Empowering Identity in Motion: Policy Research on Bangsamoro Sports Attire Design

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ABSTRACT:
Sports attire embodies both performance-enhancing functionality and a representation of identity. In the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), participation in high-level sports is constrained by the absence of standardized athletic wear that fully aligns with Islamic principles of modesty. This policy research addresses this critical gap by proposing culturally and religiously appropriate Bangsamoro sports attire, generated through documentary analysis, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with athletes, coaches, and religious leaders.

The study confirms that conventional sportswear fails to meet the non-negotiable modesty requirements of Muslim athletes, resulting in physical discomfort, psychological distress, and reduced participation, particularly in swimming events for women. The design criteria developed, known as Ehtisam (Modesty/Decency), center on non-negotiable modesty, functional performance, comfort, cultural identity, and aesthetic appeal. The study successfully developed and tested a prototype attire (sports hijab, loose-fitting tops, and flexible bottoms) incorporating breathable, moisture-wicking fabrics. This prototype demonstrates significant potential for institutional adoption in BARMM.

The research concludes that an inclusive, policy-backed, and context-sensitive approach to sportswear design is necessary to empower Muslim athletes. The core recommendation is the formalization of a faith-sensitive attire policy through the immediate adoption of the proposed Islamic sports attire and the creation of standardized guidelines to ensure inclusive, equitable, and safe participation in sports across the region.

Keywords: Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Bangsamoro sports attire, conventional sportswear, modesty, sports hijab, policy research,

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Introduction

The intersection of athletic endeavor and religious adherence presents unique challenges for Muslim athletes, particularly concerning sports attire (Balo et al., 2022). This is especially true in regions like the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, where Islamic principles strongly influence daily life and cultural practices (Balo et al., 2022). Specifically, the

requirement for modesty, known as Ehtisam, often conflicts with conventional sportswear designs, thereby limiting participation and inclusion in sports among Muslim women (Morgan et al., 2019). This disparity leads to reduced participation and significant psychological distress for female Muslim athletes who struggle to reconcile their faith with athletic aspirations, particularly when standard uniforms fail to meet modesty requirements (Hasaan et al., 2024). This research aims to bridge this gap by developing a policy framework for sports attire that respects Islamic tenets while facilitating optimal athletic performance for Muslim women in BARMM.

Cause: The increasing diversity in national and regional sports leagues highlights a significant oversight in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM): the lack of an institutional policy on designing and developing sports attire that accommodates Islamic modesty. Traditional or conventional sportswear, characterized by tight fits and exposed *awrah* (area that must be covered), creates a fundamental barrier for many Bangsamoro athletes, forcing them to choose between their religious observance and athletic opportunities (Khan, 2023). The global interest in sports apparel that balances performance with modesty necessitates regional action to meet this demand (Noori-Sistani et al., 2025).

Effects: The lack of religiously appropriate sportswear severely limits active participation, often leading to withdrawal from competitive opportunities (Arif & Sultan, 2020). Athletes who do participate frequently resort to layering non-performance clothing (such as cotton shirts and leggings) beneath their standard uniforms. This practice introduces significant challenges, including physical discomfort, heightened thermal load, potential safety issues (e.g., non-secured headwear), and psychological distress due to the conflict between religious requirements and athletic standards. This institutional consideration gap is a key constraint on participation (Cardinas, Prio, Salazar & Pendon, 2025).

Aims: This study aims to design and develop sports attire guidelines that are both religiously appropriate and performance-oriented, tailored to the needs of Bangsamoro athletes. In addition, the study aims to propose institutional and policy-level recommendations to support the adoption of standardized modest sports attire in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

Significance: This study addresses the intersection of sports and religion in BARMM by designing and developing a prototype sports attire. Further, this study responds to the needs of Muslim athletes whose participation in sports is often constrained by existing uniform standards that conflict with Islamic principles of modesty. This study also provides evidence-based insights that can guide policymakers, educational institutions, and sports organizations in formulating attire policies that accommodate religion and cultural values.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design. Document Analysis was used to review existing sports attire designs and common sports events played by the Bangsamoro athletes, competition records (Palarong Pambansa, etc.), and official sports reports. Also, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with coaches, sports coordinators, female athletes, and religious teachers. While key informant interviews (KIIs) were used to refine design criteria and policy recommendations with institutional stakeholders. The data generated were used to serve as a basis for the creation of Bangsamoro sports attire guidelines.

