

PERCEIVED FACTORS DETERMINING STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN SPORT PROGRAMMES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN JOS EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF PLATEAU STATE

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Abstract

This paper basically focuses on the perceived factors determining students' participation in sport programmes in secondary schools in Jos East Local Government Area of Plateau State. It is worthy to note that secondary schools students need sports knowing well that it has been playing very dynamic roles in the education and welfare of individuals in the society. Sports provide experience that help achieve purposeful living and should therefore form an integral part of the nation's educational programme. Sport does not exist in a vacuum because it is indispensable to human life. It is part and parcel of the education system. No institution of learning functions well without sports because it plays a very important role in the development of students' intellectually. Sport is therefore advantageous to the individual, schools and as well as the nation. The paper further revealed the Sports Participation in Secondary Schools, Facilities and Sport Participation, Personnel and Sports Participation, Motivation and

Sports participation. Factors such as inadequate sports facilities, equipment/supplies, qualified sports personnel, poor funding, time allotment to sports, motivation of students and negative attitude of were responsible for the poor sports participation and performance of students in secondary schools in Jos East Local Government Area of Plateau State. The study concluded that Sports facilities form an important variable which determine students' participation in sports programmes in secondary schools. These facilities is key due to the benefits of sports which include physical development, acquisition of specialized skills, social development, intellectual/mental development, psychological/emotional development, moral development and remediation of defects. Participation in sports by students in secondary schools in Jos East Local Government Area were determined by Sports facilities, equipment and supplies, qualified sports personnel to handle sports programmes, motivation of students/staff and fund. Based on these, the study the researchers therefore made the following recommendations that Local and State government should bring out policies of special grants to Schools in order to develop their sports facilities and adequate equipment/supplies should be provided by the school authority among others.

Keywords: Factors, Participation, Perceived, Secondary, Sports, Students.

Introduction

Sports which has been recognized and accepted as one of the most important aspects of general education touches all parts of human endeavour. It is a social activity that is indispensable to human healthy living because it functions in several ways. Akinsanmi and Oloyede (2001) opined that sports contribute to character building, discipline, economy, ideology, patriotism, education, mental development, human communication and physical fitness.

Akanbi (2002) described sports as physical activities needing physical efforts, mental and emotional stability, among others to provide entertainment, physical fitness and health as while as revenue. Also, Oladije (2003) viewed sport as an institutionalized physical activity which operates by rules and regulations. It is an activity with clear standards of performance involving physical exertion through competition, governed by norms, definitions and role relationships, typically performed by members of organized groups with the goal of achieving some rewards through the defeat of other competitors.

Gbefwi, Okoroigwe and Akinmorin (2018) opined that participating in sports by students has a lot of benefits which include; it makes the body strong and healthy; it keeps the heart in good working condition; it helps to strengthens the bones and muscles; it aids body circulation and proper breathing; it help to lose excess weight; it helps to reduce the risk of contracting some diseases; it gives a trim and firm body shape; it prevents the bones and joints from becoming stiff and reduces pains and it helps an individual to get sound sleep.

Participation in sports programme is one of the best known ways of maintaining optimum health from childhood to adulthood. It is an instrument in helping an individual at all levels, to gain strength, endurance, agility, coordination and flexibility. Robertson (2001) identified the importance of sports to the individual as; physical fitness, enjoyment, entertainment,

exercise, prizes, as a profession, as hobby and learning to develop some students as well as helping in reshaping the life of youths for a better future.

The availability of sporting facilities and equipment, personnel, funds, time allotment to sports and motivation of students are very vital variables to meaningful sports development at all levels of schools interschool, national and international sports. Akin (1998) stated that adequate physical infrastructure are necessary for effective sports performance and achievement. However, non-availability of sporting facilities and equipment, qualified personnel, motivation of students, funding and time allotment to sports may limit the organisation of sports participation. Negligence may hamper sports participation by students in secondary schools. It is against this background that this paper has emerged. It examines perceived factors determining students' participation in sport programmes in secondary schools in Jos East Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria.

