

UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO SPORTS PARTICIPATION AS A MEANS OF ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AFTER COVID-19 AMONG COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

During these difficult economic times of COVID-19 pandemic globally, nations are looking for ways to improve their finances, preserve the environment as well as the socio-political climate and educational institutions, which are needed to increase their economy and preserve their sustainable development. Sport is one of the ways through which sustainable development can be achieved. The purpose of this study was to examine and understanding barriers to participation in sport for future sustainable development that can be met after COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 1,025 students were purposively selected from five schools (School of Arts and Social Sciences, School of Languages, School of Education, School of Sciences and School of Vocational and Technical Education) in Michael Otedola College of Primary Education (MOCPEd). A questionnaire, with a tested reliability coefficient of 0.71, was used for data collection. The collected data were subjected to descriptive survey research design. The findings showed that sports facilities, funding and lecture schedules were significant barriers to sports participation. It was recommended that the Lagos State government should provide sports facilities to colleges, to prepare for economic development to support their institutional funding. Sports activities should be integrated into extra-curricular activities for all colleges in Nigeria.

Key words: COVID-19 pandemic, MOCPEd sports, sustainable development, sports participation.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic global ongoing has resulted to economic difficulties to some nations in the world, countries are looking for different avenues to generate income while preserving the environment and the socio-political climate to ensure the needs of future generations can be met. Sport is one such avenue that can be exploited to achieve sustainable growth and development in the areas mentioned after COVID-19 pandemic. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present generations, without

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Awosika, 2014). Omidiran (2000) also stated that sustainable development is the ability to meet the needs of the present while contributing to the needs of future generations.

Regular physical activity (PA) is critically essential for the health and well-being of every individual irrespective of their ages (Kulavic, Hultquist, and McLester, 2013). Be as it may, the sport has developed to become a socio-economic, political, cultural, and religious agent through which many nations perceived (Adogbeji and Oghenetega, 2006; Charles and Gareth, 2019). (Los Angeles Times, 2020) the COVID-19 pandemic has generated to the significant confusion to the worldwide sporting activity. Globally sports events have been rescheduled or cancelled to different degree levels. The Olympics for 2020 in Tokyo were postponed due to COVID-19. People are no longer enjoy sports as before and no income for players, team, state and nations through sport and games. One or two nations, such as Nicaragua and Belarus have their professional sports events has scheduled. Sustainable economic development cannot be jeopardised after the COVID-19 pandemic and solutions are needed to ensure that the colleges' support through sports participation is in place. Not only the professional or national level of sports events but also the whole institutions most engage in extra-events, which can improve their finances, preserve the environment as well as the socio-political climate and educational institutions in many forms (Cooper et al., 2020).

Charles and Gareth (2019) stated that sport has been used by nations of low-global standing to improve their image and project their national status worldwide. It is not an exaggeration to say that sport has significantly influenced virtually every social institution and has been part of civilization even right from the time of the ancient Greeks. Sport has found its way into the economic, political, legal, education, health, science and engineering sectors of almost all nations around the world. Sport has also become a unifying force among people and populations around the world and has been used to challenge and end apartheid in South Africa (Kienka, 2009). Regards to these, reconfirm the idea of sustainable development through sport after COVID-19 as a creative agitation between which we can skilfully involve to evaluate current experience towards lack of sport participation and permit those findings to guide or fuel how we realize and envisage a positive change in the coming future. This needs theoretical and corroboration for sustainable development after pandemic sports events (Cooper et al., 2020). All these points to the fact that sports indeed can be used to foster sustainable development. (Adogbeji and Oghenetega, 2016) states that directly or indirectly, the educational institution is the image-maker of society and upon them hinges the development of every progressing society. Sport is a vital tool for achieving sustainable improvement in educational institutions, and therefore, should be highly encouraged.

