

Betelihem Brehanu Alemu

The empowerment of young girls and women through sport and physical activity participation: A Case Study in Ethiopia

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Alemu, Betelihem

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Abstract

As a consequence of gender-role socialization, women across the world are still facing unfair perceptions and treatments. Being empowered at the individual level would serve as a platform from which women could combat the existing inequality treatment and perception to gain full control over their lives. Sport and physical activities could serve as a platform for women to gain control. The aim of this research is to explore the potential that sport and physical activity (PA) have in the empowerment of young girls and women in Ethiopia. Additional questions were used in order to further explore any disempowerment experiences as a result of sport and physical activity participation, barriers that limits participations and recommendation from participants to further strengthen the participation of young girls and women in sport and physical activities in Ethiopia. The study uses Zimmerman's empowerment theoretical framework to evaluate potential empowerment through the participation in sport and PA at an individual level.

The study adopted as qualitative case study research design. In personal semi-structured interviews was conducted with 12 young girls and women between the age of 16 to 20 who are currently participating in different sport and PA. Thematization was used to organize interview data and select themes from the interviews which played significant role in the formulating an in-depth understanding how sport and PA has enhance the empowerment of young girls and women in Ethiopia. Result suggested that sport and PA actually has enhanced the empowerment of young girls and women a) critical thinking b) perception of self-competence c) social support and network d) healthy and active life. However, the research also found that there were disempowerment outcomes including violence and financial burden that young girls and women face in their sport and PA participation.

Though young girl and women participation in sport and PA in Ethiopia is enabling them to gain control over their life, they are still way behind their male counters in the quality, access and inclusiveness in the area of sport. There are still endless work to do to create safe, affordable and inclusive sport and PA culture within the Ethiopian society. This research recommend providing financial assistance, coach trainings and community outreach as a start.

Keywords: Sport, Physical activity, Empowerment, Ethiopia, Women, Young girls

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“Sport and PA helps us to discover and redefine ourselves. It help us to fall in love with ourselves and surround ourselves with support systems that brings the best of us.” (Mihret)

In the eyes of Mihret from Ethiopia, sport and PA is the hope and opportunity to redefine herself. It is inevitable to say that sport is fundamental part of people and culture around the world. Nonetheless, sport and physical activity uses as a tool to promote empowerment of young girls and women is neglected because of strong universal social norms, which perceived it from being not fitting for young girls and women. Research has shown that almost in all countries young girls and women are minority in their participation of sport and physical activity and to this day sport and physical activity is dominated by males in participants, spectators, administrative roles and etc (Larkin et al., 2007).

However, it is misjudgment to conclude that the low participation of young girls and women in sport and physical activity around the globe is a result of their wish not to participate. Factors such as lack of accessibility to quality and affordable sport facilities, transportation, poverty, domestic violence and other prevent young girls and women’s participation in sport and physical activity (Kidd, 2008). Furthermore, social-cultural and religious norms and pressures that are limiting or restricting from being physically active and taking part in sport or physical activity within their surrounding without the presence and permission of men (Jawad et al., 2011).

On the other hand, there is limited evidence that shows the use of sport and physical activities as a tool to combat issues of gender inequality, poverty, domestic violence, literacy and others. Different studies on sport, gender and development demonstrate that sport and physical activity participations can positively influence in the improvement of health and wellbeing, boosting self-esteem and empowerment, enabling social inclusion and integration, challenging the existing gender norms and providing for personal and professional development of young girls and women (Larkin et al., 2007). Sport and physical activity have potential in empowerment of young girls and women at an individual and collective level by encouraging their physical, intellectual and social development.

However, the research evidence to support the above claims in context of developing countries including Ethiopia is very limited. The need for research focusing especially on sport

and physical activity in the empowerment of young girls and women is much needed to gain a more in depth understanding of sport in transforming lives of participants. The research aims to explore the empowerment experiences of young girls and women in Ethiopia as a result of their sport and PA participation and its influence in other aspects of their lives. It also hope to provide recommendation to further strengthen the participation of young girls and women in sport and physical activity based on participants suggestions.

Personal Meaning of the Research

I was born and raised in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. As long as I can remember, I have always loved and been passionate about sport. I loved playing small-sided games, watching matches on TV and listening to radio broadcasts. I loved the energy, atmosphere, excitement and pace of sports and the athletes. I loved everything about it. In my eyes, it was the one place that people seemed to be happy and celebrate togetherness. To this day, the Summer Olympics in 2000 (Sydney) and 2004 (Athens) are my all-time favorite sporting events as an Ethiopian because these were times when the whole nation came together to support our fellow men and women athletes.

However, when it comes to actual sport participation, my memories of growing up in Ethiopia are not as positive. Since I was young, I have always been active and enjoyed every minute of being out and about. Football especially was my childhood obsession. But as much as I loved sport, it was an area that women do not usually receive recognition or encouragement. It was a space where I have personally endured endless insults, discouragement, and at times, beatings. Unlike most youth around the world, my love and passion for sport was viewed as a threat to existing social norms. To this day, the expression, “*setelige wedeguada wendlige wedemeda*” echoes in my ears every time I walk onto the pitch. It was a saying that highlighted where we women belonged: in the kitchen, unlike boys, on the field.

Playing in the field was such a danger to me and seen as such a public disgrace that my brothers would get paid to bring me back home from practice and games. The sport fields were not always women friendly and safe. Of course as a kid, I always managed to sneak out and play football, basketball or in the circus as much as I could. The only place I could play safely was at school. I think going to school was so much fun for me because I could actually play as much as I wanted without worrying about getting in trouble. Though I was one of the very few girls who

played with boys, I enjoyed every minute of it. As a kid, I did not think about anything but to play.

Everything changed once I get to my teenage years. I started wondering why I was willing to put up with such a hostile environment to just to be able to play football. I wondered what was it about the field and the ball that made me think that it was worth taking all the risk. I soon discovered the answer: it was the one place that I have always been myself.. It was the one place I could go to escape the reality of living under such high social pressure. Sport was my go-to when I was down, happy or felt like I needed support. In my mid-teens, I was fortunate to have had an opportunity to move to Swaziland to study in an environment with kids from all around the world.

Waterford Kamhlaba UWCSA was the first place where I can say I received endless support and mentorship for my love of sport. The institute provided quality sport facilities for practice and games for both men and women. This was the kind of space that I had always searched for, so I did not hold myself back from any opportunity to be active. I participated in the school football, basketball, volleyball and track-and-field teams. I also developed a strong love for coaching youth sports. Since then I have been fortunate to continue to participate in sport at a competitive level at Earlham College in the U.S. and am now working as an assistant coach on a football team in Finland.

Personally, growing up in a country and culture that limits success only to excellent academic performance while restricting women's participation in sports has contributed to my interest in helping promote change. Through sport I began to understand the extent of my capability to challenge this pre-existing system I grew up in. Sport has enabled me to identify myself as an individual and build meaningful relationships with those around me, including my coaches, teammates, opponents and supporters. Sport has helped me overcome multiple personal struggles and taught me the importance of work ethic, accountability, setting goals, group work, and most importantly, giving back to the community.

Sport has also helped me to challenge the existing societal norms in Ethiopia that restrict women from excelling in all aspect of their lives. I have taken part in numerous community service projects in Ethiopia, Swaziland and the U.S. that use sport and PA as tools to advocate for immigrants, low-income families, orphan children and children with disabilities.

As a result of these experiences, I have developed a strong interest in studying sport and PA participation among young girls and women in Ethiopia. Through my research I want to share the experiences of the most vulnerable and marginalized members of our community through their own voices. I want to empower young girls and women by providing them with a platform where they can reflect their experiences of how sport and PA are influencing their lives. By doing so, I hope the research will be able to raise awareness and increase sport and PA participation of young girls and women in Ethiopia.

Unlike the numerous research projects that explore sport and PA experiences from the perspective of Western ideology, this research is aimed at understanding how sport and PA can be used to bring about social changes in the developing world. The research topic resonates with my belief that society is responsible for providing the foundation and assistance that enables young girls and women to find a way to self-identify and find purpose in their lives. It is our responsibility to create a safe, inclusive and affordable environment in which young girls and women can enjoy the fruits of their sport and PA participation. This research is my contribution to the ongoing effort to give women voice, presence and influence within their communities.

Road Map

The first chapter of this research will introduce readers to the social, historical, political and cultural context of Ethiopia. Additionally, it will provide information regarding women's status within the Ethiopian society. It will also touch upon the history and culture of sport and physical activity and participation in Ethiopia.

The second chapter of this research will provide an in-depth understanding of sport and physical activity in the empowerment of girls and women. One focus will be on explaining different types of sport and PA definitions and practical meanings. It will also focus on how sport has developed as a tool for development within the 21st century. Furthermore, it will provide different lenses through which to define and measure empowerment within the context of sport and physical activity. Lastly, it will identify and explain the Zimmerman's empowerment theoretical framework.

The third chapter will guide the reader through the research methodology. This section will demonstrate the research questions, implementation and procedures. Additionally, the selection and sampling of research participants, interview translations, coding procedure and

researcher roles will be explained so that the reader better understands the mechanisms behind the data collection and analysis process.

The fourth chapter will provide an in-depth analysis of the research. First, the focus will be on the empowerment outcomes of sport and PA participation. The second part will focus on the empowering process of sport and physical activity participation. Third, it will discuss potential disempowerment outcomes of sport and PA experiences. It concludes with a summary of the main findings of the research.

The fifth chapter is a discussion of the research findings, on the empowerment and disempowerment experiences of young girls and women, and how those experiences fit into the context of their lives within the Ethiopian society. Furthermore, alternative ways to promote sport and physical activity in the context of Ethiopia will be discussed. This is followed by an acknowledgement of the limitations of this research as well as considerations for future research.

1.1 The Ethiopian Society and Physical Activity: Historical, Political, and Cultural Context



Map 1. Ethiopia

around 21 million Ethiopians live in the urban areas (Worldometers, 2017). Ethiopia's Gross Domestic Product is estimated to be 61,54 billion dollars and its Gross National Income Per Capita is 590 dollars. In addition, in the last decade the Ethiopian economy has grown by 8%-10% and is ranked fifth fastest growing economy in the world. Almost 80% of Ethiopia's population is still employed in the agricultural sector, but the services have surpassed agriculture as the principal source of GDP. Regardless of this economic success, Ethiopia still remains one of the poorest countries in the world as a result of the rapid population growth (World Bank 2017).

The predominant religion of the country is orthodox (43.5%), followed by muslim (33.9%) and then protestant (19.5%) (CIA Factbook, 2007). Two main languages are spoken in Ethiopia; Oromo, the official working language in the State of Oromia (33.8%), and Amharic, the official national language (29.3%). In addition, smaller populations speak Somali (6.2%), Tigrigna (Tigrinya) (5.9%), Sidamo (4%), Wolaytta (2.2%), Gurage (2%), Afar (1.7%), Hadiyya (1.7%), Gamo (1.5%), Gedeo (1.3%), Opuuo (1.2%), Kafa (1.1%), other (8.1%) (CIA Factbook, 2007).

Ethiopia, formerly known as Abyssinia, is the oldest independent country in Africa and one of the oldest in the world - dating back at least 2,000 years (Chappell et al., 2000). It shares borders to the northeast with Eritrea and Djibouti, to the east and southeast with Somalia, to the southwest with Kenya, and to the west and north with Sudan (Map 1).

With a population of roughly 104 million, Ethiopia has the second largest population on the continent of Africa and twelfth largest in the world. Of the 104 million

Since Ethiopia defeated Italy in 1941, the country has been under constitutional monarchy and has experienced recurring wars and famine. For example, in the 1973-1974 famine, also known as “Red Terror”, an estimated 300,000 people died. The country experienced another devastating famine between 1984-1985 that took the lives of one million citizens (Human Rights Watch 1992). In 1991 the country went under the leadership of Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front and a new constitution was developed. Since the mid 1990’s the country has been in an endless border dispute with Eritrea and border clashes which have turned into full scale war. The two countries officially separated in 2002. Despite the development of the democratic political system, the 2005 election lead to violent protests over a number of months. Regardless of the political instability, in September of 2007 Ethiopia celebrated the start of a new millennium, following the Coptic Orthodox Church. Since then the country has reestablished tension with neighboring countries, including Eritrea and Somalia. As of 2016, Ethiopia has been experiencing the highest anti-government protest in history, which has led to the death of 140 civilians. As a result, the government has declared a six-month state of emergency and the country is experiencing an 8%-10% decrease in its economic growth (BBC 2016).

1.2 Average Ethiopian and Women in Ethiopian Society

It is very important to note that Ethiopia is still considered a developing country, even though in the past ten years the economy has experienced extensive growth. This has mostly been due to the agriculture and manufacturing sector, such that the economy has increased from 5.4% in to 10.8% in 2014-2015 (World Bank 2016). This economic development in return has enabled the country to reduce the percentage of the population that was living under extreme poverty from 55.3% in 2000 to 33.5% in 2011 (World Bank 2016). Similarly, International Labor Office reports that three different census conducted between 1999 to 2010 show that there is a steady increase in the total working force population of the country (ILO, 2013). Correspondingly, the Ethiopian Gross National Income has increased from \$550 in 2014 to \$590 in 2015. Despite this economic development, in 2010 an estimated 34% of the Ethiopian population lived under the poverty line, earning an estimate of \$1.90 per day, which is equivalent to 43.49 birr (World Bank, 2011). This disturbing fact means that one third of the population lives under two dollars per day, the result of which is that women in Ethiopia still hold especially

low economic status within the society. This is mainly as a result of a higher rate of unemployment for women than men in urban areas and an alarming increase in youth unemployment, especially for women. In addition, Ethiopia faces major ethical issues with regards to the use of child labour, as children between the age of 5-17 are commonly used in the production of goods and services in the country (ILO, 2013.)

Concerning education in Ethiopia, there has been a significant improvement in adult literacy between 2005 and 2010. According to the International Labour Office report, the adult literacy rate for males has increased from 50% to 72% and 27% to 70% for women. Similarly the percentage of children out of school has dropped by 13% between 2005 and 2010 and there has been a significant increase in the percentage of secondary school graduates. Similarly, higher education graduation rates have increased at a higher rate. However, the statistics from the International Labour Office provide evidence that women in Ethiopia have limited access and success in education in comparison to men. (ILO, 2013) Along with the continuous increase in the country's population, the situation is getting worse for young girls and women. As of 2015, a total of 49% of the population above the age of 15 can read and write; 57% of this are men and 41% are women (CIA Factbook, 2015). Further, to this day almost half of the country's total adult population is still illiterate and it is not surprising that Ethiopia is ranked 173 out of 187 countries in the Education Development Index (UNDP, 2013). Though the country spent almost 4.5% of its GDP on education in 2013, the effort was still insufficient to increase the accessibility and quality of education at all levels. As a result it is not surprising that an average Ethiopian spends only 8 years in formal education (CIA Factbook, 2013). With the alarming increase in the total population of the country, this will only get worse.

With a population of roughly 104 million (Worldometers, 2017), Ethiopia also faces endless obstacles to providing adequate health services around the country. For instance, the doctor-to-population ratio was estimated to be one doctor for every 38,000 patients in 2008 and 2009 (ILO, 2013). This shows a lack of qualified doctors and resources to service the general public. In rural areas qualified medical personnel is even more scarce. The international Labor Office report below shows an increase in the percentage of the working-age population affected by HIV (ILO, 2013). To this day HIV, Tuberculosis and malaria are the leading causes of mortality in Ethiopia.

Further, regarding violence against women continues to be a major concern. According to WHO, an estimated 71% of women in Ethiopia reported physical and or sexual violence committed by an intimate partner in their lifetime (WHO, 2005). Another concerning issue for young girls and women in Ethiopia is child marriage. The UNICEF 2016 publication on this issue has found that, among married girls aged between 12 to 24 years in the Young Adult Survey, almost 7% of the girls were married at the age of 10 and nearly 27% of the girls were married between the age of 11 and 14 (Erulkar et al., 2010 & UNICEF 2016). Though in Ethiopia there has been significant progress so, that young women are marrying later than their counterparts did three decades ago (the average age of marriage was around 19 years old in 2010 where as it was 15 years old in 1985) (UNICEF, 2013), there is far more work to do to break the cycle of early marriage in the nation.

