

## What Did Serena Wear in This Match? Family Perspectives on Tennis Fashion in the Context of Gender and Cultural Values

Sabiha Gizem ENGİN<sup>1\*</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Yozgat Bozok University, Yozgat, Türkiye

### Research Article

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### Abstract

This study aims to provide an in-depth exploration of families' perspectives on girls' sportswear preferences within the context of tennis. Adopting a phenomenological approach grounded in social norms and beliefs, the research analyses how families' internalized cultural and religious values shape their children's sportswear choices through the theoretical lens of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents of girls actively participating in tennis, and the data were analysed through content analysis and organized into thematic frameworks. The findings are categorized under three main themes: faith and sport, tennis and fashion, and clothing and intervention. Participants emphasized that religious beliefs do not contradict participation in sport but can coexist harmoniously. Comfort and aesthetic appeal emerged as major determinants in sportswear preferences, while the lack of appropriate clothing options for individuals with strong religious commitments was identified as a significant issue. Parents reported that when intervening in their children's clothing decisions, they considered factors such as age, cultural norms, and individuality. In conclusion, families' perspectives on sportswear choices reflect a delicate balance integrating religious and cultural values with children's individual development and prevailing social norms. This study contributes to the sociological understanding of how habitus mediates between collective belief systems and individual practices within the intersection of faith, fashion, and sport participation.

**Keywords:** Sport fashion, Cultural values, Religion, Female child

\* Corresponding Author: Sabiha Gizem Engin, E-mail: [s.gizemengin@gmail.com](mailto:s.gizemengin@gmail.com)

## INTRODUCTION

Sport has historically been characterized by a male-dominated structure, which has led to the reproduction of gender norms and the marginalization of women (Dinç, 2019). Within this dominant framework, female athletes have sought to draw strength from sportswear in order to enhance their visibility and challenge societal perceptions. In this context, tennis has emerged as one of the arenas in which sportswear has been most prominently exhibited. The impact of sportswear on the social perception of the female body has been addressed in academic literature (Cereda, 2023; Zaccagni & Gualdi-Russo, 2023), and in particular the historical development and transformation of tennis clothing have been documented. For example, the outfits worn at the Wimbledon Championships between 1870 and 1939 were designed in accordance with the fashion sensibilities of the era and positively influenced the visibility of women in the sports world (Rowland, 2019). During that period, female athletes' clothing was designed in a manner that prioritized conformity to social norms, thereby limiting physical mobility (Lake, 2011). This era clearly demonstrates how societal expectations regarding female athletes' bodies and clothing preferences guided fashion trends. However, subsequent changes have revealed that tennis fashion is not merely an aesthetic choice but also an equality struggle that strengthens women's presence in the sporting world (Lesyk, 2023). In this regard, sports fashion functions as more than an individual form of expression; it serves as a tool to empower women's participation in sport. This empowering instrument is shaped by fashion dynamics while simultaneously being influenced by the broader cultural values within the societal context (Crane, 2002). Individuals reinforce the social acceptance and significance of sports fashion by aligning their clothing choices not only with personal aesthetic preferences but also with social norms and the wider cultural value system (Entwistle, 2018). This transformation affects the attitudes and behaviors of young adults participating in sport, and families constitute one of the factors playing a role in this evolution (Bonavolonta et al., 2021). Existing research has predominantly focused on adult athletes and general sports fashion (Fuller, 2021). However, the clothing preferences of children and young adults involved in tennis present a motivational gap in the literature that warrants investigation.

