Vol. 7 No.1 June (2024)
JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND TOURISM EDUCATION
ISSN: 2659-0794 (PRINT) ISSN:2659-0808(ONLINE)
Content Available at: **https://jeate.net/index.php/Jete/issue/archive**

Demographic Variables and Sports Participation Among Secondary School Students in Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Keywords
Demographic variables, Sports participation

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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate demographic variables and sports participation among secondary school students in Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of the study, two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance. Literature was reviewed according to the variables of the study. Survey research design was considered most appropriate for the study. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the seven public secondary schools while systematic random sampling technique was employed to select the two hundred and eighty-eight (288) respondents used for the study. A structured questionnaire was the instrument utilized for data collection. The instrument was subjected to validity test by relevant persons. In testing the hypotheses formulated for study, independent t-test statistical tool was used for data analysis. The result obtained from data analysis and testing of hypotheses revealed that there was a significant influence of school location and age on sports participation among secondary school students. Based on these findings it was recommended among others that the ministry of education should ensure that school locations with small space should not be granted license to operate in order to provide space for students to participate in sports while in school.

Introduction

Sports in Nigeria have grown from a humble beginning as an entertainment and recreational activity to a prominent phenomenon whose influence is felt in all facets of life. It is an activity involving physical exertion and skills in which an individual or team competes against another or for the purpose of entertainment. The act of participating in sports has enabled several students to discover their talents and develop them into useful means of livelihood.

Bassey (2019) opined that sport is an integral building block in various educational institutions of learning; primary, secondary and tertiary. Sporting activities are an important component of complete education. Sport provides a platform for the younger generation and adults to develop, physically, socially, mentally and emotionally. The researcher observed that, students are no longer enthusiastic about coming out to participate in sporting activities. Dan, Odok, Osaji and Akpong (2020) added that participation in sports and clubbing activities moved from social gathering and youth organized activities to adult organized programmes in the twentieth-first century and has now gained ground in properly structured sports programmes which has given youths the opportunity to engage in beneficial, ascertaining, educative ad mind-relaxing sports activities.

Other similar challenges students encounter in attempt to get themselves into school sport activities is the unbearable nature of the school environment, parental negative comparison towards sport participation and their studies, peer group negative influence, lack of motivation due to the non-availability of sport facilities and equipment. Some don't just want to participate because of fear and phobia of getting injured and leaving with those scars.

The act of taking part in a sporting activity contributes to the social, emotional and other dimensions of well-being. Sport participation is simply the ability of an individual to take active part in the performance of a desired sporting activity, has remained a means of bringing people of different culture. It serves as an avenue where people of different gender, age and religious background and political afflictions meet without any rancor. Sports have remained a social agent where people of different age bracket and political backgrounds interact either as players or as spectators. Justifying the importance of sports, Gbadamosi (2019) 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.

It has been observed that students' participation in sport is usually influenced by certain demographic variables. Kingston (2019) identified school location as a factor that can influence students' participation in sports. The place is a school is situated is can determine the level of sports participation among students. Students in urban and rural schools may not have the same access to sports facilities, which could influence the extent to which they can participate in sports. The age of a student could also be responsible for the level of sports

participation among secondary school students. Young and older students in a school do not participate in the same sports. Even competitions organized in schools usually consider different age categories. This emphasizes the age dichotomy in relation to sports participation among secondary school students. This indicates that the age of a student could determine the students' level of sports participation in a school.

Literature Review

School location and sports participation among students

School location refers to the community in which the school is located, such as a village, hamlet, urban or rural areas (area fewer than 3000 people), a small town (3,000 to about 15,000 people), a town (15,000 to about 100,000 people), a city (100,000 to about 1,000,000 people) (William, 2016). School location is the geographical location of a school or the place a school is situated. Whether a village, hamlet, small or big town, or a city, school location is categorized into urban and rural areas.

Ojoawo (2017) found that school location is one of the potent factors that influence the distribution of educational resources. Throwing light on location influence, Ezike (2018) conceptualized urban location as those places which have high population density containing high variety and beauty and common place views. Moreover, that rural location on the other hand is characterized by low population density containing low variety and isolated places. Owolabi (2017) asserted that highly qualified teachers prefer to serve in urban areas rather than the rural areas and that teachers do not accept postings to rural areas because their conditions are not up to the expected standard as their social life in the areas is virtually restricted as a result of inadequate amenities, facilities are deficient, play grounds are without equipment, libraries are without books while laboratories are glorified ones.

Ojoawo (2017) summarized that provision of education in rural areas is normally fraught with difficulties and problems; qualified teachers refuse appointment in isolated villages; villagers refuse to send their children to school because they are dependent on them for help; parents hesitate to entrust their daughters to male teachers; some villages have few children for an ordinary primary school; lack of roads; books and teaching materials not available. These factors among others determine a student's level of participation in sports. According to Ewezu (2019) the location of a school, urban or rural, influences a student's interest in sport and subsequent performance at the level expected of him. The implication of this is that a stimulating school location arouses the student's interest to participate in sports. Nduka (2017) observed that every school location had environmental factors which include the quality of teachers, available infrastructural facilities and even the quality of equipment and that these factors influences the attitude and performance of students in sports. The author also asserted that there was a remarkable difference between the urban and rural areas in terms of standard of living, the kind of experiences provided, and standard of teaching and learning. Furthermore these variables were enough factors that could significantly influence the overall well being of the student and their attitude to sports participation. It was therefore stated that urban students

were more motivated and consequently participated actively in sports than their rural counterparts.

