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Editor's Note



It is with great pleasure and a deep sense of responsibility that I write to you as the new Editor-in-Chief of the Asian Sport Management Review. I am honored to take on this role and to continue the excellent work of my predecessors in advancing the field of sport management across Asia.

As we open this new chapter, I am excited to present the first issue of this year's volume. Our mission remains to provide a robust platform for the dissemination of high-quality research that addresses the unique challenges and opportunities within the Asian sport management landscape.



I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to our editorial board members, reviewers, and authors for their dedication and hard work. Their contributions are invaluable in maintaining the quality and relevance of our journal. I am also deeply appreciative of our readers for their continued support and engagement with the journal. Your interest and feedback are crucial to our ongoing success.

Looking ahead, I am committed to fostering a vibrant academic community and encouraging research that not only advances theoretical knowledge but also has practical implications for sport management professionals. I am confident that, together, we can continue to build on the strong foundation of this journal and contribute to the growth and professionalization of sport management throughout Asia.

I hope you find this issue thought-provoking and inspiring. I look forward to your continued involvement with the Asian Sport Management Review and to sharing many more volumes of pioneering research in the years to come.

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Sincerely,

Kwon, Woong Ph.D.

Editor-in-Chief

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Evaluation of a Parasport Education Program: A Logic Model Approach Focusing on Locus of Control and Controllability

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Abstract

In the wake of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, parasport-based educational programs have attracted growing attention. However, empirical evidence supporting their educational impact remains scarce, and some studies suggest such interventions may unintentionally reinforce biases toward persons with disabilities. This study evaluates a parasport education program using a logic model framework, with a particular focus on locus of control and controllability—two key constructs associated with prejudice reduction. Outcome evaluation revealed partial improvements in specific items related to locus of control, though no statistically significant changes were found at the factor level for either construct. The process evaluation, informed by the logic model, identified several structural and content-related areas for program refinement.

Keywords

Program evaluation, parasports, logic model, locus of control, controllability

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1. Introduction

Since Tokyo was selected to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2013, the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games has promoted Olympic and Paralympic education in order to convey the educational value of the Games to the public.

Among these initiatives, the program that focuses specifically on the Paralympics is referred to as parasports education, and its main component consists of parasports experience classes led by para-athletes (MEXT, 2016).

In particular, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government has actively implemented parasports education, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education provided such programs in all public schools and kindergartens in the city over a six-year period from 2016 to 2021. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, 2020), the value of parasports education lies not only in raising interest in the Games themselves, but also in its multifaceted educational potential—such as promoting understanding of the value of sports, international and cross-cultural awareness, and awareness and understanding of persons with disabilities. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that the actual effectiveness of parasports education in promoting understanding of persons with disabilities has not been sufficiently examined, and its educational effects based on scientific evidence remain unclear (Okada et al., 2023).

In recent years, program evaluation has attracted attention as a method for assessing the effects of educational interventions and guiding program improvements. Program evaluation refers to the use of social research methods to systematically examine the effectiveness of social intervention programs. Its aim is to improve programs that seek to address social issues and to provide useful knowledge for social practice, based on the concepts and techniques of the social sciences (Rossi et al., 2005).

Over the past two decades, this method has been increasingly applied to evaluating nonprofit organizations and social issue-oriented projects in fields such as welfare, healthcare, and education. In Japan as well, MEXT has promoted an outcome-based education policy grounded in objective evidence since 2017 (MEXT, 2017).

It can therefore be said that parasports education, which is implemented using public funds, is also expected to be promoted with scientific evidence supporting its effectiveness.

In particular, when it comes to educational interventions that address the theme of disability, there is a risk that such programs may inadvertently reinforce prejudice and discrimination against persons with disabilities (Scullion, 2014). Moreover, there are skeptical views regarding the effectiveness of these interventions (MEXT, 2010).

Therefore, verifying the effects of such programs through scientific evidence is essential. Accordingly, this study aims to evaluate a parasports education program by employing a framework grounded in program evaluation theory.

2. Literature Review

Sports program evaluation

Program evaluation refers to the systematic clarification of the implementation processes or outcomes of projects and policies by comparing them with explicit criteria, serving as a means to contribute to the improvement of programs and policies (Weiss, 1972). Over the past 20 years, the theory of program evaluation has also been applied in the field of sports, revealing the outcomes and challenges of sports policies and social issue-solving programs through sports. Regarding research evaluating parasport programs, many studies have examined outcomes for people with disabilities, including physical effects such as rehabilitation benefits and prevention of secondary disabilities through sports participation (Castagno, 2001; Imai et al., 2020; Vernerova et al., 2022), psychological effects such as improvements in self-esteem and motivation for self-actualization (Laferrier et al., 2015; Dykens & Cohen, 1996; Castagno, 2001; Vernerova et al., 2022; Uchida et al., 2003), and social effects such as quality of life and acquisition of social skills (Dykens & Cohen, 1996; Gencoz, 1997; Moss et al., 2020; Laferrier et al., 2015; Grenier et al., 2023; Robinson et al., 2023; Stanojevic et al., 2023; Yun et al., 2024). Regarding the impact of parasport programs on able-bodied individuals, Yasui (2004), Uchida & Otani (2013), Tindal (2013), Tsutsuki et al. (2015), and Okada et al. (2023) have clarified the effects of parasport educational programs. However, prior research on parasport programs has often focused only on outcomes, and insufficient consideration has been given to the processes by which these outcomes are generated.

Concerning outcome-focused program evaluations, Chen & Henry (2016) pointed out that conventional research on sports program outcome evaluations tends to clarify the statistical relationships between dependent outcome variables and independent variables but pays little attention to the causal mechanisms that produce such changes. Fauzi (2025) also noted that conducting evaluations on goal achievement levels yields insights only about the intervention's effectiveness. In response to these critical views on outcome-biased program evaluation, attempts to formatively evaluate programs, including the processes by which outcomes are generated, have been introduced. For example, Chen & Henry (2016), Bunn et al. (2023), and Van et al. (2023) have analyzed outcomes and their generative processes related to participant health promotion in sports events, clubs, and programs using frameworks such as logic models and theories of change. Similarly,

Greve & Krieger (2019), Kochanek & Secaras (2023), and Cortez (2023) have elucidated outcomes and generative processes related to social inclusion of minorities through sports clubs, programs, and events. These studies have revealed the factors that produce or inhibit the generation of program outcomes, thereby enabling the proposal of concrete measures for program improvement. In the context of parasport education programs, it is therefore essential to evaluate not only the outcomes, but also the processes by which those outcomes are produced.

Stigma

In outcome evaluation studies of parasport education programs, factors often examined as outcomes of interventions are those related to stigma against people with disabilities, such as awareness and attitudes toward disabled persons. Stigma is a concept that has attracted attention since around the 1960s as something that influences coexistence with people with disabilities. Stigma refers to negative labels or discriminatory attitudes toward an individual's social identity (Goffman, 1963), and it is considered to affect the realization of a society where people from different cultures and social groups live together. Based on this understanding, various empirical studies have been conducted on the impact of stigma on people with disabilities. Link and Phelan (2001) discussed the concept of stigma and its impact on disabled people, asserting that stigma causes negative evaluations of people with disabilities and may lower their self-esteem and self-confidence.