Employing a qualitative approach, this study examines how social dynamics shape the phenomenon of clothing and fashion in tennis and how these processes influence the clothing preferences of girls within familial contexts. Furthermore, by highlighting the role of families in their children's identity development and sports participation, the study aims to fill a significant gap in the literature. Through an in-depth understanding of parental perspectives, the study also seeks to raise social awareness regarding the visibility of young female athletes and gender equality in sport.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study draws on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus to explain how sports fashion and gender roles shape families' clothing preferences. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus refers to the deeply internalized patterns of behavior, thought, and perception that individuals acquire through their social environment and life experiences

(Bourdieu, 1995). Habitus is not simply a set of learned habits; rather, it is a dynamic system of dispositions that mediates between social structures and individual agency, shaping how people perceive, interpret, and respond to the world around them (Annala et al., 2022). Through the process of socialization, habitus enables the reproduction and reinforcement of cultural and social values in everyday practices, often operating at a subconscious level (Lu et al., 2022). Importantly, habitus is both structured by and structuring of social norms, expectations, and power relations. For instance, gendered expectations regarding sports clothes are both a product and a producer of family habitus. It reveals how individuals internalize societal standards such as gender roles, religious beliefs, and cultural values and how these standards are sustained and transmitted across generations (Gavrilets et al., 2024). In the context of sports fashion, habitus provides a framework for understanding how the presentation of the body, clothing choices, and aesthetic preferences are shaped by broader social forces, including gender norms and religious values.

Within this framework, families' attitudes and decisions regarding their children's selection of sports outfits can be interpreted as expressions of habitus shaped by their accumulated cultural and religious capital. These attitudes not only reflect the internalization of social norms but also contribute to the ongoing negotiation and transformation of those norms within the family and the wider community. Thus, in the context of sports fashion and family decision-making, habitus offers a powerful analytical lens for examining the complex interplay between individual choices and the social, cultural, historical, and religious dynamics that inform them.

### **Serena Williams's Black Catsuit Case**

It is essential to underscore how sports fashion and habitus intersect with the social dynamics that shape individuals' apparel preferences. These dynamics operate not only within familial settings but also manifest equivalently in the professional sports arena. One of the most sensational examples of elite athletes confronting institutional and media-imposed norms alongside performance and health imperatives is the black catsuit worn by Serena Williams at the 2018 French Open (Litchfield et al., 2018; Wilks, 2020). This kind of cases vividly demonstrate that female athletes' clothing choices are shaped not only by requirements such as performance and health but also by racism and sexism (Allen, 2021; Schultz, 2005), social norms and gender-based expectations (Aboud, 2020; Love & Maxwell, 2020) embedded in the habitus of both athletes and sporting institutions.

Love and Maxwell (2020) analyzed the implications of criticisms directed at women's clothing choices in the world of sports in terms of gender equality, focusing on the catsuit controversy. Their study emphasizes that Williams's catsuit became a symbol not only of a health necessity but also of clothing freedom for female athletes. This symbolic resistance can be interpreted as a challenge to the dominant habitus that governs gendered expectations in sport. Similarly, Allen (2021) examined Williams's resistance through fashion and the discrimination she faced in professional tennis. The study evaluates Williams's clothing choices as a form of resistance and suggests that the bodies and attire of Black female athletes

have become a political issue. Aboud (2020) examined social control mechanisms over female athletes' clothing and addressed the catsuit controversy as an example of these mechanisms. The study shows that female athletes' clothing choices are associated not only with performance but also with gender roles. These mechanisms of control are part of the broader social habitus that shapes and limits women's agency in sport. The Williams catsuit controversy demonstrates that social pressures on women's sportswear persist today and explains how this situation affects women's position in the sports world. These studies indicate that debates over female athletes' clothing choices raise widespread awareness not only about individual cases but also about social norms and discrimination. Beyond these personal and social determinants, political and institutional restrictions, such as religion, in some countries, can also have significant impacts on women's sportswear choices and participation. This complex situation generates social and political pressure and discrimination on women's participation in sports and their clothing choices, especially within certain sensitive groups, such as religious and conservative people.