Despite improvements in economic development, employment, and literacy rate, Ethiopia still has one of the highest gender gaps in the world. As reported by the Gender Gap Report 2015, out of the total 145 countries, Ethiopia was ranked 124th, while Kenya and Uganda were 48th and 58th respectively. Surprisingly, over the last five years Ethiopia's progress to close the gender gap has been significantly slow (World Economic Forum 2015). This report also shows that between the year 2006-2015 there are considerably higher gaps regarding economy, education, health and politics between women and men in Ethiopia. All the above reports shows that regardless of the economical and political development of Ethiopia, in most cases young girls and women are not benefiting from such progress. Accordingly, their experiences in society are significantly different than men's experiences in many ways.

1.3 History of Sport and Physical Activity in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is divided into 14 ethnically oriented regions. An estimate of 80 tribes and ethnic groups reside in Ethiopia, of which the Oromo and Amhara tribes account for 34% and 29% (CIA Factbook, 2007). All these tribes have long histories of fascinating traditional sport and board games. The traditional sports, such as "*Feres Gugis*" (horse racing), "*Dula Miktosh*" (fencing), "*Wana*" (swimming) and "*Gibgib*"(wrestling) are sports that are physically demanding and require fine skills and agility to take part in them. In addition, sports such as "*dula*" (stick), "*gorade*" (sword) "*tor*" (spear) are those that engage the skillful handling of

weapons and hand-to-hand combat. These traditional sports linked sportsmanship with warrior skills and battleship in early Ethiopian history. On the other hand, there are also sports such as “Gena” (Ethiopia hockey), which is one of the oldest and most popular outdoor sports, which is played during Ethiopian Christmas. Ethiopia also has a few recognizable board games such as “*Senterej*” (Ethiopia chess) and “*Gebta*” (Mancala) which test players tactics and strategies. These boardgames also carry societal status, as they are only played among peers of similar class, age, gender and affiliation (Getahun, 2002).

The organized sport structure in Ethiopia ties to the early 20th century when Western-modeled schools in Addis Ababa developed a curriculum of sport education in schools. The Monarchy encouraged this development by organizing annual gymnastics exhibits on Christmas for school children in Addis Ababa. Alongside gymnastics, in 1929 school sport exhibits were expanded to include an annual track and field sport day. The core purpose of the establishment of sport was for character building programs to raise men of strength and integrity. Slowly these sports also developed close ties with churches, local factories and youth clubs (Chappell et al., 2007).

Ethiopia authorized its first sport governing body in 1939 called “Sport Office”, which was responsible for organizing football competitions between school and church-organized sport clubs. However, the rise in the demand for sport competitions within the city of Addis Ababa and surrounding areas led to the development of “Ethiopian School Sport Association” in 1938 and “National Sport Federation” in 1940 (Chappell et al., 2007). Soon after the “National Confederation of Sport”, which was run and organized by volunteers, was created in 1941 to promote regional and international sport. The 1950’s mark Ethiopia’s progress in its international presence in the world of sports. In 1952 the Ethiopian “National Confederation of Sport” became an official member of FIFA, and the African Football and Basketball Federations in 1956. 1956 was also the first time Ethiopia competed in the Olympic games. Despite the development of significant sport organizations nationally and internationally, sport development in Ethiopia was delayed due to the lack of adequate resources, and existed under the control of the government (Chappell et al., 2007).

However, with the introduction of socialism in the 1970’s, sports became even more centralized under the control of government. In 1976 the “Commission of Physical Education and Sport” was formed and responsible for developing sport policies; establishing sport clubs

and organizations; planning and executing sport on a national and international level; representing the country at the international conferences; organizing a national system of sport and drafting a sport calendar (Chappell et al., 2007). In this era the aim of sport and physical activity (PA) participation was to 'prepare the younger generation for a long and happy life, highly productive labour for the benefit of society, and for the defence of the socialist homeland' (Riordan, 1999, p.52).

The 1980's era of sport and physical activity was used for inspiring a new generation to combat national struggles, improve national production, and to promote health and friendship between nations and nationalities. Additionally, the centralized sport governance used sport as a means to unite the different tribal and ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Sport was a source for national pride and fueled the country's attempt to gain international recognition in the world of sport and beyond (Riordan, 1999). Thus, from the 1960's to the 1980's the country was able to create and strengthen national identity and unity through sport. Sports idols such as Abebe Bikila, who won the first Olympic gold medal by back African nation in 1960, were national heroes and role models for future generations. This all resulted in the development of school sport programs for health promotion and discipline directed towards the next generation of athletes (Chappell et al., 2007).

In 1991 Ethiopia became a democratic state, which led to the decentralization of sport organizations. In 1996 the "National Sport Committee" was established, independent of the national government, to monitor the different sport federations. The National Sport Committee is responsible for the introduction of sport development; building sport facilities, conducting research in sport sciences and medicine, and creating environments that promote healthy and active behavior. The other important sport governing body in Ethiopia is the Ethiopian Olympic Committee which is responsible for upholding the regulations of the International Olympic Committee, leading the national team in Olympic competitions, fostering relationships with other olympic associations, encouraging the "sport for all" policy of the IOC, supporting the National Sport Federations, and keeping Olympic records and other relevant documentation (IOC, 2017).

1.4 Sport and Physical Activity Participation in Ethiopia

As discussed earlier, school has played a significant role in the development of sport and physical activities in Ethiopia since the early 1900's. However, it was only in the 1960's that Ministry of Education was given the responsibility of training physical education teachers so that they could organize school-based sport and physical activity. Following this, Ethiopia established its first physical education institute, Kotebe College of Physical Education, in Addis Ababa, which started its full four-year degree curriculum in 1991. Since then physical education has been made mandatory in all schools across the country. Even in universities and colleges students are required to participate in weekly sport classes (Chappell et al., 2007).

Since the 1960's Ethiopia has also gained glorious status on a global scale in athletics, particularly in long distance running. The country holds 53 olympic medals, of which 22 are gold, 9 are silver and 22 are bronze, and was ranked 35th in the 2016 Olympic Ranking (IOC, 2017). However, this international success in athletics is not reflective of participation in sport and physical activity around the country. The vast majority of Ethiopians still live in rural areas, under poverty, and lack resources and management in sports sectors. This in return has impacted the sport and physical activity participation at local, regional and national levels. Similar to other African countries, participation levels among women and girls in Ethiopia in sport and PA is significantly less than men. This might be a result of the social and cultural structure of the country, which requires women to spend more time on their family commitments, such as childcare and household activities, than men. Furthermore, women have limited economic independence from men which also influences their ability to take part in sport and PA (Hargreaves, 2002). Regardless, the country continues to see inspirational and motivating women athletes at the national and international level who are becoming the driving force for making sport safe, accessible and affordable for future generations. Although this progress is slow and participation rates are lower than wanted, women in Ethiopia are taking part in sports such as basketball, handball, volleyball, etc. and there are annual national competitions which are organized to scout future athletes that could represent the country in international competitions (Getahun, 2009). All that said, it is important to mention that currently there is no official research on the estimated number of people in sport and PA in Ethiopia.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The aim of this section is twofold: the first part will provide an understanding of sport and physical activities in the empowerment of girls and women. First, the focus will be on defining sport and physical activity and how sport has developed as a tool for development, particularly in the 21st century. The focus is also to provide a brief analysis regarding “Sport Development” and “Sport For Development” and the core difference between the two approaches to development. This is followed by different perspectives in the definitions of empowerment and measurements of the empowerment of women. There will follow a critical evaluation of empowerment outcomes of sport and physical activity participation. Throughout, the main focus will be on sport and physical activities in relation to the empowerment of girls and women and on research evidence to support or reject the existing claims. The second part of this literature review will discuss Zimmerman’s theoretical framework for empowerment.

2.1 Sport and Physical Activity

Sport and physical participation are socially constructed activities whose core meaning and content have changed throughout history in different societies and cultures. As a result there are different definitions and meanings attached to sport, exercise and physical activity. Because this study aims to explore empowerment through sport and physical activity, it is necessary to make distinctions between sport, physical activity and exercise.

Physical activity is “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure” and is positively correlated with physical fitness (Caspersen et al., 1985). Physical activity serves as an umbrella for all types of body movement within sport, exercise, chores, work, recreation, commuting, and spontaneous movement (Merchant et al. 2007). On the other hand, exercise as a subset of physical activity is “planned, structured and repetitive bodily movement, the objective of which is to improve or maintain physical fitness” (Caspersen et al., 1985). Sport is considered a subset of exercise that can be performed on an individual or team level, under certain rules and defined goals (Khan et al., 2012).

Others define sport as all forms of physical activity, “casual or organized participation, aimed at improving physical fitness and mental well being, forming social relationships, or obtaining results in competition at all levels” (DES, 1991, p.11). Additionally, sport has come to

be seen as a possible tool for the development of communities, particularly in the so-called developing world.

2.2 Sport Development and Sport for Development

In the last two decades sport and physical activity has gained recognition as a tool to promote socioeconomic aspects of society. There are two core efforts to use sport and physical activity for sustainable social development around the world. The first approach is Sport for Peace, which uses sport and physical activities to “advocate reconciliation and intercultural communication in regions of conflict” (Kidd 2008, p.372). This approach sees sport as a universal language which can be a powerful tool to promote peace, tolerance and understanding by bringing people together across boundaries, cultures and religions. The United Nations (UN) claims in regards to sport, “teamwork, fairness, discipline, respect for the opponent and the rules of the game are understood all over the world and can be harnessed in the advancement of solidarity, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence” (UN).

The second approach is Sport for Development, which uses sport and physical activities to enable nations to reach the United Nations Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs) (Kidd 2008). Sport development programs at different levels play two important roles: the “development of sport in communities” and the “development of community through sports” (Coalter 2002). According to the first view, development of sport in communities primarily works to tackle barriers which inhibit target groups or communities from participating in sport and physical activity (Coalter 2002). These development projects are mostly collaborative efforts between educational institutions, sport clubs and communities (Coalter 2002; Kidd 2008). On the other hand, the “development of community through sport” aims at using sport and physical activity for social inclusion, thus improving the fitness and wellbeing of specific target groups, enhancing community safety by attempting to reduce violence and crime, improving access to quality education and increasing class attendance and performance, establishing social and technical skills of participants for better employment opportunities, and assisting in community development (Coalter 2002; Kidd 2008). Collaboration on these programs involves work between local and international NGOs, the minister of health, educational organizations, and local and central government in order to bring social changes (Coalter 2002; Kidd 2008). Unlike sport development, sport for development specifically focusses on enabling communities and

nations to reach the United Nation MDGs through sport (i.e education for young girls and women to reduce sexual violence, decrease child mortality, etc.).

That said, research shows that in order for “Sport for Development” to successfully work, “Sport Development” has to be in place first (Skinner et al., 2008). This means that one has to develop proper sport facilities and environments in order to then use the sport for development purposes. In this way, sport can become a powerful tool to access quality education, improve the safety of communities and build strong social cohesion, as well as specifically tackle issues of women and children and other disempowered members of the community. Empowerment is a prime target of sport for development because it is an all-encompassing value that can bring concrete improvements in people’s lives.

2.3 Concept of Empowerment

Empowerment is an evolving concept in the work of social development and sustainable changes around the globe. Empowerment is defined and explained differently according to its purpose and target groups. Empowerment can be defined as “a voluntary, collaborative process in which power and resources are redistributed and shared with the aim of enhancing individual and collective capacities, efficacy, and well-being, addressing inequities, and where poverty is implicated, promoting social and economic justice. It helps individuals, families, groups, and entire neighborhood communities” (Lawson 2005, p.147).

The United Nations similarly defines empowerment as a “process of enabling people to increase control over their lives, to gain control over the factors and decisions that shape their lives, to increase their resources and qualities and to build capacities to gain access, partners, networks, a voice, in order to gain control” (Chant, 2012, p.1999). Empowerment is also “about the power to redefine our possibilities and options and to act on them. It is the process of broadening and enhancing the capacities of people both at an individuals or groups level to make strategic life choices and transform these choices into desired actions and outcomes” (Haile et al., 2012, p.257). All in all, these definitions emphasize that empowerment aims at transforming the lives of individual or collective targets groups through active decision-making and aims to broaden opportunities to make sustainable changes to end societal and/or institutional inequality.

Empowerment could also be defined and studied as a process by which people, organizations and communities achieve a sense of control (Rappaport, 1984; Wallerstein, 2006; Zimmerman, 2000). Empowerment is seen as an ongoing interaction process centred in the local community in which people who lack power and resources gain access to greater control through collaboration, critical reflection, mutual respect and group participation in their local community (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989; Zimmerman, 2000). From an individual level of analysis, empowerment can be seen as a process where individuals learn to see a closer correspondence between their goals and a sense of how to achieve them, and a relationship between their effort and life outcomes (Mechanic, 1991). All of the above definitions of empowerment suggest that participation with others (participants and organizers within the local community) to reach a certain goals, attempts to gain access to resources and critical awareness of the existing socio-economical and political environment are core components of empowerment.

Thus, the three key components of empowerment are power (power over, power with and power to), resources (material, social or human) and collaboration (Lawson, 2005). Empowerment has the potential to redistribute power or share the power between members of the community or target group and it can be generated through endless social interaction (Gutiérrez et al., 1991; Gutiérrez et al., 1995). In a way, power provides means of accomplishing one's goal, influencing others actions or perception toward oneself or others, and allocating or distributing resources within families, communities and organizations (Gutiérrez et al., 1995; Lawson 2005).

Empowerment also has the potential to enable access to, and redistribution of resources (i.e money and non-monetary exchange) which are strongly related to power (Lawson, 2005; Kabeer, 1999). This means that it is possible to measure empowerment of a target group by evaluating the positive shift in accessibility to one or more kinds of resources within communities and organizations. Empowerment is closely tied with collaboration between different parties. These collaborative works, unlike the others key elements, can be seen as evidence of target groups needs in terms of when and where they need resources and how they plan on attaining them (Lawson, 2005; Mujijs et al., 2003). Through the three key components, empowerment can enhance the redistribution of power and resources through voluntary and collaborative processes at the level of the individual and the community to influence well-being

and address inequalities related to race, gender, socioeconomic status, etc. (Lawson, 2005). Given its many benefits, empowerment has been an important part of sport for development programs. But to appreciate how effective these programs are in promoting empowerment, one has to be able to measure it.

2.4 How to measurement Empowerment?

Similar to defining empowerment, measuring empowerment also differs according to its purpose and target groups, though it will be evident that these various forms of measurement are all closely related. The measurement tools include economic participation, economic opportunity, political involvement, educational attainment, health and sense of self.

Economic participation is one way of measuring empowerment of women. Studies argue that evaluation and analysis of the presence and participation of women in the workforce could be an indicator of empowerment because participation in the workforce leads to participation in economic family decision-making. (Lopez-Claros et al., 2005; Moghadam et al., 2005). In these studies it is evident that the economic participation of women can help them become active contributors to their household income as well as the overall development of their communities.

Economic opportunity, in the form of employment, is an alternative way of measuring empowerment of women. Studies show that through the evaluation and analysis of employment possibilities, upward mobility, opportunities within workplaces, and legal protection prior, during, and post-employment can also be indicators of empowerment (Taibi, 1994; Laschinger et al., 2004; Malhotra et al., 1997). Women who have the possibility of employment also have more influence in the broader decision-making processes at the individual, family, community and even societal level (Kabeer, 2001). Additionally, employment opportunities enable women to create different alternative sources of income which can help them to improve their socio-economic status (Mehra, 1997).

Political involvement, in the form of representation of women in the decision-making process at all levels of society, is another means of measuring empowerment. Studies reveal that the presence of women and the opportunities for women's participation in decision-making processes at the household, community and national level can assist in the measurement of their empowerment (Pennell et al., 2000; Holvoet et al., 2005). This highlights progress in the inclusion of women's voice in the formulation of policies that affect their lives at different levels.

Educational attainment and health are two other useful statistics for measuring women empowerment. Studies argue that the accessibility and quality of education is one of the keys for women to get quality jobs, and to be able to influence the development of policies within their communities and beyond (Ahmed et al., 2010; Malhotra et al., 1997). Recently, the general health and wellbeing of women has also been used as a tool for assessing their empowerment. Researches revealed that access to quality health care, adequate nutrition, contraceptives, general safety and integrity of women could be competent means of measuring women's empowerment (Kim et al., 2007 & Lopez-Claros et al., 2005).