Definition of Terms: For clarity and consistency, the following terms are defined as they are used in this policy research:

- **Awrah:** A non-negotiable Islamic term referring to the parts of the body that must be covered in public, especially during competitive sports. For Muslim women, this generally includes the entire body except the face, hands,

and feet. For Muslim men, this is defined as the area between the navel and the knee.

- **Ehtisam:** A term derived from the Arabic word for **Modesty** or **Decency**. In this study, it serves as the unified, locally established design philosophy and criteria for Bangsamoro sports attire, encompassing non-negotiable modesty, performance, comfort, and cultural identity.

- **Islamic Modesty:** The religious principle guiding the design of the proposed attire, requiring loose-fitting, non-transparent, and full-coverage clothing that conceals the body's shape (*awrah*) to uphold religious values during physical activity.

Results

1. Document Analysis

1.1. Literature Review

The global shift towards modest athleisure highlights a growing market need for sportswear that seamlessly blends athletic performance with cultural and religious values. Khan (2023) details the concept of modest sportswear as an exciting blend of practical athleticism, fashion, and cultural values that has gained popularity, particularly among Muslim athletes and fitness enthusiasts. This design approach balances performance, comfort, and non-negotiable modesty, challenging traditional sportswear notions that often prioritize skin exposure and tight designs to promote broader inclusivity and representation. Khan emphasizes that the concept is rooted in Islamic modesty, which requires adherence to principles of coverage (*awrah*), loose fits, and non-transparent fabrics, addressing the unique challenge of engaging in physical fitness while adhering to faith-based principles. To address this, modest sportswear utilizes innovative solutions such as looser fits, longer lengths, and specialized breathable yet non-transparent fabrics. The market viability is highly significant: the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report indicates that Muslim consumer spending in this sector is on track to reach an impressive $311 billion by 2024, with the growth rate of modest activewear outpacing the broader modest fashion sector by three to four times (Khan, 2023). This trend has driven major industry players like Nike (Pro Hijab, Victory Swim Collection), Adidas, and Under Armour, alongside specialized independent brands such as Modanisa and Imaan Active, to actively develop full-coverage products. Furthermore, Khan notes that this movement contributes to broader discussions about body positivity, diversity, and the evolving landscape of the fashion and athletic industries, extending its influence beyond strictly religious boundaries. Research has also demonstrated the direct impact of garment choice on an athlete's physical and mental well-being during activity. A study by Taştan Özkan and Arslan (2023) specifically investigated the thermophysiological and psychological comfort properties of different garments using wear trial tests. Their findings confirm that the material, fit, and design of athletic wear are critical determinants of performance, influencing core body temperature regulation, moisture management, and the athlete's perceived comfort and mental state. This underscores the necessity of moving beyond simple layering solutions to engineer specialized, performance-oriented textiles that manage heat and sweat effectively, thereby mitigating the thermal load and physical discomfort that often accompany non-standard modest attire.

1.2. Legal Basis

However, the legal and policy framing of this issue is also subject to critique. It is argued that defining access to sports participation solely as a question of 'religious identity' under human rights laws (such as Article 9 of the ECHR) often produces counterproductive outcomes (Vakulenko, 2007). This framing leads to judicial avoidance of difficult questions through deference to local bodies, provides an unsatisfactory account of Muslim women's agency by simplifying it as mere "choice," and ultimately subjects the athlete to subtle mechanisms of public scrutiny. This body of critical scholarship underscores that relying on reactive legal intervention is insufficient; rather, a proactive, institutional policy is required to ensure genuine inclusion, safety, and the

preservation of the athlete's dignity without constant exposure to moralizing scrutiny.

