

**Θεματική Ενότητα: Κοινωνιολογία του Αθλητισμού
Προφορικές & Αναρτημένες Ανακοινώσεις 17^{ου} Διεθνές
Συνεδρίου Φυσικής Αγωγής & Αθλητισμού**

**Section: Sports Sociology
Oral & Poster Presentations of the 17th International
Congress of Physical Education & Sport**



Αναρτημένες - Poster

4576

IS ISLAMIC BELIEF A BARRIER TO PARTICIPATE IN RECREATIONAL PHYSICAL EXERCISE FOR FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS?

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Muslims believe in Allah, who revealed the holy Quran to Muhammad, the final prophet, approximately 1,400 years ago. The Quran and Hadith (sayings and practices of Muhammad) constitute the primary sources for codified living in Islam (Daiman, 1995). Although Islam was innately concerned with the development and maintenance of spiritual and physical strength, regardless of gender (1), researchers have identified significantly low participation rates of Muslim women in recreational physical exercise (RPE), referring to reasons ranging from alleged discriminatory Islamic doctrine to incompatibility with Islamic beliefs (2). Most of the people (98 %) in Turkiye are muslim. The regime is republic. So the life-styles of Turkish women are not the same as the women who live in the nations which are governed by the the Shari'a (Islamic Rules). There seems the signs of different cultures on life styles. Sfeir (3) postulated that sport opportunity for women in an Islamic country is a function of that country's nationalistic tendencies, socialist ideologies that promote secular egalitarianism, and pro-western bent. This study sought to provide information about the effects of Islamic belief on (RPE) behavior of muslim girls in Turkiye. The subjects were female students (N: 200) from Mugla University, aged between 18-24. The data were gathered during a three month field-study in Mugla. The results showed that all of them can participate in RPE at any time they want. Being a muslim is not a reason not to involve in RPE. Almost half of the students think that For all muslim females in Turkiye, considering the regions, almost half of them thinks that Islam encourages RPE participation for women while the rest accepts it as a barrier. Most of these barriers seem to be products of Muslim society's view of women and their sexuality. The results of this study can not be generalized for all females in Turkiye. Therefore, further researches by different methodologies in large examples were suggested.

Key words: Islam, recreational physical exercise, female university students