

Effective Participation of Athletics Track and Field in Secondary Schools in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State

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DOI: 10.56201/ijee.v9.no1.2023.pg44.51

Abstract

This study examined how well secondary school students in Bayelsa State's Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area participated in athletics. For this study, a descriptive survey design was used. Because the design provided a thorough descriptive analysis of effective athletic participation in secondary schools, it became essential to the study. The total population of the study is five thousand, two hundred fifty-three (5,253) public senior secondary school students. Using a basic random sampling technique, 201 people were randomly chosen as the study's sample size from the study's total population. The "Effective Participation of Athletics (Track and Field) Questionnaire (EPATFQ)," a self-structured questionnaire created by the researchers and approved by experts, served as the study's data collection tool. Copies of the instrument were given by the researcher to various students who weren't included in the study's sample size. Two hundred questionnaires were distributed and collected in total. The examination of the questionnaire produced the study's data. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question. The results also showed that the majority of respondents thought that low funding, infrastructure, culture, and tradition, as well as technical know-how, had a significant impact on how well secondary schools implemented athletics.

Keywords: *Effective, Participation, Athletics, Secondary School, Students*

Introduction

Engaging in athletic activities may directly enhance academic performance. First off, improved health among athletes may spur greater output and human capital expenditures. Second, playing sports teaches soft skills like following directions, taking charge, working as a team, according to rules, and socializing in addition to functional skills like dexterity and balance. Thirdly, because sports impart character traits that are not necessarily learned in the classroom, such as drive, self-control, determination, competitive spirit, responsibility, perseverance, confidence, and self-worth, they can aid in the development of young people's character. These behavioral characteristics should result in fewer kids missing school, a greater desire to succeed academically, and an encouragement of social engagement with other students. These

outcomes are linked to increased learning efficiency since more time is spent effectively (Corneliben & Pfeifer, 2017).

Rees and Sabia (2010) state that there is theoretical uncertainty regarding the impact of childhood physical participation on academic achievement. The amount of time available for learning and studying may decrease with participation. On the other hand, it has been suggested that playing sports improves kids' motivation and instills self-control and teamwork, which has a beneficial academic carryover. According to Ballesteros (2012), sport is defined as physical activity consisting of natural activities, carried out by men and women in the most diverse forms since the origin of the species, such as running, jumping and throwing. Sport is a form of controlled movement and over the years it has evolved and its program has changed and has become a sport that includes events so different that the morphology and physical characteristics of the ideal athlete differ greatly from one discipline to another (e.g. example throwers compared to long-distance runners).

Sport is an exemplary basic sport, due to its tradition, its universality, its prestige and the variety of skills and qualities necessary for its practice. As a result, it is one of the most important sports in the Olympic Games. It is performed all over the world due to its great educational value and ability to enhance physical conditions, serving as the foundation of physical preparation for the rest of the sports. The athletic program includes the following events: - Track events: races (flat and with hurdles). Throws and leaps are examples of field events. - Running a race. - Combination of occurrences (Ladani, 2007).

Track and field is a popular sport that includes many different types of athletic events. Track and field activities are either performed on a running track or in an open field setting. Track events are made up of running workouts that range from short sprints of approximately a mile to long distance running such as a complete 26-mile marathon. Strength workouts and throwing competitions are the focus of field events. The heptathlon and decathlon, which comprise seven and ten events respectively, incorporate many track and field activities. The rules for track and field events varies depending on the event. The training for each event is also different (Ladani, 2017).

All track and field events are classified as either track events or field events. Track events are further subdivided into three parts, each of which presents competitors with a unique challenge. Track events are made up of running workouts that range from short sprints of approximately a mile to long distance running such as a complete 26-mile marathon. Strength workouts and throwing competitions are the focus of field events. The heptathlon and decathlon, which comprise seven and ten events respectively, incorporate many track and field activities. The rules for track and field events varies depending on the event. The training for each event is also different (Ladani, 2017).

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All track and field events are classified as either track events or field events. Track events are further subdivided into three parts, each of which presents competitors with a unique challenge. Ironically, it's possible that school administrators fell short in this area. In today's society, school sports are hardly mentioned. When such sports are occasionally offered, they are typically unplanned because these competitions frequently result in extreme violence because of inadequate planning and the indifferent attitudes of the relevant authorities. Research has revealed that secondary schools, both public and private, do not consistently participate in sports (Olajide, 2014). Sports facilities are either nonexistent, insufficient, or occasionally in disrepair in many secondary schools. One of the factors preventing successful school sports is a lack of supplies and equipment (Mgbor, 2015). It has also been observed that academic assignments frequently conflict with extracurricular activities like sports on the school schedule.