1.3 Research Gap

While the global context offers general trends, there is a critical absence of focused empirical research in the Bangsamoro region on designing and developing sports attire that is simultaneously performance-oriented, locally contextualized, and adherent to Islamic modesty. Specifically, there is no institutionalized or standardized attire that addresses guidelines for modesty, thermal comfort, movement, and cultural approval within the BARMM sports framework.

1.4. Ten (10) Common Sports Events Played by the Bangsamoro Athletes

Document analysis of national, regional, and local competition records from 2019 to 2025 revealed consistent participation across various athletic events.

Level	Name of Sports Competition	Years Covered	Common Sports Events
National	Palarong Pambansa, Batang Pinoy, PRISAA	550-02	Athletics, Badminton, Baseball, Basketball, Futsal, Softball, Swimming (boys only), Table Tennis, Tennis, Volleyball
Regional	BARMAA Meets, MASTS Meets	550-02	Athletics, Badminton, Baseball, Basketball, Futsal, Softball, Swimming (boys only), Table Tennis, Tennis, Volleyball
Local	Intramurals, Barangay League	550-02	Athletics, Badminton, Baseball, Basketball, Futsal, Softball, Swimming (boys only), Table Tennis, Tennis, Volleyball

The documentary analysis confirms consistent engagement in ten core sports at all competitive levels (National, Regional, and Local), underscoring the diverse athletic needs that must be addressed by standardized modest sports attire. Critically, data across all competitive levels shows a marked non-participation of Bangsamoro women in swimming. This absence directly points to a significant barrier related to cultural and religious beliefs regarding appropriate attire, particularly in sports with strict uniform standards or high physical exposure (Husna, 2020). This lack of participation at the grassroots level confirms the urgent need for a policy that institutionalizes religiously acceptable attire to ensure equitable access and opportunity for all Bangsamoro athletes.

2. Challenges of Bangsamoro Athletes in Sports Participation

2.1 Documentary Analysis

Existing records and media reports indicate a systemic issue, especially for female athletes. Reports consistently highlight the non-participation of Muslim women in swimming events due to attire conflicts. A 2011 ABC News report, cited by the researchers, noted that a Muslim athlete was barred from competition because her modest attire (long-sleeve garment) was deemed a safety risk or a potential unfair advantage, underscoring the lack of institutional recognition for religious dress. Similarly, local observation of the Palarong Pambansa and BARMMAA Meet swimming events showed an absence of female Muslim athletes due to attire conflicts.

2.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Analysis

During the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with athletes, coaches, and religious leaders, the participants synthesized three major themes regarding the challenges faced by Bangsamoro athletes due to the lack of appropriate attire. These themes directly informed the development of the Bangsamoro sports attire principles later in the study.

Theme	Sub-Themes	Quotes	Interpretation
1. Current sportswear does not meet the Islamic modesty standards	Violation of *Awrah*	*"When we play, especially volleyball or basketball, the standard uniforms are too short, showing our knees and arms. This conflicts with the teachings we grew up with. We feel exposed and worry about sin if we compromise." – Participant 3*	Conventional uniforms (shorts, sleeveless tops) violate the *awrah* (the required area of coverage) for both men (navel to knee) and women (entire body except face/hands/feet), creating a profound moral conflict that restricts participation, particularly for female athletes.
2. Tightness of sports wear	Body-hugging fit	*"The fabric is often thin and clings to the body when we sweat, which shows the shape of the body. My daughter was told to wear a baggy shirt over her jersey, but it was hot and interfered with her movements." – Participant 1*	Tight-fitting, form-hugging material violates the Islamic requirement for loose clothing. This forces the use of layers (extra shirts, leggings) over the standard uniform, which compromises functional performance and creates thermal discomfort in the humid BARMM climate (Khan, 2023).
3. Discomfort and Safety Issues	Thermal load and unfit headwear	*"In athletics, we have to wear leggings and long-sleeve rashguards under the uniform, even in the heat. It makes us very hot, dizzy, and slows us down. For the girls, the non-sports hijabs are dangerous because they keep shifting and sometimes cover the eyes while running." – Participant 5*	Layered, non-performance sportswear leads to significant thermal load, moisture retention, and potential heat-related illness. Furthermore, non-standard, shifting head coverings pose a tangible safety risk, directly impacting performance, concentration, and safety (Noori-Sistani et al., 2025).

