

Barriers to Muslim Female Students Participation in Physical Activities and Sports in Lagos State University, Ojo

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the barriers to Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports at Lagos State University. A total of two hundred (200) respondents were selected for the study. A review of related literature was carried out to provide a good background for this study. Five (5) research hypotheses were tested, and data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire titled "Barriers to Muslim Student Participation in Sports Questionnaire (BMSPSQ)," which comprised 20 items. The questionnaire was based on a four-point modified Likert scale. The data collected in this study were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, and Chi-square (χ^2), and conclusions were drawn from the findings. The findings indicated that religious belief ($\chi^2 = 90.16, p < 0.05$), parental involvement ($\chi^2 = 16.05, p < 0.05$), individual student's perspectives ($\chi^2 = 47.88, p < 0.05$), and health status ($\chi^2 = 18.33, p < 0.05$) have a significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports. However, discrimination ($\chi^2 = 6.14, p > 0.05$) has no significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports at Lagos State University. The study recommended that Islamic scholars who are knowledgeable in sports should promote the compatibility of Islam and sports and provide culturally appropriate physical activity opportunities to increase Muslim women's participation in sports.

Keywords: barriers, muslim female students, health status, perspective, discrimination

INTRODUCTION

There is a strong sense in the literature that participation in extra school activities, such as sport, can be beneficial for students in terms of their engagement, sense of belonging, identity and other aspects of personal development. Physical activities can be defined as, bodily movements that uses energy. It includes all form of physical education, sports, and dance activities. The poor participation of Muslim females in sports and physical activities compared to other young people is a social issue (Adeyanju, 2018). Finn (2019) found that there were many aspects of the school environment that could help students to achieve a sense of attachment with their school and that to participate in extracurricular activities was considered as the best way for young people to connect with their school.

Studies conducted by Gerber (2016), suggested that participation rates in extracurricular activities might vary by ethnicity, religious beliefs with some minorities being significantly less likely to be involved than others. It was also suggested that a particular ethnic group might not be receiving the benefits that extracurricular involvement seems to propose. Participation in extracurricular activities is more challenging for Muslim girls than Muslim boys. It is apparent that Muslim girls are likely to face more difficulties in their efforts to participate in sports and extracurricular activities than Muslim boys. According to studies by Carrington and Williams (2018), both Muslim boys and girls of secondary school age are often faced with a dilemma when the time comes to participate in sports and physical education. The fact that they are Muslim reinforces the differences between boys and girls, and causes the girls to encounter more problems than the boys. Their attitudes and beliefs are heightened during these school years, and it is obvious that girls have a more difficult time at high school than boys. The cultural and religious traditions of Islam, which allot

vary specific roles to males and females, inherently controlling their conduct and dressing can cause conflict and consternation when it comes to participation in sport, especially for girls.

A study conducted by Benn and Dagkas (2016) describe in detail the tensions between Islamic cultural practices and physical education. Some examples they give include dress codes for women, mixed/single-gender groupings, attitudes related to privacy and modesty, extra-curricular activities, fasting during Ramadan, swimming and dancing. They particularly remarked on the above-mentioned Islamic requirements for modesty and privacy, which do not permit the wearing of short skirts or shorts for girls, or public changing rooms with public showers. According to Islamic codes, Muslim pupils should be segregated; however, no consideration is given to this in many institutions for learning.

Adeyanju (2018) emphasized that; the low involvement of women in sports is not due to the lack of interest in sports but it is due to the long history of direct, and indirect systemic forms of discrimination and stereo-typing as well as many other problems that women have to contend with. Adeyanju noted that, if Nigeria is to fulfil her aspiration of being amongst the top sporting countries of the world, the issue of women participation in sports must be successfully addressed. Bello (2019), revealed that Sharia had been in full operation in Nigeria before the advent of the colonialist and historically, some of the artefact indicated that Sharia was found in Kano, Sokoto, Niger, Gombe, Jigawa, Kebbi, Bauchi, Borno and Zamfara. Sharia is a way of life of a Muslim which defines for him how to interact with people who belong to the same religion as well as those other believers. It teaches how to respect and protect the life and property of those who co-exist with him whether of same faith or not. It is a divine law which left nothing untouched be it social, economic and political ways of life (Bello, 2020). For many Muslim women religious belief and values gives meaning to the ways in which they structure and approach their life. Islam is a fundamental aspect of their identity and their approach to sport is often determined by religious, cultural and ethnic factors.