Other than their academic work, many secondary school students have no interest in extracurricular activities. Few students use the sports facilities and equipment, even in places where they are available. This explains why some school-sponsored intramural sports programs occasionally don't work out. A lot of private schools focus their involvement on specific sports. The school administration has not promoted maximum participation, despite the growing awareness and excitement expressed (Asagba, 2013). This action might have, in part, denied private students the numerous advantages that come with playing sports. School sports programs must be run so that the players will continue to value the program's ideals and anticipated outcomes. It is clear that some school administrators do not have a positive attitude toward athletics. Sports are viewed by some as a time waster and a fast route to disability and injury. Students' participation in any kind of activity is greatly influenced by the attitudes of their parents as well. Regretfully, the majority of parents do not encourage their children to participate in sports or accept invitations from the school to participate in the athletic program.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the opportunities and difficulties associated with successful track and field participation in secondary schools in the Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area. In particular, the research aims to;

- i. Determine the degree to which the availability of sports facilities influences the effectiveness of track and field participation in secondary schools in the Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.
- ii. Determine the degree to which customs and culture influence how successfully track and field is practiced in secondary schools in the Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

- i. To what extent does athletics infrastructure affect the effective participation of athletics (track and field) in secondary schools in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State?
- ii. To what extent does culture and tradition affects the effective participation of athletics (track and field) in secondary schools in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State?

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was used in the study. An extensive descriptive analysis of successful secondary school athletic participation was provided by this design. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were permitted in this instance due to the descriptive research design. Stated differently, the descriptive survey research design yielded a wealth of information that made it a valuable tool for determining academic facts. 5253 students from 12 public senior secondary schools in Kolokuma/Opukuma, Bayelsa State, make up the study's population (Bayelsa State Ministry of Education Public Secondary School, 2023). According to Ofor (2005), Gay (1981) confirmed that 4% of the study population was used to determine the sample size. Using simple random sample techniques, 210 respondents were randomly selected from the entire population to make up the sample size. During the research study, stratified random sampling was used in this investigation. Because of the nature of the study, the researcher employed stratified random sampling techniques. This approach gave all employees an equal chance to participate in the study and allowed for the generalization of a large population within a predetermined margin of error (Kothari, 2004). The "Effective Participation of Athletics (Track and Field) Questionnaire (EPATFQ)" was the instrument used to collect the data for this investigation. There were two sections to the instrument. Section "B" includes items pertaining to obstacles and opportunities for successful secondary school athletic participation, while Section "A" examined the respondent's background.

A questionnaire with a four-point rating scale was used to gather primary data. The questionnaire was developed with the study's research questions in mind. Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD), and Disagree (D) are the four rating categories on the scale. Two experts from the Science Education Department were also given it to validate. These resource people evaluated the instrument's items for correctness and suitability for the grade level of the teachers and students involved in the study. It affected every correction they had made. Using the test-retest methodology, the instrument's (EPATFQ) reliability was determined. Copies of the instrument were given to various students who were included in the study's sample by the researcher. The same students were given the sample instrument again after two weeks, and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Formula was used to correlate the data gathered or generated from the two administrations. A 0.78 reliability coefficient was found. The respondents who were chosen for the study were given the instrument by the researcher in person. Only two hundred (200) of the questionnaires that were collected that day were also retrieved. The examination of the questionnaire produced the study's data. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. For every item in the instrument, the cut off Mean (\bar{x}) will be 2.5. Consequently, any item with a mean score of 2.49 or less would be regarded as disagreed, while all items with a mean score of 2.5 or higher would be identified as agreed.

Analysis and Results

Research Question One: To what extent does infrastructure affect the effective participation of athletics in secondary schools in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State?

Table 1: Extent at which infrastructures affects the effective participation in athletics

S/N	Item	Response				F _x	X	Remark
		SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)			
1.	I am not encouraged to take part in sports because my school lack sports facilities	61 (244)	107 (321)	24 (48)	8 (8)	621	3.1	Agreed
2.	There is adequate space for sports in the schools	4 (16)	47 (141)	81 (162)	68 (68)	387	1.9	Disagreed
3.	I am not interested in sports participation because the facilities in my school are not well maintained	13 (52)	104 (312)	71 (142)	12 (12)	518	2.6	Agreed
4.	The sports facilities in my school cannot serve the students population	10 (40)	136 (408)	49 (98)	5 (5)	551	2.8	Agreed
5.	There is poor construction of athletic facilities in my school	62 (248)	126 (378)	16 (32)	6 (6)	664	3.3	Agreed
Grand Mean							2.7	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The answers to the question of how much infrastructure affects secondary schools in Bayelsa State's Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area's effective participation in athletics were displayed in Table 1. According to the data, there were two (2) items where the mean scores were 3.1 and 1.9, respectively. On the other hand, three (3) agreed, having mean scores of 2.6, 2.8, and 3.3.

The criteria mean of 2.50 was not equal to the grand mean score of 2.7 in table 4.2. However, the grand mean of 2.7 indicated how much infrastructure in the Bayelsa State local government area of Kolokuma/Opokuma affects secondary schools' ability to effectively participate in athletics.

Research Question Two: To what extent does culture and tradition affect the effective participation of athletics in secondary schools in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State?

