

# **SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL BARRIERS OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION BY COLLEGE FEMALE STUDENT ATHLETES**

Dr. Saeed Javed, Dr. Abida Naseer, Qasid Naveed

## **ABSTRACT**

*The present research was aimed to determine the contribution of social and ecological barriers of the sports participation by female student athletes of Southern Punjab, Pakistan. The research was purely quantitative. Population was all female students studying in 1<sup>st</sup> year to 4<sup>th</sup> year grades. Systematic random sampling was applied to select the respondents. Initial sample size consisted of 500 female student athletes through 'K' value of systematic sampling belonging to 17 women colleges of Southern Punjab districts. Therefore, from the 500 survey questionnaires distributed to the female athletes, 365 were correctly completed and returned. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were employed on collected data to test the hypotheses. The findings of the research indicated that social and ecological barriers had significantly and positively contributed to the outcome variable (sports participation of female student athletes). All hypotheses were accepted at a highly significant level (0.01). It was concluded that social barriers have greater significant effects on sports participation of university female student athletes than ecological barriers.*

*Key words: Social and Ecological Barriers, Sports Participation, Female Athletes*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Sports is a phase of human activities that prominently contribute to distinguish interests of the crowds and have a massive approach for bringing them together, getting out to all, irrespective of age groups, social source or religious grouping (Edim & Odok, 2015; Khan, Jamil, Khan, Kareem, & Imran, 2012). The social part of sports, in improving

the health of individuals, has also made the possibility to increase relations of Pakistan with rest of the world particularly with India (Hussain, Farid, Hussain, & Iqbal, 2011).

Health and behavior improved by everyday volume of workout (Björnsdóttir, 2014). Without any perception of gender, sports deliver numerous assis-

tances such as preference, ability, vigorous life, sound atmosphere and total wellbeing of the participants (Bibi, Khan, & Khan, 2016a).

The thinking carried through, sports help to improve awareness and progress about skills, develop motivation, improve competition, and leaning in the direction of personnel struggles (Hussain et al., 2011). For better health and attaining fitness, Islam inspires both genders to take part in physical activities.

Humanity cannot attain its objectives deprived of emerging vigorous atmosphere for activities of sports. In Pakistan, sports activities require appropriate inspiration for females even at school and college levels (Naseer, Shariff, & Javed, 2016). Unfortunately, the exact prospects of the sports have not yet been familiar to adoptive health, societal, and traditional activities in Pakistan, this segment has been unapplied and needs to be established. Government needs to pay more attention to promote the female participation in sports by providing them more incentives and increase the participation of females

in sports by providing them sports resources and facilities in schools as well as colleges and universities (Hussain et al., 2011).

In the olden times females were not permitted to participate in Olympic Games. There was no female participation in 1896 the first modern Olympic games which took place in Athens. In the first Olympic Games, early Greece females were not allowed to be spectators on Mount Olympus and were not permitted to participate in sports (Berthold, 2012; Aminat, 2016).

The entire world has become a village of sports now and everybody has equal chance to participate in sports (Naseer et al., 2016). Females take interest in sports and have wish to participate in them for the whole development i.e. fitness intelligence, societal, expressive, and divine progress (Khan et al., 2012). Female sport history started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century increased at adequate level after the introduction of Title IX for the educational improvements in 1972. Opportunities for females to play sports have gradually progressed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century as spec-

tacle and as participants in sports (Berthold, 2012; Fink, 2013; Bibi et al., 2016a; Aminat, 2016; Senne, 2016).

Females in Pakistan at different levels are commonly not well characterized in sports and this poor situation becomes more obvious when females present depressed participation at elite level. Females face various difficulties with situation to their approach at elite level in participation in different sports in Pakistan (Khan et al., 2012).

In Pakistan, there are only a few females who may participate in sports without any hindrance, whereas, many Muslim females have numerous domestic problems, hurdles, and trials to participate in sports. Furthermore, Pakistani females need to get motivated for participation in all fields of sports (Abbas, 2011). Females have no skills in sports services supporting them in playing field, moreover, they have insufficient separate playgrounds and environment in Pakistan where they may participate and practice together with males (Naseer et al., 2016).

