



Study of obstacles to the practice of female students at the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences at Anbar University in the game of football

Estudio de los obstáculos a la práctica de las estudiantes de la Facultad de Educación Física y Ciencias del Deporte de la Universidad de Anbar en el juego de fútbol

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Abstract

Introduction: Identify the most important problems and difficulties facing university students that prevent them from practicing football. Its importance lies in being a serious scientific attempt that may contribute to finding appropriate solutions to overcome these problems and increase the base of practice.

Objective: This study aims to identify the most important obstacles facing students at the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, Anbar University, when playing football.

Methodology: The descriptive approach was used in the survey method to suit the nature of the study, and the research community consisted of female students of the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, Anbar University, for the academic year (2020/2021), numbering (116) students, using the study tool prepared by Walid Munfar, 2010, which identified obstacles to female students' practice of football in four areas, and the triple response scale (Likert) was adopted, after collecting the data, it was statistically processed using the (SPSS) program. **Results:** After collecting data from the forms distributed to the sample members and analyzing them statistically, it was found that (79.61%) of the study sample members have a real desire to play football as a sports activity.

Conclusions: There is a positive attitude among students at the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences at Anbar University towards playing football. The existence of obstacles that prevent students from playing football is represented in the social and family fields, while the artistic and personal fields do not represent an obstacle for them.

Keywords

Obstacles to playing sports: football, students, physical education, and sports sciences.

Resumen

Introducción: Identificar los problemas y dificultades más importantes a los que se enfrentan los estudiantes universitarios que les impiden practicar fútbol, y su importancia radica en ser un intento científico serio que pueda contribuir a encontrar soluciones adecuadas para superar estos problemas e incrementar la base de práctica.

Objetivo: Este estudio tiene como objetivo identificar los obstáculos más importantes que enfrentan los estudiantes de la Facultad de Educación Física y Ciencias del Deporte de la Universidad de Anbar al jugar al fútbol.

Metodología: Se utilizó el enfoque descriptivo en el método de encuesta para adecuarlo a la naturaleza del estudio, y la comunidad investigadora estuvo constituida por estudiantes mujeres de la Facultad de Educación Física y Ciencias del Deporte de la Universidad de Anbar, para el año académico (2020/2021), numerando (116) estudiantes, utilizando la herramienta de estudio preparada por Walid Munfar, 2010, que identificó obstáculos para la práctica del fútbol por parte de las estudiantes en cuatro áreas, y se adoptó la escala de triple respuesta (Likert), luego de recolectar los datos, se procesaron estadísticamente utilizando el programa (SPSS).

Resultados: Después de recolectar los datos de los formularios distribuidos a los miembros de la muestra y analizarlos estadísticamente, se encontró que (79,61%) de los miembros de la muestra del estudio tienen un deseo real de jugar al fútbol como actividad deportiva.

Conclusiones: Existe una actitud positiva entre los estudiantes de la Facultad de Educación Física y Ciencias del Deporte de la Universidad de Anbar hacia la práctica del fútbol. La existencia de obstáculos que impiden a los alumnos jugar al fútbol se representa en el ámbito social y familiar, mientras que el ámbito artístico y personal no representa un obstáculo para ellos.

Palabras clave

Obstáculos para practicar deportes; fútbol, estudiantes; educación física; ciencias del deporte.

Introduction

International documents, foremost of which is the UNESCO Universal Document, affirm that the effective exercise of human rights depends fundamentally on the availability of the necessary capabilities and the empowerment of individuals to exercise their freedom to develop their physical, mental, moral, and psychological capacities. Accordingly, ensuring the practice of physical education and sport becomes a fundamental right for all segments of society, given its social importance, its human dimensions, and the moral values it entails. These rights are particularly important for women, who have historically suffered marginalization in this area. Sport is an effective tool in boosting self-confidence, providing individuals with the necessary means to improve their quality of life, and broadening their personal horizons to promote integration into the social fabric. It also contributes to alleviating and resisting the pressures of contemporary life.

