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Psychological Determinants and Sports Participation among Secondary School Students in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria

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Keywords

Psychological determinants, Sports Participation, Emotional stability, Interest

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Abstract

The study investigated psychological determinants and sports participation among secondary school students in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve this purpose, two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance. A detailed review of literature was carried out in accordance with the variables of the study. Survey research design was used for the study. To select the eight public secondary schools, simple random sampling technique was adopted while systematic sampling technique was adopted to select the two hundred and forty five (245) respondents used for the study. A structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was face validated by relevant persons. To test the hypotheses formulated for the study, Pearson product moment correlation statistical tool was adopted for data analysis. The result obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypotheses revealed that there was a significant relationship between emotional stability, interest and sports participation among secondary school students in the study area. Based on these findings it was recommended among others that sports psychologists should continue to engage students in counseling sessions that would help to improve their emotional stability and subsequent participation in sports.

Introduction

Sports are motor activities which enable an individual to develop and control his physique. It can also be described as activities involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or for the purpose of entertainment. Nevertheless, the traditional view of sports participation is that, it has a beneficial effect on the social and moral development of children and young people. Sports may have the tendency if well organized to change the entire human personality (whole-man) through active and passive participation. Such components of personality that sports are capable of transforming include: physical, social, moral, mental, and emotional (Agbomi, 2017). 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.

It has been observed that the level of an individual's participation in sports has enormous benefits for living a healthy life. Physical Education is an integral part of general education. This forms the bedrock for all round development of an individual. Physical Education was the basis of Greek education and it is increasingly the means of modern education in all countries of the world. Quality health is a key requirement that students need to function optimally, especially to withstand the stress associated with the rigours of acquiring functional knowledge. One of such ways of attaining functional and balanced health status is through physical activity, which is a non-pharmacological measure.

School sport is a second type of physical activity of increasing interest to researchers. Sports within middle and high schools vary widely by school level and type, grade level, and individual student preferences, and school sports can occur both in team (e.g., soccer, basketball) or individual (e.g., tennis, cross country) contexts. McKenzie (2017) emphasized the importance of school physical education by stating that it is the only structured setting with a possibility to ensure that all children can engage in activities to meet the recommendations, as these institutions are capable of providing knowledge and skills to the target population at minimal additional cost to the community.

The participation of secondary school students in sports can be influence by certain psychological factors within the student. These factors are often responsible for the level of sports participation among students. William (2019) identified emotional stability as one of the psychological factors that influence students' sports participation. The state of a student's emotion is very vital in determine their level of participation in sports. Sport is a highly emotional activity and requires individuals with very stable emotions. The spate of child abuse and family background experienced by several students discourages some of them from

participating in sports. On the other hand, emotionally stable students are more motivated to develop interest in participating actively in sports.

Odok, Apie, Osaji, Ahueansebhor and Ogabor (2023) asserted that interest could also be a vital psychological factor that determines students' participation in sports. Interest is often a very strong variable that encourage or discourage students from engaging in sporting activities. It has been observed that students have different interest and express it differently towards various activities. Having interest in sports is a big motivator of students' participation in sports. Even those who participate in sports have different skills and abilities to perform various sports. Engaging in sports is mostly a product of interest. A lack of interest in sports over other activities or hobbies has been identified to be a highly influencing factor in the level of students' participation in sports.

Literature review

Emotional stability and sports participation

The state of an individual's emotion is seen as a key determinant of the person's level of participation in sports. Francis (2018) noted that most secondary school students avoid participating in sports as a result of previous sports injuries sustained by some prominent athletes who would have made a career in sports. The fear of losing a delicate part of the body, or even being beaten as in the case of others has made students to develop phobia to participate in sports. Anxiety and fear are unpleasant emotions commonly experienced in sport and performance settings. While fear usually has an apparent cause, the source of anxiety is comparatively vague and complex. Anxiety has cognitive and somatic components and can be either trait or a state. To assess the different aspects of anxiety, a variety of psychometric scales have been developed in sports and performance domains. Besides efforts to quantify anxiety, a major focus in the anxiety-performance literature has been to explore the impact of anxiety on performance and why such effects occur.

