

## ROLE OF SUPPORTIVE AND NON-SUPPORTIVE FACTORS ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS

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### ABSTRACT

*The aim of the existing study is to examine the role of various supportive (social support factors) and non-supportive (social interferential factors) factors associated to women participation in sports at Pakistani rural areas secondary schools. The main problem to be addressed in this present study was poor social support from parents, siblings, peers, and sport teachers as social support factors and dress code and gender inequality as social interferential (non-supportive) factors in the way to sports participation especially for female athletes belonging to secondary schools of rural areas of Pakistan. A sample was comprised of 70 female athletes from two girls' schools of district Sahiwal. The statistical method employed in the existing research was descriptive statistics while 46 responded. The results of the present study revealed that social support factors as parents, siblings, peers, and sport teachers whereas dress code and gender inequality as social interferential factors played an important role on women participation in sports and these foremost factors may decline participation figure in Pakistani women sports.*

**Keywords:** Social Support, Social Interference, Sports Participation, females' athletes, Pakistan

### INTRODUCTION

Participation of females in sports is as important as male's. Especially, when children are in their beginning phase of life and the elders like parents, caretakers, and teachers around them, they feel the utmost central effect on their social and emotive growth (Najam and Kausar, 2012). However, there is a need of proper encouragement for female sports activities even at school level in Pakistan. The standards of sports in Pakistan are not appropriate according to the requirements (Sarwar et al., 2010). It is a need of society to promote female healthy activities at grass roots level indeed.

School is the home of academic development wherever sport talents and personalities of students are also industrialized through participation in sports (Rokita, 2005). The achievements may not only make the female athletes physically healthier but also boost their drive and interest in sports and they may achieve better grades in their academic prospective. Participation in school sports exposed an optimistic influence on the lives of athletes in the development of health, personal drive, and interest in sports (Oldenkamp, 2012).

The role of parents, siblings, peers, and sport teachers contribute tremendously not only in sports participation of successful female athletes but also in their achievements. Parental behaviors maybe influence the females' sport participation by the chances they make available for their females' to contribute in a sport and to improve their expertise and capabilities in particular sport (Horn and Horn, 2007). Secondly, parental behavior maybe impact females' sport participation by providing emotionally supportive and heartening behaviors. Explicitly, parents were originated as a significant foundation of emotional

support at the time while female players' faced sport-related hindrances, they desired to overwhelm. Some of parents pay fully attention concerning to their children's sports whereas, rest of the others supposed that this is school's accountability (Xhakaza, 2005).

If the stress to participate in sports is not produced by home, at that time it must be generated from the peers and predominantly the coaches or sport teachers who are the foremost motivating powers inside the education division. On the other hand, if parents are equipped to provide them material support to their girls and pay attention in their sports progress, it would hearten the girls to achieve at their best capabilities. However, schools are institutes in which sports are mostly controlled inside an educational setting and therefore regulate whether students will participate (Xhakaza, 2005). The level of parental sport is much influential on their females' sport especially at beginning age levels of their sport participation than the impact of peers, sport teachers, and instructors (Horn and Horn, 2007).

It is a truth that females of Pakistan are not inferior to males, but are facing uncountable problems such as dress code and gender equality may be socially interfere with their independence to participate in sports as well as in all kinds of sports similar to males, especially in emerging country like Pakistan (Khanum, 2011). Mixed-gender sports and participating dress code within the crowds near females sports are particular the elementary restrictions that interfere females participation in sports (Dagkas et al., 2011). Female athletes frequently wear western dresses in Olympics that are the main obstacle for Muslim athletes because they cannot wear it openly in front of male spectators and it is the major cause of fewer contributions in sports participation for the Muslim countries like Pakistan at national and International levels (Qureshi & Ghouri, 2011). On the other hand, considerable gender differences in sports also exist between rural and urban areas as well as between the provinces of Pakistan (Chaudhry & Rahman, 2009).

Though participation of females and girls in overall sports is a worldwide problem, however, in Islamic country like Pakistan it is usually consider that women and girls may deal with numerous difficulties (Khan et al., 2012). Moreover, a very few females may participate in sports deprived of any obstacle, whereas majority of Muslim females in Pakistan have countless difficulties, obstacles, and challenges in their way to sports participation. Pakistan needs to encourage its females for participation in all arenas of sports as well as assessable steps are required to be engaged up till now when it derives to equal opportunity in all pitches comparable to sports (Abbas, 2011). Furthermore, energetic girls who desire to examine their visions needed to be heartened at all levels instead of stopping from participating in sports by reason of social stresses.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Age of Participants**

The mean age of the participants was 15.1 years whereas, the standard deviation (sd) was found .646 in the existing studying.