Table 2: Extent at which culture and tradition affects the effective participation of athletics

S/N	Item	Response				F _x	X	Remark
		SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)			
6.	Some parents are against their wards participating in athletics because their culture forbids	28 (112)	80 (240)	78 (156)	14 (14)	522	2.6	Agreed

female exposing parts of their body

7. Some parents of student in my school discourage their female wards from participating in athletics because they believe it meant for males only	11 (44)	129 (387)	56 (112)	4 (4)	547	2.7	Agreed
8. Parent discourage their wards in participating because their religion discourage competitions between individuals	4 (16)	61 (183)	116 (232)	19 (19)	450	2.2	Disagreed
9. Parent encourages their wards in participating in athletics because their religious organisation permits it	19 (76)	125 (375)	52 (104)	4 (4)	559	2.8	Agreed
10. Parents forbid their wards from participating in athletics because it is against their religion	8 (32)	54 (162)	105 (210)	33 (33)	437	2.2	Disagreed

Grand Mean

2.5 Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The answers to the question of how much culture and tradition influence secondary schools in the Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State's effective participation in athletics were displayed in Table 2. The information showed that two (2) items had mean scores of 2.2 and 2.2, indicating disagreement. Three (3), however, had mean scores of 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8 that were agreed upon.

The Grand Mean score of Table 2 was 2.5, exceeding the 2.50 criteria mean. However, the grand mean of 2.5 showed how much tradition and culture influence secondary schools in Bayelsa State's Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area's ability to effectively participate in athletics.

Discussion of Results

The extent at which infrastructures affects the effective participation in athletics

In item one (1), it was found that 61 respondents strongly agreed, 107 agreed, 24 disagreed, and 8 strongly disagreed with the statement that they are not encouraged to participate in sports because there aren't enough facilities. However, the item was subsequently deemed agreed because its mean score of 3.1 is higher than the 2.50 cut-off mean.

In response to item two (2), 4 out of the total respondents strongly agreed, 47 agreed, 81 disagreed, and 68 strongly disagreed with the statement that there is adequate space for sports in their school. However, the item was later rejected because the mean score of 1.9, which is lower than the cut-off mean of 2.50, was disagreed with.

Item two (3) showed that, out of all respondents, 13 strongly agreed, 104 agreed, 71 disagreed, and 12 strongly disagreed with the statement that they are not interested because their school's facilities are not well maintained. However, the item was later accepted because it yielded a mean score of 2.6, which is higher than the cut-off mean of 2.50 and it was taken into consideration.

Ten of the total respondents strongly agreed, 136 agreed, 49 disagreed, and five strongly disagreed with the statement that sports facilities in their school cannot serve the student population. However, item two (4) was later accepted because it yielded a mean score of 2.8, which is higher than the cut-off mean of 2.50 and it was agreed.

The results of item five (5) showed that 126 respondents agreed, 62 strongly agreed, 16 disagreed, and 6 strongly disagreed that the athletic facilities at their school are poorly constructed. However, the item was later accepted because the mean score of 3.3, which is higher than the cut-off mean of 2.50, was agreed upon.

The results of this study are consistent with those of Yusof and Omar-Fauzee (2003), who ascertained Malaysian college students' perceptions of the limitations on their participation in sports.

Extent at which culture and tradition affects the effective participation of athletics

Table 2 (item 6) showed that while 92 respondents agreed that some parents are against their wards participating in athletics because their culture prohibits women from exposing certain parts of their bodies, only 17 of the total respondents strongly agreed. However, the item was approved because, as agreed upon, the mean score of 2.6 exceeded the cut-off point of 2.5.

The results of item 7 showed that 129 respondents, or 11 out of the total respondents, agreed that some parents of students in my school discourage their female wards from participating in athletics because they think it's a sport for men. Because the item's mean score of 2.7 exceeded the agreed-upon cut-off point of 2.5, it was approved.

According to item 8, 4 out of the total respondents strongly agreed, and 61 agreed that parents should discourage their children from competing because it is against their religion for people to compete with one another. Because the item's mean score of 2.2 was disagreed with and below the cut-off mean of 2.5, it was rejected.

Nineteen percent of respondents overall—125 percent—strongly agreed with item 9's finding that parents encourage their wards to participate in athletics because their religious organization allows it. The item was approved since the agreed-upon mean of 2.8 was greater than the cut-off mean of 2.5.

Eight out of the total respondents strongly agreed with this item, and 54 agreed that parents should not allow their children to participate in sports because it goes against their religious beliefs. Because the item's mean score of 2.2 was disagreed with and below the cut-off mean of 2.5, it was rejected.

The results of this study are consistent with Lapchick's (1989) extensive discussion of the culture surrounding high school athletics.

Conclusion

The study's findings led to the following conclusions being made. The Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area's public secondary school sports participation won't increase without strong facilities, sufficient financing, and skilled athletic staff. If the government, school administration, parents, and other stakeholders work together, there may be successful athletic participation in schools. This will open doors for the students' physical, mental, and social development so they can manage their daily responsibilities.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. School administrators, teachers, and students need to be made aware of the benefits of sports participation. This would facilitate the implementation of additional programs by school stakeholders that will increase student involvement and promote greater teacher-student interaction outside of the classroom.
2. In order to encourage sports participation, the Ministry of Education should work with the county director of education to guarantee that all secondary schools have access to the most basic sporting facilities and gear.

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