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CHALLENGES OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION FOR STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT: A QUANTITATIVE INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

Numerous aspects of a person's well-being can be improved through sports and physical activity (Ilhan et al., 2021). It is responsible for healthiness, and has a direct influence on one's capacity to carry out everyday tasks (Engel-Yeger & Hamed-Daher, 2013). This study looked for the obstacles to physical activity for students with physical impairments in Pakistan. The research was primarily descriptive in nature. Students with physical impairment studying at higher education level were approached to select the sample. 100 students with physical impairment from University of the Punjab, University of Education, Government College Women University, Faisalabad and University of Management and Technology, Lahore were selected as sample through convenient sampling approach for this investigation. The information was gathered through the use of a questionnaire. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the information gathered. Findings revealed that pupils with physical impairment face a number of hurdles to sports participation, including discriminatory practices by community, inequitable access to sports, the expulsion of fellow students, a lack of accessible transportation and a negative perception from typically developing peers.

INTRODUCTION

In order to maintain mental, physical, and social health, physical activity (PA) is a necessity (Biddle & Asare, 2011). The benefits of sports activities for people with disabilities are numerous (Ilhan et al., 2021). It enhance one's overall physical abilities, including stability and postural control (Bouchard & Tétreault, 2000). It also has a positive impact on one's ability to carry out everyday tasks (Engel-Yeger & Hamed-Daher, 2013).

There are many benefits to physical activity for pupils with disabilities, including a reduction in bias toward those with disabilities as well as an increased sense of community (Haegele, et al., 2015). Equal opportunity to participate in society is also promoted by this practise (Dane-Staples, et al., 2013). But limiting exercise for people with disabilities can have a number of negative consequences. Reduced PA makes people more reliant on others for their daily needs, which reduces their sense of independence (Skaggs & Hopper, 1996). Furthermore, a sedentary childhood results in a lack of peer relationships, entertainment, mental wellbeing, and physical fitness for people with physical disabilities as they grow older (Kozub & Oh, 2004).

Sport participation among people with disabilities is lower than among their fellow students, despite countless benefits of regular physical activity (Augestad & Jiang, 2015; Haegele & Porretta, 2015). Some possible explanations include a need for assistance with mobility, a lack of accessible sporting events, discrimination, or other forms of social exclusion (Qureshi, et al., 2022). In addition, adolescents with physical impairments experience stress, anxiety, or depression while attending an inclusive environment (Qureshi, et al., 2021). There may also be an overall deficit in motor abilities, poor balance, postural control and integration among people with physical impairments (Basit, et al., 2021; Basit, et al., 2022) that may be intertwined with their ability to move (Wagner, et al., 2013). Their motivation to engage in physical activity may be diminished as a result.

Students' concerns of being humiliated in sporting activities and also being ridiculed by non-disabled fellow students are also observed as barriers to physical activity for people with disabilities (Dane-Staples, et al., 2013; De Schipper, et al., 2017; Engel-Yeger & Hamed-Daher, 2013; Tahira, et al., 2022). In view of the lack of studies in Pakistan on the constraints to sports activities for people with disabilities, this study aims to identify those barriers. In order to better understand the barriers that prevent students with physical impairments from participating in sports and physical activity at the university level, the researchers conducted an investigation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study intended:

- To identify the obstacles that prevents students with physical impairment from participating in sports activity.
- To determine whether there is any difference between the challenges in sports participation faced by students with physical impairment studying in public and private universities.
- To determine whether there is any difference between the challenges faced by boys and girls with physical impairment in sports participation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was primarily descriptive in nature. Population of the study was students with physical impairment studying at higher education level in Punjab. Students studying in University of the Punjab, University of Education, Government College Women University, Faisalabad and University of Management and Technology, Lahore were approached to select the sample. 100 students with physical impairment were selected as sample through convenient sampling approach for this investigation. The information was gathered through the use of a questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire was 0.76, indicating that it was reliable. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the information gathered.

