

THE ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN SPORTS PARTICIPATION AMONG PAKISTANI ELITE ATHLETES

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ABSTRACT: *The main objective was to investigate the relationship between social environmental factors and sports participation of elite female school athletes of Pakistan. The questionnaire was used as instrument. The survey data was collected with a large sample size of 590 elite female athletes of different secondary schools of rural areas through purposive and simple random sampling technique. Descriptive statistics and Pearson’s correlation were employed as data analysis techniques. The findings revealed that the relationships between social environmental factors (socio-economic status, sports facilities, rewards for achievements and sport media) and sports participation (health, personal drive and interest) were found highly significant. The results specified that socio-economic status and sport media were found poor whereas, sports facilities had medium in its relationship with all domains of sports participation. It was concluded that sports facilities and sport media coverage were not up to the mark for elite athletes, whereas, the socio-economic status may be better if the athletes get sufficient rewards upon their achievements. It was also concluded that the sports participation of female athletes might be increased with the development of environmental factors not only at schools’ level of rural areas but also at national and international levels.*

Keywords: Environmental Factors; Participation; Elite Athletes; Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Sports always produce nation builders. No doubt, sports performed a major role in several females’ lives in Muslim countries, such as from rowing and football in Iran to sprinting events in Kuwait, Bahrain, Morocco, and Pakistan and basketball in Saudi Arabia [1]. The sportsmen and sportswomen are signs of peace, prosperity and integrity of the country. Society cannot achieve its goals without developing healthy environment for sports activities. Sports make available an outstanding platform for females where they develop their confidence and improve their decision-making capabilities and management expertise for their imminent endeavors [2].

Social environment makes sure countless contributions on the participation of females in sports. Financial position and earnings level of the families are also among the heart burning causes of participation in sports. Female students who belong to lower-income families do not use sport facilities regularly nevertheless, they do not look like lesser energetic [3]. An optimistic approach associated with sports facilities is needed to encourage females’ sports participation

in schools in Pakistan [4]. Sports facilities may enhance the level of interest in females as well as their participation in sports. Women sports complex recently built in Karachi city presents a great example of the struggles for upgrading of females’ sports participation in Pakistan. Besides of sports facilities, motivation also straightly contribute on the level of achievement in which players finally succeed [5]. In addition, sports females and players are frequently overlooked through the sport media because the media always offer the picture that female sports do not have the same worth paralleled to male sports as well as male players [6].

The accurate prospective of the female sports are needed to recognize to promote physical, social, and cultural events for females in Pakistan [7]. Pakistan Sports Board, Pakistan Olympic Association, National Sports Federations, Provincial Sports Boards, Associations, departments, and educational institutions are considered foremost sports organizing agencies in the existing system and can be seen in Table 1. The entirely sports Federations dispose applicable sport competitions for females [8].

Table 1: National Women Organizations of Sports in Pakistan

No.	Name of Sport Organization	No.	Name of Sport Organization
1.	Pakistan Sports Board	11.	Pakistan Women Basketball Federation
2.	Pakistan Olympic Association	12.	Chess Women Federation of Pakistan
3.	Pakistan Football Federation (Women)	13.	Pakistan Women’s Swimming Federation
4.	Pakistan Women Swimming Federation	14.	National Rifle Shooting Association
5.	Pakistan Women Taekwondo Federation	15.	Pakistan Kabaddi Federation
6.	Pakistan Women Squash Federation	16.	National Body Building Federation
7.	Pakistan Weightlifting Federation	17.	Pakistan Women Gymnastic Federation
8.	Pakistan Women Rowing Federation	18.	Pakistan Women Handball Federation
9.	Pakistan Athletics Association	19.	Rugby Federation of Pakistan
10.	Pakistan Women Tennis Federation	20.	Pakistan Women Softball Federation

Source: Pakistan Olympic Association [9]; Ministry of minorities, culture, sports, tourism, and youth affairs [8].