Geographical location is always considered by many people as one of the major factors that affect students' performance in sports in school. Empirical and opinion based reasoning has suggested that educational resources are not evenly distributed among zones and schools. In Nigeria, preference is given to unity schools as oppose to state and private owned schools. Environmentalists have shown that environment, which the location is paramount, plays an important role in learning. Rural areas lack complementary investments; in roads, hospitals, good drinking water, and many more life aiding facilities which are found in cities. All these significantly contribute to participation in sports. Others see some of the facilities as distractors and levy a claim why most schools are sited outside the city, to promote a conducive atmosphere for learning (Cronwell, 2019).

In a study carried out by Moshe (2018) on factors affecting sports participation among secondary school students in five regions of Tanzania, by reviewing relevant literature and available empirical data, the study was restricted to three districts in each regions, one urban and two rural. The chosen schools were categorized into large (enrolment of 601 plus) medium (350-6000) and small (below 350 pupils). The available scores plus data gathered from a five point Likert type scale were used to arrive at decision concerning the school and students involvement. The data collected involved review of primary and secondary documents; additional data was collected through the use of inventories, checklist for schools and offices, interview with key administrators, short questionnaires, observation schedules for classroom teaching and performance test. Analysis results showed that students' participation in sport was better in urban schools than in rural schools. The researcher opinion as to the result was based on the fact that, urban schools were occupied by qualified teachers and had better access to teaching and learning materials.

Akubuiro (2018) argued that, urban learning environment has a greater access to social, cultural and economic facilities and services, and as such produces a high performing learner and fulfilled or satisfied teacher and in the corresponding rural situation, a "poor performing learner" and poorly motivated teacher. As in all learning areas, students in urban schools usually experience more friendly school environment because they have access to basic facilities and infrastructures that make life at least minimally comfortable. The student in urban schools has better opportunities in terms of access to relevant information, collaboration with other students, better working facilities and a more hygienic or motivating working condition. The urban student has more chances of participating in any sport of their choice (Fabunmi, 2019).

A study by Anon (2019) examined how school location influences sports participation among students in secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State. The study used a sample of two hundred

and eighty eight (288) respondents randomly selected from eight public schools in the study area. The survey research design was employed for the study. A structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. To analyze data obtained in the study analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for data analysis. The result obtained shows that the sports participation among students in urban schools is 0.35% in favour of male students while the mean difference in the participation of male and female students in semi urban schools is 0.12% in favour of female students. However, result further showed that these differences are not significant. The result also shows that the mean difference in the sports participation of male and female students in rural schools is 1.27% in favour of male students. The result shows that this difference is significant. The analysis showed that the participation of female students in rural locations is less than that of male students. The result also shows a consistent drop in the mean performance of female students with values of 71.95, 70.99 and 69.63 respectively for urban, semi-urban and rural locations participation of male students. The analysis indicates that the participation of female student is significantly influenced by location. Female students perform best in urban schools and worst in rural schools. Although location also influenced male students' participation in sports, the influence is not as much as it is for the female students.

Age and sports participation among students

Sports participation is a means of bringing people of different culture and creeds together. It serves as avenue where people of different gender, ages and religious background and political afflictions meet without any rancor. According to Fasan (2018) 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 group is very common in sports. The above can be attributed to inculcating fairness and equity in sport competitions. The age of an individual can determine the extent of the individual's participation in specific sports. Younger students usually do not have the strength required to participate in high energy demanding sports as compared to the older the students. As a result, age constitutes a major factor that determines sports participation among students.

According to Nahata and Raizada (2020), several factors influence the participation in sports among individuals and age remains a major determining factor as regards sport participation. Supporting the above Adeyemo and Ajibola (2014) 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. Further supporting the above, Alfonso, Jorge and Alberto (2020) opined that grouping methods according to the date of birth within the constituent year, known as the relative effect of age (RAE), remains a major factor that influences sport participation as well as the achievement of sport success.

Going by the above, Rowe and Beasley (2020) maintained that an ageing population may witness a significant drop in the participation in 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. As people grow older, they may be financially established and hence participate in luxurious sports like golf or tennis. However, at a young age, they may indulge in football or basketball, which involves lesser investment in terms of finance. 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, 2019). Accordingly, one of the major factors that may reduce participation in sports is an ageing population.

