

THE ROLE OF CULTURAL NORMS IN SHAPING PHYSICAL LITERACY AMONG PAKISTANI SCHOOL GIRLS

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ABSTRACT

The whole purpose of this study was to investigate into physical literacy level of the Pakistani school girls and to explore the impact of cultural norms affecting physical literacy. The study targeted the enrolled schoolgirls of class 9th and 10th from public, private and religious institutes of province of Punjab, Pakistan. Multistage sampling technique to select appropriate sample was used. 416 schoolgirls from public, private and religious institutions were selected for this quantitative study. A self-developed validated questionnaire, consisting of 18 items, was used to collect data. The result revealed that the level of physical literacy among schoolgirls was low. Moreover, cultural norms have a significant effect on physical literacy of the schoolgirls. The results also indicated that cultural norms were affecting physical literacy adversely and were causing hurdles in enhancing and flourishing in the prevalence of physical literacy among Pakistani schoolgirls.

Keywords: Physical literacy, Physical activity, Physical education, cultural norms.

INTRODUCTION

In Pakistan, like other multicultural countries, cultural norms play a significant role on every aspect of life including educational aspect. These norms have a significant impact on the level of physical activity and literacy of girls. Different studies indicates the several barriers in developing physical literacy i.e. social, cultural, gender issues, and lack of self-care in Pakistani girls (Lansburgh et al., 2022; Mahmood et al., 2022). Moreover, economic issues i.e. poverty, and less educated girls marriage are the key factors which affect their social experience and preserving traditional socio-cultural practices that impede physical activity (Nawaz, 2022). Besides, research also emphasizes the key role of consideration in different contexts like cultural, societal, and structural. These are the major elements while making to design mediations in enhancing physical literacy levels among Pakistani girls, for

improving the large scale physical literacy as well as health outcomes (Mahmood et al., 2022).

Family dynamics as the part of culture, significantly influence physical activities among Pakistani girls. In 3rd world countries, like Pakistan, cultural patterns, security concerns, and controlled outdoor places due to community limitations impact girls' involvement in different physical activities (Qutub et al., 2015). Family care and support have a central part in determining youngsters' physical activity performances, with conception of family help and support, as a major influencer (Kiyani et al., 2021; Sarwar et al., 2010). The major focus of these studies in on space for physical activity, deficiency of funds, non-provision of required facilities, disinterest from staff and parents, and the students as well. Additionally, young girls in the country also counter gender inequalities by their families along with

society that ultimately result in hinders in the participation in different physical (Ahmed Laar et al., 2022). It is essential to understand and address these cultural and family dynamics which will ultimately support in promoting and supporting girls in enhancing involvement of girls in the physical activities and literacy in Pakistan, besides that, it will also be supportive in reforming policies, modifications in school methods and approaches for outdoor places, and empowerment policies to cope different cultural issues and safety fears. Ahmed et al. (2016) conducted a study in Hyderabad, Sindh about the physical activities of local secondary school's girls. This study examined parental support for girls, family fluctuation, and surviving in the nuclear household, substantially affected physical activity of girls in Pakistan, equally inside and outside of the school.

Recent studies indicated a lower score on physical literacy in Pakistani girls, but these studies have some limitations which demands out towards exploring physical literacy among Pakistan with a large sample including religious institutions. The level of physical literacy in Pakistani girls do not meet with international standards. (Liu et al., 2023). Recent research revealed that Pakistani students, particularly girls, are less active and are on lower level of physical literacy compared to progressive countries (Jaffri et al., 2023). Moreover, Pakistani girls face deficiencies in infrastructure, facilities, instrument availability, qualification of faculty, and social awareness in the country (Ali et al., 2014). In Pakistan, among other efforts made in this regard, the translation of Canadian Assessment of Physical Literacy-2 in Urdu, to assess physical literacy in young children of Pakistan is valuable (Hadier et al., 2024).

Numerous factors effect physical literacy among Pakistani school girls. Individual aspects i.e. self-efficacy, their motivation and attitude of the school girls has a significant effect on predicted level of physical activity (Kiyani et al., 2021). Moreover, ethnic factors, involving gender bias and parental opinions regarding education, affect physical literacy of Pakistani school girls in Pakistan (Ambreen & Mohyuddin, 2012). Besides all these, the urban/rural classification in Punjab, Pakistan were found to shape physical literacy level, rural parts of the province indicating comparatively higher level of literacy, demonstrating the key role of geographic features in inducing physical literacy (Malik, 2020).

It is essential to understand and address these factors to promote physical literacy among Pakistani school girls. It will ultimately be supportive in interventions, which will ultimately be helpful in improving the situation.

