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The viewpoints of physical education experts on the attendance of women as spectators in stadiums and its role in the growth of women's sport

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ABSTRACT

In order to examine the viewpoints of physical education experts on the attendance of women as spectators in stadiums and its role on the growth of women's sport, 226 managers, experts, and faculty members of physical education were selected through random sampling and based on Krejcie & Morgan Table, and answered to the questionnaire prepared by the researchers. In order to approve the face and content validity of the questionnaire, 10 experts in sport management, and in order to determine the reliability, Cronbach's Alpha (0/886) were consulted and used; moreover, in order to analyze the data, descriptive and deductive statistics (ANOVA and T-Test) were used. Findings showed that the viewpoints of physical education experts about the topic were significant. It can be said that there are many political-social obstacles in terms of women's presence in stadiums that have led to the prohibition from attending stadiums in many sport areas. It is while, findings indicate that the presence of women in stadiums as spectators can be of help for the growth of men's as well as women's sport, and consequently have positive political, social, economic, and cultural impacts for our country.

Key Words: Physical Education Experts, Spectators, Women's Sport, Culture of Sport

INTRODUCTION

Sport as a social event has undergone numerous ups and downs, and was under the influence of many social issues, and covers different groups of the society under titles of athletes, fans, spectators, etc. In the present society, sport has been considered as a humanistic-educational issue, and is widespread among all walks of the society. In the present condition, many young people are trapped in harmful conditions like addiction that is due to unemployment, lack of adequate programs, etc. Women are not exceptions here, lack of sport equipment or adequate programs for spending the free times have implicated women even more. On the other hand, we have witnessed rough behaviors in sport environments. A brief review of men's competitions show that whenever women were present as spectators, the discipline was more both in athletes and the spectators. Furthermore, much more excitement was injected in the environment {1}. In the early 1980s when the revolutionary beliefs regarded the women's attendance contrary to its inspirations, ordered the prohibition of their attendance in stadiums. After a respite and almost simultaneous to the Cultural Revolution, sport got back in track but men became in absolute charge of everything. This led to the deprivation of a large group of society from one of the most necessary civil rights, without any justifiable explanation {2}. Years passed with these beliefs. Rough behaviors, undermining the moral atmosphere of stadiums due to the use of profanities were part of the achievements of this condition. In other words, the ownership of the

culture of stadiums was assigned to men whose dictionary had defined only the word *prejudice*. This cultural inversion gradually, led authorities to come up with finding solutions. Although family was not the first option, it seemed that bringing the same forgotten citizens into the stage is the best option {3}. The attendance of women in stadiums is more a cultural warning to the athletic society than merely a conflict between pros and cons. In recent years, the issue of women's attendance in stadiums has always been hot. The issue, which has even paved its way into the hot debates of parliament members. It is while we have witnessed women's successes in international sport events, even with Islamic Hijab {1}. In a study, the viewpoints of different groups of people, in terms of women's attendance in sports arenas as spectators, were analyzed. Results showed that most of them approve women's presence in stadiums, however, the only reason for disapproval of some others was the lack of reliability to the behavioral health of male spectators. Put it simply, failing to observe moral issues on the side of male spectators is one of the main reasons that hinders women to be present at stadiums as spectators. Moreover, a study about the social-political condition of the country showed that the current condition of the country is not suitable for hosting women in stadiums. On the other hand, the statistical estimations from the overall people (72%) participated in the study led to the point that presence of women as spectators causes sport environment to be morally and culturally more suitable {1}.

A group of researchers in a study titled *How Women Become Supporter Of Australian Rules Football* came up with some results based on interviews and reports from women who had been to stadiums. This study showed that there are significant social obstacles for the presence of women in stadiums and these social obstacles hark back to family and environmental conditions which will lead to the future decline of women's presence in stadiums as spectators {6}.