### **Restrictions in Women's Sportswear and Conservative Communities**

Studies on religion and sportswear have emphasized that religious commitment is one of the most important determinants of sportswear preferences especially among Muslim women (Baber, 2019; Islam et al., 2019). For instance, Hussain and Cunningham (2023) found that Muslim women's preferences for sports-appropriate hijabs are closely related to religious commitment and social norms. On the other hand, the demand for sportswear in Muslim societies is not only limited to religious requirements (Shreim, 2009) but also influenced by various factors such as comfort and aesthetic concerns (Ashraf et al., 2023). Furthermore, it is important to recognize that sportswear preferences among Muslim women are not monolithic and may vary significantly based on age (Ashraf et al., 2023) and socioeconomic status (Shreim, 2009). Regional differences further complicate this landscape; preferences and restrictions vary notably due to differing cultural norms (Islam et al., 2019) and legal frameworks (Agustina et al., 2024; Ajaib & Altunışik, 2022). These findings illustrate how habitus, as a system of internalized dispositions, mediates the influence of both religious and social norms on clothing preferences. In addition to these factors, the relationship between body perception and clothing preferences also plays a significant role in shaping Muslim women's participation in sports (Hargreaves, 2006). According to Hargreaves, modest clothing, which is based on covering the body and avoiding attention, is an important tool that supports Muslim women's more active participation in the sports world.

However, beyond these personal and social determinants, external factors such as political and institutional restrictions by organizations can also significantly impact women's sportswear choices and participation. For example, Hoodfar (2015) states that political and policy-related reasons are among the obstacles Muslim women face during sports. One of the most striking of these factors is clothing restrictions in some international competitions (Agustina et al., 2024). At the most recent Olympics, Paris 2024, the French government banned female athletes representing France from wearing headscarves during competitions and ceremonies (Nurhalisa, 2025). This situation contradicts the International Olympic

Committee's (IOC) principle that prohibits discrimination based on religion, language, or race (IOC, 2025). Such policies have sparked international debate about the balance between national regulations and athletes' rights. Long before this incident, it was a controversial issue whether sports organizations should consider the clothing preferences of Muslim female athletes (Qureshi & Ghouri, 2011). These institutional constraints interact with individual and collective habitus, sometimes leading to tension between personal beliefs and official regulations. In addition to political and institutional barriers, performance and competition-related concerns also play a role in shaping sportswear choices. Limoochi and Le Clair (2011) examined the clothing barriers faced by Muslim women in sports and the strategies developed to overcome these obstacles. They noted that clothing items such as the burkini and hijab have enabled greater participation of women in sports; however, these garments may negatively affect performance in some cases. It should be underscored that such circumstances are not, in the contemporary world, confined solely to Muslim women. For instance, dress regulations enforced upon women competitors in the Wimbledon Tennis Championships around 150 years ago were likewise formulated to conform to the dominant social norms of the time, yet they represented a significant handicap by constraining physical mobility. Consequently, across different historical periods, prescribed forms of sportswear for women have operated as restrictive instruments, preventing their role in sport and continuing to do so into the present era.

### **Problem**

Cultural values and especially religious beliefs significantly impact individuals' daily lives and social roles. Leonnard et al. (2019), in their study on the modest sportswear preferences of young Indonesian Muslim women, stated that families play a significant role in these clothing choices. However, the scope and nature of familial influence may vary considerably depending on factors such as the child's gender, the family's level of religiosity, and broader sociocultural contexts (Smith, 2021). For instance, parental impact on girls' sportswear choices may be more pronounced or governed by different norms than that on boys (Perilloux et al., 2008), and non-religious families (Aljayyousi et al., 2019; Bhalla & Weiss, 2010) might exhibit entirely different patterns of influence. Additionally, the study conducted by Tutia and Najib (2019) revealed that young Muslim consumers care about religious values as well as different factors (brand, etc.) when determining their clothing preferences. Therefore, it can be assumed that the influence of religious values on clothing preferences in these families also affects the children. These dynamics resonate with Bourdieu's habitus theory, which explains how internalized cultural and religious dispositions within families shape individual preferences and practices, mediating between social structures and personal agency.