Recognizing this importance, university institutions have paid increasing attention to sports activities. This is reflected in encouraging and guiding students, in general, and female students, in particular, to invest their free time in actively participating in these activities as a purposeful and constructive activity. Sport is an influential factor in unloading excess energies, self-realization, and gaining high levels of psychological competence, such as self-confidence and emotional balance. In addition, it contributes to the development of social aspects that enhance interaction and adaptation to the requirements of society and acceptance of others of all kinds, as well as improving the level of physical fitness and achieving a slim and harmonious posture, which is a basic requirement for students.

Football is one of the most popular and attractive games, as it is practiced and followed by different age groups because of its aesthetic and excitement, in addition to its role in developing the physical structure of practitioners. The results of several scientific studies, such as (Rabeh et al., 2021), (Khadija et al., 2022), and (Sumaya, 2019) and (Boumaraf, 2014) This indicates that there are positive attitudes among university students in Arab countries towards playing and enjoying this game. These studies have also shown that joining football teams contributes, from the student's point of view, to enhancing their self-confidence and forming strong friendships, which confirms the psychological and social dimensions of this sport. (González Alcántara et al., 2025)

However, playing sports, especially football, is not without challenges and difficulties faced by female students, especially in Eastern societies. The results of several scientific studies have confirmed these obstacles, including those of (Al-Hajjar & bin Saeed, 2002), (Nabil & Khaled, 2012), (Suzanne, 2003), Alexandris & Tsorbatzoudis, 2002), (Yen C & HO, 2012), and (Theyab, 2017). These studies have indicated that the most prominent of these obstacles are the limited sports capabilities and equipment, the lack of specialized training staff in physical education, the conflict of study schedules, and the societal view that football may be considered a male sport.

Against this background, the researchers, through their work and follow-up of the college's activities, noticed an increasing interest by female students of the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences at Anbar University towards playing football and watching its matches, but this interest does not translate into actual practice on a large scale. This prompted researchers to investigate the reasons for not meeting the students' desire to play this game and to identify the obstacles and difficulties that stand in their way.

Admittedly, the first steps towards increasing the number of participants in any sports activity begin with providing optimal conditions and possibilities and identifying problems that prevent the expansion of the base of practice, especially with the desire and motivation of the individuals involved. This is followed by trying to find the best solutions to overcome and remove these obstacles in a way that guarantees the right of everyone to practice.

Hence, the importance of the current study is that it seeks to shed light on the most prominent difficulties and obstacles facing university students and preventing them from playing football, with the aim of overcoming these obstacles and contributing positively to increasing the number of practices.

Objective: This study aims to identify the most important obstacles facing students at the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, Anbar University, when playing football.



The question of the study: What are the most important obstacles facing students at the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, Anbar University, when playing football?

Method

Study Design

The researchers used the descriptive approach (Hammood et al., 2024; Khalaf et al., 2025). This means that the researchers relied on the descriptive approach in their study. A descriptive method is a research technique that aims to describe phenomena or events as they are without interfering with or changing them. (Omar et al., 2025).

Participants

- The study population consisted of female students at the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences at Anbar University, Republic of Iraq, for the academic year (2020/2021).
- The number of community members reached is 116 students.
- All members of the community were selected as a sample for the study, meaning that the sample included 116 students.
- The sample was selected intentionally, which is a method in which the sample is selected based on specific criteria set by the researcher. In this case, the criterion is that the student must be enrolled in the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences at Anbar University during the specified academic year.
- All female students in the college were selected because they possessed the experience and knowledge to answer the study questions, including the obstacles they faced in playing football.
- Due to the small size of the community, all its members were chosen to make the study more accurate and comprehensive.
- This sample was chosen because it is the most suitable to achieve the objectives of the study and because it represents the population that the researcher wishes to study.
- Table 1 shows the details of the research population and its sample.

Table 1. Shows details of the research population and its sample

Stage	Education	Number of female students
First stage	Morning Study	46
	Evening study	33
Second stage	Morning Study	21
	Evening study	16
Total		116

Study Tool

Objective of the tool

The researchers used the questionnaire form as the main tool for the study in order to achieve its objective.

