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CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER EQUALITY IN SPORTS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON FEMALE ATHLETE PARTICIPATION

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Abstract This study aims to explore the influence of cultural perceptions regarding gender equality on the participation of female athletes in sports. The type of research used is quantitative with a survey approach. The population in this study were female athletes who are active in various sports in Indonesia, and the sample consisted of 150 respondents who were selected randomly. The research instrument was a questionnaire that measured cultural perceptions and the level of participation of female athletes. The data analysis technique was carried out through linear regression analysis to test the relationship between variables. The results showed that cultural perceptions regarding gender equality had a positive and significant effect on the participation of female athletes, with a significance value of 0.000. As much as 39.3% of the variability in female athlete participation can be explained by cultural perceptions, while the rest is influenced by other factors such as social support and access to sports facilities. This study concludes that changes in cultural perceptions can encourage greater participation of female athletes in sports. To achieve this goal, collaboration is needed between various parties, including the government, sports organizations, and the media, to create an environment that supports gender equality in sports.

Keywords: cultural perception, gender equality, female athlete participation



INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the issue of gender equality in sport has attracted increasing attention in both academic research and public discussion. Sport, often seen as a reflection of social norms, remains an area where gender roles and representations are often unbalanced (Messner, 2021). Gender equality in sport is not just about representation, but also includes aspects of rights, access and opportunities for women to be fully involved in sport (Zurbriggen et al., 2023). Societal culture has a significant influence on the perception and participation of female athletes, which in turn can affect their success in sports (Marlow et al., 2019). In this context, it is important to explore how cultural perceptions of gender impact the participation of female athletes across countries.

Cultural factors play a complex role in influencing societal perceptions of gender equality in sport. Some cultures view women's roles in sport as unconventional or even taboo, and they often receive less social support (Anderson, 2019). These perceptions not only limit opportunities for women to participate in sport but also contribute to disparities in access to adequate

resources and training (Dworkin & Wachs, 2021). These imbalances are often reinforced by narratives pervasive in the media that portray sport as a male-dominated arena (Musto et al., 2017).

In many countries, the influence of cultural values on gender is evident in how women engage in sports. For example, in some Asian countries, women's roles in sports are often associated with cultural demands on femininity, so women who engage in sports that are considered masculine face challenges of social stigma (Russell et al., 2020). In contrast, in Western countries, despite increasing gender equality, there are still stereotypes that limit women's participation in certain sports (Potter et al., 2018). These different cultural influences highlight the importance of understanding the cultural context when discussing women's participation in sport.

In addition, socially constructed gender norms are also a significant factor. These norms shape society's understanding of the "appropriate" roles for men and women in sports. These perceptions, reinforced through socialization from family, education, and the media, have a direct impact on women's interest in participating in

sports (Zurbriggen et al., 2023). Girls who grow up in cultures that limit their role in sports tend to have lower interest and participation than girls from cultures that support gender equality (Messner, 2021).

Research shows that the presence of female role models in sport can play an important role in encouraging female participation in sport (Potter et al., 2018). Successful female athletes are symbols of hope for younger generations, but their lack of representation in the media and at the sports leadership level hinders this positive impact. This representation is also closely linked to gender equality in sports culture, where female athletes often do not receive the same attention and recognition as their male counterparts (Musto et al., 2017).

Not only that, the lack of adequate infrastructure and facilities for women is also a challenge in achieving equal participation in sports. Research shows that women often have limited access to safe and appropriate sports facilities, which prevents them from actively participating (Harjun, 2021). These inequalities in resource allocation are often exacerbated by cultural perceptions that prioritise males in the use of sport facilities.

The issue of inequality in the management of sports organizations also reflects gender perceptions in sports culture. In many countries, sports organizations are dominated by men, both at the leadership level and in decision-making (Malmquist et al., 2021). This situation reinforces inequalities in sport, as women's perspectives are often ignored, which ultimately results in policies that are not inclusive of female athletes.