In this context, the study aims to reveal families' perspectives on sportswear from a religious standpoint and the priorities they consider in their tennis-interested children's clothing choices. By focusing on girls' attire within this framework, the study addresses a notable gap in the literature and concretizes the cultural and social expectations of families regarding their daughters' sportswear.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Model**

This study was planned based on the phenomenological approach, one of the qualitative research methods. The phenomenological design focuses on phenomena that individuals are aware of but have not interpreted in detail. In such research, the data analysis process aims to reveal the participants' experiences and the meanings they attribute to these experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In the context of the phenomenological approach, the researcher made every effort to avoid projecting personal biases during the research process. Objectivity was ensured during the data analysis phase through the inclusion of external auditor perspectives. Participants' experiences were treated in their raw form, with minimal interpretive interference during the content analysis stage. Additionally, in accordance with the recommendations of Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), participants' statements were directly reflected in the findings, and detailed explanations of these procedures are provided under the data analysis section.

Given the aim to reveal and interpret participants lived experiences while maintaining rigor and validity, content analysis was selected as the preferred method for qualitative data analysis within this phenomenological framework. Accordingly, the content analysis method, one of the qualitative data analysis techniques, was preferred. In content analysis, data are elevated to a conceptual level, and themes are created to explain the phenomenon under investigation. Findings are generally presented in a descriptive manner and supported directly by participant statements. Additionally, the findings are discussed and interpreted in detail in line with the themes obtained (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Yin, 2018). Within the scope of the research, participants were asked about their views on sports fashion, their approaches to sportswear from a religious perspective, and their thoughts on the sports clothing used by their daughters. The participants conveyed their thoughts and experiences on these topics in detail.

### **Research Groups**

In this study, the criterion sampling method, one of the purposive sampling types, was used. Criterion sampling is based on the principle of selecting individuals, events, objects, or situations with specific characteristics related to the research topic (Büyükoztürk, 2024). Within the scope of this study, certain inclusion criteria have been established. Within the inclusion criteria of this study, parents of female tennis players under the age of eighteen were included in the sample. This selection is significant, as parents hold legal guardianship over their children. It is therefore assumed that parents have legitimate authority to express opinions regarding their children's clothing preferences. Another inclusion criterion is that the athletes must be registered and licensed members of a tennis club. This requirement ensures that the research group represents individuals who engage in the sport regularly and at a professional level, rather than those who participate merely as a hobby.

In the city of Yozgat, where the study was conducted, there is only one tennis club. The researcher obtained the necessary permissions and support from the club's manager and coach to reach all eligible parents. A total of 17 parents with daughters in this club were

identified; however, six of these individuals either declared that they did not meet the inclusion criteria or expressed unwillingness to participate in the study. Consequently, approval was obtained from eleven families to begin the interviews. After scheduling the interviews according to the participants' availability and commencing data collection, one parent withdrew from the study due to personal reasons (time constraints). All data and information of the participant who declared withdrawal from the study were deleted after being withdrawn from the study and were not included in the research findings. Thus, the study was completed with a total of 10 participants. Details regarding the research participants and the interviews are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Details of participants and interviews

| Participants  | Occupation        | Child's Age | Years in Sports | Interview Duration |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| P-1 (mother)  | Housewife         | 16          | 4               | 35 min             |
| P-2 (mother)  | Housewife         | 10          | 5               | 33 min             |
| P-3 (father)  | Teacher           | 17          | 7               | 40 min             |
| P-4 (mother)  | Housewife         | 12          | 2               | 25 min             |
| P-5 (mother)  | Medical Secretary | 16          | 5               | 31 min             |
| P-6 (father)  | Private Security  | 15          | 3               | 39 min             |
| P-7 (mother)  | Housewife         | 9           | 4               | 27 min             |
| P-8 (mother)  | Nurse             | 16          | 6               | 38 min             |
| P-9 (father)  | Veterinarian      | 16          | 7               | 34 min             |
| P-10 (mother) | Housewife         | 12          | 1               | 26 min             |

These findings reveal that the participants possess socioeconomic diversity and reflect different experiences and perspectives regarding their children's participation in sports.

