The Factors Affecting the Gender Equality in Iraqi Football Setting

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to study the factors affecting gender equality in Iraqi football setting. The current research is based on a quantitative approach. The research population consisted of the employees of the football federation, players, and football coaches in Iraq. Based on Morgan's table, 384 people completed a researcher-developed questionnaire through random sampling. The content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by eight professors of sports management. Convergent and divergent validity and composite reliability were checked and confirmed by the PLS software. Findings showed patriarchal culture, gender stereotypes, the variable of gender inequality in broadcasts, the biased performance of social media in gender equality, gender inequality in budgeting and financial support, the variable of public support for men's football, and inequality in accessing to sports facilities and equipment have significant effects on gender equality in Iraqi football setting. However, the findings reveal that family restrictions do not have significant effect on gender equality in Iraqi football setting.

Introduction

Sports in the contemporary era have a special place to the extent that it is mentioned in the dictionary of sociology as the most apparent manifestation of social life. It is considered effective in rationalizing social life and the development of modern societies (Coalter, 2007). Some social scientists have also considered people's type of sport as a determinant of their lifestyle and an expression of their social class and have considered it a social phenomenon that does not urgently need interpretation and is the reflection of nations themselves (Weiss & Norden, 2021). The analysis of sports spaces has shown how restrictive gender norms penetrate sports and affect people (Norozi, Maleki, Parsamehr, & Ghasemi, 2018). The norms and traditions of sports continue to reinforce and perpetuate the concepts

of masculinity's dominance and control over sports. The fact that sports are a gendered institution and sports institutions have institutionalized masculinity as the principle of action in sports, which essentially reinforces the masculine image of sports and reinforces masculine behavior as acceptable characteristics required in sports (Burton, 2015). Women in sports are affected by the same masculine effects attributed to the sports norm. One of the main factors in feminizing women in sports and strengthening the domination and control of masculinity is the portrayal of female athletes by the media. A common issue women face in the media is gender labelling that portrays men's sports as the norm and women's sports as the "other." Another issue is that in the media, the representation of successful female athletes is often based on beauty, body shape, hair, and other personal characteristics.

Furthermore, socializing women into gender norms at an early age teaches them that they are soft and passive, as well as inferior in sports (Schaillée et al., 2021). Despite such conditions, today, women play sports more than ever and have access to it, but this participation does not always mean removing gender barriers and improving the status of female athletes. Greater and more active participation in sports traditionally defined as masculine, if it does not lead to changing gender definitions or transform the gender constructions of sport, is more likely to reproduce or another form of genderization of sport than to be liberating. It seems that women still face issues of gender equality in sports governance, sports media representation, and perception of sports. Therefore, while the opportunity to participate in sports is always open to women (Zia & Rouhollahi, 2020), there is a socially conditioned notion that women should not participate in masculine sports because it does not conform to traditional standards of femininity (Trolan, 2013). However, female athletes perceived as beautiful and graceful can get media coverage, not because of their actual athletic abilities but just their appearance. Research shows that sport is still heavily male-dominated and strongly favors men as the primary controllers of sport (Khan, 2021).

Poorgachi, Heidarinejad, Shetab Booshehri, and Khatibi (2017) acknowledged that barriers such as gender inequality, perception of gender, gender and culture, society's attitude, and managerial and technical factors are effective in not promoting women's sports. Gholi poor and Keshkar (2021) claimed that developing a model and training programs in sports to achieve gender equality and prevent violence against women and using the model in the training of coaches and athletes will increase gender equality and reduce violence against women in society. Afrozeh, Shafiei, and Rahmati (2021) concluded that despite extensive efforts in the development of gender justice, sports is still an utterly gendered institution and women are on the sidelines in sports fields and leadership and decision-making positions. Jeanes et al. (2021) showed that although more women and girls participate in sports, this alone does not significantly change gender relations. Baker, Seymour, and Zimbalist (2019) stated that female athletes are paid less than men, have far fewer opportunities to compete professionally, and must contend with more significant uncertainty about their immediate future as professional athletes. Lim and Dixon (2017) concluded that exercise does not always lead to strength, security, or self-confidence. Sports experiences can reinforce traditional gender roles and expectations and make women feel disempowered. In some contexts, especially in cases where no empowerment practices and training take place, female participants who are made aware of gender roles and expectations quit sports or come to terms with traditional femininity instead of resisting it and trying to change others' perceptions or encouraging them not to behave stereotypically towards women, conforming themselves to societal expectations.