Sports have developed a social organization and have

regularly improved the way of sports (Akyüz, Açar, Akyüz, & Doğru, 2016). This troublesome condition has lit this researcher's interest to investigate the social barriers associated with the sporting involvements of females with an opinion to determining its obstacle to the whole attainment of the goals of sports (Edim & Odok, 2015; Ogu, 1999).

The lack of instant sports services in the society raises the struggle of peoples to contribute to physical events that need these services or makes it difficult to contribute in such activities when one is unable to extent additional reserved capability (Reimers, Wagner, Alvanides, Steinmayr, & Reiner, 2014). Parental impact may arise as diverse categories of interactions, such as parental force their kids to contribute or wining sport may appropriate their warmth level to the exact sports product (Partridge, 2011).

In the earlier days, parents prohibited their daughters to participate in sports, but these days they deliver apparatus, resources, and oblige as role models by their contribution in sports,

parents stress children to participate in sports because they know that sports are nowadays a prospective foundation of money making. There is limited work relevant to parental effect on female sports participation to youth involvement (Pacheco, Mas, Olivárez, & Avila, 2012).

Parents today spend extravagant amounts of time and energy, tacking their daughters from one sport event to another, week after week, even to point where it expands the family and family resources (Vipene & Ikpeme, 2015; Aminat, 2016; Knight, Dorsch, Osai, & Haderlie, 2016; Amado, Oliva, Ponce, González & Miguel, 2015; Ogu, 2015; Edim & Odok, 2015; Baxter-Jones & Maffulli, 2003; Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Wijtzes, Jansen, Bouthoorn, Pot, Hofman, Jaddoe, & Raat, 2014; Bibi et al., 2016a; Knight, Dorsch, Osai, Haderlie, & Sellars, 2016; Bibi, Khan, Khan, & Abbas, 2016b; Osai & White-man, 2017).

The view of a person's belief takes sympathy to consider of variance in the ways in which Muslim females follow to their belief and the first choice of some of them is to participate in enc-

losed situations (Benn & Dagkas, 2013). Physically participation in sports has impact on survival of Muslim female athletes by the techniques in which the constructions and strategies of current sport boundar (Benn & Dagkas, 2013). Presently, female sports participation characterizes a fast increase moving part in values and the existing trends have generated a requirement for knowledge about the female participation in sports. Sports skills progress the sport participation. Sporting involvements in this environment are sport skills that arise from practice (Ogu, 1999). Pakistan is a Muslim country where gender differences inhibit the girls' sports participation events in public, due to mix gender sports and dressing (Qureshi, & Ghouri, 2011).

After observing the dress code according their religion, Muslim females may participate in sports. Muslim females could participate in sports only, in such situation, they are wearing dress that is made according to the Islamic principles and their behavior were strictly followed (Harkness, 2012). Hijab is not a hindrance and use of hijab has

additional status for Muslim females. The games turn into a protection zone where spiritual characteristics were not disappearing and hijab did not characterize an obstacle (Walseth & Strandbu, 2014). There are use of hijab which have importance for females (Harkness, 2012). The truth is composite with numerous causes to less engagement of Muslim female in sports (Benn & Dagkas, 2013).

Gender differences occur in many areas and females still have low participation in sports than males. Gender problems have become fundamental procedure in any field (Raju, 2014; Senne, 2016). Inefficiently female participation is there in university sports, there is no thoughtful struggle to inspire them as there are small or no female coaches or female sports administrators in the sports councils (Vipene & Ikpeme, 2015). Although the title IX has prominently improved athletic participation amongst females but non-fulfillment and differences are quite common (Senne, 2016). Female participation in sport has for prolonged time been comparatively less related with male due to variance

treatment constructed on socialized gender parts and prospects (Ogu, 1999).

