

Gender Differences in Sports Participation Attitudes

Dr. Tushar Dhar Shukla¹, Deepak Kumar Singh²

¹Head of Department, UIPEs, Chandigarh University, Gharuan, Mohali, Punjab

¹Email: drtusharshukla@gmail.com

²Director (Sports), Chandigarh University, Gharuan, Mohali, Punjab

²Email: deepak.rowing@gmail.com

Abstract

This research investigates the gender disparities in attitudes towards sports participation, with a particular emphasis on the social, psychological, and institutional elements that determine the level of involvement in physical activities that is displayed by males and females. There are still discrepancies in terms of participation rates, motives, and perceived impediments in sports, despite the fact that there have been greater initiatives to achieve gender parity in sports. The research investigates the ways in which established gender norms, access to resources, parental support, peer influence, and media portrayal all have a role in shaping individuals' opinions from a young age. According to the findings, males tend to demonstrate more positive attitudes and higher levels of confidence in competitive sports contexts, whereas females are more likely to experience feelings of self-consciousness, concerns about safety, and societal discouragement regarding their participation in sports. The findings of this study highlight the need of designing sports settings that are inclusive, implementing targeted interventions, and reforming policies in order to cultivate fair attitudes and increase participation across genders. The educators, coaches, and lawmakers who are working to close the gender gap in sports must have a solid understanding of these inequalities in order to be successful.

Keywords: sports, Gender, attitudes

INTRODUCTION

The promotion of physical health, emotional well-being, and social growth among persons of all ages is significantly aided by participation in sports. On the other hand, the prevalence of sports involvement varies greatly between the sexes. Throughout history, males and females have had contrasting perspectives on their participation in sports. These perspectives have been moulded by societal expectations, cultural norms, and institutional practices. There are still significant discrepancies in terms of interest, encouragement, access, and confidence in physical exercise, despite the fact that attempts to promote gender parity in physical activity have made headway in the past several decades. From an early age, males are frequently encouraged to participate in sports that are both physically demanding and competitive. This reinforces the notion that athleticism is a characteristic that is associated with men. When compared to males, girls are more likely to be exposed to societal signals that link physical exercise with beauty, health, or social connection rather than competitiveness or performance. Different degrees of motivation, self-efficacy, and long-term participation in sports are all influenced by these variances in socialisation, which contribute to the disparities. In order to create successful interventions that encourage equitable participation, it is vital to have a solid understanding of gender-specific attitudes towards sports. An in-depth study of the underlying origins, patterns, and implications of these gendered attitudes will be presented in the next section, which draws upon research in the fields of psychology, sociology, education, and sports science. This introduction will set the stage for the analysis. The discrepancies in sports participation are not simply a reflection of individual choices; rather, they are firmly rooted in the larger societal institutions and values that constitute the society as a whole. Not only do gendered views impact who participates in physical education programs at the school level, but they also influence how participation is

regarded and encouraged at the elite level of competitive sports. In many instances, these beliefs translate into inequalities in opportunity, with males often having better access to training, coaching, and institutional support than females do. It is also important to note that cultural circumstances play a crucial part in the formation of these gendered dynamics. In civilisations that are more conventional or patriarchal, females may be subjected to overt discouragement or limits on their ability to engage in physical exercise. On the other hand, in situations that are more progressive, girls may nevertheless grapple with subtle prejudices and lower expectations. Additional layers of inequity are created as a result of the gender dynamic being further complicated by intersectional factors such as socioeconomic position, ethnicity, and geographic location. Recent global movements that advocate for gender equality in sports have begun to challenge these standards, which has resulted in an increase in the visibility of female athletes and a broader discourse around fairness. The process of transforming deeply ingrained views, on the other hand, is a slow one that calls for extensive educational, policy-level, and community-based interventions. The purpose of this research is to investigate the disparities in attitudes towards sports participation that exist between the sexes, to investigate the causes that contribute to these discrepancies, and to propose actions that may be taken to foster a more inclusive culture in the athletic world. It is possible for stakeholders to work towards minimising inequities and cultivating an atmosphere that is supportive of all persons, regardless of gender, if they have a thorough awareness of these dynamics.