Undoubtedly, football is the world's most popular, most watched, and exciting sport (Javani & Karimivand, 2022). Investigating the position of women in football has become one of the important research in various fields of social sciences. Although women's ability in football was not well known in different eras, today, the presence of women in football attracts everyone. So over many years, the speed of progress and improvement of the level of activity and performance of women's football has been very impressive (Taree, Charen, Huang, Poeran, & Colvin, 2022). Women's sports in Iraq still suffer from an apparent deterioration, evident in the widening gap between it and its counterpart in Arab countries. Soccer, the most popular in Iraq, is a significant unifying factor after years of war and turmoil. The Iraqi Football Association is the governing body of football in Iraq and is also the governing body of the Iraqi national football team and the Iraqi Premier League. The association was founded in 1948 and became a member of FIFA in 1950 and AFC in 1971. Iraqi men's football

athletes have always enjoyed material and spiritual support since the establishment of the Iraqi Football Federation until this year. Both from the people and the Iraqi authorities, and the best proof of that is the Asian Football League Confederation Cup, which started on July 7. The cup was held until July 29, 2007 AD, and Iraq lifted the cup after defeating the Saudi team.

After every success, the Iraqi men's football team was honored with vast sums of money by the Iraqi government. Dispite, women's football success in the Asian Championship in 2019 was neither supported by the Iraqi society nor even by the government. Even in the media, this news did not resonate, and they passed it by. Nevertheless, Iraqi women want to break the restrictions and participate in sports.

It seems that Iraqi female athletes have encountered to lack of opportunities to compete due to political and social issues which has resulted in a lack of female professional athletes. Therefore, in recent years, the presence of women in football has decreased significantly due to the many problems they face (Culvin, 2021). Nevertheless, after improving the peace and steadtibilties in Iraq and the conceptualization of the importance of sports for women, women's football attracted many women. Moreover, many female athletes pioneers of the sports movement who possessed high rank of professional status have started to set off women's sports teams and clubs.

Despite historical and ongoing gender discrimination, FIFA has improved its support for women's football. However, it is unclear to what extent this development is due to respect for women's sports or a desire to invest in an untapped market (Desjardins, 2021). However, FIFA's decision and its emphasis on gender equality in football made us choose football as an academic sport. Gender equality in football and society, providing grounds for female participation in an exciting team sport that brings many sociological functions, can lead to many attitudes and cultural changes. Undoubtedly, the support and promotion of women's football at the level of national and local communities provide an opportunity to develop and promote female athletes. Whereby, Women's football presents an interesting research context to consider how attitudes towards gender equity can be influenced to help increase the likelihood that women will play and involve. Therefore, the current research was conducted to study gender equality in Iraqi football.

Methodology

The current research was done according to a quantitative approach. Data collection was done using a researcher-developed questionnaire, and data analysis, model fitting, and relationship testing between research variables were done using structural equation modelling with software (PLS software 2.0). One of the primary and essential path modelling software using the partial least squares method is (PLS) software. In order to determine the validity and convergence, and divergence of the structure, confirmatory factor analysis has been used. The statistical population consists of the employees of the football federation, players, and football coaches in Iraq, and due to the unknown size of the population, according to Morgan's table, the sample size was determined as 384 people. The demographic characteristics of participants have been given in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants

	Variables	**N**
Sex	Female	156
	Male	194
Age	30<	83
	30-40	200
	40>	67
	Diploma	76
Education	Bachelor	103
	Master	141
	Ph.D	31
	Employee	34
	Male football coach	61

Profession	Female football coach	56
	Male football Player	109
	Female football Player	90

In order to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was used. In this section, the questionnaire has sufficient reliability since the value of Cronbach's alpha for all variables is higher than 0.7.

