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Predictors of Physical and Health Education as a Course of Study Among Secondary School Students in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria

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Keywords

Predictors, Physical and Health Education, Availability, Gender

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Abstract

The main thrust of this study was to verify predictors of physical and health education as a course of study among secondary school students in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance. Literature was carried out based on the variables of the study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select the eight public schools while systematic sampling technique was adopted to select the two hundred and fifty six respondents used for the study. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection, which was properly vetted by experts to ensure its validity. To test the hypotheses formulated for the study, Pearson product moment correlation was used for data analysis. The result obtained from data analysis and hypotheses testing revealed that there was a significant relationship between peer influence, availability of trained teachers and attitude of students towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course in the study area. Based on the findings

	obtained in the study it was recommended among others that school authorities should ensure that only trained and qualified teachers are recruited, trained and retrained in order to boost their competencies and enhance students' interest in the study of Physical and Health Education.

Introduction

Physical and Health education (PHE) is an important subject in the curriculum of formal education system in Nigeria and recognized as one of the most important activities to develop the habit of physical activity during adolescence. It also helps to improve the students' ability through physical activity, social, emotional and cognitive development. The importance of Physical and Health Education has increased. The curriculum of Physical and Health Education for example, has been revised to ensure students' mastery on knowledge and skills of the subject are increasing. A more effective and holistic approach in teaching PHE is by involving students in at least one game or sport in school (Balakrishnan, 2021). Other aspects like suitability length of teaching time, facility and equipment provided and teachers' qualifications contribute to the effective instruction of PHE classes.

The attitudes of students towards courses affect their academic success throughout their education life. Attitudes of students towards Physical and Health Education courses, as well as other courses, affect their motivation and interest towards the Physical and Health Education courses. It is known that Physical and Health Education courses not only contribute to physical, mental and spiritual health development, but also to forming of national integrity and a healthy society. In this regard, major responsibilities fall onto the shoulders of families and education facilitators in order to motivate children to sports and Physical and Health Education activities in early ages. If this is provided, it can be expected that the students demonstrate a positive attitude towards Physical and Health Education courses.

Physical and Health Education classes can also help students develop teamwork skills. Working together in team sports can teach students how to cooperate with others and how to resolve conflicts. These skills are important in all aspects of life, including the workplace. In addition, participating in physical activity can help students to develop social skills and make friends. Physical and Health Education contains many types of sports and physical activities and helps the overall development of the body (Kingston, 2020). Physical and Health Education is a part of every school, and it is a subject that provides learning that goes beyond fun activities and games. Physical and Health Education in all schools offers fitness, health, and learning via different sports activities. Many school students also participate in other

physical sports like basketball, soccer, volleyball, dodgeball, tennis, etc. This article will discuss a brief concept of Physical and Health Education and its importance.

There are several factors that could influence students' attitude towards the study of Physical and Health Education in schools. Peer influence is one of such factor that could determine a student's attitude towards the study of Physical and Health Education. Students usually belong to a group of friends in school. The influence these students have on each other is usually amazing and foes a long way to influence their decisions especially with regards to course of study. The decision or attitude of students towards the study of Physical and Health Education can be largely determined by their close friends.

Availability of trained teachers could also be a factor that influences the attitude of students towards the study of Physical and Health Education. The teacher is a very important factor in the quality of education provided in schools. The availability of trained Physical and Health Education teachers in school could be a motivating factor in students' decision to study Physical and Health Education. The unavailability of trained teachers could also discourage students from developing positive attitude towards the study of Physical and Health Education.

Literature Review

Peer influence and students' study of Physical and Health Education

There are various researchers that explain the impact of peer group on the decision of students. Team (2017) noted that as children grow older, they tend to look to their friends, general acquaintance or others in an increasing wide circle of influences. One area where friends can have a big influence is in sports, and being part of a peer group can make a difference to a child sporting choices and experiences. When it comes to physical activities, the behaviour and attitudes of the people a child looks up to in their peers can have a strong and motivating influence on the likeness for Physical and Health Education positively or negatively. Similarly, 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.