The challenges are multi-layered: moral/religious (Awrah violation), physical/functional (discomfort, thermal load, restricted movement), and systemic (lack of institutional support/guidelines). These factors collectively hamper the participation of women and lead to a compromised athletic experience for all Bangsamoro Muslim athletes. **Furthermore,** the data reveals five key themes that highlight the challenges, requirements, and institutional needs at the intersection of faith and athletics.

Theme 1: The Conflict with Current Sportswear and Islamic Modesty

This theme addresses the fundamental incompatibility between much of the current athletic apparel and the principles of awrah/modesty in Islam.

Sub-Theme 1.1: Tightness and Revealing Attire

Current standard uniforms directly violate Islamic dress codes, particularly for women, by being overly form-fitting.

"One major issue with current sportswear is that many uniforms for female athletes are too tight, which goes against Islamic principles of modesty 3." She further warned, "There will be in the last part of my ummah women who will be dressed yet appear naked... They will not enter Paradise nor even smell its fragrance." – Participant 5

The tightness of non-compliant uniforms is seen as a significant haram (forbidden) act, as it reveals the shape of the woman's body, which is contrary to the requirement for loose, non-transparent clothing. A primary design mandate is to standardize and enforce specific uniform guidelines that ensure clothing is loose, non-transparent, and provides full coverage awrah for all athletes in the BARMM.

Sub-Theme 1.2: Resemblance to Men's Attire

Modesty extends beyond coverage to include distinct gender-appropriate dressing.

"We have clear Islamic guidelines on hijab, and one of them is 'Al'la yakun libasu al-rijal,' which means women should not dress in a way that resembles men's clothing." Participant 5

Even if a female athlete's uniform is modest in coverage, if it too closely mirrors men's attire (e.g., specific cuts or styles), it can still contradict Islamic teachings on feminine modesty. Women's sportswear should be distinctly different from men's sportswear to maintain modesty. This suggests a need for unique cuts, lines, or added components like the hijab or veil.

Theme 2: Impact on Performance, Comfort, and Safety

The discussion clearly links the lack of modest attire to detriments in the athlete's physical state, psychological confidence, and overall effectiveness.

Sub-Theme 2.1: Psychological and Physical Discomfort

Improper attire creates physical and mental barriers to peak performance.

Participant 4 stated, "I always choose a 2XL jersey to allow freedom of movement without feeling restricted." She added, "I avoid tight clothing because I become self-conscious if my outfit is too form-fitting."

The "tightness of sportswear" causes discomfort due to excessive sweating, which "can negatively impact their performance, focus, and endurance" Participant 3

Self-consciousness from revealing attire or discomfort from tight, hot fabric can distract the athlete, hindering their ability to perform confidently and effectively. Sportswear must be designed to be comfortable, loose-fitting, and provide ease of movement. Coaches and officials should include comfort in the definition of modest attire.

Sub-Theme 2.2: Safety and Movement Restriction

Unsuitable fabric and poor fit can pose direct physical risks.

"Some outfits may not be safe; if a player falls, she could suffer serious scrapes or injuries." Participant 5

Participant 3 shared that layering polyester or dry-fit over cotton to absorb sweat "can add extra heat and restrict movement".

Modest attire must be balanced with athletic functionality to ensure safety and an unrestricted range of motion. Layering, while a temporary fix for sweat, is an imperfect solution that compromises mobility. Sportswear must be constructed from a single, high-quality, sweat-absorbent material that is loose enough to prevent restriction but well-fitted enough to avoid safety hazards from excessively bulky clothing.

Theme 3: Institutional and Financial Obstacles

This theme highlights the external barriers—funding, policy, and enforcement—that prevent Muslim athletes from accessing appropriate sportswear27.

Sub-Theme 3.1: Lack of Funding and Budget

A critical barrier is financial, preventing the widespread adoption of compliant uniforms.

Participant 1 stated that "the biggest thing holding back our Muslim athletes is just a lack of funding and budget." He noted, "clothing that adheres to Islamic requirements tends to be more expensive compared to the standard sports uniforms provided by schools."