Recently, based on Weiner's attribution theory (Weiner, 1979), attempts have been made to evaluate stigma against people with disabilities by focusing on locus of control and controllability. Locus of control refers to the perceived source of responsibility or causality for one's condition or situation, while controllability denotes the extent to which individuals are believed to have control over their circumstances. These factors have been shown to influence helping behaviors toward people with disabilities (Weiner et al., 1988; Ling et al., 2010; Fukushima & Yajima, 2019). Therefore, this study focuses on locus of control and controllability and evaluates a parasports education program using a logic model framework. Specifically, it examines the following research questions:

RQ1: Does the parasports education program intervention have a positive impact on locus of control and controllability?

RQ2: Through what processes does the parasports education program intervention influence locus of control and controllability?

3. Method

This study employs a program evaluation framework to develop a logic model and conduct both outcome and process evaluations of the program. In constructing the logic model, the realist evaluation approach was also used supplementarily. Realist evaluation emphasizes context-dependent explanations of the program's generative mechanisms and is said to clarify how outcomes arise through generative mechanisms (causal processes) that function within specific contexts (Chen & Henry, 2016). Research in realist evaluation analyzes processes using the "Context + Mechanism = Outcome" (CMO) configuration, which is a conceptual framework effective for elucidating under what circumstances and why a program succeeds or fails (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Therefore, this study incorporated the CMO configuration into the logic model to create the program's logic model. First, to understand the program's logic model, the researcher intervened from the design stage of the program, conducting multiple activities including document analysis related to the program, participant observation during program implementation, and several meetings with program administrators and school personnel involved in program execution. Through these, the structure of the program's Context, Input, Activities, Mechanism, and Outcomes was grasped. Next, a questionnaire survey was conducted among program participants to measure outcomes, and the program's process was analyzed using the logic model.

Program

The program targeted in this study is the "Para Athlete School Visit," which is managed by the Sports Promotion Section of the Life, Culture and Sports Department in the Chiba City. Chiba City has continuously implemented parasports education programs from 2016 to 2024 and is a municipality actively promoting parasports activities. The sports featured in the experience sessions include a variety of disciplines such as wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, para-volleyball, wheelchair badminton, blind soccer, goalball, and para-athletics.

Among these, this study focuses on the program themed around wheelchair basketball, which is the most popular event. The program consists of three main components: a demonstration by wheelchair basketball athletes, a wheelchair basketball trial, and a storytelling by the athletes. In the experience session, participants learn how to use a

sports wheelchair, take part in a wheelchair relay, and play a wheelchair basketball match. During the storytelling session, the athlete shares their personal story about how they acquired their disability and came to play wheelchair basketball. Further details about the program are summarized in Table 1.

Date	November 5th,2021 13:20~15:30 (2times 60minutes program)
Participants	1st to 3rd grade of Junior high school (total:135students)
Staff	4 wheelchair basketball players 1 facilitator 5 supporters
Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-introduction of wheelchair basketball players • Wheelchair basketball demonstration • Wheelchair basketball trial • Storytelling by wheelchair basketball player

[Table 1]

Date collection

120 male and female students in the first to third grades of junior high school in Chiba City were surveyed before and after the implementation of the Parasports Education Program, for a total of two separate surveys. The program implementation

Investigators	120 students in grades 1st-3rd of junior high school in Chiba City
Survey Date	November 1st-5th, 2021
Samples	96 (80% valid response rate)

[Table 2]

Evaluation scales

To evaluate stigma toward people with disabilities, this study adopted the concepts of locus of control and controllability. To measure these concepts, an original questionnaire was developed with reference to the studies by Weiner et al. (1988) and Benoît & Dale (2001). In their study on stigma, Benoît & Dale (2001) presented respondents with a scenario and asked how they would act in that situation; the nature of their responses was then used to assess discriminatory attitudes. Following this approach, the present study also included a scenario at the beginning of the questionnaire: “A student in your class, Person A, has a lower-body disability. Person A is unable to participate in physical education class with their classmates.” Respondents were then asked to answer a series

of questions based on this scenario. The questionnaire consisted of 12 items in total: six items related to perceived locus of control (i.e., factors believed to explain why people with physical disabilities cannot participate in sports), and six items related to perceived controllability (i.e., factors believed to be manageable in resolving the issue). Responses were recorded on a four-point Likert scale ranging from “1: Strongly disagree” to “4: Strongly agree.” (Table3 & Table4).

Evaluation scales

The 4 categories of formalization identified from the first RQ were evaluated. The evaluation results were summarized as follows (see Supplementary Table 4).

This study evaluated formalization by the existence of regulations and manuals for each task. Since the number of tasks performed by the ADs differed among universities, they were categorized by percentages on right side of the table, and not the number. Overall, “(d) Neither the regulation nor the manual” showed a tendency for a high ratio. It suggests many tasks are not indicated in the regulations or manuals within the AD, and staff members conduct these tasks implicitly as the AD tasks (Supplementary Figure 2, and Supplementary Table 4).

Locus of control

1-1	Because of Mr. A's lower body disability.
1-2	Because Mr. A. never asked to participate in PE himself.
1-3	Because we, the students in the same class, don't support Mr. A to participate in PE.
1-4	Because the teacher does not support Mr. A to participate in PE.
1-5	Because we, the students in the same class, would not change the rules of the sporting events we do in PE class so that even Mr. A can participate in them.
1-6	Because the school is not equipped with the facilities and sports equipment for Mr. A to participate in physical education.

[Table 3]

Controllability

2-1	I think Mr. A's lower body disability can be cured with his own efforts.
2-2	I think Mr. A could ask to participate in PE himself.
2-3	I think we, the students in the same class, can support Mr. A to participate in PE.
2-4	I think the teacher could support Mr. A to participate in PE.
2-5	I think we, students in the same class, can change the rules of the sporting events we do in PE class so that even Mr. A can participate in them.
2-6	The school could provide a suitable place and sports equipment for Mr. A to participate in physical education

[Table 4]

4. Analysis

Outcome Evaluation

First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the construct validity of locus of control and controllability. Then, t-tests were performed to compare the mean scores of each factor before and after the program implementation.

Process Evaluation

To analyze the process of the parasports education program, the program was classified into the following structure: Context, Input, Activities, Conjectured Outcomes, and Observed Outcomes, based on the studies of Gadais & Bardocz-Bencsik (2022) and Chen & Henry (2016), who evaluated sports programs using logic models and the Context Mechanism-Outcome (CMO) framework of realist evaluation. In this classification process, data collected through participant observation during program implementation, program documentation, and meetings with stakeholders were also taken into consideration.

Ethical Consideration

The questionnaire is to be filled out without names, and the data will be statistically processed and published as population data. The questionnaire will include the following statement: "The information you provide in this questionnaire will be kept in a safe place and used only for research activities. In addition, a document explaining the purpose and objectives of this study was prepared for the teachers in charge at the target schools, and the survey was conducted after their consent was obtained. This study was approved by the "Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects" of Waseda University (Approval No. 2021-328).

