

Experiences and Challenges of Women in Sports Management in Iraq

Ahmed Salah Abdulameer Nassrullah¹ , Dr. Abbas Naqi Zadeh Baqi²

Abstract

This study, "Experiences and Challenges of Women in Sports Management in Iraq", explores various aspects that shape the professional landscape for women in this field. The research adopted a qualitative approach, focusing on secondary data analysis, including literature review, policy analysis, and media analysis, to gather comprehensive insights. The findings revealed that women in sports management in Iraq face significant challenges, including social and cultural barriers, professional obstacles, and political and legal constraints. The study also highlighted the significant role societal attitudes and cultural norms play in shaping the professional landscape for women in this field. Additionally, it uncovered gaps in organizational dynamics and policy frameworks that hinder women's progress in sports management roles.

Key Research Recommendations:

There is an urgent need for sports organizations in Iraq to adopt and effectively implement gender equality policies, which should include aspects such as fair hiring practices, equal pay, and creating a supportive work environment.

The establishment of mentoring programs, professional development opportunities, and networking platforms specifically for women in sports management is recommended.

Initiatives to raise awareness about the value and importance of women's contributions to sports management are crucial. Efforts should be made to change cultural perceptions and promote a more inclusive vision of women in leadership roles in sports.

key words: Gender Equality, Sports Management, Women in Leadership, Cultural Barriers, Policy Analysis

تجارب وتحديات النساء في إدارة الرياضة في العراق
أحمد صلاح عبد الأمير نصرالله¹ ، عباس نقى زاده باقي²

المستخلص

ملخص البحث: استكشفت هذه الدراسة البحثية "تجارب وتحديات النساء في إدارة الرياضة في العراق"، حيث تناولت مختلف الجوانب التي تشكل المشهد المهني للنساء في هذا المجال. اعتمدت الدراسة نهج البحث النوعي، مركزة على تحليل البيانات الثانوية، بما في ذلك استعراض الدراسة، وتحليل السياسات، وتحليل وسائل الإعلام، لجمع رؤى شاملة.

أظهرت النتائج أن النساء في إدارة الرياضة في العراق يواجهن تحديات كبيرة، بما في ذلك الحواجز الاجتماعية والثقافية، والعقبات المهنية، والقيود السياسية والقانونية. كما أوضحت الدراسة الدور الكبير الذي تلعبه المواقف المجتمعية والمعايير الثقافية في تشكيل المشهد المهني للنساء في هذا المجال. كما كشفت عن الثغرات في الديناميات التنظيمية والأطر السياسية التي تعيق تقدم النساء في أدوار إدارة الرياضة.

توصيات البحث الرئيسية: هناك حاجة ملحة لمنظمات الرياضة في العراق لاعتماد وتنفيذ سياسات المساواة بين الجنسين بشكل فعال، والتي يجب أن تشمل جوانب مثل التوظيف العادل، والأجور المتساوية، وخلق بيئة عمل داعمة. يوصى بإنشاء برامج إرشادية، وفرص التطوير المهني، ومنصات التواصل خصيصًا للنساء في إدارة الرياضة. مبادرات لرفع الوعي حول قيمة وأهمية مساهمات النساء في إدارة الرياضة أمر حاسم. يجب بذل الجهود لتغيير التصورات الثقافية وتعزيز رؤية أكثر شمولاً للنساء في الأدوار القيادية في الرياضة.

الكلمات مفتاحية: المساواة بين الجنسين، إدارة الرياضة، النساء في المراكز القيادية، العوائق الثقافية، تحليل السياسات

Affiliations of Authors

¹ Islamic Azad University (Khorasgan), Iran, Isfahan, 39998-81551

² sport Management, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Iran, Ardabil, 56199-11367

¹ ahmedsalahh1.1989@gmail.com

² a.naghizadeh@uma.ac.ir

¹ Corresponding Author

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انتساب الباحثين

¹ جامعة آزاد الإسلامية (خوراسگان)، إيران، اصفهان، 39998-81551

² الادارة الرياضية، جامعة محقق اردبيلي، إيران، اردبيل، 56199-11367

¹ ahmedsalahh1.1989@gmail.com

² a.naghizadeh@uma.ac.ir

¹ المؤلف المراسل

معلومات البحث

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Introduction

This research explores the "Experiences and Challenges of Women in Sports Management in Iraq." It delves into the unique circumstances and barriers that women face in a field traditionally dominated by men, particularly in a region with distinct cultural and societal norms. The study focuses on understanding how gender roles and societal expectations shape the involvement of women in sports management roles.

