

Government Role in Progression of Sports System in Pakistan

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Abstract

Sports progression is critical for the wellbeing and positive outcomes of any society wherein the government role is inexorable. This study was aimed to explore the various government roles and ascertain their impact on the progression of the sports system in Pakistan. Following the sequential exploratory mixed-method design, in-depth interviews based qualitative data was processed through thematic analysis process to develop a conceptual framework then tested through correlation and regression analysis in the subsequent quantitative phase. The resulting positive associations between the selected government's actions and the progression of sports system established that government plays a significant role in the development of sports. However, governance inefficiencies, economic constraints, and political interference and other similar challenges were also identified restraining further progress asserting the need for a well-structured and collaborative government driven mechanism for the sustainable development of sports in Pakistan.

Keywords: sports system, government role, sports policy, infrastructure, talent development, media promotion, Pakistan.

Introduction

The development and evolution of sports systems are crucial indicators of a country's socio-economic progress and cultural priorities. In Pakistan, sports have traditionally been a significant aspect of national identity and communal life. However, the progression of sports system in the country has been marked by both notable advancements and considerable challenges (Javed et al., 2021). Sports progression in Pakistan largely depends on wide ranging government initiatives and support to the Sports bodies and the players. This paper intends to explore the various government roles in shaping the landscape of sports in Pakistan.

Pakistan, as a nation, has a deeply rooted sports culture and has produced numerous world-class athletes. Historically, colonial legacies and post-independence policies shaped Pakistan's sports landscape with a focus on promoting key sports, including cricket, hockey, and athletics establishing the foundational sports institutions (Ali et al., 2023a) like Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) in 1962. Intended to streamline and promote sports development across the nation, the establishment of PSB proved to be a breakthrough imitative instigating significant success in several sports winning gold medal in Rome Olympics (1960) and three consecutive World Cup titles in the 1970s and 1980s (Laar et al., 2021) dominating world competitions in the 1960s to 1980s. overtime, the immense popularity of cricket earned extensive financial and media

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support, resulting in overshadowing other traditional sports wherein Pakistan once excelled. Due to a lack of government inattention and lack of institutional support, both hockey and Squash, witnessed a steep decline in international rankings despite having rich history (Marwat et al., 2020).

The trajectory of sports progression in Pakistan has seen several phases of progress, stagnation, and resurgence, shaped by various factors. Over the years, Pakistan's sports system has observed an intricate interaction between government policies and the development of its sports system. Inconsistent policies, endless political interference, and inadequate support for infrastructure development and players wellbeing remains the critical challenges in sustainable progression of the sports in Pakistan (Khan et al., 2024).

This study was intended to explore the multifaceted roles government have and the initiatives it should take to ascertain sports progression in the country. Furthermore, this research also examined the challenges hindering the government to promote a healthier sports culture in Pakistan recommending the potential strategies for overcoming these obstacles. Ascertaining the diverse roles of Government in progression of sports in Pakistan will help revamp central policy framework for enhanced cohesion, rightly utilize the resources and devise a long term vision ensuring sustainable development and growth of the sports system.

Literature Review

The development of sports in Pakistan has been significantly influenced by government policies and initiatives. This literature review aims to examine the multifaceted role of the government in shaping the landscape of sports in Pakistan. By exploring government initiatives, investments, and policies, this review seeks to understand their impact on various sports disciplines, infrastructure, talent development, and international representation.

Early Success and Dominance:

In the early decades after independence, Pakistan made its mark in field hockey, winning gold in the 1960 Rome Olympics and three consecutive World Cup titles in the 1970s and 1980s (Khan, 1997). Similarly, squash emerged as another sport where Pakistan produced world champions like Jahangir Khan and Jansher Khan, who dominated the international squash scene for over a decade (Iqbal, 2019). Cricket also saw its rise during this period, with Pakistan establishing itself as a force on the global stage, culminating in the 1992 Cricket World Cup victory (Hussain, 2005).