Alternatively, some researchers favor measuring empowerment through the lense of sense of self. For example, from a liberal feminist perspective, empowerment can be measured by understanding and evaluating the process by which an individual secures a sense of self (Rowland-Serdar et al., 1991). Referring to the work of Alcoff (1988), Rowland-Sedar, et al. (1991) define empowerment as the “process in which women come to believe in their ability to construct, and take responsibility for, [their] gendered identity, politics, and choices” (p.606). In other words, the authors reiterate the importance of tracking individual progress to measure their empowerment.

Having defined the concept and measurement of empowerment, we will now see what specific empowerment benefits sport and physical activity can have.

2.5 Empowerment Outcomes Sport and Physical Activity

Much research has been done of the effects that regular physical activity and sport can have on the health and social relations of young girls and women. Broadly, the empowerment benefits relate to active/healthy lifestyles, social networks and self-confidence/sense of competence. Each will be discussed in turn in the following section.

2.5.1 Active and Healthy Lifestyle

In today's world there is an increasing concern for weight-related health crises at all ages. Among the growing concerns is the predominant increase in the number of overweight and obese people in many countries around the globe. In 2014 alone an estimated 1.9 billion adults above the age of 18 were overweight and 600 million of those were reported obese (WHO, 2016).

Different studies have shown that being obesity and overweight can contribute to the development of cardiovascular disease (Lakka et al., 2002, Franco et al., 2005; Warren et al., 2010), diabetes (Hu et al., 2003; Wilmot et al., 2012), musculoskeletal disorders (Hartman et al., 2006) and other health problems. Unhealthy eating and limited physical activity as a result of increase in sedentary lifestyle are among the contributing factors to the concerning global health issues of being obese or overweight (WHO, 2016). A study which compared sport and PA among school age children between 1977-2007 showed that there is an alarming decline in participation of PA during adolescence, especially for young women (Dumith et al., 2011).

In response to the rise of a sedentary lifestyle, sport and regular physical activity can enhance the physical, emotional and mental well-being of individuals (Khan et al., 2012; De Castro et al., 2008). For example, an active lifestyle through sport and physical activity can confer considerable cardiovascular health benefits (Boreham et al., 2000). For women particularly sport and PA can improve emotional and mental health. Studies have found that women who engage frequently in regular exercise are less likely to experience deterioration of mood (Choi et al. 1995). Furthermore, studies have shown women that engage in mindfulness and relaxation exercises see a significant decrease in stress (Tacón et al., 2004; Michalsen et al. 2005) and improved overall quality of life (Carlson et al. 2003). Moreover, studies have also shown that moderate-intensity exercises improve the quality of sleep among women (Tworoger et al., 2003; Carlson et al., 2003). Further, participation in aerobic forms of exercise could reduce anxiety and depression symptoms for women (Petruzzello et al., 1991; Paluska et al., 2000). Taken together, these studies show that sport and physical activity are a reliable way for women to improve their physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

2.5.2 Social Network

Building social networks is important for communities as well as for individuals' sense of belongingness (Putnam, 2000). Sport is common ground to promote integration through bonding and bridging social networks for female participants (Chalabaev et al., 2013). For young women between the age of 16 to 25 with immigrant backgrounds (i.e Norway) sport participation has led to the development and growth of their social network. By spending a lot more time together with their teams, participants were able to further strengthen the existing relationships with their friends and classmates. For others, sport provides the opportunity to know someone they did not

know before. These social network experiences provide crucial social support and help participants to learn new cultures from each other (Walseth, 2008).

Sport and physical activity participation is also known to facilitate women in building friendships and strengthening peer networks, and to engage in more frequent and meaningful contact with peers (Sawka et al., 2013; Strauss et al., 2003). Intercollegiate women athletes claimed that their participation in college sport has enabled them to build especially strong and unique relationships within their teams and the college athletic community. Their endless interactions within sports practices, competitions, traveling and other social events provides them with further group support beyond athletics. Women athletes are able to connect with other athletes through similar sport background, shared understanding of sport pressures and problems related to sports, which help them to feel a strong sense of belongingness within their community (Blind et al., 1994).

The effects of social networks within sports also enable marginalized women to better integrate. For example, lesbians in the Netherlands stated that sport has enhanced their social network and integration within their community (Elling et al., 2003). Participants claimed that their interactions in sport alongside with their community subculture became a reliable source of friendship. As a result of these social networks through sports participation, participant involvement in, and enjoyment of social activities and tournaments has increased enormously (Elling et al., 2003).

However, despite common belief, research on the influences of sport on bonding and bridging social networks has produced conflicting results. For example, researchers found that participating in sport can also create the sense of “like us” and “outsiders” in social networks of women (Coalter 2007; Putnam 2000). Hall (2000) found that women of color often left their sport because of the level of discomfort they faced as girls or women of color. Being the minority within sport exposes women of color to social stereotypes regarding their race, unwanted comments, and exclusion from social events. Women of color felt they were always expected to adapt to the white standards while their white teammates failed to make an effort to connect with them and learn about their culture. This in return results in some women of color choosing to leave their sport clubs.

Similarly, another study on cliques in sport, which focused on the perceptions of intercollegiate athletes, found that sport has provided athletes with social networks of others

athletes to whom they could relate. However, the study also revealed that the social networks were segregated according to athletes' age (i.e first years vs. third and fourth year), skill level (i.e team starters vs bench players) and individual similarities (i.e athletic, academic, religious). The formation of intended and unintended subgroups within sports teams, for both female and male participants who do not fit into one of the subgroups, led to them feeling left out or ignored within social and sports-related situations. Some participants claimed that, at times, the cliques in their sport weakened their team bond and performances. Others reported that the cliques became sources of emotional stress and hindered their interest in maintaining their involvement in sport (Martin et al., 2015).

2.5.3 Self confidence and Sense of competence

Participating in sport and PA can enable women to feel confident and competent within the world of sport and beyond. Research has shown that there is a positive correlation between sport participation and development of self-esteem among girls and young women (Jackson et al., 1986). Sport puts women participants in an environment which challenges them not only physically but also psychologically. This environment can provide opportunity to positively impact women participants' physical competence, body image, and attitude toward one's own ability (Pedersen et al., 2004 & Richman et al., 2000). A study conducted on young women who are currently participating in college sport and PA found that, when referring back to their high school experience, participating in sport and PA made them feel physically strong, coordinated and fit, all of which increased their sense of physical competence. Furthermore, their independence and self-motivation during their sport participation also helped them believe in their own ability and develop an assertive attitude (Greenleaf et al., 2009). Research suggests that these self-perceptions of physical condition (i.e fit and coordinated) and sport-related competence (i.e ability to compete) are strongly associated with continuing physical activity participation in the short and the long run. (Crocker et al., 2006).

Similarly, research on the "girl only" sport, gender and development (SGD) martial arts program in Uganda revealed that young women participants felt that the program significantly improved their self-confidence. Participants claimed that martial arts boosted their physical fitness level and provided them social skills including respect, obedience, and knowledge of how to work effectively with others. Participants' sense of confidence and competence, as a result of

their participation in martial arts, has made them feel that they are capable of fighting for their equality and safe living environments (Hayhurst, 2014).

Another study on women college athletes pointed out that their sport participation significantly contributed to their sense of self-efficacy. This means that sport has influenced participants beliefs in their ability to have control over circumstances on and off the field (Blind et al., 1994). In addition, the study revealed that, through their practices and persistent effort in sport, participants were able to reassure themselves of their capacity to accomplish their goals and to be independent. Furthermore, participants' commitment, dedication and motivation enhanced their sense of competence and accomplishment, not only in sport, but in other parts of their life such as school and work (Blind et al., 1994).

However, as much as sport and PA have been shown to enhance the development of self-confidence and sense of competence among women, other research has shown that sport and PA participation can also have a negative impact. Young girls and women who had experienced some form of sexual harassment and abuse within sport, by their teammates, coaches or spectators, reported major loss of self-confidence and competence, both in their sport-related performances and in life generally (Brackenridge, 1997). In addition, a study on girls and women in sport and physical activity within a school setting found that negative experiences, such as more limited access to facilities than boys, not being good enough in some sport, and aggressive competitiveness resulted in a loss of self-confidence, as well as quitting in some cases (Coakley et al., 1992).

Sport and PA can also create an environment where women participants receive negative feedback from their coaches, teammates, opponents, spectators and others. One study showed that women participants started to develop a low sense of competence and confidence based on the low frequency of encouragement they received compared to the correcting of skills-related errors that they received from their coaches. For others, if the quality of feedback that their coaches provided them in relation to their teammates was lower, it had a higher negative affect on their sense of confidence to compete and perform better (Allen et al., 1998.)

It is also common for women to feel high pressure in their participation, performance and progress in sport and PA. It is understandable that such a demanding environment could negatively influence women's self confidence and sense of competence. A former competitive swimming female athlete revealed that consistent significant increase in load of trainings,

competitions and diet recommendation on her diet for weight loss by her coach made her question her ability to compete in such a high level and also resulted in the loss of strong self confidence. Soon after, she developed an eating disorder which ultimately led to an end of her sport career (Jones et al., 2005). Furthermore, in some cases this high pressure in sport and PA has led to the development of an attitude of perfectionism among some women participants. Those women who underperform or do not reach their target goals can develop higher levels of cognitive anxiety and low levels of self-confidence in sport and in day-to-day life (Koivula et al., 2002).

Body image has become a hot topic within sport and PA of women. Girls and women could experience endless pressure from their peers, families, coaches and others toward their body and this can have significant influence on their self confidence and competence. One school organized physical education program revealed that girls felt endless pressure for their body to be an active, healthy type, not due least to the gazes of male counterpart and teacher. This made them doubt their competence in sport (Evan et al., 2006). In other cases, women who also felt that their body was unacceptable within the sport environment revealed that it has significantly impacted their confidence in their ability to perform; in some cases internalizing these insecurities pushes women participants to actively remove themselves from situations where their body might be on public display or quit their participation as a whole (Robyne 2004 & Wild et al., 2004).

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Marc A. Zimmerman's (2000) empowerment theoretical framework is constructed of three mutually interdependent levels of empowerment - individual, organizational and community. These three levels of empowerment are both a cause and consequence of each other. From this theoretical framework perspective, it is important to make clear distinction between empowerment processes ("empowering") and empowerment outcomes ("empowered") so that the structure through which it supports and creates empowerment of participants is understood.

Zimmerman (2000) argues that empowerment process are ones in which "attempts to gain control to obtain needed resources, and critically understand one's social environment are fundamental" (p.47). Empowerment process is empowering if it enables people's skills and abilities so that they can be the decision-makers, problem-solvers and independent at an

individual, organizational and community level. On the other hand, empowerment outcomes refer to “operationalization of empowerment so we can study the consequence of citizens’ attempts to gain greater control in their community, or the effects of interventions designed to empower participants” (p.47). Empowered outcomes also differ across levels of analysis. His study proposes empowerment process and outcomes across all the three (individual, organizational and community) level.

Table 1. A comparison of Empowering Process and Empowered outcomes across level of analysis (Zimmerman 2000, p.47)

Level of Analysis	Process (“empowering”)	Outcomes (“empowered”)
Individual	Learning decision-making skills Managing resources Working with others	Sense of Control Critical awareness Participatory behaviours
Organizational	Opportunity to participate in decision making Shared responsibilities Shared leadership	Effectively compete for resources Networking with other organizations Policy Influence
Community	Access to resources Open government structure Tolerance for diversity	Organizational coalitions Pluralistic leadership Residents’ participatory skills

In Zimmerman (2000), the individual level of empowerment is also known as psychological empowerment (PE). Zimmerman argues that the empowerment at the individual level of analysis focuses on the individual development in critical awareness of his or her surrounding and participatory behavior in individual lives and community (Zimmerman 2000). The psychological empowerment framework provides an understanding into the process through which individuals feel empowered, different experiences of empowerment and outcomes of empowerment experiences. Individual's ability to understand and influence control over their lives, their capability to critically analyse and understand one’s social and political situation and take action is the core ideology of the individual level of empowerment (Zimmerman, 2000).

The individual level of empowerment outcomes consist of three units including interactional (critical awareness of social and political environment), intrapersonal (motivation, perceived control or beliefs competence) and behavioral (participation in collective action). According to these three units of individual level empowerment, an empowered individual may believe that he or she is in a position to influence their being, observe and evaluate their surrounding and engage in actions to claim control in their lives and surroundings (Zimmerman, 2000).

Chapter 3: Method

The aim of this section is to provide step by step description of the how study data was collected and interpreted. The first section focus on research questions that aim to create an in-depth understanding in the empowerment experiences of young girls and women through their sport and PA participation. Second and third sections focus on research implementation, procedure and sampling of research participants. The fourth and fifth sections demonstrate the interview translations and coding procedure of the interview data. The final section of the chapter explains the role of the researcher prior, during and post data collection.

3.1 Research Questions

There is limited study which attempts to understand and evaluate the empowering experiences of young girls and women as a result of their sport and PA participation in Ethiopia. As a result, the present research is essential if we are to begin to understand the role that sport and PA play in the lives of young girls and women in Ethiopia. The research aims to explore the potential empowerment of young girls and women in Ethiopia as a result of their sport and PA participation, as well as how sport and PA influence other aspects of their lives. Understanding the diverse sport and PA experiences of young girls and women in Ethiopia through their voices will enable the future development of sport policies that aim to design sport environments that contribute to the empowerment of women. Therefore, this research aims to answer the following questions:

- 1) How and why do young women feel empowered through their sport and physical activity participation?
- 2) What are the possible setbacks (disempowerment) of young girls and women as a result of their participation in sport and physical activities?
- 3) What are the barriers that limit the participation of young girls and women in sport and physical activities in Ethiopia?
- 4) What are the participant's recommendations for increasing participation in sport and PA among young girls and women in Ethiopia?

3.2 Research implementation and procedure

This research uses qualitative research methods. Exploring the potential of empowerment of young girls and women in Ethiopia through sport and physical activities requires a complex and detailed understanding which can only be established by talking directly with young girls and women (See Creswell, 2007). The research encourages young girls and women to share their stories in environment with a minimum power relationships between researcher and participants. In addition, qualitative research method will help researcher to understand the contexts and or settings in which the target groups address empowerment including their home, family, work and others. (Creswell, 2007.) The case study enables research to answer “how” and “why” questions and want to contextual the living conditions and experiences of participants that relevant to investigate. Case study also enable research to uses multiple data sources such as interviews, direct observation and participant-observations to capture the experiences (Yin, 2003). Therefore this research method is adequate to enable researcher to collect and integrate data which can facilitate a well rounded understanding of research topic.

To complete the data collection, the researcher traveled to Ethiopia and conducted face-to-face interviews with participants. The prospective research participants were contacted between December 7th - 21st, 2016 and collaborated with the researcher to organize possible dates, locations and times in which to conduct the interviews. The interviews were conducted between January 5th - 26th, 2017. The interviews mostly took place in cafes, residential areas, and sport and PA fields. The interviews usually lasted between 20-45 minutes and the participants’ legal guardians and coaches were asked for their permission to sign consent forms prior to the interviews.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to collect data, in addition to with observations and note-taking throughout the interview process. The researcher used an Acer Tablet, Samsung Galaxy Phone, Pen, Pencil, and a notebook during the interviews. Then the interviews were translated from Amharic to English and transcribed in English for the data analysis process. The interviews included four different sections (Appendix 1). Each interview section allowed the researcher to understand and describe the empowerment and disempowerment experiences of young girls and women. The questions were also designed in a

way that each participants' own perceptions, regarding the influence of the empowerment and disempowerment experiences in their day-to-day life, were taken into consideration.

The first section of the interview focused on collecting information regarding basic demographics of participants and their sport experiences. This section helped the researcher to understand the participants' backgrounds, such as age, city of residency, marital status, educational background and occupation. In addition, this section also enquires about the type of sport and PA that participants engage in, how long and how often they participate, and at what level they compete or participate at.