5. Result

Demographics

A breakdown of the survey respondents is shown in Table 5 below.

grade in school	1st grade students: 38 2nd grade students: 37 3rd grade students: 34
Familiarity with people with disabilities	Yes: 21 (19.1%) None: 57 (51.8%) Don't know: 1 (0.9%) Do not want to answer: 28 (25.5%) No answer: 3 (2.7%)
Parasports experience	Other para-sport classes: 69 (70.4%) Parasports events in town: 7 (7.1%) Prior study for parasports classes: 11 (11.2%) Other events such as parasports tournaments: 5 (5.1%) Never participated in any of them: 29 (26.4%)

[Table 5]

Consideration of reliability

To examine the validity of the scale, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted. Additionally, to assess convergent validity, factor loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR) were calculated. To evaluate the reliability of the scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed. The analyses were conducted using IBM AMOS and SPSS. Model fit in the confirmatory factor analysis was assessed using the indices GFI, AGFI, CFI, and RMSEA. For the locus of control model, the results were as follows: $\chi^2/df = 7.608$, GFI = 0.959, AGFI = 0.594, CFI = 0.907, and RMSEA = 0.277. While GFI (threshold $\geq .90$) and CFI (threshold $\geq .90$) met the acceptable criteria, χ^2/df (threshold ≤ 3.00), AGFI (threshold $\geq .90$), and RMSEA (threshold $\leq .08$) did not meet the criteria (Oshio, 2018), indicating a poor model fit. For the controllability model, the results were: $\chi^2/df = 1.109$, GFI = 0.994, AGFI = 0.936, CFI = 0.999, and RMSEA = 0.036. All indices met the threshold values, indicating a good model fit (Table 6).

Measure	Validity of model	Model fit
Locus of control	CMIN/df=7.608 GFI=0.959 AGFI=0.594 CFI=0.907 RMSEA=0.277	△
Controllability	CMIN/df=1.109 GFI=0.994 AGFI=0.936 CFI=0.999 RMSEA=0.036	◎

[Table 6]

Validation of program effectiveness

To examine the effectiveness of the parasports education program in which the study subjects participated, we investigated whether there were any changes in locus of control and controllability. First, we calculated the mean scores (factor scores) of multiple items constituting each factor and conducted paired t-tests to examine significant differences before and after the program. In addition, we conducted the same t-tests at the individual item level within each factor to supplementarily identify any patterns of change. The results indicated no significant changes in the factor-level t-tests. However, in the supplementary item-level t-tests, significant changes were observed only in Items 1-1 and 1-2 related to the locus of control of disability. Item 1-1 showed a positive change, while Item 1-2 showed a negative change (Table 7).

questionnaire		mean value difference in	t-value	Significant probability (both sides)
1-1	Because of Mr. A's lower body disability.	0.396	4.349	<.001
1-2	Because Mr. A. never asked to participate in PE himself.	-0.394	-3.787	<.001

[Table 7]

Process evaluation

To analyze the process of the parasports education program, the program was categorized and examined according to the structure of Context, Input, Activities, Conjectured Outcomes, and Observed Outcomes. As a result, it became clear that there was a partial gap between the outcomes anticipated by the program's key stakeholders and the outcomes that were observed. The program's key stakeholders assumed that, through

activities such as experiencing a sports wheelchair, learning the rules of parasports, and listening to para-athletes' storytelling about how they began participating in wheelchair sports, students would come to recognize that the causes of barriers to sports participation for persons with disabilities are not limited to illness or medical conditions, and that by adjusting external factors such as rules and equipment, participation can be made possible. However, the analysis of observed outcomes revealed that while students' tendency to attribute barriers to illness or disease decreased, their tendency to attribute barriers to the actions or behaviors of persons with disabilities themselves increased. Furthermore, regarding controllability, no significant change in students' perception was observed following the program intervention (Table8).

Context	Input	Activities	Mechanism	Conjected outcomes	Observed Outcomes
students have never experienced wheelchair sports	4 Wheelchair basukettoball players	Wheelchair basketball rule lecture	Students come to understand that people with disabilities can also enjoy sports by adapted rules and sports equipment → Students realize that having a disability itself is not a barrier to participating in sports	Students recognize that the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in participating in sports are not solely attributable to their medical conditions, but also to social and environmental factors	Students showed a decreased tendency to attribute barriers to sports participation among persons with disabilities to their illness or medical conditions but Students showed an increased tendency to attribute barriers to sports participation among persons with disabilities to PwD's action
		Wheelchair basketball trial			
Students have had little contact with people with disabilities	10 Wheeler for sports	Wheelchair basketball demonstration	Students learn that the help of supporters, and modifications to rules and equipment can enable individuals with disabilities to participate in sports → Students come to recognize that external barriers to sports participation for people with disabilities are controllable	Students recognize that, among the various factors affecting sports participation for individuals with disabilities, the controllable ones are primarily external—such as social, environmental, or institutional barriers—rather than internal characteristics of the individuals themselves.	no significant difference
	6 Support staff	Wheelchair basketball player's storytelling			

[Table 8]

6. Conclusion

This study evaluated the outcomes and processes of a para-sport education program using a logic model, focusing on locus of control and controllability. First, a t-test comparing pre- and post-program data using a revised Locus of Control and Controllability Scale revealed significant differences in only two items related to locus of control. Next, to analyze the program process, the para-sport education program was categorized into Context, Input, Activities, Conjectured Outcomes, and Observed Outcomes. The analysis revealed a gap between the outcomes expected by the program's key stakeholders and the outcomes actually observed.

7. Discussion

This section discusses the outcome evaluation results in relation to the program's process. Regarding locus of control, the results showed a decreased tendency to attribute problems in para-sport participation to the individual's disability or illness, and an increased tendency to attribute them to the individual's own behavior. This suggests both expected and unexpected results in line with stakeholder intentions. These changes can be attributed to specific program content. For instance, during the wheelchair basketball experience and explanation of rules, athletes emphasized the adaptive features of sports wheelchairs and inclusive rules that enable participation regardless of physical impairment. Participants appeared to recognize that having a disability does not preclude engagement in sports. This is supported by free-text survey responses such as: "I realized that people with disabilities can play and excel in sports with the use of wheelchairs," and "The rules are well-designed so that people with disabilities can also enjoy basketball." Similar findings were reported in Stanojevic et al. (2023), which demonstrated that integrated wheelchair basketball programs helped university students understand the aims of adapted sports. On the other hand, the increased attribution of participation difficulties to the actions of individuals with disabilities may have been influenced by the demonstration and storytelling components. Athletes shared personal experiences, such as searching for teams independently and improving through daily training. This may have led participants to perceive that sports participation is primarily the result of personal

effort. Supporting this, several survey responses mentioned the athletes' hard work, e.g., “They are all trying hard and living with great effort.” Similarly, Ono et al. (2016) found that watching performances of elite athletes with disabilities can lead to increased expectations regarding their capabilities, suggesting a potential for reinforcing meritocratic perspectives. Based on these findings, the following suggestions are made to improve the program:

1. To further enhance desirable changes in locus of control, allocate more time or emphasis on explaining the rules and adaptive equipment used in para-sports.
2. To mitigate unintended increases in attribution to personal effort, either remove these episodes or ensure messaging emphasizes the enabling factors—such as rules, equipment, and support systems—that make participation possible.
3. To strengthen participants’ recognition of controllable social factors affecting sport participation, implement workshops in which participants design adapted sports themselves, modifying rules and equipment to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

8. Implication

Theoretical Implication

Previous studies on para-sport education programs have largely focused only on outcome measurements. This study contributes theoretically by applying a logic model to also examine program processes, allowing an exploration of why certain outcomes were observed, whether the program achieved the intended results, and how it could be improved.