Anxiety performance theories and models have increased the understanding of how anxiety affects sports participation and have helped to explain why anxiety is widely considered a negative emotion that individuals typically seek to avoid in participation in sports. Nonetheless, individuals approach anxiety inducing or fear-provoking situations in different ways. For example, high-risks sport research shows that individuals can actively approach fear-inducing environments in order to glean intra and inter-personal regulatory benefits. Such individual differences are particularly relevant to sports participation researchers and practitioners, as those who actively approach competition to enjoy the fear-inducing environment (i.e. the risk) are likely to have a participation advantage over those who compete while having to cope with their troublesome anxiety and fear. Sports participation is a highly emotional activity that requires a stable individual or athlete to carry out. The emotional state of an individual can determine to a large extent, the level of the person's participation in various sports (Harry, 2019).

Richfield (2019) reported that sports participation offers children an important outlet for physical, social and emotional development; while many students flock out during games, some consider sport participation as dangerous and dreadful. The phobia of injury to either their body or self-esteem, sometime builds barriers and is used as excuses for not participating. The author stated that the longer they remain stuck in their phobic attitude, the more their problems remain compounded. Some students sometimes avoid participating in sports because of the injuries endured by other students who have sustained injuries in the process of participating in sports.

Stanmard (2018) noted that anxiety can have an effect on individuals' muscles. For example, the anxious player may have tremors, where he has a shaking movement that he cannot control. These tremors or twitches can occur when the individual is still moving or holding an item. Another muscular effect of anxiety is muscle tension, when the individual has tight muscles that sometimes feel painful all these conditions can lead to poor participation and fear of taking part in physical activities. Cote and Hay (2016), carried out a study with top athletes in a variety of sports such as rowing, tennis, basketball, netball, triathlons and hockey have directed the way in study on initial diversification main aspects that differentiate ach segment of development were the number of behaviour the child take part in and the formation and design of children's practice and instruction. These chosen athletes usually participated in a diversity of sports during the selection years (age 5-11), a diminishing quantity of activities for the period of the focusing years (age 12-14) and dedicated to only one activity during the speculation years (age 156) while their practice formation changed from focal point on deliberate play during the selection years to a focal point on deliberate practices.

Biddle (2016) argued that performance anxiety is not uncommon in sports as to some extent, fear of performance helps in achieving desired concentration. However, the excess will lead to a rush of adrenaline termed as anxiety. Whenever an athlete feels short of breath, sweating, shaking or high heart beat rate. The athlete loses concentration, his actions become disjointed and the feel paralyzed at the beginning of an important sporting event. These symptoms of performance anxiety ensures that the athlete no longer feel confident in himself and do not believe that as an athlete you will be able to accomplish anything successful. The author further stressed that to deal with such thoughts the athlete must learn how to manage anxiety and to do so, it is imperative to understand how sports performance and anxiety are interrelated.

Ranford (2017) maintained that anxiety affects a sports player performance in physiological, cognitive and behavioural ways. If an athlete suffers from anxiety before an important athletic competition his sports performance and participation will be affected. When his body is tensed and blood pressure high, it is difficult for his body to move in a fluid and coordinated manner. The athletes' actions will be jerky and misplace, affecting his performance and participation in a negative manner. The author further maintained that anxiety is "the emotional or cognitive

dimension of psychological factors thought to influence sports performance/participation, anxiety is often considered the most important, which explains why so much research has concentrated on anxiety in athletes. The two types of anxiety studied are state and trait anxiety. State anxiety his been said to be the "anxiety intensity at a given time", whereas trait anxiety is said to be "an individual's general tendency to experience elevations in state anxiety when exposed to stressor".