### Data Collection Tools

Data were collected through a semi-structured interview form. While preparing the interview form, a literature review was conducted, and a question pool was created. The question pool was submitted for expert review, and after revisions, the final version consisted of eleven questions. The questions included in the interview form are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The semi-structured interview form

| No | Questions                                                                                       |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Does your child follow tennis fashion?                                                          |
| 2  | How do you evaluate women's clothing used in tennis?                                            |
| 3  | Do you consider it socially appropriate?                                                        |
| 4  | Do you find it appropriate in terms of faith?                                                   |
| 5  | Is there any type of clothing you think should be changed for girls?                            |
| 6  | Should there be a difference between the clothing of adult tennis players and that of girls?    |
| 7  | How do you evaluate it when the age factor comes into play?                                     |
| 8  | Does your child consult you in clothing selection, or do you intervene?                         |
| 9  | Are there any clothes your child wears that make you uncomfortable?                             |
| 10 | If your child chooses to wear a hijab in the future and wants to continue playing tennis, what  |
| 11 | If your child participates in an international tennis tournament wearing a hijab, how would you |

These questions aimed to reveal families' attitudes towards tennis fashion and women's/girls' sportswear, the level of parental intervention in clothing choices, and the reflection of social teachings and beliefs on sports-related approaches. Additionally, within the scope of the interview technique, probing questions were posed by the researcher in accordance with the flow of the interview to elicit more detailed and nuanced responses from the participants. These probing questions were specifically designed to encourage participants to elaborate on certain answers or provide additional explanations. Thus, the goal was to move beyond superficial responses and obtain in-depth information.

### **Ethics Approval**

Before proceeding to the data collection phase of the research, ethical approval was obtained from the Yozgat Bozok University Social and Humanities Ethics Committee with decision number 25/30 dated 14.05.2025. During data collection, participants were asked to fill out a voluntary consent form and were informed that they could terminate the interview at any point if they wished to withdraw.

### **Collection of Data**

Data were collected between 16 May 2025 and 24 May 2025, after obtaining ethics committee approval. Interviews conducted with participants were audio-recorded with their consent after providing necessary information and obtaining signed consent forms. During the research, no guidance was given to participants, and the raw data were evaluated as obtained. The audio-recorded interviews were later listened to and transcribed by the researcher.

### **Analysis of Data**

The data analysis in this study was conducted using a systematic qualitative approach consistent with phenomenological principles. Semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary data collection method. Trustworthiness is a fundamental criterion in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1986), and various strategies recommended in the literature were implemented to ensure validity and reliability throughout the research process (Arastaman et al., 2018). Accordingly, the interview data were first defined and systematically categorized to form thematic clusters. Coding was performed by multiple experts (peer reviewers), and direct quotations from participants were included to illustrate and substantiate the identified themes. This approach supported methodological triangulation, thereby enhancing the rigor and credibility of the study (Denzin, 2017). The analysis process was carried out rigorously and sequentially to ensure confirmability. Initially, audio-recorded data were transcribed into Microsoft Word. To maintain credibility, the data were included in the analysis without any modification (Tracy, 2010). The interview transcripts were subjected to open coding by the researcher, and those with semantic coherence were grouped under specific categories using axial coding techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Review of the data by different experts increased the trustworthiness and dependability of the study. Accordingly, the dataset was sent to independent experts experienced in qualitative research, who evaluated the data without prior knowledge of the researcher's classifications. The coding performed by the researcher and the experts was then compared, and inter-coder reliability was assessed using

Kappa analysis. The obtained Kappa coefficient was 0.85, indicating a good level of agreement between coders (Cohen, 1960). Finally, to ensure credibility, exemplary participant statements were provided under each theme, and all quotations were included in the report without any modification. In interpreting the data, the created themes and their associated categories were examined. The researcher sports experience and expertise in qualitative analysis contributed to the credibility of the study through reflexivity. Additionally, periodic short-interval meetings and peer review sessions further supported dependability and confirmability.