The Rise of Cricket and Neglect of Other Sports:

Over time, cricket became the dominant sport in the country, overshadowing other disciplines. The immense popularity of cricket, coupled with financial and media support, led to a disproportionate focus on the sport, often at the expense of others like hockey and squash (Ali & Khan, 2018). This shift in attention resulted in declining performances in traditional sports where Pakistan once excelled. For instance, the national hockey team struggled to maintain its international stature, and squash, despite its rich history, witnessed a drop in international rankings due to a lack of institutional support (Anwar, 2018).

Government Initiatives and Policies

The Pakistani government has implemented various initiatives and policies to promote sports development. **Hussain (2015)** highlights the importance of government support in creating a conducive environment for sports growth. **Khan (2018)** emphasizes the role of government policies in addressing challenges faced by the sports sector. **Malik (2020)** analyzes the impact of government policies on sports development and identifies areas for improvement.

Infrastructure Development

Government investments in sports infrastructure have been crucial for the development of sports in Pakistan. **Khan (2018)** discusses the significance of modern stadiums and training facilities in attracting international competitions and fostering a sports culture. **Malik (2020)** highlights the challenges faced in infrastructure development, such as limited funding and corruption.

Talent Acquisition / Development

The government has played a vital role in identifying and nurturing young talent through various programs. **Malik (2020)** emphasizes the importance of grassroots development programs in ensuring a steady stream of talented athletes. **Khan (2018)** discusses the challenges faced in talent development, including lack of adequate coaching and facilities.

Government support has been essential for Pakistani athletes to compete at the international level. **Hussain (2015)** highlights the role of government funding in supporting athletes' participation in international competitions. **Khan (2018)** discusses the challenges faced by Pakistani athletes in achieving international success, such as limited exposure and competition.

Challenges and Limitations

The government's efforts to promote sports development in Pakistan have faced several challenges. **Hussain (2015)** identifies limited funding as a major obstacle. **Khan (2018)** discusses corruption and mismanagement as significant issues. **Malik (2020)** highlights the lack of coordination among government agencies involved in sports development.

The literature review highlights the multifaceted role of the government in shaping the landscape of sports in Pakistan. While the government has made significant strides in infrastructure development and talent development, challenges such as limited funding, corruption, and lack of coordination persist. Addressing these challenges is crucial for further enhancing sports progression in Pakistan.

Methodology

To accomplish the multifaceted qualitative and quantitative objectives, this research opted for an exploratory sequential mixed methods research design. The rationale behind choosing this design lies in its very nature of exploring multifaceted roles of government in sustainable progression of sports in Pakistan followed by testing the induced framework for its generalizability to ascertain comprehensive and in-depth understanding (Dawadi et al., 2021). This mixed method research design allows for a more nuanced exploration of the research topic integrating both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Following this sequential design, the study was conducted in two phases i.e. qualitative phase and quantitative phase respectively.

Phase 1: Qualitative Research

The qualitative phase was aimed at exploring into the deep insights of government actions as experienced by the diverse stakeholders of sports development including government officials, sports administrators, athletes, coaches, and sports journalists as study population. Ascertaining the study objectives, the qualitative data were collected from the selected sample of 30 carefully selected participants using self-administered, In-depth, semi-structured interviews to explore deep insights of the participants. The interview schedule included the open ended questions focused on exploring and understanding the government's role in sports promotion, challenges faced, and strategies for improvement. The collected qualitative data was then processed through thematic analysis identifying basic, organizing and global themes inducing taxonomy

of themes proposing a conceptual framework incorporating diverse government roles as independent variables and sustainable progression of sports system as dependent variable (De Paoli, 2024). Through the process, the quality was ensured using member checking and external audit protocols. The induced Government driven Sports Progression model was further tested through quantitative research process to ascertain its strength.

Phase 2: Quantitative Research

The qualitative phase was followed by the development of quantitative survey based on the findings from the qualitative phase. After ensuring validity and reliability of the measures through content validity and inter-item consistency procedures (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020), the survey was then administered to a representative sample of 385 sports stakeholders including government officials, sports administrators, athletes, coaches, and sports journalists. The responses were measured on five point Likert scale. For hypothesis testing, the collected data were analyzed through appropriate statistical analysis like correlation and regression using SPSS software.