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha coefficients

Variables	Questions	Cronbach's alpha coefficients
Social challenges	15	0.73
Media challenges	8	0.89
Challenges of unequal opportunities and support	6	0.86
Gender equality in Iraqi football	3	0.84
Total questionnaire	32	0.83

In the following, in order to analyze the data, descriptive statistical methods (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Smirnov's Kolmograph test, structural equation test, and Smartpls software at a significance level of 0.05) were used.

Results

Descriptive indicators based on the data collected from the research questionnaire, including the mean, standard deviation, the minimum and maximum value of the data for the research variables, are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive indicators

Variables	Dimensions	Man	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Social challenges	Patriarchal culture	3.05	0.81	1	5
	Public support for men's football	3.07	0.85	1	5
	Gender stereotypes	3.00	0.87	1	5
	Family restrictions	3.00	0.80	1	5
Media challenges	Gender inequality in broadcasts	3.09	0.83	1	5
	Social Media dysfunction in gender equality	4.03	1.11	1	5
Challenges of unequal opportunities and support	Gender inequality in budgeting and financial support	3.00	1.03	1	5
	Gender inequality in sports facilities and equipment	3.01	0.91	1	5
Gender equality in Iraqi football	Gender equality in football	3.00	0.81	1	5
	Gender inequality in football	3.08	0.86	1	5

Exploring the normality of data variables

The assumption of the normality of the distribution of the investigated variables is one of the main assumptions required for using parametric tests. Therefore, before performing the desired tests and examining the research variables, the normality of the distribution of the variables should be tested. If the research variables do not follow the normal distribution, it is necessary to use non-parametric tests to check the research variables. In this research, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check the normality of the variables. The test results are reported in the table with four significant percentages. As all the research variables are at the below 5% error level, and in other words, none

of the research variables follow a normal distribution. Therefore, to measure the model and test the research variables due to the non-normality distribution of all variables, the partial least squares method was used with the help of Smart PLS 2.0 software.

Checking the normality of data variables
The assumption of the normality of the distribution of the investigated variables is one of the main assumptions required for parametric tests. Therefore, before conducting the desired tests and examining the research variables, the normality of the distribution of the variables should be tested. If the research variables do not follow the normal distribution, it is necessary to use non-parametric tests to check the research variables. In this research, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check the normality of the variables. The test results are reported in the table with a significant percentage of 4. So all the research variables are at the error level below 5%; in other words, none follow the normal distribution. Therefore, the partial least squares method was used with the help of Smart PLS 2.0 software to measure the model and test the research variables due to the non-normality distribution of all variables. Several reasons were mentioned for using the PLS method. The most important reason is the superiority of this method for small samples and abnormal research data (Wong, 2013).

Table 4. The results of the normality test of research variables

Variables	Statistic	Significant level
Social challenges	0.062	0.001
Media challenges	0.066	0.001
Challenges of unequal opportunities and support	0.068	0.001
Gender equality in Iraqi football	0.102	0.001