Concepts like fitness, health, personal and social development, and spiritual health have close relationships with physical education and sport. History shows that the civilized nations have regarded sports and their role in the training of their young people to get them ready to fight back the personal and social problems. With the commence of the new century, the health thought for women emerged with the slogan of *girls as tomorrow's mothers* and the developed countries proposed sport regimens for women. The most important goals that nowadays are pursued in the Islamic Republic of Iran for women's sport are the followings: a) growth and maintaining physical health; b) growth and maintaining spiritual health; c) growth and maintaining social relationships; d) growth of mental and cognitive conditions; e) growth and maintaining moral and spiritual conditions; f) programming the free time of women; g) prevention and treatment of the common weaknesses and illnesses in different stages of growth and development {2}. In another study, 11.63 % of people have gone to sport arenas that in terms of gender, 18% were male and 4.8% were females. Results of this study showed that social-political issues have caused women to attend stadiums less compared to men. In other words, findings of this study show that the sexual features have led to the decline of spectator group in the sport fields and competitions. It should be mentioned that the lower percentage of women's attendance compared to men goes back to the social limitations that already exist in Iranian society {3}. Although it seems that in the recent decade women's sport has highly developed, not much progresses have been done in terms of women's role as stadium spectators of especially women's sport competitions. It is while women have increasingly watched soccer, hockey, and baseball matches of men and have attended men's competitions as spectators in the world. It seems that women are facing social, psychological and scientific obstacles for watching men's competitions {5}. Studies have shown that women are disinterested in watching the competitions of their own gender, however, have more inclinations in watching the opposite gender competitions. The aim of this study is to see to what extent are women inclined to watch men's competitions including men's and women's basketball matches; results indicated that they are interested in watching men's matches. The feedbacks of this unwillingness or inclination can be effective in the growth or regression of men or women's sport {5}. On the other hand, sometimes, in some important sport events like men's soccer, women face problems. Findings of a research titled *Girl's Presence in Soccer and the Culture of Female Spectators in Men's Soccer* showed that, nowadays, closed beliefs have been developed in terms of the sexual features of stadium spectators especially women spectators in men's soccer matches. Studies show that the resistance and motivation of the female spectator society is diminished due to different reasons and this can be deteriorating for soccer {7}. Sport event spectators are considered as the body of sport; in fact, from international point of view, spectators are the main consumers in sport. The spectator group are highly gender oriented. With sport being globalized, rarely examinations of women's role and their relationship as participants or spectators are taken into account. Women's competition do not have enough media coverage to get nationalized. With sport being globalized and industrialized, women are marginalized {8}. With regard to the findings of a research, even if women have occupied half of a nation, however, most of them are sporadically involved in sport media. This problem needs logical and accurate analysis in the type of sport activity and the extent

of media coverage for it {8}. A group of researchers in a study titled *The Role of Female Spectators in Men's Sport and What Can Develop Women's Sport* came up with some results. This study discusses the potential of TV networks in providing a firm position for women's sport and motivations of male athletes. The scope of this study is the viewpoints of women that are concerned about sport events, especially through sport media. This also shows parts of social limitations that women face for entering the stadiums as spectators {4}.

In general, findings of the local studies show that the limitations women face in filling their spare time is due to the political-social conditions of the country. Oversea studies have also been done on this issue, however, this problem causes less limitations in foreign countries. In foreign countries most of the administered studies are about the social limitations of women's presence in sport arenas, both as spectators and athletes. Comparison of local and foreign studies show that one common factor exists in both groups that go back to the political condition of countries that is the second important reason after the social barriers. Analysis of the theoretical principles and studies done about women's sport and their attendance as spectators can be informative about the history of women's sport and be a motive for women to upgrade the standards of women's sport. With regard to the point that women comprise half of the society members, enriching their free time and encouragement to be in sport arenas and watching professional competitions can help having a healthy society of women {1}. It has been years that the issue of women being present in stadiums has been the topic for debates; however, it has not been really implemented. As a result of cultural-scientific conditions of the country, few studies have been done in this area. Therefore, examination of social aspects of this study can pave the way for women to be present in stadiums as spectators and upgrade women's sport. As a result, running a research about the viewpoints of physical education experts on women's presence in stadiums as spectators and its effect on the development of women's sport seems to be necessary. There are important social, cultural, political variables that should be analyzed. Now with regard to the effects spectators may have in showing their feelings and the boost in motivations of athletes, it seems that the presence of female spectators can have positive effects on athletes as well as other groups of spectators. Immunization of sport environments, identification of social barriers through the prohibition of aggressive behaviors, developing social-cultural behaviors with regard to the acceptable Islamic and national principles and traditions, developing cultural codes in stadiums, boosting individual motivations as a result of enthused spectators, enlivening the spirit of sport, prohibition of harmful traditions, identifying decent sport role models, and strengthening women's sport through watching high-profile competitions can be factors that can prepare stadium atmospheres a proper place for the presence of women as spectators. Presence of women and family members in stadiums to watch important competitions can increase the supervision and social control in stadiums to a significant degree. It is because of the fact that aggressive behaviors have got nothing to offer against the dominated family culture in the stadium. This good and cultured ambience does not let the stadium to be unraveled by aggressive deplorable and uncivilized behaviors. Therefore, the main queries of this study are the followings:

