

INHIBITING FACTORS TO FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN SPORT IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

The study examined the inhibiting factors to female participation in sport in Nigerian universities. A descriptive research design of survey type was adopted for the study, and a self structured questionnaire was used to collect information from a sample of 300 female undergraduates. Data collected were analysed with the use of frequency counts, mean scores percentages and chi-square statistics. Findings revealed that parental influence is not a significant inhibiting factor to female participation in sport. However, other variables considered in the study revealed that non availability of standard sport facilities and equipment; coping with academic stress; and university policy on sport are inhibiting factors to female sport participation in Nigerian universities. It was suggested that government and non governmental agencies, the university authorities, as well as corporate organizations should provide more sport facilities, review academic programmes and university sport policy that will be of utmost benefits to female participation in sport.

Keywords: Inhibiting factor, sport participation, academic stress, parental influence

Introduction

Sports participation is a means of bringing people of different culture and creeds together, it serves as avenue where people of different genders, ages and religious background and political afflictions meet without any rancour. It is a social agent where people of different ages and political backgrounds meet as either producers or consumers

(players and spectators). Justifying the importance of sports, Gbadamosi (2000) claimed that sports are one of the unifying instruments that unite human beings irrespective of race, gender, class and others. He stressed further that it has emerged as a global, cultural institution that unites the world, which has however become part of human nature and transcends the man made bias and other hindrances placed before the human race.

Mohammed (1998) observed that sport can achieve what it takes peace talk, diplomatic treaties and conferences a longer period to achieve. He also posited that it is only sport that could, in a short time, bring warring nations, for example, the Jews and the Arabs, England and Argentina, Ghana and Togo and others to list a few. Onifade (2001) noted that sport has become an inexorable part of modern society with its influence being felt in all facets of national life, and has also become a symbol of national unity which governments utilize to legitimize themselves.

Worldwide, most especially in the developed countries of the world, institutional sports has always been the basis for selection of athletes for international competitions. Apart from this, an institutional sport has been used by students to keep fit, socialize and prolong life. Both male and female participates in sports to keep fit and live a healthy life devoid of disease or any infirmity. Many universities worldwide provide sporting facilities for both male and female students to keep them relaxed after rigorous academic work. At times female undergraduates participate in sports in order to be physically fit. According to Jones, Ainsworth and Croft (1998) and Vuori (1995) regular physical activities remain an important behavior of promoting health, postponing or preventing prevalence of neuromuscular disorders, such as, mechanical low back pain, neck and shoulder pain and decreasing the risk of developing coronary heart diseases, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity and colon cancers.

However in spite of the importance of sports and physical activities to the female undergraduates, many factors seem to be hindering their participation. These include parental influence, availability of standard facilities and equipment, coping with academic stress and university policy on sports. At times many parents frown at their children's participation in sports while some encourage them.

In Nigeria, many universities lack standard facilities and equipment needed for sports participation either for competition or for recreational purposes. Oyeniya (2002) submitted that facilities and equipment are the power house of sport, hence they are indispensable to competitive and recreational sports. This study therefore, examined inhibiting factors to

female sports participation in Nigerian universities with special interest in variables of parental influence, availability of standard facilities and equipment, coping with academic stress and university policy on sports.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. Parental influence is not a significant inhibiting factor to female participation in sports in Nigerian universities
2. Availability of standard facilities and equipment is not a significant inhibiting factor to female participation in sport
3. Academic stress is not a significant inhibiting factor to female participation in sports.
4. University policy on sport is not a significant inhibiting factor to female participation in sports.

Methodology

Descriptive research design of survey type was adopted for the study. The population of the study was all female undergraduates of universities located in south western Nigeria. The sample for the study consisted of 300 female undergraduates purposively and randomly selected from state and federal universities.

A self designed questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was carried out through the use of Cronbach alpha statistics and an r of 0.73 was obtained. Data collection was done through the help of research assistants. The data were analysed with the use of frequency counts, mean scores, percentages and chi-square.