The results of the data analysis showed in Figures 1 and 2. For measuring the significance of the causal relationships between the variables, the partial index of the t value has been used.
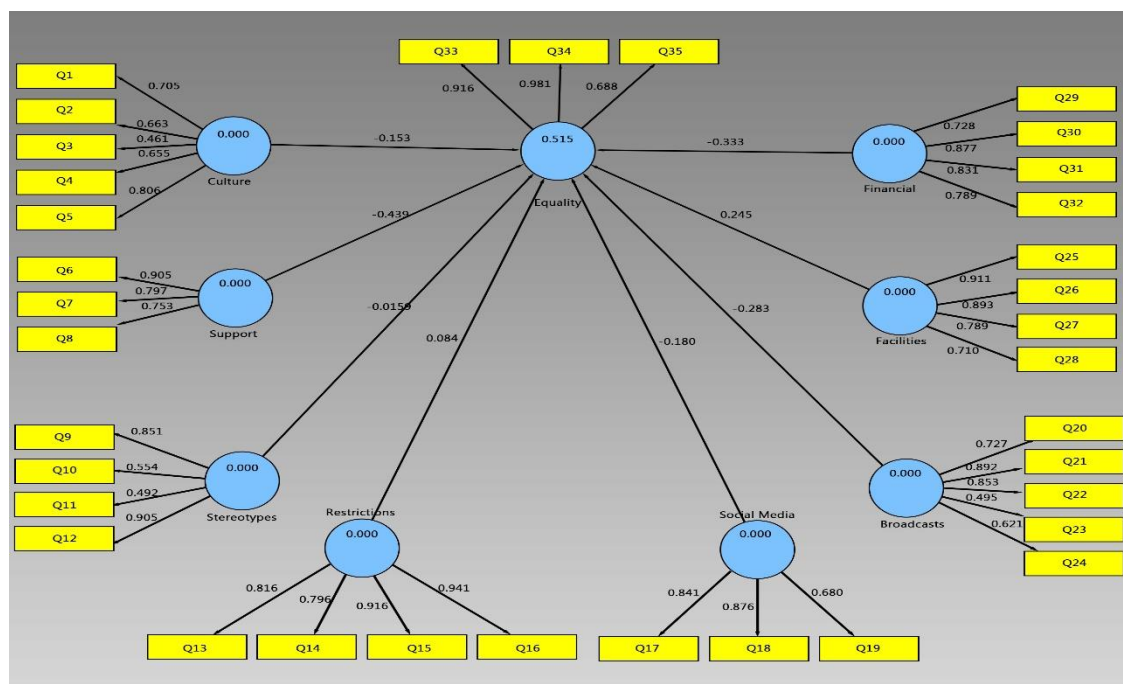

Figure 1. Path coefficient and factor loading of variables

In PLS software, the t value shows the significance of the effect of the variables on each other. If the value of T is higher than 1.96, the effect is positive and significant. If it is between +1.96 and -1.96, there is no significant effect, and if it is smaller than -1.96, it means an adverse effect, but it is significant. The value of the t statistic is the main criterion for confirming or rejecting the hypotheses. If this value is higher than 1.64, 1.96, and 2.58, the result shows that the research hypotheses are