Odok, Ogabor, Apie, Osaji and Ahueansebhor (2023) posited that the relationship that kids develop during interaction with friends can lead to a lot of different outcomes, especially when kids feel accepted by their peers. They reported that higher levels of self-esteem and more enjoyment of activities are more likely to happen. Odok *et al*. opined that experts believe that peer friendships are unique compared to other friendships that kids have. Kids want their friends in sports to help reinforce their egos and give them preferential treatment. However, there are recent findings that girls can also have a lot of negative friendship experiences with one another in sport. Girls easily isolate other girls, start rumours, ignore one another or refuse

to pass the ball to one another. Encouraging girls to develop friendship with one another in sport can be a simple way to turn a good experience into a great one. This peer interaction can encourage students to develop positive attitude towards the study of Physical and Health Education especially at the senior secondary school level.

In a study carried out by Berger (2018), in order to assess differences between the peer and the friend conditions, a second method was run with the peer condition as the reference (peer vs friend). The outcomes from MRM predicting the total number of points earned for physical activity. Youth earned more points for physical activity when they had the choice to be physically active with a friend (friend condition, M=24.05, SD=9.73), (1,1536) = 104.84, P<.001, than when they were alone (=18.07, SD=10.19). Results also indicated a significant interaction of WS by peer condition (1,1536) = 22.23, P<.001. overweight youth earned significantly more points for physical activity when they had the opportunity to be physical active with a peer than when they were alone whereas, this was not the case for lean youth (P=.47).

According to Davidson (2018), there are very little high quality studies on peer group negative impact of competitive school sports on the psychological health of students, but students, teachers, parents, cope daily with the pressure of missing lesson and home study time, negative reaction to pre competition anxiety, large amounts of time travelling to training and a lack of down time with non-sporting peers. He stated that, the ability of the young person to learn and adapt with the psychological demands of performing in competitive school sport is an important element of success. Similarly, Rees (2016) stated that, the pressure on young people to conform and be accepted within their peer group is a hard step for talented young athletes where their sporting demands means they spend considerable time away from their school teachers and parents.

Similarly, Okumura (2019) opined that, friendship and peer group are very much an important aspect of the teen years. Understanding the nature of peer influence can help support youth as they enter into this period and follow the path towards close friendship that are hallmarks of adolescence. Adolescence is a time when peers play an increasingly important role in the lives of peers. Teens begin to develop peer groups that are more intimate, exclusive, and more constant than in earlier years. He stated that, these peer groups are an essential component of development. They provide safe venues where youth can explore their identities, where they can feel accepted and where they can develop a sense of belongingness and foster social skills necessary for future success.

The impact of peers and friends on youth physical activity and motivation to be physically active was studied by Jean, James, Natalie, Phillip, Leonard and Epstein (2019). Youth motivation to be physically active and study Physical and Health Education in school as a

function of the social context was measured using a computerized relative reinforcing value task to earn points exchangeable for physical and/or sedentary activities. The results revealed that the presence of a friend (p<.001) increased youth's; motivation to be physically active. The presence of a peer increased overweight youth's; motivation to be physically active, whereas this was not the case for lean youth (p=.47). Participants biked a greater distance in the presence of a friend than when alone (p<.001). Overweight youth biked a greater distance in the presence of a peer than when alone, while this was not the case for lean youth *(p=.23).* It was concluded that friendships might increase youth's motivation to engage in physical activity and promote greater physical activity in non-overweight and overweight youth.

Availability of trained teachers and students' study of Physical and Health Education

Every school is established to accomplish pre-determined goals and objectives which cannot be realized in a vacuum. The organization of Physical and Health Education program requires a well-trained, competent Physical and Health Education teacher to manage the various specialized sections of the program (Asua, 2016). Adegbeson (2018) opined that Physical and Health Education teachers, sports masters, coaches, games officials or match officials, judges, umpires, arbiters have important influence in making students pick physical and health education as a career. Physical and health education personnel are staff who handle or judge participants with the laws of the games of every sports being organized. They control the athlete and officiates matches or contest and enforce the laws of the games on them. The caliber and strength of well trained and competent personnel are very important in Physical and Health Education as students who pick career interest in Physical and Health Education see them as their role model to emulate.