Tool used

The researchers relied on the tool prepared by the researcher (Walid, 2010), Which included four main areas that may limit and directly affect the practice of female students in football:

- Social field: includes obstacles related to social values, customs, and traditions.
- Family field: includes obstacles related to the role of the student's family and encouraging or not encouraging them to play the game.
- Technical field: includes obstacles related to the technical skills and abilities necessary to practice the game, in addition to the availability of coaches and appropriate sports facilities.



- Personal domain: includes obstacles related to the personal characteristics of students, such as self-confidence, motivation, and interest in exercise.

Response Ladder

- The researchers adopted the triple response scale (Likert).
- The response scale consisted of three responses:
- Large degree: It is given 3 degrees and indicates the presence of people with disabilities to a large degree.
- Medium degree: It is given 2 degrees, indicating the presence of people with disabilities with a moderate degree.
- Low score: It is given 1 degree, indicating the presence of people with disabilities to a small degree.

Formulation of the paragraphs of the study tool (questionnaire)

- All paragraphs of the study tool were formulated in negative terms (the paragraphs of the questionnaire are the phrases that express the content that is intended to be harvested, and in order for researchers to obtain the desired results from the questionnaire, the paragraphs must have a unified formula and method in terms of their positive or negative significance), (and the meaning of negative, meaning that the paragraphs are formulated negatively that measure the subject feature in the opposite direction to the direction of the scale, i.e. going against the direction of the dimension to which they belong)
- The reason for this is that the paragraphs express obstacles and difficulties that limit students' practice of football.

Study Procedure

Instrument Arbitration

- The study tool was presented to a group of experts specialised in the field of study.
- The goal is to make sure the tool is true and consistent and to make sure it measures what it is supposed to measure.

Distribution of the study tool (questionnaire form)

- The researchers conducted personal interviews with the targeted students.
- During the interviews, the forms were distributed to the students.
- The content of the form and its objectives are clear and detailed.
- The method of answering the paragraphs of the form was clarified, and illustrative examples were provided if necessary.
- Time has been set aside to answer any queries or questions students may have.
- The researchers hired colleagues to help distribute the forms to speed up the data collection process and ensure the comprehensiveness of the distribution.

Retrieval of forms

- The researchers retrieved the forms distributed to the students after they completed the answers.
- It was ensured that all distributed forms were received and that students who were late in submitting them were followed up with.

Sorting Forms

- The researchers sorted the retrieved forms, excluding invalid forms (such as forms that were incomplete or had unclear answers).

- The accuracy of the entered data was ensured, and the necessary revisions were made to correct any errors.
- Valid forms have been prepared for statistical analysis.

Data analysis

The program used: After collecting the data, it was statistically processed using SPSS.(Ali et al., 2022, 2024; Mohammed Hammood et al., 2025). The following statistical systems were used:

- Computational media.
- Standard deviations.
- Broker.
- Pearson's correlation coefficient.
- Percentage
- Chi-square.
- Standard error.

Results

After collecting the forms from the sample members, the researchers checked the answers in the filled forms in order to sort them to exclude the forms that did not meet the conditions, where (113) forms were distributed that were not fully retrieved and Table (2) shows the number of distributed forms and excluded, non-retrieved and statistically analysed forms.

Table 2. Shows distributed forms and excluded, non-retrieved, and statistically analysed forms.

Stage	Education	Number of female students	Distributed Forms	Excluded forms	Statistically Analyzed Forms
First stage	Morning Study	46	44	4	40
	Evening study	33	33	3	30
Second stage	Morning Study	21	20	2	18
	Evening study	16	16	1	15
Total		116	113	10	103

After collecting the data from the forms distributed to the sample members and analysing them statistically, it was found that the majority of the samples studied had the desire to play football, and Table (3) shows that.

Table 3. Shows the students' desire to play football or not.

