

Volume 22, No. 1  June Issue 2025

JOURNAL OF

Islam in Asia

A Refereed International Biannual Arabic – English Journal

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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E-ISSN: 2289-8077

Exploring the Islamic Ethical Framework for Athletes: Its Significance, Development, and Justification

Meneroka Rangka Kerja Etika Islam untuk Atlet: Kepentingan, Perkembangan dan Justifikasinya

Mohammed Ghous Mohammed Insaf* and Fatmir Shehu**

Abstract

This research seeks to introduce an Islamic ethical framework for athletes with an integrated holistic approach. People's engagement in sports, the fundamental aspect of human nature, shows a defining characteristic of civilizations throughout history. It is widely acknowledged that sports enable people to transcend their religious, ethnic, language, cultural, racial, and other differences. Islam teaches Muslims rules and regulations concerning their participation in sports. Despite Islam's endorsement of sports activities, the extent to which academic engagement with sports from an Islamic perspective has been explored remains uncertain. This paper aims to address this gap by analyzing the content of selected existing literature to underscore the necessity of developing an ethical framework for athletes rooted in Islamic ethical norms. Descriptive and analytical methods are used in this research while dealing with secondary sources, including journal articles, book chapters, and websites. The findings reveal an absence of comprehensive Islamic ethical frameworks with an integrated holistic approach explicitly tailored for athletes. Introducing an integrated holistic approach from the Islamic perspective will respond to athletes' contemporary challenges and foster holistic athlete development within the global sporting community.

Keywords: Islamic Ethical Framework, Athletes, Sports, Integrated Holistic Approach, Sporting Community.

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Abstrak

Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk memperkenalkan rangka kerja etika Islam untuk atlet dengan pendekatan holistik bersepadu. Penglibatan orang ramai dalam sukan, aspek asas sifat manusia, menunjukkan ciri yang menentukan tamadun sepanjang sejarah. Adalah diakui secara meluas bahawa sukan membolehkan orang ramai mengatasi perbezaan agama, etnik, bahasa, budaya, kaum dan lain-lain mereka. Islam mengajar orang Islam peraturan dan peraturan mengenai penyertaan mereka dalam sukan. Walaupun Islam menyokong aktiviti sukan, sejauh mana penglibatan akademik dengan sukan dari perspektif Islam telah diterokai masih tidak pasti. Kertas kerja ini bertujuan untuk menangani jurang ini dengan menganalisis kandungan kesusasteraan sedia ada terpilih untuk menekankan keperluan membangunkan rangka kerja etika untuk atlet yang berteraskan norma etika Islam. Kaedah deskriptif dan analisis digunakan dalam penyelidikan ini sambil berurusan dengan sumber sekunder, termasuk artikel jurnal, bab buku, dan laman web. Penemuan ini mendedahkan ketiadaan rangka kerja etika Islam yang komprehensif dengan pendekatan holistik bersepadu yang secara eksplisit disesuaikan untuk atlet. Memperkenalkan pendekatan holistik bersepadu dari perspektif Islam akan bertindak balas terhadap cabaran kontemporari atlet dan memupuk pembangunan atlet holistik dalam komuniti sukan global.

Kata Kunci: Kerangka Etika Islam, Atlet, Sukan, Pendekatan Holistik Bersepadu, Komuniti Sukan.

Introduction

In contemporary society, sporting activities transcend their traditional confines of leisure and recreation to encompass multifaceted dimensions, including cultural, economic, academic, and political realms.¹ The burgeoning sports industry is a testament to this evolution, with many professions, ranging from athletes to sports managers,

¹ John Nauright and Steven Pope, 'The Twenty-First-Century SportsWorld: Global Markets and Global Impact', *Sport in Society* 20, no. 12 (2017): 1817-20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2017.1234014>.

contributing to its growth and development.² Furthermore, the rapid advancement of sports medicine underscores the increasing importance placed on athletes' health and well-being.³ Integral to this paradigm shift is the symbiotic relationship between sports and media, where the influence of sports media permeates various facets of today's media landscape. The pivotal role of sports media in shaping public discourse and perceptions underscores its significance in the contemporary media milieu.⁴ The academic discipline of sports philosophy, which emerged in the 1970s, has evolved into a prominent field of study. It offers insights into the philosophical underpinnings of sports and its societal implications. This academic pursuit is further bolstered by the proliferation of courses in sports sciences provided by numerous universities worldwide, reflecting the growing scholarly interest in the field.⁵ Amidst this backdrop of burgeoning academic and professional engagement with sports, examining the discourse on sports within the Muslim world is imperative.⁶ Despite the global prevalence of sporting activities, there remains to be more scholarly inquiry into sports from an Islamic perspective. This gap in academic literature warrants closer examination, particularly considering Islam's endorsement of physical activities and its emphasis on ethical conduct in all aspects of life.