Sport in secondary schools of Jos East Local Government started having setback for quite a long time. Reports had it that inter-secondary schools sports where secondary school students from Jos East participated showed that their performances were either average or below average. Despite the importance of sports to students, it was observed by other researchers that most students did not come out to participate in intramural sports in their schools, such as interclass and inter house competitions. The students complained of inadequate sports facilities, equipment/supplies, and lack of motivation to students by schools to participate in sporting activities among others. Attitudes and interest towards sports participation seems to be a factor in secondary schools in Jos East Local Government Area.

After a careful observation of the students' participation in intramural sports competitions, the researchers decided to examine the factors determining students' participation in sport programmes in secondary schools in Jos East Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria. A better understanding of these factors will promote sports participation and better performance among secondary school students in Jos East Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Theoretical Framework (Conditioning Theory of Pavlov 1936)

Conditioning theory of Pavlov (1936) was postulated that all learners can have their behaviour shaped or condition through regular association (practice) and manipulation of the learning practice environment by the coach or the teacher. The performer learns to associate certain behaviour (responses) with certain stimuli from within the environment. Once this connection or bonding together of a particular stimuli and response occurs, then the performer's behaviour becomes habitual, enabling predictions to be made about that person's future responses to the same or similar stimuli. This theory is relevant to the study because according to the theory, there must be a factor that stimulates or motivates individuals to participate in sporting activities or programmes. The stimuli in this regards can be the sports facilities, equipment/supplies, personnel, motivation means among other things. For example a school without sporting facilities cannot encourage students' sports participation.

A school that has sport facilities and adequate equipment/supplies and then lacks personnel to handle sports programmes will not encourage much sports participation. In line with above, Wesson (2002) stated that sports facilities and equipment/supplies are important

stimuli to sports participation. It is also impossible to achieve satisfactory responses to sports from student athletes who lack sports facilities and equipment/supplies in their schools. Good sports programmes function effectively only when they are supported with sufficient equipment in good condition and also a judicious use of rewards for performance will provide reinforcement for desired behaviours.

Sports Participation in Secondary Schools

Secondary schools include Junior and Senior secondary schools. Oduyale and Okundare (2002) viewed that sporting activities are organized to fulfill social and other charitable objectives such as promoting interaction, physical fitness, keeping students together, learning each other's virtues, and developing skills among others. These are achieved through intramural and extramural sports activities. The most dominant form of sports programmes organized in secondary schools is the intramural sports. These are the comprehensive programmes of activities carried out within the walls of the secondary schools. Intramural sports are organized in such a way that they offer a wide range of opportunities for students' participation, enjoyment, interest and fun while participation is voluntary.

Ene (1995) opined that sports are veritable means of promoting cooperative living among students in secondary schools, thereby minimizing incidences of alcoholism, cultism, examination malpractice, ethnicity and other vices bedeviling the modern society.

Intramural athletic activities as viewed by Ladani (2007) observed that competitive and non-competitive physical activities conducted among individuals or group of students within a school. Participants may compete as team members against other individuals or against themselves. Intramural sports programmes is a comprehensive programmed of recreational activities conducted within the schools. The sports activities that are involved in intramural and extramural programmes include:

- i. Organized competitive leagues for both boys and girls. For example inter-house competition
- ii. Recreational free play activities
- iii. Sports clubs which may include both competitive and non-competitive event and
- iv. Extra-mural sports activities which involve competitions with other schools.

The inter-secondary school sports are very important in secondary schools. It encompasses the state's secondary schools festivals, Milio secondary schools basketball competition and the Shell competition organized for secondary schools.

Butler and Hardy (2002) observed that the importance of inter-secondary schools sports include:

- i. It promotes a healthy lifestyle
- ii. It helps secondary school students or teens to develop and enhance their fine and gross motor skills.
- iii. It helps in managing anger
- iv. It improves their grades since some schools will not allow students to play a sport if their grades are not as a certain level
- v. It improves teamwork skills
- vi. It encourages sports in teenagers
- vii. It brings out skills in secondary school students

- viii. It is appealing to colleges, since colleges like to see students involved in extra-curricular activities.
- ix. It helps in safe fun since the teenagers need stimulation and if they don't play a sport or involve in some other extra-curricular activities, they will find that stimulation elsewhere

Sports Facilities and Sports Participation

Ituh (1995) viewed sports facilities as those playing surfaces or areas for sports. They include pitches, courts, tracks, rooms, halls and other areas. Facilities are those playing areas that facilitate the teaching of games and sports as shot put, discus, volleyball, football/soccer, wrestling, judo, swimming, gymnastics, aquatic sports, pre-colonial sports because without facilities, it will be difficult to understand the rules, regulations, and even skills of games.