The higher cost of quality, faith-compliant sportswear is a significant financial burden that individual schools and athletes cannot easily bear, stunting the development of talented athletes. The BARMM government must increase the budget for sportswear and ensure Muslim athletes are provided with high-quality, compliant attire.

Sub-Theme 3.2: Policy Enforcement and Advocacy

Participants stressed that policies must move beyond documentation to active implementation and advocacy.

"I strongly believe that enforcing a proper Muslim dress code for female athletes is necessary... However, it's not enough for these rules to exist only on paper; we need to see them in action." Participant 2.

Participant 5 - "strongly recommended that the Darul Ifta of BARMM be involved in discussions to ensure compliance with Islamic principles."

The current policies are insufficient without consistent enforcement, and the government

must act as an advocate to protect Muslim athletes from having to compromise their faith in competition. The BARMM sports committee must set clear guidelines and actively enforce them at all levels of competition (e.g., Palarong Pambansa). The government should also advocate for more inclusive policies in national and international sporting arenas.

Theme 4: Identity, Culture, and Religious Commitment

This theme addresses the deeper, non-performance-related values connected to the attire.

Sub-Theme 4.1: Visibility of Islamic and Bangsamoro Identity

The uniform is a public statement of faith and cultural belonging.

Participant 2 mentioned that "wearing a hijab is not just about modesty, it's a statement of faith." He added that the correct attire "not only distinguishes them as a Muslim or Bangsamoro athlete but also subtly introduces and represents Islam to others in the sporting community."

The proper Islamic attire, especially the hijab, serves as a powerful marker of cultural and religious identity. By adhering to the dress code, athletes uphold their faith while earning respect and challenging stereotypes. Sportswear must be designed based on Islamic principles and cultural sensitivity, visibly representing the values of the Bangsamoro people without compromising functionality.

Sub-Theme 4.2: Religious Obligation vs. Personal Preference

The participants stressed the non-negotiable nature of religious guidelines.

"It is not a matter of personal preference but a religious obligation 47." She stated, "If you are Muslim, then Islamic principles should be your standard, not just what feels convenient" – Participant 5

The standard for modesty cannot be set by individual comfort or modern trends but must be defined by clear Islamic teachings found in the Qur'an and Hadith. Educational efforts should reinforce that adherence to Islamic dress codes is a religious responsibility. Policy guidelines must strictly adhere to the fundamental principles of awrah coverage.

3. Design Needs and Criteria for Sports Attire

Based on the synthesis of Documentary Analysis and FGDs with religious experts, supported by a formal documentary review of Islamic jurisprudence (Shari'ah) on dress and modesty, a unified design philosophy was established, locally termed Ehtisam (Modesty/Decency). This philosophy serves as the non-negotiable standard for the proposed Bangsamoro sports attire.

3.1 Foundational Islamic Criteria: Documentary Review (Ehtisam)

The criteria for **Ehtisam** were formally determined through the review of core Islamic texts and consensus from religious authorities consulted, focusing on the concepts of *awrah* (required coverage), non-transparency, and non-tightness (Robb & Yunus, 2024; Husna, 2020). The general Islamic standards for clothing, adapted for sports functionality, are as follows:

Component	Standard	Sports Adaptation
Men	Coverage from the navel to the knee.	Attire must be loose-fitting and non-tight.
Women	Full-body coverage except for the face, hands, and feet.	Must include a secure, performance sports hijab and loose-fitting silhouettes.
Fit	Looseness & Non-Revealing Fit.	Clothing should not be tight or body-hugging in a way that outlines the body's shape, especially when in motion or wet.
Material	Non-Transparent Material.	Fabric must be thick enough to prevent see-through exposure, especially when sweating profusely or submerged (for swimming).

Identity	Non-Imitating the Opposite Gender.	Men must wear masculine cuts; women must wear feminine attire that conforms to Islamic identity.
Aesthetics	Avoidance of Extravagance & Symbols.	Attire should avoid excessive luxury, religious symbols of other faiths, or offensive designs.
Performance	Comfort & Performance.	Clothing must allow free movement, be breathable, lightweight, and support athletic performance while strictly maintaining modesty.