Against this backdrop, this article explores the academic works within the Muslim world about sports. By delving into the existing literature, the aim is to elucidate the extent to which sports have been academically engaged from an Islamic ethical perspective. Specifically, this research seeks to identify any prevailing ethical frameworks or

² Ekaterina Glebova and Fateme Zare, 'Career Paths in Sport Management: Trends, Typology, and Trajectories', *Journal of Physical Education and Sport* 23, no. 2 (2023): 463–68, <https://doi.org/10.7752/jpes.2023.02057>.

³ Steven N Blair et al., 'Perspectives From the Health Professions Medicine', *American Journal of Health Promotion* 182–185, no. 2 (2003), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.4278/0890-1171-18.2.182>.

⁴ Puertas Molero Pilar et al., 'Impact of Sports Mass Media on the Behavior and Health of Society. A Systematic Review', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 16, no. 3 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16030486>.

⁵ John William and Francisco Javier Lopez Frias Devine, 'Philosophy of Sport', The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Department of Philosophy, Stanford University, 2020), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2023/entries/sport/>.

⁶ Khalid Su'ad Kanu, *Al-Alab Ar-Riyadiyyah, Ahkamuha, Dawabituha, Dirasa Fiqhiyyah Mu'asira (Sports Games, Their Rules and Regulations: A Contemporary Jurisprudential Study)*, 1st ed. (Damascus, Beirut and Kuwait: Dar an- nawadir, 2012).

principles governing sports within Islamic teachings and to assess the adequacy of these frameworks in addressing contemporary challenges faced by athletes. By shedding light on the academic discourse surrounding sports in the Muslim world, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the intersection between sports and Islamic ethics. Furthermore, it seeks to underscore the importance of developing a robust ethical framework for athletes grounded in Islamic ethical principles, fostering holistic athlete development, and promoting ethical conduct within the sporting realm.

Literature Review

Sports-related literature within the Islamic framework is divided into classical and modern categories. The former focuses on equestrianism, swimming, and archery, while the latter explores contemporary scholarly inquiries into sports from an Islamic perspective. It emphasises the link between Islamic teachings and sports participation and aims to promote a more comprehensive understanding of sports within Islamic contexts.

I- Classical Literatures

Muslim scholars have written about various sports, such as swimming, hunting, archery, and horseback riding, focusing on their military applications. Equestrianism was considered a significant skill in ancient times, with a rich tradition of folk poetry and intellectual writings.

First, equestrian literature: the most significant works are *Ibn Hadhil Al-Andalusi's* "The Ornament of the Knights and the Emblem of the Brave" (363 AH), a book about horses that includes information on their names, colours, and desirable qualities as well as advice on how to choose, train, and compete with them. It also mentions various equestrian equipment, such as swords, spears, bows, darts, and shields.⁷ Among them is *al-Furusiyyah al-Muhammadiyah* (Muhammadiyah

⁷ Ali Ibnu Abdur Rahman Ibnu Hathyal, *Hilyat Ālfursān Wa Šhi'ār Āl Šuġ'ān (The Ornament of the Knights and the Emblem of the Brave)*, ed. Muhammed Abdul Gani Hasan (Cairo: Darul Ma'arif lit tiba'ati wan nashr, 1951).

