
4. Promoting social and emotional development (30% – 6 respondents) → Fewer respondents consider rugby to be a tool for social and emotional development, although this is an important facet of the sport.

In Madagascar, rugby is mainly perceived as a sport that strengthens physical ability and instills values such as teamwork and discipline. However, its social and emotional dimensions appear to be less emphasized compared to its physical and professional aspects. These findings may reflect

how rugby is currently practiced and promoted in the country, potentially with a stronger focus on performance and career opportunities.

D. Teaching Strategies and Challenges

a. Strategies Used to Maximize Rugby's Benefits for Students

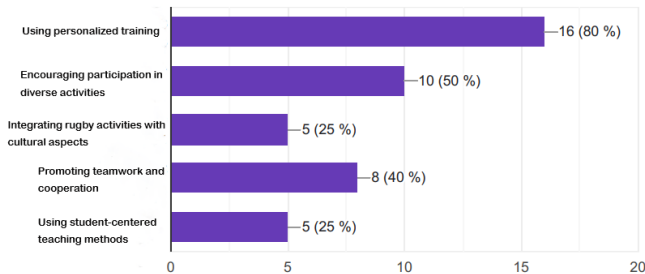


Figure 8: Teaching Strategy

This chart highlights the various pedagogical strategies adopted by rugby educators to maximize the benefits of the sport for students.

The data is based on responses from 20 participants:

- 80% (16 educators) use personalized training techniques to improve individual performance.
- 50% (10 educators) encourage versatility by having players take on different roles.
- 40% (8 educators) emphasize teamwork and cooperation to strengthen group cohesion.
- 25% (5 educators) integrate educational themes beyond rugby (health, discipline, leadership).
- 25% (5 educators) apply methods based on analysis and reflection, promoting a deeper tactical understanding of the game.

Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Strong emphasis on individualized training (80% of educators)

- Personalized training is the most commonly used approach.
- This reflects a desire to tailor learning to each player's specific needs, in order to maximize their technical and physical development.
- It also enables more effective progress monitoring and long-term performance optimization.

Promotion of versatility and adaptability (50% of educators)

- Half of the educators encourage players to take on a variety of roles, which enhances their overall understanding of the game.
- By experiencing different positions and responsibilities, players develop tactical awareness, decision-making skills, and on-field adaptability.
- This approach also boosts self-confidence and fosters initiative.

Focus on teamwork and cooperation (40% of educators)

- As rugby is a team sport, this dimension is essential.

- By emphasizing teamwork, educators help build group cohesion, communication, and solidarity among players.
- It also promotes key values such as respect, mutual support, and emotional regulation during play.

Interest in broader educational approaches (25% of educators)

- Some educators go beyond purely technical training by integrating educational themes like health, discipline, and leadership.
- This approach aims to develop players who are not only effective on the field, but also responsible and engaged individuals off the field.
- A quarter of educators also encourage analysis and reflection on the game to help players refine their strategic and tactical understanding.

The pedagogical methods used by rugby educators in Madagascar are diverse and complementary, combining individual development, collective learning, and broader educational goals. The emphasis on personalized training (80%) shows a strong focus on optimizing player performance, but could be further enriched by reinforcing collective strategies. Versatility and teamwork are also key pillars of training, preparing players to be more complete and reactive on the field. Meanwhile, the integration of educational values and tactical reflection, though less widespread, offers promising avenues for enhancing the players' overall rugby experience. Educators are adopting a holistic and evolving approach that blends performance, game intelligence, and core values—contributing to the development of well-rounded athletes capable of thriving both on and off the pitch.

- b. What are the main benefits rugby brings to youth in sports education?

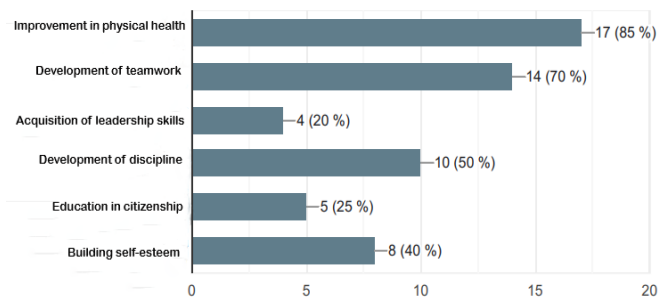


Figure 9: Benefits of Rugby

This chart highlights the main benefits that rugby offers young people within the context of sports education in Madagascar, based on a sample of 20 respondents.

Interpretation of Results

Improved physical health (85%): Rugby is primarily perceived as a sport that significantly benefits young people's physical well-being. This is an expected result, given the sport's intensity, which demands strength, endurance, and agility.

Development of team spirit (70%): A core aspect of rugby is collective effort. This percentage reflects a strong recognition of rugby as a sport that fosters cooperation and solidarity among players.