The second and third sections of the interview asked participants to describe the sport and PA experiences that they think have empowered them or improved their capacities in some way. The interview questions in these sections also focus on connecting participants' sport and PA participation to the skills they have developed which help them in other aspects of life. For example, working and interacting with others, managing resources, and decision-making. Further questions were asked to understand the impact of sport and PA participation on participants' critical thinking, participatory behaviors, and self-efficacy. The goal of these questions was to specifically understand the connection between the skills developed through sport and PA and how those skills impact participants' day-to-day lives.

The fourth section of the interview asked participants to discuss their experiences that they think reflect the attitude of their community/society towards sport and PA participation. This section also allowed participants to discuss disempowerment experiences that they have experienced and how those experiences impacted other aspects of participants' lives. Lastly, participants were asked what would they change about their communities (for example, communal attitude, resource allocation, etc.), based on their own experiences in sport and PA, in order to create more positive experiences for, and empower, women and girls like them. In addition, it allowed participants to provide suggestions for how to create an inclusive and women-friendly sport environment.

3.3 Selection and sampling of research participants

This research focus' on young girls and women who were born, raised, and currently live in Ethiopia. Ethiopia was selected because it is a country where men and women are treated very differently due to religion, ethnicity, and tradition. Though the value and perception of women in

Ethiopia is slowly changing, the traditions and norms of the society are well-established and therefore difficult to change. The research recruited young girls and women who participate in sport and physical activity at a recreational or competitive level. At the first stage of the recruitment, the researcher used her personal network (i.e former sport clubs, friends, coaches) to find participants for the research. Then the initial participants were used to find the contact details for further potential participants.

Fifteen Ethiopian young girls and women were initially recruited, but a total of twelve Ethiopians who participate in sport and PA were interviewed. The participants' ages range from 15-20 and all participants lived in an urban area of Ethiopia (Table 2). The participants have diverse backgrounds in terms of their individual sport experiences, type of sport and PA, how long and how often that they participate, and at what level they compete/participate. All of the twelve participants were single. With the exception of two participants, all of the participants were full time students (7th to 12th grade). One participant was a full-time student with a part-time job while the other was a school dropout. Football was the most common sport that the participants played (n=12), followed by dance (n=3), track and field (n=2), tennis (n=1) and circus (n=1). Six participants participated in more than one sport and PA. And four interviewees participated in a competitive sport. In order to respect and protect participants confidentiality, participants' names and city of residence were kept out of the collected demographic information. In order to insure the confidentiality and safety of research participants as a result of the current political, social instability and insecurity in Ethiopia, researcher has decided to use a make up names and unanimous location.

Table 1: Research Participants Profile

	Age	Marital Status	Education	Occupation	Current sport or PA	How often and Long	Context	What level
1	17	Single	8th Grade	Student/part time	Football and dance	3-4/week, (3y)	NB sport	Recreational
2	17	Single	9th Grade	Student	Football	2-3/week, (3y)	NB sport	Recreational
3	17	Single	9th Grade	Student	Football	2-3/week, (3y)	NB sport	Recreational
4	15	Single	7th Grade	Student	Football	3-4/week, (2y)	Sport Club	Competitive
5	15	Single	8th Grade	Student	Football and Track	3-4/week, (3y)	NB sport	Recreational & Competitive
6	17	Single	9th Grade	Student	Football and Tennis	3-4/week, (4y)	Sport Club	Recreational
7	17	Single	8th Grade	Student	Football and dance	2-3/week, (2y)	NB sport	Recreational
8	20	Single	12th Grade Graduate	Student	Football	2-3/week, (6y)	NB sport	Recreational & Competitive
9	18	Single	11th Grade	Student	Football	4-/week, (3y)	Sport Club	Recreational & Competitive
10	19	Single	12th Grade	Student	Football and Track	3-4/week, (4y)	Sport Club	Recreational & Competitive
11	17	Single	7th Grade dropout	Part time employee	Football, dance and circus	3-4/week, (4y)	NB sport	Recreational
12	16	Single	8th Grade	Student	Football	3-4/week, (4y)	Sport Club	Recreational & Competitive

How often and long: y*= years, Context: NB*=Neighbourhood sports

3.4 Interview Translation

The research interviews were translated from Amharic to English and transcribed in English by the researcher. The interview transcriptions and translations were in English because the research analysis and publication would be in English. This was also done to save a significant amount of data processing time for the researcher. The analysis and coding also were done in English and the researcher used translated quotes (from Amharic to English) from the interviews to support claims. The researcher thoroughly checked and re-checked the translation and transcriptions in order to minimize any loss of meaning or content from the interviews. In addition, the researcher also sought the assistance of colleagues to double-check and correct the translations and transcriptions of the interviews.

Accordingly, this research is published in English. However, the research involved using Amharic for data collection from participants. That is, although the researcher developed the interview guides in English, during the data collection process the researcher translated interview questions to Amharic. This was done to ensure that participants were able to understand and take part in the research in their own native language. Following the data collection, the interview data were translated back from Amharic to English and transcribed in English for the analysis part of the research.

However, the researcher was worried about producing different qualitative research results due to the fact that data collection was done in a different language than the data analysis and overall research. Some studies suggest that basic and core concepts in one language maybe understood differently in another language, especially in the case of qualitative research, as it works with words and expressions (Squires, 2009). Similarly, Temple and Young argue that translation in qualitative research could potentially introduce bias and lead to disagreement about the translation of source data (Temple et al., 2004). The translation in qualitative research depends largely on the interpretation and understanding of the researcher, and so it is possible for certain meanings and contexts to get lost in the process of the translation. On the other hand, the native Amharic speaker made it possible to collect this kind of data.

In order to minimize this problem concerning translation in qualitative research, during the early stage of the data collection the researcher employed test interview questions for interviews with three participants. Based on the findings in these three interviews, the researcher made changes in a few of the question formats and wording. Furthermore, in the analysis stage of

the research, the researcher also used the descriptive approach to successfully capture the context and meaning of participants' responses. These strategies have enabled the research to lower the risk of losing meaning, depth and context in the translation process between the two languages.

3.5 Coding Procedure

The interview data was processed partially theory based analysis. Following the transcription and translation of the interviews, the researcher first developed abstract categories and concepts in order to begin to code the interviews. Furthermore, the researcher also developed abstract categories for the individual interview question responses. The researcher then employed constantly and consistently developed coding themes from Zimmerman's (2000) framework. In addition, the researcher also coded additional themes that arose in the data and appeared to add new insight to the research. This process uses thematization to start from the raw data and develop abstract categories and concepts for analysis (Merriam, 2009). Since this is qualitative research, the analysis heavily relies on an interpretative approach which aimed to accurately preserve participants' own understanding and interpretation of their sport and PA participation experiences and its influences on their day-to-day life. (Creswell, 2007).

3.6 Role of researcher

In qualitative studies researcher serve as an instrument in the data collection process. The data collection in qualitative studies are moderated through the researcher "human instrument" unlike quantitative studies which uses questionnaires or machines (Danzin et al., 2008). In order to successfully fulfill this role, research participants need to know and trust the researcher especially in research topic that are personal and sensitive like this study. For the purpose of the data collection, I traveled to Ethiopia for two month and spend quality time in recruiting research participants, getting to know them and conducting the interviews.

As a researcher speak the same language and understand the socio-cultural environment that the research participants are living under since researcher comes from similar background. At the early stage of the research visit researcher had the role of etic (Punch, 2013). The researcher was observing the different sport and PA practices, games, performances and day to day lives of research participants a an outsider. Once the researcher start to get to know few of

the research participants, researcher started to participate in some of their sport and PA practices. Researcher enjoyed playing and engaging in conversation with participants regarding school, families, sport and any other topic that they please. In addition, researcher also assisted coaches in organizing football practices and run few sessions. Especially in the case of team that did not have mentorship or official coach, researcher volunteered to spend few hours per week traveling with coaching the team practices, traveling games and simply supporting the participants. Within the two month, researcher slowly noticed that the role as a researcher has transformed from an outsider to becoming member of the group (Punch, 2013). Participants were happy and comfortable in researcher's presence in their practice and games because they insist that researcher is teaching them new techniques of sport and PA. Researcher also traveled to different tournaments to support their participation and observe the surrounding environment in the process. Researcher and colleagues also attended their games and provided water, food and transportation to and from the events. Researcher did not expected to be invited to spend more time with participants for walks, coffee or small friends circle. The friendly environment, passion for sport and understanding each other helped not only the participants but also researcher to feel conformable. During the interviews, researcher asked probing questions, then listen to participants responses and think and ask more probing questions to get deeper levels of conversation.

Chapter 4: Results

The research findings show that sport and PA can serve as mediums to empower young girls and women in Ethiopia, according to the the different sport and PA experiences and individual backgrounds. It is important to mention that there were also a few disempowerment experiences as a result of young girls' and women's participation in sport and PA. However, most of the research participants discussed the potential of sport and PA for empowerment and positive transformation in their lives.

Notably, the influences of sport and PA were revealed within sport and PA, beyond sport and PA, or in both. These influences within the area of sport or beyond are presented in within the empowerment outcomes and empowering process figures. The main themes, sub-themes and quotes that demonstrate the sub-themes are included in the figures. The empowerment and disempowerment outcomes were coordinated in accordance to Zimmerman's empowerment theoretical framework (see Table 1). As shown in the table, Zimmerman's empowerment theoretical framework analyses the empowerment process and outcomes at three levels: individual, organizational and community. However, this particular research focuses on the individual level of analysis in the empowering process and outcomes.

Table 1 shows the six main elements within the individual level empowerment analysis of empowerment process and outcomes. The research findings were categorized according to those main elements of empowerment process and outcomes and presented in figure 1 to figure 8. The figures consists of main themes of empowering process and empowering outcomes, disempowering outcomes and supporting quotations for each sub-theme.

4.1 Empowerment Outcomes

There were a handful of empowerment outcomes that were identified from the research participants' responses. These empowering outcomes stand for the outcomes that were gained through the experience of sport and PA participation that empowered young girls and women in their daily lives. These empowering outcomes include: general outcomes, critical awareness, participatory behavior and sense of control/self efficacy, in accordance to Zimmerman's framework (2000).

4.1.1 General Empowerment Outcomes

Empowerment outcome refers to the “operationalization of empowerment so we can study the consequence of citizens attempts to gain greater control in their community, or the effects of interventions designed to empower participants” (Zimmerman 2000, p.47). The general empowerment outcome component includes three main themes, which are young girls’ and women’s visibility and respect; discipline and active lifestyle (Figure 1).

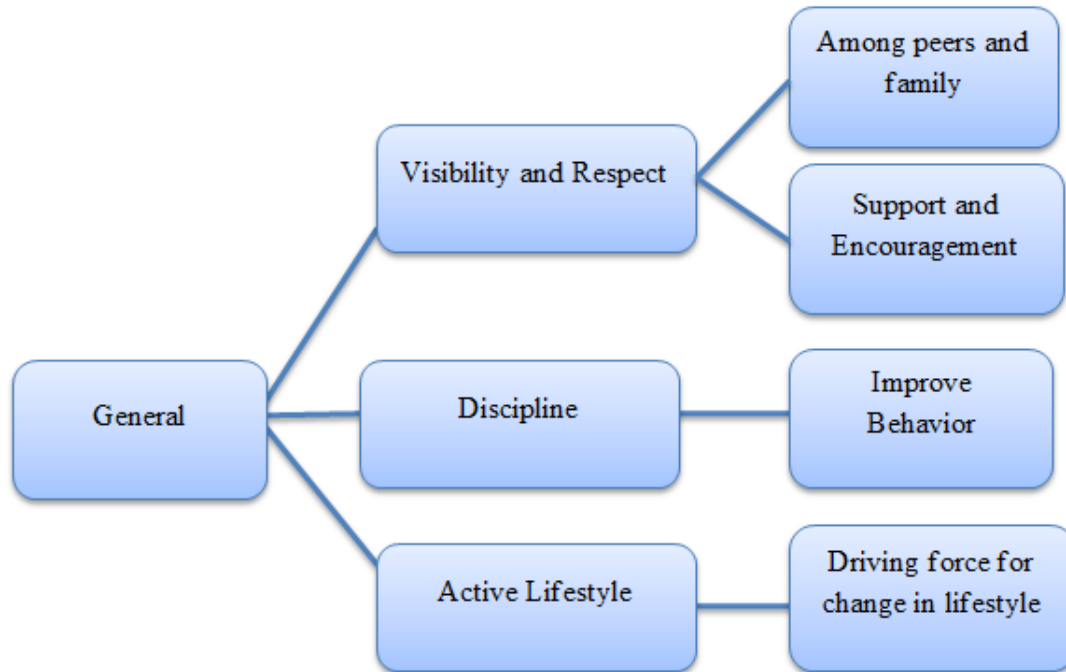


Figure 1. General Empowerment Outcomes

First, the research participants claimed that their sport and PA participation has enabled them to gain visibility and respect among their peers and families. Their active involvement in sport and physical activities allowed them to follow new and healthy paths which have allowed them to build better a name and reputation for themselves. This effort has also drawn recognition from their family and friends.

“I was nobody and my identity was non-existence if it is not linked back to my family. But since joining our football team, people have started to recognize me and even my family. People start referring to me by my name and the team that I play for.” (Betty)

Young girls and women are finally becoming visible in a community that had made their identity invisible and nonexistent for so long. Participants also reported that they are able to gain support and encouragement after participating in sport and PA. Some participants have earned immense support from teachers who recognize their efforts to excel in their school performance and participations. Others highlight the tremendous support and encouragement from their teammates and coaches in their efforts to grow as people, students and members of their community.

“I have earned the respect of my family in the new path that I am taking. They are happy that I am not surrounding myself with bad influence and that I am in a healthy and good environment” (Fana)

Second, the participants reported that they were able to learn discipline and improve their behaviour as a result of their participation in sport and PA. Their interaction with their coaches, teammates and role models in sport and PA made young girls and women to change their old habits such as drinking, fights, gambling and missing school.

“As I said before, I used to play a street football with the boys and little kids in my neighbourhood. And most days we also used to gamble. I think I used to gamble since I was 9 years old. I also used to play cards. These games were fun but also require money and sometimes I had lie to my family about needing money for school or market. However, this changed when I started playing football in the girls team. I think football is keeping me busy and I no longer have the time for the old street life.” (Hilina)

Participating in sport and PA made participants to eradicate toxic relationships and habits for good. Similar to Hilina, the football participants Mihret & Yodit had a long history of underage drinking and clubbing habits which have negatively impacted their relationships with their families and communities. They insisted that it was their sport and PA participation which helped them realize their situation and change their habits (e.g. unprotected sex, drinking and drug use) and learn discipline.

“Sport has also helped me to change myself and my surrounding by providing role models. Before starting to play football, I used to drink a lot. Even though I was underage back then I used to really enjoy drinking and being happy. I also used to go out to nightclubs and street parties.” (Yodit)

Third, the participants reported that they were able to start living a healthy and active lifestyle. Sport and PA provided participants with knowledge of body strengthening, conditioning and nutrition. The different activities in sport and PA also enabled participants to lose weight and make active progress to more healthy body conditions.

“If you know the old me, I used to be overweight and quite unhealthy. I remember how slow I was. When my family sent me to the market or street it used to take me forever to get there. People used to even make me fun of me. They used to tell me to run like a kid but I couldn’t. This wasn’t the most pleasant memory of myself because it made me sad and uncomfortable wherever I went. But since I have started playing football, I have regained my fitness and even lost my excessive weight.” (Betty)

“I saw sport as a way to improve my physical well being. Through football and track and field I have learnt the different techniques of conditioning and strengthening workouts. This in return has helped me to stay active. In turn, I feel comfortable in my daily walk to school and in helping my family. I think becoming healthy has also helped me to feel strong and confident in all aspects of my life.” (Kidist)

The tennis and football participant Rediet had been able to fight back from becoming overweight by improving her body strength, eating health eating and doing body coordination through the two sports.

“When I first started to play football I used to be in very good shape. But since I stopped playing in between my transition of two cities I noticed that I have also stopped taking good care of my body. But now that I have been playing tennis I have improved my body strength and shape. For instance my hand and legs movements and coordination has gotten relatively good. Especially when I combined the two sports, I saw an overall improvement of my body and my confidence in my ability to compete just like anyone” (Radiet)

4.1.2 Critical Awareness

This sub-component of empowerment outcomes refers to the understanding of, and one’s ability to critically evaluate, one’s individual surroundings. According to the interview data, participants sport and PA participation has stimulated their ability to evaluate their surroundings and themselves (Figure 2).