Supporting the above, 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 sport 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 infrastructural 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 (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. Ageing does not always bring inevitable physical decline. Although, for most people, their peak physical years will come in young adulthood, for one group of people this is not necessarily the case. Organized sporting events for older adults – now known as master athletes, or veterans – were first established in the 1960s. By the 1970s, sport science researchers had begun to question the widespread belief that physical abilities inevitably decline dramatically after young adulthood. Master athletes were held up as prime examples of "successful ageing", due to their ability to maintain high levels of physical performance well into older adulthood. In most sports, this age sweet spot falls in the mid-20's to early 30's. Although there have been numerous examples of Olympians competing, and sometimes winning medals, over the age of 50, the vast majority of these come from sports requiring exceptional skill and less aerobic or anaerobic power, such as the shooting events, sailing, equestrian and fencing. For endurance events, the upper cap for competing at the sport's highest levels appears to be around the age of 40 (Oscar, 2021).

Statement of hypotheses

i. There is no significant influence of school location on sports participation among secondary school students.
ii. Age does not significantly influence sports participation among secondary school students.

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for this study. This is because the research design intends to investigate the phenomena as it exists at the time of this investigation. The population of the study comprised of 2,812 senior secondary school students in the 18 public secondary schools in Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The sample for this study was 288 students randomly selected from 7 public secondary schools in Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The 288 sampled respondents represented 20% of proportionate sample of the total population in the seven (7) selected public secondary schools in the study area.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire was the instrument utilized for data collection. It was titled Demographic Variables and Sports Participation Questionnaire (DVSPQ). It contained two sections. Section A contained the demographic variables in the study covering school location and age. Section B was developed using four point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). It contained ten items measuring sports participation among students.

Result and discussion

Ho: 1

There is no significant influence of school location on sports participation among students. The independent variable in this hypothesis is school location while the dependent variable is sports participation among secondary school students. Independent t-test analysis was used for data analysis. The result of this analysis is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of school location on sports participation among secondary school students in Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

School location	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Cal.t	P.value
Rural	114	23.0088	.71017	-48.718*	0.000
Urban	172	26.5000	.50146		

*Significant at 0.05; df = 284

The result of analysis of data presented in table 1 showed that the calculated t-value of -48.718 is higher than the p.value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance with 284 degree of freedom.

The implication of this result is that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant influence of school location on sports participation among secondary school students in Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Ho: 2

Age does not significantly influence sports participation among secondary school students. The independent variable in this hypothesis is age while the dependent variable is sports participation among secondary school students. Independent t-test statistical tool was employed for data analysis. The result obtained is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of age on sports participation among secondary school students in Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

Age	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Cal.t	P.value
Below 15 years	134	24.6014	1.63216		
				-4.921*	0.000
Above 15 years	152	25.6154	1.84591		

*Significant at 0.05; df = 284

The result of analysis of data presented in Table 4 showed that the calculated t-value of -4.921 is higher than the p.value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance with 284 degree of freedom. The implication of this result is that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant influence of age on sports participation among secondary school students in Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of findings

The finding that was obtained from data analysis and testing of hypothesis one in the study revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected. This implied that there was a significant influence of school location on sports participation among secondary school students in Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The finding of this study could be attributed to the fact that the location of a school largely determines the sports facilities that could be found in the school. Schools that are located in urban centres are usually favoured in terms of provision of sports facilities/equipment as compared to the schools in rural areas. As a result, the availability of these sporting facilities in urban centres has provided more opportunities for students to participate more actively in sports as compared to the level of participation among secondary school students in rural areas.

The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Ojoawo (2017) who found that school location is one of the potent factors that influence the distribution of educational resources. Throwing light on location influence, Ezike (2018) conceptualized urban location as those places which have high population density containing high variety and beauty and common

place views. Moreover, that rural location on the other hand is characterized by low population density containing low variety and isolated places. The finding of this study also supported that of Ewezu (2019) who revealed the location of a school, urban or rural, influences a student's interest in sport and subsequent performance at the level expected of him. The implication of this is that a stimulating school location arouses the student's interest to participate in sports.

The finding that was obtained from data analysis and testing of hypothesis two in the study revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected. This implied that there was a significant influence of age on sports participation among secondary school students in Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The finding of this study could be attributed to the fact that the age of a student can actually influence his level of sports participation. As students grow older their strength also increases and their interest to participate in sports also increases. The younger students usually feel weak to engage in strenuous physical activities and always participate mildly in sports.

The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Nahata and Raizada (2020) who reported that several factors influence the participation in sports among individuals and age remains a major determining factor as regards sport participation. Supporting the above Adeyemo and Ajibola (2014) 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 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. Further supporting the above, Alfonso, Jorge and Alberto (2020) opined that grouping methods according to the date of birth within the constituent year, known as the relative effect of age (RAE), remains a major factor that influences sport participation as well as the achievement of sport success.

Conclusion

This study examined demographic variables and sports participation among secondary school students in Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The finding obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypotheses in the study revealed that there was a significant influence of school location and age on sports participation among secondary school students.

Recommendation

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

i. The Ministry of Education should ensure that school locations with small space should not be granted license to operate in order to provide space for students to participate in sports while in school.
ii. Students in both single sex and co-education should be adequately sensitized by sports administrators to participate more actively in sports in order to develop their talents.

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