Discipline development (50%): Half of the respondents emphasized rugby's role in instilling discipline. This highlights the sport's inherent rigor and the values it teaches, particularly respect for rules, teammates, and opponents.

Boost in self-esteem (40%): Rugby also appears to support personal growth, with 40% of participants reporting that it helps young people build self-confidence through sporting achievements and team cohesion.

Citizenship education (25%): One-quarter of respondents believe rugby contributes to citizenship education, likely through the promotion of values such as respect, inclusion, and mutual support.

Development of leadership skills (20%): Only 20% of those surveyed saw rugby as a tool for developing leadership skills. This may be due to the fact that leadership is typically required in specific positions on the field, such as team captains or playmakers.

Overall, the findings indicate that rugby in Madagascar is mainly perceived as beneficial to physical health and teamwork. It is also recognized for promoting discipline and self-confidence. However, aspects such as leadership and citizenship education are less emphasized, pointing to potential areas of improvement in both the practice and teaching of rugby.

c. *What challenges do educators face when integrating rugby into school programs?*

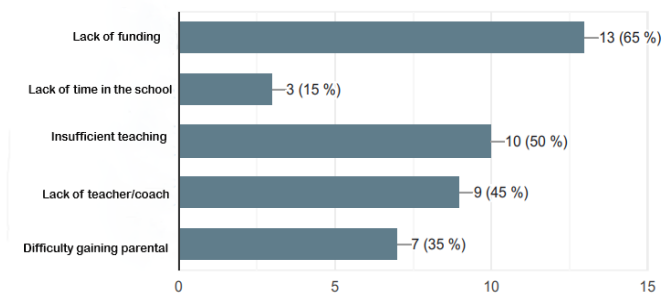


Figure 10: Educational Challenges

Interpretation of Results

Lack of funding (65%): A majority of respondents (65%) identified insufficient funding as the main barrier to rugby development. The sport requires appropriate equipment and qualified coaching staff—investments that many schools are unable to afford. This financial limitation significantly hinders both the accessibility and quality of rugby programs.

Shortage of instructional materials (50%): Half of the participants highlighted the lack of rugby-specific teaching materials, such as balls, protective gear, and appropriate uniforms. This deficiency restricts both the practice and effective teaching of the sport, limiting its integration into physical education programs.

Lack of training for teachers and coaches (45%): Approximately 45% of respondents emphasized the shortage of training for educators and coaches as a major challenge. Well-trained staff are essential to ensure the safe and pedagogically sound practice of rugby. Without adequate training, schools

may be reluctant to adopt the sport due to concerns about injury and improper technique.

Difficulty in gaining parental support (35%): More than one-third of respondents reported parental reluctance to allow their children to play rugby. This hesitation may stem from concerns about injury, stereotypes portraying rugby as a violent sport, or a general lack of information about its physical and psychosocial benefits.

Lack of time in school timetables (15%): Only 15% of participants indicated that a lack of time within school schedules poses a significant obstacle. This suggests that, although rugby requires a substantial time commitment, the primary barriers are not related to scheduling, but rather to financial, material, and human resource constraints.

Overall, the integration of rugby into Malagasy schools is primarily hindered by financial, material, and human challenges. The absence of funding restricts the acquisition of equipment and the training of educators, thereby slowing the implementation of rugby programs in schools. Additionally, securing parental support remains a key issue. To address these barriers, solutions such as seeking sponsorships, investing in educator training, and launching awareness campaigns aimed at families could be implemented to promote greater acceptance and accessibility of rugby in the educational context.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Hypothesis Confirmation and Literature Comparison

The findings confirm that Malagasy rugby serves as a powerful catalyst for personal development, in line with Carron and Brawley's (2008) assertion that "team sports, through their cooperative structure, foster self-confidence and a sense of belonging." Notably, 95% of Malagasy players surveyed reported an improvement in self-esteem—a proportion higher than that observed in South Africa, where Kidd (2008) found a similar effect among 78% of players. This discrepancy may be attributed to the unique cultural role of rugby in Madagascar, where the sport holds a particularly prominent social position.

B. Malagasy Cultural Specificities

The incorporation of local traditions by 55% of Malagasy rugby clubs constitutes a distinctive cultural feature. As Combeau-Mari (2011) notes, "rugby in Madagascar became 'Malagachized' well before it was democratized, adopting local rituals such as the *hira gasy* prior to matches." This contrasts with the case of Senegal, where, according to Diouf (2019), football remains largely resistant to local cultural influences. Such cultural hybridization appears to enhance the sport's social impact in Madagascar—an aspect that UNESCO's 2017 report on sport in Africa did not fully acknowledge.

