

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND SPORTS PARTICIPATION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IKOT EKPENE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The thrust of this study was to examine learning environment and sports participation among secondary school students in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. A review of literature was carried out in accordance with the variables of the study. The research design adopted for the study was the survey research design. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the eight public secondary schools while systematic random sampling technique was adopted to select the two hundred and fifty-three (253) secondary school students (respondents) used for the study. A fifteen items four point Likert scale questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was duly vetted to ensure its validity. To test the hypotheses formulated for the study, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool was employed for data analysis. The result obtained revealed that there was significant relationship between availability of sports facilities and availability of sports equipment among students in the study area. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other things that school administrators should continue to ensure that relevant sports facilities are adequately provided in each school in order to promote students' participation in sports.



Keywords: Learning Environment, Sports Participation, Sports Facilities and Sports Equipment

Introduction

The need for students to develop interest in and participate actively in sports is gaining wide acceptance among various stakeholders. This is because active participation in sports

enables students to promote and sustain their physical, mental, emotional and social health. This emphasizes the benefits associated with students' participation in sports at secondary school level. Sampson (2019) reported that students' participation in physical activity within the school setting can take a variety of forms, with a broad classification outlining three major types: (a) physical education classes, (b) school sports, and (c) free-time activity. Physical education is often the dominant form of physical activity in schools due to its widespread prevalence and mandate by most school districts. The components of physical education classes often vary by school, teacher, class, region, and season. Generally, students are given a range of activities that are individual or team based, with periodic testing of specific skills to measure levels of fitness.

Grasten (2019) reported that school-based physical activity interventions increased students' physical activity participation and positive attitudes toward physical activities. The majority of young people spend significant amounts of time in the school environment, although this stressful and poses a lot of environmental challenges on the students and other employees (Ekpo & Ndum, 2021). School is a key context to target children and youth with physical activity interventions. Telama (2017) believed that patterns of activity in adulthood are often established during adolescence. Grasten (2019) also underlined the importance of this period saying that it is a period for promoting physical activity. Apart from sufficient equipment and facilities, a safe environment is also indispensable for an effective and attractive school physical education (Ekpo, Nnaji, Onabe & Ovat, 2023). An increase in physical activity could be possible with access to a gym or when equipment and safe space for play was made available during recess.

In this context, activities such as walking, squatting, running, jumping, cycling, swimming, playing, dancing, working in the garden, and climbing stairs can all be considered as physical activity. Bouchard (2018) describes physical activity as follows; Health-related physical activity involves any movement of the body caused by skeletal muscles, which leads to an increase in energy consumption through resting metabolism. Physical activity is considered as a physical movement resulting in energy consumption due to the movement of the body's skeletal muscles. The value created by physical activities in terms of quality of life, health protection, and development is an accepted reality all over the world. Buckworth and Dishman (2018) stated that physical fitness is the capacity to successfully deal with current and potential physical challenges in life.

It has been observed that certain variables within the school can determine students' participation in sports. Availability of sports facilities has been identified as a school variable that can influence students' participation in sports. The availability of relevant facilities in a school can either encourage or discourage students from taking part in extra curriculum activities (Ekpo, Egbula & Abang, 2016). This means that students' participation in various sports can be attributed to the availability of facilities required to effectively carry out that activity within the school. Different equipment are usually required to carry out certain sports within a school. The level of availability of equipment including balls, racket, bats, nets, tables among others could either motivate or discourage students to participate actively in sports.

Purpose of the study

- i. To examine the relationship between availability of sports facilities and sports participation among secondary school students.
- ii. To find out how availability of sports equipment relates to sports participation among secondary school students.

Statement of hypotheses

- iii. There is no significant relationship between availability of sports facilities and sports participation among secondary school students.

- iv. Availability of sports equipment does not significantly relate with sports participation among secondary school students.