### **Sampling Procedure**

Simple random sampling technique was used for its two reasons; first, each participant of the entire population had an equivalent opportunity to be nominated as respondent and secondly, it was helpful to decrease the selection favoritisms (**Graziano and Raulin, 2013**). The sample size was comprised of 70 female athletes from two girls' schools (government girls' secondary school 171/9-L and government girls' secondary school 131/12-L) of district Sahiwal while 46 responded.

**Instrumentation**

Quantitative research approach was employed for the existing study. Survey questionnaire was used as the central stratagem. The adopted and modified survey questionnaire was utilized to collect the desired information.

**Statistical Technique**

Simple statistical technique “Mean Score” under descriptive statistics was used to examine the complete collected survey data.

**Data Collection**

Survey data was collected personally by the researcher with the permission of school management of both secondary schools and briefed them to submit the questionnaire on next day in headmistress office. The data was collected only those athletes (participants) who were studying in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade/class. All the respondents were agreed to fill the questionnaires voluntarily.

**Data Analysis**

Coded answers were calculated in a statistical manner and SPSS-21 software was used to examine the results. The answers for the questions in the questionnaire directed through Likert scale under five rank (1-5) dimensions (strongly disagree - strongly agree). The answers were noted through “Mean Score” under descriptive statistics.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Sport Participation**

**Table 1(Part-I). Sport participation of female athletes**

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>
I participate in sports at the school.....	
1 to maintain strength being a successful athlete.	3.59
2 to maintain my body weight being a successful athlete.	3.33
3 to feel good and happy.	3.43
4 to remain healthy being a successful athlete.	3.39
5 to achieve my maximal cardiovascular fitness being a successful athlete.	3.41
6 to maintain my physical fitness being a successful athlete.	3.57
7 to use my energy and effort in a positive way being a successful athlete.	3.33
8 because I have participated in the sport since I was enrolled in secondary school.	3.41
9 to spend my free time in doing something I like sport.	3.56
10 because I prefer sports to other activities.	3.54
11 because I come from an athletic family.	3.35
12 to do something I am good at.	3.39
13 because I am very keen to sports.	3.43
14 because I am interested in the sport.	3.41
15 because exercise is exciting.	3.33
16 because I think my sports skills are good.	3.37

**Table 1(Part-II). Sport participation of female athletes**

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>
I participate in sports at the school.....	
17 because I am motivated to participate in sports.	3.41
18 because the sport I like is approachable.	3.50
19 because I prefer to use my time to participate in sports rather than study.	3.27
20 because the sport I am interested in is available at my school.	3.41

Sports participation provides a respectful and well-known platform to those female athletes who gain success. Female student athletes' talked about the "participation in sports at the school to maintain strength being a successful athlete" with maximum mean value of 3.59. On the other hand, minimum value has been found for mean value 3.27 about "I participate in sports at the school because I prefer to use my time to participate in sports rather than study" as shown in Table 1.

### Social Support Factors

Successful athletes' stated about parents' social support on "it is important that my parents trust me to participate in sports" originated with maximum mean value 3.35. Whereas, minimum value remarked by student athletes for "my family has exciting with my participation in sports" as mean value 3.17.

Female athletes' feels less of their siblings' social support in their sports with minimum mean value 2.26 that "my brothers and sisters have a lot of exciting with my participation in sports". Whereas, it was found that athletes on "my brothers and sisters try to spend time with me during my sports participation" with maximum mean value 3.09 as display in Table 2.

**Table 2(Part-I). Social support factors**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Mean</i>
<i>Parents</i>	
1 My family has exciting with my participation in sports.	3.17
2 It is important that my parents trust me to participate in sports.	3.35
3 I enjoy spending time in sports participation and with my parents.	3.24
4 My parents and I disagree about my participation in sports.	3.33
5 My parents manage well with my participation in sports.	3.30
6 My parents care about very much about my participation in sports.	3.28
<i>Siblings</i>	
7 My brothers and sisters have a lot of exciting with my participation in sports.	2.26
8 My brothers and sisters feel close to my participation in sports.	3.07
9 My brothers and sisters enjoy spending time with my participation in sports.	3.04
10 My brothers and sisters try to spend time with me during my sports participation.	3.09
11 My brothers and sisters try to avoid being around when I participate in sports.	2.93

**Table 2. Social support factors**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Mean</i>
<i>Peers</i>	
12 My teammates often bother me when I participate in sport.	3.15
13 All of other girls in my grade/class like me much due to my sports participation.	3.13
14 My teammates like working with me.	3.13
15 Other teammates in my team manage well with my participation in sport.	3.00
16 My teammates like me.	3.17
17 The other girls at school often love me due to my participation in sport.	3.07
<i>Sport Teachers</i>	
18 I care what my sport teachers think of my participation in sport.	3.17
19 I want to be respected by my sport teacher.	3.09
20 I try to get along with my sport teacher.	3.20
21 I always try hard to earn my sport teacher trust.	3.15
22 I usually like my sport teacher.	3.24

Student athletes stated about their peers with the statement “my teammates like me” with maximum mean value 3.17. However, they realized that “other teammates in my team manage well with my participation in sport” placed minimum mean score 3.