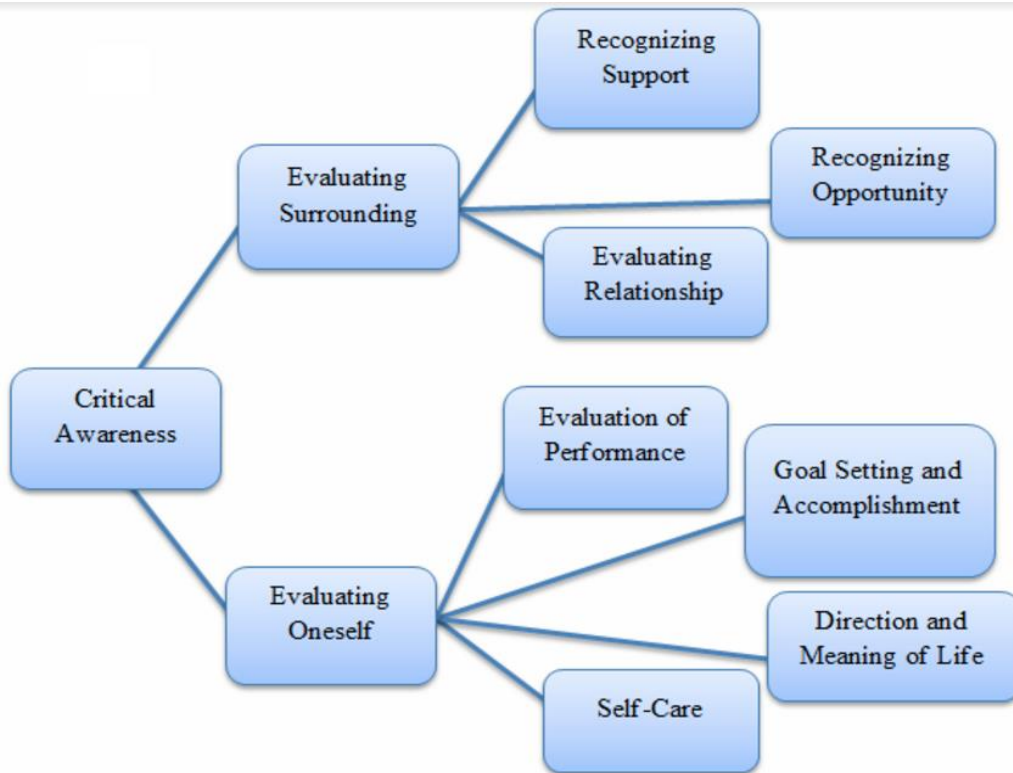


Figure 2. Critical Awareness

To start, the vast majority of the participants claimed that their participation in sport and PA had enabled them to evaluate their surroundings. For most participants, sport and PA enhanced their effort to recognize supports around them. By seeing the way their surroundings react to their attempt to participate in sport and PA, participants were able to identify where their families, friend and communities were supportive and where they were not. In some cases this recognition of support has enabled participants to understand the different areas that are traditionally women-friendly and others that are not, within sport and beyond.

“Sport makes you see your surroundings in a way that you didn’t know before. You see the way people look at you when you put your jersey on. You see the way people talk to you. And it makes you see the way society treats you. The rest is up to you to think and evaluate this interaction. Through sport you learn about what the society is supportive of and what they are not supportive of. You start to understand the places that are women-friendly and others that are not.” (Martha)

For others it was seeing the consistent encouragement and support from their coaches and teammates that made them recognize the on- and off-the-field support in their efforts for a better

life. Furthermore, sport and PA assisted participants in recognizing opportunities around them. Sport and PA exposed participants to different sport training, games and social get-togethers, which helped them to realize different possibilities in their surroundings.

“The life I live today is completely different from yesterday. I used to surround myself with a bad group of friends. And I really didn’t know that it was a toxic relationship because it was normal to me. But sport and dance environment everyday made me question myself and my environment. I ask myself if I am trying hard to be better or if I have the right surrounding for support. I sometimes wondered if I am even happy with myself and the life that I am living. I realize it would be quite stupid to think that I can always blame others for where I am in life.” (Samrawit)

“Just like preparing for a game in sport I have also started to study my environment and understand it. I am in constant conversation with myself and my surrounding. I think about my supporters including my coaches and teammates. I think about barrier such as financial problems in my sport participation and also family issues. This is important because I learn from my surroundings and identify things that support or limit girls participation in sport and PA. Now that I have seen all the positive changes in my life as a result of sport and PA I engage in discussion with my teammates, coaches and friends about ways to bring more girls to the field.” (Hilma)

“At times we go for two weeks trip in different cities and meeting endless teams; it gives us the opportunity to leave our daily struggles and dream a bit, see the bigger world that is full of endless opportunity for us.” (Fana)

Most participants also had the opportunity to travel to different cities and regions as a result of their participation in sport and PA. These experiences enabled participants to see new possibilities with sport and job opportunities outside of their usual circle.

“I have gotten to see many different cities in Ethiopia that I didn’t know about. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for people like me who don’t get these kinds of chances often...Some of my closest friend are women that I met on these trips and they have taught me so many things... Some have even shown me that there are more opportunities in bigger cities for me to play and work. These are places that I can be independent and have better access to higher clubs and better jobs to financially support my family.” (Ayda)

Additionally, sport and PA has strengthened participants’ ability to evaluate their relationships with their friends, families, teammates, coaches and communities. Participants have become critical regarding the different relationships and how the relationships influence their

behaviour, performance and progress. One football player Emu said that sport and PA enabled her to filter relationships with people that encourage her efforts to be a better student and member of her team.

“For instance, if I keep missing practices every week, I can’t expect my coach to give me playing time in games. In the same way, if I chose to surround myself with people that are bad influences on my academic, sport and work environment, then I have to be ready to pay the price. So I have been able to filter relationships that are good for my personal and sport development.” (Emu)

Second, sport and PA has permitted participants to evaluate themselves. Participants reported that sport and PA enabled them to evaluate their performances. Some participants linked evaluation of themselves directly to sport, including evaluations of performance during games, trainings and seasons.

“Once the game or practice is complete, then I get to evaluate my own performance according to the goals that I set earlier.” (Betty)

Others evaluated themselves in relation to their role in school, teams and family. Through the discussions with their teammates and coaches, participants had started to critically evaluate their responsibilities and the consequences of their actions. Similarly, sport and PA had provided an opportunity for participants to critically evaluate themselves according to their personal goals and accomplishments. Participants were motivated to think about their contribution to their team growth and development as well as themselves. Their success at evaluating oneself made them hungry to set higher goals in sport, school and social life. Their ability to critically evaluate themselves had give participants a sense of direction in life and tips on how to take good care of themselves.

“In an organized team there is sense of direction from the coaches and collaborative work with teammates. The coaches are also available to give feedback and design sessions that helps players to get better every day. Some of the skills that I learnt include goal setting, as each season we set personal and team goals. I learnt from football that I can always give my life some direction by working toward some goals.” (Emu)

4.1.3 Participatory Behavior

The participatory behaviour in this study refers to the the perceptions one had about the change in her participation in different activities as result of sport and PA. This component includes community participation, with a few subcategories, and travel (Figure 3).

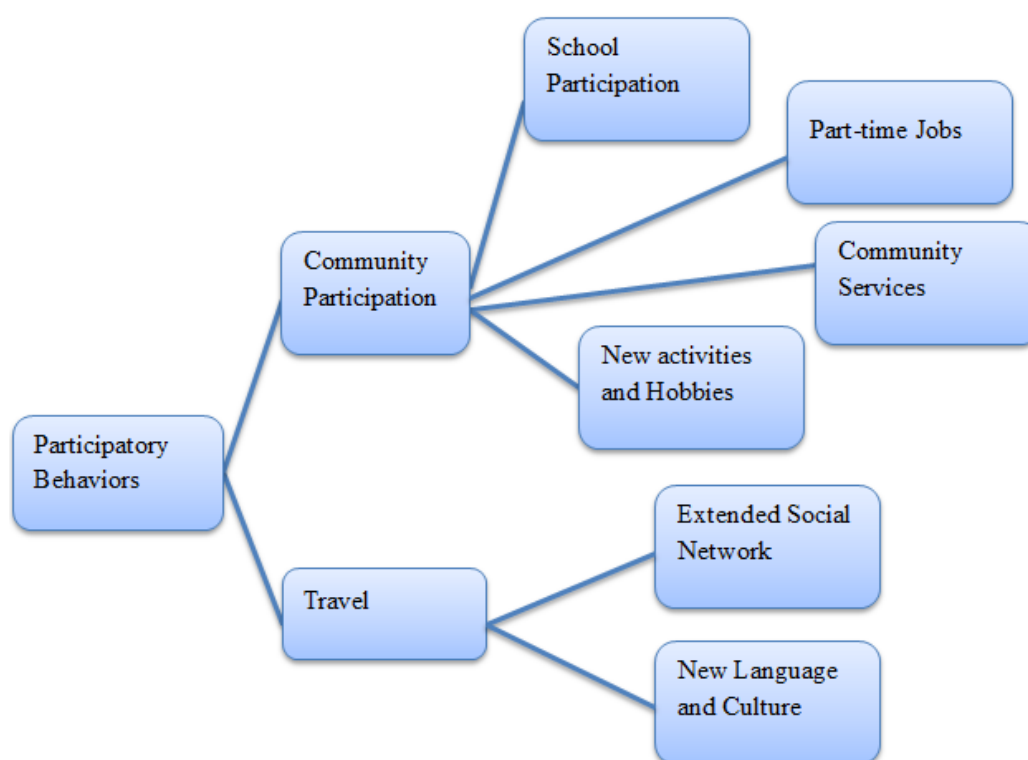


Figure 3. Participatory Behavior

Most of the participants indicated that as a result of sport and PA they have had better school participation. For example, a few participants mentioned that their coaches demanded players to be in school in order to take part in the team sport, while others indicated that coaches and teammates were paying closer attention to their academic progress, which motivated them to have a better school attendance and performance.

Similarly, a few participants were able to find part-time jobs within their community to financially support themselves and their families. Sport and PA participation has positively transformed their self-confidence, network and time management, which made it possible to seek out part-time employment.

“Since starting sport and PA I think I have started to give more value to my time. After finishing practice, I usually rush home to help my mom in cleaning, cooking and grocery shopping. I have started to go around the neighbourhood and clean people’s clothes so that I can help my mom financially.” (Samrawit)

A few participants have also started to take part in community service. A football player and dancer Beza implied that she gained her CPR and First Aid training and certification in a few sport seminars. This made it possible for her to take part in emergency responding team in her community and around the region. Some other participants have started participating in new hobbies and activities within sport and PA or others. A football player Betty said that since she started doing sport and PA, she was no longer afraid for trying new things and has become an active member within her school team. Others demonstrated their new hobbies in circus, theater and music. Above all, most of participants indicated that they had increased their community participation since starting to take part in sport and PA, as it provided them the opportunity in learning new skills related to sport and PA and they are now teaching their friends, families and other member of the community in their effort for active and healthy life.

Due to the nature of sport and PA, most participants revealed that they had more opportunity to travel to different cities and regions within Ethiopia. These traveling experiences for sport competitions or trainings have been the source of learning new cultures and languages for participants. Most participants expressed that they had expanded their knowledge about the diversity of Ethiopian cultures that they did not know before.

“My football team takes part in friendly matches or competition within our city and others. I have gotten to see many different cities in Ethiopia that I didn’t know about. These are once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for people like me who don’t get this kind of opportunity often. It was really amazing to share my culture and history of our cities to other teams in the tournaments. I have also learnt so much about other cultures and experiences of women in their sport and PA participations.” (Emu)

One football player Ayda has said that by attending a few of the friendly matches or sport competitions around different cities she had been able to engage in discussion regarding her culture, the history of her city and vice versa with other team players. Not only this, participants

stated that the traveling experiences as a result of their sport and PA participation had also enabled them to extend their social network outside of their regular surroundings. Networking and sharing their experiences in sport and PA with other young girls and women who come from different backgrounds had expanded participants' understanding.

4.1.4 Sense of control and self-efficacy

This sub-component of empowerment outcomes point out perception of control and competence. It refers to the perception of participants regarding their own ability and mastery to achieve control over themselves and their life (Zimmerman, 2000). This component includes changes in participants' mentality, confidence, and attitude (Figure 4).

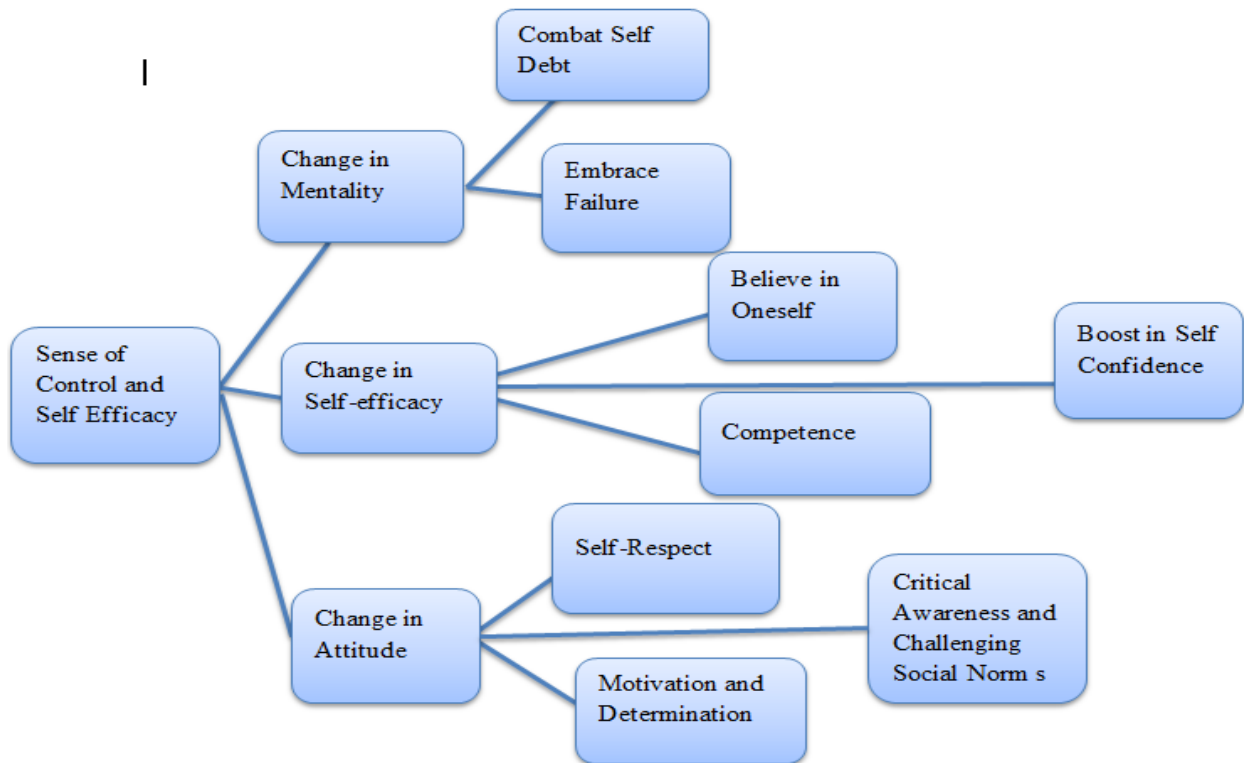


Figure 4. Sense of control and self-efficacy

Most of the participants revealed that they were able to combat their self-doubt in the current sport and PA participation and other aspects of life. For example, their improvement in their performances in sport and encouragement from their coaches helped them to challenge their inner doubts.

“Prior to doing sport I used to have a weak attitude. I used to think that I can’t do anything, especially outside of my comfort zone, and give up quickly. I used to think that I am incompetent in relation to those around me. But once I joined my team I learnt that it is almost impossible to do anything or learn by saying I can’t. I used to think that it is only those who can do it who can join team or even excel in life. I didn’t really know people can also learn something that they didn’t know about. It is the effort and consistency that can change “I can’t” to “I can”!” (Kidist)

This sense of confidence is helping participants to believe and value themselves. In addition, a few participants have mastered how to embrace failure as a result of their participation in sport and PA.