In addition, educational institutions and community sports programs serve as important platforms that, depending on the context, can promote or question gender stereotypes towards sports. The manner in which young people evaluate their own athletic potential and talents is significantly influenced by the teachers, coaches, and mentors who are present in their lives. It has been demonstrated via research that gender prejudice, whether deliberate or accidental, may have an effect on the distribution of chances, feedback, and encouragement. This bias frequently favours boys in positions of leadership or competition, while restricting girls to roles that are supporting or aesthetic in the realm of athletics (Lenskyj, 2000). Some progress has been made as a result of the implementation of gender-inclusive policies in educational institutions and sports federations. As an illustration, the implementation of co-educational physical education programs, the presence of women in coaching positions, and the implementation of focused initiatives to encourage girls' involvement have all seen notable effects. On the other hand, these initiatives are frequently hindered by persistent preconceptions, unbalanced media coverage, and a lack of continuous institutional commitment. A significant obstacle that continues to impede the full realisation of gender parity in sports is the gap that exists between legislation and practice. An additional factor that can have a significant influence on participation patterns is the psychological impact of gendered expectations. These expectations might include things like the fear of being judged, concerns about one's body image, or internalised concepts of femininity and masculinity. Boys may shy away from activities that are labelled as "feminine," which can hinder their participation and general well-being. Girls may avoid sports that are viewed as being excessively forceful or unladylike due to the perception that they are not ladylike. These deeply entrenched views have an effect not just on who engages but also on how long they continue to be involved and how intensely they participate. Therefore, it is both pertinent and vital to investigate views towards sports participation via the lens of gendered perspectives. By gaining a knowledge of the fundamental factors that contribute to gender-based disparities in sports participation, it is possible to help close the gap as society moves towards a more inclusive and equal opportunity society. In order to make a contribution to that knowledge, the purpose of this research is to synthesise theoretical ideas and empirical data, emphasise important hurdles, and give recommendations for the creation of a sports environment that is really equal.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

Students' views on whether physical education lessons are adequate are represented by the following categories: adequate for some students, adequate for most students, and adequate for all students. Active participation, leisure participation, and non-participation are the three distinct ways in which people engage in sports. Both male and female students served as the research's control variable. Students' levels of physical education involvement were measured by administering a questionnaire, the outcome of which was the dependent variable—their score on a motivation scale.

SAMPLE OF RESEARCH

The sample consisted of 706 students from primary schools located in the downtown area of Belgrade, with 401 males and 305 females. The circumstances for the implementation of the physical education curriculum were standard. There were 154 students in the fourth grade who were 11 years old, 121 students in the fifth grade who were 12 years old, 184 students in the sixth grade who were 13 years old, and 247 students in the seventh grade who were 14 years old.

INSTRUMENT AND PROCEDURES

It was the questionnaire that served as the study instrument, and it contained:

1. Measurement of participation in physical education using a motivation scale,
2. The questions that pertain to students' participation in sports and their opinions on whether or not the knowledge they have gained via physical education classes is sufficient

The Motivation scale, developed to assess physical education involvement, was derived from a modified MSP instrument utilised in Barjaktarević's (2001) doctoral dissertation. The original scale came from a subscale that measured accomplishment motivations, which came from the Sports accomplishment Motive (MSP) developed by Lazarević and Havelka. Its findings were published in Serbian in 1981 after this instrument was created in 1976. Both positive and negative forms of competitive anxiety have their own subscales in the original instrument. There are 29 items that make up the Motivation scale, which is used to quantify physical education engagement. A subscale of the MSP instrument was based on the sports accomplishment motives questionnaire, which was a source for many of them. In 1981, the General Achievement Motivations (MOP) were draughted by Havelka and Lazarević. It was later published in Serbian and extensively borrowed from. Barjaktarević (2001, in Serbian), the author of the revision, added an additional claim to their work. With regard to the original scale, adjustments were made to the scoring system. On a five-point Likert scale, one indicates never and five means always. There is a scale from 29 (the lowest possible score) to 145 (the greatest possible score). At a significance level of $p = .000$, Cronbach's α , which quantifies the scale's internal consistency, has a value of .84 ($F = 165, 1004, df = 28$). The research was carried out in a way that guaranteed secrecy, and the data was collected in a classroom environment.