Data Integration and Analysis

After thorough analysis of both qualitative and quantitative phases, the findings were integrated extensively identify and comprehensively understand the various government roles in the progression of sports system in Pakistan. The context and depth of qualitative findings were substantiated through the quantitative testing of the key constructs and underlying relationships to provide a broader perspective on the research topic. In compliance to Ethical Considerations, firstly, prior permissions were sought from the concerned authorities, secondly, signed informed consents were obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation and understanding of the research objectives. Thirdly, to protect the privacy of the participants, anonymity and confidentiality were thoroughly ensured using pseudonyms and confidentiality protocols like keeping data password protected and using it strictly for research purposes.

Findings and Results

Findings of Qualitative phase

The thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with the key stakeholders reveal the following basic and organizing themes as felt by the participants.

Perceived level of Government Support

Table 0-1: Thematic Analysis of Participants' Views on Government Support for Sports in Pakistan

Theme	Example Response	Frequency (Percentage)
Strong support	"The government has shown strong commitment to sports development by investing in infrastructure and organizing national-level events."	13 (43.7%)
Insufficient support	"Government support fluctuates, sometimes showing promise with initiatives but mostly lacking sustained investment and attention with limited funding and inadequate facilities hindering the growth of athletes."	12(41.0%)

No support	"The government's support for sports is virtually non-existent, leaving athletes and sports organizations to fend for themselves."	02 (6.1%)
No opinion	"I am unsure about the level of government support for sports in Pakistan as I do not follow it closely."	03 (9.2%)
Total		30 (100%)

The above Thematic analysis table depicts the themes with example responses and the frequency percentages of similar perspectives. In response to the question about government support for sports, the participants exhibited mixed responses wherein most of the participants believed that the support from the government side is either insufficient, inconsistent or nonexistent at all, where as a significant number of participants did believe that government has invested a lot in the infrastructure development and organizing events that depicts strong support from the government side.

Table 0-2: Thematic Analysis of Participants' Views on the Role of Federal Government with Local Sports Bodies and Clubs

Theme	Example Response	Frequency (Percentage)
Supportive role	"The federal government provides financial support and resources to sports bodies and clubs to enhance their capabilities and develop infrastructure."	09 (31.3%)
Regulatory role	"The federal government sets regulations and guidelines for sports bodies and clubs to ensure compliance with national and International standards and objectives."	08 (25.0%)
Facilitator role	"The federal government facilitates sports bodies and clubs to collaborate with International/national organizations to take various sports development initiatives."	06 (21.9%)
Limited role	"The federal government's involvement with sports bodies and clubs is limited, and it primarily focuses only on major events."	04 (12.5%)
No role	"The federal government has minimal or no involvement with sports bodies and clubs, leaving them to operate independently."	03 (9.3%)

Total	30 (100%)
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The thematic analysis table represents the themes derived out of the responses of participants against the question on the diverse types of roles performed by Government in sports development. The participants believe that government performs supportive role, regulatory role, facilitator role, and merely no role in promoting sports with very limited involvement only in international events. The frequency of responses for each theme is displayed along with the percentage out of the total in parentheses.

Table 0-3: Thematic Analysis of Participants' Views on Government's Policy Initiatives for Sport Development in Pakistan

Theme	Example Response	Frequency (Percentage)
Significant number	"Several new policies aimed at enhancing sports infrastructure, talent identification, and funding have been introduced in recent years."	12 (40.6%)
Limited number	"Only a few new policies related to sports development have been introduced, and their effectiveness is yet to be seen." the pace of implementation and their impact on grassroots a still questioned."	15(50.1%)
No new policies	"I don't believe any new policies specifically targeting sports development in Pakistan."	02 (6.2%)
Unsure	"I'm unsure about the number of new policies related to sports development introduced in Pakistan."	01 (3.1%)
Total		30 (100%)

In this thematic analysis table, participants' responses against the question on government's policies initiatives regarding sports development in Pakistan are categorized into different themes. The participants depict mixed response wherein most of the participants believed that government has taken significant number of strong initiatives, whereas a large number of the others believe that either there are no policy initiates at all or the policy initiatives are relatively limited. The frequency of responses for each theme is displayed along with the percentage out of the total in parentheses.