“See, in football your goal for the game might be to win but there will be days that that won’t happen. Rather than being depressed about the final outcome of the game we usually look at the process. We also look at the good effort in the game and learn from the mistakes that we have done. This in return help us to perform even better in the next game. This is a very important lesson in my life as it helped me to see my experiences as learning moments, not necessary failure.” (Emu)

One football player Emu said that losing football matches has taught her the importance of focussing on the process and performance of the game rather than the final outcome. Looking at the process and performance of their matches enables player to critically analyze how to perform better; this mentality can also be applied in other life spheres. Equivalently, there had been a positive change in the attitude of participants towards themselves and their ability to accomplish things.

Through their sport and PA participation, participants indicated that they felt a strong sense of self-confidence and competence within sport and life in general. Participants felt confident and competent in their ability to learn new sport-related skills, perform in sport and achieve their personal goals. Especially those who take part in team sport emphasize that learning with their peers and having close mentorships from their coaches had provided them with an enormous sense of confidence and competence.

“Since taking part in sport and PA my self-confidence has grown enormously. Prior to joining our neighbourhood team and dance, I used to be so scared and shy all the time. But through time in football and dance, I have started to believe in myself and my ability to improve each day. Almost in all my performances and games, I have started to believe that I can do it, that I can perform and compete, that I can accomplish my goals and learn in the process. And

this is also visible to my friends, families, teammates and coaches who also believe that there is a shift in my personality and level of confidence in myself and my ability.” (Mihret)

Their sense of confidence and competence also received a boost from others’ recognition. A few football players said that they have started to get recognition from semi-professional and professional football clubs and were recruited to play for youth teams within the sport clubs.

“I have met few coaches and players in different tournaments. I have also exchanged contacts with some hoping that we could reconnect in the future...But some coaches actually asked me to make a trip and train with their team in different cities. And I was so happy because this means that they can see the potential in me. This is a great opportunity for me and my family because it can help us to change our lives. Some coaches and players have also supported me with jerseys and shoes and encouragement to continue to play football. I learn from their trainings and different coaching styles which helps me to be a well-rounded player and also to think about my future.” (Hilina)

Participation in sport and PA has facilitated participants to have more self-respect. A few participants claimed that the boost in their self confidence and competence has enabled them to surround themselves in environments and relationships that match their daily progress. Participants are no longer willing to be submissive to unhealthy habits such as drinking and drugs and they made deliberate efforts to work toward a healthy relationships with their teammates, friends, families and community that bring them happiness and success.

“But I also realize that there are a few members of our teams that are bringing their old habits. And if I want to continue to play football in the same team I have to be careful that they don’t drag me toward these habits. And that, I hope, can lead by example for the team on and off the field. So in that trip I try to make the best of my time by building relationships with other players who were not involved in the night life. Looking back at that time I could understand why some parents wouldn’t let their daughters join a team or travel far for tournaments. Because even within the world of sport there are toxic people that could take you in a path that is not beneficial for you or others” (Hilina).

Some participants also linked a sense of control and competence to becoming motivated and determined within sport and other life domains. They believe that they are more willing to work for the opportunities by challenging themselves on a daily basis.

“These interactions (during traveling) have opened up my eyes. I can see a lot more opportunities that I did when my world was limited to one neighborhood in my city. Now I can challenge myself toward better and higher goals than before.” (Radiet)

For other participants, a sense of control and self-efficacy helped to develop a critical awareness and willingness to challenge social stigmas attached to women’s participation in certain kinds of sport.

“The motivation behind my sport and PA activity is to challenge the existing prejudice against women’s participation. There is a saying in our culture that says “Setelige wedeguada wendlige wedemeda” which means ‘girls to the kitchen, boys to the field’. I was always asking why we as girls were not permitted to freely play sport and this is mainly how I decided to find a local team that I could play football with.” (Ayda)

For instance, one participant said that her active participation in football has helped her to understand the existing negative perception in the community of young girls doing sport. And her progress in school, discipline and attitude through sport has started to show the community that young girls can be independent, hardworking and successful within sport and beyond if they are adequately supported by their surroundings.

“Before I started to participate in sport and dance, I used to see myself as weak and incapable. I used to think that I am stupid (can’t really understand anything). I used to think that no matter how much I work, my life and future won’t change. This was as a result of looking at my surroundings and life of women in my community.” (Beza)

4.2 Empowering Process

An empowering process is one in which “attempts to gain control, obtain needed resources, and critically understand one’s social environment are fundamental.” (Zimmerman 2000, p.47). Zimmerman’s framework argues that the empowerment process is empowering if it enables people’s skills and ability so that they can be decision-maker’s, problem-solvers and independent at an individual level. For the purpose of this study, empowering processes are organized as general, managing resources, working with others and decision-making, in accordance to Zimmerman’s framework (2000).

4.2.1 General Empowering Process

The general empowerment process refers to perceptions of participants in change regarding her ability to be active and independent at a personal level. This sub-component of empowering processes include academic performance, active life and accountability (Figure 5).

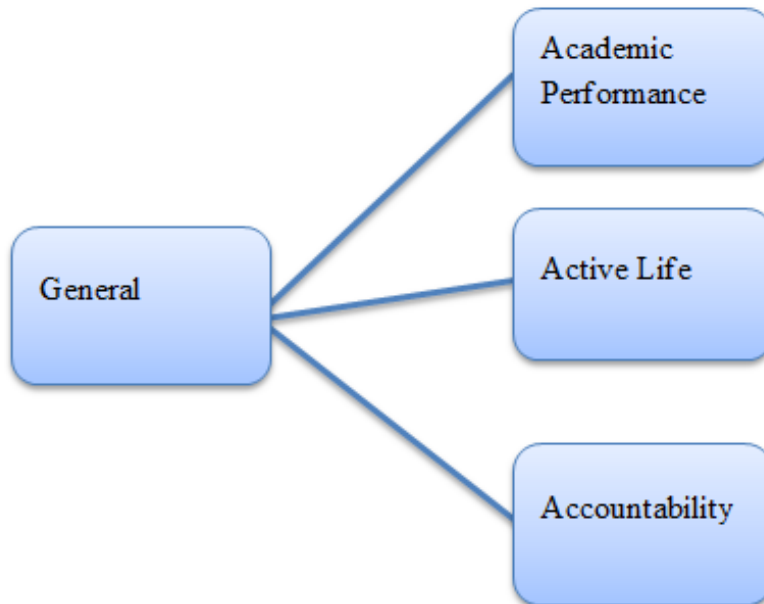


Figure 5. General Empowering Process

Some participants revealed that their sport and PA participation had enhanced their accountability as they are constantly evaluating their efforts in order to achieve a better academic, work and sport performance. Unlike before, they also have their teammates and coaches who helped them to reflect on their efforts to be accountable for their personal and collective responsibilities. Other participants have noted the boost in their academic performance. They had started to hold themselves accountable for their school performance and made consistent efforts which resulted in the improvement of their school performances. At the same time, a few participants revealed that sport and PA have provided them the know-how to achieve an active lifestyle.

“...sport and dance environment every day make me question myself and my environment. I ask myself if I am trying hard to be better or if I have the right surrounding for support. I sometimes wondered if I am even happy with myself and the life that I am living. I realize it would be quite stupid to think that I can always blame others for where I am in life. In sport and PA I learnt that you can sit and complain how much your life sucks or how bad your team is. But sooner or later you are going to learn that you have two choices. To sit and do nothing or start doing something. And I think life is the same way for me. Once I realized I was living an unhappy life, I make an effort to change it. The best part is I don't have to do it all alone.”
(Samrawit)

4.2.2 Managing Resources

This sub-component of empowering process refers to the development of adequate skills that one can use to positively transform one's life, including resource management skills. The participants pointed out that they have developed time management, financial management and task management skills through the different sport-related experiences (Figure 6).

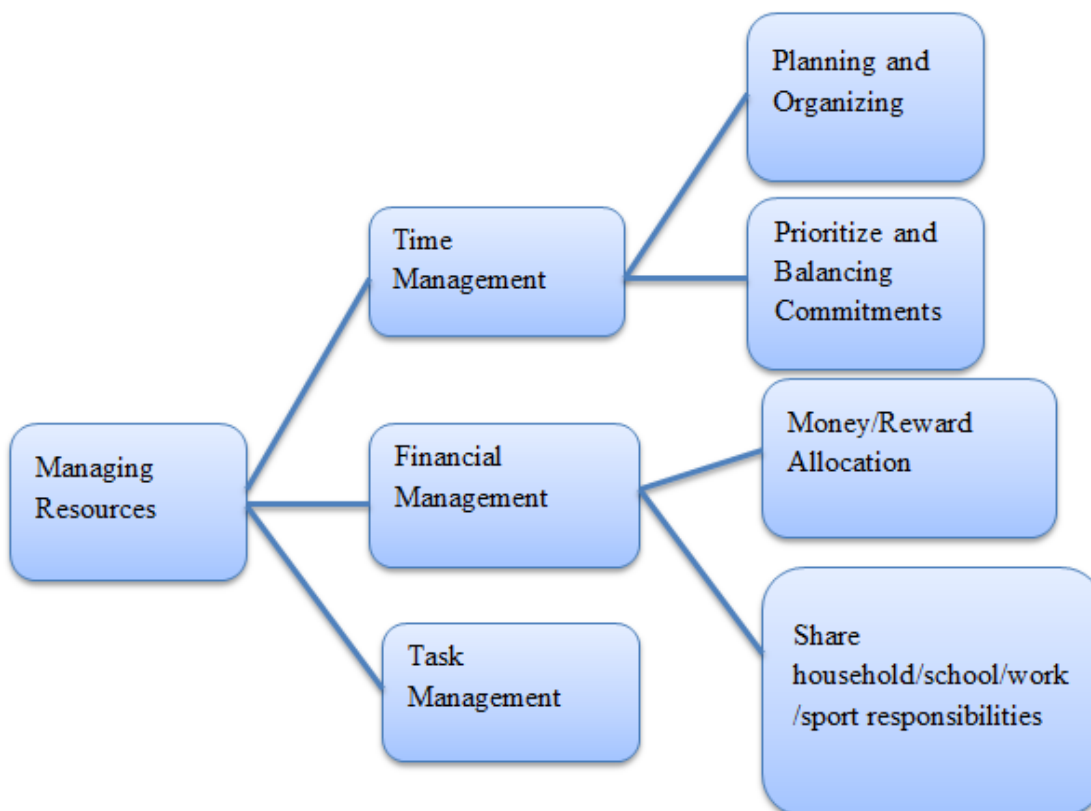


Figure 6. Managing Resources

First, most participants revealed that they have a better sensitivity to time management now that they play sport. A few demonstrated that they are mastering the skills of planning and organizing their time according to their different commitments by developing weekly schedules for themselves. Other linked time management to a sense of knowing how to prioritize and balance their commitments.

“There is a significant change in my time management skills. Before doing football and dance I was very careless about my free time. I do whatever I please whenever I want. I didn’t really have value of time and things to do. I used to go to wherever I got invited with my friends and do nothing. My drinking and clubbing habit has also contributed to the lack of my time management. However, once I have started to take part in football and dance, I have become busier than before. My teams have given me a responsibility and I didn’t want to let them down. So I start learning how to schedule my day and know what time is practice and what is my free time and such.” (Emu)

Second, the majority of the participants saw their participation in sport and PA as an opportunity to earn some form of income for themselves and their families. Through the few sport games and tournaments, participants had been able to win prize money. Some said that prior to playing sport they used to spend the money they had on drugs, drinking and gambling. However through the mentorship of their teammates and coaches most of the participants have been able to contribute to the household income to help their families to cover basic school, sport and family expenses. This had made participants feel like relevant members of their family.

“See, tennis and at times football have given me the opportunity to earn some money if I perform well or win tournaments. There were a few financial problems at home, especially for my family, to send myself and my two sisters to school. There were times they struggled to buy us basic school supplies. So I use my earnings to help my family, my sisters and myself so that we continue to go to school without any problem.” (Radiet)

Third, a few participants revealed that their participation in sport and PA has enhanced their skill in task management/allocation. Those participants who are involved in sport team (in the case of football and dance) pointed out that they learned how to allocate tasks on the field specific to their field positions and skills. This had significantly contributed to their ability in task allocation within their households, schools, and works commitments. For example, one

footballer stated that she had started to delegate the household duties among her siblings so that they can share the responsibilities equally.

“Also for me, there are three or four more children in our household. So I tried to use that support system to balance my commitment for sport and other parts of life. I work and communicate with my siblings to split or take shifts in helping in our house. So this help me to capitalize on my free time well and be able to still take part in school and sport without missing out in any.” (Fana)

4.2.3 Working with Others

This sub-component of empowering process refers to the development of social skills that one can use to enhance one’s ability to work and live alongside others. The participants pointed out that they have developed collaborative work and social support through the different sport-related experiences (Figure 7).

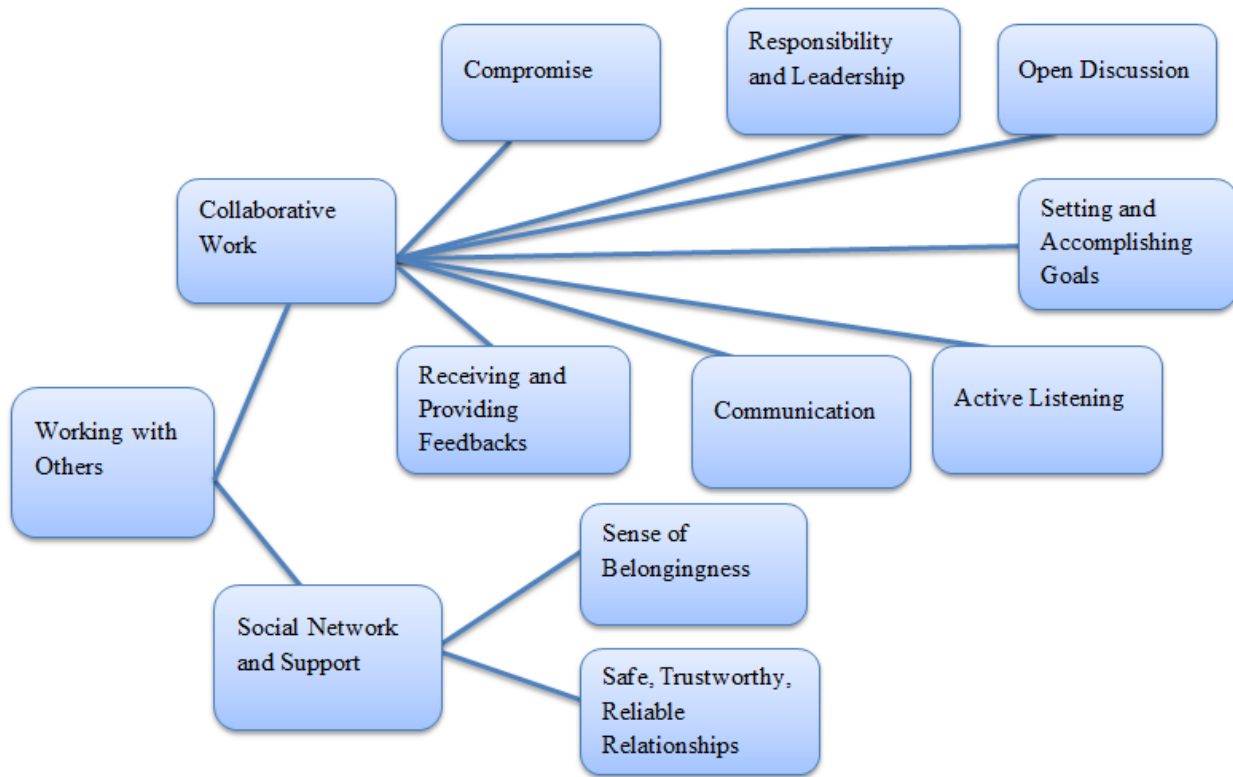


Figure 7. Working With Others

To start, most of the participants reported that they were able to work collaboratively with their teammates, coaches and families as a result of their participation in sport and PA. A few participants referred to collaborative work in their understanding and efforts to compromise toward a common goal. Some referred to practices, games and performances that enhanced their effort and skills in communication with their surrounding. Others claimed that sport and PA have enabled them to openly share their views in the topic of sport and their feelings regarding their daily life within their teams.