Results

Inhibiting Factors to Female Participation in Sports

A	Parental influence	Yes		No	%	X^2
1.	Sports participation is viewed as a waste of time by my parent	128	42.67	162	57.33	1.62
2	Sports equipment are bought for me by my parents	120	40	180	60	
3	My parents always encourage me as a result of the importance of sports	194	64.67	106	35.33	

4	It is my interest that matters not my parents wish	202	67.33	98	32.67	
	\bar{X}	161	53.67	139	46.33	
B	Availability of standard sports facility and equipment					
5	Standard facilities encourage female participation	230	76.67	70	23.33	9.72
6	Equipment are available for female participation	265	88.33	35	11.67	
7	Sports equipment are only made available for university top athletes	158	52.67	142	47.33	
8	Facilities are usually taken over by male students hence female do not have access to them.	55	18.33	24.5	81.67	
	\bar{X}	177	59	123	41	
C	Academic stress					
9	Lectures take place throughout the day so there is no chance for sports participation	114	38	186	62	7.68
10	Assignment and field work take most of my time	188	62.67	112	37.33	
11	Female lecturers frown at sports participation by female students	98	32.67	202	67.33	
12	I cannot cope with academic stress and sports	104	34.67	196	65.3	
	\bar{X}	126	42	174	58	
D	University policy on sport					
13	The University gives room for sports participation by declaring an evening lecture free day	40	13.33	260	86.67	115.32
14	Funds are released for development of facilities	54	18	256	82	
15	Female sports participants are usually rewarded adequately	38	12.67	262	87.33	
16	Females are accommodated in the hostel hence they have opportunity of participating in sports.	96	32	204	68	
	\bar{X}	57	19	243	81	

Critical value = 3.84 at 1 df.

From the table, items 1-4 are on parental influence as inhibiting factor to female sports participation in Nigerian Universities. The mean score showed that Yes had 161(53.67%) while No had 139 (46.33%). The calculated chi-square gave a value of 1.62 which is

less than the critical value of 3.84 at 0.05 alpha level. With the result the hypothesis that stated that parental influence is not a significant inhibiting factor to female sports participation in Nigeria was not rejected.

Items 5-8 are on availability of standard sports facilities and equipment. The mean score showed that Yes had 177 (59%) while No had 123 (41%). The calculated chi-square of 9.82 obtained is greater than the table value of 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis that availability of standard sport facilities and equipment is not a significant inhibiting factor to female participation in sports in Nigerian Universities was rejected.

Items 9-12 are on academic stress as inhibiting factor to female sports participation in Nigerian Universities. The mean score showed that Yes had 126 (42%) while No had 174 (58%). The calculated chi-square of 7.68 obtained is greater than the table value of 3.84 at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, the hypothesis that academic stress is not a significant inhibiting factor to female participation in sports was rejected.

Items 13-16 are on University policy on sports. The mean score revealed that Yes had 57(19%) while No had 243(81%). The calculated chi-square obtained is 115.32 which is greater than the table value of 3.84 at 0.05 alpha level. With the result the hypothesis that university policy on sports is not a significant inhibiting factor to female participation in sports was rejected.

Discussion

The study revealed that parental influence is not a significant inhibiting factor to female participation in sports in Nigeria Universities. This may be due to the fact that majority of the students do not stay with their parents. However, it was discovered that many parents encourage their children to participate in sports as a result of the advantages therein. Regular physical activity remains an important behavior for promoting health, postponing or preventing prevalence of neuromuscular disorders such as mechanical low back pain, neck and shoulder pain and decreasing the risk of developing coronary heart diseases, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity and colon cancers (Jones, Ainsworth & Croft, 1998; Vuori, 1995).

The findings also revealed that availability of standard facilities and equipment are inhibiting factors to sports participation by the female in Nigerian Universities. The findings is consistent with Oyeniyi (2002) who posited that facilities and equipment are power house of sports, hence they are indispensable in competitive and recreational sports.

Furthermore, it was discovered that academic stress is a significant inhibiting factor to female participation in sports in Nigerian Universities. This result may be own to the ways and methods in which academic programmes are arranged which do not allow students enough time to participate in sports. At times students especially female are being victimized by lecturers for attending sporting programs instead of going for evening classes (Akindutire, 1998).

It was also found out that university policy on sports is another factor inhibiting female participation in sports in Nigerian Universities. These University policies may include accommodation for female students, non provision of an evening for sports participation and others to list a few.

Conclusion

The study examined the factors inhibiting female participation in sport. From the findings we were able to conclude that parents is not significant inhibiting factor to female participation in sports, However, it was discovered that availability of standard facilities and equipment, academic stress and university policy on sports are significant inhibiting factors to female participation in sports in Nigerian universities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is therefore, suggested that parents should encourage their female children by buying sports equipment for them. Governing councils of universities and government should provide standard facilities and equipment in order to encourage female participation in sports. Also, university authorities should always designate an evening as lecture free period so that students can participate in sporting programs, to reduce stress. University policies on sports should always be received and updated in order to encourage many sports participants.

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