3.2 General Guidelines for Ten Core Sports

Based on the Ehtisam criteria, the following general design guidelines were established for the core sports:

Event	Head/Hijab	Top (Women)	Bottom (Women)	Top (Men)	Bottom (Men)	Recommended Textile (General)
Athletics	Secure, lightweight, pull-on sports hijab.	Loose-fit, long-sleeve rash guard style, below the hips.	Ankle-length, loose-fit joggers or track pants.	Loose-fit tee-shirt.	Knee-length, loose-fit shorts (past the knee).	Lightweight, moisture-wicking polyester or nylon blend.
Basketball/Volleyball	Performance-fit sports hijab.	Loose, jersey-style top with long sleeves.	Ankle-length, flexible stretch pants/leggings covered by a short outer tunic or modest shorts.	Loose, performance jersey.	Loose, knee-length shorts (past the knee).	Breathable mesh-polyester for ventilation.
Swimming	Performance swim hood/turban, secure.	Full-coverage, water-repellent, fast-drying top.	Full-length swim trousers (modest swimsuit).	Loose swim shorts/trunks and a loose rash guard top (if necessary).	Quick-dry nylon, spandex blend with DWR (Durable Water Repellent) finish.	
Badminton/Tennis	Performance sports hijab.	Loose-fit, long-sleeve polo or tee, below the hips.	Lightweight, ankle-length trousers/pants.	Performance polo/tee.	Loose, knee-length shorts.	Technical polyester with high stretch/mobility.

3.3 Suggested Bangsamoro Sport Attire Design and Features

Proposed Ehtisam "Modest" Sports Attire: Visual Guide and Design Blueprint for Bangsamoro Athletes (Female Athletes)

This document serves as a detailed guide for the standardized Bangsamoro sports attire, applying the **Ehtisam** (Modesty/Decency) criteria. The designs prioritize modesty (non-tight fit, full *awrah* coverage), safety (secure headwear), and functional performance (breathability, free movement).

Core Component

1: Headwear (The Performance Hijab)

This component is universal for all land-based sports and is derived directly from the prototype design.

Feature	Description & Appearance
Type	**Slip-On Performance Hijab** (Integrated style).
Coverage	Extends over the head, fully covering the hair, neck, and chest area. The length is specifically designed to tuck securely under the top's high neckline, eliminating gaps.
Material	Lightweight, high-stretch, moisture-wicking synthetic knit (e.g., technical polyester/nylon blend).
Key Visuals	Minimal seams. Features integrated **laser-cut ventilation panels** (small perforations) strategically placed over the ears and hairline to improve airflow. The fit is secure and non-shifting, engineered to be **static-free** to prevent movement during high-intensity action.

2: Land Sports Categories (9 Sports)

- The nine land-based sports are grouped below by their required movement profiles.

Group A: High-Intensity & Aerobic Sports

(Athletics, Volleyball, Basketball, Futsal) This group requires maximum range of motion, breathability, and non-restrictive silhouettes.

Garment	Athletics (Track & Field)	Volleyball / Basketball / Futsal
Top (Appearance)	**Loose-Fit Long-Sleeve Performance T-Shirt.** Hem extends significantly *below the hips* for maximum modesty, providing excellent coverage even during arm raises. High, round neckline.	**Loose-Fit Performance Tunic Top.** Similar to the Athletics top but utilizes **side-slit hems** (starting around the thigh) to ensure the top does not catch or restrict the lower body during quick lateral movements, lunges, and jumps.
Top (Modesty Feature)	**Vertical Pleating/Draping** incorporated over the front chest area. This design actively prevents the fabric from clinging to or outlining the body's shape, even when sweating.	**Slightly more structured knit** to retain a boxy, non-clinging shape. The tunic-length ensures the hip and upper thigh area is fully obscured.
Bottom (Appearance)	**Loose-Fit Joggers/Track Pants.** Relaxed through the hip and thigh, tapering slightly to an **elasticated cuff at the ankle**. The ankle cuff ensures full coverage while keeping the fabric clear of the feet for precise running.	**Hybrid Bottoms.** Loose-fit, flexible stretch pants/leggings (ankle-length) are worn **under** a **Short, Loose Outer Tunic or Modest Shorts** (mid-thigh length). This layering effect provides maximum flexibility with enhanced visual modesty.