School athletes opinions about sport media showed that “I usually like my sport teacher” (mean value 3.24). Least value was assumed to “I want to be respected by my sport teacher” with minimum mean value of 3.09) and can be seen in Table 2.

### **Social Interferential Factors**

Successful athletes specified about dress code for Muslim women athletes that “special sports dress should be designed for Muslim female athletes that may not hinder sports performance and not violating Islamic values” with mean value 4.17. On the other hand, minimum weightage presumed to “would you dislike preferring Hijab/cover head while participating in sports” (mean value 3.39).

Overall opinions of the school athletes were about gender inequality “females compared to males tend to have a superior moral sensibility” that accomplishes most dominant role as social interference. They favoured minimum to “males are not willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for females in sports” (mean value 3.61) in Table 3 below.

**Table 3(Part-I). Social interferential factors**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Mean</i>
<i>Dress Code</i>	
1 Would you dislike preferring Hijab / cover head while participating in sports?	3.39
2 Do you think that banning hijab during competitive sports is discrimination against Muslim female athletes?	3.98
3 Do hijab affect your sport performance?	3.96

Table 3(Part-II). Social interferential factors

<i>Item</i>	<i>Mean</i>
<i>Dress Code</i>	
4 Do you think dress which is covered your body along with hijab should be recognized internationally for Muslim female athletes?	4.09
5 Do you think that by covering your body and taking hijab there would be less resistance to your participation in sports from families?	3.96
6 There should be separate dress for Muslim female athletes during sports competitions.	4.02
7 Special sports dress should be designed for Muslim female athletes that may not hinder sports performance and not violating Islamic values.	4.17
<i>Gender Inequality</i>	
8 Females have not a quality of purity that men possess in sports.	3.98
9 Females, compared to males, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.	4.00
10 Females, as compared to males, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste.	3.63
11 In a disaster, females ought not to be rescued before males.	3.65
12 Females should be cherished and protected by males.	3.89
13 A good female should be set on a pedestal by her male.	3.87
14 Males are not willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for females in sports.	3.61

## CONCLUSIONS

Visible dimness of the role of social support and social interferential factors on participation in sports of female student athletes were examined through the data collected. A vivacious gap can be recognized between existing application and the results to observe the role of social support and social interferential factors on female athletes. Results proposed to obvious modifications which are required to boost the social support of those personalities who are concerning to female athletes and it was also originate an observable gap between social interferential factors and female athletes participation in sports. Consequently, the subsequent suggestions and recommendations might be protracted and survive the outcomes.

The present level of social support from parents, siblings, peers, and sport teachers may not providing such support needed to appreciate the actual sports participation requirements of female athletes and may produce more reliable outputs from the sports participation. The present social support does not provide shelter females for the improvement of participation in sports. Moreover, rich social support is required by the parents, siblings, peers, and sports teachers to boost up the health, enhance the personal drive, and develop the interest of female athletes for the improvement of female participation in sports. Available social support delivered by parents, siblings, peers, and sport teachers is not sufficient to meet the actual needs of sports participation of females.

The current social interferences might be the upmost hindrances in the way to real sports participation needs of women athletes. Furthermore, it is required to reduce inferences through the dress modification of Muslim female athletes and make sure the equal chances and facilities to overcome on gender inequality to boost up the health, enhance the personal drive, and develop the interest of female athletes for the improvement of female participation

in sports. Under the current social interferences, female participation in sports might not increase due to encountering of dress code and gender inequality.

The present level of athletes' health is deprived to encounter the predicted performance in sports so it is required to upsurge female participation in sports to boost up their health. Therefore, personal drive of school students is desired to be amplified to increase female participation in sports. Athletes' interest in sports might be developed providing proper social support and reduce possible interferences at school level. The results stated that available social support is not enough to boost any attention to health, personal drive, and interest of female student athletes. Athletes should go ahead to acquire more probabilities of practice through sports participation for the superior performance.

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