### **EXISTING PROBLEM**

Females are limited to be disadvantaged in sports than males. In the same way, male sports trainings are less affected by parents than females (Amado et al., 2015). In Pakistan, females are facing numerous restrictions for taking participation in sports than rest of the world (Bibi et al. 2016a; 2016b).

Sports participation is influenced by social and environmental issues as well. Numerous social and environmental factors influence the sports participation of females (Bibi et al. 2016a). Females faced many constraints by society when they participated in sports such as restrictions from their father, mother, and siblings. Females' sports involvement may be affected by parents' responses and hopes toward their children (Ogu, 1999). Parents of Muslim females forbid their daughters to participate in sports (Walseth, 2006). In any society, family is the basic component which has direct impact on the overall progress of

associated persons (Bibi et al., 2016a).

In Islamic countries, females can participate in sports after observing the dress code. Islam permits females to participate in sports but females must be totally covered when they participate in sports activities, their bodies should not be visible or uncovered (Bibi et al., 2016a). Pakistani females may not participate in sports with males because their social environment and religious teachings prohibit them for participation. Muslim females follow their belief and pay their attention to their dressing keeping in view the environment. They cannot participate in sports jointly with boys due to religious complications of sports participation for females in Muslim countries (Bibi et al., 2016a). Males and females are equal by physique, but females are still facing many difficulties everywhere especially in Islamic countries and progressive states of the world (Deaner, Balish, & Lombardo, 2016).

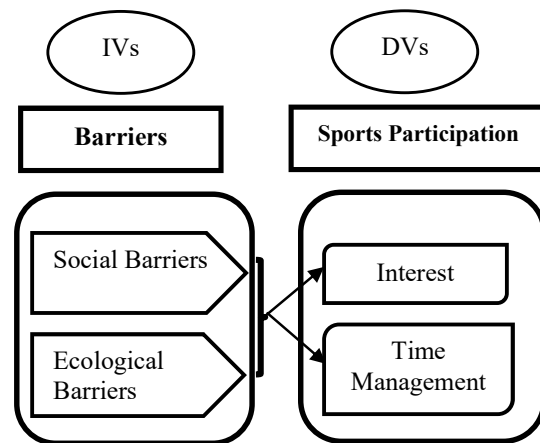
The main objective of the existing study was to investigate the social and ecological barriers on sports participation (interest

and time management) of female athletes of Southern Punjab in Pakistan.

## STUDY HYPOTHETICAL MODEL

The model describes the constructs such as social and ecological barriers which effect the interest and time management of sports participation of female athletes. Parents and family restrictions were found as social barriers and gender inequality and dress code considered as ecological barriers in the present study.

**Figure 1. Hypothetical Model**



### **Study Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were developed for the present research:

**Ha1:** There is significant effect of ecological and social barriers on interest of female athletes in sports participation of Southern Punjab in Pakistan.

**Ha2:** There is significant effect of ecological and social barriers on time management of female athletes regarding their sports participation of Southern Punjab in Pakistan.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design and Population**

Current study was based on quantitative research method as a primarily research design. Sometimes, it is not possible to consider all members as population in a research study, therefore, we choose a feasible number of individuals that characterize the population regarding their area of interest (Meyers, Gamst, & Guarino, 2016). Population of the existing research was considered all female athletes (1502) belonging to 17 government women education

institutions / colleges (intermediate/degree) of Southern Punjab in Pakistan.

#### **Sampling, Sample Size, Tool, and Statistical Package**

Systematic random sampling was applied to select the samples. The "K" value of systematic sampling was 3.004 and further rounded as 3. The number 2 was randomly selected at initial selection of the respondent and further, 3 (K) was used to make difference in numbers from 1 to 1502 (2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26...so on). Therefore, 500 female student athletes were selected through 'K' value of systematic sampling as samples. Female athletes who represented themselves in intercollegiate sports belonging to Government colleges had equal opportunity to participate in present survey study. The data was collected from 11 districts of Southern Punjab, Pakistan. The questionnaire used as a tool of survey data was self-administered. After finalizing the draft of questionnaire having 45 items, it was sent to three qualified experts belonging to sports field for the content validity. One of the experts suggested that two items be removed from the initial

draft. After the content validity, a pilot test was performed with 35 respondents selected from the population to determine the construct validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The construct validity was measured through Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test, anti-image matrices, communalities, eigenvalue, and factor component. Thus, 3 items created new group due to having weaker values under factor components and they were removed. All other items were fulfilled the goodness-of-fit values (0.5) as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test Scores**