Tony (2016) stated that available services are rendered by a qualified and well-trained physical instructor who administers sports programs in schools, colleges and other agencies whenever the needs arises. The scholar further stressed that such work required the services of special competent and well qualified individuals if one is to perform the services effectively. Amuchie (2017) added that other qualities of a good sport personnel include willingness to accept responsibility and understanding of the subject matter, command of administrative technique and good intellectual capacity. The scholar noted that one of the most essential requirements for the successful implementation of physical and health education program is to provide adequate trained and experienced manpower, equipped with necessary skills to handle students in physical and health education. Aluko (2015) recommended that a good physical and health education administrator should have a thorough knowledge of the subject, possess educational degrees preferably in the management of sport so as to get students motivated to pick a career in the subject when they hear of them.

Duru (2016) while reporting on the caliber of people managing Physical and Health Education in the schools noted that there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the curriculum, the problem is that we have Physical and Health Education teachers who are not professionally prepared to handle such functions in school. Ojeme (2018) observed that most schools in

Nigeria are not only suffering from lack of necessary facilities but also human resources and the provision of safety in their physical environment. The scholar further stressed the inadequate trained personnel, facilities are often times poorly maintained, the safety of the user is out-rightly neglected. This has created obvious lapses for accidents and injuries during physical and health education training or practice.

Adeogum (2016) asserted that a trained teacher is qualified and is someone who possesses knowledge of the subject matter, human growth and development, he or she must have enriched conditional knowledge in physical and health education with professional abilities, enhance confidence, good leadership skills and motivation which boost learner's achievement. However, a well-trained personnel in physical and health education must therefore have certain characteristics in terms of qualification, experience, teaching methodology in other to ensure quality of education is given out to students. This also interests students to pick PHE as a career.

Abene (2017) reported that a well-trained teacher in Physical and Health Education must have a decisive role in making their school learners have higher competence in their field because of the knowledge they transmit to the students. The scholar stressed that schools need to have a well-trained personnel in physical and health education that can transform students' interest in picking Physical and Health Education as a career to help transform their cognitive effective and psychological domain of such students. Butter (2019) opined that trained teachers in Physical and Health Education must know or have good knowledge of new innovations in the aspect of new facilities that has been brought or provided by the government to facilitate the student's learning capacity. He must be able to teach each of the students how the new equipment/facilities are used and as well be a role model to the students. The school physical and health education program is organized as a tripod, as instructional intramural and extra-mural programs which help reveal star students that can represent the nation at national level all this can be possible if the personnel are well-trained to get any student ready to take physical and health education as a career choice.

Baker (2018) noted that most schools lack trained personnel who can organize sporting activities as well as motivate students to develop interest in sports as a career. A good sport's personnel should have a thorough knowledge of the subject matter, possess educational degree preferably in the management of sports. Marthaler (2015) lamenting on the caliber of personnel managing sport in schools stated that there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the curriculum, the problem is that we have student ready but sports administrators who are saddled with the responsibility of coaching these students are not professionally prepared for handling such helm of affairs. According to Akpan (2019), most schools in Nigeria are not only suffering from lack of necessary sports facilities, but also human resources and the provision of safety competitive environment. They scholar noted that most sports personnel

lack the technical know-how on the latest development of sports thereby limiting students' participation in sports in secondary schools. Inadequate trained personnel are often poorly provided in schools. This has continued to discourage students from taking up a career in sports.

According to William (2019), a well-trained sport' personnel must have a decisive role in making their students have higher competence in their field because of the knowledge they transmit to their students. Schools need to have a well-trained personnel in sports so as to help transform female students cognitive, effective and Psychological domains. Izuchukwu (2016) viewed that a well trained personnel in sports know how to apply appropriate teaching method that will best suit specific and particular participant in the traditional way of learning. Many personnel in sports widely used applied teacher centered methods to transmit knowledge to female students comparative to students centered method for personnel who are well trained to achieve their set goals of effective learning and coaching outcome, they must approach different ways of instruction that will help enhance growth of female students in sports (Kukoyi, 2017).

Statement of hypotheses

i. Peer influence does not significantly relate with students' attitude towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course of study.
ii. There is no significant relationship between availability of trained teachers and students' attitude towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course of study.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for this study. This research design investigates the phenomena as it exists at the time of investigation. The population of the study comprised of all Senior Secondary School two (SS 2) students giving a total of 3,114 in the sixteen public secondary schools in the study area. The sample for this study comprised of 256 students randomly selected from 8 public secondary schools in the study area.