Stage	Total, Number	I have a desire to play football		I have no desire to play football.	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Phase I - Morning Study	40	31	30.09%	9	8.73%
Phase I - Evening Study	30	23	22.33%	7	6.79%
Phase II - Morning Study	18	16	15.53%	2	1.94%
Second Stage - Evening	15	12	11.65%	3	2.91%
Total	103	82	79.61%	21	20.38%

Table 4. Shows the frequencies, percentage, and chi-square of the phrases of the first field among students of the Faculty of Physical Education in the social field, n = 103

M	Phrases	I agree with a degree. Large		Moderate Agree		Slightly Agree		Arithmetic mean	Broker	Chi-square	Approval Percentage	Relative weight	Sample direction
		number	Percentage	number	Percentage	number	Percentage						
1	Discouragement of faculty at the university	5	4.85%	22	21.36%	76	73.79%	1.31	22.00	80.58*	4.85%	135	Unhindered
2	Discouragement of male and female colleagues at the university	7	6.80%	31	30.10%	65	63.11%	1.44	31.00	49.48*	6.80%	148	Unhindered
3	Misconception by society towards practising this type of sport	65	63.11%	19	18.45%	19	18.45%	2.45	19.00	41.09*	63.11%	252	Obstructive
4	Abuse of fans and audiences	37	35.92%	38	36.89%	28	27.18%	2.09	37.00	1.77	35.92%	215	neutral
5	The surrounding community does not accept the importance of the game of football for the opposite sex	68	66.02%	19	18.45%	16	15.53%	2.50	19.00	49.65*	66.02%	258	Obstructive

* Chi-square value is significant at 0.05 = 5.99



It is clear from Table (4) on the statistical significance of frequency, percentage, and chi-square for the social domain statements of the sample under research that there are statistically significant differences in most of the field statements, where the calculated chi-square value was greater than the chi-tabular values at the level of 0.05 = (5.99), and the percentage of approval for all statements ranged between (4.85%: 66.02%).

Table 5. Shows the frequencies, percentage, and chi-square of the phrases of the second field among students of the Faculty of Physical Education in the family field, n = 103

M	Phrases	I agree with a degree. Large		Moderate Agree		Slightly Agree		Arithmetic mean	Broker	Chi-square	Approval Percentage	Relative weight	Sample direction
		number	Percentage	number	Percentage	number	Percentage						
1	Parents do not allow practising this type of sport	21	20.39%	38	36.89%	44	42.72%	1.78	38.00	8,29*	20.39%	183	neutral
2	The negative attitude of siblings	27	26.21%	37	35.92%	39	37.86%	1.88	37.00	2,40	26.21%	194	neutral
3	The family's fear of being injured due to the roughness of the game	61	59.22%	24	23.30%	18	17.48%	2.42	24.00	31,59*	59.22%	249	Obstructive
4	Exposure of the family to negative perceptions from the surrounding community	43	41.75%	28	27.18%	32	31.07%	2.11	32.00	3,51	41.75%	217	neutral
5	The family belief that this type of sport is incompatible with religious beliefs	35	33.98%	34	33.01%	34	33.01%	2.01	34.00	0,019	33.98%	207	neutral

* Chi-square value is significant at 0.05 = 5.99

It is clear from Table (5) on the statistical significance of frequency, percentage, and chi-square for the family domain statements of the sample under research that there are statistically significant differences in most of the field statements, where the calculated chi-square value was greater than the chi-tabular values at the level of 0.05 = (5.99), and the percentage of approval for all statements ranged between (20.39%: 59.22%)

Table 6. Shows the frequencies, percentage, and chi-square of the third field statements among female students of the Faculty of Physical Education in (technical field), n = 103