Literature review

Availability of sports facilities and sports participation among students

Sports facilities are the structures built for sporting activities that can thrill students to participate in sports. These facilities include athletic tracks, stadia, soccer pitches, basketball courts, lawn tennis courts among others (Ogundario, 2016). The relevance of the presence of facilities to the smooth running of competition in secondary school has really boosted students' participation in competitive sport. The provision of adequate facilities in any school plays a significant role in female sports development. It is difficult to separate the standard of sports from the standard of facilities available for training of female student (Ekpe, 2018).

Facilities are indispensable to competitive and recreational sport and important in the promotion of female sporting activities because they are the powerhouse of sports (Oyeniyi, 2017). Omolawan (2017) asserted that the provision of appropriate and adequate sports facilities has considerable influence on students' participation in sport in any establishment. The scholar further stressed that availability of adequate facilities is vital to the conduct of intramural sports and other sports programmes. The availability of facilities in a school determines the type of sports programme that will be offered to female sports participant in secondary school.

Okuneye (2018) noted that inadequate facilities is one of the serious challenges affecting female participation in sporting activities in schools as lack of facilities hinders the implementation of competitive sports programme in secondary schools. Kabunge (2018) affirmed that sports practice with new, modern facilities and playing against some top competitors in their sports of interest offers the challenge that help in developing an appropriate self-identity. Therefore, for longevity of the facilities one of the most important areas of administrative concern of sports administration in the school involves prudent management of facilities in sports programmes.

Odok, Ogabor, Apie, Osaji and Ahueansehbor (2023) opined that if schools must get their students in top gear, the facilities in use in their schools must meet the standard required and these facilities include soccer field, basketball court, volleyball court, handball court, hockey pitch, gymnasium, badminton court, and tennis court. All these facilities if provided can influence a student's participation full time in sporting competition. However, Norman (2017) recommended that facilities listed by National Association for Sports Development in Nigeria secondary schools if adhered strictly to, will be of great importance to the successful implementation of secondary school students' participation in sports activities/programmes. The scholar stressed that participation in sports requires the teacher to make the students learn, but students cannot learn with the facilities provided without the teacher. Availability of sporting facilities is important in the promotion of sports in school because participant will get motivated.

The availability of adequate facilities and supplies as well as their utilization are important to improve the love and choice of sport among students (Clement, 2018). According to the author, availability refers to resources ready to be used about to be used or that can easily be found and used. Onyejiemezie (2017) noted that availability is a state of making provision for a satisfactory standard requirement in terms of teaching resources to enhance effective instructional activity in a particular subject. Onyejiemezie (2017) further opined that the availability of facilities and supplies as well as adequate personnel motivates the students to choose particular sports. Homby (2017) asserted that adequacy is a condition in which something is enough or good enough in quantity for a particular purpose or need. Adequate availability of equipment and facilities and their proper utilization have been positively correlated to good choice of sport. The scholar opined that there is a relationship between facilities and equipment, and choice of sports. She added that the expected outcome in a programme will not come from mere acquisition of knowledge but from its utilization.

Availability of sports equipment and sports participation among students

Sports equipment are extremely important in every modern school of the twenty first century because they aid in the teaching-learning process and allow students to easily engage and participate in sports-related activities at any time. Several governments all over the world have embarked on a building journey and billions of dollars have been spent to establish contemporary schools with sports equipment and facilities that meet the needs of the modern generation. Research has shown that the availability and conditions of sports equipment in most schools in developing countries is below standard, resulting in poor sports involvement and a lack of interest in participating in sports-related activities (Orunaboka & Nwachukwu, 2018).

The availability of suitable equipment, facilities, and supplies, as well as their use, are important elements in any physical education and sports plan. In recent years, it has been closely observed that sports and physical education seem to be losing momentum and steam in almost all the primary schools within the country. Presumably this is being well-thought out as part of the reason why the country has not been scouting and discovering new athletes to perform at regional, national, and international levels (Lawson, 2021). The government does not usually provide adequate sports equipment in Nigerian schools; schools must solicit donations from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These donations have been given to schools in urban areas frequently (Odok, Osaji, Dan, Ahueansebhor & Odey, 2023).