However, in the last decade, global campaigns for gender equality in sport have begun to gain momentum. Campaigns such as "This Girl Can" and support from organizations such as the IOC have raised awareness of the importance of women's involvement in sport (Zupanc et al., 2021). The campaign also encourages changes in sports policies and structures in various countries, allowing more women to participate and achieve in sports.

In Indonesia, progress in female athlete participation in sports continues to increase, although many cultural and structural challenges remain to be overcome. According to a recent survey, there is increasing social support for female athletes, although traditional culture remains a significant barrier

(Pavlidis & Fullagar, 2016). It is important for Indonesia and other countries to continue advocating for gender equality in sports to increase women's participation in sports sustainably.

METHOD

Research Design

The type of research used in this study is quantitative research with a descriptive-analytical approach. Quantitative research was chosen because it allows for objective measurement of perceptions, using numbers and statistical data to explain the relationship between cultural perceptions of gender equality and female athlete participation (Sugiyono, 2019). The descriptive-analytical approach allows this study to describe and analyze the influence of cultural perceptions on the level of participation of female athletes in sports. According to (Creswell, 2018) Quantitative descriptive research can help in understanding the correlation between variables in a more measurable way, is relevant for testing hypotheses and obtaining general results.

The population in this study were female athletes in various sports at the university and professional levels in Indonesia. Sampling was done purposively, namely by selecting female athletes who are active in sports as samples that meet the research criteria. Based on (Ary, 2018) purposive sampling technique was used to focus on individuals who have direct experience and perspectives relevant to the study. The sample size in this study was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table which refers to a population of at least 300 people, resulting in a sample of around 150 respondents to maintain the validity and reliability of the data.

The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire consisting of two main parts. The first part contained questions about cultural perceptions of gender equality in sports, while the second part measured the level of participation of female athletes in sports activities. This instrument used a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree), as suggested by (Now, 2016), to make it easier for respondents to express their level of agreement. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were tested using Pearson

Product Moment correlation techniques and Cronbach's Alpha with values above 0.7 as indicators of a reliable instrument (Sugiyono, 2019).

Data collection was conducted through the distribution of questionnaires online and directly to the respondents involved. Online questionnaires allow for extensive data collection in a short time, while direct questionnaires ensure that data is collected representatively from respondents who have limited online access (Fraenkel, 2015). This technique provides flexibility in data collection and maintains the accuracy of information obtained from respondents. To maintain the validity of the data, an explanation of the purpose of the study was first given to respondents before they filled out the questionnaire.

The data analysis technique in this study used descriptive statistical analysis and multiple linear regression. Descriptive analysis was used to identify the distribution of cultural perceptions of gender equality and patterns of female athlete participation in sports. Then, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the effect of the independent variable (cultural perceptions of gender equality) on the

dependent variable (level of female athlete participation). The use of multiple linear regression is in accordance with the recommendations (Pallant, 2020) to measure the relationship between variables in social research. The results of the data analysis will be presented in the form of tables, diagrams, and statistical interpretations to facilitate understanding (Field, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following table and figures show the characteristics of respondents based on age, education level, and sports they participate in.

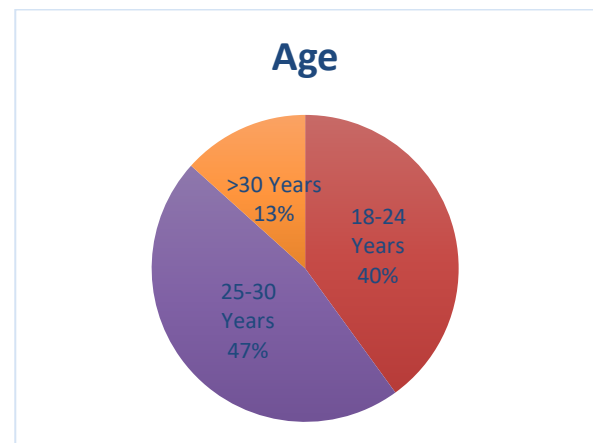


Figure 1. Description of Respondents' Age

From the data description, the majority of respondents are in the age range of 18 – 24 years (40%), 25-30 years (46.7%) and > 30 years (13.3%).