M	Phrases	I agree with a degree. Large		Moderate Agree		Slightly Agree		Arithmetic mean	Broker	Chi-square	Approval Percentage	Relative weight	Sample direction
		number	Percentage	number	Percentage	number	Percentage						
1	Lack of qualified specialists in this field	16	15.53%	27	26.21%	60	58.25%	1.57	27.00	30,54*	15.53%	162	Unhindered
2	Lack of private playgrounds in my college	39	37.86%	29	28.16%	35	33.98%	2.04	35.00	1,47	37.86%	210	neutral
3	Lack of suitable time to practice this sport	31	30.10%	29	28.16%	43	41.75%	1.88	31.00	3,34	30.10%	194	neutral
4	Lack of necessary capabilities, tools, and devices	47	45.63%	31	30.10%	25	24.27%	2.21	31.00	7,53*	45.63%	228	neutral
5	conflict Synonyms Translate Training days with a number of registered hours	27	26.21%	41	39.81%	35	33.98%	1.92	35.00	2,87	26.21%	198	neutral

* Chi-square value is significant at 0.05 = 5.99

It is clear from Table (6) on the statistical significance of frequency, percentage, and chi-square for the technical field statements of the sample under research that there are statistically significant differences in most of the field phrases, where the calculated chi-square value was greater than the chi-tabular values at the level of 0.05 = (5.99), and the approval rate for all statements ranged between (15.53%: 45.63%).

Table 7. Shows the frequencies, percentage, and chi-square of the fourth field statements among students of the Faculty of Physical Education in (personal domain), n = 103

M	Phrases	I agree with a degree. Large		Moderate Agree		Slightly Agree		Arithmetic mean	Broker	Chi-square	Approval Percentage	Relative weight	Sample direction
		number	Percentage	number	Percentage	number	Percentage						
1	I am ashamed to practice this sport	13	12.62%	16	15.53%	74	71.84%	1.41	16.00	68,87*	12.62%	145	Unhindered
2	I feel like it belongs to men.	13	12.62%	25	24.27%	65	63.11%	1.50	25.00	43,18*	12.62%	154	Unhindered
3	Make me lose my femininity	7	6.80%	21	20.39%	75	72.82%	1.34	21.00	75,10*	6.80%	138	Unhindered
4	It affects the size of the muscles, which affects my figure as a girl	11	10.68%	36	34.95%	56	54.37%	1.56	36.00	29,61*	10.68%	161	Unhindered
5	The clothes for this game contradict my religious beliefs	36	34.95%	33	32.04%	34	33.01%	2.02	34.00	0,13	34.95%	208	neutral
6	Lack of desire to practice this type of sport	11	10.68%	16	15.53%	76	73.79%	1.37	16.00	76,21*	10.68%	141	Unhindered

* Chi-square value is significant at 0.05 = 5.99



It is clear from Table (7) on the statistical significance of frequency, percentage, and chi-square for the family domain statements of the sample under research that there are statistically significant differences in most of the field statements, where the calculated chi-square value was greater than the chi-tabular values at the level of $0.05 = (5.99)$, and the percentage of approval for all statements ranged between (6.80%: 34.95%).

Discussion

The aim of this study is to identify the most important obstacles facing students of the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, University of Anbar, when practicing football, and it is clear from Table (3) that (79.61%) of female students have a real desire to practice football as a sports activity, and researchers attribute this to the increasing awareness and spread of the faith in the benefits and values of the game of football and the conviction of students of the new curve of playing the game and its status as an educational means characterized by educational, health, social and psychological outputs that seek to improve and prepare the girl in preparation Inclusive as a good citizen for herself and her society and their awareness of their role in the requirements of comprehensive development, as well as the significant change in the perception of society and parents of physical education in general and the practice of sports by students in particular. He stressed (Al-Khouli, 1996) that university sports and their values constitute good citizenship through the development of the university student's personality through the values of struggle, seriousness, regularity and achievement, and (Samira et al., 2021) indicate that the activity of female students in universities is one of the pillars of the educational and educational mission that universities aspire to, and is one of the most important means to achieve the goals of education, as it contributes to building the integrated personality of the student, providing him with various knowledge, and developing his skills.

