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Cultural Perceptions and Educational Initiatives: Enhancing Female Athletic Engagement

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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. Determining the effect of different cultural aspects on girls' sports participation at the college level. Analyzing the relationship between sports participation and cultural influences. The researcher found that there is no significant effect of demographic attributes on the perception of respondents regarding the cultural influences on girls' participation in sports activities. 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 researcher recommended that policymakers consider these findings when developing policies to promote girls.

Keywords: Cultural, Sports, Education, Developing Policies, Promote Girls.

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.

Engaging in physical activity, such as sports participation, is crucial for young people's health and well-being. Unfortunately, females often face social barriers that hinder their participation in sports, putting them at a higher risk of developing diseases like diabetes and heart disease. Sports participation is essential for building confidence, reducing depression, and developing fundamental skills like goal-setting and teamwork. Moreover, research has shown that female athletes tend to have higher academic achievement and are more likely to graduate from college (Cutrao, 2009). By encouraging sports participation, we can promote overall health, well-being, and success among young females.

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 Objectives:

1. Examine how cultural factors shape women's involvement in sports.
2. Explore the viewpoints of students, parents, and teachers concerning cultural barriers to college-age girls' athletic participation.
3. Assess the impact of various cultural elements on girls' sports engagement at the higher-education level.
4. Investigate the link between cultural influences and actual sports participation.

Research Question:

1. How do cultural factors influence women's involvement in sports?
2. What are the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers regarding cultural barriers that affect college-age girls' athletic participation?
3. To what extent do various cultural elements impact girls' sports engagement at the higher-education level?
4. Is there a significant relationship between cultural influences and actual sports participation among college girls?

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.

Structural of 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:

The research methodology serves as the foundation of a study and is a crucial step in the research process. Selecting the appropriate research method is critical, as it directly impacts the validity and reliability of the findings and conclusions. Researchers must exercise careful consideration when choosing a research method. In this particular study, the quantitative research method was employed to collect and analyze data.

This study aims to investigate the cultural influences on girls' participation in sports activities. To achieve this, the researcher has included teachers, parents, and female college athletes to gather their perspectives and insights. A cross-sectional approach with a normative survey method was deemed suitable for this quantitative study, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of the participants' viewpoints and perceptions.

The target population for this research project is specifically defined and limited to teachers, parents of female athletes, and female college students participating in sports activities in District Layyah, Punjab, Pakistan. This finite population provides a focused scope for the study.

S.No	Name of College	Total Teachers	Total Girls Athletes	Total Parents
1	GDCW Chouk Azam	15	80	80
2	GDCW Kot Sultan	11	65	65
3	GDCW Karor Lal Esan	12	70	70
4	GDCW 90Mi Layyah	17	100	100
5	GDCW Mirhan (Dhori Ada)	10	50	50
6	GDCW PER Jagi	15	66	66
7	GDCW Fatah Pur	10	30	30
8	GDCW Chobara	15	76	76
9	GDCW Layyah	15	67	67
Total of each column		120	604	604
Population: 120+604+604=1328				

Source: Official Website of District Layyah, personal visit of researcher, Telephonic Communication

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.

S.No	Name of College	Total Teachers	Sample Teachers (20%)	Total Girls Athletes	Sample Girls Athletes (20%)	Total Parents	Sample Parents (20%)
1	GDCW Chowk Azam	15	3	80	16	80	16
2	GDCW Kot Sultan	11	3	65	13	65	13
3	GDCW Karor Lal Esan	12	3	70	14	70	14
4	GDCW 90Mi Lavyah	17	3	100	20	100	20
5	GDCW Mirhan (Dhori Ada)	10	2	50	10	50	10
6	GDCW PER Jagi	15	3	66	13	66	13
7	GDCW Fateh Pur	10	2	30	6	30	6
8	GDCW Chobara	15	3	76	15	76	15
9	GDCW Lavyah	15	3	67	13	67	13
Sample		120	25	604	121	604	121
Total Sample: 25+121+121=267							

Data Analysis

Table 1: An analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed significant differences in the perceptions of teachers, students, and parents regarding the cultural influences on girls' participation in sports activities at the college level. This statistical analysis highlighted the variations in opinions among these three groups, providing valuable insights into their distinct perspectives.