Constructs	KMO	Bartlett's Test	P-value
Social Barriers	.724	112.669	0.000
Ecological Barriers	.687	60.364	0.000
Sports Participation	.792	90.249	0.000

The reliability was tested through Cronbach's Alpha and all 40 items were found above than the 0.7 value as displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2. Cronbach Alpha Reliability**

Constructs	Alpha Scores
Social Barriers	.814
Ecological Barriers	.788
Sports Participation	.863

The final draft of the questionnaire was rearranged with 40 items before collecting the final data. Afterwards, the questionnaires were distributed to 500 female student athletes with the permission and volunteer consents of the administration and lecturers physical education. Various statistical packages were employed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version-XXV. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, mean, and std. deviation) and inferential analysis (multiple regression analysis) were employed to test the hypotheses of the present research.

### **Ethical Consideration**

The present research was conducted with the consent of administration of targeted colleges and female student athletes prior to data collection. The researchers briefed the administration and female athletes that the collected data would be kept fully confidential and would be utilized only for the purpose of research.

### **RESULTS**

General information of 365 participants was collected and analyzed through descriptive sta-



tistics (frequencies, mean, and standard deviation). Personal information about respondents included of their age level (years) was investigated.

A number of 365 respondents between 15 to 20 years of their age contributed to the present research through the questionnaire data. The mean and std. deviation of female athletes' age (years) was calculated as 17.61 and .968 respectively in Table 3.

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Participants about their Age**

	Mini.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age Level	15	20	17.61	.968

### Testing the Hypothesis

Multiple regression analysis was applied to test the impact of social and ecological barriers on overall sports participation.

**Table 4. Results of Relationship of Social and Ecological Barriers with Overall Sports Participation**

	R Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.561	2	1076.15	231.05	.000
Residual		362	4.658		
Total		364			

The results of model summary revealed in Table 4 that the value of R square was .561, whereas,  $F$  was 231.05(2,362) and the significance level was 0.01 statistically that was less than 0.001. The findings also confirmed the strong relationship among the constructs.

**Table 5. Results of Effect of Social and Ecological Barriers on Sports Participation Dimensions**

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Social Barriers	.369	.034	.582	10.696	.000
Ecological Barriers	.202	.054	.202	3.709	.000

Social barriers and ecological barriers had effect on overall sports participation of female student athletes' (interest and time management) at its significant level (0.001) that was below than 0.01 value as displayed in Table 5. The both values of beta showed the effect on overall sports participation of female athletes. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted by the data. Social and ecological barriers had 58% and 20% variances respectively in sports participation of female student athletes.

### Results of Testing the Hypothesis (Ha1)

**Table 6. Results of Relationship of Social and Ecological Barriers with Interest of Sports Participation (Ha1)**

Model 1	R Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.438	2	985.41	176.39	.000
Residual		362	3.567		
Total		364			

The findings of model summary of hypothesis 1 revealed in Table 6 that the value of R square was measured .438 whereas,  $F$  was found 176.39(2,362) and the significance level was analyzed 0.001 statistically that was found less than 0.01. The findings also revealed the medium relationship among the constructs.

**Table 7. Results of Effect of Social and Ecological Barriers on Interest of Sports Participation (Ha1)**

Model 1	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Social Barriers	.254	.078	.399	8.669	.000
Ecological Barriers	.127	.089	.115	2.417	.000

Table 7 indicated that social barriers and ecological barriers had effect at its significant level (0.01) that was found less than 0.01 on interest of female athletes

in sports performance. However, both values of beta revealed the effect on the interest of female student athletes in their sports participation. Social and ecological barriers had 40% and 12% variances respectively in interest of sports participation of female student athletes. Therefore, the hypothesis (Ha1) was accepted by the data.