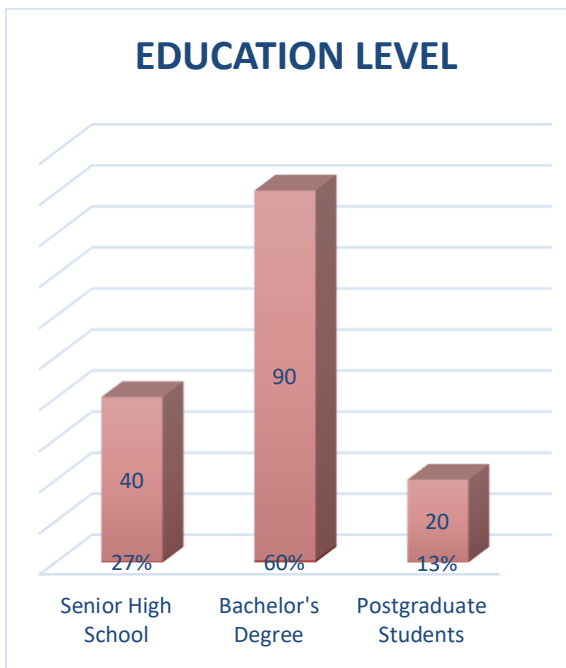


Figure 2. Description of Respondents' Education Level

From the data description, the majority of respondents have a bachelor's degree (60%), 26.7% Senior high school, and 13.3% are postgraduate students.

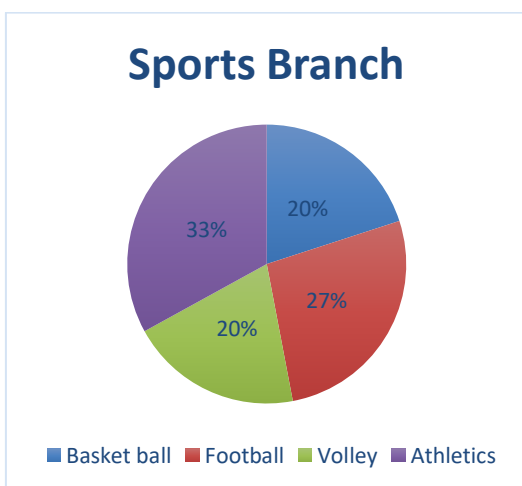


Figure 3. Description of Respondents' Sports Branches

From the data description, the majority of respondents are in the most dominant sport followed, namely athletics (33.3%).

Prerequisite tests include normality tests, multicollinearity tests, and heteroscedasticity tests to ensure that the data meets the requirements for regression analysis.

Normality test was performed using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Here are the results:

Table 1. Normality Test

Variables	Statistics	Sig.	Caption
Cultural Perception	0.987	0.087	Normal
Female Athlete Participation	0.789	0.135	Normal

With the Sig. value of each variable > 0.05 , the data is normally distributed.

Multicollinearity tests are carried out by looking at the VIF and tolerance values.

Table 2. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variables	Tolerance	VIF	Caption
Cultural Perception	0.765	1,307	

Tolerance values > 0.1 and VIF < 10 indicate the absence of multicollinearity. The heterosce-

dasticity test was carried out using the Glejser test.

Table 3. Heteroscedasticity Test

Variables	Sig.	Caption
Cultural Perception	0.118	

Sig. value > 0.05 indicates no heteroscedasticity.

Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression analysis to test the influence of cultural perceptions on female athlete participation

Table 4. Results of simple linear regression analysis

Model	Coefficient (B)	t	Sig.	Caption
(Constant)	2.356	4.213	0.000	
Cultural Perception	0.452	5,621	0.000	

$$(Y) = 2.356 + (X) 0.452$$

The results of the regression test show that cultural perception has a significant effect on female athlete participation (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05). The regression coefficient of 0.452 indicates that every one unit increase in cultural perception will increase female athlete participation by 0.452 units. Thus, the hypothesis stating that cultural perception of gender

equality has a positive effect on female athlete participation is accepted.