DATA ANALYSIS

For the purpose of processing the data, the SPSS application version 13.0 was utilised. The chi-square test and the analysis of variance were the methodological approaches that were utilised.

RESULTS OF RESEARCH

In order to discover whether or not there is a connection between the length of time that students spend participating in sports and the quantity of information that they perceive they have acquired from their physical education classes, an evaluation was carried out. Based on the findings, it was determined that there was no comparison that could be considered statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1,757; df = 4; p = 0.0780$).

Table 1. How gender, degree of athletic participation, and judgement on the adequacy of PE class knowledge are related.

	Number of people who play the sport			Opinions on whether or not PE programs are adequate		
Gender	Involved no way	For fun	Actively	Sufficient for all students	More than enough for most kids	Just right for a select group of pupils
Male	55	95	251	127	162	112
Female	93	82	130	98	133	74
Total	148(21%)	177(25%)	381(54%)	225(32%)	295(42%)	186(26%)
	$\chi^2 = 36,765; df = 2; p < 0.000$			$\chi^2 = 1,323; df = 2; p < 0.516$		

There were statistically significant differences found in the analysis of the relationship between gender and the amount of engagement in sports, as well as the relationship between gender and the view of students regarding the sufficiency of information received via physical education teaching. The majority of students believed that the information gained from physical education classes was sufficient for the majority of pupils, and boys were significantly more likely to participate in some type of sporting activity.

Table 2. Statistical analysis of the Motivation scale for physical education participation broken down by gender, degree of participation in the sport, and perceptions of the usefulness of PE course material.

Views of students about the adequacy of knowledge gained from physical education lessons	Sport's involvement	Male			Female			Total		
		M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Not enough to affect any one student	Not involved at all	102.05	19.74	20	101.27	16.85	26	101.61	17.95	46
	Recreationally	105.93	15.99	30	97.29	15.54	21	102.37	16.23	51
	Actively	107.96	14.92	77	105.08	14.84	51	106.81	14.90	128
	Total	106.55	16.01	127	102.40	15.69	98	104.74	15.97	225
More than enough for most kids	Not involved at all	92.43	14.59	21	88.88	17.62	42	90.06	16.64	63
	Recreationally	95.62	12.83	39	93.32	12.69	41	94.44	12.73	80
	Actively	102.85	15.16	102	96.84	13.24	50	100.87	14.79	152
	Total	99.76	15.06	162	93.24	14.87	133	96.82	15.30	295
Just right for a select group of pupils	Not involved at all	91.50	20.83	14	86.96	12.87	25	88.59	16.06	39
	Recreationally	98.85	16.74	26	92.80	10.89	20	96.22	14.66	46
	Actively	102.92	16.75	72	99.21	16.20	29	101.85	16.60	101
	Total	100.54	17.55	112	93.34	14.62	74	97.68	16.78	186
Total	Not involved at all	95.69	18.55	55	91.83	17.15	93	93.26	17.72	148
	Recreationally	99.76	15.48	95	94.21	13.05	82	97.19	14.63	177
	Actively	104.44	15.67	251	100.60	14.92	130	103.13	15.51	381
	Total	102.13	16.33	401	96.21	15.62	305	99.57	16.28	706

Athletically active guys not only thought that physical education classes taught all pupils enough, but they also scored better on the motivation scale. However, the females who didn't participate in sport at all got the worst grade. These girls believed that some pupils learnt all they needed to know from PE class.

Table 3. Using analysis of variance, the findings of the research of variations at the Motivation scale for the purpose of measuring engagement in physical education.

