FACTORS AFFECTING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN SPORT - A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Females carry on to be feebly represented in sport as participants, coaches, advisers and as team administrators and are seldom seen in the capacity as managers of different sporting codes. This systematic review sets out to determine the factors affecting the participation of women in sport. After reviewing available article and abstract on the subject; several factors were identified as influential determinants of whether girls decide to participate or not to participate in sport. The following factors were identified: financial benefits; family support; career opportunities; stereotypes about female sport participation; physiological nature of females; self-esteem; ability; motivation; competitions; need for recognition; coaching preferences and how well females get the recognition over their male counterparts; lack of motivation; pressure and the competitive nature of the world of sport. Educational Institutions should maintain the spirit of sport participation and by so doing generate sport participation by women as a lifelong skill.

Keywords: Women in Sport

INTRODUCTION

Sport and physical activities are parts of every national culture. Since women and girls make more than half if a country’s population, unfortunately, in the beginning of the millennium, the percentage of women sport activities is different between countries and in all countries women don’t have accessibility to sport activities (half of women) ;it is interesting that the present difference is considered as cultural rules. The publication of required sports of human beings as enjoyable activities during the life time has been strongly emphasized; also, the sport of championship plays a key role in the growth of public sport but unfortunately due to the attractions of championship sport and its financial, economical issues, public sport has not been paid attention in different country.

Along this, women challenge with sport and moral obstacles to enter into sport fields. In other words, they face either with problems in a stadium, championship and other non-athlete position to keep their health raising their agility through sport activities. Basically all stadiums belong to everyone but it is mono sexual; thus, women lack of any sport participation; they even do not have accessibility to any sport events to drain their excitements and energy as well. Along with the collect of information about women sport in a society, there exist many researches and the recent research is one of them. Women’s and girls’ access to and participation in sport is not a privilege. It is a right. The right to participate in sport and physical activity is enshrined in Article 1 of the UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education and Sport, for example, which states that “The practice of physical education and sport is a fundamental right for all”. Similarly Articles 10 (g) and 13 (c) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) call for States Parties to ensure the same opportunities for women and men to participate actively in sports, physical education and recreational activities. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also recognize access to and participation in sport as human rights. It is widely
acknowledged that women’s and girls’ inability to participate in sport is linked to the persistent gender inequalities. The United Nations General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Commission on the Status of Women have called for the creation of opportunities at the national, regional and international levels that would facilitate the participation of women and girls in sport and physical activity. This call was encapsulated in the Beijing Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The 2005 United Nations International Year for Sport and Physical Education highlighted the power of sport to enable individuals to experience equality, freedom and empowerment, noting that “the control over one’s body experienced while practicing sport is particularly valuable for girls and women…” The quadrennial international conferences, organized by the International Working Group on Women and Sport, have galvanized the global community to confront the prevailing unequal situation of women and girls in sport. The Brighton Declaration outlines eloquently the areas requiring action, including facilities, school and junior sport, developing participation, high performance sport, leadership in sport, education, training and development, sport information and research, resources and domestic and international cooperation. Therefore this systematic review aimed at identifying the factors affecting the participation of women in sport.

**OBJECTIVE**

To identify the factors affecting participation of women in sport

**RESEARCH METHOD**

The researcher was downloading the different articles and abstracts which were related to the title in the first step. Then try to see each of in detail. Lastly based on the information or results that have gained by scholars the research put his discussion and conclusion as reviewer.

**DISCUSSION**

Motivation to participate in sport is dependent on internal and external factors which are combined with a variety of drives and successful negotiation of leisure / time constraints (Recours et al, 2004; Yan & Mc Cullagh, 2004; Frederick-Recascino & Schuster-Smith, 2003; Alexandris et al, 2002; Vlachopoulos et al, 2000). Two dominant themes have been identified from the literature - and sports participation for self reward such as social interaction or fun, and sports participation for competitive outcomes. People also participate in sport for the ‘love of the game’ and want their chosen sport to be fun and entertaining. Having fun, being physically fit, making friends and achievement are all important motives for participation but these motives also change or are dependent on age, gender, ability and skill level (Kilpatrick, et al, 2005; McDonough & Crocker, 2005; McGee et al, 2005; Salguero, 2004; Ryska, 2003; Barber et al, 1999; DeVoe & Carroll, 1994). Sport participation has also been shown to have positive effects on physical health, psychological enhancement, stress reactivity, mental well-being as well as having a positive impact on body image, self concept and to enhance self esteem (Kilpatrick, et al, 2005; Ryska, 2003; Koivula, 1999;).Recours et al (2004) examined the motivational differences between male and female participants within their motivational scale which consisted of the four factors of competition, exhibition, sociability and playing to the limit. Men and women participate in different types of sports because they have different motives for their participation. It is argued that male participation was based on hypercompetiveness while female participation was for personal development, competitiveness and enhancements of personal and social development. (Recours et al, 2004; Kelinkske et al, 2001; Koivula, 1999). However, whilst gender based competitiveness is recognized, equestrian sport is predominantly female orientated and as such, represents a sport where the influence of competitiveness of female participants can be more easily examined.

