



**VICTORIA  
UNIVERSITY**  
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

# SPORTS UNIFORMS FOR GIRLS

INSIGHTS ON WHAT GIRLS WANT



FOREVER. FASTER.



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## A WORLD WITHOUT BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION, WHERE EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO PLAY, CAN PLAY.

Dear reader,

At PUMA, we are dedicated to advancing women in sport. Especially for young girls going through puberty, body image plays a key role in participation in sports and other physical activities – sports uniforms are an important influence.

We started researching and collecting data on the subject, wanting to understand the aspects of sport uniforms that prevent or discourage girls to participate in sport. We quickly came to realise that there was very little information available.

In order to take a step towards narrowing that knowledge gap, we teamed up with the expert team from the Institute of Health and Sport, Victoria University in Australia to conduct research to determine girls' preferences for sports uniforms when it comes to the type, aesthetics, fit, and performance features.

Girls need sports uniforms that not only look good but make them feel comfortable, confident,

and ready to play sport. As a brand in the sportswear industry, we have the responsibility and possibility to create positive impact through the products we create, as well as the awareness we can spread among sport federations, clubs, and public institutions.

With these survey insights, we aim to inspire and generate ideas that can drive further progress within PUMA and our industry. They will ignite conversation and push product innovation towards more inclusive designs that are suitable for as many girls as possible. No matter the body type, ethnicity, or sport they play, we believe in 'a world without barriers to participation, where everyone who wants to play, can play'.

**Maria Valdes**

Chief Product Officer

# WHY THE NEED?

Childhood and adolescent physical activity engagement is positively associated with physical activity habits in adulthood<sup>1</sup>. However, engagement in physical activity, as well as body satisfaction tends to decline during adolescence, particularly among girls<sup>2</sup>. In one qualitative study, girls aged 14–16 years did not want to participate in physical activity due to embarrassment, felt their bodies were on display, and did not meet society’s beauty standards<sup>3</sup>.

Designated sport uniforms are a standard requirement for participating in most sports, whereby many are tight fitting, revealing, or expose the body during movement, resulting in girls potentially comparing one’s actual body and perceived ‘body ideal’<sup>4</sup>.

**GIRLS NEED SPORTS UNIFORMS THAT MAKE THEM FEEL COMFORTABLE, CONFIDENT AND READY TO ENGAGE IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.**

## REPORT OBJECTIVE

### A NEW ERA IN SPORTS UNIFORMS FOR GIRLS

Provide quantitative evidence-based insights on adolescent girls’ preferences for sports uniforms.



# OUR RESPONDENTS

Insights gained from **3,221 respondents** across **8 countries** provide evidence-based insights on adolescent girls' preferences for sports uniforms.

# 3,221

SURVEY RESPONSES

ACROSS **08** COUNTRIES  
BETWEEN 400 AND 404 RESPONSES FROM EACH COUNTRY



## AGE RANGE

**50%** girls aged between 12 and 14 years (younger girls), **50%** girls aged between 15 and 18 years (older girls)



## COUNTRY

France, Germany, Brazil, Mexico, United States, United Kingdom, Japan and Australia



## CULTURAL BACKGROUND

**14%** identified as LGBTIQ+, **4%** as having a physical disability, and **1%** were newly arrived refugee/immigrant



## SPORT PARTICIPATION

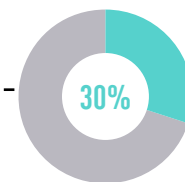
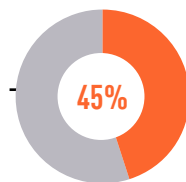
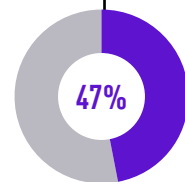
- ▶ **84%** Active vs. **16%** Inactive → **84%** actively participated in at least one sport and/or physical activity
- ▶ **Running, Swimming** and **Football/Soccer** were the top sports played
- ▶ **5.3 years** was the average girls had participated in their main sport or physical activity