Recommended Textile	Lightweight, high-wicking synthetic knit or woven fabric with a slight mechanical stretch.	Technical, durable mesh-polyester blend for enhanced ventilation and fast drying.

Group B: Racket & Fielding Sports

(Badminton, Tennis, Table Tennis, Baseball, Softball) This group requires high mobility in the arms and shoulders, combined with rapid starting and stopping. The design largely follows the high-intensity model.

Garment	Badminton / Tennis / Table Tennis	Baseball / Softball
Top (Appearance)	**Loose-Fit Long-Sleeve Polo or T-Shirt.** Similar cut to Group A (below the hip, high neckline) but with options for a collar (Polo style) for formal competition aesthetics (Tennis/Badminton). The sleeves are designed with a **gusseted underarm** for unrestricted overhead or serving motions.	**Loose-Fit Long-Sleeve Jersey.** The top is slightly heavier weight (more durable fabric) and may feature team branding. The length covers the hips and ensures full coverage during fielding/bending movements.
Top (Modesty Feature)	Utilizes the **vertical draping/pleating** design to ensure the torso shape is obscured during dynamic swings and rotations.	Maintains a **wide, loose cut** through the torso and shoulder to prevent the garment from pulling tight during throwing.
Bottom (Appearance)	**Lightweight, Ankle-Length Trousers/Pants.** Fabric is designed for maximum stretch and return (e.g., technical stretch twill or knit) to allow for deep lunges and quick changes in direction without binding. Elasticated/drawstring waist.	**Loose-Fit Track/Softball Pants.** A durable, loose-fit trouser that maintains full ankle coverage and is cut wide enough to allow for sliding without garment stress. Elasticated cuff is preferred to secure the bottom around cleats.
Recommended Textile	Technical polyester or nylon with high stretch and mobility.	Durable, medium-weight woven fabric with reinforced seams for field-based activity.

3: Aquatic Sports Category (1 Sport)

Group C: Swimming

This requires a unique textile approach where the fabric does not become transparent, heavy, or cling when fully saturated.

Garment	Swimming (Female)
Head (Appearance)	**Performance Swim Hood/Turban.** A secure, streamlined hood designed to minimize drag. It may have a small internal weight or elastic structure along the seam to prevent the fabric from floating up in the water.
Top (Appearance)	**Full-Coverage, Long-Sleeve Swim Top (Tunic-Length).** Extends to at least mid-thigh. The high-neck design zips at the back or side. The shape is engineered to be slightly loose when dry, and **non-clinging** when wet.

Bottom (Appearance)	**Full-Length Swim Trousers.** These are cut as a modest swimsuit bottom, ensuring full-length coverage from the waist to the ankles. They are secured at the waist and ankles to prevent floating or ballooning.
Key Features	The entire suit is made from a high-quality **Quick-Dry Nylon/Spandex Blend** with a **DWR (Durable Water Repellent) finish** to repel water initially and ensure fast-drying properties once out of the water. The fabric is **non-transparent** even when wet.
Recommended Textile	High-performance, Chlorine-resistant, Quick-dry Synthetic Blend with a DWR finish.

Discussion

The empirical findings of this policy research underscore the critical need for institutional policy and design intervention in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) to achieve equitable sports participation. The documented non-participation of Bangsamoro women in swimming (Section 3.1) and the challenges of thermal load and safety hazards from layering (Section 3.2) confirm the fundamental barrier identified in the literature, where religious dress codes act as constraints on physical activity (Arif & Sultan, 2020). This systematic exclusion validates the study's hypothesis that current athletic standards conflict with the non-negotiable modesty requirements of Muslim athletes.