According to Eric (2020), Project Hope donated items including 50 soccer balls, whistles, and chessboards to the event that took place in Lagos. These kinds of donations imply a big shortage of equipment within the sports fraternity in the entire country. One of the challenges faced by sports administrators at school level is that of management and taking care of sports equipment for future use (Frank, 2020). Most of the little equipment in schools has been reported missing without a trace and some has been broken without repair. All these elements have affected sports participation and teaching of physical education in Namibian schools.

Sports programmes are mainly concerned with movement and one important factor in the conduct of successful sports programmes is the provision of adequate equipment and supplies. Sport equipment management relates to organizing, monitoring and reporting on any equipment used by sport facilities. Sport facilities can include training centers, gymnasiums stadiums, sports federations and even universities. They can host several activities tournaments; and training sessions (Awosika, 2018). All of these events use a wide range of gear, which greatly complicates the process of monitoring and servicing. This, coupled with the rise of injuries in sporting events, calls for better sports equipment management practices. A sports equipment management takes care of procurement, maintenance and the disposal of sports gear for their company. They also ensure that all equipment meets functional and safety requirements before being utilized by players. Meeting these regulations is critical if you wish to avoid athlete accidents stemming from poor maintenance of equipment.

Smith (2020) conducted a study to investigate and assess the availability and conditions of sports equipment in secondary schools in Ikono Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. An observational study was adopted for this study, where Physical Education school teachers were observed using the available sports equipment in the schools during their PE classes. The targeted population consisted of 10 teachers within 10 respective secondary schools. A questionnaire was administered to collect data on available equipment. Data was analyzed using SPSS statistics software. Based on sports code level of participation, athletics was found to be the most popular activity with 35% of learners taking part. Soccer came in second with 25%. Netball was the third most played sport, with 20% of participants in annually scheduled competitions at regional and national levels. Volleyball was the fourth highest with 10% of learner participation. The lowest four sports codes were boxing at 5%, rugby 3%, gymnastics 1%, and cricket 1%. This study therefore concluded that sports equipment were either unavailable or completely in poor condition in most of the secondary schools under study. So, it

is very important to get the right tools and facilities so that physical education and sports can be taught and learned well.

Odok, Apie, Osaji, Ahueansebhor & Ogabor (2023) asserted that ideally, provision of equipment should be adequate and timely and that limitations imposed by those factors that restrict the number and kinds of activities that may be performed in the sports programme are detrimental to sports development. Just as adequate facilities and equipment are needed for effective institution and fulfillment of objectives in other disciplines, so are there needed for the successful teaching of sports and games. Sports materials are grouped into equipment and supplies. Equipments are those expendable and durable materials used on the sports facilities to practices sports or compete in sporting activities (Umoh, 2018).

The relevance of the presence, adequacy, supply and maintenance of equipment are very essential to the smooth operation of any sports and fitness programme has been emphasized in the literature (Ojeme, 2019). The level of success of most sports and fitness programmes is greatly dependent on the degree of availability and care of up to date equipment and facilities as this form the hob around which such programmes revolve. The design and operation of a fitness centre, like any other sports programmes, involves the selection and use of specialized equipment and facilities that are germane to the effective operations of the fitness centre.

Methodology

This study adopted survey research design, because it investigates the phenomena as it exists at the time of this research. The population of this study comprised 3,008 senior secondary school students in the 17 public secondary schools in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The sample for this study consisted of two hundred and fifty-three (253) senior secondary school students randomly selected from 8 public secondary schools in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire that was titled Learning Environment and Sports Participation Questionnaire (LESPQ). It was divided into two sections. Section A contained items on respondents' personal variables while Section B was designed using four point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). It contained fifteen items that measured the variables of the study. Items 1-5 measured availability of sports facilities. Items 6-10 measured availability of sports equipment. Items 11-15 measured sports participation among students. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was the statistical tool used for data analysis.