Equestrianism) by *Ibn al-Qayyim (751 AH)*, a thorough book whose chapter combines the equestrian arts' legal foundation with a helpful explanation of how to practise them, what is needed for the learner, and what regulations need to be observed when engaging in equestrian activities.⁸

"*Albaha fi Fadl al Sibaha wa Al Samah fi Akhbar Al Rimah*," written by *Jalaluddin al-Suyuti (911 AH)*, is a foundational work of notable academic discourse divided into two portions. The first section, "*Al-Bahah Fi Fadl al Sibaha*," explains how *Suyuti* elaborates on the lessons ascribed to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH regarding the importance of learning to swim. In this section, *Suyuti* outlines the instructions the Prophet gave regarding learning to swim and sharing that knowledge and the advantages the religious predecessors believed to be associated with the ability to swim. On the other hand, the work's next section, titled "*Al-Samah fi Akhbar Al Rimah*," is a wise collection that includes several narratives, one of which is about the benefits of being skilled with spears. In this chapter, *Suyuti* carefully studies the hadiths that elaborate on the praiseworthy qualities of being an expert spear thrower and the prophetic exhortations that encourage people to become experts in this field. In addition, *Suyuti* embellishes his speech with a plethora of literary allusions. One example is the epigraph that extols the virtues of weapons, such as swords and spears, in conjunction with the poetic resonances within the sportsmanship theme.

II- Modern literatures

Numerous academic works have explored the intersection of sports and Islamic perspectives. Although the volume of research is limited, the thematic focus of these works can be categorized into distinct topics. *Abdullah Manaz* stresses that in Islam, participation in sports is closely connected to believers' way of life, with activities like walking, running, and swimming being explicitly approved by the Prophet Muhammad to enhance physical and spiritual health.⁹ *Ahas Kirkhs* argues in his paper that Islamic teachings emphasise the importance of physical

⁸ Ibn Qayyim Al-Jauziyyah, *Al Furusiyya Al Muhammadiyya*, ed. Bakr ibnu Abdilllah Abu Zaid (Meccah: Daru Alamil Fawaid lin nashri wat tawzi', n.d.).

⁹ Abdullah Manaz, 'Islam and Sport', 2019.

fitness through sports to fulfil religious duties.¹⁰ Additionally, the concept of *Maqāṣid*, which refers to the critical goals of Islamic law, provides an understanding of how sports participation fits into the ethical framework of Islam, which is in line with the overall objectives of *Shari'ah*.¹¹ A significant research project, titled "*Sports, Its Laws and Definitions: A Study of Modern Islamic Jurisprudence*,"¹² aimed to create a practical legal structure in Islamic jurisprudence regarding involvement in sports, presence at sporting events, participation in sports festivals, and pursuit of professional sports. The study aimed to define the legal limits of sports participation by examining relevant rules and practices in Islamic legal discussions. *Ahmad Akram and Saidatolakma* aim to explore the current guidelines of Malaysian authorities and assess how their implementation influences the commitment of Muslim women athletes to adhere to *Shari'ah* law during their engagement in sports activities.¹³

Through exploring previous works, we can find that both classical and modern literature present norms for Islamic legal authenticity for engaging in sporting activities and its benefits from a religious perspective. On the other hand, classical literature mostly tends to have a military dimension more than a recreation and leisure dimension. At the same time, the core discussion of most modern works is "*female engagement in sports*", which refers to either their dress code or limitations or their obstacles in engaging in sporting activities and other issues. Rarely can we find some works on some other ethical issues related to athletes, such as using performance-enhancement drugs. We can't find comprehensive work on the Islamic Ethical framework for athletes.

¹⁰ Ahas Kirkhs, 'Maqāṣid Al- Shari'ah and Sport: What It Means to the Practising Muslims' 28, no. 1 (2023): 16–31.

¹¹ Kirkhs.

¹² Kanu, *Al-Alab Ar-Riyadiyyah, Ahkamuha, Dawabituha, Dirasa Fiqhiyyah Mu'asira (Sports Games, Their Rules and Regulations: A Contemporary Jurisprudential Study)*.

¹³ Ahmad Akram et al., 'A Qualitative Review of the 'Awrah Issue of Muslim Women Athlete in Malaysia: Analysing the Existing Standardised Guidelines' 29, no. 1 (2024).

Methodology

This study explores the importance of developing an Islamic ethical framework for athletes within the sports domain. We have employed a descriptive qualitative analysis approach to accomplish this aim, drawing upon classical and modern literature on sports and Islam. The methodology involves a comprehensive review of scholarly articles, books, and other textual sources about Islam and sports, analysing their intersection. Through this qualitative analysis, the research provides insights into the significance and justification for integrating Islamic ethics into athletes' training, conduct, and governance. This contribution aims to enhance the broader conversation on ethical practices within sports.

