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Empowering Women in Sports: The Power of Education and Awareness

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ABSTRACT

The role of education and awareness in promoting cultural female sports participation. The objectives Examining cultural influences on female sports participation. Understanding the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers regarding cultural influences on college girls' sports participation in Sialkot district. Determining the effect of different cultural aspects on girls' sports participation at the college level. Analyzing the relationship between sports participation and cultural influences. Identifying mean differences in demographic attributes regarding cultural influences on girls' sports participation. The study population consisted of 1327 individuals, with a sample size of 276 (20% of the population) selected using proportionate random sampling and simple random sampling techniques. A Likert-type questionnaire was used for data collection. The findings revealed a significant impact of cultural aspects on girls' sports participation. The researcher recommended that policymakers consider these findings when developing policies to promote girls' sports at the college level.

Keywords: Empowerment, Awareness, Education, Sports.

Introduction

The role of education and awareness in promoting cultural female sports participation. The impact of cultural factors on female participation in sports in developing countries has been a topic of discussion for many years. Engaging in physical activity is essential for a healthy lifestyle, yet girls are at a higher risk of not getting enough exercise compared to boys. Generally, boys tend to be more physically active than girls, and physical activity levels decline with age for both genders. However, this decline is more significant among girls, leading to increased rates of overweight and obesity, which are at an all-time high.

This puts young people at a higher risk of developing various diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, Pakistani Girls Pictures (2016). An important wellspring of physical activity,

which is often disregarded in females because of social marks of shame, is wear participation. Game participation has an incredible part in building certainty and confidence and diminishing level of gloom. Game participation give a mean to construct important fundamental abilities, for example, objective setting and cooperation, notwithstanding having a great time and remaining fit as a fiddle. Research has demonstrated that female competitors for the most part have higher scholarly test scores and will probably move on from school, Cutrao, J. (2009).

Participating in sports and physical activity offers numerous health benefits, particularly for young females. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of obesity and related diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, throughout their lives. Moreover, sports participation plays a crucial role in building strong bones, decreasing the likelihood of osteoporosis in older age (Dagkas, Symeon, and Tansin Benn (2010).

In recent years, opportunities for female athletes have expanded, and female sports participation has reached an all-time high. Therefore, it is essential to encourage young females to explore various physical activities and find sports that interest them, promoting early adoption of physical activity habits that will benefit them throughout their lives (Crouter, 2011).

Research Questions

1. How do cultural factors influence female sports participation?
2. Can education and awareness programs effectively promote female sports participation?
3. What strategies can be implemented to increase female representation in sports?

Literature Review:

According to Di- Capua, Y (2005), mental barriers to women's participation in physical activity include role conflict, low self-esteem, and a lack of positive role models. Yoshida, Hewett, Heather (2010), identified perceived obstacles to women's participation in physical activity, such as lack of time due to work, health reasons, and lack of energy, motivation, or interest. Self-doubt, anxiety, and fear of injury can also hinder women's participation in physical activities. Many women lack confidence and self-perception, believing they are not skilled enough to engage in physical activities. Additionally, the lack of internal and external motivation, as well as societal expectations and fear of injury, can discourage women from participating in physical exercise.

Anatomical and Physiological Limitations

Physiological limitations to women's participation in physical activity include smaller lung capacity and restricted musculoskeletal capabilities (Mahfoud Amara (2011). The physical fitness status of an active woman cannot be directly compared to that of an active man. Generally, a woman's muscle strength and endurance may hinder her participation in high-intensity exercises. Women have distinct physical characteristics, including looser joints, sensitive ligaments, higher body fat percentage, and smaller muscle mass (Orunaboka and Kemebradikumo, 2007). Additionally, women have a smaller heart size, lower blood volume, fewer red blood cells, higher heart rate, smaller stroke volume, smaller thorax, and less lung tissue. These physiological differences have implications for the type, frequency, duration, and intensity of physical exercises or sports in which women participate.

Cultural Limitations

Women who pursue careers in sports face ridicule from society for not choosing a traditionally valued profession (Orunaboka and Kemebradikumo, 2007). The multiple demands placed on women, including paid work, household responsibilities, childcare, and lower economic status, hinder their participation in physical activities (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2000). Women are constantly bombarded with unrealistic beauty standards and societal expectations of how they should look, move, and behave (Lonsdale, 1990). Gender stereotyping significantly influences women's participation or non-participation in sports and physical activities (Lirgg, 1991). One persistent myth and barrier to female sports participation is the belief that intense physical activity will masculinize girls and women (Boutilier and SanGiovanni, 1983).

In some societies, women are viewed as solely useful for childrearing and domestic work, and are seen as "child factories." Women who engage in sports are perceived as defying traditional gender roles and societal expectations of womanhood. Societal stereotypes have traditionally associated physical activities and sports with masculinity, leading to women and girls being discouraged from participating in exercises deemed suitable for men. The lack of time due to family responsibilities is a significant factor in low physical exercise participation rates among women (Bryant and McElroy, 1997).