The research was conducted in Turkish, which was the native language of all participants, eliminating any potential language barriers or comprehension issues related to a second language. Since the publication was in English, a specialist linguist supported the process to ensure that the participants' perspectives and experiences were rendered faithfully, without distortions stemming from translation. As noted by Squires (2009), such measures reduce the likelihood that language could compromise the validity of the data.

## FINDINGS

The data were grouped under three main themes: faith and sports, tennis and fashion, and clothing and intervention. Additionally, the views of the parents who are the subjects of the research regarding the research topic are presented in this section. Some participants' opinions are quoted under the relevant themes. Details regarding the themes and codes are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Details of themes and codes

| Themes                    | Codes                                        |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Faith and Sports          | Faith and respect / Support / Role model     |
| Tennis and Fashion        | Comfort and adaptation / Modesty / Diversity |
| Clothing and Intervention | Age / Sensitivity / Individuality            |

The themes presented in Table 3, although shown as separate headings, are in fact intertwined and mutually reinforcing dynamics. For instance, faith exerts a dominant and guiding influence on individuals' daily lives and behaviours (Shreim, 2009); this is directly reflected in clothing preferences and the justifications for parental intervention (Hussain & Cunningham, 2023). Additionally, modesty codes associated with religious teachings may emphasize avoidance of ostentation and promote humility, which in turn manifest in clothing choices and the rationale behind interventions (Osman, 2025; Miller, 2013). Therefore, parents' perspective on faith can shape the ways in which they intervene in their children's clothing decisions and the value systems underlying these interventions. This relationship indicates an interconnected structure where the themes interact directly and continuously.

## Faith and Sports

Some participants' statements under the codes of faith and respect are as follows:

*P-3: There should be no distinction in sports based on religion, language, race, or culture. Being hijabi does not conceal a person's talents; on the contrary, reaching this level without compromising on faith demonstrates character and personality. There may be positive or negative criticisms. These are different perspectives and should be respected.*

*P-10: In our society, there is no distinction between being religious or being an athlete. It is pleasing when a person continues their sports activities while also fulfilling their religious beliefs.*

Under the code of support, the following participant statement is included:

*P-8: If our daughter wishes to wear a hijab in the future and continue her sports career, we would primarily respect her decision and, if necessary, arrange private lessons for her due to religious sensitivities.*

Under the code of role model, the following personal statement is included:

*P-4: The idea that a person can be both hijabi and a good athlete is beautiful in itself. In this way, one becomes a role model for hijabi individuals and also a successful person. For example, we have a national hijabi athlete, Kübra DAĞLI. I think she is a role model for many young people. Although negative comments may be upsetting, success will outshine even that.*

This theme reflects a general consensus among parents that faith and sports participation are not mutually exclusive. The father (P3) and mothers (P4, P8, P10) alike affirm that religious beliefs are fully compatible with athletic achievement. This shared view also underpins their strong emphasis on respect for individual choices and the importance of positive role models who embody both faith and sports. These insights connect closely with the theoretical framework on social identity and role modeling, demonstrating how religious commitment informs parental support for sports engagement.

## Tennis and Fashion

Under the codes of comfort and adaptation, the following participant statements are included:

*P-2: I am a hijabi person. I pay attention to my clothing; however, tennis is a very active and focused sport. Therefore, I think wearing comfortable but not revealing clothes makes sense for me when playing tennis*

*P-5: I really like the clothes used, and they look very good on our female tennis players. When I play tennis in my spare time, I also prefer shorts because they are comfortable and look very nice.*

Under the code of modesty, the following participant statement is included:

*P-6: There should be slightly more modest sportswear without sacrificing quality and comfort. Because hijabi people sometimes really cannot find comfortable clothes.*