## ENVIRONMENT

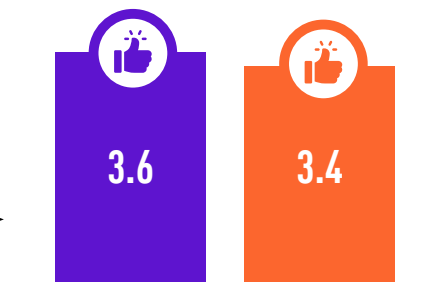
Primarily, girls participated in a social context

- 1 47%** with friends/family
- 2 45%** member of a local club
- 3 30%** by myself



## BODY SATISFACTION

Girls were moderately to highly satisfied with what their bodies could do physically and with their appearance.



Composite average scores assessed on a 1 to 5 range (higher scores = greater satisfaction)

# KEY FINDINGS

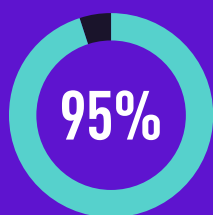


## SPORTS UNIFORM:

Clothing worn during sports or physical activities, in or outside of school, including **(but not limited to)**, official sports team uniforms.

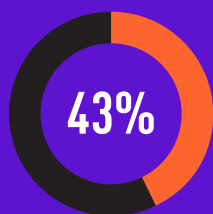
## SUMMARY

### SPORTS UNIFORMS AFFECT HOW GIRLS FEEL

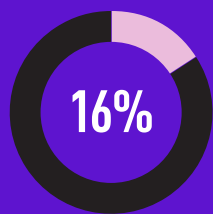


95% of active girls were happy to wear whatever uniforms are required.

HOWEVER



believed their uniforms make them feel conscious about how they look



believed their uniforms restrict movement while playing sport or being physically active



### A CHOICE OF SPORTS UNIFORMS

- ▶ Encourages active girls to continue participating in sport and/or physical activity
- ▶ Helps active girls feel comfortable and confident
- ▶ Can influence inactive girls to become active

### GIRLS WANT

- ▶ Sports uniforms that allow them to focus on their performance
- ▶ Breathable fabric that hides sweat and fits them well
- ▶ T-shirts for upper body clothing
- ▶ Generally a tighter fit
- ▶ Sports bras, the same colour as their top
- ▶ Options for a second layer of upper and lower body clothing

### DIFFERENCES EXIST

- ▶ Active and inactive girls have different preferences
- ▶ The age of active girls influences their need
- ▶ Uniform requirements vary between girls from the surveyed countries
- ▶ Distinguishable characteristics exist between girls participating in team sports vs. individual sports or physical activity

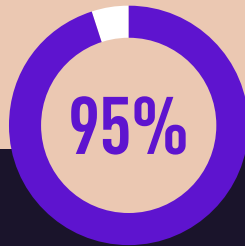


## KEY FINDINGS: ACTIVE GIRLS

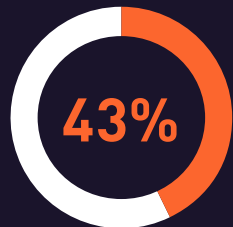
# INFLUENCE OF SPORTS UNIFORMS



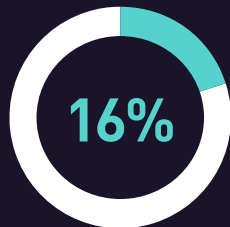
SPORTS UNIFORMS AFFECT HOW GIRLS FEEL WHEN THEY PARTICIPATE IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.