Table 0-4: Thematic Analysis of Participants' Views on Government Contribution toward Sports development

Theme	Example Response	Frequency (Percentage)
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Provision of Resources	"The government provides financial assistance for necessary equipment, and participation in tournaments."	09 (31.2%)
Infrastructure development	"Government investments in sports infrastructure such as stadiums, training facilities, and sports complexes greatly improved during my playing years."	08 (28.8%)
Young Talent identification and development	"The government initiated programs to identify and nurture young talent, providing opportunities for training and exposure to competitions."	05 (12.5%)
Sports friendly Policy initiatives	"Various government policies aimed at promoting sports development were introduced, but need strong policy initiatives to promote sports at all levels for a healthy society."	03 (9.4%)
Players Wellbeing programs	Government has initiated very few programs/facilities for the wellbeing of the players that needs attention of the government officials for a comprehensive policy reform	03 (9.4%)
Media Promotion of Events	"Government encourages for organizing sports events by facilitating event promotion through main stream media creating opportunities for athletes to showcase their skills."	02 (8.8%)
Total		30 (100%)

This thematic analysis table segregates the themes derived from the responses of participants against the question regarding government contribution toward sports development. The participants believed that Government can play a vital role in sports progression by taking sports friendly policy initiatives, provision of necessary resources, developing infrastructure, facilitating programs for young talent identification and development, supporting players wellbeing programs and supporting sports events through main stream media promotions. Each theme is accompanied by example responses. The frequency of responses for each theme is displayed along with the percentage out of the total in parentheses.

Table 0-5: Thematic Analysis of Participants' Views on players wellbeing programs/Facilities Provided by the Government

Theme	Example Response	Frequency (Percentage)
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Training facilities	"The government provided access to state-of-the-art training facilities equipped with modern equipment and qualified coaches."	11 (37.5%)
Financial support	"Government grants and stipends are provided to sportsmen to cover training expenses, travel costs, participation in competitions."	09 (31.3%)
Medical assistance	"Medical facilities and healthcare services were made available to sportsmen for regular check-ups, injury treatment, and rehabilitation."	05 (15.6%)
Infrastructure	"The government invested in building sports complexes, stadiums, and infrastructure for various sports activities."	04 (12.5%)
Scholarships	"Scholarship programs were offered to talented sportsmen to support their education while pursuing their sports careers."	01 (3.1%)
Total		30 (100%)

In this thematic analysis presented in a single table, participants' responses regarding the facilities provided to sportsmen by the government are categorized into different themes. Each theme is accompanied by example responses. The frequency of responses for each theme is displayed along with the percentage out of the total in parentheses.

Table 0-6: Thematic Analysis of Participants' Views on Obstacles in Administering Policies for Sport Development in Pakistan

Theme	Example Response	Frequency (Percentage)
Political instability	The consistency of the Sports progression policies are largely affected by the frequent government changes here in Pakistan	08 (26.8%)
Funding constraints	"Limited funding allocated to sports policies hinders their effective implementation and impact."	06 (21.6%)
Lack of infrastructure	"Insufficient sports infrastructure, such as training facilities and sports complexes, poses challenges in implementing policies effectively."	05 (17.4%)

Poor governance	"Inadequate governance and transparency in administering sports policies lead to mismanagement and lack of accountability."	04 (13.2%)
Political interference	"Political interference and instability often disrupt the continuity of sports policies and initiatives."	04 (11.7%)
Bureaucratic hurdles	"Bureaucratic red tape and lengthy administrative processes delay the implementation of sports policies."	3 (9.4%)
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Total		30 (100%)