History and Modern Development of Sport

Sporting activity has gone through numerous phases throughout history; in the beginning, it was combined with a society's sociopolitical and economic paradigms; later, it evolved into a leisure and amusement reality. As a result, understanding the historical history of sports is essential for understanding the current sports phenomenon.

I- Historical Origins of Sports

Sports have played a vital role in human civilisation for ages, providing enjoyment and physical prowess. Athletic activities have encompassed various disciplines and purposes, from ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome to the diverse range of sports in India, pre-Islamic Arabia, and Islamic civilisations. Whether it was gladiatorial contests in Rome, chariot racing in Greece, or refined martial arts in India and Arabia, sports in these civilisations often reflected their distinct cultural values, beliefs, and societal norms.

Throughout history, people from various civilisations have engaged in different sports. Despite the diversity of sports, certain common aspects have evolved, such as competitiveness, physical exertion, and often ritualistic importance. These common threads illustrate humanity's universal desire for athletic endeavours. This

article will explore the dimensions of sports in different civilisations, including the types of sports practised and the goals they serve.

Ancient Egypt: In ancient Egypt, sports like wrestling and archery were not just physical exercises but also religious rituals, often part of festivals honouring gods.¹⁴ The involvement of national and international players and referees showcased their commitment to excellence and fair play.¹⁵

Ancient Greece and Rome: Greek and Roman civilisations similarly revered sports, with the Olympics and gladiatorial contests symbolising athletic prowess.¹⁶ Greek sports, tied to religious rites, emphasised physical competition as a tribute to gods. Including players and referees from different regions promoted cultural exchange and diplomacy, fostering unity among city-states and empires.

Ancient India: In the Indian Indus Valley, sports were both religious and recreational, with rituals incorporating athletic competitions as acts of devotion.¹⁷ Throughout Indian history, sports like yoga and martial arts remained integral, offering physical and spiritual benefits.¹⁸

Ancient Babylon: In Babylon, which is today's Iraq, sports like chariot racing and wrestling were entertainment spectacles reflecting power and prestige. Rulers and nobles often participated to demonstrate their prowess and leadership.

¹⁴ Ahmed Ebied Ali Hamed, 'SPORT, LEISURE: ARTISTIC PERSPECTIVES IN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN TEMPLES (Part II). / Esporte, Lazer: Perspectivas Artísticas Nos Antigos Templos Egípcios (Parte II).', *Record: Revista de História Do Esporte* 8, no. 1 (2015): 1-28, <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.library.ucc.ie/login.aspx?direct=true&db=s3h&AN=103421177&site=ehost-live>.

¹⁵ Doaa El-Shereef, 'Ancient Egyptian Sports and Fundamental Principales of Olympic', in *World History Bulletin Sports in World History*, ed. Yi Guolin H.Micheal Tarver, Nicholas Di Liberto, vol. XXVI (Russellville, 2020).

¹⁶ David J Lunt, 'The Heroic Athlete in Ancient Greece', *Journal of Sport History* 36, no. 3 (2009): 375-92.

¹⁷ Lakhveer Kaur and Rajesh Chander, 'Ancient Indian Sports : A Historical Analysis', *International Journal of Humanities, Arts, Medicine and Sciences (BEST)* 3, no. 11 (2015): 75-78.

¹⁸ Jagdish Parshad, 'Wrestling in Indian Arts', *Academic Discourse: An International Refereed Research Journal*, 2021.

Ancient Chinese: The recreational sports in China exhibit distinct national characteristics. These include traditional folk festivals featuring acrobatics and boat races, as well as daily activities like swinging, and historical sports such as Cuju and sumo, which have military origins. The history of sports in China spans over 10,000 years, dating back to the conclusion of primitive society.¹⁹

Ancient Arabs: Before Islam, Arabs engaged in various sports encompassing practical skills training and social festivities, reflecting nomadic lifestyles and martial traditions. Camel racing and archery fostered camaraderie among tribes and clans.²⁰

Islamic Era: In Islamic history, sports hold significance beyond physical activity, encompassing spiritual and communal dimensions. The religion emphasises preserving physical health, considering the body a trust from Allah.²¹ Prophetic sayings encourage Muslims to engage in physical activity, highlighting its value for overall well-being. Historical accounts show Prophet Muhammad and his companions participating in various sports, reflecting their importance in daily life.²² Islamic leadership, such as Caliph Umar, prioritised sports education, recognising its practical utility.²³