Source	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1451.394	6.153	0.000
Intercept	5159699.567	21875.359	0.000
Gender	2459.739	10.428	0.001
Views of students about the adequacy of knowledge gained from physical education lessons	4024.969	17.064	0.000
Sport's involvement	3938.936	16.700	0.000

Participants' views on the value of PE, the amount of time they spent playing sports, and their gender all showed statistically significant differences. In addition, no statistically significant interactions were found between the variables. While the analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that male students generally scored higher on the motivation measure, a post hoc comparison with the Scheffe test showed that female and male students were similarly motivated. On the motivation scale, which of the three groups scored significantly higher than the other two? Who thought that the lessons taught in PE classes covered enough ground to meet the needs of every student? In addition, the post hoc Scheffe comparison showed that the motivation scale ratings of gender-neutral students who were actively involved in sports were substantially higher than those of the other two groups. Conversely, the degree to which students felt motivated was lowest among those who did not participate in any athletic activities.

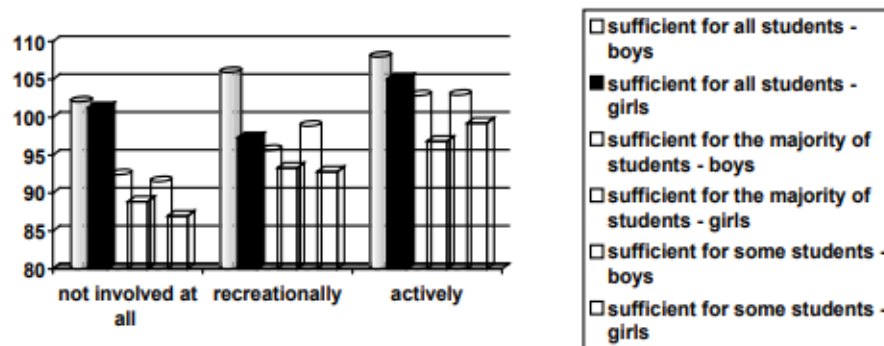


Figure 1: Scores on the Motivation scale, which measures participation in physical education, were compared across levels of sport participation and perceptions of the usefulness of PE classroom instruction.

It is possible to notice from Figure 1 that the only deviation from the linear trend of increase of motivation is the result of females who are not engaging in any sport at all and who felt that physical education knowledge was sufficient for all students. This is the only variance that can be observed.

DISCUSSION

A statistically significant difference was noted during the study of the connection between gender and involvement in sports ($\chi^2 = 36,765$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.000$). Whether it's for fun or for serious competition, more boys than females will likely be involved in some kind of sporting activity. This finding lends credence to a global trend: women are statistically less likely to engage in athletic events than men, regardless of the level of competition. According to Adler et al. (1992) and Thorne (1993), girls could think it's uncool to display physical strength, athletic ability, and dominance since these qualities are synonymous with popular males. There is a complex web of relationships between girls' physical education and femininity. This is because boys have a say in setting the agenda (basketball, handball, volleyball, and soccer make up the bulk of Serbia's physical education curriculum). Also, they were worried about how other people would see them, especially persons of the other gender. The Motivation scale, which measures students' interest in PE, consistently shows significant gender differences in scores. This might be the cause of these differences. As before, there was no statistically significant correlation between students' athletic participation and their perception of the adequacy of what they learnt in PE. It would suggest that kids, especially girls, are less motivated than their peers if they are unhappy with the PE curriculum and have little interest in doing sports outside of school. Boys were far more likely to engage in athletic activities, and most students thought that the knowledge they received in PE lessons was enough for most kids. Finally, it seems that athletic involvement does factor into the desire to engage in physical education programs, and this factor is independent of the gender of the participant. When it comes to physical education and athletic involvement, gender is a major factor. because some women think that kids don't need much more than what they learn in PE class and don't play any sports all. It may be worthwhile to focus further on this group and look into the beliefs and actions of its members.