In general, Islam promotes good health and fitness and encourages both men and women to engage in physical activity to maintain healthy lifestyles. However, there are aspects of the religion which affect how sports can be practiced for example; women following their faith cannot engage in mixed gender sports and the environment and dress code also requires considerations. Due to religious misinterpretations or simply a lack of awareness, many Muslim women have been prevented or not felt able to participate in sports.

It has been discovered that participating in school sporting activities could positively influence the lives of the students (Blomfield & Barber, 2019). Unfortunately, little attention has been paid to the role of sporting activities in schools and its relationship to students' development (Feldman & Matjaszko, 2015). Almari (2018) noted that the identity of Muslim students faces challenges as a result of the inherent complex nature of belonging to a minority group in dominant Western society. Also, Knez (2018) asserted that research which understands young Muslim women and physical activity through a deficit framework fails to consider the difference and diversity within the lives of these young women.

Therefore, it is in the light of the aforementioned issues that this research work intended to find out the barriers to Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. Religious belief will have no significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.
2. Parental involvement will have no significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.
3. Individual perspectives will have no significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.
4. Health status will have no significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University

5. Discrimination will have no significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The participant used in this study comprised of two hundred (200) Muslim female undergraduates from Lagos State University, Ojo.

A self-structured questionnaire titled 'Barriers to Muslim Students Participation in Sports Questionnaire (BMSPSQ)' was developed by the researcher to obtain data for the study after an extensive review of the related literature on barriers to Muslim students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University. The questionnaire consisted of twenty questions bothering on the research hypotheses. The respondents responded on four Likert scale type options of, Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD), on the questions posed on them.

Ethical considerations

All data were collected through the questionnaire which was given strictly to the female undergraduate Muslim students who came to observe the Friday Jumah prayer held in the University Central Mosque.

RESULTS

Table 1: Responses on respondent's age

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
15-19	57	28.5
20-24	84	42.0
25-29	39	19.5
30-above	20	10.0
Total	200	100

Table 1 expresses that out of the 200 respondents for this research, 57 (28.5%) were within the age bracket of 15-19, 84 (42%) were of 20-24 age bracket, 39 (19.5%) were within age bracket 25-29, and 20 (10%) were within age bracket 30 and above. This implies that the majority of the respondents were between the ages of 20-24 years.

Table 2: Responses on respondent's academic level

Academic level	Frequency	Percentage
100L	48	24
200L	52	26
300L	44	22
400L	56	28
Total	200	100

Table 2 indicates that out of the 200 respondents for this research, 48 (24%) were in 100 level, 52 (26%) were in 200 level, 44 (22%) were in 300 level and 56 (28%) were in 400 level. This indicates that the respondents were sampled from the basic academic levels in the university and majority of them were in 400 level.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

This section is on the testing of the formulated hypotheses. The criteria for acceptance or rejection were set as 0.05 level of significance

- **Hypothesis 1** states that religious belief will have no significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis on religious belief and Muslim females' physical activity participation

Responses	FRQ	%	DF	LS	Cal X ²	P value	RMK
SA	144	24.0					
A	139	23.2	6	0.05	90.16	.001	Sig
D	171	28.5					
SD	146	24.3					
Total	600	100					

Table 3 which projected the data collected from the respondents on hypothesis 1 reveals a calculated χ^2 value of 90.16 which is statistically significant at $p = .001 < 0.05$ at 6⁰ of freedom hence the rejection of the null hypothesis. It therefore implies that religious belief has significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.