Most active girls (95%) were happy to wear whatever uniforms are required to play sport and/or physical activity, however:



believed their uniforms make them feel conscious about how they look



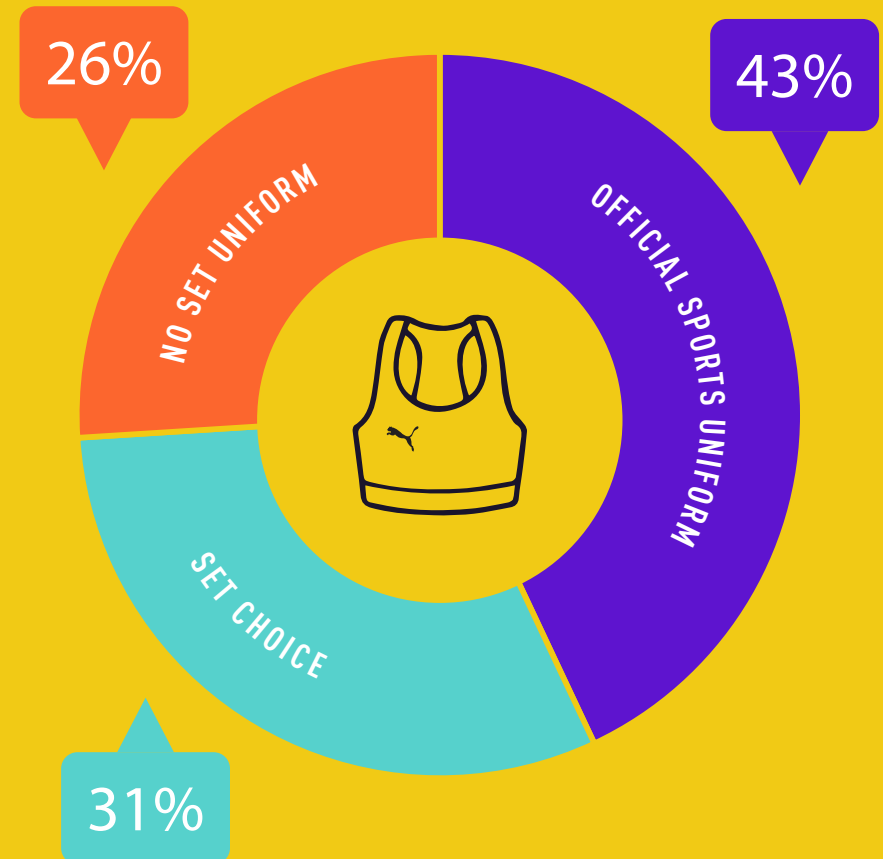
believed their uniforms restrict movement while playing sport or being physically active

Feeling self-conscious in sports uniforms is one reason adolescent girls potentially drop out from playing sport<sup>5</sup>

## SPORTS UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

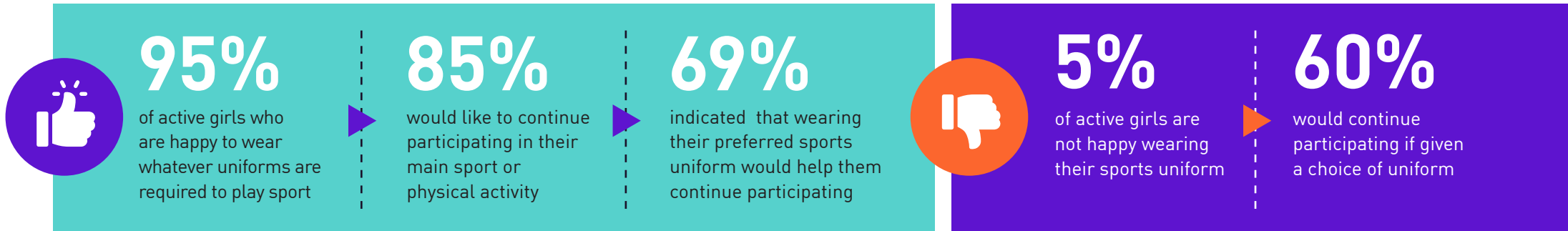
Over half the girls (57%) had a choice in what they wore to play sport or participate in physical activity.

In their main sport or physical activity, almost half the girls (43%) were required to wear an official sports team uniform, nearly another third of girls (31%) had a choice of set uniform options and a slightly lower percentage (26%) had no set uniform.



## KEY FINDINGS: ACTIVE GIRLS

### CONTINUED PARTICIPATION



These findings emphasize the importance of uniform options to enable girls to wear their preferred type and have a choice. Doing so may prevent sport dropout among some adolescent girls.