Practical Implication

By conducting both outcome and process evaluations, this study visualized gaps between expectations and actual outcomes, enabling the proposal of specific program improvements to key stakeholders. Moreover, the finding that para-sport education programs do not always produce the expected outcomes highlights the importance of continuous program evaluation in both policy and practice.

9. Limitation & Future research

This study found no significant differences at the factor level, and only two significant differences at the item level. The limited impact may be due to the program being a onetime, two-hour intervention. Additionally, the use of only quantitative data restricted the depth of analysis regarding participant change. Incorporating qualitative methods, such as interviews, could have provided richer insights into program outcomes and causal mechanisms. Future research should focus on long-term programs that foster sustained interaction through sport and explore outcome evaluation methods that combine both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

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Acculturation challenges and sport participation success of young Muslim women in the multicultural Australian context: A review study

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Abstract

This narrative review examines the acculturation challenges faced by young Muslim women participating in sports within the multicultural Australian context. Drawing from 20 peer-reviewed articles published between 2020 and 2023, the review identifies four primary themes: cultural and religious barriers, community expectations and social norms, institutional limitations and structural barriers, and inclusive programming and strategies for change. The findings highlight how Islamic principles of modesty, traditional gender roles, and community pressures hinder sports participation. Institutional factors, such as the lack of female-only training sessions, culturally appropriate sportswear, and cultural sensitivity among coaches and administrators, further compound these challenges. However, the review also reveals promising strategies for fostering inclusivity, including culturally responsive sports programs, community engagement, and policy-level interventions. The discussion expands on the implications for practice, theoretical contributions, policy recommendations, and future research directions. The review underscores the need for a multifaceted approach that addresses both individual and systemic barriers to create a more inclusive and empowering sports environment for young Muslim women in Australia. Ultimately, promoting sports participation among this demographic is crucial for fostering social cohesion, personal development, and cultural integration within Australian society.

Keywords

acculturation, inclusive sports, cultural barriers, Muslim women, Australia

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1. Introduction

Australia's identity as a multicultural nation has grown increasingly complex over the past few decades, with a significant rise in cultural and religious diversity. According to the 2021 Census, over 813,000 Muslims reside in Australia, making up approximately 3.2% of the population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022). This demographic evolution has brought forth both opportunities and challenges, particularly in the realm of public life and social integration. Among the many sectors affected, sports—a domain often heralded as a vehicle for social cohesion, personal development, and community engagement—presents unique challenges for young Muslim women.

The sport participation of young Muslim women intersects with themes of identity, acculturation, and social inclusion. Sports can break down cultural barriers and build community, but may reinforce stereotypes when cultural norms are not accommodated. Acculturation, as defined by Berry (2005), refers to individuals adapting to a new cultural environment while maintaining their original cultural identity. For young Muslim women in Australia, sporting environments often conflict with their religious and cultural beliefs regarding modesty and gender interactions (Cheng, 2019; Ahmed et al., 2021).

The challenges these young women face are multifaceted. Traditional Islamic principles emphasize modesty, which translates into specific expectations regarding attire and behaviour in public settings. For example, standard sports uniforms—often designed for maximum athletic performance—may conflict with these cultural and religious values. In sports such as swimming or athletics, where revealing attire is common, many young Muslim women may feel uncomfortable or even prohibited from participating due to concerns over modesty (Leonnard et al, 2019). The absence of suitable modest sportswear exacerbates this issue, limiting their options in various sports disciplines (Agustina et al., 2024).

Institutional structures within mainstream sports often lack the flexibility to accommodate alternative practices, such as single-gender sports sessions or the provision of modest sportswear (Ahmad et al., 2020). For instance, many local sports clubs do not offer female-only training sessions, which can deter participation among young Muslim women who may prefer to engage in physical activities in an environment free from male presence. The lack of female coaches or mentors further contributes to a sense of exclusion and can discourage young Muslim women from pursuing sports.

Additionally, societal expectations and peer perceptions complicate the participation of young Muslim women in sports, creating an environment where they must navigate both internalized cultural norms and external pressures from their host society. Negative stereotypes about Muslim women can lead to discrimination and isolation within sporting communities, making it challenging for them to feel accepted. Studies have shown that young Muslim women often experience pressure to conform to both traditional cultural roles and modern societal expectations, creating a complex web of identity that they must navigate in sports contexts.

Studies have examined how cultural and religious factors influence sport participation among Muslim women (Ahmed & Karam, 2021; Maxwell et al., 2013; Thorpe et al., 2020). However, the literature remains fragmented, focusing on either participation barriers or benefits without comprehensive integration. There is a need to address these challenges as Australia's multicultural landscape evolves. As sports reflect broader societal issues, examining the intersection of acculturation and sport participation through traditional practices and inclusive strategies is essential.

This narrative review synthesizes research on acculturation challenges faced by young Muslim women in Australian sport. It examines cultural, religious, community, and institutional barriers to participation and explores strategies for creating inclusive sports environments. By reviewing literature across sociology, cultural studies, sport management, and psychology, this study provides a holistic understanding of these issues. It highlights the potential of culturally responsive policies that accommodate Muslim women's needs while contributing to societal integration.

To address these gaps in understanding and provide a comprehensive synthesis of current knowledge, this narrative review was guided by three central research questions:

- *Research Question 1: What are the primary cultural, religious, community, and*

institutional barriers that prevent or limit sport participation among young Muslim women in multicultural Australia?

- *Research Question 2: What strategies, interventions, and inclusive practices have been proposed, implemented, or evaluated to overcome these barriers and increase sport participation among young Muslim women?*
- *Research Question 3: How do acculturation processes and intersecting identity factors influence the effectiveness of inclusive sport programming for young Muslim women, and what implications does this have for policy and practice?*

These research questions were developed to capture both the challenges and opportunities within this domain, ensuring the review examined not only barriers to participation but also potential pathways for creating more inclusive sporting environments. The questions reflect the theoretical framework underpinning this review, incorporating Berry's acculturation model to understand cultural adaptation processes and intersectionality theory to examine how multiple identity factors interact to shape sporting experiences.

In doing so, it highlights the transformative potential of culturally responsive policies and programs that not only accommodate the needs of young Muslim women but also contribute to broader societal integration and cohesion. The review examines sports' role in promoting social integration and personal development. It discusses how culturally sensitive sports programs empower young Muslim women by providing safe spaces to develop leadership skills and build networks beyond athletics. Programs like the Muslim Women's Sports Association create inclusive environments through modest sportswear initiatives. The review suggests actionable steps for policymakers and sports organizations to bridge traditional cultural practices with modern sports environments, fostering participation while respecting cultural diversity.

2. Theoretical Framework

The selection and integration of Berry's acculturation model and intersectionality theory as the analytical framework for this review were guided by the specific nature of the research phenomenon and the multifaceted factors influencing sport participation among young Muslim women in Australia.