confirmed at the significance levels of 90, 95, and 99 percent, respectively. Numbers higher than 1.96 at the 0.05 level and higher than 2.58 at the 0.01 level are significant.
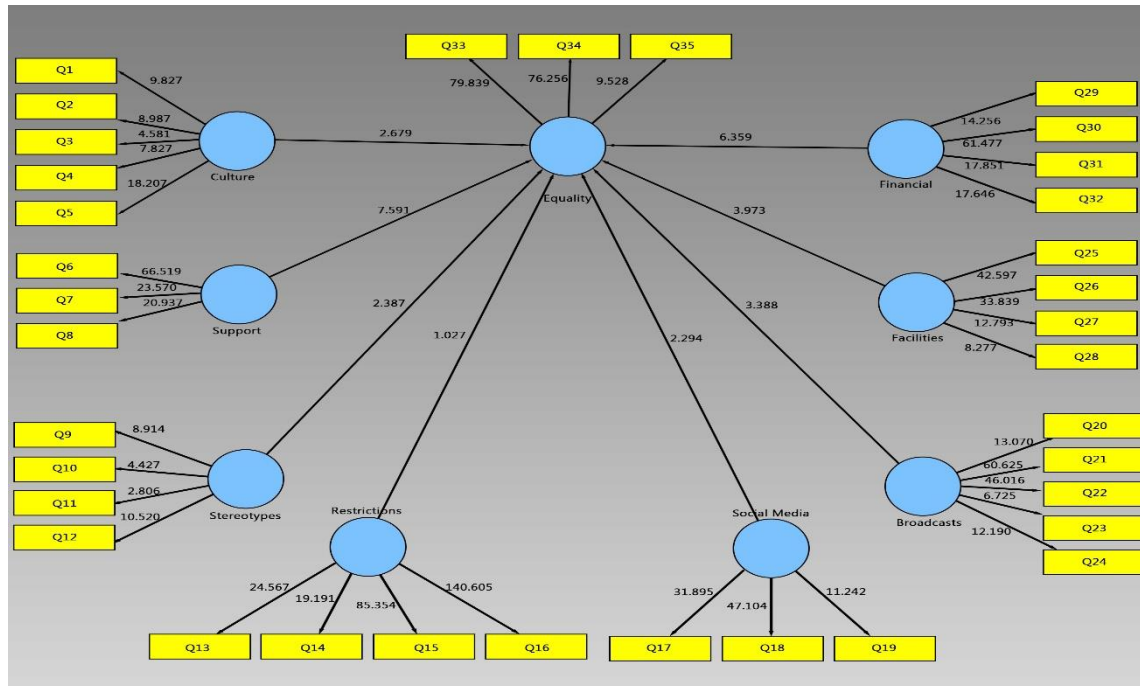

Figure 2. The value of the t statistic to check the significance of path coefficients and factor loadings

Reliability and extracted variance
The results of the combined reliability of each structure are reported in Table 5. Values higher than 0.7 are acceptable for composite reliability. As can be seen, all values are more than 0.7, so despite this combined reliability, the structures are acceptable. The values related to the extracted variance of the structures are also reported in Table 5. This index was proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The acceptable value for the criterion, which expresses the appropriate validity of the measurement tools, is 0.5. It means that the desired hidden variable explains at least 50% of the observed variance. As can be seen, the extracted variance values for all research variables are higher than 0.5, and the validity of the measurement tools is confirmed.

Table 5. Composite reliability and extracted variance of research variables

Variables	Composite reliability	Extracted variance
Patriarchal culture	0.796	0.505
Public support for men's football	0.860	0.674
Gender stereotypes	0.804	0.523
Family restrictions	0.925	0.756
Gender inequality in broadcasts	0.843	0.645
Social Media dysfunction in gender equality	0.847	0.536
Gender inequality in budgeting and financial support	0.882	0.625
Gender inequality in sports facilities and equipment	0.897	0.688
Gender equality in football	0.887	0.726

In Table 6, the path coefficient, standard deviation, statistic value (t), and significance level related to each path are written on the model of gender equality in Iraqi football.

Table 6. Value of path coefficient and t-statistic

Variables	Path coefficient	S.D	t	Significant level
Patriarchal culture → Gender equality	0.153-	0.057	2.67	0.001
Public support → Gender equality	0.440-	0.055	7.59	0.001
Gender stereotypes → Gender equality	0.160-	0.069	2.38	0.031
Family restrictions → Gender equality	0.083	0.071	1.02	0.512
Broadcasts → Gender equality	0.180-	0.075	2.29	0.015
Social Media → Gender equality	0.283-	0.083	3.38	0.001
Budgeting and financial → Gender equality	0.333-	0.051	6.35	0.001
facilities and equipment → Gender equality	0.245	0.064	3.97	0.001

Based on the results of the table, the path coefficients of public culture, public support for men's football, gender stereotypes, media bias in gender equality, gender inequality in virtual space, gender inequality in financial opportunities, and gender inequality in sports facilities are entirely at the error level of 0.05 are significant. However, the family restrictions variable is not significant at the error level of 0.05.