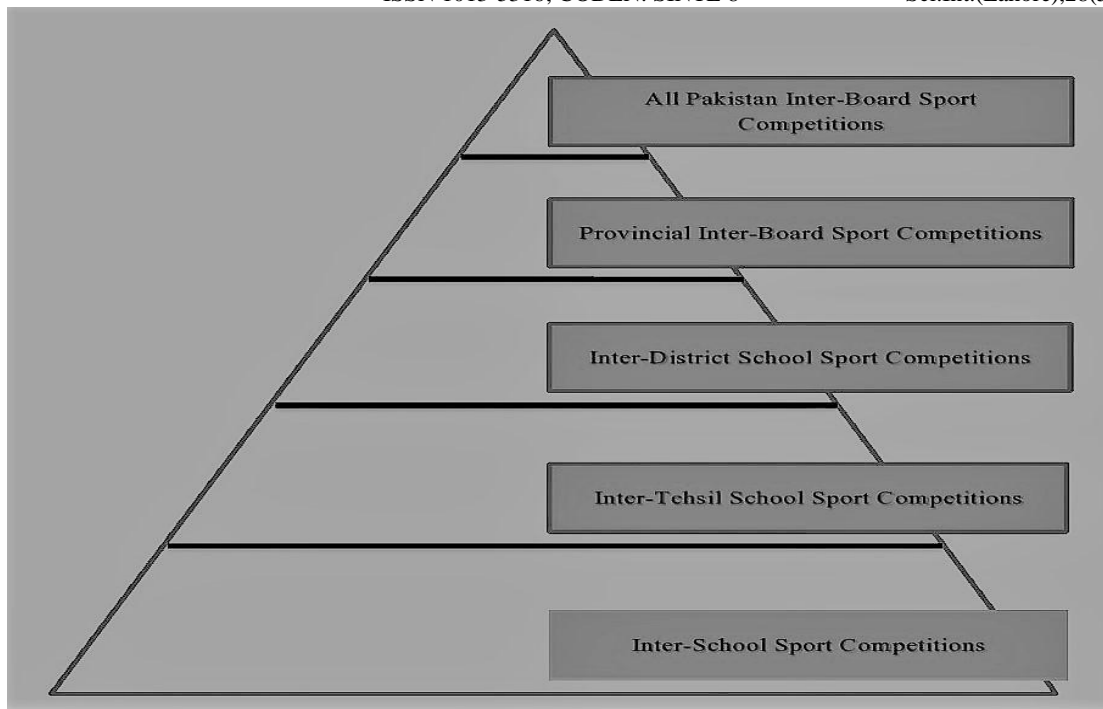


Figure 1: Pyramid Model of Female Secondary Schools Sport Competitions. Adopted from Salmikangas [10].

Similarly, to national level, female school sport competitions comprise of five stages as inter-school female sport competitions, Inter-Tehsil female sport competitions, Inter-District female sport competitions, Provincial Inter-Board female sport competitions, All Pakistan Inter-Board female sport competitions [11] as shown in Figure 1. All female athletes of secondary schools participate in sport events through these five types of sport competitions and are remained successful with innumerable laurels.

The purpose of the current study is to determine the relationships of social environmental factors related to sports participation of elite female athletes at secondary schools of Pakistan. This may be for the reasons that there is inadequate environmental support as poor social economic status, limited sports facilities, lesser rewards upon achievement, and few sport media coverages for female athletes and may be all these cover the appropriate encouragement for female athletes that can be helpful for elite female athletes to obtain sports participation goals. The study investigated the relationship of sports participation factors of elite school female athletes in Pakistani sports context through social environmental factors.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research design finalized for the existing study was based purely on quantitative research approach.

Population and Sample Size

All elite female athletes of secondary schools of overall Pakistan were declared population of the existing study. Population in a survey represents a superior gathering from which the researcher desire to achieve information [12]. The sample as a sum of target characters selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey [13]. Therefore, 590 elite female athletes were selected as samples using

purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The aim to use two sampling techniques was this because only 9th and 10th class/grade female students were nominated to participate in the existing study. Second aim was to provide equal chance of participation for all elite school female athletes without any bias.

Tool of Data Collection

It is considered the leading job of the researcher to discover the informational area wherein the study is to be existed and the method wherein the instrument to be controlled [12]. The existing study was quantitative in nature. Therefore, adopted questionnaire of various researchers [14, 15, 16, 17] was employed as a research tool for data collection. The original authors of these adopted questionnaires pleasantly permitted to modify their scales.

Procedure for Collecting Data

The data was collected from Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtoon Khawah (KPK) provinces of Pakistan. Before the procedure of collecting the data, the headmistresses of targeted secondary schools were contacted and discoursed the determination of the existing study. They were guaranteed that the collected data will only be utilized for the research purpose. It was cleared prior to filling the questionnaires that the participation of elite school female athletes will only be voluntarily. The respondents were instructed about the questionnaire overall. Subsequently, the 590 questionnaires were circulated to respondents and said to bring the filled questionnaires back to their school headmistress offices on next day. Because various secondary schools were engaged in the process of data collection and the data was collected as said by scheduled times. However, 313 respondents returned the filled questionnaires back and the response rate was found 53 percent.

RESULTS

The results of existing study were analyzed through descriptive statistics and inferential analysis (correlation analysis).

Descriptive Statistics

The mean age of the elite school female athletes was considered 15.42 years while, SD (std. deviation) was found .981.

Inferential Analysis

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used as statistical technique to investigate the relationship between social environmental factor and elite female athletes' sports participation. The association was established between the sub-variables of social environmental factors and sports participation and the finding are displayed in Table 2.