RESULTS

Table No.1 Challenges reported by students with physical impairment for sports participation

S.No	Which of the following challenges are experienced by students with physical impairment for sports participation?	Reported percentage
1	Inadequate opportunities of sporting events	60%
2	Discrimination by the society	82%
3	Safety issue	73%
4	Inaccessible environment	65%
5	Limited access due to transportation	60%
6	Lack of disability friendly sports material	68%
7	Lack of awareness of sports instructor with the needs of those with physical impairment	70%
8	Lack of latest technology to facilitate needs of those with physical impairment	82%
9	Lack of acceptance from healthy peers	72%
10	Sports are too competitive	60%
11	Lack of cooperation from peers	68%
12	Bullying from healthy fellows	65%
13	Low socio-economic status of family	50%
14	Dearth of support from family	62%
15	Over protected and extra conscious parents	60%
16	Lack of interest and motivation	60%
17	Fitness issues	70%
18	Lack of self-efficacy to perform in sports	72%
19	Lack of information and awareness	60%
20	Inferiority complex	70%
21	Fear of injury	62%
22	Being dependent of others for sports and physical activity	78%
23	Fear of mockery	62%
24	Sports incapability owing to restricted experiences	60%

Table No. 1 indicates challenges confronted by students with physical impairment in sporting activity. Most commonly reported obstacle was lack of

latest technology to facilitate needs of those with special needs as reported by 82% respondents. An additional obstacle as stated by 82% was discrimination by the society. Being dependent of others for sports and physical activity was reported by majority of the respondents 78%.

Safety issues (stated by 73%), lack of acceptance from healthy peers (described by 72%), bullying from healthy fellows (stated by 65%), fear of injury (told by 65%) and fitness issues (stated by 70%) were among few other reported barriers.

Table No. 2 t-test statistics based on gender of respondents.

	Gender of respondents	Number of respondents	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Df	t-value	p-value
mean	Female	50	4.0050	.27194	.03846	98	-1.838	.069
	Male	50	4.0992	.23941	.03386			

Table No 2 shows a no significant difference in statistically calculated mean of male and female students with physical disability regarding challenges faced by them in sports and physical activity. The value of t is -1.838, with a p-value of .069 which is greater than $\alpha = .05$. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no difference in challenges faced by male and female students with physical disability in sports and physical activity.

Table No. 3 t-test statistics based on nature of institute

	Nature of institute	Number of respondents	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Df	t-value	p-value
mean	Government	65	4.0397	.24939	.03093	98	-.647	.519
	Private	35	4.0750	.27892	.04715			

Table No 3 indicates a non-significant difference in calculated mean of students with physical impairment studying at government and private institutes regarding challenges faced by them in sports and physical activity. The value of t is -.647, with a p-value of .519 which is greater than $\alpha = .05$ at confidence interval of 95. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no difference in challenges faced by students of government and private universities in sports and physical activity.

DISCUSSION

The results of this research demonstrated that students with physical disabilities experience a variety of challenges while engaging in sports activities. In addition, the dearth of advanced technologies to accommodate the needs of those with physical impairment, an insufficient knowledge among sports instructors about the requirements those with physical disability, discriminatory practices by community, bullying from healthy counterparts, and a negative perception from typically developing peers were some of the most commonly quoted obstructions. previous studies indicated that the dismissal of fellow students, inequitable availability of resources, and a scarcity of adequate

travelling facilities are all frequently cited as hindrances for people with disabilities (Haegele, et al., 2015; Rimmer, et al., 2004; Jaarsma, et al., 2014; Lieberman, et al., 2013; Qureshi, et al., 2022).

In the present investigation, constraints to sports participation include, along with many other things, physiological concerns, inferiority complexes, and a phobia of embarrassment. Physical symptoms, expenses, and the limited capacity to rehearse alongside classmates and friends are all factors that limit participation in sports (Dane-Staples, et al., 2013; Jaarsma, et al., 2013; DeSchipper, et al., 2017; Tahira, et al., 2022).

Researchers discovered that students who've been overly protected by their parents or who live in households with poor socioeconomic background reported their parent's attitude as a barrier to sports participation. Participants' perceived inability to engage in physical activity is partly due to the costs associated with participating in sports; this has been established by Scelza, et al. (2005); Jaarsma et al. (2014). Similar findings were observed in studies on persons with a disability (Tahira, et al., 2022; Wright, et al., 2019).

In participation in sport and physical activity, male and female students with physical disabilities suffer the same difficulties, according to the study findings. There was no substantial distinction in participation in sports activities exercise between students with physical disabilities attending public institutions and those attending private ones.

CONCLUSIONS

In Pakistan, pupils with physical impairment face a number of hurdles to sports participation, including inadequate resources, inequitable access to sports, the expulsion of fellow students, discriminatory practices by community, and a lack of accessible transportation and a negative perception from typically developing peers. It is reported to be difficult for some people with physical disability for a variety of reasons, including lack of exposure, physical constraints, health issues, guilt, and a sense of inferiority.

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