CONCLUSION

The investigation of gender variations in attitudes towards sports participation demonstrates that these differences are not just based on personal choice but are firmly established in long-standing society norms, cultural expectations, and institutional practices. This is the conclusion that can be drawn from the findings of the investigation. It is common for

males to have more positive attitudes towards sports, which are frequently influenced by factors such as social support, availability to resources, and better assessments of their own level of skill. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to face obstacles such as gender stereotypes, restricted representation, uneven chances, and psychological restraints such as concerns about their body image and a lack of confidence. There are still considerable differences in terms of participation rates, motivation, and sustained involvement in sports, despite the fact that there is a rising awareness of the issue and legislative initiatives that are targeted at fostering gender equality in sports. The fact that these problems continue to exist highlights the importance of adopting a holistic strategy that takes into account both structural inequities and attitudinal prejudices among individuals. The development of an inclusive environment that appreciates and encourages involvement from people of all genders is a collaborative effort that requires the engagement of educators, coaches, parents, and politicians. The gender gap in sports must be closed by persistent efforts to reshape social beliefs, improve access to sports facilities and coaching, increase media portrayal of female athletes, and integrate gender-sensitization programs into schools and communities. These are all needed in order to narrow the gap. The only way to guarantee that athletics will serve as a truly equal platform for personal development, empowerment, and social integration for all individuals, regardless of gender, is to address these difficulties on numerous levels.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Brustad, R. J. (1996). Parental and peer influence on children's psychological development through sport. In F. L. Smoll & R. E. Smith (Eds.), *Children and Youth in Sport: A Biopsychosocial Perspective* (pp. 112–124). Brown & Benchmark.
- [2]. Eccles, J. S., & Harold, R. D. (1991). Gender differences in sport involvement: Applying the Eccles' expectancy-value model. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 3(1), 7–35.
- [3]. Fink, J. S. (2015). Female athletes, women's sport, and the sport media commercial complex: Have we really “come a long way, baby”? *Sport Management Review*, 18(3), 331–342.
- [4]. Fredricks, J. A., & Eccles, J. S. (2004). Parental influences on youth involvement in sports. In M. R. Weiss (Ed.), *Developmental Sport and Exercise Psychology: A Lifespan Perspective* (pp. 145–164). Fitness Information Technology.
- [5]. Gill, D. L. (2008). *Psychological Dynamics of Sport and Exercise* (2nd ed.). Human Kinetics.
- [6]. Hardin, M., & Greer, J. D. (2009). The influence of gender-role socialization, media use and sports participation on perceptions of gender-appropriate sports. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 32(2), 207–226.
- [7]. Kane, M. J. (2013). The better sportswomen get, the more the media ignore them. *Communication & Sport*, 1(3), 231–236.
- [8]. Koivula, N. (2001). Perceived characteristics of sports categorized as gender-neutral, feminine, and masculine. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 24(4), 377–393.
- [9]. Lenskyj, H. (2000). *Inside the Olympic Industry: Power, Politics, and Activism*. SUNY Press.
- [10]. Messner, M. A. (2002). *Taking the Field: Women, Men, and Sports*. University of Minnesota Press.
- [11]. Sabo, D., & Veliz, P. (2008). *Go Out and Play: Youth Sports in America*. Women's Sports Foundation.
- [12]. White, S. A., & Duda, J. L. (1994). The relationship of gender, level of sport involvement, and participation motivation to task and ego orientation. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 25, 4–18.

Cite this Article:

Shukla, T. D., & Singh, D. K. (2026). Gender differences in sports participation attitudes. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Arts, Science and Technology (IJMRAST)*, 4(6), 20–25.

Journal URL: <https://ijmrast.com/> DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59828/ijmrast.v4i6.284>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

© The Author(s) 2026. IJMRAST Published by Surya Multidisciplinary Publication.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The author(s) are solely responsible for the content and claims of this article. The publisher and editors assume no legal liability for any errors, copyright violations, or damages arising from its use.