Regardless of uniform, the ability for girls to continue participating in sport and/or physical activity is impacted by a variety of other factors including the need for free-time and accessibility of the sport and/or physical activity.



**A CHOICE OF UNIFORM ENCOURAGES ACTIVE GIRLS TO CONTINUE PARTICIPATING IN SPORT AND/OR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.**

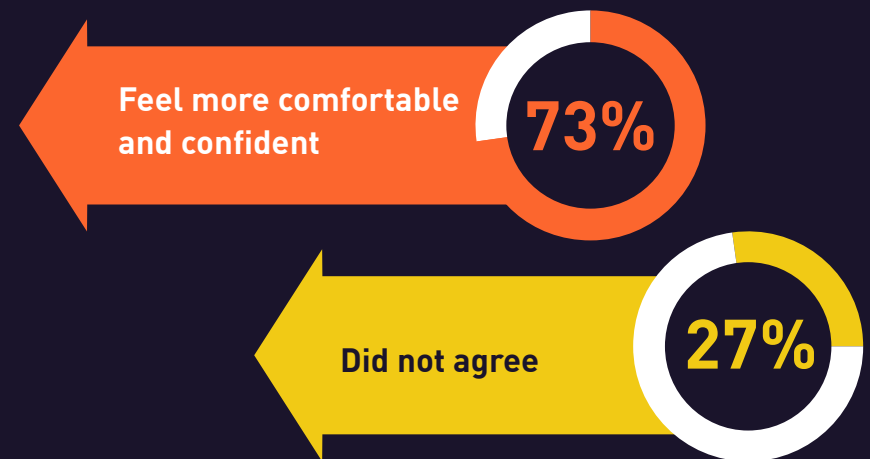
### COMFORT AND CONFIDENCE

If active girls could wear their preferred sports uniform, almost three-quarters agreed it would help them feel more comfortable and confident (73%) when participating in sports and/or physical activity. The girls who did not agree (27%) also had significantly lower aesthetic and functional body satisfaction.

Sports uniforms need to promote inclusion<sup>6</sup> designed for varied body types<sup>7</sup> to allow girls to feel comfortable and confident.