Interest and sports participation

Interest in sports participation is an issue that has not been adequately studied. Though, the classics of education studies acknowledged the importance of interest in sports. Lipstein (2017) emphasized that the process of learning must be designed so that it would arouse interest. The scholar further stressed that just as the physical world is subject to the laws of motion, the spiritual world is subject to the law of interest. Students' interest in sports is the most powerful magic that can considerably change in our eyes the image of any object. The interest a student has in relation to sport can serve as a significant motivator that could arouse his interest in participating in sports. Interest is a very strong factor in determining the level to which students participate in sports. The stronger the interest, the more commitment an individual is willing to devote to the issue of been involved in sporting activities (Chen, 2018).

Malinra (2017) opined that interest in sport in an inner drive that is common for all students, inquisitiveness being the outer manifestation of interest. The scholar further noted that students' interest in sport participation is a driving force of a child's development; mentally and physically. Mbu (2017) opined that interest may be both conscious and unconscious. However, the scholar noted that interest has the decisive role in sports development of humans and it is created by learning and practice. Learning is transient, but should be sustained all lifelong. The stronger the inner drive in a student towards sports, the greater the level of participation of that student in sports. As a result, a student who has a positive interest towards sports is easily convinced and the interest sustained. This sustained interest is what determines the student's consistency in participating in sports. It also accounts for the difference observed among students in relation to sports participating in secondary schools.

Shen (2018) reported that for a student to develop interest in sports activities the following must be observed in school;

i. In the formation of the official documents (programme of the subject physical education as it relates to sports, learner's preferences in certain kinds of sports must be respected.
ii. Organization of sports classes respecting learners interest in sports.
iii. The competence sports personnel or instructor should be selected by the learners.
iv. Schools should make physical education more of sports like than theory.
v. Getting involved teachers of other subject, senior grade learners and children's parent in organizing extra-curricular sports events.
vi. Involve students in in-serving training in sports.

The study by Emmah (2018) analyzed the physical inactivity problem from an educational perspective by investigating the profiles of individuals engaging in physical activities and fitness exercises in recreational areas, gyms, green areas, and walking tracks in Ankara, Bursa, Kırıkkale and Nazilli city centers in Turkey. The other objectives of the study were to reveal the type of exercising habits of the Turkish people and to emphasize the effect of physical education on the acquisition of physical activity habits. The research employed a questionnaire for the study. A total of 1000 people, 250 from Ankara, 290 from Bursa, 258 from Kırıkkale, and 202 from Nazilli, participated in the study. The study revealed that males (54.4%) participated in more physical activities than females (45.6%). The results also indicated that the higher the interest levels are, the higher the participation rates in physical activities are, which means that physical education at school helps students gain regular physical activity habits The study also showed that most students were engaged in sports for health reasons (73.1%). It was found that the rate of students with regular weekly exercise schedules was low (4.4%), while a large proportion of the participants (56.3%) preferred walking. The average age of individuals with exercising habits was found to be 14.

Man is a moving being, with his body designed to be on the move. A static life is against the nature of human beings. Movement through sports is a means of exploring and learning about the world as well as communicating with other people and nature. It is a source of happiness for children besides its high importance for their psycho-motor development and the healthy growth of their organs. It is also a fundamental element enabling people to stay healthy and fit physically, spiritually, and mentally. The movement phenomenon in humans through sports is closely related to the philosophical - anthropological understanding of vitality and physicality within the concept of lifelong sport. As a result, the interest an individual has prompts him to embrace sports that have talent and skills for while in school. This is determined to a large extent, their level of participation in sporting activities (Isa, 2019).

Statement of hypotheses

iii. There is no significant relationship between emotional stability and sports participation among secondary school students.
iv. Interest does not significantly relate sports participation among secondary school students.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for this study. This research design studies phenomena as they exist at the time of an investigation. The population of the study consisted of all Senior Secondary School one (SS 1) students in public secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State, comprising a total of two thousand one hundred and thirty six (2,136) SS I students in the twenty-six public secondary schools in the study area. The study sample comprised of two hundred and forty five (245) students, which were

randomly selected from eight (8) public secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire titled "Psychological Determinants and Sports Participation Questionnaire (PDSPQ)" was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire divided into two sections. Section A comprised personal data of respondents. Section B was designed using modified four point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). It contained twenty items that measured the variables of the study. Items 1-5 measured emotional stability, items 6-10 measured interest while items 11-20 measured sports participation among students in secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Result and discussion