It shows the significance of exploring physical literacy among Pakistani girls at various age levels. In Pakistani context, a few studies are available regarding physical literacy, but these have some limitations. These studies targeted a particular age group children (Liu et al., 2023), a particular urban area of a particular province (Ahmed et al., 2016; Sarwar et al., 2010), limited sample size (Taş & Altunsöz, 2021), and a particular culture representative sample (Taş & Altunsöz, 2021). This indicates a significant gap in this regard which needs to be studied further. This study aims to target all secondary school girls and their parents to understand in order to explore the level of physical literacy, barriers in promoting PL, and strategies to improve the situation.

Statement of the problem: there are many challenges for physical literacy among Pakistani school girls. They face deficiencies in provision equipment, insufficient faculty, social, and family support. It is observed that the situation is worse in girl's school that result in obesity along with development of unhealth habits (Liu et al., 2023). Besides that, as far as PL is concern, Pakistan, due to its cultural patterns, is trying to cope the situation, as it does not fulfil the international standards adequately. To explore these factors in order to unveil the inadequate situation of PL in Pakistani school girls, is essential. To tackle the bad situation, it is need of the time to cope this issue and give the right to the Pakistani school girls the opportunity which may justify them properly (Raza, 2021).

Objectives of the study:

1. To assess the prevalence of cultural norms effecting physical literacy in Pakistani school girls
2. To establish the impact of multiple cultural norms on physical literacy of Pakistani school girls
3. To assess the PL level of different educational sector of Pakistani school girl

Significance of the study:

This study aimed to extremely lower PL rates among Pakistani schoolgirls. The study will provide an insight into the role of cultural norms in forming and effecting PL behaviors. While through investigating, these complex interdependent interactions may be understood properly, and it will ultimately be supportive in developing effective interventions in order to promote PL and healthier lifestyle. It will also be helpful in enhancing and flourishing girls' participation in different physical activities.

Methodology:

Population and sample:

Population of the study consists of all public, private and religious institutions in the province of Punjab. Multistage sampling technique was used to select appropriate samples. At the 1st stage, one division out of 10 divisions in province of Punjab was selected randomly. At the 2nd stage, two districts from selected division, were selected randomly, whereas at the 3rd stage, 3 public schools, 3 private

schools, and 2 religious institutions were selected randomly. The data of these institutions was taken from School Information System (SIS) Punjab, office of the District Education Officers (Male/Female/Secondary) one from each DEO office to select private schools randomly, and 2 religious institutions were selected from the data provided by Wafaq Ul Madaris randomly. All the students of class 9th and 10th of selected public schools, private schools and religious institutions were selected as a sample.

Instrument, data collection and analysis:

A self-developed questionnaire consisting of 18 items which was validated from experts was used to collect data. The value of Cronbach's Alpha was .701. Whereas, data were collected personally by visiting the public, private, and religious institutions. Data were analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, independent sample T-test and ANOVA were used to analyze data.

Results:

Chart 1: Description of Age of the Students Selected in the Study

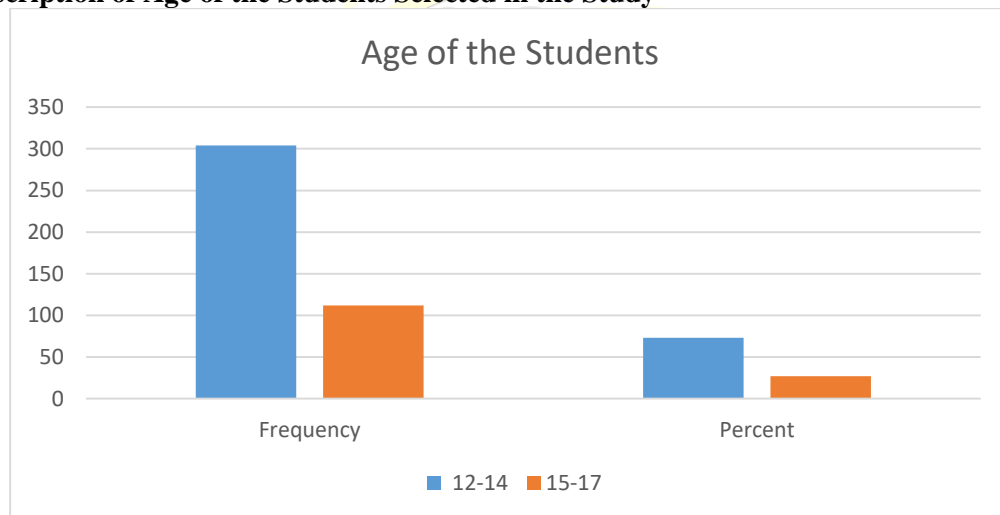


Chart 1 indicates the ages of selected students, the age ranging 12-14 consists of 304 students with 73.1% and age ranging 15-17 consists of 112 students with 26.9%.

