

Abstract

Sports participation is known to have many benefits for individuals and especially for females. Women enjoy not just a healthy body and mind because of sports but also develop certain life skills that help them on and off the field. They become more confident, advance in leadership roles, and become more socially and economically mobile. The current research project aimed at exploring the physical and psychological impact of participation in sports using Pakistani female cricket players as a reference. In the study, the experiences and characteristics of Pakistani female cricket players were explored and analyzed through Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis

(2006). Semi-structured interviews with twenty women with professional cricket backgrounds were conducted. The detailed analysis of the result showed Six major themes (Pre-Sport, Post-Sport, Stress, Mental health, Barriers, and Role Models). The generation of the themes was done by using the data obtained from the study and also by consulting the relevant literature. Results indicated that the influence of cricket was highly dominant and entwined with the participants' lives and personalities, as they experienced various changes in their personalities once they started professional cricket. Subcategories highlighted how barriers and obstacles were overcome, including gender stereotyping. Leadership skills and psychological resilience were developed by the players over time. The positive and negative impacts of sports on the mental health of the girls were also observed. In conclusion, the vast majority of factors that comprise an individual female cricket player's life had the influence of cricket present within it. Regarding public significance, the study draws attention to the various positive elements which are present within female athletes and could therefore be a stimulant for the encouragement of women participating in sports. Further Research should compare and contrast in more depth how exposure to and participation in sports may affect females physically and psychologically.

Keywords: *female participation in sports, personality, leadership, experiences*