Instrumentation

The instrument employed for the study was a structured questionnaire, which was titled Predictor of Physical and Health Education Questionnaire (PPHEQ). It contained two sections. Section A contained items that measured personal data of respondents, section B was designed using four point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), to measure the variables of the study. It contained twenty items. Items 1-5 measured peer influence, items 6-11 measured availability of trained teachers. Items 12-20 measured students' attitudes in studying Physical and Health Education.

Result and discussion

Ho: 1

There is no significant relationship between peer influence and attitude of students towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course. The independent variable in this hypothesis is peer influence while the dependent variable is attitude of students towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course. Pearson product moment correlation statistical tool was used for data analysis. The result obtained is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between peer influence and attitude of students towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State (N = 251)

Variables	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	Cal.r	P.value
Peer influence	3584	4837	8016	0.474*	0.000
Attitude towards study of Physical and Health Education as a course	6187	7384			

*Significant at 0.05; df = 249

The result of analysis of data as presented in table 1 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.474 is higher than the p.value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance with 249 degree of freedom. This implied that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between peer influence and attitude of students towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State.

Ho: 2

Availability of trained teachers does not significantly relate with students' attitude towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course of study. The independent variable in this hypothesis is availability of trained teachers while the dependent variable is students' attitude towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course of study. 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 trained teachers and attitude of students towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State (N = 251)

Variables	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	Cal.r	P.value
Availability of trained teachers	3856	5119	8462	0.493*	0.000
Attitude towards study of Physical and Health Education as a course	6187	7384			

*Significant at 0.05; df = 249

The result of analysis of data as presented in Table 6 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.493 is higher than the p.value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance with 249 degree of freedom. This implied that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between availability of trained teachers and attitude of students towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course in Calabar Municipality of 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. This showed that there was a significant relationship between peer influence and attitude of students towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course in secondary schools in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State. The reason for this finding could be that students in secondary schools in the study area are easily influenced by their peers. The decision made by most students is determined by their interaction with their friends and close associates. Students often tend to make career choices based on the views of their peers. As a result, the interaction among students in secondary schools in the study area is partly responsible for their attitude towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course.

This finding agrees with that of Team (2017) who noted that as children grow older, they tend to look to their friends, general acquaintance or others in an increasing wide circle of influences. One area where friends can have a big influence is in sports, and being part of a peer group can make a difference to a child sporting choices and experiences. When it come physical activities, the behaviour and attitudes of the people a child looks up to in their peers can have a strong and motivating influence on the likeness for Physical and Health Education positively or negatively. Similarly, 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.

The finding obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypothesis two in the study revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected. This showed that there was a significant relationship between availability of trained teachers and attitude of students towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course in secondary schools in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State. The reason for this finding could be that the availability of trained teachers could be a motivating factor for students' career choice in Physical and Health Education. When Physical and Health Education teachers are competent and qualified, it could serve as a factor that could motivate students to choose or develop interest in the study of Physical and Health Education. The availability of trained teachers will ensure that the teaching of Physical and Health Education is effective, thereby attracting students to develop genuine to study the course at the tertiary level of education.

The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Tony (2016) who stated that available services are rendered by a qualified and well-trained physical instructor who administers sports programs in schools, colleges and other agencies whenever the needs arises. The scholar further stressed that such work required the services of special competent and well qualified individuals if one is to perform the services effectively. Amuchie (2017) added that other qualities of good sport personnel include willingness to accept responsibility and understanding of the subject matter, command of administrative technique and good intellectual capacity. The scholar noted that one of the most essential requirements for the successful implementation of physical and health education program is to provide adequate trained and experienced manpower, equipped with necessary skills to handle students in physical and health education. Aluko (2015) recommended that a good physical and health education administrator should have a thorough knowledge of the subject, possess educational degrees preferably in the management of sport so as to get students motivated to pick a career in the subject when they hear of them.

Conclusion

This study examined Predictors of Physical and Health Education as a course of study among secondary school students in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings obtained in the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between peer influence, availability of trained teachers and attitude of students towards the study of Physical and Health Education as a course of study in the study area.

Recommendation

Based on the finding obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypothesis in the study, the following recommendations are made:

i. School counselors should ensure that students are regularly sensitized on their choice of career in order to reduce the peer influence with regards to students' decision to study Physical and Health Education.

ii. School authorities should ensure that only trained and qualified teachers are recruited, trained and retrained in order to boost their competencies and enhance students' interest in the study of Physical and Health Education.

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