**A CHOICE OF UNIFORM HELPS ACTIVE GIRLS FEEL COMFORTABLE AND CONFIDENT.**

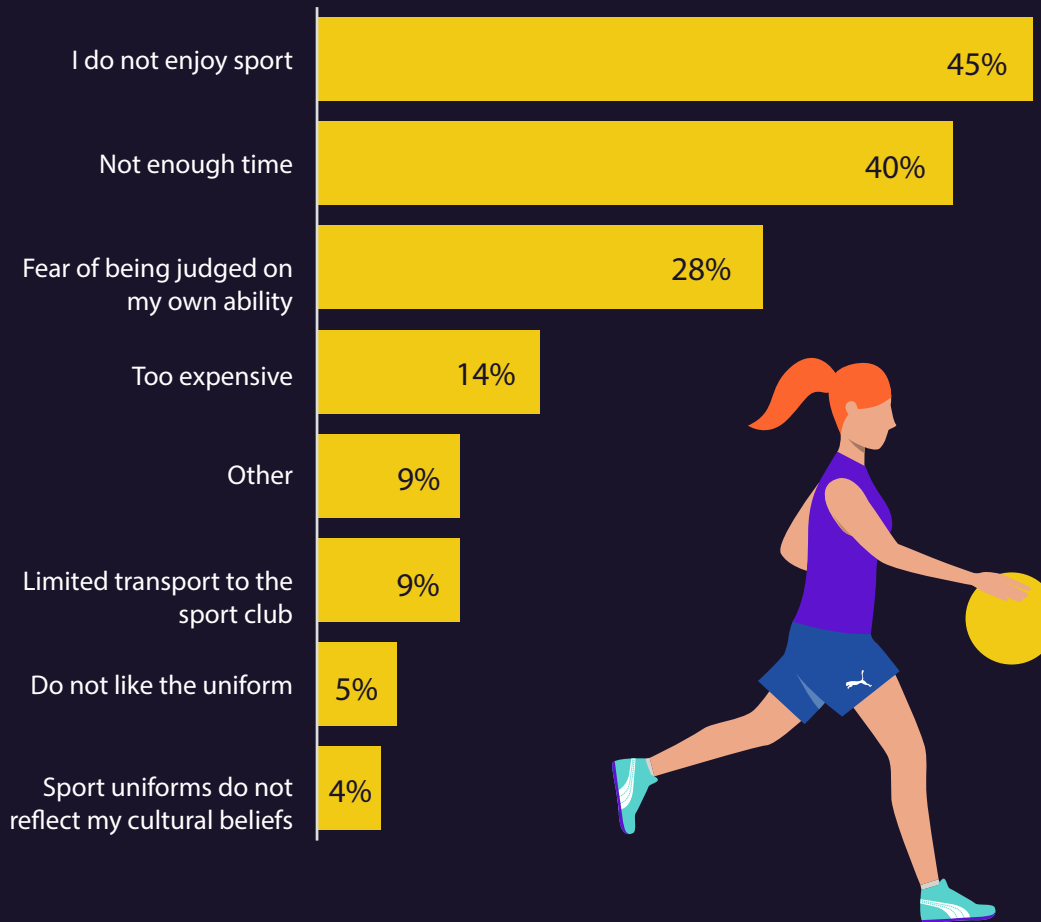




## KEY FINDINGS: INACTIVE GIRLS

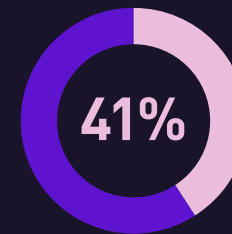
### BARRIERS TO SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The three most common reasons inactive girls did not participate in sports and/or physical activity were: lack of sport enjoyment; lack of time; or fear of judgment towards their ability participating in sport and/or physical activity.

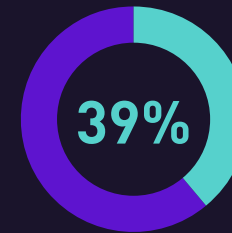


### INFLUENCE OF SPORTS UNIFORMS

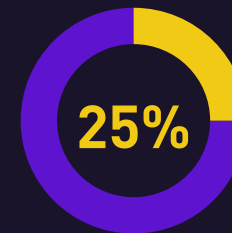
Wearing their preferred sports uniforms would help inactive girls:



feel more comfortable when participating in sports or physical activities



increase their level of confidence to start a sport or physical activity



participate in sport or physical activity

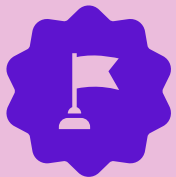


**A CHOICE OF SPORTS UNIFORMS CAN INFLUENCE INACTIVE GIRLS TO BECOME ACTIVE.**

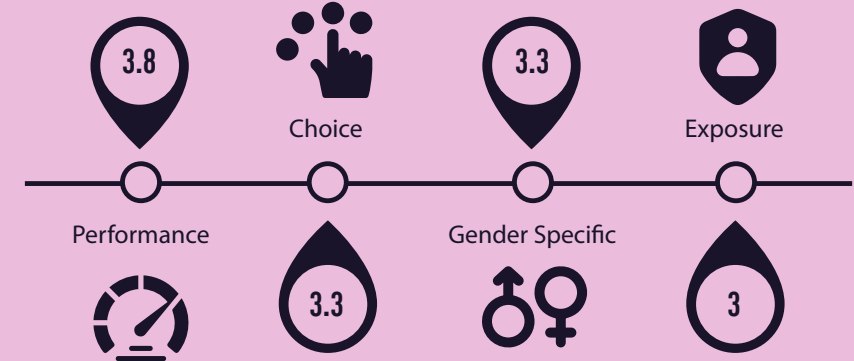
## KEY FINDINGS: ACTIVE AND INACTIVE GIRLS

# ASPECTS OF SPORTS UNIFORMS

The design of sports uniforms needs to allow girls to focus on their performance when playing sport and/or being physically active. To a lesser extent, yet still important, is the ability for girls to choose uniforms that are gender specific and for them not to feel exposed in their uniform when participating in sport and/or physical activity.