Under the code of diversity, the following participant statement is included:

*P-3: Maybe we are acting against our religion with the clothes worn, but we have to respect people's views. In this society, there are both those who dress openly and those who wear hijab. Therefore, it is not our place to judge. Everyone will account for themselves in the hereafter.*

The findings under this theme illustrate nuanced perspectives among parents regarding tennis attire. Fathers (P3, P6) tend to emphasize modesty and the challenges of finding suitable sportswear, while mothers often focus on comfort and practical adaptation. This reveals a diversity of views shaped by both religious considerations and personal preferences, highlighting the complexity of clothing choices in sports. Furthermore, the parents' shared respect for diversity underscores a community norm of tolerance, which intersects with sociocultural theories of pluralism and individual agency in sports engagement.

### **Clothing and Intervention**

Under the code of age, the following participant statement is included:

*P-1: If you ask my opinion on children's clothing, there should be separate clothes for children and adults. Some clothes are really not suitable for our culture or religion. Children inevitably see these clothes on social media, advertisements, or celebrities. Especially if your daughter is in adolescence, she insists on buying those clothes. This pushes our children into a feminine position before they are even women. Yet, they are still children!*

Under the code of sensitivity, the following participant statement is included:

*P-9: Sometimes the shorts and skirts she wears are very short. There are clothes that almost reveal the buttocks, and I find this very disturbing. In such cases, I try to intervene without hurting or upsetting her. Actually, the reason I intervene is that some people may look with ill intentions. That is what really bothers me.*

Under the code of individuality, the following participant statement is included:

*P-7: My child asks for my opinion in clothing selection, and unless it is an extreme situation, I do not interfere with her choices. Because in this way, she learns to be an individual and establishes her own personality.*

This theme reveals variations and occasional tensions within parental approaches. Father, such as P-9, express concerns that lead to intervention motivated by protective intentions tied to perceptions of external judgment. Mothers frequently endorse fostering individuality, indicating some divergence in parental roles and attitudes. These contrasts enrich the findings by illustrating internal community negotiations about appropriate clothing, autonomy, and cultural values. Addressing these disagreements offers a more complex and comprehensive understanding of parental perspectives, supporting the study's overall narrative coherence.

In conclusion, parents' views show diversity regarding fashion, religious beliefs, and children's clothing preferences. Participants emphasized the importance of respect for

individual preferences and differences, while also approaching social and cultural values sensitively. In addition, while children's personality development and the supportive attitude of families come to the fore, a sensitive and understanding approach is adopted when intervention is necessary.

## **DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION**

In this section, the connection of the findings with the literature is discussed in detail, and the relationships between topics such as the effect of religious beliefs on sports and family interventions in children's clothing preferences are discussed in a holistic manner. These relationships can be further understood through the lens of habitus theory, which emphasizes how social environments and internalized dispositions shape individual practices and preferences. When the results of the study are compared with current literature, both similarities and differences are observed.

The effect of religious beliefs on participation in sports and clothing preferences is one of the main findings of this study. Participants stated that religious beliefs do not prevent participation in sports; on the contrary, individuals can maintain a balanced life by both practising their faith and engaging in physical activities. This finding is consistent with the views of Marwat et al. (2014), who argued that the barriers faced by Muslim women in sports can be overcome. Moreover, Ahmad and Thorpe (2020) indicated that Muslim women athletes reshape social norms by gaining visibility on digital platforms. In this study, parents support for their children's participation in sports while observing their religious values is also in line with this literature. Similarly, the findings of Testa and Amara (2016) regarding the role of sports in Islamic societies suggest that religious beliefs may serve as a motivating factor for sports participation rather than a restrictive one. From the perspective of habitus theory, these findings highlight how religious values are internalized within families and communities, influencing both attitudes and behaviours toward sports participation.