### Results of Testing the Hypothesis (Ha2)

**Table 8. Result of Relationship of Social and Ecological Barriers with time Management of Sport Participation (Ha2)**

Model 2	R Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.352	2	861.49	179.32	.000
Residual		362	3.781		
Total		364			

The results of model summary revealed for Ha2 in Table 8 that the value of R square was found .352, whereas,  $F$  was measured 179.32(2,362) and the significance was found 0.01 statistically that was showed less than 0.01. The findings also indicate the medium relationship among the constructs.

**Table 9. Results of Effect of Social and Ecological Barriers on Time Management of Sports Participation (Ha2)**

Model 2	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Social Barriers	.211	.059	.373	7.451	.000
Ecological Barriers	.104	.077	.167	2.547	.000

Table 9 indicated that social barriers and ecological barriers had significant effect on the time management of female athletes for their sports performance at statistically significant level (0.01) that was found below than 0.05. However, both values of beta revealed the effect on the interest of female student athletes in their sports participation. Social and ecological barriers had 37% and 18% variances respectively in time management of sports participation of female student athletes. Therefore, the hypothesis (Ha2) was accepted by the data.

## DISCUSSION

Social and ecological barriers predicted the outcome variable (sports participation of female athletes) in regression models 1, 2, and 3 and analyzed through multiple regression

analysis. Outcomes of model 1, social and ecological barriers' constructs had significant and positive effects on sports participation (interest and time management) of female athletes of Southern Punjab in Pakistan. Interest and time management were found as essential elements particularly for female athletes, student players may have difficulties in their time management due to heavy workload of academic involvements (Ustun, Ersoy, & Berk, 2017).

Parental impact may arise in diverse categories of interactions in the sports performance (Partridge, 2011). The reason behind the adverse relationship of the previous study may be that parents were not supporting their females in their sports participation. Previous researches showed that all over the world especially in Muslim countries, females were not allowed to participate in sports in past (Deaner et al., 2016; Bibi et al., 2016a). Muslim females followed their beliefs and they pay attention to their dressing and environment as well and they are unable to participate in sports jointly with males.

Females were not permitted to participate in sports in the past days (Bibi, 2016b). Furthermore, the history of Pakistani females has marked and established rare cases for sports participation. Humanity cannot attain its objectives deprived of emerging vigorous atmosphere for sports events. In Pakistan, sports activities require appropriate inspiration for female athletes (Naseer et al., 2016). The notable attendance of parents, friends, siblings, and officials may have an essential effect on the experience of female sports (Partridge, 2011). Family prospects on the part of young females have an influence on their sports participation (Bichi, 2018).

All constructs established the significant effect on outcome variable. Several prior studies confirmed the results of the present research that social and ecological barriers have significant effect on sports participation of female athletes overall (Qureshi & Ghouri, 2011; Ogu, 1999; Deaner, et al., 2016; Bibi et al., 2016a; Naseer et al., 2016). All constructs accomplished significant contribution in the outcome variable (sports participation of female student athletes).

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The sports participation of female athletes found strongly linked to social and ecological barriers. The results revealed that inadequate sports practices are found as perceived by Pakistani female athletes from sports institutions. Therefore, the administration of Government colleges and universities may inspire the female athletes with growing awareness about the sports participation. The management must spend to have these outcomes to develop the sports participation of female athletes. It is important for the government of Pakistan to provide the similar chances to all female athletes including Southern Punjab, Pakistan. It has been detected that social barriers are too much active in creating intercollegiate female athletes to make them play at any position in team formation, whereas, ecological barriers were not found more supportive.

Appreciation to female athletes by their parents, physical education teachers, sport coaches, and administration of the institutions is an urgent need of today. Sports associations, federations, and higher institutions need to

provide equal opportunities for both male and female athletes. Educational institutions keeping in view the academic calendar need to prepare such sports schedules as may enhance the interest of female student athletes in sports as well as manage their time for sports participation.

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