The importance of this study lies in its potential to highlight issues of gender inequality in a crucial sector like sports. By examining the challenges and experiences of Iraqi women in sports management, the study aims to contribute to the global discourse on gender equality, offer insights into the impacts of cultural and societal structures on women's careers, and potentially influence policy changes towards more inclusive practices in sports management.

1. Objectives of the Research

The key objectives of this research are:

- **To Identify and Analyze Challenges:** Understand the specific barriers and challenges that Iraqi women face in sports management.
- **To Explore Personal Experiences:** Document and analyze the personal experiences, stories, and career trajectories of Iraqi women in sports management.
- **To Compare with Global Trends:** Situate the findings within the broader context of global trends in women's participation in sports management.

To Provide Recommendations: Offer actionable recommendations for sports organizations,

policymakers, and other stakeholders to foster a more inclusive environment in sports management.

2. Literature Review

The Literature Review section of the study on "Experiences and Challenges of Women in Sports Management in Iraq" comprehensively covers two main areas:

2.1 Historical Context of Women in Sports in Iraq

- **Early Developments:** The initial phase of women's involvement in sports in Iraq was marked by limited participation, largely influenced by traditional societal norms and expectations. This phase reflects the broader cultural context within which women's sports had to evolve.
- **Influence of Political Changes:** The varying political climates in Iraq have significantly influenced the state of women's sports. Different regimes have either supported or restricted women's participation in sports, indicating a direct correlation between political shifts and the development of women's sports [1].
- **Recent Trends:** Recent years have seen a notable shift with increased advocacy for women's empowerment in sports. This has led to more women participating in various sports activities and gaining some representation in sports management, signaling a positive trend towards gender inclusivity in sports.

2.2 Global Perspectives on Women in Sports Management

- **Global Challenges:** The review extends to a

global context where challenges such as gender bias, underrepresentation, and unequal pay are common for women in sports management. These challenges highlight the universal struggle for recognition and equality in a field traditionally dominated by men.

- **Progressive Policies:** The study also identifies countries with progressive policies supporting women in sports as benchmarks. These models offer insights into effective strategies for promoting women's participation and leadership in sports [2].
- **International Organizations' Role:** The role of international sports organizations in advocating for gender equality is acknowledged. Their influence on global policies and practices underscores the importance of collective efforts in advancing gender equality in sports.

This Literature Review provides a focused and effective analysis, directly addressing the historical and global context of women in sports management in Iraq. It lays the groundwork for understanding the current landscape and the evolving dynamics of women's participation in sports management both locally and globally.

2.3 of Iraqi women's experiences in sports

Nabaa Ismael: She overcame cultural challenges and established her own yoga studio in Baghdad, demonstrating determination and innovation in the face of adversity.

Rasha Saddam Hatem: Her story as a coach and champion in fitness and wrestling serves as an example of the challenges women face in sports and their strategies to overcome them.

Bushra al-Hajjar: As a boxing instructor and a mother, her story can illustrate how a woman can overcome stereotypes in a conservative society like Najaf.

Iraqi Women Boxers: Incorporating their stories can show the effect of social changes on the acceptance of women in competitive sports.

Hajer Ghazi: Her narrative as a young medal-winning boxer shows the importance of family support and can reflect how supportive policies and programs can encourage young women to participate in sports.