- What are the social barriers that impede women to be present in stadiums as spectators?
- In case of their attendance would it have effects in the growth of women's sport?
- In what sport areas there is the possibility of women's presence as spectators?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is a descriptive empirical research. The participants include experts and sport federation members, staff managers of the Ministry of Sport and Youth, as well as faculty members of physical education departments of Tehran city (N=302) which were selected randomly based on Krejcie & Morgan Table; experts (113), managers (60), and faculty members (80). This selection was due to their influence in decision and policy makings in sport areas. The instrument of the measurement of research variables was the researcher's questionnaire. This questionnaire was comprised of 40 five-scale (Likert) questions; 5 points were specified for the option (very much) and 1 point for the option (nothing). In order to assure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire and resolving the vagueness, a study was conducted on 10 experts in sport management. In order to determine the face and content validity of the questionnaire experts' opinions were taken into consideration and they all approved it, and to determine the reliability Cronbach's Alpha (0/886) was used. In order to organize and summarize the data descriptive statistics were used, and about the deductive statistics one-way analysis of variance, post-hoc Scheffe test and one-group t-test were administered by SPSS Software V.20.

RESULTS

Findings:

Table 1 describes the personal features of the respondents, in three groups of experts and sport federation members, staff managers of the Ministry of Sport and Youth, and the faculty members of physical education departments of Tehran city.

Table1. Descriptive statistics of the personal features of the respondents in sport federations, Ministry of Sport and Youth, and physical education department of Tehran

Statistic Sample Place of Service	Gender			Marital Status			Academic Degree		
	Gender	number	percentage	Marital Status	number	percentage	degree	number	percentage
Ministry of Sport and Youth	female	44	73/3	married	41	68/3	Diploma	2	3/3
							AA	4	6/6
	male	16	26/6	single	19	31/6	BA	46	76/6
							MA	8	13/3
							Phd	0	0
Sport Federation	female	51	44/7	married	64	56/1	Diploma	25	21/9
							AA	16	14/0
	male	63	52/2	single	50	43/8	BA	57	50
							MA	15	13/1
							Phd	0	0
Faculty Members	female	23	44/2	married	45	86/5	Diploma	0	0
							AA	0	0
	male	29	55/7	single	7	13/4	BA	0	0
							MA	0	0
							Phd	52	100

Table 2 shows the findings related to the single group t-test for the comparison of the difference between the theoretical mean of social barriers women face for attending stadiums as spectators. With regard to the point that the theoretical mean is considered 3, findings in table 2 show the calculated t with freedom degree of 250 at the level of (0.05) for the examination of the first hypothesis is (2.86). In the hypothesis there is a significant level of (0.05), and there is a positive relationship between women's presence as spectators and social barriers.

Table2. Single t-test group for the comparing the difference between the sample average and theoretical average of social barriers women face in terms of attending stadiums as spectators

T	Freedom Degree	Level of Significance	Difference from the Mean	Confidence Interval of 95% for the Differences	
				High Level	Low Level
2/8611	250	0/001	0/94519	1/0103	0/8801

Table 3 shows the findings of ANOVA test related to the connection of social barriers in different groups. Findings show that there exists a positive significant correlation between the social barriers women face with the lack of possibility to attend stadiums in most of the sport areas ($p=0.97$). There is also positive correlation between the development of men's and women's sport and the lack of possibility of being present in stadiums ($p=0.97$). However, this relationship about the social barriers and the development of men's and women's sport was different ($p=0.00$).

Table3. ANOVA Test about the Correlation of Social Barriers Women Face for being Present in Stadiums as Spectators in Different Groups

Group1	Group2	Difference from Mean	error std	Significant Level	Confidence Interval of 95% for the Differences	
					High Level	Low Level
1	2	-0/017	0/068	0/97	0/152	-0/186
3		-0/597	0/081	0/00	-0/359	-0/789
2	1	-0/017	0/068	0/97	0/186	-0/152
3		-0/580	0/072	0/00	-0/402	-0/758
3	1	0/597	0/081	0/00	0/798	0/359
2		0/580	0/072	0/00	0/758	0/402

Table 4 shows the findings related to single group t-test for the comparison of the difference of sample mean and theoretical mean between female spectators and their role in the development of men's and women's sport. With regard to the point that the theoretical mean is considered 3, results obtained in table 4 shows that the calculated t

with freedom degree of 250 in the level of (0.05) for testing the second hypothesis is (2/76) and there is a positive significant correlation between women's presence as spectators and their role in the development of men's and women's sport.