- **Hypothesis 2** states that parental involvement will have no significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.

Table 4: Chi-square analysis on parental involvement and Muslim females' physical activity participation

Responses	FRQ	%	DF	LS	Cal X ²	P value	RMK
SA	150	15.0	6	0.05	16.05	.015	Sig
A	166	27.7					
D	147	24.5					
SD	137	22.8					
Total	600	100					

Table 4 showed the summary of the data collected from the respondents on hypothesis 2 and it also indicated the calculated χ^2 value of 16.05 which is statistically significant at $p = .015 < 0.05$ at 6⁰ of freedom hence the rejection of the null hypothesis. This expressed that parental involvement has significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.

- **Hypothesis 3** states that individual perspectives will have no significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.

Table 5: Chi-square analysis on individual perception and Muslim female's physical activity participation

Responses	FRQ	%	DF	LS	Cal X ²	P value	RMK
SA	170	28.3					
A	146	24.3	6	0.05	47.88	.001	Sig
D	128	21.3					
SD	156	26.1					
Total	600	100					

Table 5 which projected the data collected from the respondents on hypothesis 3 reveals a calculated χ^2 value of 47.88 which is statistically significant at $p = .001 < 0.05$ at 6⁰ of freedom hence the rejection of the null hypothesis. It therefore implies that individual perspectives have significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.

- **Hypothesis 4** states that health status will have no significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.

Table 6: Chi-square analysis on health status and Muslim female's physical activity participation

Responses	FRQ	%	DF	LS	Cal X ²	P value	RMK
SA	223	37.2	6	0.05	18.33	.001	Sig
A	163	27.2					
D	81	13.5					
SD	133	22.1					
Total	600	100					

Table 6 showed the summary of the data collected from the respondents on hypothesis 4 and it also indicated the calculated χ^2 value of 18.33 which is statistically significant at $p = .001 < 0.05$ at 6⁰ of freedom hence the rejection of the null hypothesis. This expressed that health status has significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.

- **Hypothesis 5** states that discrimination will have no significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.

Table 7: Chi-square analysis on discrimination and muslim female's physical activity participation

Responses	FRQ	%	DF	LS	Cal X ²	P value	RMK
SA	166	27.6	6	0.05	6.14	.409	Not Sig
A	184	30.7					
D	90	15.0					
SD	160	26.7					
Total	600	100					

Table 7 showed the summary of the data collected from the respondents on hypothesis 5 and it also indicated the calculated χ^2 value of 6.14 which is statistically significant at $p = .409 > 0.05$ at 6⁰ of freedom hence the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This expressed that discrimination has no significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the barriers to Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University. Result on hypothesis one revealed that religious belief has significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University. In support of the above result, Azizan and Fauzee (2021) explored the Impact of Islamic Religious Beliefs on Muslim Women's Sport Participation in Malaysia. The authors found that some Muslim women perceived sports as inconsistent with their religious beliefs, while others believed that sports could be compatible with Islamic values. The authors conclude that there is a need for more education and awareness about the compatibility of Islam and sports to increase Muslim women's participation in sports.

Alghamdi, et al. (2020) also examined the experiences of Muslim women in Canada regarding physical activity and sports. The authors found that some Muslim women faced challenges in participating in sports due to cultural and religious beliefs, such as the need to dress modestly and the fear of violating religious teachings. The authors suggest that providing culturally appropriate and inclusive physical activity opportunities can increase Muslim women's participation in sports.

Further, Alghannam and Alkhateeb (2020) explored the relationship between Islamic religious beliefs and female physical activity participation in a study in Saudi Arabia. They discovered that some Muslim women perceived sports as incompatible with Islamic values, while others believed that sports could be consistent with their religious beliefs. The authors suggest that promoting the compatibility of Islam and sports and providing culturally appropriate physical activity opportunities can increase Muslim women's participation in sports.