Berry's (2005) acculturation model was selected as the primary theoretical lens because sport participation among young Muslim women fundamentally involves navigating the tensions between heritage cultural practices and dominant societal norms. The model conceptualizes acculturation through four distinct strategies: integration (maintaining one's heritage culture while adopting aspects of the host culture), assimilation (fully adopting the host culture while discarding the heritage culture), separation (preserving the heritage culture while rejecting the host culture), and marginalization (disengaging from both cultures). These categories provide a valuable framework for analyzing the diverse approaches young Muslim women take when navigating mainstream Australian sporting environments. Importantly, Berry's model conceptualizes acculturation as a bidirectional process, where inclusion and adaptation are contingent not only on the minority individual's efforts but also on the responsiveness of host institutions. This makes it particularly relevant for evaluating how sport settings can become more culturally inclusive and supportive of diverse identities.

The model's applicability to this review was further justified by its emphasis on voluntary versus imposed adaptation. Young Muslim women's sporting choices often reflect active negotiation between maintaining religious identity and participating in secular activities, rather than passive assimilation. This theoretical perspective enabled the review to examine how different acculturation strategies manifest in sporting contexts and which approaches lead to sustained participation versus withdrawal.

The application of Berry's model to this review's thematic analysis occurred in several keyways. First, the integration strategy guided the identification of literature examining how young Muslim women maintain their cultural and religious identity while simultaneously adapting to mainstream sports environments—such as seeking modest sportswear options while participating in organized sports. Second, the separation strategy informed analysis of studies documenting withdrawal from mainstream sports in favor of culturally specific alternatives or complete avoidance of sporting activities. Third,

instances of assimilation strategy directed examination of cases where cultural or religious practices were compromised or abandoned to conform to existing sporting norms. Finally, the marginalization strategy helped categorize experiences of exclusion from both mainstream sports and culturally appropriate alternatives.

Berry's framework is particularly useful for identifying how institutional flexibility, community support, and individual agency intersect to influence acculturation outcomes. It also provides a structure to evaluate how different sports policies and programs either facilitate or inhibit the ability of young Muslim women to integrate into Australian sporting life without sacrificing core aspects of their identity. This framework specifically guided the synthesis process by structuring the search strategy to ensure inclusion of studies examining both cultural maintenance and adaptation processes, informing thematic categorization where the four primary themes identified correspond directly to different acculturation strategies and their facilitators or barriers, and guiding data extraction by focusing on evidence of how participants navigated between heritage culture maintenance and host culture adaptation.

Intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1989) provided the complementary analytical lens for understanding how multiple social identities interact to create unique barriers and experiences that cannot be understood by examining single identity categories in isolation. This framework was particularly relevant for understanding the experiences of young Muslim women, whose sporting participation is influenced by the intersection of gender, religion, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic factors.

The application of intersectionality theory to this analysis operated through several mechanisms. The gender and religion intersection guided examination of how being both female and Muslim creates distinct challenges not faced by Muslim men or non-Muslim women in sports contexts. The religion and ethnicity intersection informed analysis of how Islamic identity intersects with various ethnic backgrounds within the diverse Muslim community in Australia. Additionally, the age and cultural identity intersection directed focus on developmental challenges specific to young women who are simultaneously navigating identity formation and cultural adaptation processes.

Intersectionality theory presented specific guidance for the synthesis process by ensuring literature selection included studies examining multiple, intersecting identities rather than research focused on single identity markers. This approach informed thematic development, where each theme was analyzed through an intersectional lens to understand how various identity markers compound barriers or create unique

opportunities for participation. The framework also guided critical analysis by highlighting how traditional single-factor interventions may be insufficient for addressing the complex, intersecting challenges faced by young Muslim women in sports.

The theory's focus on how multiple marginalized identities interact to create distinct experiences justified its inclusion in understanding why interventions successful for other female athletes or other Muslim community members may prove insufficient for young Muslim women. This framework enabled the review to examine how intersecting identities create both unique barriers and potential intervention points not addressed by single-identity focused approaches.

The integration of both frameworks was theoretically justified by their complementary analytical strengths. The combination of Berry's acculturation model and intersectionality theory created a comprehensive analytical framework that addressed both the structural processes of cultural adaptation and the complex interplay of multiple identity factors. Berry's model provided the foundational understanding of cultural adaptation processes and strategies, while intersectionality theory added analytical depth by examining how multiple identities influence these acculturation processes. Together, these frameworks enabled the identification of nuanced strategies for creating inclusive sporting environments that acknowledge both acculturation needs and intersecting identity complexities.

This integrated theoretical approach directly influenced the development of the four primary themes by ensuring each theme captured both the acculturation dynamics—specifically the tension between cultural adaptation and maintenance—and the intersectional complexities arising from multiple identity interactions present in the literature. The frameworks also guided the development of practical recommendations, with Berry's model informing suggestions for creating multiple pathways for participation that address different acculturation preferences, while intersectionality shaped recommendations for holistic, multi-faceted interventions rather than single-issue solutions that might address only one aspect of participants' complex identities.

These theoretical frameworks provided explicit guidance for the literature synthesis through several mechanisms:

- 1) Search Strategy Guidance: Berry's acculturation model informed the inclusion of search terms related to cultural adaptation, integration, and identity maintenance, ensuring capture of studies examining both cultural preservation and sporting

participation. Intersectionality theory guided the inclusion of terms addressing multiple identity factors, preventing over-focus on single-barrier studies.

- 2) Literature Selection Criteria: Studies were prioritized if they examined multiple acculturation strategies rather than assuming single approaches, reflecting Berry's four-strategy framework. Intersectionality theory guided preference for studies addressing multiple identity factors rather than treating Muslim women as a homogeneous group.
- 3) Thematic Categorization Process: The four primary themes identified directly correspond to different acculturation challenges and strategies. "Cultural and Religious Barriers" reflects conflicts between heritage culture maintenance and host culture participation requirements. "Community Expectations and Social Norms" captures how social networks influence acculturation strategy choices. "Institutional Limitations and Structural Barriers" examines host society accommodation failures. "Inclusive Programming and Strategies for Change" represents successful integration approaches where both cultures adapt.
- 4) Data Extraction Focus: Berry's framework guided extraction of evidence showing how participants navigated between cultural maintenance and sporting adaptation. Intersectionality theory ensured extraction captured how gender, religion, ethnicity, and age factors compounded to create unique challenges distinct from single-identity experiences.
- 5) Analytical Interpretation: The frameworks enabled interpretation of findings beyond descriptive barrier identification toward understanding dynamic processes of cultural negotiation. Rather than simply cataloguing obstacles, the analysis examined how different acculturation strategies and intersecting identities shaped participation outcomes.
- 6) Synthesis Organization: The integrated framework guided organization of findings to show progression from barriers (failed accommodation) through to solutions (successful integration strategies), reflecting Berry's emphasis on bidirectional adaptation and intersectionality's focus on structural change rather than individual deficit models.

This theoretical integration ensured the review moved beyond atheoretical description toward theoretically informed analysis that contributes to broader understanding of multicultural integration processes within sporting contexts.

3. Method

This narrative review employs a systematic approach to synthesizing the existing literature on the acculturation challenges faced by young Muslim women in sport participation in Australia. The review focused on peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and relevant policy reports published between 2020 and 2023, supplemented by foundational texts that provide essential theoretical context. The coding and thematic analysis process followed a systematic approach informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework, adapted for narrative review methodology. Each of the 20 selected articles underwent a multi-stage coding process to ensure rigorous analysis and reliable theme identification.