Muslim World: Muslims globally participate in diverse athletic activities, reflecting the enduring relevance of sports in Islam. Initiatives promoting sports for social development underscore their importance in fostering communal cohesion. Overall, sports in Islam embody principles

¹⁹ Jianqiang Guo & Rong Li, 'The Development of Leisure Sports in Ancient China and Its Contemporary Sports Culture Value', *Advances in Physical Education* 07, no. 04 (2017): 377–82, <https://doi.org/10.4236/ape.2017.74031>.

²⁰ Saja Khalid Jasim and Zaeneb Ali Abid Al-ameer Al-musawy, 'Historical Review : Athletics and Heroic Sports Encouraged and Played at Islamic Period and Greek' 12, no. 12 (2021): 4337–42.

²¹ Irshaad Sedick, 'The Strong Believer Bodies, Minds, and Souls', SeekersGuidance The Global Islamic Academy, accessed 31 March 2024, <https://seekersguidance.org/uncategorized/the-strong-believer-article-ten-healthy-bodies-minds-and-souls-your-health-is-an-amana-trust/>.

²² Rameez Ahmad Lone, 'Sports in Islam', *International Journal of Research* 04, no. 14 (2017): 1989–95.

²³ Ahmad bin Husain bin Ali Abubakr Al-Baihaqi, *Al-Jami' Li Shu'ab Al-Imaan* (الجامع لشعب الإيمان) (Maktabatu al-Rushd, 2003).

of balance, moderation, and self-discipline, contributing to physical health and personal development while upholding Islamic values.²⁴

Throughout history, civilizations like Egypt, Rome, Greece, India, China, and Babylon have embraced sports for religious rituals, leisure, military training, education, and economic sustenance. Over time, these activities evolved, reflecting the interplay between cultures, technologies, and societal needs. This trajectory underscores the human inclination towards physical prowess, competition, and communal engagement, shaping the global sporting heritage.

Multifaceted Evolution of Modern Sports

The evolution of modern sports encompasses a dynamic interplay between various disciplines and societal domains, transcending its traditional role as mere entertainment. From philosophical inquiries into the foundations of sports to the emergence of sports ethics as a normative framework promoting fairness and integrity, the multifaceted nature of sports has been deeply explored.²⁵ Sports education has also gained prominence, offering interdisciplinary programs covering physical therapy, biomechanics, and coaching methodologies.²⁶ Additionally, advancements in sports-related research, alongside the economic significance of the sports industry, highlight its far-reaching impact on global economies.²⁷ Moreover, the intertwining of sports with politics and media underscores its role as a platform for diplomatic relations and social discourse.²⁸ As we navigate the complexities of modern sports, interdisciplinary collaboration and ethical

²⁴ Lone, 'Sports in Islam'.

²⁵ Cesar R. Torres, ed., *The Bloomsbury Companion to the Philosophy of Sport* (London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney, 2014), <https://www.ptonline.com/articles/how-to-get-better-mfi-results>.

²⁶ University courses

²⁷ Murat Aygün, Yunus Savaş, and Dilek Alma Savaş, 'The Relation between Football Clubs and Economic Growth: The Case of Developed Countries', *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 10, no. 1 (2023): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02074-2>.

²⁸ Meistra Budiasa, 'Proceedings of the Annual International Conference on Social Science and Humanities (AICOSH 2022)', in *Proceedings of the Annual International Conference on Social Science and Humanities (AICOSH 2022)* (Atlantis Press SARL, 2022), 220–28, <https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-494069-87-9>.

considerations remain crucial for ensuring the continued growth and sustainability of the sports industry.

This section of the article addresses significant norms and issues related to sports, it specifically examines critical aspects concerning athletes, emphasizing the importance of an Islamic ethical framework. By exploring these issues, the discussion aims to highlight how Islamic ethics can provide a comprehensive moral foundation for athletes, ensuring integrity and fairness within sports. This analysis seeks to underscore the relevance and applicability of Islamic ethical principles in addressing contemporary challenges faced by athletes, thereby advocating for their broader adoption in the sporting world.