Table 4. Single Group T-test for Comparing the Difference of Sample and Theoretical Mean between Women's Presence as Spectators and their Role in the Development of Women's and Men's Sport

T	Freedom Degree	Level of Significance	Difference from the Mean	Confidence Interval of 95% for the Differences	
				High Level	Low Level
2/7643	250	0/000	1/13004	1/2106	1/0495

Table 5 shows the findings of ANOVA test related to relationship of women's presence as spectators and their role in the development of men's and women's sport. Findings show that there is a positive and significant correlation between the social barriers women face and lack of the possibility of being present in stadiums ($p=0.827$). There also exists a positive and significant correlation between the development of women's and men's sport and the lack of possibility to be present in stadiums in most of the sport areas ($p=0.827$). However, this correlation was different between the social barriers women face and the development of women's and men's sport ($p=0.00$).

Table 5. ANOVA Test Related to the Connection between the Presence of Women as Spectators and Their Role in the Development of Women's and Men's Sport of Different Groups

Group1	Group2	Difference from Mean	error std	Significant Level	Confidence Interval of 95% for the Differences	
					High Level	Low Level
1	2	0/057	0/093	0/827	0/172	-0/286
3		-0/453	0/110	0/00	-0/239	-0/782
2	1	0/057	0/0393	0/827	0/286	-0/172
3		-0/453	0/097	0/00	-0/214	-0/693
3	1	0/511	0/110	0/00	0/782	0/239
2		0/453	0/097	0/00	0/693	0/214

Table 6 shows the findings related to the single group t-test for comparing the difference of sample mean and theoretical mean between the possibility of women's presence as spectators in most of the sport areas. With regard to the point that the theoretical mean is considered 3, the findings show that the calculated t with the freedom degree of 250 at the level (0.05) for testing the third hypothesis is (2.87). In the hypothesis, the significance level was less than (0.05) and there is a positive and significant correlation between the possibility of women's presence as spectators in most of the sport areas.

Table6. Single Group T-Test for Comparing the Difference of Sample Mean and Theoretical Mean between the Possibility of Women's Presence as Spectators in most of the Sport Areas

T	Freedom Degree	Level of Significance	Difference from the Mean	Confidence Interval of 95% for the Differences	
				High Level	Low Level
2/876	250	0/004	0/09010	0/1518	0/0284

Table 7 shows the findings of ANOVA test related to the possibility of women's presence as spectators in most of the sport areas. According to the findings, we can say that the third hypothesis significance is very close to (less than 0.05), the mean of the third hypothesis was examined in 3 statistic populations; in the first population mean was (2.93), in the second population the mean was (3.10) and in the third population the mean was (3.24); as it can be seen the means in all 3 populations is close to the value under examination and the hypothesis of the possibility of women's presence as spectators in most of the sport areas will be accepted.

Table7. ANOVA Test Related to the Possibility of Women's Presence as Spectators in Most of the Sport Areas of Different Age Groups

Group1	Group2	Difference from Mean	error std	Significant Level	Confidence Interval of 95% for the Differences	
					High Level	Low Level
1	2	-0/179	0/073	0/052	0/001	-0/359
3		-0/311	0/087	0/002	-0/097	-0/526
2	1	0/179	0/073	0/052	0/359	-0/001
3		-0/132	0/077	0/230	0/057	-0/323
3	1	0/311	0/087	0/002	0/526	0/097
2		0/132	0/077	0/230	0/323	-0/057

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

With regard to the information discussed above, we should admit that the quantity and quality of responders in this study increases the value of findings. Taking education level, sexual distribution, marital status, and the organization of service into account indicate the significance of the viewpoints about the issue.

Findings indicated that from the viewpoints of physical education experts, political-social barriers exist before women for attending stadiums as spectators. In addition, significant positive difference exists between women's presence as spectators and its role in the growth of women's sport. At last, with regard to the viewpoints of the respondents, the possibility of women being present in stadiums do not exist in most of the sport areas, especially soccer.

Findings of the study show that from the viewpoints of staff managers of the Ministry of Sport and Youth, experts and members of sport federations, and the faculty members of physical education departments of Tehran there are social barriers before women for being present in stadiums as spectators. Respondents mostly indicated the religious and traditional oppositions as the main causes. Their viewpoints hark back to the dominant ruling condition of our country which is based on religion and traditions. In the recent decades, especially after the revolution, religion has been highlighted in the country and has been the overarching criterion in all aspects of the government. This issue has shown its impacts in sport for the case of prohibition of women as spectators. However, the decisiveness of the religious government has influenced the views of people and they have accepted that at the present condition women's presence in stadiums as spectators is not an option {1}. Failure in observing the moral codes by male spectators was another reason. Another reason which was elicited from the responses was the inadequate political-social condition of the country. In this respect, some believe that one of the most important reasons which impede women from being spectators are the social and governmental obstacles. A survey among female spectators in Australia about their support for stadiums indicated that specific conditions and barriers of their country have become a huge problem that refrain women to be present in stadiums freely {6}. Other social barriers that were mentioned included the views of law makers, managers, and officials of the country and the media coverage of women's sport. In this respect, some researchers believe that with globalization of sport, law makers and mass media do not specify enough media coverage to women's sport. In other words, women's sport events and their presence mostly do not have enough media coverage to be nationalized {8}.