The development of the Ehtisam criteria (Section 3.3) and the successful prototype (Section 3.4) represent a regional manifestation of the global shift towards modest athleisure (Khan, 2023). By adhering strictly to Islamic principles of coverage (*awrah*) and loose fit while incorporating technical, performance-oriented textiles, the proposed attire aligns with the international trend driven by major industry players like Nike and Adidas (Khan, 2023). This approach moves beyond simple layering by engineering specialized solutions—such as secure sports hijabs and moisture-wicking materials—to manage heat and sweat effectively. The positive feedback from the preliminary testing, particularly regarding the reduction of thermal load and improvement in comfort, directly supports the findings of Taştan Özkan and Arslan (2023), who established that material and design are critical determinants of both thermophysiological and psychological comfort in athletic wear. The ability of the prototype to mitigate physical discomfort is therefore expected to remove a significant impediment to athletic engagement.

The policy implication is profound. The introduction of the faith-sensitive attire is expected to significantly increase engagement and participation across the ten core sports, particularly among women (Section 3.1). This outcome supports the existing body of literature suggesting that access to functional, modest athletic wear leads to improved physical and mental health outcomes for Muslim women by fostering confidence and addressing cultural constraints (Rafiq & Ghaffar, 2019; Zehra, 2021). Furthermore, the core recommendation for the formalization of a faith-sensitive attire policy (Conclusion) directly addresses the critical legal and policy gaps in existing human rights jurisprudence. Relying on reactive legal arguments often subjects athletes to constant public scrutiny and simplifies their participation as a mere 'choice' (Vakulenko, 2007). In contrast, the proactive institutionalization of the Ehtisam criteria through a policy resolution offers a mechanism to guarantee genuine inclusion, safety, and the preservation of the athlete's dignity, without exposing them to constant moralizing scrutiny (Vakulenko, 2007). Thus, the institutional adoption of the prototype moves the discourse from accommodation to empowerment.

Conclusion

This study confirms that the absence of standardized, faith-sensitive sports attire in BARMM constitutes a systemic barrier to equitable sports participation, particularly for

female Muslim athletes. The challenges stem from attire that violates Islamic modesty requirements, leads to functional discomfort, and poses safety risks. By establishing the Ehtisam criteria and developing a tested prototype, this research provides an evidence-based, actionable framework for designing inclusive sportswear. Inclusive, policy-backed design is essential for empowering Bangsamoro athletes to compete without compromising their faith or performance.

Policy Action Recommendations

The following policy recommendations are proposed for immediate action within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) to support the institutionalization of modest sports attire:

1. **Mandate and Formalize the Faith-Sensitive Attire Policy:** The Bangsamoro Sports Commission (BSC), in coordination with the Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education (MBHTE-BARMM), must draft and enact a formal resolution (e.g., a BAA resolution) that officially recognizes and mandates the use of religiously appropriate attire based on the Ehtisam criteria in all regional and national sports participation. This action formalizes commitment to inclusivity and equity.

2. **Systematize Standardization and Validation:** The BSC and the MBHTE-BARMM shall immediately convene a Writeshop and Validation Panel to convert the tested prototype and general guidelines into a final, standardized Bangsamoro Sports Attire guideline. This process must include final field testing of the produced prototype across multiple sports to ensure optimal performance, comfort, and compliance before mass production.

3. **Establish Dedicated Financial Sustainability:** The BARMM government must allocate a dedicated budget line within the regional sports development fund to subsidize or fully fund the procurement and distribution of the standardized modest sports attire to athletes. This action eliminates financial barriers to compliance and ensures long-term sustainability and equitable access to the uniforms.

4. **Support Localized Manufacturing and Economic Development:** To ensure cultural authenticity and stimulate regional economic growth, the policy must prioritize partnering with and supporting local Bangsamoro tailors and manufacturers to produce the attire. This partnership ensures quality control, responsiveness to local needs, and promotes the development of a regional sports apparel industry.

5. **Develop Targeted Communication and Education Materials (IEC):** Launch a region-wide Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaign to educate coaches, athletes, tournament organizers, judges, and sports officials on the necessity, design principles, and policy requirements of the new modest sports attire. This campaign is critical for promoting cultural acceptance and guaranteeing compliance during competitive events.

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