Sustainable development through sport cannot be achieved after COVID-19 pandemic if government or individuals fail to provide the basic conditions needed for participation. Perhaps this was why (Gert, 2005) stated that the provision of adequate and modern sports facilities can bring about the desired sporting results. Awosika (2014) pointed out that as long as the government is unwilling to make the sacrifice necessary to provide modern, adequate facilities in tertiary institutions, Nigeria will always be backward.

It is regretful that the government does not provide tertiary institutions with the needed support in sports education. Abdul (2000) was right to state that sport has not been given the required level of support in institutions of learning. Lack of funding has been the major problem for government-run educational at MOCPEP. Funds must be available to run sports activities at MOCPEP to achieve sustainable development. Cooper et al. (2020) stated that a lack of funds is the most obvious obstacle to providing suitable facilities. While (Abdul, 2000) also reported that funding greatly influences the facilitation of an effective school sports programme and suggested that government, at all levels, should provide adequate funding to develop a sports curriculum in schools. According to (Omolawon, 2002) the financial resources in schools are so limited that sports programmes are in a comatose state.

Numerous factors involving personal, social, environmental, and cognitive variables influences PA or sports behaviour. Based on cognitive factors related to PA with college students, self-effectiveness is an essential variable combined with exercise behaviour. However, previous studies also demonstrate high self-effectiveness which usually could result in high levels of PA participation (Kulavic, Hultquist, and McLester, 2013). Besides, whatever the number of funds and facilities made available, if the students do not make use of them, it will still amount to a waste of resources. The utilization of these resources largely depends on the available time (i.e. lack of time is a key obstacle) couple paucity of devotion to consistent daily physical exercise is deemed to be part of the major obstacles when fostering a healthy and active lifestyle. (Gómez-López, Gallegos, & Extremera, 2010).

The time allotted to school sports is grossly inadequate (Charles and Gareth, 2019). Stated that time must and should occupy the centre of a man's intellectual and emotional interest in sports participation (Alia et al., 2012). The purpose of time allocation is to have a schedule for the programme that is adequate for sports participation. It was also discovered that in adolescences (Park and Kim, 2008) and through the transition into college, and when studying at the college, not considering a healthy lifestyle and a reduction in participation of moderate to vigorous physical activity or sports (Han et al., 2008; Sinclair et al., 2005).

Adogbeji and Oghenetega (2016) reported a significant relationship between the participation of Delta State tertiary institution students in sports activities and lecture schedule. They further explained that the lecture hours schedule affected the sports activities hour, so therefore inadequate time allotted for sporting activities will be a barrier to the participation of MOCPEP students in sport.

The role of sport in the sustainable development of a society cannot be overemphasized. It is imperative however to note that the ascribed role played by sport in the development of a society will not be achieved if the government fails to provide the necessary impetus after COVID-19 pandemic.

In light of the above, the purpose of this study was to examine and understanding barriers to participation in sport for future sustainable development that can be met after COVID-19 pandemic in MOCPEP.

A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is funding a barrier to sports participation at MOCPEP?
2. Are the facilities a barrier to sports participation at MOCPEP?
3. Is the lecture schedule a barrier to sports participation at MOCPEP?

B. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This study employed the descriptive survey research method in carrying out this study. The method is considered appropriate because of the sample size. The recognition of involving distinctions based on qualities that will improve the country's educational system starting from the foundation, which is the primary level of students at MOCPEP. The college is located at Noforija in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State Nigeria. Its uniqueness is what has come to be known as the "Noforija Experiment". The population of the students is 3,000. The college is an autonomous and non-residential institution for staff and students. The college edict gave prominent recognition to sports and recreation (competitive and non-competitive). Based on this, the Academic Board approved all Wednesday afternoon as a lecture-free period to afford students participation in sports for recreation and competition in areas of their sporting interests.

C. PARTICIPANTS

The study participants were purposively selected from all the five schools (School of Arts and Social Sciences, School of Languages, School of Education, School of Sciences and School of Vocational and Technical Education) at MOCPEP. A purposive sample of 205 students was selected from each of the schools. This brings the total number of participants to 1,025, out of which 673 (65.66%) were male and 352 (34.34%) were female.