Studies of women’s and girls’ experiences of sport suggest that positive experiences can contribute to a sense of empowerment for participants and the development of a sense of ownership of their bodies. As self-esteem and self-direction are improved, participants begin to function more openly and equally in community life. In doing so, women’s and girls’ participation in sport challenges and changes social
norms with regards to their roles and capabilities within society (WorldHealthOrganization, 2005). Sport and physical activity organizations should target awareness and recruitment initiatives at women and girls of all ages. Reengagement can take many forms including as a physical activity participant, athlete, official, coach, instructor, educator, board member, advocate/champion, volunteer or professional leader. There are many other gateways to becoming engaged, such as through one’s professional or volunteer work including as members of the media covering sport; professionals in sport medicine, sport science, and health promotion; major games mission staff; academia; business and facility ownership and management; equipment suppliers; etc. More consideration should also be given to the development of effective off ramps, conveying an appreciation for one’s prior involvement (in whatever form it was), acceptance and support for current circumstances, and options for being re-engaged in the future (e.g., invitation to reconnect or offer to follow up after a certain period of time, sharing of information regarding other opportunities, active recruitment for other roles, assistance with issues related to one’s transition). For example, as an athlete, there are opportunities to participate at a variety of levels, from Masters Games to community sport and recreational activities; although typically there are more options for men than there are for women. As a coach, official, administrator or volunteer, options include special events and opportunities with community, provincial/territorial, national and international programs, clubs, associations and organizations, as well as mission staff/games assignments and countless other roles in the sport and physical activity system. Furthering one’s education through training, certification and professional development may be required for some roles and should be part of transition planning. Another key element needed to achieve system alignment and integration for women and girls is enhanced support for diversity.

A diverse representation of women and girls must be included in research in conjunction with appropriate research methods and tools. In particular, age/lifecycle, race/ethnicity, disability/ability, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status are diversity domains that need to be better understood and more strongly reflected in research (British Columbia Centre for Excellence in Women’s Health, 2000). Research findings and best practices from the field need to disseminate throughout the Canadian sport and physical activity system to enhance practice, and inform future research. Improvements such as these will contribute to more success, whether measured by more active, healthy and engaged girls and women or more podium-caliber performances by female athletes.

A gender analysis study conducted by the World Health Organization (as cited in VanDeventer, 1998), showed that learners placed a higher priority on participation in school sport compared to club sport and leisure activities. The study also showed that girls regularly participate in non-active leisure activities like partying, dancing and listening to music. Boys regularly party, dance and listen to music but then also participate in school sport. Culture is when a group of people have similar beliefs, which form part of their tradition and custom. According to Hargreaves (1997), culture is seen to be a lived and subordinated of particular classes, in the sense that certain cultural beliefs can affect the progress of particular areas in life. Cultural beliefs have a great impact on the involvement of females in sport. Kane (1998) argued that sport could be regarded as one of the most important sites for the production of cultural beliefs and practices that equate gender differences. These cultural beliefs make women think that they will never attain the levels of their male counterparts where sport performance is concerned.

"A women's place is in the kitchen" is still a common saying and many cultures still firmly believe it. Participation in sport masculinises females and is therefore viewed negatively (Fasting, 1987). Hargreaves (1997), went on to indicate that women were excluded from convenient venues and they often had to travel long distances for them to be able to play and this was one of the factors causing females to be side lined. Despite many negative factors, females who continue to participate in sport are challenging the culture-bound beliefs and are going against deep-seated traditional beliefs. "If sports is a cultural space where gender relations are produced, preserved and publicly celebrated, then women's involvement in sports can be seen as a form of resistance that disturb the apparently already existing logic of male supremacy" argued Birrel and The berg (as cited in Kane 1998, p. 342). There are however, many factors that make it impossible for certain females to take part in sport. Cratty (as
cited in Higginson, 1984), argued that even if facilities are available a child might not participate in sport if the parents are unconcerned regarding this facet of the child's development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information which is gathered, the reviewers conclude the following main points.

- Stereotypical attitudes need to be concretely addressed, through for example, the adoption of legislation specifically mandating the equal access to and participation in sport in all public programmes. Some female athletes have already challenged the stereotypes by moving into predominantly male sports such as basketball and boxing. These courageous women need support.

- An enabling environment in which women and girls can play without fear of violence and harassment must be created. Governments, international organizations, sporting organizations, women’s organizations and networks need to work together to ensure that women’s and girls’ participation in sport is safe and without discrimination and harassment.

- Information gathered by different networks and organizations, should be shared to facilitate its dissemination and reporting in order that good practice as examples might be replicated.

- Availability of resources is critical to quality sport facilities, equipment, trainers, and programmes. Inability to pay should not be a justification for exclusion of any girls or women from exercising their right to sport and physical activity. Governments, the donor community and private sector should consider expanding investment in sport as a contribution to overall development to provide urgently needed resources.

- The coverage by the media of women’s sport and physical activity must not be done selectively but rather given equal attention as that accorded to men’s sport.

- Finally, the visibility of women at decision-making tables is an indivisible aspect of women’s access to and participation in sport. More efforts need to be made to increase the numbers of women in leadership and decision-making.

REFERENCES