“There are lots of advantages of this relationship [in sport]. For instance, it provides you with a friend or relationship that you can look up to....Relationships like these challenge you to try harder and believe that you have what it takes to be the person that you want to be tomorrow. You engage in conversation about your work, struggles and dreams. For the first time in my life I felt like I found someone that truly understands me. We open up about our family problems and insecurities. Even with distance, we still make the effort to be there for each other and this is special to me.” (Martha)

On the other hand, a few participants highlight that sport and PA have taught them their responsibility as members of a team, family and student. The consistent interaction in sport and PA has also helped a few participants to develop leadership. One football player Ayda shared how her initiative to organize an off-season workout alongside a few of her teammates has helped her to enhance her communication and leadership skills. Similarly, other participants pointed out that their interaction with their teammates and coaches has enabled them to know how to receive and provide feedback. Meanwhile, others noted that their collaborative work within sport and PA enacted their active listening. They argued that within their team they engaged in endless discussions regarding their team progress, performance and, at times, personal stories.

“Our team was patient and welcoming which made my transition easier. I slowly learnt how to communicate with my team and engage in team-bonding activities before and after practice. See, when you feel part of a team it is easier to engage in discussions, problem-solving and even giving feedback for one another. This is because you know that the relationship is aimed at making each other better on and off the field.” (Kidist)

This increased their ability to give others the opportunity to share their thoughts and engage in open discussion. Most importantly, participants linked collaborative work within sport

to setting and accomplishing goals. Participants spoke of how the team goals in practices, games and academic performance set by their coach pushed them to slowly learn how to work towards personal and collective goals.

Second, the participants claimed that working with others within sport and PA has enabled them to build social networks and support that they didn't have before. For most of the participants, sport and PA have become sources of safe, trustworthy and reliable relationships mainly with their teammates and coaches. A few participants claimed that sport and PA have connected them to people with which they could share their personal growth and struggles in different aspect of life.

“The most influential feature of sport and PA is it provide you with people that walk the journey with you. Of course, they won't do the work for you but they will be working alongside you. They help to set a healthy competitive and working environment which is contagious.”
(Fana)

While for others this had helped them to find a mentor and role model that walks along them in their effort for a better life. Last but not least participants have claimed that sport and PA has enabled them to have a strong sense of belonging within their team. Unlike any other part of their life, participants claim that they feel welcome and supported on a daily basis as they attempt to live a better life.

4.2.4 Decision-making

This sub-component of empowering processes points out feelings regarding one's ability to influence in different aspect of life. The sub-component includes a sense of independence and critical thinking as a result of sport and PA participation (Figure 8).

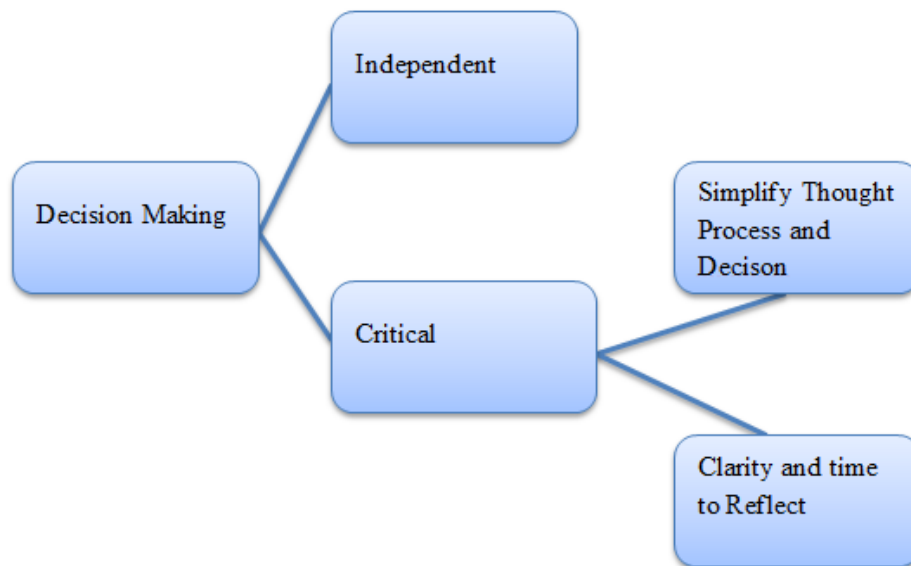


Figure 8. Decision Making

First, the majority of the participants reported that they are able to think for themselves regarding themselves, their commitments, future plans and other aspects of life after participating in sport and PA.

“I am less stressed when I am playing sport and that provides me the time and space to think. I get to think about football, work, family and my future. I also reflect on my progress this far and learn from some of the hardships. I think about what I need to do in practice, at work and with my family to continue my active participation in sports.” (Emu)

A few referred back to the days when others would think and decide for them in almost all aspects of their life.

“I used to always want other people to think and make a decision for me. I was dependent and easily influenced by others, sometime for good and sometimes for bad. But sport and PA is slowly helping me to learn to think for myself and make decisions. I think this is a good change because it comes with recognizing my responsibilities in different part of my life and considering/projecting the possible outcomes or consequences of my actions.” (Yodit)

The activities in sport and PA have allowed participants to focus on the development of their sport-related skills, bodies and ability to think independently about what needs to be done to improve their on- and off-field performances. This gave participants the independence to think and decide what to do in the sport and other part of their lives.

Second, a few participants claimed that sport and PA participation enabled them to simplify their thought process and decision-making. They say that their sport and physical activity participation enabled them to focus. This gave them the feeling of rationality and doing things step-by-step. For others, it helped them to be less stressed regarding their daily concerns about school, family issues or job-related problems.

“Sport simplifies my thought process and decision-making. I am less stressed when I am playing sport and that provides me the time and space to think. I get to think about football, work, family and my future. I also reflect on my progress this far and learn from some of the hardships. I think about what I need to do in practice, at work and with my family to continue my active participation in sports. This has given me the confidence and motivation. I think that I have what it takes and if I am given opportunity I can go even farther than expected.” (Ayda)

4.3 Disempowerment Outcomes

Even though there have been numerous empowerment outcomes through the participation in sport and PA for young girls in Ethiopia, the negative case analysis reveals that there were also disempowerment outcomes that were detected in the interviews. Although most participants gained strong feelings of active participation in school, work and community as a result of their participation in sport and participation, there were often those whose ability to take part in different activities. Participants claimed they felt stressed out as a result of conflicting schedules between their school, family responsibility, practice and games.

“Prior to joining my current team I used to really struggle finding the place between football and other aspects of my life. There were lots of occasions that I had to miss practice while I am at school and vice versa. This used to cause me so many problems with my teachers, coaches and family because every time I am missing in one of those circles they used to think that it is mostly because I don't care or got back to my old habits.” (Ayda)

The participant Ayda stated that there were quite a few occasions of a conflict in schedule that forced her to miss different commitments as a result of sport, school or needing to stay at home and help her family. This caused numerous conflicts with her teachers, teammates and family, who questioned her commitments. In fact, similar experiences among other participants has caused their confidence in time management and different commitments to decline.

Moreover, a few participants shared their experiences of hostility and negative comments from their families and other members of their community regarding their sport and PA participation. For some, their families has not been supportive of their participation, and the participants are facing discouragement.

“Most of my family and members of my community always wanted me to stay at home. They didn’t really understand the benefits of a healthy and active style. And plus I was a woman, and sports were not really meant for us. My family used to tell me that man looks gracious and elegant when they play sports than women...Their comments and insults used to hurt so much.”
(Kidist)

Other had families that were constantly questioning whether they were being physically active or going back to their old habits in drinking and clubbing. Especially those participants of traditionally masculine sport encounter negative reactions in school, workplaces and sport fields. This makes them feel disrespected and ignored in their own communities.

“However, I also have aunties that live with my family who are not fully supportive of my sport participation. For instance, some weeks we have training until 6:30 PM. By the time it is after 7:00 PM. They think that I have been somewhere else. They are always arguing with me that I am using football as an excuse to come home late and question my honesty. This has caused so much conflict between my family and I. It is not really the best environment to walk into... In our neighborhood when I was inactive and used to hang out around the neighborhood, people used to always tell us to go inside [back to our home] and stop being distracted. They used to be mad and yell at us (Beza).”

Even worse, some participants shared their experiences with street harassment, including sexual and verbal assault on their way to and from practices and games. Almost all the participants highlighted how important it is for them to be careful about what time of the day and with whom they are when they do sport. This hateful environment is the reason why there are few young girls and women in their age participating in sport and PA.

The financial pressure for continuing to take part in sport and PA has also become a concerning source of disempowerment. Most of the participants come from lower class families and neighborhoods, and have very limited resources to support their participation in sport and PA and school. A few participants have revealed that they had been in the verge of dropping out from school and doing sports while others had to find part-time jobs on top of their other

commitments in order to cover the basic expenses for participating in sport and PA. Some had becoming dependent on charity organization or fundraising from their community to cover their traveling, food and sport equipment expenses.

“When I started playing football I used to play barefoot. I didn’t have the right clothing or anything but it was the team atmosphere that I really enjoyed. But once I started working washing people’s clothes, then I started buying my own cheap outfits. Fortunately, I joined a project which offers small help in covering our uniforms and etc. But it was only short-term because they stopped coming to support our participation.” (Samrawit)

In fact, most participants argue that limited financial support from their families is one of the main reasons why there are few young girls and women participating in sport and PA.

Even though most of the participants claimed that their sport and PA has boosted their self-confidence and perception of self-competence, there were some who argued that the benefits were limited to sport. This is especially true for those participants that come from a very low economic background; they think that their family structure and place in the society has more influence over them. Regardless of how much effort they see themselves putting into their goal, they acknowledge that the real world is not the same as the football pitch.

“Of course in sport I learnt that I have what it takes to compete just like everyone else and that I can do what I set my mind to do. However, this is not always true in other parts of our lives. For example, my mom is one of the most hardworking women that I know and she is also confident in her work skills. However, I also know that there hasn’t been any improvement in her life or our family regardless of how hard she is trying. Sometimes your environment, support and opportunities also plays a big role in what you can accomplish. You have to have an environment that recognizes the hard work and rewards you with better alternatives. If not, people like my mom eventually loss hope and self confidence in their ability to accomplish their goals.” (Samrawit)

This has resulted in the participants being disappointed and losing faith in the possibility to excel in their life outside of sport and PA. They stated that it is important for young girls and women not to get a false hope regarding a better future for everyone.

There were also participants who had experienced unfriendly environments within sport and PA. Occasionally, participants were exposed to conflicts between teammates and opponents. Others were exposed to their teammates old habits of alcohol, drugs and gambling.

“My drinking teammates would ask me why I behaved differently from them. Some of my teammates were really mad at me and started to insult me. I didn’t really know what to do then because I didn’t want to join them out of the respect for myself, my family and the team culture that our coach always talked about. This wasn’t really a pleasant experience but I learnt from it in a sense that I saw that sport could also expose you to something that is not good for you. You have to be very careful whom you trust, respect and rely on because some of these relationships with my teammates were more toxic than my old friends.” (Hilina)

These unpleasant experiences has made few participants to be passive in meeting new people or initiate new friendship within sport and PA.

4.4 Conclusion

Nearly all the empowerment outcomes and empowerment process core elements of the Zimmerman individual level of empowerment were indicated in the results. There were relatively equal influences of sport and PA on how young girls and women think about themselves and their understanding of issues surround them and changes on their behaviors.

According the interview data, both empowerment and disempowerment outcomes as a result of sport and PA participants were identified. Although the majority of research participants experienced empowering outcomes, there were also negative empowering experiences within sport and beyond.

The result also revealed that some of the empowerments were in sport context while others were infiltrated in other life domains. Some participants directly connected learning new sport related skills such as stretching or dribbling, field position and such that are directly connected to the sport context. Some outcomes and life skills that were gained through the participation of sport and PA transferred to other life domains include social support, self-evaluation, communication skills, critical thinking, planning and organizational skills, desire to challenge oneself, and community participation. The participants were able to apply those skills and outcomes in their personal lives or at school, home and work places.

Chapter 5 Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this section is to discuss and connect the research findings with previous studies. The section provides an in-depth discussion regarding the sport experience of young girls and women in the content of Ethiopia. It will also discuss different aspects of the socio-cultural features that influences their experiences and why it is important to participate in sport and PA for young girls and women in Ethiopia. The section also propose alternative to promote sport and PA for young girls and women. Lastly, the section will provide brief analysis of the research limitation and future direction that could further strengthen in the understanding of sport as a tool for empowerment.

5.1 Discussion

This study explored the potential empowerment of young girls and women in Ethiopia through sport and PA participation and its influence in other aspects of their lives. It identified empowerment outcomes and empowering process of different sport experiences that influenced the participants experiences. Zimmerman's individual level of empowerment theoretical framework enabled the study to recognize, understand and illustrate the individual experiences of young girl and woman participation in sport and PA. The result shows that empowering process and empowerment outcomes through sport and PA participation at the individual level. These include enhancing their critical thinking, developing their self-confidence and competence, providing them with a social network which teaches them how to work with others and the desire to take control over their lives. Most of these findings are also true with other research which focuses on women's sport and PA experiences (Blind et al., 1994; Elling et al., 2003; Wess et al., 2008; Brace-Govan, 2004; Greenleaf et al., 2009; Crocker et al., 2006; Putnam, 2000; Walseth, 2008; Elling et al., 2003; Choi et al., 1995; Carlson et al., 2003; Michalsen et al., 2005; Khan et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the results go beyond the individual level of empowerment of Zimmerman's theories and provide an important insight into family and community influences on participants experiences. Although the aim of the research was to explore the individual level of empowerment according to Zimmerman's theory, the findings shows that empowerment is a more social process in which individual empowerment is closely tied with the surrounding

community and organization that can positively or negatively influence the empowerment. As a result, it is impossible to have an in-depth understanding of the participants individual experiences in sport and PA without linking it to surroundings.

It is crucial to note that the study also found out that there were disempowerment experiences in sport and PA at the individual level. In fact, the research identified that the disempowerment experiences at the individual level were directly connected to the family and community. Most participants linked both their individual empowerment and disempowerment to their families and community which comes to show the close ties and influences that family and community have on young girls and women in Ethiopia.

Unlike previous studies that look at the empowerment experiences of young girls and women through sport and PA from the context of Western culture, this investigation was made in a developing country. Therefore, it is important to emphasise the differences in the role and influences of family and community in the process of understanding empowerment at the individual level.

Why is it disempowering in Ethiopia?

To this day the role of young girls and women in Ethiopia is to take care of others in their families and communities (Cherinet et al., 2002). The general perception within the culture is that women are caregivers and are expected to put others ahead of themselves. The status of women in Ethiopia is their position in relation to others, frequently in relation to men. In most cases women are expected to not exceed their male counterparts in their educational achievement, employment, and social benefits (Kabeta et al., 2013). Within this culture, women have a very limited influence in the decision-making process, resource-allocation and overall control of their lives. Research on the interrelationship between violence against women and literacy rates reveals that literate rural women who were married to an illiterate spouse had the highest risk of experiencing physical violence by an intimate partner (Deyessa et al., 2010). As a result of a patriarchal social structure, even to this day women are less educated, less economically well off, and receive almost no recognitions to their labour and household contributions.

Additionally, living in a collective culture, Ethiopians genuinely care about their surroundings' expectations and responsibility. Most Ethiopians actually live their life according to the expectation of others as their own personal desires. While growing up, children in such a collective community faces endless pressure and expectations from their family and their communities (Kabeta et al., 2013). It is common that families and community influences women progress in school, work and family establishment. As a result of such a tight community and patriarchal society in which women hold small possession of power, women do not have the opportunities to have independence in the way they want to live their lives (Measor et al., 1992). Even when women know what they want in life, it is quite difficult and almost impossible to go for it if it is in conflict with their family and community expectations.