In traditional Nigerian culture, a married woman's primary role is often seen as childrearing, taking care of her husband, and managing household chores, with no emphasis on physical exercise. The societal belief that a woman's place is in the kitchen persists, hindering women's participation in sports. Some cultures or groups restrict women and girls from appearing in public spaces, expecting them to focus on domestic duties and childcare (Orunaboka and Kemebradikumo, 2007). In some traditional Nigerian cultures, a woman's domestic responsibilities may extend to farm or agricultural work, but never include activities like running or other physical exercises.

In traditional Nigerian culture, domestic workers are often young girls and women, responsible for household chores and maintenance. However, they face discouragement and criticism from parents and older community members for participating in physical exercise, as it is believed to negatively impact their reproductive system. As a result, their activities are often limited to domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and childcare, with some religious and cultural beliefs restricting their participation in outdoor activities. Additionally, certain dressing styles for physical activities and sports that reveal sensitive body parts are discouraged by some religions and cultures.

Method & Material:

Research method provide the base to the researcher study and is considered very important step. There are many factors involved in selection of research methods because it is the way to reach at concrete and valid findings and conclusions. The researcher should be conscious while selecting researcher method. The research method for to conduct this particular research study was Quantitative research method.

Since this study is an attempt to find The cultural influences upon girls' participation in sports activities, for this purpose the researcher has include teachers, parents and female athletes at college level to assess their viewpoints and perceptions. Using cross sectional approach with normative survey method was found appropriate for this particular quantitative study.

The population of attention in this research project is finite which consisted of all the Teachers working, Parents of Girls athletes and the girls who are participating in Sports activities at college level in District Sialkot in the Province of Punjab, Pakistan.

Selection of Sample

A representative sample of 276 participants, comprising 20% of the total population, was selected from the chosen girls' colleges for this study. This sampling strategy was guided by Gay's (1987) recommendations. Due to the dispersed population and the researcher's gender, collecting data from the entire population was challenging. To address this, a combination of simple random sampling and proportionate random sampling techniques was employed to select the sample. The sample consisted of: 35 teachers, 121 parents, 120 girl athletes. This sampling approach ensured a diverse and representative group of participants, enabling the researcher to collect valuable data for the study.

Data Analysis:

Table: 1 ANOVA showing the difference between the perception of teachers, students and parents regarding the cultural influences on girl's participation in sports activities at college level.

Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	F	Sig.
Teachers	35	3.2333	.51708	(2, 273)	.008	.992
Parents	121	3.2245	.43619			
Girl Athletes	120	3.2308	.47522			
Total	276	3.2283	.46237			

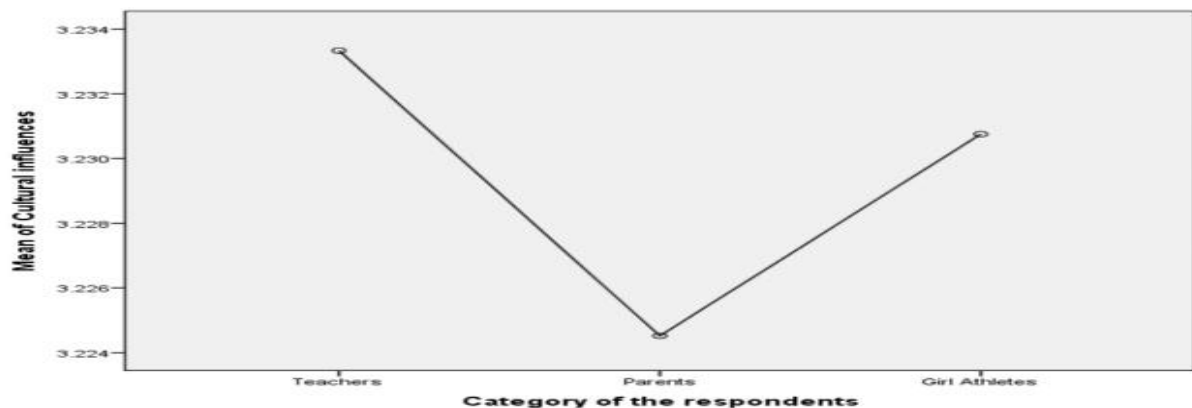
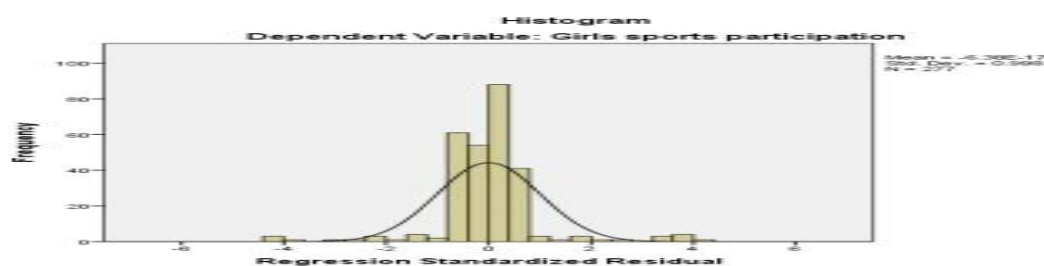
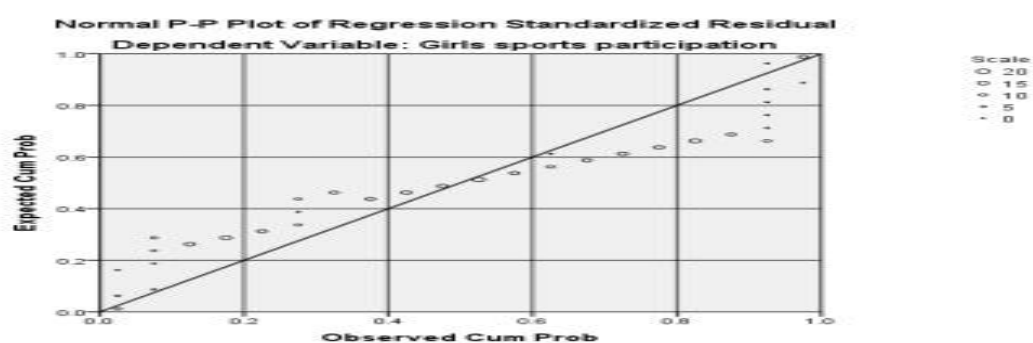