**SPORTS UNIFORMS THAT ALLOW GIRLS TO FOCUS ON THEIR PERFORMANCE WHEN PARTICIPATING IN SPORT AND/OR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS VITAL.**



Composite average scores assessed on a 1 to 5 range (higher scores = more importance)

## GIRLS WANT

### MAIN PRODUCT FEATURES

Breathable fabric that hides sweat and fits them well



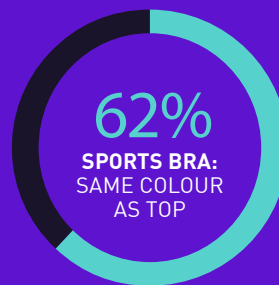
**BREATHABLE**



**HIDES SWEAT**



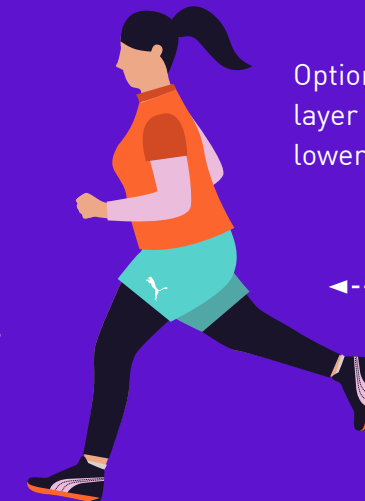
**FITS WELL**



### PREFERRED PRODUCT TYPE



Options for a second layer of upper and lower body clothing



### PREFERRED PRODUCT FIT



Generally a tighter fit including high-impact sports bras, tights/leggings and cycle shorts/short tights

# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUB-GROUPS



## ACTIVE AND INACTIVE GIRLS HAVE DIFFERENT PREFERENCES

### LOWER BODY CLOTHING



SHORTS FOR  
ACTIVE GIRLS



TRAINING PANTS FOR  
INACTIVE GIRLS

### INACTIVE GIRLS PREFER MORE TYPES OF LOOSER CLOTHING THAN ACTIVE GIRLS



TRAINING  
PANTS AND  
POLO FOR  
ACTIVE GIRLS



T-SHIRTS, LONG-SLEEVE  
SHIRTS, SLEEVELESS SHIRTS,  
AND TRAINING PANTS FOR  
INACTIVE GIRLS

### PURCHASE DRIVERS



QUALITY OF SPORTS  
UNIFORMS FOR ACTIVE GIRLS



PRICE FOR  
INACTIVE GIRLS



## COUNTRY DIFFERENCES EXIST ON WHAT GIRLS WANT:



▶ Lower body satisfaction exists for girls in **Japan**, who prefer looser fitted sports uniforms



▶ T-shirts are preferred for girls in all countries, except for **Brazil** (sports bras)



▶ Shorts are preferred for girls in all countries, except for **Germany** (training pants) and the **United Kingdom** (tights/leggings)



▶ Breathable uniforms are vital for inactive girls from **Brazil** and **Japan**, whereas uniforms that fit well are vital for inactive girls in **Germany**



