

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND SPORTS PARTICIPATION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN BOKI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to investigate demographic factors and sports participation among secondary school students in Boki Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve this purpose, two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. A detailed review of literature was carried out based on the variables of the study. The survey research design was considered most suitable for the study. Simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the eight public secondary schools while the systematic sampling technique was adopted in selecting the two hundred and fifty six respondents used for the study. A structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated by relevant authorities. To test the hypotheses formulated for the study, independent t-test statistical tool was used for data analysis. The result of the analyses revealed that there was a significant influence of age and school type on sports participation among students in the study area. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that students from small schools should be provided with the relevant facilities to enable them participate more actively in various sports.

Keywords: Demographic factors, sports participation

Introduction

Active participation in sport has remained a major contributor to healthy living among students in terms of their mental and physical health. This assumption is widely believed as the World Health Organization recommends that for a substantial health gain to be realized through sports it is recommended that adult's participate in sports for at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous - intensity aerobic sports or an equivalent combination of both moderate and vigorous sporting activities.

Bhagyasree and Shiny (2020) maintained that sports not only benefit people in terms of their health, but it also inculcates certain values like teamwork, leadership, confidence, etc., which help individuals in their overall development. Sergiu and Klára (2018) also maintained that taking part in a sporting activity contributes to the social, emotional and other dimensions of well-being. Sport participation which is simply the ability of an individual to take active part in the performance of a desired sporting activity, has according to Isaac and Pat (2018) remained a means of bringing people of different culture and creeds together, it serves as avenue where people of different genders, ages and religious background and political affiliations meet without

any rancour. Sports have remained a social agent where people of different ages and political backgrounds interact either as players or as spectators. Justifying the importance of sports, Gbadamosi (2015) maintained that sport is one of the unifying instruments that unite human beings irrespective of race, gender, class and others. Sports have emerged as a global cum cultural institution that unites the world (Mohammed, 2018).

Moreso, in developed countries of the world, institutional sports has always been the basis for selection of athletes for international competitions. Apart from this, institutional sport has been used by students to keep fit, socialize and prolong life. Both male and female participates in sports to keep fit and live a healthy life devoid of disease or any infirmity (Isaac & Pat, 2018), Many universities worldwide provide sporting facilities for both male and female students to keep them relaxed after rigorous academic work. According to Jones and Croft (2018) regular participation in sports remain an important behavior of promoting health, preventing prevalence of neuromuscular disorders, such as, mechanical low back pain, neck and shoulder pain and decreasing the risk of developing coronary heart diseases, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity and colon cancers.

Statement of hypotheses

1. Age does not significantly influence sport participation among secondary school students.
2. There is no significant influence of school type on sports participation among secondary school students.

Literature review

Age and sports participation

Sports participation is a means of bringing people of different culture and creeds together, it serves as avenue where people of different genders, ages, religious background and political affiliations meet without any rancor. According to Fasan (2016), one of the most important phenomena which cut across all human endeavours is sports, and that the knowledge of sports has contributed immensely to the art and science of discoveries. The grouping of athletes by age is very common in sport, the above can be attributed to inculcating fairness and equity in sport competitions.

According to Nahata and Raizada (2020) several factors influence the participation of sports among individuals and age remains a major determining factor as regard sport participation. Adeyemo and Ajibol (2016) maintained that students like to engage in the same sports as their age grades. This they attributed to the fact that students feel secured, relaxed and well understood in the midst of their peers and they also overcome challenges together. Age affects participation in sports and the interest of individuals is normally aroused by the presence and success of their friends in a particular sport (Hamafyelto & Badejo, 2018).

Similarly, Rowe, Adams and Beasley (2020) maintained that an ageing population may witness a significant drop in the participation of sports and vice versa. The age of a person helps determine the participation of sport at the various stages in a human's life. Age, as a factor, may also affect the sport that one participates in. Another factor may be the amount of physical activity involved in the particular sport, which will be more for football and less for cricket. In most studies, it showed that younger people are comparatively more active than older ones (Wicker, Hallmann & Breuer, 2017). According to Allender, Cowburn & Foster (2016) one of the major factors that may reduce participation in sports is an ageing population.

Nahata and Raizada (2020) conducted a study on factors affecting sports participation at the recreational level. The study sought to understand the factors that affect participation in sports to understand consumers' behavior and provide them with what is missing in the industry. A qualitative research design was adopted in the study. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews across different demographics such as age, gender and profession. The study revealed that social, economic and infrastructure affect sport participation Age fell

under the social factor that affects sport participation. Based on the above it was concluded that the future of sports will be dependent on a wide range of factors which may involve having to change the cultural and social attitudes among people, attitudes towards the structure and distribution to free time and accordingly programs must be created in a way that people feel motivated to participate in sports.

Furthermore, Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2016 maintains that age remains a significant factor influencing active participation in sports. The above is owed to the fact that physiological changes that accompany advancing age result in declines in both aerobic and anaerobic performance, with speed and power most affected (Westerkerp & Meijer, 2016).

School type and sports participation

Education is generally accepted as an instigator of change in the needs of society. Schools, because of their location and prominence in the society, and because a high percentage of children attend school at some stage in their lives, are considered the ideal avenues through which most educational and sport objectives can be achieved. Schools also have the obvious advantage of reaching all sectors of society regardless of gender (boys and girls), social status, or physical fitness and skill level (Zenoy & Moore, 2018). Physical Education and sport activities in the school setting is therefore the most effective vehicle through which both participation objectives can be achieved (Travill, 2015).