Chart 2 Classes of the Students selected for the study

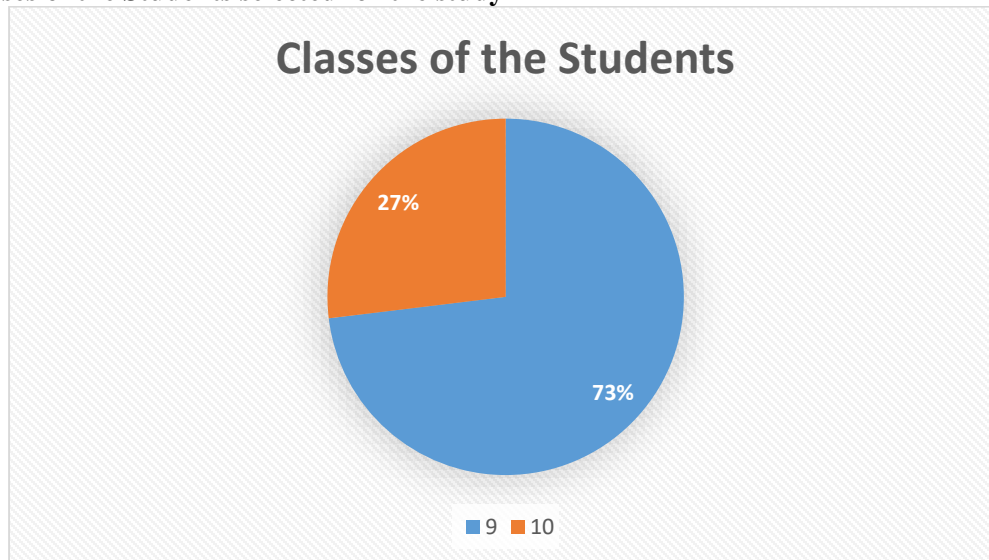


Chart 2 revealed that the number of samples selected from class 9th was 304, which was almost 73% of the whole population. Whereas 10th class students selected for study numbered 112, which was almost 29% of the whole population.

Chart 3 Location of the Institution

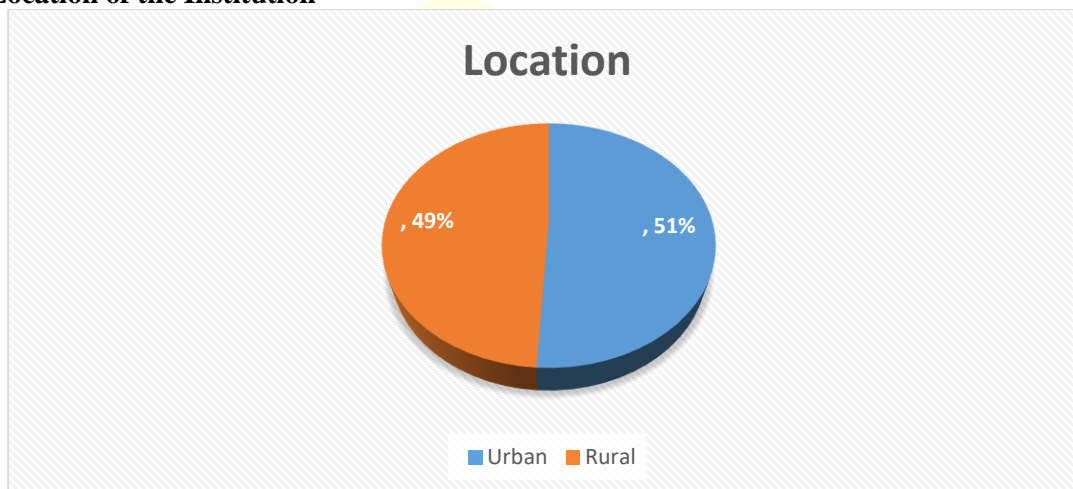


Chart 3 indicates the location of the students who were included in this study. 212 urban students and 204 rural students were selected for the study which was 51 and 49 percent respectively.