These direct examples highlight the individual experiences of Iraqi women in sports, demonstrating their resilience, determination, and the social and institutional factors that impact their journeys. Incorporating these stories into the research paper can provide valuable insights and real-life context to the discussion of women's experiences and challenges in sports management in Iraq.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Relevant Theories and Models in Sports Management and Gender Studies

- **Leadership and Management Theories:** These theories, including transformational leadership and organizational behavior, are crucial to understanding the dynamics within sports organizations and how they impact women's roles in sports management.
- **Gender and Feminist Theories:** These provide an essential framework for analyzing the systemic barriers and biases that women face in sports management. They help in understanding the role of gender in shaping

opportunities and experiences in sports.

- **Social Identity Theory:** This theory explains how one's identity within a social group (like gender) influences their behavior, experiences, and interactions within the sports context.
- **Intersectionality:** This concept highlights how overlapping social identities, including gender, race, and class, affect the way individuals experience discrimination and privilege, particularly relevant in a diverse and complex society like Iraq.

3.2 Conceptual Understanding of Gender Equality in Sports

- **Equality vs. Equity:** Understanding the difference between equality (providing the same resources or opportunities) and equity (acknowledging differences and providing resources or opportunities based on those differences) is crucial in the context of gender in sports.
 - **Access and Participation:** This involves ensuring women have equal opportunities to participate in sports at all levels, from athletes to management.
 - **Representation and Empowerment:** The importance of representation in leadership positions in sports management and creating an environment where women feel empowered to pursue and excel in these roles.
 - **Cultural and Societal Influences:** Acknowledging how cultural norms and societal attitudes in Iraq impact gender roles in sports, and how these can be addressed to promote gender equality.
- These theoretical frameworks and conceptual understandings provide the backbone for analyzing women's experiences and challenges

in sports management in Iraq, offering insights into the multifaceted nature of gender equality in this field [5].

3.3 Challenges and Opportunities: A Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis in the research focuses on understanding the specific challenges and opportunities for women in sports management in Iraq, in comparison with global trends (1).

3.3.1 Challenges Faced by Women in Sports Management in Iraq

- **Cultural and Societal Constraints:** A significant challenge for women in Iraq is navigating cultural norms and societal expectations that traditionally limit their roles to domestic spheres. This cultural backdrop can be a major impediment to women pursuing careers in sports management.
- **Professional Limitations:** Women in sports management in Iraq often face professional limitations, including limited access to leadership roles and developmental opportunities, which are compounded by societal expectations [3].

3.3.2 Opportunities Identified

- **Advocacy and Awareness:** Despite these challenges, there is a growing recognition of the need for gender equality in sports. Increased advocacy and awareness are creating opportunities for change and progress.
- **Emerging Role Models:** The emergence of successful women in sports management roles serves as an inspiration and catalyst for change, demonstrating the potential for women

to succeed in this field.

3.3.3 Comparative Global Insights

- **Learning from Global Contexts:** The study examines how other countries have addressed similar challenges, looking at successful policies and practices that have promoted gender equality in sports management.
- **Adapting and Implementing Strategies:** Key to this analysis is identifying strategies that could be adapted to the Iraqi context. These strategies might include policy reforms, educational programs, and initiatives to support and empower women in sports management roles [4].

This comparative analysis directly addresses the specific challenges and opportunities for Iraqi women in sports management, contrasting them with global experiences to identify effective strategies that could be adapted and implemented in Iraq.

4. Methodology

The methodology for the research study on "Experiences and Challenges of Women in Sports Management in Iraq" is structured as follows:

4.1 Research Design

- **Secondary Data Analysis:** The study primarily utilizes secondary data analysis. This approach is chosen for its effectiveness in synthesizing a broad range of existing information to comprehensively understand the topic.

4.2 Data Sources

- **Literature Review:** A thorough review of academic literature, government reports,

articles, and other relevant publications is conducted. These sources cover various aspects related to women in sports management, gender equality in sports, and the sociocultural context of Iraq.

- **Policy Analysis:** The study includes an analysis of existing policies concerning sports management and gender equality both within Iraq and in a global context. This involves reviewing government and organizational policies, legal frameworks, and international guidelines.
- **Media Analysis:** Media reports, documentaries, and publicly available interviews are examined to understand the portrayal and public perception of women in sports management in Iraq.