According to the research findings, parents' evaluations of sportswear are shaped within a multidimensional framework including comfort, aesthetics, social values, and religious sensitivities. Especially the lack of appropriate clothing for hijabi individuals during sports was identified as a prominent issue in the study. This is consistent with the literature, which argues that sports fashion should be addressed not only from aesthetic and performance perspectives but also with an inclusive approach, considering a social sustainability perspective. For example, Kopplin (2023) emphasizes that for sports fashion to achieve sustainability goals, it must consider social inclusion as well as environmental impact. These findings are consistent with parents' views supporting both aesthetics and functionality in their children's sportswear choices.

Parental interventions in children's clothing preferences constitute another significant finding of the study. The findings of our research indicate that parents tend to adopt a sensitive and empathetic approach when intervening in their children's clothing choices. This supports the

individuation process of children. On the other hand, the design and comfort of modest (hijabi) sportswear, especially for women athletes who wear the hijab, is a frequently discussed topic in the literature. Mohd Yusof et al. (2021) argue that modest sportswear should meet both religious and physical requirements, while Baharudin et al. (2021) emphasize that the clothing worn by women during sports activities should be evaluated in terms of thermal comfort. This study also observed that parents, while prioritizing their children's comfort and individuation processes, take into account conformity with cultural and religious values in clothing choices. This is consistent with the themes of social inclusion and individual freedom highlighted by Maxwell et al. (2013). Habitus theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how family practices, cultural expectations, and individual agency shape children's clothing preferences and the negotiation of identity within social contexts.

The tendency of children and adolescents to emulate clothing styles they see on social media and, especially, through celebrities is frequently emphasized in the literature (Demaria et al., 2024; Methlouthi & Nefzi, 2023). Astika and Budianto (2025) note that young people are strongly influenced by popular culture figures and digital platforms. At the same time, Chew and Leng (2016) note that through clothing, children can be pushed into adult roles at an early age and may experience conflicts with religious values. In this study, parents also observed that their children may be drawn to feminine and age-inappropriate clothing styles seen on social media or worn by famous athletes and generally expressed a negative attitude toward such preferences. Similarly, Juhlin and Soini (2018) found that young people largely adopt fashion trends and clothing styles through digital media and celebrities. These findings indicate that families are sensitive to issues of age-appropriateness and cultural values in their children's clothing choices.

In conclusion, the findings of this study are broadly consistent with the discussions in the current literature. Parents' views on sports fashion, religious beliefs, and children's clothing preferences are shaped around the axes of social values, individual preferences, and inclusivity. The themes of inclusivity and individual freedom in the literature support the findings of this study. Habitus theory further supports these conclusions by emphasizing that the interplay between individual dispositions and the broader social context is central to understanding how clothing choices, sports participation, and family interventions are negotiated.

### **Limitations and Suggestions**

First, it is recommended that future research be conducted and replicated in different cultural and geographical contexts. Such replication would broaden the limited perspective that may arise from focusing on families sharing similar cultural values within a single geographical area in this study. Moreover, comparative studies involving families from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and differing religious orientations could help reveal the cultural and social rationales underpinning parental perspectives on this issue. Additionally, longitudinal analyses of children's and families' experiences with sportswear could

contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of social and cultural changes in this area.

From a practical and policy-oriented perspective, future efforts toward sportswear design should adopt a more comprehensive and multi-stakeholder approach. Although the role of sportswear producers is significant, the concept of inclusivity in sportswear extends well beyond mere production processes. Accordingly, other stakeholders such as parents, sports media, and sports federations also play crucial roles in shaping awareness, acceptance, and access to inclusive sportswear. For instance, parents' attitudes toward sports fashion may influence children's participation in sports. Moreover, through the collaboration of sports media and federations, inclusivity in sportswear can be promoted, thereby contributing to the normalization of diversity in sports appearance and identity. Ultimately, strengthening collaborative frameworks among these various actors is essential, and the role of all stakeholders should be further emphasized to promote a more sustainable and socially inclusive sports culture.

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