

EXPLORING GENDER BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCES AMONG FEMALE HOCKEY PLAYERS

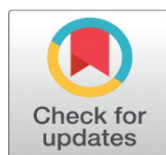
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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the gender bias and experiences of discrimination among female hockey players. A self-made questionnaire was administered to 18 participants aged between 11 and 27, collecting data on social support and self-perception. The questionnaire included Likert-scale items, and the responses were transformed into percentile statistics for analysis. The findings revealed significant experiences of gender discrimination by referees during tournaments and coaches during practice/competitions. Bullying by senior athletes and incidents of sexual harassment were also reported, highlighting the presence of such issues within sports environments. The participants' awareness of these incidents and their perception of existing laws addressing sexual harassment varied. However, most participants believed in sports' empowering role financially for women and the importance of gender parity in competition prizes and boarding/lodging facilities. Support for establishing a committee to address gender bias in sports was moderately expressed. These results emphasize the need to address and rectify gender biases, discrimination, and harassment in women's hockey and promote inclusive and equitable sporting environments.

Keywords: Gender Bias, Discrimination, Hockey, Female Athletes



1. INTRODUCTION

Gender bias and discrimination have long been prevalent in various domains, including sports. Women's hockey, in particular, has faced challenges in achieving gender equality and creating inclusive and equitable environments for female players. Understanding the perceptions and experiences of gender bias and discrimination among female hockey players is crucial for addressing these issues effectively and promoting positive change. This study examines the perceptions of gender bias and experiences of discrimination among female hockey players, shedding light on the existing challenges and advocating for inclusive and equitable sporting environments.

Research in this area has shown that female athletes often face gender-based discrimination, ranging from biased officiating and coaching practices to bullying and incidents of sexual harassment. For instance, studies have highlighted the presence of gender biases in referee decisions, where female players receive unequal treatment compared to their male counterparts (Hovden & Gjesdal, 2020). Similarly, discriminatory behaviours by coaches during practice and competitions have been reported, affecting the development and experiences of female players (Azzarito & Solmon,

2005). Bullying, particularly by senior athletes, has also been identified as a concerning issue, contributing to a hostile environment for young female players (Talbot & Trudel, 2016). Moreover, incidents of sexual harassment within sports have been reported, necessitating measures to ensure the safety and well-being of female athletes (Brackenridge, 2001).

To address these challenges, it is essential to assess the awareness and perception of gender bias and discrimination among female hockey players. Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of promoting gender equality in sports and ensuring that female athletes receive equal opportunities, recognition, and resources (De Bosscher et al., 2019; Law et al., 2007). Moreover, understanding the financial empowerment potential of sports for women can contribute to advocating for increased support and investment in women's sports programs (Norman et al., 2019).

By exploring the perceptions of female hockey players regarding gender bias, discrimination, and their experiences of these issues, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on women's hockey and provide insights for creating inclusive and equitable sporting environments. The findings will inform policymakers, sports organizations, coaches, and other stakeholders in implementing measures to address gender bias, discrimination, and harassment in women's hockey.

2. METHODOLOGY

Participants in this study consisted of 18 female hockey players aged between 11 and 27. A self-made questionnaire was administered to collect data regarding social support and self-perception. The questionnaire included Likert-scale items, with responses ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." The responses were then transformed into percentile statistics to analyse the distribution and patterns of the participants' perceptions of Sexual Harassment and Gender Bias.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of data have been presented in Tables 1 to 10.

Table 1 Experiences of Gender Discrimination by Referees During Tournaments

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	03	16.8
Agree	07	39.2
Undecided	04	22.4
Disagree	03	16.8
Strongly Disagree	01	5.6

According to the data presented in Table 1, a significant portion of participants reported experiencing gender discrimination from referees during tournaments. Specifically, 39.2% agreed and 16.8% strongly agreed that they had faced such discrimination. These results indicate the existence of gender bias in sports officiating, emphasizing the importance of addressing and correcting these issues to promote fairness and equality in sports environments.

Table 2 Experiences of Gender Discrimination by Coaches during Practice/Competitions

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	01	5.6
Agree	03	16.8
Undecided	05	28
Disagree	04	22.4
Strongly Disagree	05	28

In Table 2, information regarding the participants' encounters with gender discrimination by coaches during practice and competitions has been presented. The statistics reveal that 16.8% of the participants agreed and 5.6%

strongly agreed that they faced gender discrimination by coaches. Furthermore, 28% of the respondents were unsure about their experiences. These results suggest that there may be gender biases in coaching practices that need to be addressed and corrected to eliminate discriminatory behaviour.

Table 3 Experiences of Bullying by Seniors in Sport

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	02	11.2
Agree	05	28
Undecided	04	22.4
Disagree	06	33.6
Strongly Disagree	01	5.6

Table 3 indicates the experience of participants who have faced bullying from senior athletes in their respective sports. The statistics show that 28% of individuals agreed and 11.2% strongly agreed that they were bullied by senior athletes. On the other hand, 33.6% of participants disagreed with such incidents. These findings suggest that bullying is prevalent in sports settings, and prevention measures must be taken to ensure safe and inclusive sporting environments.