Concerning the second hypothesis, findings show that there is a significant correlation between women's presence as spectators and the development of women's and men's sport which indicates that women's presence gives boost to men's and women's sport. Moreover, it develops the culture of having sport in women.

Some experts believe that, although women's sport was on the verge of growth in the recent decade, their presence as spectators for watching women's sport has undergone a perceptible decline. It is while their strong presence could further women's sport. It is while women are watching men's competitions increasingly and its feedback is the increasing growth in men's sport {5}. Analysis of the responses has shown that the presence of female spectators can be a good cause in increasing the motivation of male athletes in championing the competitions. It can be assumed that women's presence in stadiums has helped men to strive for achievements {4}.

Findings of the study show that from the viewpoints of staff managers of Ministry of Sport and Youth, experts and members of the sport federations and faculty members of physical education departments of Tehran, the possibility of women's presence as spectators do not exist in most of the sport areas at the present condition.

Responses show that one of the most important sport areas that women cannot attend is soccer. Inadequate safety conditions of stadiums and moral conditions of male spectators have been maintained as the main barriers. In this regard, some researchers believe that, closed thoughts still exist in the society about the sexual features of the spectators, especially female spectators in men's soccer. This group believes that, the motivation of female spectators towards soccer has been diminished due to different reasons which can be deteriorating for soccer. This shows that there are barriers against women being present in stadiums in sport areas, especially soccer {7}. Others believe that, the main reasons which have led to the decline of women's sport are the governmental barriers and the dominant condition of the country. Other reasons can be the geographical condition of the stadiums. Based on the viewpoints of respondents, stadiums in central areas of the city provided more opportunities for women to attend. In contrast stadiums located in the city margins offered less chance for women to attend. Although analyzing all these

factor is beyond the scope of this study, we should indicate the role and dignity of women in both Iranian culture as well as instructions of the glorious religion of Islam. In Iranian cultural traditions, sayings and actions that might be considered ordinary among men are usually mentioned and taken place with care at the presence of women. Men's humbleness and modesty in front of women is a traditional and national characteristic of Iranians which can be regarded as cultural and valuable modesty. Findings of this study show that women's presence in stadiums most probably hinders some of the immoral behaviors of male spectators. Although testing this hypothesis seems to be difficult but cannot be easily ignored. Unfortunately, nowadays, in some of the sport competitions like soccer, the use of profanities has become a norm in a way that sometimes thousands of spectators use the most obscene words for several minutes. Does this behavior happen in front of female spectators? If it is noted that women and families are present in the stadium do immoral behaviors still continue to dominate? Viewpoints of physical education experts showed that the present condition is not suitable for women to be present in stadiums, especially for watching soccer matches.

The overall conclusion is, there are political-social barriers like the opposition of religion and tradition before women to be present in stadiums. On the other hand, according to the views of respondents, conditions are not suitable for women to be present as spectators in most of the sport areas, especially soccer. Senior government authorities should provide this opportunity for women in an organized functional program, because the feedback, with regard to the significance of the hypothesis indicating women's presence as a key element in the development of men's and women's sport, can lead to the growth of sport in our country, especially women's sport. Based on the findings, there are social barriers before women to attend stadiums as spectators and all the three population of this study have confirmed these social barriers. It is proposed that authorities identify these barriers and take the necessary measures to resolve them. With regard to the outcomes about the relationship between women's presence as spectators and the growth of men's and women's sport, it is proposed that experts and authorities pay more attention to this problem and use the feedbacks of this study in practice; may the feedbacks of this study open horizons towards the development of men's and women's sport. It is hoped that the results of this study persuade senior authorities and especially key decision makers to step forward in an organized trend to provide opportunities for female spectators to attend stadiums and consider its role in the growth of men's and women's sport. That is because, based on the findings of this study, women's presence as spectators can have positive impacts in terms of economy, politics, social affairs and above all the growth and development of sport from all its aspects in our country.

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