Figure: 1

The above table shows that there is no significant difference between the perception of teachers, parents and girls athletes regarding the cultural influences on girl's participation in sports activities at college level. Since the results of ANOVA appeared as $F(2, 273) = .008$, $\text{Sig.} = .992 > \alpha = .05$ which indicates that the null hypothesis is hereby accepted.

Table:2 Regression showing the effect of different cultural aspect upon girls' participation in sports activities at college level.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	T	β	Sig.
1	.795 ^a	.633	.638	473.835	6.037	.783	.003
a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural influences							
b. Dependent Variable: Girls sports participation							

**Figure:2****Figure:2.1**

The above table shows that there is significant of cultural aspects upon girls' participation in sports activities. The cultural aspects significantly predicted girls participation in sports activities at college level $\beta = .783$, $t = 6.036$, $\text{Sig.} = .003 < \alpha = .05$. Which indicates that there is significant effect of cultural aspects upon girls' sports participation at college level in district Sialkot. Cultural aspects explain a significant proportion of variance in girls sports participation $R^2 = .633$, $F = 473.835$, $\text{Sig.} = .003 < \alpha = .05$. Hence the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and alternate hypothesis there is significant influence of cultural aspects upon girls sports participation is hereby accepted.

Table: 3 t test showing the mean difference between local and non-local respondents regarding cultural influences on girl's participation in sports activities at college level.

Testing Variable	local and non-local respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	T	Sig.
Cultural influences	Local	168	3.2367	.45826	275	.115	.908
	Non-Local	109	3.2252	.46917			

The above Table shows that there is no significant difference between the perception of local and non-local respondents regarding the cultural influences on girls' sports participation at college level since $t(275) = .115$, $\text{Sig.} = .908 > \alpha = .05$. Hence the null hypothesis is hereby accepted.

Conclusions

The study was conducted to see the the role of education and awareness in promoting cultural female sports participation. A questionnaire consisting of 42 valid and reliable statements was developed and administered to teachers, parents, and female athletes. The study's descriptive nature aimed to achieve specific objectives, which were met through data analysis. The findings revealed a significant impact of various cultural aspects, including culture of honor, veil, male dominance, restricted mind, dress code, crime against women, narrow mind, joint family system, and taunting of relatives, on girls' participation in sports at the college level in District Sialkot. Notably, the perceptions of teachers, parents, and female athletes aligned regarding this phenomenon. The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between cultural aspects and girls' sports participation at the college level.

5.4 Recommendations

The main purpose of the study was the role of education and awareness in promoting cultural female sports participation.

1. Awareness campaigns through media and public programs to promote the benefits of sports for girls and challenge the culture of honor.
2. Encouraging female participation in sports to promote self-confidence, physical fitness, and respect, and recognizing sports as a gender-neutral activity.
3. Challenging restrictive mindsets and promoting gender equality in sports participation.
4. Changing male-dominant societal concepts to increase girls' self-confidence in sports.
5. Encouraging families to allow both boys and girls to participate in sports activities, recognizing the importance of motor fitness for both genders.
6. Providing separate sports facilities for girls to address cultural and family restrictions.

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