Table 4 Awareness of Incidents of Sexual Harassment in Sports

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	03	16.8
Agree	03	16.8
Undecided	05	28
Disagree	05	28
Strongly Disagree	02	11.2

The data in Table 4 reveals the extent to which participants are aware about incidents of sexual harassment in sports. The results indicate that 16.8% strongly agreed, and 16.8% agreed that they had heard of such incidents. However, 28% were uncertain about their awareness, while another 28% disagreed with being aware of sexual harassment incidents. It is evident that there is a pressing need for heightened awareness and education concerning sexual harassment prevention in sports.

Table 5 Experiences of Sexual Harassment in Sports

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	01	5.6
Agree	00	0
Undecided	06	33.6
Disagree	07	39.2
Strongly Disagree	04	22.4

According to the results in Table 5, some participants reported experiencing sexual harassment in sports, with only 5.6% strongly agreeing. However, a significant 39.2% disagreed, and 22.4% strongly disagreed with encountering such incidents. Additionally, 33.6% were undecided about their experiences. These findings indicate that while some have experienced sexual harassment, a considerable proportion have not.

Table 6 Perception of the Presence of Laws Addressing Sexual Harassment in Sports

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	02	11.2

Agree	04	22.4
Undecided	05	28
Disagree	05	28
Strongly Disagree	02	11.2

According to Table 6, there's a perception among participants regarding the presence of laws that tackle sexual harassment in sports. Out of the participants, 22.4% agreed, and 11.2% strongly agreed that such laws exist. However, an equal percentage (28%) disagreed and remained undecided about the existence of such laws. This highlights the importance of increasing awareness about legal frameworks pertaining to sexual harassment in sports.

Table 7 Perception of Sports' Role in Empowering Women Financially

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	13	72.2
Agree	04	22.2
Undecided	01	5.6
Disagree	00	0.00
Strongly Disagree	00	0.00

According to the findings presented in Table 7, the majority of participants (72.2%) firmly believe that sports play a crucial role in empowering women financially. Additionally, 22.2% of the respondents agreed with this idea. A small percentage of participants (5.6%) were uncertain about the notion, while no respondents expressed disagreement or strong disagreement. Overall, these results indicate a widely held belief that sports have a positive financial impact on women.

Table 8 Perception of Similar Prizes for Boys and Girls in Competitions

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	06	33.6
Agree	09	50.4
Undecided	03	16.8
Disagree	00	0
Strongly Disagree	00	0

Table 8 depicts the participants' perception of whether boys and girls are given similar prizes in competitions. The data reveals that a majority (50.4%) agreed, and 33.6% strongly agreed that both genders receive comparable prizes. Additionally, 16.8% were undecided. Significantly, no respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating a prevailing belief in gender parity regarding competition prizes.

Table 9 Perception of Similar Boarding and Lodging Facilities for Boys and Girls in Sports Competitions

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	04	22.4
Agree	09	50.4
Undecided	04	22.4
Disagree	01	5.6
Strongly Disagree	00	0

Table 9 illustrates the participants' perception of whether boys and girls receive similar boarding and lodging facilities in sports competitions. The findings indicate that 50.4% agreed, and 22.4% strongly agreed that both genders have equal access to such facilities. However, 22.4% were undecided, and 5.6% disagreed with this notion. No respondents strongly disagreed, suggesting a general belief in equitable accommodation provisions for male and female athletes.

Table 10 Support for Establishing a Committee to Address Gender Bias in Sports

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	05	28
Agree	06	33.6
Undecided	03	16.8
Disagree	06	33.6
Strongly Disagree	01	5.6

Table 10 demonstrates the participants' support for establishing a committee to address gender bias in sports. The results reveal that 33.6% agreed, and 28% strongly agreed with the necessity of such a committee. Conversely, 33.6% disagreed, and 5.6% strongly disagreed. Additionally, 16.8% of respondents were undecided. These findings underscore the diverse opinions regarding establishing a committee, highlighting the importance of further discussions and evaluations.

4. CONCLUSION

This study sheds light on the perceptions and experiences of gender bias and discrimination among female hockey players. The findings indicate the existence of gender biases within officiating and coaching practices, as well as instances of bullying and sexual harassment. By addressing these issues, they underscore the importance of creating safe and inclusive sporting spaces. The study also highlights the need for increased awareness, education, and preventive measures regarding sexual harassment in sports. Furthermore, participants expressed belief in sports' empowering role financially for women and emphasized the importance of gender parity in competition prizes and boarding/lodging facilities. The mixed opinions regarding establishing a committee to address gender bias in sports call for further discussions and evaluations to effectively address these issues.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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