D. INSTRUMENT

A questionnaire was the main instrument employed and was supported by an oral interview. The questionnaire and the interview guide were developed by the researchers and were given to three other colleagues for content and to construct validity. Their corrections and criticisms were considered in the final draft of the instrument. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire and the interview guide were administered to 200 students who were not part of the study at an interval of two weeks (test-retest). Data collected were subjected to the Pearson Product Moment Correlation and gave a reliability coefficient of 0.71. Items in the questionnaire and interview guide focused on sports facilities, funding and lecture schedule.

E. PROCEDURE

Students completed the questionnaires; copies of the questionnaire were personally administered to the respondents at their various schools. Participants were also asked to respond to the interview guide. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately to avoid any loss.

I. DATA ANALYSIS

Points were assigned to each response based on a four-point Likert scale. Data collected were subjected to the descriptive statistics of frequency counts, simple percentages as well as chi-square. Hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

A total of 1,000 copies of the questionnaire were properly filled and analysed. Nearly half of the participants, 515 (50.24%) were between the ages of 15-18 years, 493 (48.10%) were between the ages 19-22 years, while 17 (1.66%) were between the ages 23-26 years. As well, 505 (49.27%) were in NCE III, 285 (27.80%) were in NCE II and 235 (22.93%) were in NCE I.

In Table I, it is shown that 375 (37.5%) and 471 (47.1%) participants strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, with the statement that finance is a constraint to sports participation. Nearly half of the participants, 501 (50.1%), strongly agreed, while 373 (37.3%) participants agreed with the statement that lack of money can hinder sports participation. Some 337 (33.7%) and 439 (43.9%) participants strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, with the statement that there is no fund to sponsor a sports programme at MOCPEP.

Table II showed that 371 (37.1%) and 475 (47.5%) participants strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the statement that facilities are constraints to sports participation. While 490 (49.0%) and 376 (37.6%) participants strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the statement that inadequate facilities can hinder sports participation. Additionally, 376 (37.6%) and 395 (39.5%) participants strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, with the statement that there are no facilities for some sports of choice.

Table III showed that 365 (36.5%) and 470 (47.0%) participants strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, with the statement that lectures schedule are constraints to sports participation. Concerning the lecture schedule, 397 (39.7%) and 372 (37.2%) participants strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, with the statement that busy lectures schedule can hinder sports participation. While, 405 (40.5%) and 419 (41.9%) participants strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, with the statement that sports participation is hindered by inadequate/ lack of time.

TABLE I: Percentage and Chi-Square Analysis on Funds and Sports Participation

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Df	α	X ² crt	X ² cal	Decision
Finance is a constraint to sports participation	375 (37.5)	471 (47.1)	55 (5.5)	99 (9.9)	6	0.05	12.592	97.57	Significant
Lack of money can hinder sports participation	501 (50.1)	373 (37.3)	79 (7.9)	47 (4.7)					
There is no funding to sponsor sports programmes	337 (33.7)	439 (43.9)	111 (11.1)	113 (11.3)					

TABLE II: Percentage and Chi-Square Analysis of Data on Facilities and Sports Participation

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SA (%)	Df	α	X ² crt	X ² cal	Decision
Facilities are constraints to sport participation	371 (37.1)	475 (47.5)	64 (6.4)	90 (9.0)	6	0.05	12.592	71.08	Significant
Inadequate facilities can hinder sport participation	490 (49.0)	376 (37.6)	75 (7.5)	59 (5.9)					
There are no facilities for some sport of choice	376 (37.6)	395 (39.5)	97 (9.7)	132 (13.2)					

TABLE III: Percentage and Chi-Square Analysis of Data on Lecture Schedule and Sports Participation

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SA (%)	Df	α	X ² crt	X ² cal	Decision
Lecture schedules are constraints to sports participation	365 (36.5)	470 (47.0)	69 (6.9)	96 (9.6)	6	0.05	12.592	28.89	Significant
Busy lecture schedule can hinder sports participation	397 (39.7)	372 (37.2)	101 (10.1)	130 (13.0)					
Sport participation is hindered by inadequate/ lack of time	405 (40.5)	419 (41.9)	87 (8.7)	89 (8.9)					

DISCUSSION

The role of finance in sports participation cannot be overemphasized. Finance will in no small way to determine the success or otherwise of any sports programme.