Through Table (4), which shows the degree of obstacles to the practice of football among students of the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences at the University of Anbar for the paragraphs on the social field, it is clear that the lack of acceptance of the surrounding society for the importance of the game for the opposite sex and the wrong view by society towards practicing this type of sport is one of the most important obstacles to female students practicing football, as despite the spread of this game for girls in various parts of the world, but the practice of this type of activities in our Arab societies does not. Many studies and scientific research conducted in various Arab countries have proven that one of the most prominent reasons or obstacles that stand in the way of students practicing sports activities are social and family reasons (social norms and traditions), which was confirmed by the results of the current study, which indicated that the social aspect and society's view towards the practice of sports activities by girls still negatively affect the demand of students to practice various sports in general and football in particular.

Through Table (5), which shows the degree of obstacles to the practice of football among students of the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences at the University of Anbar for the paragraphs on the family field, it is clear that the family's fear of injury due to the roughness of the game is the most prominent obstacles, and researchers attribute this to the fact that the game of football, despite being the first and most popular game in the world, but it is considered one of the games that are characterized by roughness, violence and friction between players. (Clifford & Elizabeth, 2010) Emphasizes that football is a high-intensity physical activity, which includes physical contact between players, continuous running, falling to the ground, and other movements that require a high physical level (Aref et al., 201).

The idea of football is a game by nature that relies heavily on physical contact between players in attempts to control and possess the ball from the opposing player, and this leads to the exposure of players to many injuries of varying severity (Thomas & Mark, 2003). This generated a bad impression among the students' families about football, which prompted them to make sure that their daughters do not play this game for fear of being injured, which may harm their future. And thus, this has become a prominent obstacle for students.

Tables (6) and (7), which show the degree of obstacles to the practice of football among students of the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences at the University of Anbar for the paragraphs on the technical field and the personal field, became clear that both do not represent any obstacle to the participation of students in playing the game, and this is confirmed by the results of Table (3), which showed



a great desire among most students to play the game with personal motivation and believe that it is a fun sports activity full of joy and their lovers.

This is in line with scientific studies such as those. (Bahgat & Bassam, 2010), where their results with regard to the field of beauty and expression confirmed that the attitudes of students towards playing football came first and that this is due to the pleasure when performing their movements and skills such as control, dialogue, passing, shooting, accuracy... etc., and this is what makes it a game that works to satisfy the artistic taste of students.

Therefore, it can be said that this study and similar studies contribute significantly to providing a deep understanding of the importance of integrating efforts between various parties, such as families, educational institutions, youth centers and universities, to encourage students to practice in general and football in particular and overcome the imposed obstacles that stand in front of that practice, and the promotion of policies that support the desire of students contributes to the formation of a more inclusive environment that encourages them to play football safely and effectively, which is reflected in the development of a positive sports culture for generations. Next. (Sáenz Olmedo et al., 2022)

Conclusions

In light of the results of the study and their discussion, the researchers conclude that:

1. The existence of positive attitudes among students at the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences at Anbar University towards playing football
2. The existence of obstacles that prevent students from practising football, represented in the social field and the family field, while the artistic and personal fields do not represent an obstacle for them.
3. The lack of acceptance by the surrounding society of the importance of the game of football for the opposite sex and the misconception by society towards the practice of this type of sport are the most prominent obstacles in the social field.
4. The family's fear that their daughters will be injured due to the roughness of the game is the most prominent obstacle in the family field.

Recommendations

1. Spreading community sports awareness with the aim of supporting the concept of girls playing football by activating the role of the media.
2. Promoting and investing in students' attitudes towards playing football in motivating them to develop their performance through positive support represented in providing capabilities, meeting needs, and satisfying the tendencies and desires of students at the university.
3. There is a need to pay attention to competitions in the game of football and the formation of sports teams so that students can participate periodically.
4. The importance of women's practice of various sports activities in accordance with the cultural and social framework of society and in line with religious principles.
5. The need for the availability of material resources and sports facilities within universities, schools, and clubs to create an appropriate atmosphere for the practice of sports activities in general and football in particular.
6. Conducting similar studies to find out the attitudes of female students in universities towards other sports.

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