

# Religious Involvement in Young Islamic Women Participation in Physical Education, Sports, and Physical Activities

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This study is to identify the relationship between young Islamic women involvement in physical education, physical activities, and sports. Today, limited attention has been paid to the relationship of young female Muslims and sports. This relationship can be noted as a social problem, and therefore need a specific attention to this problem. This study examines how Muslim female students display their participation in physical education and sporting activities and how their Islamic background influences of the way of the precise their engagement with the field of sport. Being a Muslim young woman and participating in sport is getting as a challenge of their ethnic identities. So that the young Muslim women clearly positioning within the framework of their ethnic identities are not interested in sports because they not seen it as a respectable femininity. According to the previously reported guidelines and results, the methodology was constructing for this systematic review. All the original data in this article were collected from published articles in research gate and Google scholar. The articles were searched under the topics of “religious involvement in Muslim female’s physical education, sports and physical activities” and “Muslim Female Participation in Olympics”. Results show that the religious involvement has positive attitudes toward female participation but extensive parental influence important to the young Muslim women involvement in the sports field. This paper also expresses that Muslim girl’s participation in physical education, physical activity, and sports is less because they are in struggle between their identity as Muslims and dress codes as well as the sporting requirements and in the other hand mixing or interaction with the opposite gender and doing exercises on Ramadan.

*Keywords:* Muslim, Islam, female, physical education, physical activities, sports

## Introduction

Now a day’s field of physical activity and sports is important area in the world. It interprets the importance of the physical education from the school level. Physical activities can be defined as, bodily movements that uses energy. It includes all form of physical education, sports, and dance activities. It is a problem in the society why the Muslim females engagements with the sporting and physical activities are low than the other youngsters. That is important to examine the reasons for this situation, those Islamic females less participation for the physical education, sports, and physical activities, and also the impact of their religion.

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### **Methodology**

Base on the previously reported guidelines and results, the methodology was constructing for this systematic review. All the original data in this article were collected from published articles in research gate, Google scholar, Journal of Sport, Education and Society, Sociology of Sport Journal, SAGE Journals, Asia-Pacific Journal of Health, Sport and Physical Education, Leisure studies, Journal of experimental sciences, books, newspapers and magazines. Published articles were searched under the topic of “religious involvement in Muslim females’ physical education, sports and physical activities” and “Muslim Female Participation in Olympics”.

The papers collected were reviewed. The appropriate articles selected after review of abstract, introduction, conclusion, results and discussion. References were used to find more articles to get more details and results.

### **Religion and Ethnicity**

A study shows major two patterns that young Islamic females identify work to their involvement in physical activity and sports. The meaning of identify work is use to underline the dynamic aspect of identify construction. Being a young Muslim female and participated for the sports is seen as a challenge to their ethnic identities. Therefore young females who are in the framework of their ethnic identities are not interested in participating sports, because it is not seen as a respectable femininity. Other young women, who challenge the idea of femininity by participating in sports, experienced by sanction or harassed. Those who think religion is the important source of identification, than ethnicity has seen as being physically active is important because of Islam’s health aspects (Walseth, 2006). A four month field study done in Egypt shows that the women in the study agreed that Islam encourages sports participation for women. The women on Egypt participate for sporting activities because they are supporters of the fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. Furthermore different interpretation of Islam is consequences to the sport participation, which relate to using the veil, the concept of excitement, gender segregation, and power relationship between women and men (Walseth & Fasting, 2003). A study finds that most of Muslim females have positive attitudes towards sports, while their actual participation level for the sports and physical activity is very low, in compared with other youngsters. This explains that often reasons for Islamic females less participation for the sport and physical activity are the fact that sports participation is restricted by the Islamic living rules, especially for females. But number of authors argued that Islam is not obstructing female participation for sports (Knop, 1996). From another study it explains that the Muslim women in Malaysia strongly influenced by their process of culture and identity with their parent’s ethnic group (AbdulRzak, Sofian, & Abd-Latif, 2010). Some studies explain that Islamic doctrine to incompatibility with Islamic beliefs is a reason for Muslim females less participation for sports (Nakamura, 2002).

### **Family Oriented Leisure Activities**

An author argued that effect of Islam on leisure behavior manifests itself through the emphasis on strong family ties and on family oriented leisure among Muslims. Another article identifies how family identities shape and are reinforced to playing football (Ahmad, 2011).

### **Parental Influence**

In another study, which is done to identify the family influence on young women from minority

communities who are engage in combine sport and educational program, explains that parents influence also important to encouragement for the participation to the sports and physical activities (Kay, 2006). In another study it was done by the local education authority because of the improvement of parental withdrawal of Islamic girls from physical education. It interprets that the parental influence is strong across the age phases (Benn, Dagkas, & Jawad, 2011).