I- Sports-related Modern Issues and Norms

The nexus between sports and ethics represents a rich terrain of inquiry, drawing attention from modern scholars and philosophers alike.²⁹ While contemporary scholarship extensively explores the multifaceted benefits of engaging in sports, including enhancements in physical health, personality development, fostering positive attitudes, nurturing cooperation, and strengthening social relationships, philosophers have embarked on an ethical exploration of sports, unravelling complex moral quandaries embedded within sporting practices.³⁰

Within philosophical inquiry, individuals steeped in various theoretical frameworks of ethics offer their perspectives on ethical dilemmas manifesting in sports.³¹ These perspectives, rooted in diverse ethical traditions, are the foundation for rigorous debates and analyses. As such, scholars delve into critical topics that encapsulate the moral

²⁹ Mike McNamee, 'Editorial: Sport, Ethics and Philosophy; Context, History, Prospects', *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* 1, no. 1 (2007): 1-6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17511320601173329>.

³⁰ Rochelle M. Eime et al., 'A Systematic Review of the Psychological and Social Benefits of Participation in Sport for Adults: Informing Development of a Conceptual Model of Health through Sport', *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* 10, no. 98 (2013): 1-21, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1479-5868-10-135>.

³¹ Devine, 'Philosophy of Sport'.

dimensions of sports, thereby enriching our understanding and discourse on sports ethics.

Among the salient themes that emerge in discussions on sports ethics, performance-enhancing doping stands out as a pressing concern that challenges the integrity and fairness of sports competitions. Ethical deliberations on doping extend beyond mere regulatory compliance to delve into broader questions concerning the essence of fair play and the moral responsibilities of athletes and governing bodies.³² Similarly, examinations of cheating in sports prompt reflections on the ethical boundaries of competitive conduct and the implications of deceptive practices for the ethos of sportsmanship.³³

Moreover, ethical scrutiny extends to sports characterised by inherent risks of violence and danger, raising questions about the moral implications of perpetuating or condoning activities that endanger participants' well-being. Discussions on gender inequality and race within sports interrogate systemic biases, discrimination, and disparities in opportunities and recognition, advocating for equitable representation and inclusivity within sporting spheres.³⁴

Furthermore, ethical considerations encompass the behaviour of fans, the treatment of individuals with special needs in sports, and the aesthetic dimensions of sporting performances. These inquiries illuminate the ethical complexities inherent in spectatorship, accessibility, and the subjective appreciation of sporting endeavours, fostering a more nuanced understanding of the moral landscape of sports.

II- *Ethical Issues among Muslim Athletes*

In recent times, a significant rise is evident in the participation of Muslim athletes across a wide array of sports genres, ranging from

³² Marie Overbye et al., 'Athletes' Perceptions of Anti-Doping Sanctions: The Ban from Sport versus Social, Financial and Self-Imposed Sanctions', *Sport in Society* 18, no. 3 (2015): 364–84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2014.982539>.

³³ Devine, 'Philosophy of Sport'.

³⁴ Adam Dwight and Kay Biscomb, 'Ten Years of the UK's Equality Standard for Sport', *European Journal for Sport and Society* 15, no. 2 (2018): 171–88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/16138171.2018.1458181>.

popular disciplines like Football, Cricket, and Athletics to various Martial Arts forms including Karate, Boxing, Muay Thai, MMA, and Taekwondo. Noteworthy is the trend observed in Muslim-majority nations, where there is a growing commitment to allocate resources from their budgets towards enhancing sports infrastructure and programs. This evolving landscape reveals distinct profiles of Muslim athletes. The first group encompasses individuals who, unfortunately, resort to unethical behaviours such as engaging in unfair play, match-fixing, bribery, and the illicit use of performance-enhancing drugs.³⁵ Contrasting this, the second category showcases athletes who actively engage in sports while conscientiously adhering to the principles of their faith. For instance, luminaries like Hashim Amla, hailing from South Africa and Moin Ali, representing the England Cricket team, have notably stood firm in their religious convictions, even enduring penalties for their refusal to endorse alcoholic brands through their sportswear.³⁶ Lastly, the third segment comprises athletes who abstain from competitive sports altogether out of reverence for their religious beliefs.³⁷ This diverse spectrum underlines Muslim athletes' varied ethical positions and strategies within the sports domain, reflecting a nuanced interplay between faith, personal principles, and sporting pursuits.