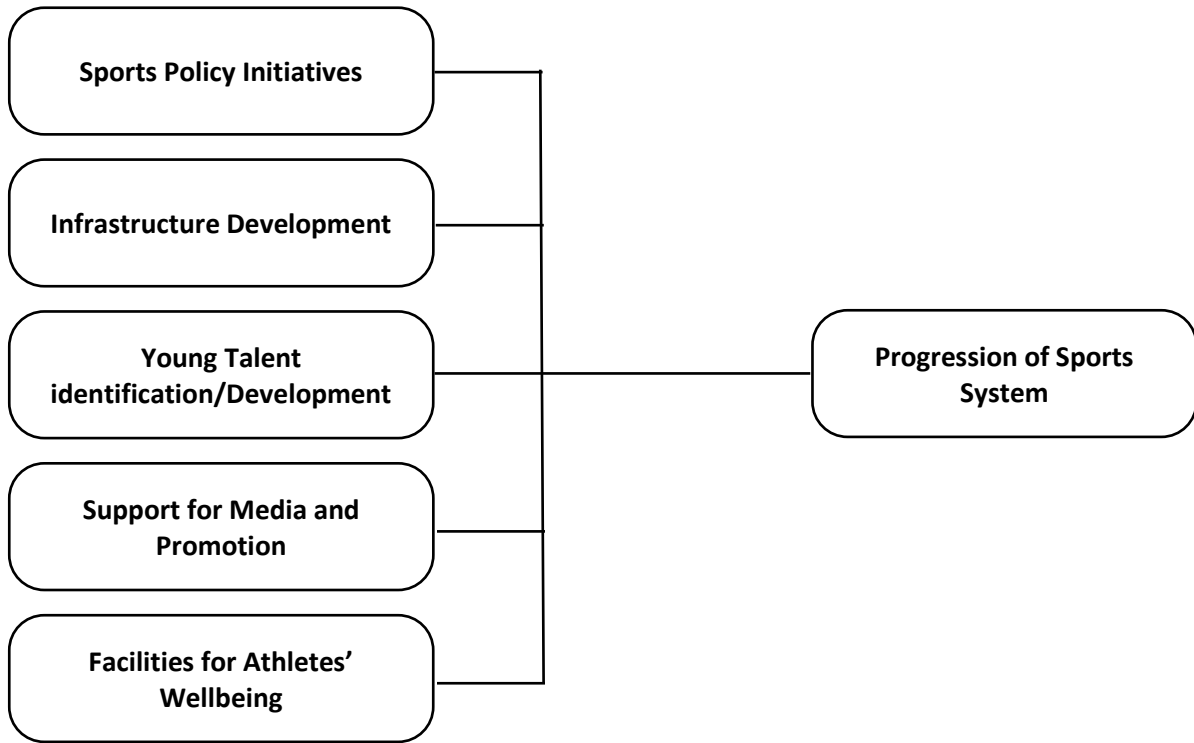
In this thematic analysis presented in a single table, participants' responses regarding crucial obstacles in administering policies for sport development in Pakistan are categorized into different themes. The participants believe that Political instability, Funding constraints, Lack of infrastructure, Poor governance, Political interference, and Bureaucratic hurdles are the major constraints restricting sports progression in Pakistan. Each theme is accompanied by example responses. The frequency of responses for each theme is displayed along with the percentage out of the total in parentheses.

Conceptual framework developed on the basis of Qualitative analysis

Based on the stage structure analysis of the themes derived from qualitative data analysis, the following conceptual framework is developed for further testing in the quantitative phase of the research.

Government Roles (IV)

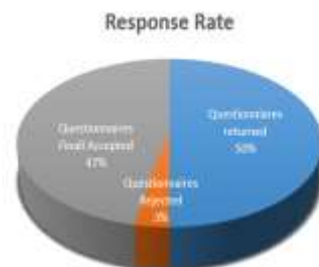
Progression of sports system (DV)



Results Quantitative Analysis

Response Rate

Description	Numbers
Questionnaires Distributed	500
Questionnaires returned	410
Questionnaires Rejected	25
Questionnaires Finally Accepted	385
Response rate	77%



The response rate table shows that out of 500 distributed questionnaire

Respondent Profile

Demographic Characteristics for the study (n=385)

Variables	f(%)	M±SD
Age		21.57(3.43)
Experience		5.04(2.97)
You are playing from Federation	12(6.0)	