Table 5. Results of the Determination Coefficient (R²)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	0.627	0.393	0.389

The R Square value of 0.393 shows that cultural perception is able to explain 39.3% of the variability in female athlete participation in sports, while the rest is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

From the results above, it can be concluded that cultural perceptions of gender equality have a positive and significant influence on female athlete participation in sports. This shows that the more positive the cultural perception of gender equality, the higher the participation of female athletes in various sports

Discussion

Ages

The results of this study indicate that cultural perceptions of gender equality have a positive and significant effect on the participation of female athletes in sports. This finding is in line with research conducted by (Messner, 2021), which emphasizes that social

norms that support gender equality can encourage women to participate more actively in various sports activities. The congruence of these findings underscores the importance of cultural context in shaping women's interests and opportunities in sports.

In the Indonesian context, the results of this study indicate that the more positive the public perception of gender equality, the more likely women are to engage in sports. This is consistent with research by (Berliana et al., 2021; Messner, 2021; Musto et al., 2017) which shows an increase in social support for female athletes despite cultural and structural challenges. This study suggests that social support can play an important role in changing negative perceptions and encouraging female athlete participation.

Research by (Ahmed et al., 2020) also in line with these findings, where they suggest that better access and support for women in sports will create a more inclusive environment. The results of this study emphasize that there is not only a need for equality of access, but also a change in cultural perceptions that shape patterns of women's participation in sports. This shows that social change does not only occur at the policy level,

but also at the societal and cultural levels.

Linear regression test shows that cultural perception can explain 39.3% of the variability in female athlete participation. This percentage indicates that there are other factors that influence female participation, such as family support, access to sports facilities, and sports organization policies. (Potter et al., 2018). Research by (Alegre et al., 2015) found that the presence of female role models in sport can also play a significant role in increasing female interest and participation, suggesting that other social factors need to be considered in this context.

In addition, the results of this study confirm that the media has an important role in shaping cultural perceptions of gender in sports. Research by (Segar et al., 2022; Shi, 2023; Van Uffelen et al., 2017) shows that the media often portrays female athletes in a disproportionate manner to their male counterparts, which can hinder female participation. Therefore, changes in media representation can contribute to changing public perceptions of female athletes and gender equality in sport.

Although the results of this study indicate a positive influence, challenges

remain, especially in a culture that still views women as the weaker party in the context of sport. Research by (Hunt et al., 2020) emphasizes that in some cultures, there is a stigma attached to women participating in certain sports, which can limit their opportunities. This suggests the need for a more strategic approach to promoting gender equality in sport by taking into account the existing cultural context.

The results of this study also indicate that early education and socialization about gender equality can be an important step in building a more inclusive culture. According to (Billings & Hardin, 2022) educational programs that emphasize the importance of gender equality in sports can help change the perceptions of future generations. This study provides hope that positive change can be achieved through appropriate education and social campaigns.

This study has several limitations, including the limited sample size of female athletes in Indonesia. To obtain more representative results, further research can expand the population by involving respondents from various countries or cultures. (Şahin et al., 2024). This is important to gain a more comprehensive picture of how cultural

perceptions may influence women's participation in sport across contexts.

Overall, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship between cultural perceptions of gender equality and female athlete participation. Collaborative efforts are needed between governments, sport organizations, and communities to create an environment that supports women's participation in sport in a sustainable manner.

CONCLUSION

This study has revealed that cultural perceptions of gender equality have a positive and significant influence on female athletes' participation in sports. The results of the regression analysis indicate that increasing positive perceptions of gender equality in society can encourage more women to engage in various sports. With 39.3% of the variability in female athletes' participation explained by cultural perceptions, this finding indicates that other factors also play an important role, such as social support, access to facilities, and fair media representation.

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