Facilities and equipment have the following advantages:

- i. They promote interest in sports and recreation.
- ii. They make training interesting and easy.
- iii. They motivate the athletes, coach, and trainers.
- iv. They enhance efficiency in skills and understanding of techniques

Oyeniya (2002) emphasized that if facilities are available, adequate and well planned, there is every possibility of good sports programme that will stimulate students' participation in sports. There have been numerous studies whose results highlighted the influence of facilities on participation and performance in sports. Anejo and Okwori (2007) observed that the existence of sports facilities and equipment is of vital importance in the conduct of physical education, intramural sports and other sports programmes. Akintunde (2001) opined that sports facilities must be structured and constructed to meet the standard of related sporting activities in order to programme, utilize and perform effectively in recreational and competitive sports in secondary schools.

Anejo and Okori (2004) stated that the existence of sports facilities is of vital importance in the conduct of physical education, intramural sports and other sports programmes. Ogundiaro (2010) specified sports facilities to include the following:

- i. Athletics tracks
- ii. Soccer pitches
- iii. Basketball courts
- iv. Lawn tennis courts
- v. Gymnasium
- vi. Badminton courts
- vii. Volleyball courts.

Sports Equipment/Supplies and Sports Participation

Charles and March (2002) opined sports equipment refer to those items that are not considered expendable but that are used for a period of years; such as parallel bars, volleyball stands, strength training equipment, soccer goals, mats and video tape recorders. Ladani (1996) viewed that sports equipment are aids or tools that facilitate the teaching of health and physical education and coaching of sports. Equipment for sports consists of all durable materials such as fly rings, badminton nets and other implements used in the various activities of sports. The qualifications and characteristics of the person that should be providing and maintaining sporting equipment/supplies to include:

- i. Ability to work with staff and students of both genders
- ii. He should possess organizational ability
- iii. Capability to give careful attention to details
- iv. Vast knowledge of the goals and objectives of physical education, intramural athletics and institutional mission
- v. Ability for effective public relations
- vi. Very firm, highly principled without animosity
- vii. Ability to supervise students' managers and any paid assistants.

The availability of equipment and supplies for students use may encourage and stimulate them to participate in sports. Provision of facilities without equipment is not complete; the two things work hand-in-hand (Akin, 1998).

Sports Personnel and Sport Programmes

Sports require the use of highly qualified, efficient and competent personnel to be able to handle the different segments of sport programme. The experts (coaches, game masters, organizers, psychologists, sociologists and physiotherapists), the administrator or chief executive or the manager is supposed to provide efficient opportunities. Ogu (2001) reported that school sports are so delicate that they cannot be handled by any other person than physical education personnel who has been trained for that purpose. Also, a good management skill, training opportunities should be provided for sports personnel at regular intervals. They must be exposed to workshops, seminars and conference in order to develop their technical skills and update their professional competence.

Igbanugo (1986) identified sports personnel as the game master, assisted in his duties by a number of administrative staff such as the technical advisers. In secondary schools, students and teachers are very important in sporting process. Many schools do not have coaches. The teachers are saddled with the responsibilities of teaching and coaching of athletes. Since these people have divided interest, the time to effectively train the students for sports will not be there, or will not be enough. On many occasions, game masters in secondary schools in desperation to win medals for their schools in a major competition recruit mercenaries who are established stars even after graduating from secondary schools to win medals.

Inadequate manpower in the area of school sports has been highlighted by many Nigerian physical education specialists. Akintunde (2001) viewed that the need for adequate manpower has not been satisfied. School sports are so delicate that it cannot be handled by any other person than the physical education personnel who are trained for it.