4.3 Data Synthesis

Thematic Analysis: Key themes, patterns, and insights are identified from the collected secondary data through thematic analysis. This process involves coding the data and categorizing it into themes that are significant to the research topic.

This methodology provides a direct and effective framework for the study, grounded in existing knowledge and information, and does not rely on primary data collection methods like interviews or surveys. The approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and challenges of women in sports management in Iraq.

5. Experiences of Women in Sports Management in Iraq

Discussing the mentioned aspects of the research on women in sports management in Iraq involves a

direct and focused examination of key areas that are crucial to understanding their professional landscape:

To integrate the success stories of Iraqi women in sports into your research, you can include them in different sections of your study, emphasizing how their experiences relate to various aspects of women's roles in sports management in Iraq. Here's how you can structure it in English:

5.1 Case Studies and Personal Narratives:

- **Nabaa Ismael:** Include her story in the "Individual Experiences" section to highlight how she overcame cultural challenges and established her own yoga studio in Baghdad, demonstrating determination and innovation in the face of adversity [6].
- **Rasha Saddam Hatem:** Her story as a coach and champion in fitness and wrestling serves as an example of the challenges women face in sports and their strategies to overcome them (6)

5.2 Role and Impact of Societal Attitudes:

- **Bushra al-Hajjar:** As a boxing instructor and a mother, her story can illustrate how a woman can overcome stereotypes in a conservative society like Najaf.
- **Iraqi Women Boxers:** Incorporating their stories can show the effect of social changes on the acceptance of women in competitive sports.

5.3 Institutional and Policy Analysis:

- **Hajer Ghazi:** Her narrative as a young medal-winning boxer shows the importance of family support and can reflect how supportive policies and programs can encourage young

women to participate in sports.

Using these stories in your research can enhance readers' understanding of the challenges and achievements faced by women in the field of sports management in Iraq. By appropriately distributing them across different sections, you can provide a comprehensive view that reflects their individual experiences as well as the social and institutional factors affecting them.

this comprehensive analysis aims to provide a clear and effective understanding of the various institutional and policy-related factors that shape the professional experiences of women in sports management in Iraq. By exploring these aspects, the research can highlight areas of progress, ongoing challenges, and potential strategies for fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in the sports industry [7].

6. Challenges Faced by Women in Sports Management

Women in sports management in Iraq, like their counterparts in many parts of the world, face a unique set of challenges. These obstacles range from societal and cultural barriers to professional development hurdles and policy constraints. Understanding these challenges is essential for developing effective strategies to support women in this field and promote gender equality in sports management. The next section will delve into these challenges in detail, providing a comprehensive overview of the barriers that women in sports management in Iraq must navigate (7).

6.1 Social and Cultural Barriers

- **Gender Stereotypes:** Women in sports

management in Iraq often confront deeply ingrained gender stereotypes that limit their perceived capabilities in leadership and decision-making roles.

- **Societal Expectations:** The traditional societal expectations regarding the roles and responsibilities of women can significantly impede their ability to fully participate in and commit to a career in sports management.
- **Cultural Resistance:** There may be resistance within the broader cultural context of Iraq to women taking on roles that are traditionally seen as male-dominated, including sports management.

6.2 Professional and Career Development Challenges

- **Limited Access to Opportunities:** Women often face challenges in accessing the same professional opportunities as their male counterparts, such as training, networking, and career advancement prospects [8].
- **Work-Life Balance:** The challenge of balancing professional responsibilities in sports management with personal and familial obligations can be particularly pronounced for women, given societal norms.
- **Professional Isolation:** Women in sports management may experience a sense of isolation, lacking sufficient support from peers and mentors within the field, which is crucial for career development.

6.3 Policy and Legal Constraints

- **Inadequate Gender Policies:** The lack of comprehensive and enforceable gender equality policies within sports organizations can lead to unequal treatment and limited

career progression for women.