Result and analysis

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between availability of sports facilities and sports participation among students. Pearson product moment correlation statistical tool was employed for data analysis. The result obtained is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis of the relationship between availability of sports facilities and sports participation among secondary school students in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State (N = 249)

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	Cal.r	P.value
	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$			
Availability of sports facilities	4034	5623	9236	0.429*	0.000
Sports participation among secondary school students	6688	8162			

*Significant at 0.05; df = 247

As presented in table 1, the result of this analysis showed that the calculated r-value of 0.429 is higher than the p.value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance with 247 degree of freedom. The indication of this result is that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between availability of sports facilities and sports participation among secondary school students in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis two: Availability of sports equipment does not significantly relate with sports participation among students. Pearson product moment correlation statistical tool was employed for data analysis. The result obtained is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between availability of sports equipment and sports participation among secondary school students in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State (N = 249)

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	Cal.r	P.value
	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$			
Availability of sports equipment	3827	4934	8763	0.518*	0.000
Sports participation among secondary school students	6688	8162			

*Significant at 0.05; df = 247

As presented in table 2, the result of this analysis showed that the calculated r-value of 0.518 is higher than the p.value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance with 247 degree of freedom. The indication of this result is that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between availability of sports equipment and sports participation among secondary school students in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of findings

The finding obtained from data analysis 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 relationship between availability of sports facilities and sports participation among secondary school students in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. This

finding could be as a result of the fact that the availability of facilities is necessary for the conduct of any sporting activity. A school with good and modern sports facilities will always attract students and motivate them to participate in any sports of their choice. The availability of sports facilities in secondary schools in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area has been a source of attraction to several students who have developed interest to participate in various sports within the school.

This finding is in agreement with that of Odok et al. (2023) who opined that if schools must get their students in top gear, the facilities in use in their schools must meet the standard required and these facilities include soccer field, basketball court, volley ball court, hand ball court, hockey pitch, gymnasium, badminton, court, and tennis court. All these facilities if provided can influence a student's participate full time in sporting competition. However, Norman (2017) recommended that facilities listed by National Association for Sports development in Nigeria secondary schools if adhered strictly to, will be of great important to the successful implementation of secondary school students' participation in sports activities/programmes. The scholar stressed that participation in sports requires the teacher to make the students learn, but students cannot learn with the facilities provided without the teacher. Availability of sporting facilities is important in the promotion of sports in school because participant will get motivated.

The finding obtained from data analysis 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 relationship between availability of sports equipment and sports participation among secondary school students in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. This finding could be as a result of the fact that certain equipments are required to effectively perform any sport in school. The availability of these equipments serves as a source of motivation for students to participate in various sports. The availability of these equipments will enable interested participants to find required equipment to carry out desired sporting activities.

The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Lawson (2021) who reported that the availability of suitable equipment, facilities, and supplies, as well as their use, are important elements in any physical education and sports plan. In recent years, it has been closely observed that sports and physical education seem to be losing momentum and steam in almost all the primary schools within the country. Presumably this is being well-thought out as part of the reason why the country has not been scouting and discovering new athletes to perform at regional, national, and international levels (Lawson, 2021). The government does not usually provide adequate sports equipment in Nigerian schools; schools must solicit donations from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These donations have been given to schools in urban areas frequently.

Conclusion

The finding obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypotheses in the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between availability of sports facilities, availability of sports equipment and sports participation among students in the study area.

Recommendations

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

1. School administrators should continue to ensure that relevant sports facilities are adequately provided in each school in order to promote students participation in sports.
2. School authorities should continue to ensure that students are provided with necessary equipment required for various sports within the school in order to promote students sports participation.

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