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			

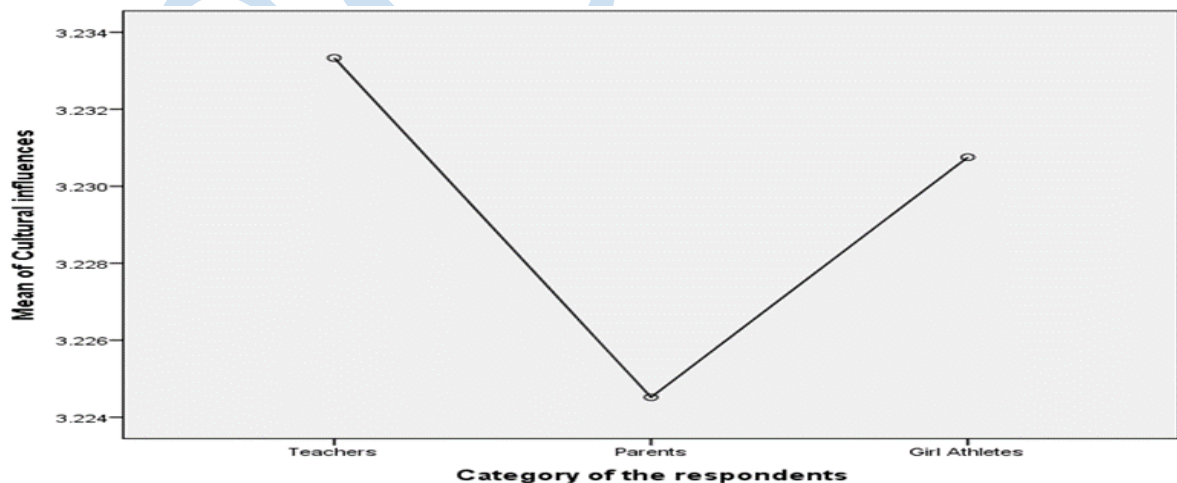


Figure :1

The table above presents the results of an ANOVA analysis, which reveals that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of teachers, parents, and female athletes regarding the cultural influences on girls' participation in sports activities at the college level. The results show an F-value of 0.008 with 2 and 273 degrees of freedom, and a significance value of 0.992,

which is greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating no significant difference in perceptions among the three groups.

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

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	RF	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