The results in Table I show that funding was a significant barrier to sports participation at MOCPEd. The findings of this study on funding and sport participation are not far from expectation, particularly when one looks at the financial status and the age of the college. MOCPEd was established in 1994, with no significant or appreciable revenue and solely relies on grants from the State in the execution of its programme in which sports is only a fragment. Although sport is important, other programmes are given priority at the expense of sports. This finding does not deviate from the findings of (United Nations Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, 2020) who reported that the financial resources at schools are so limited that sports programme is in a state of comatose. Abdul (2000) reported that funds have a great influence in facilitating the effective organization of a school sports programme. Money is needed to provide sports facilities, and without money, sports programmes cannot be executed.

However, sports can also be used to raise the financial status of a college. This can be achieved when schools come to use the college facilities for sports, thereby making such schools pay a certain amount of money.

The role of facilities in sports participation cannot be underestimated. Facilities in no small way determine the success or otherwise of a sports programme. Also, this result is not far from expectations, as the college lacks a football field, gymnasium, sports hall, squash facility, and even those facilities that are available (volleyball, handball, basketball, tennis) are in a deplorable state. It should be expected that sports participation would be hindered in a society such as this (Cooper et al., 2020).

The result in Table II showed that facilities were a significant barrier to sports participation at MOCPED. A lack of sports facilities can hinder the students from participation in a sport of their choice and this can threaten interpersonal relationships, socio-political relationships and even the economic development of the college. Therefore, the sustainable development that can be achieved through sports participation may be hindered due to the lack of sports facilities.

While Charles and Gareth (2019) stated that, the provision of adequate and modern sports facilities can bring about the desired sports results. Whatever the amount of money and the sports facilities available, their utilization depends largely on the students. The results in Table III showed that lecture schedules were a significant barrier to students' participation in sports. It is not surprising that lectures schedule-hindered students' participation in sports because students offer as many as 13 courses in each semester, and therefore, they do not have time.

Apart from the lectures, students have to do assignment work, as well as attend to religious programmes and other domestic activities. Furthermore, sports appear only once, that is for two hours, Wednesday 4-6 pm, and even some lecturers still set classes for this particular time. Not all these combined allow students to take part in any sports of their choice. This finding does not deviate from the report of (Alia et al., 2012) who stated that the time allotted to school sports is grossly inadequate. That is as Adogbeji and Oghenetega (2016) who reported a significant relationship between Delta State tertiary institution students' participation in recreational activities and the lecture schedule. In addition, Awosika (2014) reported that the lack of available time or the inadequate time offered as one of the factors that hindered the college of education students' participating in active recreation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that funding was a barrier to sports participation at MOCPED and hindered the provision of sports facilities.

It could also be concluded that facilities are barriers to sports participation at MOCPED, as the college lacks some sports facilities and others that are available are in deplorable states. Furthermore, it could be concluded that the lecture schedule was a barrier to sports participation in MOCPED.

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. The State government should make available adequate funds for the college so that the sports programme could be executed along with other academic programmes to have sustainable development after COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The government should provide the sports facilities that the college lacks and upgrade the existing ones to an appropriate standard to have sustainable development after COVID-19 pandemic.
3. More time should be allotted to sports. Students should also set aside extra time for sports, despite their busy lecture schedules to have sustainable development after COVID-19 pandemic.

LIMITATION

Due to the sampling techniques used in this study, a purposive sample was used to access participants in Nigerian schools resulting in a non-probability sample. This approach included an inability to distribute the selected participating genders in equal sample size. Therefore, the selection of male and female into the study was not an equal sample size. The results may not be used for generalizability in a larger population.

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