Literature Search and Selection Process

Stage	Process	Number of Studies	Exclusion Criteria Applied	Studies Excluded	Studies Remaining
Identification	Scopus	22	-	-	22
	JSTOR	19	-	-	19
	Google Scholar	14	-	-	14
	Total identified	55	-	-	55
Screening	Duplicate removal	55	Duplicate publications across databases	8	47
	Title screening	47	Not focused on Muslim women in sports context	12	35
	Abstract screening	35	Not in multicultural Western context (Australia/NZ/Canada)	10	25
	Records excluded at abstract screening	25	Opinion pieces/commentaries without empirical data	5	20
Eligibility	Full-text assessment	20	Insufficient methodological detail	0	20
	Full-text articles excluded, with reasons	20	Language other than English	0	20
	Full-text articles excluded, with reasons	20	Unable to access full text	0	20
Included	Final synthesis	20	-	-	20

[Table 1]

Two researchers independently conducted line by line coding of each article, extracting key concepts, findings, and contextual information relevant to the research questions. This initial coding focused on identifying manifest content related to barriers, facilitators, cultural factors, and intervention strategies. A standardized data extraction form was developed to capture study characteristics including author(s), publication year, methodology, sample size and demographics, geographical context, key findings, and limitations.

Characteristics of Included Studies (n=20)

Study Characteristic	Number of Studies	Percentage
Study Design		
Qualitative	11	55%
Quantitative	7	35%
Mixed Methods	2	10%
Geographic Context		
Australia	14	70%
New Zealand	4	20%
Canada	2	10%
Publication Year		
2023	6	30%
2022	5	25%
2021	4	20%
2020	3	15%
Pre-2020 (foundational texts)	2	10%
Sample Size Range		
Small scale (≤ 50 participants)	9	45%
Medium scale (51-200 participants)	7	35%
Large scale (> 200 participants)	4	20%
Primary Thematic Focus		
Cultural/Religious barriers	8	40%
Institutional limitations	5	25%
Community expectations	4	20%
Inclusive programming strategies	3	15%

[Table 2]

Each article was coded for evidence relating to cultural barriers (e.g., modesty requirements, gender segregation), institutional factors (e.g., facility limitations, policy gaps), community influences (e.g., family expectations, social norms), and potential solutions or interventions. Following initial coding, the research team engaged in focused coding to identify patterns and relationships between codes across studies. This phase

involved grouping related codes into broader categories and examining how different studies addressed similar themes. The coding process was iterative, with researchers returning to the original texts multiple times to refine code definitions and ensure accurate representation of study findings. Themes were developed through collaborative analysis sessions where researchers examined the coded data for recurring patterns, contradictions, and gaps in the literature. The four primary themes emerged through consensus discussion, with each theme requiring evidence from multiple studies and clear relevance to the research questions. Theme boundaries were refined through multiple iterations to ensure distinctiveness while maintaining comprehensive coverage of the literature. To enhance reliability, a subset of articles (n=5) was independently coded by both researchers, with inter-coder agreement calculated using Cohen's kappa ($\kappa=0.82$), indicating substantial agreement. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion and refinement of coding criteria.

Inter-rater Reliability and Bias Minimization

Process	Method	Result/Outcome
Study selection (title/abstract screening)	Dual independent screening by two researchers	Cohen's $\kappa = 0.89$ (excellent agreement)
Thematic coding	Independent coding of 5 articles by both researchers	Cohen's $\kappa = 0.84$ (substantial agreement)
Disagreement resolution	Consensus discussion for discordant cases	3 studies required discussion; 100% consensus achieved
External validation	Preliminary findings presented at conference	Peer feedback incorporated into final analysis
Reflexivity sessions	Regular team meetings to discuss potential bias	4 formal reflexivity sessions conducted

[Table 3]

To minimize bias and enhance objectivity in the literature selection and analysis process, several strategies were implemented. A comprehensive search across three major databases—JSTOR, Scopus, and Google Scholar—was conducted to reduce the risk of omitting relevant studies due to database-specific limitations. Multiple combinations of search terms were used to ensure broad yet focused coverage of the research area. The search terms used included “Muslim women in sports,” “acculturation in sport participation,” “cultural barriers in sports,” “inclusivity in sports Australia,” and “religious identity and sports.” These search terms were chosen to capture a wide range of studies addressing both the challenges and opportunities associated with sport participation among young Muslim women.

Search Strategy and Terms

Database	Search Terms Used	Filters Applied
Scopus	("Muslim women" OR "Islamic women") AND (sport* OR "physical activity" OR recreation) AND (Australia* OR "New Zealand" OR Canada)	Peer-reviewed; 2020-2023; English language
JSTOR	"acculturation" AND "sport participation" AND women AND Muslim	Academic journals; 2020-2023; English language
Google Scholar	"cultural barriers" AND sport* AND "Muslim women" AND Australia	2020-2023; exclude patents and citations

[Table 4]

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria” Studies were included in the review if they met the following criteria:

- The study focused on Muslim women or the broader Muslim community in the context of sport participation in Australia or comparable multicultural societies.
- The publication was peer-reviewed and published between 2020 and 2023, with exceptions made for seminal works that provided a theoretical foundation (e.g., Berry, 2005).
- The study utilized either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods approaches to examine cultural, religious, or institutional factors affecting sports participation.
- The full text was available in English.

Articles that did not provide empirical data or that were commentaries or opinion pieces without robust methodology were excluded from the review. The initial search yielded over 50 articles; after screening titles and abstracts, 20 articles were selected for full-text review and subsequent thematic analysis.

Quality Assessment Summary

Quality Indicator	Studies Meeting Criteria	Percentage
Clear research objectives	20	100%
Appropriate methodology for research question	19	95%
Adequate sample size for study design	17	85%
Transparent data collection procedures	18	90%
Appropriate data analysis methods	20	100%
Consideration of ethical issues	16	80%
Acknowledgment of study limitations	18	90%
Appropriate conclusions drawn from findings	19	95%

[Table 5]

Data Extraction and Analysis: Key information was extracted from each study, including the research objectives, methodology, sample characteristics, key findings, and conclusions. A thematic analysis was then conducted to identify recurring themes across the studies. The analysis was guided by the research questions. The extracted data were coded using qualitative data analysis software, and recurring patterns were organized into primary themes. The findings were then compared and contrasted to provide a comprehensive synthesis of the literature, ensuring that both the barriers and the potential enablers of sport participation were thoroughly examined.

4. Results

The thematic analysis of the 20 selected articles revealed four primary themes that capture the multifaceted challenges and opportunities associated with sport participation for young Muslim women in Australia. In addition to these overarching themes, further nuances emerged that offer deeper insights into the interplay of cultural, social, institutional, and practical factors affecting participation.

Cultural and Religious Barriers

Cultural and religious expectations significantly influence sport participation. Islamic principles regarding modesty—particularly dress codes and gender interactions—are critical barriers. Ahmed and Karam (2021) report that Muslim women experience discomfort with standard sports uniforms that don't meet modesty requirements. Maxwell et al. (2013) noted that 70% of participants were reluctant to engage in mixed-gender sports due to athletic wear not meeting cultural expectations. This tension between personal faith and the public nature of sports fosters feelings of exclusion, leading many young Muslim women to either modify their participation patterns significantly or withdraw from sports altogether (Hextrum et al., 2024).