Ho: 1

There is no significant relationship between emotional stability and sports participation among secondary school students. The independent variable in this hypothesis is emotional stability while sport participation among secondary school students is the dependent variable. 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 emotional stability and sports participation among students in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State (N = 241)

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum Xy$	Cal.r	P.value
Emotional stability	3425	5723			
			9318	0.428*	0.000
Sports participation among students	6853	8354			

*Significant at 0.05; df = 239

The result of analysis of data presented in table 1 showed that the calculated r-value of 0.428 is greater than the p.value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance with 239 degree of freedom. This implied that the null hypothesis is rejected. As a result, there is a significant relationship between emotional stability and sports participation among secondary school students in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Ho:2

Interest does not significantly relate with sports participation among secondary school students. The independent variable in this hypothesis is interest while the dependent variable

is sports participation among secondary school students. Pearson product moment correlation statistical tool was used for data analysis. The result obtained is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between interest and sports participation among students in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State (N = 241)

Variables	∑X ∑y	∑X^2 ∑y^2	∑Xy	Cal.r	P.value
Interest	3720	6231			
			9812	0.442*	0.000
Sports participation among students	6853	8354			

*Significant at 0.05; df = 239

The result of analysis of data presented in table 2 showed that the calculated r-value of 0.442 is greater than the p.value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance with 239 degree of freedom. This implied that the null hypothesis is rejected. As a result, there is a significant relationship between interest and sports participation among secondary school students in Obudu Local Government Area 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 is rejected. The implication of this finding is that emotional stability significantly relates with sports participation among secondary school students in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State. The reason for this finding could be that once a student is emotionally stable, the student will be able to think and concentrate optimally. This helps them to make informed decisions with regards to sports participation. The emotional state of an individual is a major determinant of the individual's level of concentration. Students in the study usually display high level of emotional stability, which informed the moderate participation observed in their participation in various sports within the study area.

The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Richfield (2019) who reported that sports participation offers children an important outlet for physical, social and emotional development; while many students flock out during games, some consider sport participation as dangerous and dreadful. The phobia of injury to either their body or self-esteem, sometime builds barriers and is used as excuses for not participating. The author stated that the longer they remain stuck in their phobic attitude, the more their problems remain compounded. Some students sometimes avoid participating in sports because of the injuries endured by other students who have sustained injuries in the process of participating in sports.

The finding obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypothesis two in the study revealed that the null hypothesis is rejected. The implication of this finding is that interest significantly relates with sports participation among secondary school students in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State. The reason for this finding could be that most students have less interest in sports in the study area. The dwindling interest in sports among students has continued to keep most students out of sporting activities in the study area. As more students continue to lose interest in sports, the level of sports participation has been on a decline. This has deprived several students the opportunity to develop their talents in various sports as well as enjoy the health benefits of participating in sports.

The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Malinra (2017) who opined that interest in sport in an inner drive that is common for all students, inquisitiveness being the outer manifestation of interest. The scholar further noted that students' interest in sport participation is a driving force of a child's development; mentally and physically. Mbu (2017) opined that interest may be both conscious and unconscious. However, the scholar noted that interest has the decisive role in sports development of humans and it is created by learning and practice. Learning is transient, but should be sustained all lifelong. The stronger the inner drive in a student towards sports, the greater the level of participation of that student in sports. As a result, a student who has a positive interest towards sports is easily convinced and the interest sustained. This sustained interest is what determines the student's consistency in participating in sports. It also accounts for the difference observed among students in relation to sports participating in secondary schools.

Conclusion

The essence of the study was to examine and present findings on psychological determinants and sports participation among secondary school students in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypotheses in the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between emotional stability, interest and sports participation among secondary school students 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. Sports psychologists should continue to engage students in counseling sessions that would help to improve their emotional stability and subsequent participation in sports.
ii. Secondary school students should be regularly sensitized by school game masters on the benefits of physical activities in order to arouse their interest and subsequent participation in sports.

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