Sexual and physical violence is another alarming issue that young girls and women face on a daily basis in Ethiopia. Young girls and women are subjected to beating, rape, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), abduction, early marriage, and other practices in their families and communities. These experiences could also extend to working environment and educational institutions (Kedir et al., 2010). In most cases, this gender-based violence towards young girls and women is ignored or overlooked within the community. A report found out that in the capital of Ethiopia there is an estimated of 3 women are sexually assaulted each day and 30,660 annually (Cherinet et al., 2002). Another study on school age children revealed that 78% of the participants expressed fear of rape as a result of consistent threats that they face on a daily basis. An estimated 26% of the girls have been raped more than once (Mulugeta et al., 1998). Though there has been significant work toward social awareness and legal work to protect and end violence against young girls and women, the consequences of this violence have put women at a low status within society.

These social norms regarding women also translate to sport culture in Ethiopia, which usually considers women to be inferior both mentally and physically. The society values masculine sport practice, and women are not adequate. As a result, Ethiopian men still have higher rate of participation and more opportunity within sport and PA than women. As a result of the social cultural perception of sport and PA, many Ethiopian may be oblivious to the greater allocation of resources and opportunity to men than to women.

Why is it important that young girls and women participate in sport and PA in Ethiopia?

The findings of this research are quite significant because young girl and women empowerment through sport and PA participation goes beyond the field of sport. As most of the participants shared in the interviews and as shown in the results section of the study, their empowerment and disempowerment experiences are closely tied with their families and communities. When it comes to these participants, sport and PA mean a lot more than just being physically active. Unlike the Western concept of sport and PA participation being life-changing, in the case of Ethiopia participants' experiences are that it is life-saving (i.e. in relation to sex trafficking, drugs and etc).

Young girls and women who are currently participating in sport and PA are the agents of change in Ethiopia because they are able to challenge the existing social norms. Unlike in the past, sport and PA is providing young girls and women social support with people that they can trust and relate to. Participants no longer feel isolated or voiceless. They also gaining confidence within themselves and their ability to change their lives. They have a strong sense of control and direction in their lives. Most importantly, they have surrounded themselves with people who can help them to work towards their dream and they are not alone. Participants are excelling in their resource management skills and investing time in themselves. Sport and PA are enabling them to contribute to the household income and support their families.

This give them voice and independence to think for themselves in matters that are important to them. Critical thinking is a major empowerment of sport and PA and participation has allowed these girls and women to recognize opportunities around them. They are able to build networks that help them recognize opportunities and possibilities in their future and know what to do to get there. They are also to recognize the existing social prejudices that are limiting women and treating them less than others. The sport and PA environment is creating hunger and desire to challenge these prejudices. Participants want equality and opportunity within sport and other part of their lives.

It is imperative to encourage young girls and women to continue in their participation in sport and PA to validate their feelings of empowerment to be active agents of change and help inspire other women by setting an example within their families and communities. The change of social norms regarding gender equality should start from the individual level, as can be seen in

the development of new laws and legislation which attempt to protect women and raise their status within the community. Unfortunately, the legislation has not made any visible impact in transforming the lives of women in Ethiopia and eliminating existing prejudice.

It is clear that formal institutions falsely and narrowly depict equality in terms of the law granting equal rights to women in all spheres of life, including in marriage, property rights, inheritance, and bodily integrity. Female genital mutilation (FGM) has been prohibited, polygamy has been abolished and the minimum marriage age for girls was increased from 15 to 18 years (Vaughan et al., 2003 & Bevan et al., 2007). However, the reality is that 74% of the women have undergone FGM (DHS, 2005), and polygamy still occurs (Bevan et al., 2007), while traditional practices and customs dominate marriage practices, in spite of the legal reforms (Fafchamps et al., 2002). The federal government has limited capacity to enforce the laws (WHO, 1999), partly because various states have been granted full sovereignty, which allows them to practice earlier laws that discriminate against women (World Bank, 1998).

This goes to show that change should come from the individual and the family; it can then be transferred to the community and legislative bodies. The social norms that have been negatively influencing the lives of women should be challenged from the grassroots level. The creation of new social norms would be possible if the effort to do so is done in a way that everyone starts to acknowledge the reality and has the desire to change it. As can be seen from this study, sport and PA participation can be effective tools to create sustainable change little by little in the lives of women and to legitimize women within their families and communities.

What can be done to promote young girls and women participation in Ethiopia?

“I think for those who don’t have the opportunity to take part in sport and PA, I would highly recommend it. I would be happy if they can try it and see it for themselves. Because there are girls like me currently living in an environment that is toxic and unhealthy, doing drugs and alcohol, some on the path to be sex workers. I would like for them to have the opportunity just like me to change and have different path than their surroundings, to know who they are and the potential that they have to live a better life. Sport helps us to discover and redefine yourself. It help us to fall in love with ourselves and surround ourselves with support systems that bring out the best of us.” (Mihert)

The research participants have identified three main ways that we can promote sport and PA participation of young girls and women in Ethiopia. The first recommendation was to

provide financial assistance to the sport participants and sport providers within their community. The research participants suggested providing the basic sport equipments, access to sport facilities and improving the sport infrastructures within the community. In most cases, the sport facilities and infrastructure are limited to men or are quite inaccessible from where the participants live. Actually in most of the practices and games that I observed while doing this research, I noticed that most of the sessions were run with a lack of adequate sport equipments such as footballs, cones and sporting apparel. I also noticed that participants were usually walking long distances or actively searching for rides from their friends and families to attend practice and games. Even when the girls were able to make it to the sport facilities they usually needed to wait or constantly negotiated with men's team to practice or compete. There were a couple of times that they faced a very hostile and neglecting reaction from the male counterparts when it was time for the girls to run their practices.

The second recommendation to promote sport and PA participation of young girls and women was to provide coach training and provide qualified coaches.

“I think the most important thing that is needed for this change is trained coaches, someone that we can trust and learn from who is always willing to help us. We need someone that has understanding of sport itself but also the lives that we live in.” (p.5)

The research participants highlighted that it is crucial to provide a sport and PA environment with coaches or organizers who can understand the socio-economic and social norms of their community and can also create and provide safe training spaces for the young girls and women in their efforts to take part in sport and PA. It is also important that coaches or organizers of sport and PA educate participants, participants families and communities regarding the multidimensional benefits and empowerment that can be achieved through sport and PA.

Lastly, the participants recommended that there should be community outreach through sport and PA to educate families and communities in ways that they can support their participation. It is also important that the sport ministry collaborate with local sport and PA organizers to create a safe and inclusive sport culture from the grassroots level.

5.2 Limitations

There are limitations related to this study that should be considered when reading and contextualising the study findings. Firstly, although the study actively attempted to analyze different types of sport and PA, it was not able to include all kinds of sport and PA. As mentioned in the methodology, the researcher utilized previous networks to find participants who were supportive of the study's aim and were willing to take part in it. As a result, the vast majority of the study participants represents three team sports: football, dance, track and field.

Secondly, the study also uses two different languages for the data collection and overall research. Though English is the main language used for the overall research, the data collection was completed in Amharic. The researcher prepared the semi-structured interview guides in English first and translated them to Amharic. Since the study participant's native language was Amharic it was necessary to conduct the data in a language that they can understand and freely express themselves. Once the data collection was completed, it was translated and transcribed with the help of peers so that it can be ready for the analysis component of the study. After completing the translation and transcription, the researcher was not able to contact the participants to ask additional questions or clarify their previous answers. This was mainly because transcribed material was in English and the possibility to contact participants were limited since the researcher moved back to Finland. Although the interview questions and translation were done carefully, it is important to acknowledge that there might have been slight bias, loss of meaning and depth in the process.

Thirdly, the study participants' age range was only between 16-20, which means that the sport-related empowerment and disempowerment experiences of young girls and women are projected in their experiences. This limits the understanding of empowerment experiences through sport and PA specific to this age group. There might be an extensive and different empowerment experiences that the study was not able to explore. This is because the researcher only had less than six weeks to collect the data for the study utilizing the personal network.

Fourth, the study focused on unanimous city for data collection with 12 participants. Because empowerment process and outcomes varies among different population over time in different spaces, the sport and PA participation experiences that participants shared is specific to the young women and girls that were interviewed for this study. It is important to remember that sport and PA experiences of Ethiopian/unanimous city young girls and women are different from

other African countries or Western countries. This is true even among young girls and women in Ethiopia, since the study might present findings that might be limited to only the 12 participants. Since the study might be limited to the experiences of these women in terms of socio-economic background, urban or rural residence, ethnic groups, educational background, etc, the study implications are more likely be limited to specific populations in Ethiopia.

I am a woman and have an extensive history in participation in sport and PA. I also come from a similar socio-economic and cultural background, since I was born and raised in Ethiopia. I had similar experiences to most of the research participants. I could relate to their empowerment and disempowerment experiences as a result of their sport and PA participation because I had also played different sport and PA. Most of the empowerment experiences, including the positive and negative, that the study had found had significant influence on the person I am today. I still recall the endless sexual and verbal abuse, discrimination in school, neighbourhood and workplace that most women face in our efforts to take part in sport and PA. As a result, I am afraid that my firsthand experiences in the topic might make some of my interpretation of the research findings and analysis subjective.

5.2 Future Research Direction

In order to further strengthen the findings of this research, future research could involve studying a wider variety of sport settings. This study explored the empowerment outcomes only from three different sport and PA. Therefore, a future study on a wider variety of sport and PA could expand the understanding of young girls and women's experiences in sport and PA from a broader perspective. In addition, future research could also evaluate the empowerment experiences of individuals as compared to team sports and PA settings. This could contribute to understanding the different influences of individual sport and PA over team sports. Sport programs that are launched around the world could benefit by understanding how both individual and team sport and PA could be used as tools for the empowerment of young girls and women.

Future research could also investigate the empowerment experiences in relation to the perception of masculine sport and PA. The current literature lacks the in-depth understanding of how empowerment experiences differ from a feminine and masculine sport and PA. It is crucial to understand the sociocultural practices of the society in which the research aims to study. Possible findings could be used in sport intervention programs that aim to combat sport

exclusion. Furthermore, future empowerment research could identify the different contextual barriers that limit young girls and women participation in sport and PA and use the findings to develop sport and PA guidelines for sport programs, as well as local, national and international sport governing bodies, in order to promote sport and PA for women.

5.4 Researchers' Learning Outcomes

In this section I will reflect on the research process that I have undertaken for this project. I will try to evaluate myself as a researcher, both in terms of aspects of the research that I excelled at and areas in which I have struggled. It is my goal to learn from this opportunity by identifying areas that I can improve on so as to be a better researcher in the future.

At the primary stage of my research, in which I familiarized myself with the relevant literature, I enjoyed reading endless scientific articles, journals and books on the topic of sport and PA. This reading helped me to understand the depth and influences of sport and PA in the lives of young girls and women. Through these readings I was able to reshape my research aim and questions to be suitable for the particular target group. However, I struggled to find academic research pertaining to Ethiopia and to developing countries generally. This was evidence to me that most research to date that focuses on women's experiences in sport and PA has been done from a Western perspective. Therefore, this research was especially interesting and motivating for me because it is the only one of its kind on Ethiopia and the continent of Africa.

The preparation for the data collection and the collection of data through interviews were both great learning opportunities for me. When I was preparing the interview guides through the lens of Zimmerman's empowerment theoretical framework, I learned that it is important to draft multiple question guides. Especially in the case of qualitative research, I had to make sure that each draft was open-ended and not misleading. I also learned the value of having close mentorship in the process of formulating the questions. My supervisor has seen multiple drafts of the interview guides I have worked on and given me feedback that helped me ensure that the questions were adequate for the target group.

Once the interview guides were approved, I translated them to Amharic so that I could conduct the interview in my research participants' native language. I quickly learned that preparing and conducting interviews between two languages is more of a challenge than I

expected. Luckily, I was able to benefit from three sample interviews, which allowed me to see how participants understood and responded to the questions. In addition, prior to conducting the interviews, I spent quality time with potential research participants and their teams. I volunteered to coach and take part in some of their practices as well as attend their games. Once the network and trust was built I was able to interview the participants. Looking back, the hardest part of the data collection was finding time and space that was suitable for the interviews, in which participants could freely express themselves. This was especially difficult when I traveled back to Ethiopia while the country was still under the state of emergency, which meant social and political instability across the country. I had to be sure to collect the data at times and places where my participants and I wouldn't be in danger. This taught me the importance of trust and comfort in the process of conducting useful interviews. All in all this process has developed my interview and data collection skills overall. Most importantly, I have learned skills that are significantly important for a qualitative researcher to master, including social interaction and earning the trust of participants.

The data analysis section of my research was a very time consuming and messy process, as I started with translating and transcribing the interview data into English. This process took almost three weeks, but with the help of colleagues I was able to finish transforming the raw data for the data analysis. Interpreting and analysing the interview data has been one of the highlights of the research for me because I had the freedom to make sense of them in the context that fits not only the theoretical framework but the context in which my participants were speaking. The only challenging part was that I was not able to contact research participants for further explanation or clarification of their responses. As a result, I had to rely on my interpretations of their responses to certain questions, which may have been influenced by my own biases. I have already discussed this as a limitation of my studies. The discussion part of the research also gave me freedom as a researcher to interpret the results and connect them to the bigger picture of young girls and women in Ethiopia. This section was enjoyable for me because I was also able to discuss possible alternatives for promoting empowerment through sport and PA for young girls and women in Ethiopia.

All in all, this was a challenging but rewarding research and learning experience. Regardless of the time constraints, language barriers, and lack of previous qualitative research experience, I must say I have managed to accomplish almost all of my personal learning goals. If

I had to redo the research I would spend more time in the interviews and observation process. I would also have follow-up interviews so that participants could further clarify their responses if needed. In addition to this, I would combine the results and discussion sections so that I could more directly compare previous research findings to my research findings. This way I could easily emphasise the new insight that my research brings to the empowerment or disempowerment experiences of young girls and women as the result of their sport and PA participation.

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Appendices 1 Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Introduction-Demography of participants

1. Please tell me about yourself
 - a. How old are you?
 - b. Where do you live?
 - c. What is your marital status?
 - d. What is your educational background (grade level)?
 - e. Are you currently working? If so, what is your job?
2. Please tell me about your sport and physical activity participation background
 - a. What kinds of sport have you played or do you play?
 - b. How often have you played or do you play?
 - c. How long have you played?
 - d. On what level have you played or do you play?

Process “Empowering”

General

1. How has your sport and physical activity participation influenced other aspect of your life?
2. What kind of skills do you think you have gained from taking part in sport or PA? While taking part in sport and physical activity, do you feel you are acquiring new skills?
 - a. You mentioned ___ skill; can you tell me about a time you used this skill in another area of your life? How do you use these skills you have mentioned in other life situations?

Working with others

1. How you use social skills with other co-athletes/coaches/sport admin or within the sport context?
2. You mentioned ___ social skills; how these contribute to outside of the sport context?

Managing resources

1. Since you started participation in sport and physical activity, can you tell if there is any change in your organization skills?
2. Does sport and physical activity participation make you feel organized in personal and social context?
 - a. Can you tell me how you balance your time between sport/PA and your social or work life?

Decision making

1. When you are participating in sport and physical activity, does it help you think clearer?
2. Does this feeling continue after participation?

Outcomes “empowered”

General

1. In what way has sport and physical activity participation had any impact in your life?

Critical awareness

1. How does your sport and physical activity participation helped you have better understanding of your surrounding?
2. How does sport and physical activity participation help you understand and think critically of the situation around your life?

Participatory behaviours

1. How sport and physical activity participation help you take part in more activities that you might have not before?
2. Since the start of your sport and physical activity participation, can you tell if there was any changes with your leadership skills? If so, how?
3. How sport and physical activity participation enable to improve your community participation?

Sense of control and self-efficacy

1. How sport and physical activity participation contribute to your development of self confidence and sense of accomplishment?

Comparison

1. Please tell me how you think you are different now that you were before participating in sport and PA?

What about sport and PA do you think relates to that?

Has sport impact these feelings?

How has sport influence your daily live?

Social context

1. Please tell me about your experience regarding the attitude of society in sport and physical activity participation of young girls and women?
2. What would you change in the attitude regarding young girls and women participation in sport and physical activity

Conclusion

1. Think about words such as freedom, independence, strength, equality and please tell me how you can relate them to your sport and physical activity context
- 2.

Participants Made Up Names

P. 1 Mihret	P.4 Betty	P.7 Yodit	P.10 Kidist
P.2 Fana	P.5 Martha	P.8 Emu	P.11 Samrawit
P.3 Beza	P.6 Radiet	P.9 Ayda	P. 12 Hilina