Community Expectations and Social Norms

The literature highlights the profound impact of family and community expectations on sport participation. In many Muslim communities, traditional gender roles and values strongly discourage activities that are seen as conflicting with cultural or religious norms (Cheng, 2019). This community pressure often manifests in both direct and indirect ways—ranging from explicit familial discouragement to subtle, internalized self-regulation. Several studies report that young Muslim women may limit their participation in sports to avoid social stigma or to uphold familial honour. Community leaders and local role models often reinforce these expectations, making it difficult for young women to pursue sports activities without facing significant societal backlash. For example, one study documented that when community leaders endorsed alternative forms of physical activity that aligned more closely with traditional values, participation rates increased (Komatsu et al., 2020), suggesting that strategic community engagement could be key to shifting these entrenched norms.

Institutional Limitations and Structural Barriers

Institutional factors and structural barriers remain significant hurdles for sport participation among young Muslim women. Sports organizations have not adapted their policies and facilities to accommodate cultural and religious needs. Ahmad et al. (2020) and Thorpe et al. (2020) highlight the lack of female-only training sessions, culturally appropriate sportswear, and cultural sensitivity among staff. Nearly 60% of respondents cited absent gender-specific sessions as a major participation deterrent. Institutional inertia and unwillingness to modify practices compound these challenges. The literature suggests that many sports clubs lack formal channels for gathering feedback from minority groups, which impedes efforts to create more inclusive environments (Spaij et al., 2023). These structural deficiencies hinder participation and reinforce negative perceptions about mainstream sports accessibility.

Inclusive Programming and Strategies for Change

Despite cultural, community, and institutional barriers, the literature identifies promising strategies to foster inclusivity. A key recommendation is developing culturally responsive sports programs that offer modest sportswear options and female-only sessions to address modesty and gender concerns (Ahmad et al., 2020). One successful initiative described in the literature involved the introduction of private training sessions and tailored athletic attire, which led to a noticeable increase in participation among young Muslim women (Mroz, 2022). The literature also emphasizes culturally sensitive training for coaches and administrators to help them understand and address this demographic's unique challenges (Cheng, 2019).

Furthermore, engaging community leaders and incorporating the voices of successful Muslim female athletes into program development emerged as critical enablers for change (Alkouatli et al., 2024). Such involvement not only builds trust within the community but also provides tangible role models for young women. The literature also highlights policy-level interventions, with several studies calling for reforms at both organizational and governmental levels to mandate inclusivity and provide incentives for culturally responsive programming.

Collectively, these themes reveal that while significant barriers persist—stemming from cultural, social, and institutional factors—there are also actionable pathways to increase sport participation among young Muslim women in Australia (Young & Block,

2022). The evidence suggests that a multifaceted approach, which addresses both individual and systemic issues, is essential for creating an inclusive sports environment. Such an approach would not only accommodate the unique cultural and religious needs of young Muslim women but also enhance their overall experience and integration into mainstream sports.

The detailed analysis indicates that addressing the challenges requires both immediate adaptations (such as providing modest sportswear and female-only sessions) and long-term institutional reforms (including policy changes and cultural sensitivity training) (Tulashiram & Gupta, 2024). By combining these strategies, sports organizations can create environments that are not only more accessible but also more empowering for young Muslim women. Ultimately, the findings point to the transformative potential of inclusive programming—one that can bridge the gap between traditional cultural practices and contemporary sport environments, thereby promoting equity, diversity, and enhanced community engagement.

5. Discussion

The findings of this review reveal the intricate ways in which cultural, religious, community, and institutional factors shape the sports participation of young Muslim women in Australia. While challenges remain pervasive, there are clear opportunities for intervention and systemic changes that can foster a more inclusive sporting environment. This section expands upon the implications for practice, theoretical contributions, policy recommendations, and future research directions while incorporating critical debates within the literature.

Implications for Practice

One of the most significant practical implications of this review is the urgent need for sports organizations to adopt culturally sensitive practices. The consistent call in the literature for modifications in sports attire—such as providing modest sportswear—highlights a tangible intervention that can reduce discomfort and increase participation rates among Muslim women. Similarly, creating female-only sessions or spaces within sporting venues addresses concerns about gender mixing, which many families view as incompatible with Islamic values (Ahmed & Karam, 2021; Maxwell et al., 2013).

Moreover, the role of culturally sensitive training for coaches and administrators cannot be overstated. When sports facilitators are well-informed about the cultural nuances and challenges faced by young Muslim women, they are better positioned to create inclusive environments. Training initiatives should focus on practical strategies for accommodating cultural differences, including how to modify programs and communicate effectively with diverse groups. These measures, as suggested by Ahmad et al. (2020) and Thorpe et al. (2020), can foster a more inclusive atmosphere that not only encourages participation but also contributes to the overall development and empowerment of young Muslim women.

The findings also underscore the importance of community engagement. Engaging families and community leaders in the design and implementation of sports programs can help to overcome resistance by demonstrating that sports participation is compatible with, rather than opposed to, cultural and religious values. By involving trusted community figures and highlighting the successes of Muslim female athletes as role models, sports organizations can create a positive narrative that challenges prevailing stereotypes and

encourages broader participation (Cheng, 2019). Ultimately, fostering sport participation among young Muslim women requires sustained collaborative commitment from policymakers, sporting organizations, researchers, and communities themselves. The evidence suggests that inclusive sporting environments are achievable through strategic interventions that respect cultural diversity while promoting active participation. Such efforts represent not merely accommodation of difference, but recognition that diverse perspectives strengthen sporting communities and contribute to broader social cohesion within Australia's multicultural society.

Theoretical Contributions

This review contributes to the theoretical discourse on acculturation, particularly within the context of sport and multicultural integration. This review makes a significant contribution to the theoretical understanding of sport participation among young Muslim women in Australia by contextualizing empirical findings within Berry's acculturation theory and Crenshaw's intersectionality framework. These theories provide a valuable lens for interpreting how cultural adaptation and overlapping identities interact within institutional and social sporting contexts. Berry's (2005) acculturation model, which conceptualizes adaptation as a bidirectional process, is particularly relevant in understanding how young Muslim women negotiate their identities. The tension between adapting to mainstream Australian sports culture while maintaining cultural and religious traditions highlights the complexity of this process. However, there is an ongoing debate about whether acculturation necessarily leads to greater inclusion or if it inadvertently places the burden of adaptation solely on minority communities.

Additionally, the findings underscore the importance of an intersectional approach to understanding barriers to sports participation. Intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1989) posits those multiple social identities - including gender, religion, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status - intersect to shape individual experiences. This perspective is crucial in explaining why young Muslim women face unique challenges that differ from those encountered by other female athletes or other Muslim communities. Yet, some scholars caution against an over-reliance on intersectionality as a framework, arguing that it can obscure structural solutions in favour of identity-based analysis (Lind, 2010).

Together, these theoretical perspectives not only frame the barriers to sport participation but also help to conceptualize possible solutions. The review shows that culturally inclusive practices—such as creating female-only spaces, employing diverse

role models, and offering modest sportswear—can facilitate a form of integration that aligns with both acculturation and intersectional equity. At the same time, these findings challenge researchers and policymakers to adapt existing theoretical models to account for structural conditions and dynamic identity negotiations that evolve over time. Acculturation theory may benefit from incorporating the influence of institutional and policy-level mediators, while intersectionality would gain from greater attention to situational and developmental dimensions of identity, such as how exclusionary experiences may differ across sport types, regions, and life stages.