Refinement of structural model fit
Based on the results in Figure 2, the value of the multiple determination coefficient for the present study is 0.51, which according to the determined values, are 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67, respectively, as weak, medium, and strong values. Considering the index, the value of this coefficient is acceptable for the designed model. It means that the independent variables can explain 0.51% of the changes in the dependent variable. For checking the overall fit of the model, the goodness of fit index (GOF) was used, which is as follows:

$$GOF = \sqrt{\text{average (Commonality)} \times \text{average (R2)}}$$

Whose formula equals the square of the product of the two average values of common values and the average of determination coefficients. Three values of 0.01, 0.25, and 0.36 are considered weak, medium, and strong for this index, respectively. For the current research model, the value of this index is equal to the following:

$$\sqrt{0.640 \times 0.515} = 00.33$$

As a result, according to the results of combined reliability, extracted variance, coefficient of determination of the model, and goodness of fit index, it can be concluded that the drawn model in the field of path analysis has appropriate empirical-theoretical assumptions and has a perfect fit.

Variables Test
According to the data analysis algorithm, after checking the fit of the measurement models, according to the path coefficient and statistic (t) as well as Figures 1 and 2 (variable coefficients and factor loadings, significance of path coefficients and factor loadings), research variables are tested. Path coefficient shows the effect of one structure on another structure. Positive path coefficients indicate a direct relationship between variables, and negative path coefficients indicate an inverse relationship between variables. However, if the value of the significance coefficient of each path is more than 1.96, the corresponding path is significant at the 95% confidence level, and the variable is confirmed with it.
According to the findings of the research, based on the significance coefficient of the paths, the variable of public culture with a path coefficient of -0.153, the variable of media bias in gender equality with a path coefficient of -0.283, the variable of public support for men's football with a path coefficient of -0.440, the variable of inequality Gender in cyberspace with a path coefficient of -0.180, gender stereotypes with a path coefficient of -0.160, gender inequality in financial opportunities with a path coefficient of -0.333 has a significant impact on the gender equality of Iraqi

football. All these paths are significant at the 0.05 level, and the path coefficients are in appropriate conditions, confirming the designed conceptual model.

It can be said that it is essential to pay attention to these indicators to implement the gender equality model in Iraqi football. Accordingly, according to the research findings based on the quantitative results, the model of gender equality in Iraqi football is confirmed. Based on the results obtained from composite reliability, the extracted variance, coefficient of determination of the model, and goodness index of the drawn model in the field of path analysis have appropriate experimental-theoretical assumptions and have a suitable fit. Therefore, the model of gender equality in Iraqi football is confirmed.

The results of testing the research hypotheses
According to Table 6, the path coefficient from general culture to gender equality in Iraqi football equals -0.153 and is significant at the P-value of 0.05. Therefore, it is concluded that public culture has a negative and significant effect on gender equality in Iraqi football, and the first hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

Based on Table 6, the path coefficient from public support for men's football to gender equality in Iraqi football is equal to -0.440 and is significant at the P-value of 0.05. Therefore, it is concluded that public support for men's football has a negative and significant effect on gender equality in Iraqi football, and the second hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

According to the results of Table 6, the coefficient of the path from gender stereotypes to gender equality in Iraqi football is equal to -0.160 and is significant at the P-value of 0.05. Therefore, it is concluded that gender stereotypes have a negative and significant impact on gender equality in Iraqi football, and the third hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

According to Table 6, the path coefficient from family restrictions to gender equality in Iraqi football equals 0.083 and is not significant at the P-value of 0.05. Therefore, it is concluded that family restrictions do not significantly affect gender equality in Iraqi football, and the fourth hypothesis of the research is rejected.

Based on Table 6, the path coefficient from gender inequality in cyberspace to gender equality in Iraqi football is equal to -0.180 and is significant at the P-value of 0.05. Therefore, it is concluded that gender inequality in broadcast has a negative and significant impact on gender equality in Iraqi football, and the fifth hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

Based on the results of Table 6, the coefficient of the path from media bias in gender equality to gender equality in Iraqi football is equal to -0.283 and is significant at the P-value of 0.05. Therefore, it is concluded that the biased social media performance in gender equality has a negative and significant effect on gender equality in Iraqi football, and the hypothesis is confirmed.