It was also found from the study that Parental involvement has significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University. In support of the result, Al Dhaheri and Hassanpour (2021) examined the role of parental influence on physical activity participation of Muslim girls in Dubai and found that parental attitudes and beliefs towards physical activity significantly impact Muslim girls' participation in sports.

Similarly, Merkel, et al. (2020) investigated the role of parental influence on physical activity and dietary habits of Muslim Arab-American adolescents. They found that parental support and encouragement were positively associated with physical activity participation and healthy dietary habits. This implies that parents can play an important role in promoting healthy behaviours among Muslim Arab-American adolescents. Brooks, et al. (2019) also explored parental perceptions of barriers to and facilitators of physical activity for Muslim girls. The authors found that parental support, encouragement, and involvement were important facilitators of physical activity participation among Muslim girls. These studies all reveal that parents can play a critical role in promoting physical activity among Muslim girls by creating a supportive and encouraging environment.

Result from this study also found that Individual perspectives have significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University. In support of this result, Alsubaie and Alghamdi (2021). Carried out a systematic review to examine the factors influencing physical activity participation among Muslim women and found that individual factors such as self-efficacy, motivation, and perceived benefits and barriers significantly impact Muslim women's participation in sports. The authors suggest that increasing awareness of the benefits of physical activity and addressing perceived barriers can increase Muslim women's participation in sports.

In like manner, Abujarad, et al. (2020) investigated perceived barriers to participation in physical activity among hijab-wearing Muslim women in the UK and discovered that individual factors such as lack of confidence, body image concerns, and fear of judgment significantly impact Muslim women's participation in sports. The authors suggest that addressing these individual perceptions can increase Muslim women's participation in sports.

Abdel-Aziz and Janelle Joseph (2020) who explored Muslim women's attitudes towards physical activity and sport and the role of Islamic religious beliefs reported that individual factors such as per-

sonal interest and motivation significantly impact Muslim women's participation in sports. The authors also found that Islamic religious beliefs can both positively and negatively influence Muslim women's attitudes towards physical activity. The authors suggest that addressing individual perceptions and promoting the compatibility of Islam and sports can increase Muslim women's participation in sports.

The result from this study which expressed that health status has significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University negate the study by Taiwo (2022), who in his study revealed that body mass index has significant influence on the exercise behaviour of the respondents. Those with obesity and overweight exercise more than the normal and underweight respondents. The need to burn exercise fat and control weight could be the reason those with high BMI have better exercise behaviour than the group with low BMI. This result is similar with the report of Okuneye, Dansu and Idowu (2011), which reported strong relationship between exercise behaviors and body mass index of female nurses in suburb areas in Lagos State. Also, Okuneye, Dansu and Idowu (2008) found high BMI among a group of child-bearing age women and recommended that these women should be encouraged to participate in programmes that work against gaining excessive weight which will help prevent obesity and associated disease.

Another result from the study stated that discrimination has no significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University. In contrast to this result, Chawansky and George (2019) after examining the experiences of Muslim women in sport and physical activity and how discrimination affects their participation found that Muslim women face various forms of discrimination in sport, including Islamophobia, racism, and sexism. Tamminen and van Ingen (2020) also explored the experiences of Muslim girls wearing hijab in physical education classes in Canada and found that Muslim girls face various forms of discrimination, including negative comments, stereotyping, and exclusion from activities.

Ali, et al. (2020) further participated in a study that explored the experiences of Muslim women in the UK with physical activity and the barriers and facilitators they face. The authors found that discrimination, including Islamophobia and racism, is a significant barrier to Muslim women's participation in physical activity. Although the result of this study clearly stated that there is no significant evidence of discrimination in the population of this study, it is worthy of note that discrimination can lead to decreased participation in sports, negative experiences, and feelings of exclusion.

CONCLUSION

From the research work carried out, it was concluded that religious belief, parental involvement, individual student's perspectives, and health status have significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports. However, discrimination has no significant influence on Muslim female students' participation in physical activities and sports in Lagos State University.

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