C. Structural Constraints and Regional Comparisons

The lack of resources represents a major impediment to the development of rugby in Madagascar. This constraint appears more severe than in Kenya, where Barget and Gouguet (2010) reported that only 40% of clubs face comparable challenges. However, Coalter (2013) suggests that "material deficiencies may paradoxically encourage pedagogical creativity." In Madagascar, this resilience is evident in the frequent use of

informal playing grounds. Nonetheless, unlike Rwanda—where Ntoumanis (2020) reports government investment in regional sports centers—Madagascar continues to suffer from a lack of public policy supporting the development of sport.

D. Educational Perspectives

Data indicate that 70% of teachers express a need for additional training, a finding that corroborates Balyi and Hamilton's (2004) conclusion that "the quality of educational supervision determines 70% of sport's psychosocial impact." However, parental reluctance remains an obstacle, with 35% of surveyed parents expressing concerns—significantly higher than in Tunisia, where Charrier and Jourdan (2014) reported a more favorable perception of rugby. In Madagascar, such hesitation is often linked to the perception of rugby as a violent sport. Awareness campaigns, modeled after Moroccan programs described by Mascret (2018), could help reshape these perceptions and foster greater acceptance of rugby in educational settings.

E. Recommendations

- Priority 1: Implement training programs for coaches in partnership with World Rugby, drawing on the South African model described by Kidd (2008).
- Priority 2: Integrate traditional rugby practices into national school curricula, following Jean-Pierre Famose's recommendations concerning culturally embedded sports.
- Priority 3: Establish a dedicated fund for sports equipment and training, inspired by the Rwandan Sports Fund initiative referenced by Ntoumanis (2020).

Adopting these measures would enable Madagascar to overcome existing limitations and unlock the full potential of rugby as a tool for personal, educational, and cultural development.

V. CONCLUSION

Rugby in Madagascar has emerged as more than just a sport. It functions as a vector for personal growth, educational engagement, and cultural expression—its impact extending far beyond the playing field. This study has demonstrated that rugby contributes not only to self-esteem and social cohesion but also to cultural integration and the development of educational competencies. However, structural constraints such as limited funding and lingering negative perceptions continue to hinder its wider diffusion.

Our data confirm that regular rugby practice significantly enhances the personal development of Malagasy players. Specifically, 95% of respondents reported increased self-confidence—a rate that surpasses observations from other African contexts, such as South Africa, where the figure stands at 78% (Kidd, 2008). This distinction reflects rugby's central societal role in Madagascar, where it is viewed as both a structuring and unifying activity. Unlike in many other African countries where football dominates, Madagascar has culturally appropriated rugby, aligning it with local identities. As Combeau-Mari (2011) emphasizes, "rugby in Madagascar became 'Malagachized' well before it was democratized." This cultural anchoring strengthens the sport's social significance

and ensures its sustained presence in national sporting practices.

Despite these advantages, rugby in Madagascar remains constrained by significant structural barriers. A lack of material resources, cited by 65% of surveyed clubs, presents a critical challenge. This is particularly striking when compared to Kenya, where this concern is reported by only 40% of clubs (Barget & Gouguet, 2010). Yet, Coalter's (2013) observation that "material deficiencies can foster pedagogical creativity" is illustrated by the inventive use of informal fields throughout Madagascar—a testament to the adaptability of rugby stakeholders in resource-limited environments. Nonetheless, unlike Rwanda, which benefits from government-supported regional sports centers (Ntoumanis, 2020), Madagascar lacks coherent public policies aimed at advancing sport in general, and rugby in particular.

Further integrating rugby into the national education system represents a strategic opportunity to amplify its impact. Our findings show that 70% of teachers are seeking further professional development—consistent with Balyi and Hamilton's (2004) emphasis on the decisive role of school-based support. At the same time, parental engagement must be strengthened, as 35% of parents still perceive rugby as violent—more than in Tunisia, where Charrier and Jourdan (2014) reported lower levels of concern. This perception gap could be addressed through awareness initiatives modeled on successful Moroccan campaigns (Mascret, 2018).

In light of these findings, several actionable recommendations emerge. First, the training of coaches should be prioritized through collaboration with international organizations such as World Rugby, following the South African model (Kidd, 2008). Second, traditional rugby should be formally incorporated into school curricula, in accordance with Jean-Pierre Famose's advocacy for culturally rooted sports. Finally, the establishment of a dedicated fund—drawing inspiration from the Rwandan Sports Fund (Ntoumanis, 2020)—would provide essential support for infrastructure and capacity-building, ensuring more inclusive and sustainable rugby development.

In conclusion, this research underscores the transformative potential of rugby as a driver of social and educational change. Despite enduring structural obstacles and certain cultural perceptions, it is clear that rugby significantly contributes to the personal and cultural development of Malagasy individuals. Its growing integration into national identity, its demonstrable educational value, and its capacity to unify diverse social groups position it as a strategic asset for the country's future. Realizing this potential will require stronger political commitment and the reinforcement of locally-driven initiatives aimed at giving Malagasy rugby the recognition and momentum it rightfully deserves.

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