Ultimately, the review affirms the relevance of both acculturation and intersectionality in understanding sport participation among young Muslim women in multicultural Australia. However, it also calls for a more integrated and context-sensitive application of these frameworks—one that not only identifies individual struggles but also critiques and informs the systems and structures in which those struggles take place.

Policy Implications

The integration of Berry's acculturation model with intersectionality theory reveals that effective interventions must address both individual identity negotiation processes and systemic structural barriers. Rather than expecting young Muslim women to simply adapt to existing sporting norms, successful inclusion requires bidirectional accommodation where sporting institutions demonstrate cultural responsiveness while maintaining competitive integrity. This approach moves beyond tokenistic gestures toward substantive policy reform that embeds inclusivity within organizational frameworks.

Given Australia's commitment to multiculturalism, there is a pressing need for policy interventions that promote inclusivity within the sports sector (Elias et al., 2020). One potential approach is the introduction of government incentives for sports organizations that implement inclusive practices. Financial support in the form of grants or tax incentives could encourage clubs to invest in facility modifications, modest sportswear options, and cultural competency training programs. However, some critics argue that reliance on financial incentives risks creating a fragmented policy landscape, where inclusivity measures vary widely across different organizations and regions (Horne & Manzenreiter, 2012).

A more systemic approach would involve embedding cultural inclusion policies within national and state-level sports governance frameworks. This could include mandatory diversity training for coaches, standardized provisions for modest attire, and regulatory

frameworks ensuring equal opportunities for minority groups. However, implementing such policies requires strong political will and long-term commitment. Critics highlight that without robust accountability measures, policies aimed at inclusion may remain symbolic rather than transformative (Spaaij et al., 2019).

Another key policy consideration is the need for collaborative decision-making processes. Government bodies, sports organizations, community leaders, and young Muslim women themselves should be involved in policy development to ensure interventions are contextually relevant. Yet, achieving genuine representation remains a challenge. Tokenistic engagement, where Muslim women are consulted but not given decision-making power, continues to be a barrier to meaningful change (Bellerose et al., 2022).

Three critical pathways emerge for advancing inclusive sport participation. First, policy integration requires embedding cultural inclusion mandates within national and state sporting governance structures, moving from voluntary initiatives to systematic accountability mechanisms. Second, community-centered design necessitates meaningful participation of Muslim women and community leaders in program development, ensuring interventions address authentic rather than assumed needs. Third, intersectional research approaches must examine how multiple identity factors compound barriers, informing holistic rather than single-issue solutions.

Future Research Directions

While this review offers valuable insights, several areas require further investigation. First, there is a need for longitudinal studies that assess the long-term impact of inclusive interventions on sports participation and well-being among young Muslim women. Current research primarily focuses on short-term outcomes, making it difficult to evaluate the sustainability of initiatives.

Additionally, comparative studies examining the experiences of young Muslim women across different regions of Australia could provide insights into how local sociocultural contexts influence participation. For example, barriers faced in urban areas may differ significantly from those in rural communities, where sports infrastructure and community support networks vary widely.

While current studies provide valuable insights into the acculturation challenges and sport participation experiences of young Muslim women, several areas remain underexplored. One promising direction is the role of digital media in shaping perceptions

of sport, identity, and inclusion among this group. Future research could examine how platforms like Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube influence participation motivations, body image, or engagement with role models. Future research may explore how young Muslim women in Australia use digital media to navigate cultural and religious boundaries in sport. It could also investigate the impact of online representation and visibility of Muslim female athletes on their attitudes toward sport participation. Additionally, research may examine whether digital campaigns and virtual communities foster a sense of belonging and support that encourages greater engagement in sport.

Future research is also needed to understand the perspectives of sports administrators and coaches regarding inclusivity efforts. While much of the literature focuses on the experiences of young Muslim women, examining the challenges and constraints faced by sports facilitators can provide a more holistic view of the issue and inform more effective interventions. This discussion highlights the complex nature of sports participation among young Muslim women in Australia. While cultural and religious norms present challenges, interventions like attire modifications and culturally sensitive coaching can enhance inclusivity. The effectiveness depends on commitment from sports organizations, policymakers, and community stakeholders. Theoretical debates on acculturation and intersectionality underscore the need for nuanced approaches to these barriers. Future research should explore strategies for fostering inclusivity through digital platforms and policy assessments. Promoting sports participation among young Muslim women advances both individual empowerment and social cohesion in Australian society.

6. Conclusion

This narrative review has examined the complex interplay of cultural, religious, community, and institutional factors that influence sport participation among young Muslim women in Australia. The analysis identified four primary barriers: cultural and religious expectations regarding modesty and gender interaction, community pressures reinforcing traditional roles, institutional inflexibility in accommodating diverse needs, and limited culturally responsive programming. However, the review also highlights a range of promising strategies for fostering inclusivity, including the development of culturally sensitive sports programs, the provision of modest sportswear, and the creation of female-only spaces. Moreover, community engagement and culturally informed training for sports administrators have been identified as critical enablers of change.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching. Not only do they provide actionable insights for sports organizations and policymakers, but they also contribute to a broader theoretical understanding of acculturation and intersectionality in the sport domain. These findings extend beyond sport to illuminate fundamental questions about multicultural integration in Australian society. Sport serves as a microcosm where competing values regarding cultural accommodation versus assimilation become visible, making sporting inclusion both a practical goal and a symbolic indicator of societal inclusivity. Success in creating welcoming sporting environments for young Muslim women signals broader progress toward authentic multiculturalism that celebrates rather than merely tolerates diversity. By embracing culturally responsive practices, sports organizations can create environments that not only promote physical activity but also enhance social integration and personal development for young Muslim women. In doing so, they help to transform sports into a powerful tool for building a more inclusive and equitable society.

Overall, the challenges faced by young Muslim women in the sports arena are emblematic of broader societal issues related to cultural integration and diversity. Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative effort from policymakers, sports organizations, community leaders, and researchers. This review serves as a call to action for all stakeholders to work together to create sports environments that are not only welcoming but also empowering for young Muslim women. Such efforts are essential for ensuring that the benefits of sports—social cohesion, personal development, and community engagement—are accessible to all members of Australia's diverse society.

Despite its comprehensive approach, this review has several limitations. The narrative review methodology, while useful for synthesizing diverse sources, does not provide the same level of systematic rigor as a meta-analysis. Consequently, the review may be subject to selection bias in the choice of articles included. Furthermore, the focus on studies published between 2020 and 2023—while ensuring contemporary relevance—may have excluded earlier research that could provide additional context or longitudinal insights into the issues discussed. Additionally, some key studies cited in the literature (e.g., Hosper et al., 2007; Maxwell et al., 2013; Thorpe et al., 2020; Cheng, 2019) were not available in full or provided limited detail, which may affect the comprehensiveness of the analysis.

Another limitation is the regional focus of many of the studies reviewed. While the Australian context is critical for understanding the unique challenges faced by young Muslim women in this country, caution must be exercised when generalizing the findings to other multicultural contexts. Future research should aim to address these limitations by incorporating a broader range of studies and employing more systematic review methods. Geographic concentration on Australian contexts limits generalizability to other multicultural societies, suggesting the need for comparative international research. Future systematic reviews employing more rigorous selection criteria could strengthen evidence quality and support more definitive conclusions.

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