Results revealed in Table 2 emphasized that socio-economic status had significant relationship with health ($r = .39, p < .01$), personal drive ($r = .39, p < .01$), and interest ($r = .41, p < .01$) of elite female athletes. Result from the correlation analysis exposed that socio-economic status had weak relationships with health, personal drive, and interest of elite female athletes. However, the relationship between socio-economic status and health, personal drive, and interest of elite female athletes were found positive and significant.

The result exhibited in Table below that sports facilities was also significantly correlated with health ($r = .55, p < .01$), personal drive ($r = .51, p < .01$), and interest ($r = .45, p < .01$)

of elite female athletes. Result from the correlation analysis specified that sports facilities had medium relationships with health, personal drive, and interest of elite female athletes. As well as, the analysis of the sports facilities offered positive and significant correlations with health, personal drive, and interest of elite female athletes.

The result of rewards for achievements had significant relationships with health ($r = .75, p < .01$), personal drive ($r = .77, p < .01$), and interest ($r = .84, p < .01$) of elite female athletes as displayed in Table 2. The correlation analysis indicated that rewards for achievements had strong relationship with health, personal drive, and interest of elite female athletes in sports participation. In addition to, the rewards for achievements presented a resilient, positive, and significant correlations with health, personal drive, and interest of elite female athletes. The relationship between rewards for achievements and interest in sports participation was found extraordinary strong and significant.

Results revealed in Table below highlighted that sport media had significant correlation with the health ($r = .37, p < .01$), personal drive ($r = .35, p < .01$), and interest ($r = .34, p < .01$) of elite female athletes. Result from the correlation analysis exposed that sport media had weak relationship with health, personal drive, and interest in sport participation of elite female athletes. However, the relationship between sport media and health, personal drive, and interest of elite female athletes were found positive and significant.

Table 2: Correlations results among Sub-Variables of environmental factors and Sports Participation Sub-Variables (n-313)

Variables	Socio-Economic Status	Sports Facilities	Rewards for Achievements	Sport Media
Health	.389** .000	.545** .000	.752** .000	.365** .000
Personal Drive	.392** .000	.505** .000	.767** .000	.347** .000
Interest	.407** .000	.454** .000	.843** .000	.336** .000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION

Social environmental factors are an important and often ignored influence on the improvement of sports proficiency [18]. Furthermore, the significance that a society stands on a specific sport can have a noteworthy effect on the achievements succeeded. No doubt, the role of environment is to facilitate, encourage, and make sure the availability to their athletes within the society for the promotion of female sports. Little age, greater incomes, and developed socio-economic status all increase the participation percentage in sports [19]. The results showed that socio-economic status revealed medium positive significant relationship with health, personal drive, and interest of female athletes in the existing study. One of the reasons as revealed through the findings may be the poor financial status of athletes in which they cannot afford their girls sport participation. Additionally, it may be a cause that their girls have not good health, low personal drive, and less interest in sports participation due to low socio-economic status as well. Sports facilities for school athletes is one another essential and central feature of enhancing female sports participation with the improvement of sports. The accessibility of sports

facilities may be central for winning in sports [20]. Stadiums are essential for high school student athletes, parents, and native organizations [21]. Though, the current study reported the results a significant relationship of sports facilities with all sports participation variables but the relationship was found medium however, it is more needed to develop the sports facilities especially in performance viewpoint. The study findings others [22], revealed that motivational has considerably influence on the performance of the athletes overall. The intrinsic motivation is lesser than if there were no extrinsic reward [23]. One of the important findings [24] revealed that the struggle in athletics to achieve external rewards is gaining the financial benefit. Though, the current study reports a significant relationship of rewards for achievements with the sports participation variables however, rewards for elite female athletes are more needed to enhance the performance and female participation in sports. Though, the relationship of sport media variable with the sports participation of elite female athletes all constructs are reported at medium level in the existing study and also found positively significant. From the findings, it may be concluded that both the variables are given owing

consideration however, the need for improvement is still required. The media assist to continue a male-dominated sports supremacy by just declining to cover or very slightly giving coverage to female athletes and females' sports [25].

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that the socio-economic status of school females' families in rural areas is found poor whereas, sports facilities are more needed for female athletes to increase sports participation and become successful in sports as well. The school female athletes should be rewarded more with healthier incentives upon their achievements to enhance females' participation in sports. On the other hand, sports media did not provide due consideration to female sports in comparison to male sports. Therefore, healthy sports facilities and rich rewards upon achievements may enhance not only the sports participation of female athletes but also it may increase the socio-economic status of female athletes' families. Whereas, sport media may be a lime light in the enhancement of female sports participation particularly in rural areas if they equalize telecast to female sports of Pakistan with males.

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