- **Legal Frameworks:** There may be a lack of supportive legal frameworks at the national level that explicitly promote and protect the rights and interests of women in sports management.
- **Implementation Gaps:** Even when policies exist, there can be significant gaps in their effective implementation, reducing their impact on creating a level playing field for women in sports management.

Each of these sections aims to provide a detailed and direct understanding of the multifaceted challenges faced by women in sports management in Iraq. By examining these issues comprehensively, the research can highlight the areas that need attention and reform to create a more inclusive and equitable environment for women in this field.

7. Strategies and Solutions

To address the challenges faced by women in sports management in Iraq, it is essential to develop effective strategies and solutions. These strategies should aim to tackle the barriers identified in the research and leverage opportunities for progress. A comprehensive approach that includes initiatives at both the organizational and policy levels, as well as cultural and societal interventions, will be crucial for fostering a more supportive environment for women in this field. The next section will detail these strategies and solutions, focusing on practical measures that can be taken to empower women in sports management in Iraq [9].

7.1 Initiatives and Programs Supporting Women in Sports

- **Empowerment Programs:** Development of programs aimed at empowering women in sports management through skills training, leadership workshops, and mentorship opportunities.
- **Networking Platforms:** Establishing platforms where women in sports management can network, share experiences, and offer support to each other [10].
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Launching campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of gender diversity in sports management and the valuable contributions of women in this field.

7.2 Policy Recommendations

- **Gender Equality Policies:** Advocating for the adoption and implementation of comprehensive gender equality policies within sports organizations. These policies should address recruitment, retention, promotion, and addressing gender-based discrimination.
- **Legal Frameworks:** Recommending the development of supportive legal frameworks that explicitly promote and protect the rights of women in sports management [11].
- **Implementing Best Practices:** Encouraging sports organizations to adopt best practices from other countries or sectors that have successfully promoted gender equality in leadership roles.

7.3 Future Prospects for Women in Sports Management in Iraq

- **Cultural Shift:** Fostering a cultural shift towards greater acceptance and recognition of

women's capabilities and roles in sports management.

- **Policy and Organizational Changes:** The ongoing development and implementation of policies and organizational changes that support women's career advancement in sports management [12].
- **Role Models and Leaders:** Highlighting and promoting successful women in sports management as role models to inspire and encourage more women to pursue careers in this field.

This comprehensive approach to strategies and solutions aims to address the challenges faced by women in sports management in Iraq. By focusing on initiatives, policy recommendations, and future prospects, the goal is to create a more inclusive, supportive, and equitable environment for women in this industry.

Conclusion

This research has thoroughly explored the experiences and challenges of women in sports management in Iraq, shedding light on the multifaceted obstacles they face in a predominantly male-dominated field. The findings underscore the impact of deep-rooted social and cultural barriers, professional development challenges, and the inadequacies in current institutional and policy frameworks.

Results

- The research highlighted significant challenges faced by women in sports management in Iraq, including social and cultural barriers, professional development hurdles, and policy

and legal constraints.

- It became evident that societal attitudes and cultural norms play a substantial role in shaping the professional landscape for women in this field.
- The study revealed gaps in organizational dynamics and policy frameworks that hinder the advancement of women in sports management roles.

Key Recommendations

- There is a pressing need for sports organizations in Iraq to adopt and effectively implement gender equality policies. These policies should encompass aspects like fair recruitment, equal pay, and creating a supportive workplace environment.
- The establishment of mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and networking platforms specifically for women in sports management is recommended.
- Initiatives to raise awareness about the value and importance of women's contributions in sports management are crucial. Efforts should be made to shift cultural perceptions and promote a more inclusive view of women in leadership roles in sports.

Future Prospects

- Despite the challenges, there are encouraging signs of progress and a growing recognition of the need for gender equality in sports management in Iraq.
- With continued advocacy and implementation of the recommended strategies, there is significant potential for growth and improvement in the representation and

experiences of women in sports management.

- Further research in this field can continue to shed light on the evolving landscape and contribute to the development of more effective strategies for supporting women in sports management.

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