Chart 4 Nature of the Institution

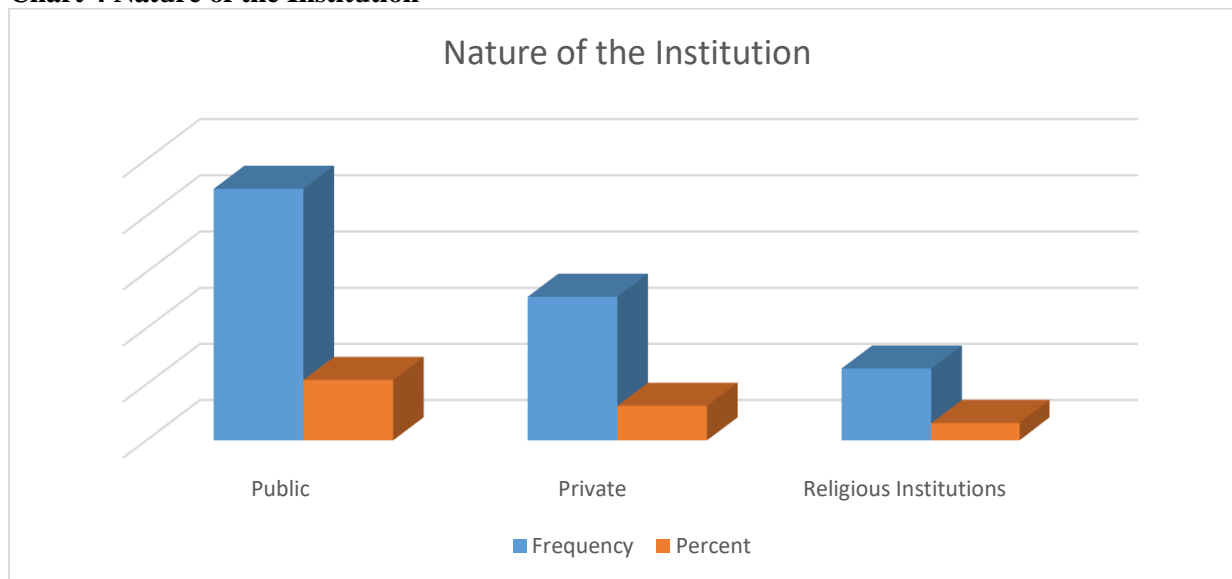


Table 4 indicates the nature of institutions selected for the study. 224 public school students (54%), 128 private school students (31%), and 64 religious institutions students (15%) were selected for this study.

Table 1. Age wise descriptive statistics

	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Physical Literacy	12-14	304	.9302	.37329
	15-17	112	.8606	.29007

Table 1 demonstrates some description of physical literacy regarding age level of Pakistani girls. It revealed that the girls, age ranging 12-14 were 304, whereas age ranging 15-17 were 112. The mean value was .9302 and .8608 respectively.

Table 2. Independent sample T-test for comparing means of ages 12-14 and 15-17

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-statistics	Degree of freedom	Std. Error Difference
		F-Statistics	Significance			
Physical Literacy	Equal variances assumed	4.147	0.042	1.784	414	0.03901
	Equal variances not assumed			2.000	253.242	0.03478

Table 2 indicates the variance of physical literacy among two age groups i.e. 12-14 and 15-16 years. The value (.043), <.05, indicates the significant difference between two groups i.e. 12-14 & 15-16.

Table 3. Independent sample T-test for comparing means of classes 9th and 10th

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-statistics	Degree of freedom	Std. Error Difference
		F-Statistics	Significance			
Physical Literacy	Equal variances assumed	5.169	.024	2.595	414	.03884
	Equal variances not assumed			2.935	258.278	.03435

Table 4 indicates the significant differences between the perceptions of class 9th girls and class 10th girls. As $p = <.05$ indicated that both groups have a significant difference.

Table 5. Independent sample T-test indicating values regarding location i.e. Urban and Rural

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-statistics	Degree of freedom	Std. Error Difference
		F-Statistics	Significance			
Physical Literacy	Equal variances assumed	.320	.572	-11.458	414	.03027
	Equal variances not assumed			-11.458	413.354	.03028

Table no. 5 reveals that there is no significant difference between urban and rural students in perceiving physical literacy. As $p = >.05$, which indicates no significant difference between the two groups.

Table 06. Table Physical Literacy among public, private and religious institutions (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	15.713	2	7.856	89.522	.000
Within Groups	36.245	413	.088		
Total	51.958	415			

Table No. 06 consists of analysis of variance (ANOVA) regarding physical literacy among three groups i.e. public, private, and religious institutions. The result revealed that there is a significant difference between these groups.

Table. 07 Do you think cultural norms are playing a restrictive role regarding physical activities?