Based on the results of Table 6, the path coefficient from gender inequality in unequal budgeting and financial support to gender equality in Iraqi football is equal to -0.333 and is significant at the P-value of 0.05. Therefore, it is concluded that gender inequality in unequal budgeting and financial support to gender equality has a negative and significant effect on gender equality in Iraqi football, and the seventh hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

Based on Table 6, the path coefficient from gender inequality in access to sports facilities and equipment to gender equality in Iraqi football is equal to 0.245 and is significant at the P-value of 0.05. As a result, gender inequality in sports facilities has a positive and significant effect on gender equality in Iraqi football, and the eighth hypothesis of the research is rejected.

Based on the combined reliability results, the extracted variance, model determination coefficient, and goodness of fit index of the central hypothesis of the research are confirmed. According to the confirmation of the theoretical model of the research, based on the coefficients of the obtained paths, it can be concluded that the public culture variable has the most and the public support for men's football has the least impact on the pattern of gender equality in Iraqi football.

Discussion and Conclusion

Gender equality has been discussed in society since the beginning. Equality has become controversial in the world of football. Based on the findings, the negative impact of patriarchal culture on gender

equality in Iraqi football was confirmed by findings by Abdullah, Hussin, Saadan, Bokhari, and Abid (2015) research, which stated that unfair beliefs and attitudes are embodied in culture and society, as well as gender perspective. It is an undeniable fact that patriarchal culture still overshadows the lives of many women and girls. The gendered view is that it sees women as mothers and in the family's service, which is an excuse that keeps women away from other social and professional activities such as sports. These traditions, beliefs, attitudes, and cultures govern the personal and social life of Muslim women and affect their self-confidence. Abd Rahim, Diah, Jani, and Ahmad (2019) declared that men have long been taught to play and watch sports, while women are often taught that sports are only for men. According to the findings, cultural beliefs support for men's football has a negative effect on gender equality in Iraqi football, which is consistent with the findings of Pfister (2018), who stated that with few exceptions, women's football teams attract only a small number of spectators. Martínez-Lagunas, Niessen, and Hartmann (2014) state that the popularity of women's soccer is increasing but still significantly different from men's soccer. Pope (2017) stated that many women are ambivalent about watching women's sports and prefer to watch mainstream men's sports. These findings suggest that being a committed female football fan does not automatically translate into a greater interest in following women's football.

Even many women's sports in various age groups directly compare to men's sports teams, concluding that men's soccer must be "better" because men are "stronger." Despite a slight increase in spectators in recent years, the interest in attending women's football matches is generally very low in European countries compared to men's football (Klein, 2018). Despite the increase in the number of girls and women playing football, it seems that this has nothing to do with the interest in watching women's league matches in the stadium. On the contrary, men's football has benefited from this growing interest in football among the female population. The percentage of women's participation in men's games has increased significantly in recent years in many European countries. When these gender norms are violated, labels are usually given, questions are asked (are you sure you are not a boy?), and people are teased with statements such as (girl and playing soccer). Kalkan (2020) discusses gender discourse as a language based on inequality, which carries the view that the patriarchal social structure is an absolute entity. Therefore, in football, it can be seen that patriarchal networks have been created, and the barriers related to gender stereotypes prevent women from participating in football. Aligns with the research findings of Jakubowska and Byczkowska-Owczarek (2018), football or soccer in North America (USA and Canada), as considered a male sport, is also considered a male sport.