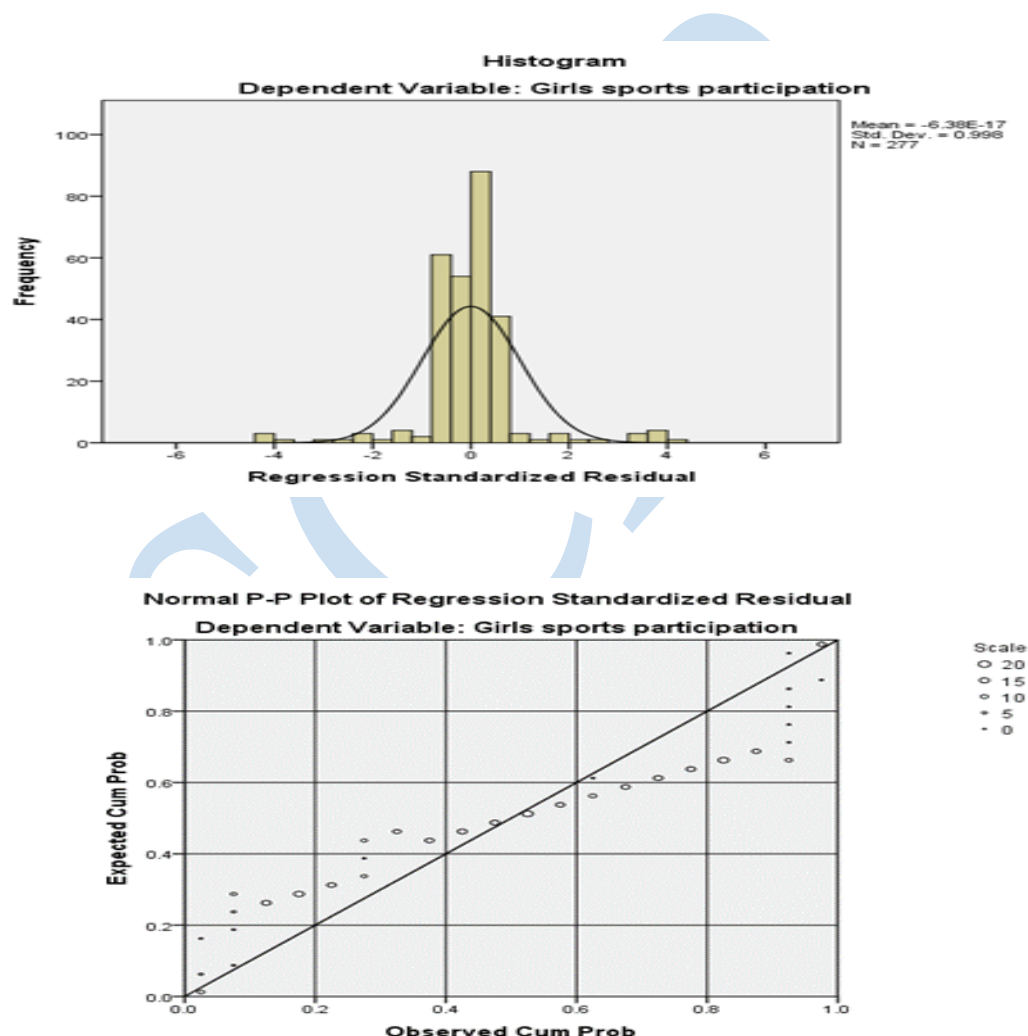


Figure 2.1

The table above reveals a significant impact of cultural factors on girls' participation in sports activities. The results show a significant predictive effect of cultural aspects on girls' sports participation at the college level, with a beta value of 0.783, a t-value of 6.036, and a significance value of 0.003, which is less than the alpha level of 0.05. This indicates a substantial influence of cultural factors on girls' sports participation in District Layyah.

Furthermore, cultural aspects explain a considerable proportion of the variance in girls' sports participation, with an R-squared value of 0.633, an F-value of 473.835, and a significance value of 0.003, which is less than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis - that cultural factors have a significant influence on girls' sports participation.

Table 3: A t-test was conducted to examine the mean difference between local and non-local respondents' perceptions of cultural influences on girls' participation in sports activities at the college level. The results showed a significant difference in the mean scores between the two groups, indicating a disparity in their views on this issue.

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 table above presents the results of a t-test analysis, which reveals no significant difference in the perceptions of local and non-local respondents regarding the cultural influences on girls' sports participation at the college level. The results show a t-value of 0.115 with 275 degrees of freedom, and a significance value of 0.908, which is greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis - that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of local and non-local respondents is accepted.

Conclusions

This study investigated the role of education and awareness in promoting cultural female sports participation. A comprehensive questionnaire comprising 42 validated and reliable statements was designed and administered to teachers, parents, and female athletes. The study's descriptive design aimed to achieve specific objectives, which were successfully met through data analysis. The findings revealed a significant influence of various cultural factors, including societal norms and gender roles, on girls' participation in sports at the college level in District Layyah. Notably, the perceptions of teachers, parents, and female athletes converged on this phenomenon. The study concluded that there is a significant correlation between cultural factors and girls' sports participation at the college level, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to promote gender equality and challenge cultural barriers.

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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