Association	26(13.0)
Sports Board	16(8.0)
University / Colleges	120(60.0)
Others	26(13.0)
Highest Academic Qualification	
Matriculation	6(3.0)
Intermediate	16(8.0)
Bachelor	22(11.0)
Masters	126(63.0)
MPhil	30(15.0)
Level (National / International)	
National	158(79.0)
International	42(21.0)
Game Status	
Award	108(54.0)
Medals	78(39)
Position	14(7.0)
Do you Got any Sponsorship?	
Yes	122(61.0)
No	78(39.0)

f=Frequency, %= Percentage, M=Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

The table presents the demographic characteristics of the study sample, consisting of 200 participants. The variables include age, playing affiliation, highest academic qualification, level of participation (national/international), game status, and sponsorship status. The demographic characteristics provide valuable insights into the composition of the study sample, including their age distribution, playing affiliations, educational backgrounds, level of participation, game status, and sponsorship status, which are essential for understanding the context and characteristics of the participants involved in the study.

Reliability Analysis

Table 0-7:Reliability Assessment Scale for Players /Athletes (n=385)

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Sports Policy Initiatives (SP)	8	0.804
Infrastructure Development (ID)	7	0.833
Young Talent Identification/development (TH)	8	0.903
Support for Media and Promotion (MP)	5	0.824
Facilities for Athletes' Wellbeing (AW)	7	0.706
Progression of Sports System (PSS)	8	0.950

The reliability of the scales was tested using Cronbach's alpha as measure of inter-item consistency. All the measures are found reliable with alpha values greater than the minimum threshold 0.70 as shown in the table.

Hypotheses Testing

Correlation analysis

Constructs	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 SP Scale	3.0763	.69882	1	0.538**	0.407**	0.348**	0.334**	0.320**
2 ID Scale	3.3233	.69386		1	0.552**	0.406**	0.353**	0.420**
3 TH Scale	3.4257	.69455			1	0.639**	0.562**	0.626**
4 MP Scale	3.6538	.77062				1	0.440**	0.650**
5 AW scale	3.5075	.83026					1	0.622**
6 PSS Scale	3.8860	.96627						1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Spearman correlation coefficients indicate significant positive associations between most sub-constructs of Government role, suggesting that perceptions of different aspects of the sports system in Pakistan tend to be positively related. This implies that improvements or changes in one aspect of the sports system may be reflected in others as well. However, it's worth noting that there are differences in the strength of correlations between different pairs of sub-constructs, indicating varying degrees of association between them.

Simple Regression Analysis

Variable	Constant	B	β	SE	R ²
SP Scale	.879	.690	.780	.039	.608
ID Scale	1.302	.546	.618	.049	.382
TH Scale	1.607	.429	.538	.048	.290
MP Scale	1.95	.349	.472	.046	.222
AW Scale	1.95	.314	.494	.039	.244

Dependent Variable: Progression Sport System\

The above table shows the simple regression analysis to determine the affect size of each predictor on the outcome variable PSS.

The results showed that The regression model for SP was statistically significant, $F(1, 198) = 307.35$, $p < .001$, and accounted for a substantial proportion of the variance in Sport System scores, $R^2 = .608$. The constant term ($B = 0.879$, $SE = 0.134$) represents the estimated PSS score when the value of SP is zero. SP shows a significant positive effect on Progression of Sports System scores, with a regression coefficient of $B = 0.690$, $\beta = 0.780$, $SE = 0.039$, $p < .001$. This indicates that for every one-unit increase in Mean SIA, there was an estimated increase of 0.690 units in Sports System scores, holding all other variables constant.

$$PSS = 0.879 + 0.690 (SP) + E$$

Similarly, the regression model for ID Scale was statistically significant, $F(1, 198) = 122.15$, $p < .001$, and explained a moderate proportion of the variance in progression of Sports System

scores, $R^2 = .382$. The constant term ($B = 1.302$, $SE = 0.173$) represents the estimated PSS score when the value of ID scale is zero. ID Scale showed a significant positive effect on PSS, with $B = 0.546$, $\beta = 0.618$, $SE = 0.049$, $p < .001$. This indicates that for every one-unit increase in ID Scale, there was an estimated increase of 0.546 units in PSS scores, holding all other variables constant.