Motivation and Sport participation

Motivation is a key area of sports psychology. It is recognized as an essential feature in both the learning of skills and the development of performance. Motivation also plays an important role in the learner's preference for the selection of activities. Wesson (2023) observed that motivation as the internal mechanism and external stimuli, which arouse and direct behaviour. In analyzing the definitions, three main aspects are key. These include;

- i. External mechanism: motivation is linked to and affected by external factors that we can experience within our learning/performance situation

- ii. Arouse behaviour: motivation is linked to a person's state of arousal that energized and drives our behaviour. The strength of energized state will determine the degree of intensity of effort used to achieve the goal related behaviour
- iii. Direct behaviour: motivation in its various forms affects our goals or selection of activities as well as our maintenance of behaviour in activities.
- iv.

Motivation therefore, is a general energized state, which prepares a person to act or behave in some way. Motives relates to the direction that the behaviour will take or the goals which are set. Thompson (2002) explained that motivation cannot be observed directly, but rather it is inferred from goal-directed behaviour and it is implicitly assumed to underline the performance of motor skills. Wiggins (2002) viewed motivation as an internal factor that arouse, direct and integrates a person's behaviour. Motivation of students to sports participation should be of great interest to all institutions of learning, because it is a vital pre-requisite to all learning and performance.

It is very important that coaches and trainers understand how different categories of students are motivated and their possible reaction to the method adopted. For example, the way extrovert will react to praise will be different from the way an introvert will react. So also, the way an athlete champion will react to blame/rebuke will be distinct from the way a learner will react to same. Their reactions to motivational techniques will have influence on their sustained interest on the task at hand and on their subsequent performance. Winning or losing is of little consequence to future participation in the event, no reward is expected from any quarters. Participation in such activities is internally justified, and therefore, maximum effort is extended with athletes working diligently for long periods of time at high level of productivity. Olowoyo (1989) clearly stated that, a change in sports performance may be due to either the presence of motivation or the lack of motivation. Olajide (2002) opined that motivation could be achieved through: provision of adequate facilities, supplies and equipment, awards, giving make-up test to athletes when they miss test because of sporting engagement on behalf of the school, footing medical bills of athletes in case of injuries and ill-health and award of scholarship to mention a few.

Funding and Sports Participation

Funds are essential for effective organization and administration of sports at all levels. It neglect may hamper sports programmes in secondary schools. Without adequate funding of sports, Nigerian schools will never reach its peak. Onyinlokwu (1986) viewed that funding is the most important element to achieve effective organization of athletic programmes. Obviously, without sufficient funds, facilities and equipment cannot be provided and properly maintained. Without funds, schools cannot employ qualified personnel that will handle sports programmes in schools. This makes it very important that adequate funds be provided to improve the standard of sports in our schools.

Budget crunch in many schools districts has caused physical education and game masters to find alternative ways of raising revenues for their programmes. Ladani (2007) observed that fund can be raised both internally and externally to fund sports programmes. A good and seasoned sport administrator does not usually depend on what comes from the government or school authority alone rather uses their initiative to find means of sustaining the physical education and athletic programmes.

Wiggins (2002) stated that funding for sports in the United Kingdom is the mixture of government, private and commercial agencies. Also identified sources of funding sports according to www.englishsports.gov.uk/lottery as;

- i. National lottery funding
- ii. Voluntary bodies
- iii. Sport aid (previously sport aid foundation)
- iv. Football Trust
- v. Gambling
- vi. Sponsorship
- vii. Taxation

Conclusion

Sports facilities form an important variable which determine students' participation in sports programmes in secondary schools. These facilities are key due to the benefits of sports which include physical development, acquisition of specialized skills, social development, intellectual/mental development, psychological/emotional development, moral development and remediation of defects.

Participation in sports by students in secondary schools in Jos East Local Government Area were determined by Sports facilities, equipment and supplies, qualified sports personnel to handle sports programmes, motivation of students/staff and fund.

Recommendations

In order to improve on the level of sports participation and performance of students in secondary schools in Jos East Local Government, the following recommendations were made by the researchers:

1. Local and State government levels should come up with a policy of special grants to secondary schools to develop and upgrade their sports facilities. The development of sports facilities should be given the same importance as the development of social infrastructure. This should not be left in the hands of the government alone but sports firms and philanthropist should be encouraged to help in providing sports facilities.
2. Adequate sports equipment/supplies should be provided by the school authority.
3. Qualified sports personnel should be the ones to handle sports in secondary schools.
4. Intramural and extramural sports programmes should be encouraged among schools and funds should be made available for them.

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