However, physical education creates opportunities to introduce children to sport activities and also inculcates a desire in pupils to actively engage in sport. Most schools observe physical education classes and most elementary schools have recess periods, when many adolescents at schools engage in athletic activities. As a result, these institutions can serve as agents for sport socialization and participation (DeKnop & Engstrom, 2015). This is particularly true if the schools' enrollment is small, where children are more likely to participate in sport.

Agnes (2015) conducted a study on effects of participation in competitive sports on school connectedness among public secondary school students in Murang'a County, Kenya. The study employed a descriptive survey design. It targeted all the 98,200 students from 257 public secondary schools in Murang'a County. Stratified random sampling was employed to select 26 schools while simple random sampling was used to select 384 students. The study used a questionnaire to collect data. Data was analyzed using inferential and descriptive statistics.

Gitonga (2018) noted that day school students spend less time in sporting activities as they spend most of this time doing assignments as well as going back home after classes. All the Mixed boarding schools allocated 5 hours per week to games while the boys and girls boarding allocated 10 hours to games per week. This could be attributed to the fact that boarding schools take part in sports even during the weekends. They also take part in sports in the mornings unlike students in day schools who spend this time doing their academic assignments. Similarly, Bulinda (2016) noted that boarding schools' students participate in sports both in the morning as well as after classes. The single-sex schools have adequate time at their disposal after classes and freedom hence, they allocated more hours per week to games.

Methodology

Design

The survey design was considered for this study. This is because it investigates the phenomena as it exists as at the time of investigation.

Population

The population of this study was 3,114 students in public secondary schools in Boki Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Sample

A total sample of 256 secondary school students was randomly selected from eight public secondary schools in Boki Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria using simple random sampling technique.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled: Demographic Factors and Sport Participation Questionnaire (DFSPQ). The instrument consisted of two sections. Section A contained information on the demographic factors. Section B was designed using four point modified likert scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). It contained ten items measuring sport participation among students. The test items were vetted by a lecturer in the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education and lecturers in the Department of Educational Foundations who are experts in Test and Measurement.

Results and discussion

Hypothesis one

Age does not significantly influence sports participation among secondary school students. The independent variable is age while the dependent variable is sports participation. Data was analyzed using independent t-test. The result of this analysis is as presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Independent t-test analysis of the influence of age on sports participation among secondary school students

Age	N	\bar{x}	SD	Cal-t	P.value
Below 15 years	152	17.463	3.738	28.642*	0.000
Above 15 years	104	19.574	4.429		

*Significant at 0.05; df=254

The result of analysis presented in table 1 shows that the calculated t-value of 28.642 is higher than the p.value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance with 254 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant influence of age on sports participation among secondary school students in Boki Local Government Area, Cross River State.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant influence of school type on sports participation among secondary school students. The independent variable is school type while the dependent variable is sport participation. Data was analyzed using independent t-test. The result of this analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Independent t-test analysis of the influence of school type on sports participation among Secondary school students

School type	N	\bar{x}	SD	Cal-t	P.value
Single sex	31	16.372	3.441	42.551*	0.000
Mixed school	225	19.869	4.628		

*Significant at 0.05; df=254

The result of analysis presented in Table 5 shows that the calculated t-value of 42.551 is higher than the p-value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance with 254 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of school type on sports participation among secondary school students in Boki Local Government Area, Cross River State.

Discussion of findings

The finding obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypothesis one in the study revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected. The implication of this finding is that there was a significant influence of age on sports participation among Secondary school students. The reason for this finding could be that students that are above 15 years tend to participate more in sport than those who are below 15 years of age. This means that the older students participate more actively in sporting activities in secondary school students in Boki Local Government Area, Cross River State.

The finding of this study is that several factors influence the participation of sports among individuals and age remains a major determining factor as regard sport participation. Supporting the above, Adeyemo and Ajibol (2016) maintained that students like to engage in the same sports as their age grades. This they attributed to the fact that students feel secured, relaxed and well understood in the midst of their peers and they also overcome challenges together. Age affects participation in sports and the interest of individuals is normally aroused by the presence and success of their friends in a particular sport (Hamafyelto & Badejo, 2018). The finding of this study also supported that of Rowe, Adams and Beasley (2020) who maintained that an ageing population may witness a significant drop in the participation of sports and vice versa. The age of a person helps determine the participation of sport at the various stages in a human's life. Age, as a factor, may also affect the sport that one participates in.

The finding obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypothesis two in the study revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected. The implication of this finding is that there was a significant influence of school type on sports participation among secondary school students. The reason for this finding could be that the type of school a student attends could determine the level of activity the student engages in. In this study, it was observed that students from mixed school were more actively involved in sporting activities than those in single sex school. This accounted for the difference in the mean participation for students from single sex and mixed schools in the study area.

This finding is in agreement with that of Gitonga (2018) who noted that day school students spend less time in sporting activities as they spend most of this time doing assignments as well as going back home after classes. All the Mixed boarding schools allocated 5 hours per week to games while the Boys and Girls Boarding allocated 10 hours to games per week. This could be attributed to the fact that boarding schools take part in sports even during the weekends. They also take part in sports in the mornings unlike students in day schools who spend this time doing their academic assignments. Similarly, Bulinda (2016) noted that boarding schools' students participate in sports both in the morning as well as after classes. The single-sex schools have adequate time at their disposal after classes and freedom hence, they allocated more hours per week to games.

Conclusion

The essence of this study was to investigate demographic factors and sports participation among secondary school students. Thus, the findings obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypotheses in the study revealed that there was a significant influence of age and school type on sports participation among secondary school students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypotheses in the study, it was recommended that:

- I. Students below the age of fifteen years should be encouraged to participate more actively in sporting activities.
- II. Students from single sex schools should be encouraged to get more involved in sporting activities.

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