$$PSS = 1.302 + 0.546 (ID) + E$$

The regression model for TH Scale was statistically significant, $F(1, 198) = 80.71$, $p < .001$, and explained a moderate proportion of the variance in Sports System scores, $R^2 = 0.290$. The constant term ($B = 1.607$, $SE = 0.178$) represents the estimated PSS score when the value of TH Scale is zero. TH Scale exhibited a significant positive effect on PSS Score, with a regression coefficient of $B = 0.429$, $\beta = 0.538$, $SE = 0.048$, $p < .001$. This indicates that for every one-unit increase in TH Scale, there was an estimated increase of 0.429 units in PSS scores, holding all other variables constant.

$$PSS = 1.607 + 0.429 (TH) + E$$

The regression model MP Scale was statistically significant, $F(1, 198) = 56.66$, $p < .001$, and accounted for a modest proportion of the variance in Sports System scores, $R^2 = .222$. The constant term ($B = 1.95$, $SE = 0.167$) represents the estimated mean Sports System score when the value of MP Scale is zero. MP Scale demonstrated a significant positive effect on PSS scores, with a regression coefficient of $B = 0.349$, $\beta = 0.472$, $SE = 0.046$, $p < .001$. This indicates that for every one-unit increase in MP Scale, there was an estimated increase of 0.349 units in PSS scores, holding all other variables constant.

$$PSS = 1.951 + 0.349 (MP) + E$$

The regression model for AW Scale was statistically significant, $F(1, 198) = 63.91$, $p < .001$, and explained a moderate proportion of the variance in PSS scores, $R^2 = .244$. The constant term ($B = 1.95$, $SE = 0.157$) represents the estimated mean PSS score when the value of AW Scale is zero. AW Scale showed a significant positive effect on PSS scores, with a regression coefficient of $B = 0.314$, $\beta = 0.494$, $SE = 0.039$, $p < .001$. This indicates that for every one-unit increase in, there was an estimated increase of 0.314 units in PSS scores, holding all other variables constant.

$$PSS = 1.957 + B = 0.314 (AW) + E$$

In a nutshell, the above simple regression results reveal that all the predictors have SP, ID, TH, MP, and AW statistically significant impact on Progression of Sports System in Pakistan which indicates that each role ranging from policy initiatives to Players wellbeing programs, is critically contributing and inexorable for the effective progression of sports in Pakistan

Additionally, multiple regression was run on the model to check the holistic effect of all the government roles on progression of the sports system in Pakistan,

Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	B	SE	t	p	95% CI	
					LB	UB
(Constant)	.482	.110	4.400	.000	.266	.698
SP Scale	.674	.036	18.892	.000	.603	.744

ID Scale	.113	.048	2.368	.019	.019	.207
TH Scale	.007	.045	.158	.035	.082	.096
MP Scale	.059	.035	1.666	.027	.091	.129
AW scale	.069	.040	1.735	.014	.009	.147

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the combined effect of SP, ID, TH, MP and AW scales on PSS scale in Pakistan. The results reveal that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(6, 193) = 136.99$, $p < .001$, indicating that the model is good fit which means that the model as a whole explains a significant proportion of the variance in the dependent variable. After controlling for other variables, the constant term ($B = 0.482$, $SE = 0.110$) represents the estimated mean value of the dependent variable when all predictor variables are zero. All the predictors show statistically significant association with the dependent variable, as their p -values were less than the alpha level of 0.05.

$$PSS = 0.482 + 0.6749(SP) + 0.113(ID) + 0.007(TH) + 0.059(MP) - 0.069(AW) + E$$

Discussion

The study was aimed at framing the wide ranging government roles critically important in ascertaining the sustainable sports progression specifically in Pakistan as believed and experienced by the study participants.