The emergence of Muslim athletes in many sports creates ethical considerations. While some engage in unethical behaviour, such as cheating, others, such as Hashim Amla and Moin Ali, choose religious beliefs over commercial gain. Some Muslim sportsmen abstain from athletics owing to religious views. This heterogeneous terrain emphasises the connection between faith, ethics, and sport. Sports stakeholders should create an environment that promotes athletic

³⁵ Ian Blackshaw, 'Match Fixing in Sport: A Top Priority and Ongoing Challenge for Sports Governing Bodies', *De Jure* 46, no. 4 (2013): 945–56, http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2225-71602013000400007.

³⁶ Aditya Gajanan Kukalyekar, '5 Cricketers Who Refused to Sport Alcohol Logos on Their Jersey', *Cric Tracker*, 2020, <https://www.crictracker.com/5-cricketers-who-refused-to-sport-alcohol-logos-on-their-jersey/>.

³⁷ '18-Year-Old Pakistan Cricketer Ayesha Naseem Announces Retirement to "Live Life According to Islam"', *The Tribune: Voice of People*, 29 April 2024, <https://www.tribuneindia.com/cricket/18-year-old-pakistan-cricketer-ayesha-naseem-announces-retirement-to-live-life-according-to-islam-64b9179113ad3256542f5039>.

excellence while maintaining integrity and honouring other cultural and religious perspectives. Dialogue, education, and ethical guidance can all help to foster inclusivity and moral behaviour among all athletes, regardless of religion.

Involvement of Females in Sports

Academic research written by scholars of various backgrounds, including both Muslims and non-Muslims, thoroughly examines the complex connection between Islam and sports, paying particular attention to the involvement of women. This collection of studies addresses a variety of subjects, showcasing the various aspects of women participating in sports in Islamic settings. Research on the participation of Muslim schoolgirls in sports activities offers essential insights into how young women in Muslim communities begin to get involved in sports.³⁸ Factors that affect girls' interest in sports, such as cultural beliefs, family backing, and availability of sports facilities and opportunities, are highlighted in these studies.

Studying the perceptions and engagement of female college students in sports provides insights into the impact of higher education on women's athletic experiences. Research on how religion influences women's participation in sports also offers valuable perspectives on the theological basis of women's involvement in sports according to Islamic law.

Scholars study religious texts to understand the rules for women in sports. They also explore reasons for Muslim women's low participation, including stereotypes and limited resources. Research suggests ways to improve coaching and facilities to encourage inclusivity in sports for women in Islamic societies. Overall, the study highlights the importance of addressing challenges to promote equality in sports for Muslim women.

³⁸ Symeon Dagkas and Tansin Benn, 'Young Muslim Women's Experiences of Islam and Physical Education in Greece and Britain: A Comparative Study', *Sport, Education and Society* 11, no. 1 (2006): 21–38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573320500255056>.

Harmful Sports

Discussions on the potential adverse effects of contact sports such as MMA, boxing, Muay Thai, rugby, and football have prompted escalating concerns regarding their physical and psychological impact on young participants.³⁹ Despite the burgeoning interest among youth, enticed by the thrill and perceived prestige, these sports present substantial risks. Research indicates elevated occurrences of concussions, enduring cognitive impairment, and chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) among athletes.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the culture of aggression and violence associated with these sports may exert a detrimental influence on behaviour and mental well-being. These findings underscore the need for stringent safety protocols and well-informed decision-making by young athletes and their guardians.

Sport-Activities-Related Fatwas

Sports activities have become widespread today, drawing more people to participate as athletes, organizers, and spectators for recreational and professional reasons. This increase in sports involvement has sparked numerous religious discussions and debates. To tackle these issues, many Islamic scholars have been consulted for fatwas, or religious rulings, especially from 2001 to 2009, highlighting the relationship between sports and Islam. A thorough research project, "Sports and Islam: Social and Intellectual Environment, Involvement and Enjoyment of Sports, Sports and Religious Obligations", investigated various aspects of sports in Islam. This study carefully examined issues like idolatry, gambling, and animal cruelty by analysing one hundred fatwas issued during a specific period. Despite the importance of these studies, more thorough research on various aspects of the contemporary sports industry needs to be conducted. While some areas have been studied, such as the ones mentioned earlier, many other aspects of sports have yet to be extensively explored within Islamic scholarship, including

³⁹ Hokman Wong, 'Brain Injury in Combat Sports', Bolt Burdon Kemp, n.d., <https://www.boltburdonkemp.co.uk/our-insights/posts/brain-injury-in-combat-sports/>.