The findings confirmed the impact of family restrictions on gender equality in Iraqi football, which to Herzog (2018) findings, parents in many countries may be more inclined to sports activities for their sons than for their daughters. Families have accepted sports as a primary field of activity, and even many families prioritize their sons' sports activities, but it is not so true for their girls (Javani, Aghajani, & Alemi, 2022). It is always scarce for families to watch girls' activities to pay attention to them, and even some families are against watching women's sports based on their religious beliefs. Some parents took active measures to prevent their daughters from participating in sports, even as fans (Pope & Kirk, 2014). Moreover, parents actively tried to steer girls away from playing and watching "male" sports like football.

Based on the findings, the impact of social media on the gender inequality of Iraqi football was confirmed, with the findings of Fink (2015), sports participation among girls and women is currently at its highest level, and these female athletes provide significant sports performance. However, female athletes and women's sports still receive different treatment from social media than male athletes and men's sports. Despite the emergence of social media that has expanded sports coverage, the coverage and representation of female athletes and women's sports have not changed (Creedon, 2014). Aligns that more social media coverage of women's sports and celebrity players may have made the sport more popular and created a balance in women's and men's sports coverage (Pope & Kirk, 2014).

The findings confirmed the impact of broadcast bias on the gender equality of Iraqi football, to Mazur, Organista, and Dziubiński (2018) findings that when most people watch predominantly male sports from childhood, they may get used to male sports. In addition, the lack of coverage of women's football may be one of the main reasons people are not used to it. Women's football has suffered from

a shortage of global broadcast coverage. These results show the low coverage and slow progress given to women over time. Women are discriminated against in sports; Print media and television coverage use language that devalues women's performance (Moawad, 2019).

Furthermore, the image of women in sports in the USA, UK, and Europe is sexualized, and this affects the audience's perception by undermining their performance by focusing on their bodies rather than their skills. The constant neglect of female athletes by the broadcast means they are given less value and importance to women than men. They are also organizations that maintain men's superiority over women (Cooky, 2018).

Based on the findings, the impact of inequality in budgeting and financial support on gender equality in Iraqi football was confirmed. Pfister (2018) showed that women are still the second gender in football; they are discriminated against not only in terms of spectators, public attention, and media coverage but also in terms of sponsors and financial resources. Considering the women's football budgeting, it can be said that the available financial resources for the best European women's football clubs are not comparable to the multi-million euro budgets of European men's clubs (Klein, 2018).

Although progress has been seen in recent decades, women are still discriminated against, undervalued and underpaid in many sports fields (Moawad, 2019). Some Spanish basketball and football players risk being terminated contracts without compensation while pregnant. Many players accept and sign such contracts without reporting this unfair clause or suing for fear of losing their careers. Wigmore (2016) claimed that the highest-paid male football player is paid almost 220 times more than the highest-paid female football player in English football.

The findings stated that the inequality in allocating sports facilities and equipment affects gender inequality in Iraqi football. According to the findings by Afrozeh, Shafiei, and Rahmati (2021), women's opportunities in the field of sports are not comparable to men's. Athletes believe that the government provides more facilities to male athletes. It is observed by comparing the inequalities between women and men in sports activities, the number of competitions, training camps for teams and clubs, the amount of dedicated budget, facilities and pieces of equipment, as well as the presence of women in sports management (Javaheri, Raghfar, & Abazari, 2021). Talebpour, Nazari Azad, and Kashani (2019) claimed various forms of discrimination among men and women's sports, including inequality in accessing sports facilities for developing women's sports.

In general, patriarchal and popular support for men's football has the most significant impact on the pattern of gender equality in Iraqi football. It is suggested that by planning at the macro level and becoming operational, change the cultural beliefs of the society and correct the cultural backwardness in the field of gender equality. Considering the negative impact of the dominant culture of patriarchy and discrimination in supporting women's teams, developing a vital action plan in introducing women's sports, especially women's football, and attracting public support can be influential. Besides, it is necessary to prepare guidelines and pass from the traditional culture and its stereotypes to a new form. It is also suggested to strive for financial support and investment, budgeting and wages as equally as possible.

Acknowledgment

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