Valid		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
		YES	384	92.3	92.3
	NO	32	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	416	100.0	100.0	

Table 07 was about the perceptions of students “Do you think cultural norms are playing a restrictive role regarding physical activities?”. It showed that according to 92 percent of the students, cultural norms were playing a restrictive role in physical activities of schoolgirls.

Table 08. Do you consider physical activities as an important factor for girls?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Important	176	42.3	42.3	42.3
	Important	136	32.7	32.7	75.0
	Neutral	80	19.2	19.2	94.2
	Not Important	24	5.8	5.8	100.0
	Total	416	100.0	100.0	

Table 08 revealed that students considered it very important to take part in physical activities for girls. According to the 75% of girls, it was important to take part in physical activities that indicates a high ratio regarding PL in schoolgirls.

Table 09. Are your teacher supportive in doing your physical activities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	304	73.1	73.1	73.1
	NO	112	26.9	26.9	100.0
	Total	416	100.0	100.0	

Table 09 indicated that schoolgirls' perception about teacher support in physical activity was very supportive. According to 73% of schoolgirls, their teachers support in performing physical activities.

Table 10. Are you parents supportive in your physical activities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	280	67.3	67.3	67.3
	NO	136	32.7	32.7	100.0
	Total	416	100.0	100.0	

Table 10 indicated that 67% of the parents were supportive for schoolgirls in their physical activities. Whereas almost 33% of the parents were not supportive for physical activities.

Table 11. What are the hurdles that play the role of barrier in performing physical activities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lack of time	72	17.3	17.3	17.3
	Lack of interest	56	13.5	13.5	30.8
	No Safe Place to Exercise	160	38.5	38.5	69.2
	Lack of encouragement from	128	30.8	30.8	100.0
	Total	416	100.0	100.0	

Table 11 indicated that according to the 39% of the schoolgirls have no safe place for exercise, moreover, 17% of the schoolgirls pointed out that they do not have sufficient time to exercise.

Table 12. Are you confident in your physical abilities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Confident	144	34.6	34.6	34.6
	Confident	128	30.8	30.8	65.4
	Neutral	48	11.5	11.5	76.9
	Less confident	80	19.2	19.2	96.2
	not confident	16	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	416	100.0	100.0	

Table 12 revealed that 65% of schoolgirls were confident in their physical abilities. While almost 19% of students responded that they feel less or no confidence in their physical 'abilities.

Table 13. According to you, how much physical activities are import?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Important	192	46.2	46.2	46.2
	Important	120	28.8	28.8	75.0
	Neutral	56	13.5	13.5	88.5
	Not Important	48	11.5	11.5	100.0
	Total	416	100.0	100.0	

Table 13 revealed that 192 respondents (46.2%) considered physical activities very important. While 12% of the respondents declared physical activities unimportant. Almost 14% of respondents remained neutral in this regard. According to most of the respondents, they were unable to perform physical activity due to the non-availability of a safe place.

Consideration:

Discussion and Conclusion

This study indicated that the level of physical literacy among Pakistani schoolgirls was very low. The situation in religious institutions regarding PL was extremely pathetic where only a few girls were involved in physical activities. The situation with respect to public and private school girls was much better comparatively. All the respondents admitted that cultural norms have an adverse effect on girls' physical activities. They called it as the barrier in developing physical literacy in Pakistani schoolgirls. Cultural norms played a significant role in reducing physical activities among Pakistani girls. As it was stated that Pakistani culture is a hurdle in promoting physical activities in Pakistan, the role of family, parents and teachers was much encouraging in developing PL among Pakistani girls. No significant differences between rural and urban students were found. Most of the Pakistani girls are aware from the importance of physical literacy. These finding are consistent with the work of Laar et al. (2019). Pakistani girls also admitted that they not only know importance of PL, but they are passionate to take part in these physical activities. These findings are consistent with Hürmeriç Altunsöz (2021). According to most of the respondents, they were not able to perform physical activity due to the unavailability of a safe place.

Curriculum may be revised, and physical education may be incorporated into the core curriculum. This will enhance the probability of participation in PE. Besides that, teachers may be provided with comprehensive training targeting the importance of

physical literacy and related teaching methods. Provide comprehensive training to teachers on the importance of physical literacy and effective teaching methods. Infrastructure may be improved to facilitate physical activities in public, private and particularly in religious institutions, especially in rural areas of the country. Girls may be appreciated in participating physical activities through incentives in educational institutions. Communities may be motivated in supporting PL among students. In order to establish a safe space in every town, collaboration with communities may be ensured. The development of periodic sports programs to encourage participation of girls may be ensured in all education institutions. Besides that, parents, family and community may be influenced through media campaigns. This will be helpful in coping negative stereotype concepts about girl's PL.

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