⁴⁰ Andrew Gardner, Grant L. Iverson, and Paul McCrory, 'Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy in Sport: A Systematic Review', *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 48, no. 2 (2014): 84–90, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2013-092646>.

its economic, cultural, and social factors. There have been attempts to tackle religious issues related to sports, but there needs to be more thorough research that delves into the various aspects of modern sports. With the continuous development of sports and their impact on society, it is crucial to conduct more studies to understand the intricate connections between sports, religion, and societal factors.

Sports and Transgender

The inclusion of transgender individuals in sports has become a matter of great significance within sports governing bodies.⁴¹ There are ongoing debates regarding whether transgender athletes should be allowed to compete in alignment with their affirmed gender. Advocates for inclusion argue that it is a matter of fairness and human rights. At the same time, opponents raise concerns about potential advantages or disadvantages for transgender athletes and the impact on the integrity of sports competitions.⁴² This complex issue has sparked discussions about creating inclusive policies that balance fairness and inclusion.

Conclusion

In contemporary society, the significance of sport extends far beyond its traditional role as a source of entertainment and relaxation. It has become deeply intertwined with various domains such as education, economics, politics, sociology, medicine, and media, reflecting its multifaceted impact on societal dynamics. Moreover, in Western contexts, the sport has transcended its conventional boundaries to attain quasi-religious status, reflecting its profound cultural significance. This evolution highlights the pervasive influence of sport across diverse spheres of human activity and underscores its central role in shaping modern societies. In the context of the contemporary development of sports, many questions and challenges arise daily, implicating players,

⁴¹ Joanna Harper, 'Transgender Athletes and International Sports Policy', *Law and Contemporary Problems* 85, no. 1 (2022): 151–65.

⁴² D. J. Oberlin, 'Sex Differences and Athletic Performance. Where Do Trans Individuals Fit into Sports and Athletics Based on Current Research?', *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living* 5, no. October (2023): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2023.1224476>.

coaches, fans, organisers and broader societal growth. Despite the plethora of studies addressing specific facets of sports, a comprehensive framework developed by Islamic legal scholars or ethics experts to approach and regulate the domain needs to be more conspicuously present. This gap in scholarly discourse leaves various stakeholders associated with sports, including athletes, fans, organisers, and sponsors, grappling with unresolved doubts and ethical dilemmas. This study concludes that addressing this gap necessitates formulating a distinct Islamic ethics and jurisprudence framework tailored to the sports domain. Such a framework would serve as a guiding paradigm, drawing upon Islamic principles and values to navigate the complex ethical terrain inherent in sporting activities. By providing a moral framework for ethical decision-making, this initiative promotes integrity, fairness, and justice within sports, enhancing the overall ethical conduct and governance of sporting events.

Developing an Islamic ethics and jurisprudence framework for sports holds significant implications for fostering inclusivity and diversity within the sporting domain. By recognising and respecting the religious and cultural values of diverse communities, this framework should aim to create a more equitable and inclusive sporting environment reflective of the pluralistic nature of contemporary society. Furthermore, formulating an Islamic ethics and jurisprudence framework for sports addresses broader societal concerns surrounding the ethical conduct of sports-related activities. By providing clear guidelines and standards of behaviour rooted in Islamic teachings, this framework should seek to mitigate ethical ambiguities and moral conflicts, safeguarding the well-being and dignity of individuals and communities involved in sporting events. Finally, the imperative to develop a separate Islamic ethics and jurisprudence framework for sports is underscored by the growing recognition of the need to address the ethical dimensions of sports from an Islamic perspective. By drawing upon the rich ethical tradition of Islam, this initiative should seek to provide moral guidance for navigating the complex moral challenges inherent in modern sports. Moreover, it should promote inclusivity, diversity, and cultural sensitivity within the sporting domain, fostering a more equitable and harmonious sporting environment reflective of Islam's justice, fairness, and integrity values.

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