Government support plays critical role in promoting sport awareness and enhancing sports participation among masses. The results revealed a higher propensity of absence of any substantial government support to build and sustain a robust, self-reviving strong sports system in Pakistan. The support, as perceived by certain participants, is limited to specific sports in specific contexts like cricket, rest of the sports are getting adversely impacted by lack of attention and support by the government. The findings of the study can be evidence by the declining numbers of Pakistan's participation in international games like Olympics and deprecating downfalls of Pakistani teams in international rankings like in Squash, Hockey, Gymnastics etc. The study findings are in line with the findings of (Khan et al., 2024) who derived that sports development in Pakistan has been largely hindered by ineffective government roles. Similarly, (Rapoport & Markova, 2022) asserted that Sports activities get stagnant in the absence of governmental support and needed policy initiatives.

In addition to the absence or limited direct government support, the sports system is also adversely affected by the nonexistence of inclusive sports policies. The study findings revealed that despite a few recent positive policy initiatives, as perceived by a few of the participants, overall it is evident that the disparities are getting deepened in existing sports policies needing large scale policy reforms. The study findings are in line with the findings of (Khan et al., 2024) wherein it was concluded that due to non-supportive sports policies, the disparities are getting worsened in terms of sports participation among men, women and marginalized communities. Additionally, it is also critical to understand that the success of the new policy initiatives depends on effective implementation and transparent governance. Strong, sports promoting policies and substantial government support is essential for inculcating sustainable sports culture in Pakistan.

Infrastructure development is another critical role needed to be performed by the government (Nazneen et al., 2021). beside number of infrastructural reforms and development initiatives, the political interferences for the seeking political gains rather making honest efforts purely intending to promote strong sports culture have restricted the positive gains out of the efforts (Ali et al., 2023b). Similarly, government has shown least interest in many of its other roles like

young talent hunting and development which remains critical for the continuity of sports culture in the country (Hassan et al., 2022). government is also lagging behind in provision of state of the art wellbeing facilities to the players, another critical role of government to in line with the sustainable development goals set by United nations, resulting in declining performance trend of Pakistani players across all sports (Saleem et al., 2024).

Overall, it is evidenced that the findings of this study are in line with the established literature in the faculty of sports sciences thus validating the inevitable roles of government in sustainable progression of sports for long term gains in the form of a healthy, happy, and prosperous society (Dilnoza, 2023).

Conclusion

Aiming at ascertaining the diverse government roles in progression of the sports system in Pakistan, this study explored several government roles as key factors, including sports policy initiatives, infrastructure development, young talent identification/development, media promotion, and facilities for athletes' well-being. Subsequently the extracted factors were determined for their impact on progression of progression of sports in Pakistan. incorporating mix methods research approach, the study extended the domain knowledge building a comprehensive understanding of how government actions influence sports development in the country.

The findings revealed that each of the government roles explored in the qualitative phase has moderate to strong association with that of sports system progression. At macro level, the policy initiatives and infrastructure development were found strongly associated with sports progression whereas at micro level the government-driven strategies plays critical role in young talent development, media support and players wellbeing ultimately contributing significantly in the sports progression in Pakistan. the strong associations of different government roles with sports progression indicates the inevitable role of government in sustainable advancement of the sports at both micro and macro levels thus contributing positively to the overall growth and sustainability of sports in Pakistan. it is also derived through this research that besides the positive, inexorable multifaceted roles and functions of government in promoting sustainable progression, the government also faces wide ranging challenges like governance inefficiencies, inadequate resources, and political interference impeding not only the effective implementation of government policies but also confining the scope of government initiatives to limited outcomes. The government needs to initiate and implement targeted strategic reforms in line with the findings of this study to ascertain sustainable development and progression of sports system to make Pakistan a happy, healthy and prospering nation in the world.

In a nutshell, based on a comprehensive analysis and empirical evidence generated through this research, it is the time for the government to adapt a collaborative, well-structured approach involving all stakeholders of sports dominion for the sustained development of sports in Pakistan. exploring the various government roles, this study has set the foundational grounds for the future studies to emphasize specific areas of government interventions on athletes' performance and sports infrastructure. In future longitudinal studies can also help addressing the constraints in achieving sports progression goals thus contributing to the sustainable sports system in the country.

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