THE AGE OF ACTIVE GIRLS  
INFLUENCES THEIR NEED

AGE 12 – 14 YEARS



ACTIVE **YOUNGER** GIRLS  
ARE INFLUENCED BY

**COMFORT**  
**CONFIDENCE**  
**FEELING TRENDY**

AGE 15 – 18 YEARS



ACTIVE **OLDER** GIRLS  
ARE INFLUENCED BY

**FEELING EXPOSED**  
**SUSTAINABILITY**  
**PRICE**

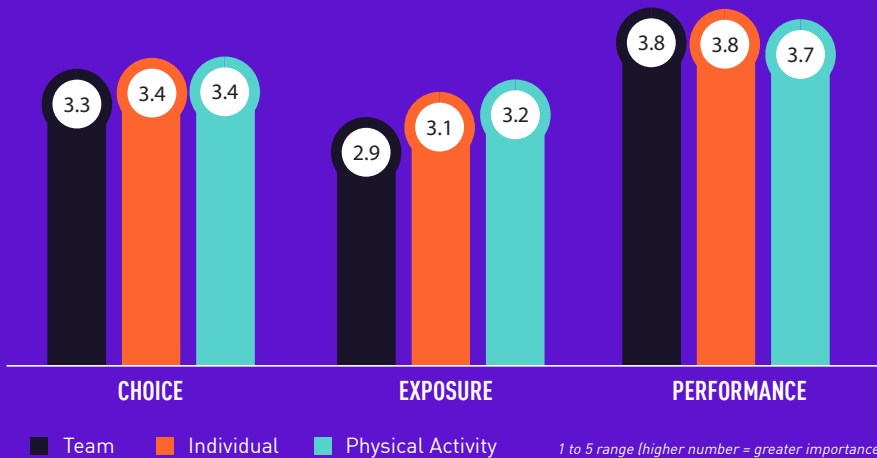
# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUB-GROUPS

## COMPARED TO GIRLS WHO HAVE A SET CHOICE OR FREEDOM TO SELECT A UNIFORM, GIRLS WHO WEAR OFFICIAL SPORTS UNIFORMS:

- ▶ Play significantly more sports and/or physical activity
- ▶ Are more satisfied with their bodies
- ▶ Yet when wearing these uniforms are more likely to feel conscious about their appearance
- ▶ Place more importance on sports uniforms to allow them to focus on their performance

## COMPARED TO GIRLS WHO PARTICIPATE IN INDIVIDUAL SPORTS OR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, GIRLS WHO PLAY TEAM SPORTS:

- ▶ Have a higher functional body satisfaction (i.e., satisfied with how their body moves)
- ▶ Care less about choice and feeling exposed in uniforms



**Price is an important purchase driver** for girls who participate in physical activity, compared to girls who play individual and team sport.



The longer girls participate in sport and/or physical activity, **the lower their aesthetic body satisfaction** (i.e., less satisfied with how their body looks).



Girls who want to wear training pants and long-sleeve tops when playing sport are more **concerned about feeling exposed** than girls who prefer wearing other clothing types.

# CONCLUSION & OPPORTUNITIES

Sports uniforms play a key role in making girls feel comfortable and confident, which enable them to focus on performance. Differences exist, however, in what girls want on features, type, aspects, fit, and options of sports uniforms. These differences can depend on their activity/inactivity, country, age, uniform requirement, team or individual sport or physical activity preference, and duration of time being active.

To be a catalyst for change and break down sports uniform barriers to help girls feel comfortable, confident, and ready to participate in sport and/or physical activity, based on their need, PUMA has an opportunity to:

## 01 X

Improve **kit design and training gear offerings** to girls in general and specific to their activity/inactivity levels, country, age, uniform requirement, and team or individual sport or physical activity preference



Lead the call for action to **change the word 'sports uniforms' to 'sportswear'**, one that embraces choice of clothing that girls want

## 02 X

## 03 X

Build global awareness on **what girls want in sportswear**

## 04 X

Build global awareness on the impact that choice of sportswear has, to **attract and retain girls to participate in sports and/or physical activity**




## 05 X

Lead the call for action to change traditional school and sport clubs uniform policies to **inclusive sportswear policies**



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“I’m proud to be part of a brand like PUMA that believes there should be no barriers to achieving your goals. When I’m comfortable in my uniform I feel confident and can focus on playing at the highest level. I hope this study elevates the conversation around uniforms and keeping young girls in sport.”

## ALI RILEY

Captain of New Zealand Women’s Football and Angel City Football Club

 **FOREVER. FASTER.**

[PUMA/Victoria University \(July 21, 2023\) Sport Uniforms for Girls: Insights on what girls want. PUMA, Germany.](#)