### **Dress Code, Gender Segregation, Doing Exercise on Ramadan**

Some researchers interpret that Muslim girls participation in sports and activities impacted by the struggle between their identification as Muslim, Islamic dress code, and sporting requirements and on other hand the mixing or interaction with the opposite gender. The dress code and the mixed teaching methods and doing exercises on Ramadan season also restricted the participation for the sporting and extracurricular activities. Other researchers found the problems for less participation of Muslim females for sports as communications, inflexible dress codes like wearing headscarf (hijab), gender organization, and use of public swimming pools were found. To minimize this situation flexibility of approach, shared decision making and situation specific policies are the most successful (Benn et al., 2011). A study done in Norway found that the Muslim females enjoying their physical education classes, and majority of them preferred gender mixed physical education classes (Walseth, 2015). Women in Iran have to cover their body and hair with long cloths and scarfs. This makes a restriction to Iranian sportswomen to attend to international competitions (Anon, 2005).

### **Socio-Cultural and Historical Context**

A research done at Greece and Britain expressed that physical education has national curriculum status and a similar rationale in both countries but with different cultures. The both groups have positive attitudes towards physical education but they are limited on their participation to the extra-curricular activities. For the Greek women, religious identity and the consciousness of requirements of the Islam, is not more evident than British women. Socio-cultural and historical contexts are impact to the Greek Muslim females engagement to the sports (Dgkas, 2006). Researchers explore the politics of identity for young refugee women in contemporary Australia (Plamer, 2009). Another study was done on Shia Muslim Canadian women to explain their discursive constructions of physical activity in relation to Islam and the hijab (Jiwani & Rail, 2010). The participation of Muslim females for sports is varying from country to country, rural to urban areas, and also on nationalism, socialism, and westernization (Sfeir, 1985). A research provides guidelines to improve the participation of Australian Muslim Females for health and physical education by considering and draw upon their curriculum and policy design and daily practices (Kenz, Macdonald, & Abbott, 2012).

### **Olympics and Muslim Female Athletes**

There are some women participants in Olympic Games and medalists from Islamic countries with some barriers. Those Islamic women's personal situations vary from their living country, their residence, and their religious orientation and also the social background (Pfister, 2010). There were many Muslim women who participated to the 2016 Olympic Games for many sporting events. It was focused on how female athletes who wore the hijab either are a symbol of oppression or finished dead last in their events. Dalilah Muhammad, first American women who won the gold medal for 400 meter hurdles, Majlinda Kelmendi, who won the gold medal for judo, is the ever Olympic medal for Kosovo; Aliya Mustafina from Russia won the gold medal for

gymnastics, Mariya Stadnik from Azerbaijan, Zhazirz Zhapparkul from Kazakhstan, Sri Wahyuni Agustiani from Indonesia, Ibtihaj Muhammad, USA for fencing, Sara Ahmed, Egypt, Kimia Alizadeh Zenoorin from Iran, Hedaya Wahba from Egypt, Patimat Abakarova, Azerbaijan, Ines Boubakri and Marwa Amri from Tunisia, and Nur Tatar from Turkey (Harvard, 2016). Many Muslim countries did not allow females to participate in international competitions. Athletes from Tunisia, for example well represented at the Olympic Games, in track and field events, canoeing, fencing, table tennis, judo, wrestling, and taekwondo. 161 men and 68 women had sent by the Indonesia for 12th summer games. Pakistan sent three girl athletes to Beijing Olympics (Qureshi & Ghouri, 2011). People argued that Muslim women are changing because the world is changing. At the Olympics in 2012 Brunei, Saudi Arabia and Qatar became the last three countries that send female athletes to the Olympics (Weinreb, 2018).

## Conclusion

It is a problematic for the society why young Islamic female participation for physical education, sports, and physical activities is less than other youngsters. The studies semblance that young Muslim females have positive attitudes towards taking part in sport and physical activities, while their actual participation is in lower level than others. Those who regard religion is the most important source of identification than ethnicity, being physical active is seen as important. Some studies identified that parental influence was also a major point to young female's participation. Some authors argued that Islamic living rules highly restricted the participation of sports for females while numbers of authors have argued that Islam does not obstruct females' sports participation. Studies revealed that Islamic females are in struggle between their identities as Muslims, Islamic dress code like wearing hijab and sporting requirements and mixing or interaction with opposing gender, doing exercise during Ramadan and using public swimming pools. Because of those factors, the Islamic young females are restricted to their engagement in physical activities and sports. But now a day there is an upgrade of young Muslim female engagement in field of sport and physical activities, in mostly the pre dominant Muslim countries and among Muslim people in well-developed countries than the other minority communities.

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