

PERCEIVED DETERMINANTS OF SPORTS INVOLVEMENT AMONG STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS, KWARA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of sports involvement in improving the wellness of students with special needs can never be overemphasized. This study investigated perceived determinants of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis. The population consisted of the special needs students in schools and rehabilitation center for the special needs in Ilorin metropolis. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 346 respondents for the study. A validated instrument developed by the researcher was used for data collection. The hypotheses stated were tested using the inferential statistics of Chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. The findings were that sports instructors, availability of facility and sport equipment are significant determinants of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis. It was therefore recommended that sport instructors should always ensure they are friendly individual and good role model so as to encourage the special students to regularly get involved in sporting events that will improve their physical condition among others.

Keyword: Determinants, Sports, Involvement, Students, Special-Needs

Introduction

Sport is often considered as physical activities that are engaged in for competition/ excellence and/or pleasure and that have defined rules and scoring systems. Positive effects of physical activity in persons with learning and physical and sensory challenge that have been demonstrated include

improvements in general health, physical fitness, bone metabolism and increased functional independence. There is also increased mobility and a reduction in chronic disease and secondary complications. Physical activity also has a mitigating effect on challenging behaviour (Boland, 2005). Physical exercise and sports are important in maintaining fitness for daily living, reducing functional limitations, facilitating independent living and preventing, delaying and reducing chronic illnesses and body conditions. In people who have acquired a physical challenge, participation in sport/physical exercise would help them come to terms with their physical challenge, regain self-esteem and social integration.

The European Sport's Charter (Council of Europe, 2012) defines sport as all forms of physical activity, which through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels. Exercise is defined as purposeful physical activity, which is often structured, and pursued for health and fitness benefits. Physical activity is defined as all forms of bodily movement which use energy including such tasks as housework and gardening. According to Council of Europe (2012), there are people with physical challenges who have had little or no experience of physical activity or exercise. Students with impairment do need to develop their motor skills through adapted physical activity programmes and through physiotherapy where indicated. Other people with physical challenges do not have the opportunity to participate in active leisure pursuits and sports that suit and appeal to them. Student who's special need have had little or no opportunity to engage in physical exercise and sport with others and enjoy their social aspects. In school and in college the experience of children and young adults with physical challenges are not always quality ones. Everyone with a physical challenge, including athletes, need to be adequately catered for and their potential recognised, respected and supported.

Physical activity is part of the antidote to the global burden of obesity and to chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes. As the economic and social impact of a sedentary lifestyle and obesity becomes more apparent, efforts are being made around the globe to increase participation in physical exercise and sport. It is important that these initiatives become catch-up ones for people with physical challenges rather than a time when the gap widens between them and their non-impaired peers in terms of participation in physical exercise and sport (Grace, 2012). According to HomeRoom, involvement in sports at any level either club, intramural, or interscholastic can be an essential aspect of the school experience and have an immense and lasting impact on a student's life. From the numerous benefits of involvement in extracurricular athletic activities, it promotes socialization, the development of leadership skills, focus, and, of course, physical fitness. It is no secret that sports helped to shape life. From a very early age, playing basketball taught the valuable lessons about grit, discipline, and teamwork.

According to Boland (2005), sport is increasingly being used as treatment complementing the conventional methods of physiotherapy. It helps to develop strength, coordination, and endurance. Some sports develop selected groups of muscles for example, weight lifting and archery help to strengthen the arm muscles of paraplegic patients, enabling them to gain independence in

self-care activities. A wide variety of sports can be enjoyed by people with physical challenges and can be of benefit to them. For example, horse riding can be beneficial to people with physical impairment including people with learning difficulties, whose confidence, coordination, and communication skills can be improved (Peacock, 2004). Some people with intellectual challenge, notably persons with Down's syndrome, have low Vitamin D levels and are at risk of bone disease with an increased prevalence of osteoporosis (Boland, 2005). Thus, physical activity may yield particular benefits for them by decreasing the risk of osteoporosis. If these factors such as availability of equipment, and interest in sport are properly taken care of, a challenged child will be enabled to be fully involved in sports that will promote his/her physical wellbeing.

According to Goldberg (1995) sport instructor or persons who are involved in organised sport and physical activity can be involved as players or in non-playing roles. Non-playing roles include coach, teacher; referee or umpire; committee member or administrator; scorer or timekeeper; medical support; or other non-playing involvement. Sport is a term that encompasses a broad spectrum of experiences that include the social, recreational, and competitive mostly handled and organized by sport. Physical activity is widely accepted as a necessary component for individual health. Over recent years, there has been increased emphasis on the role of sport and physical activity in enhancing health and quality of life of individuals with impairment and chronic illness. Federal civil rights laws require schools to provide equal opportunities, not give anyone an unfair advantage (Boland, 2005). So schools do not have to change the essential rules of the game, and they do not have to do anything that would provide a student with a physical challenge an unfair competitive advantage. Students with special needs do need to make reasonable modifications (such as using a laser instead of a starter pistol to start a race so a deaf runner can compete) to ensure that students with physical challenges get the very same opportunity to play as everyone else. The guidance issued today will help schools meet this obligation and will allow increasing numbers of kids with physical challenges the chance to benefit from playing sports (HomeRoom, 2013).

To improve participation in sports, there should be available facilities. Consequently, Nwankwo (2008) noted spotters are those who support and guard others during performance of physical activities and also ensure that sport facilities are made available. The special population needs spotters more than other persons during physical activities. Baba, Ajadi, Dominic, Onifade and Oniyangi (2013) noted that availability of sports facilities has significant impact on professional performance in sport competition. The essence is to watch and support the physically challenged students during performance to avoid any form of accident that may occur as a result of their involvement especially in complex physical activities while using the available sport facilities. Availability of sport facilities is a factor of more significant determinants for sport participation than characteristics of the children themselves. The establishment of short-term goals, emphasizing variety and enjoyment, and positive reinforcement through documented progress toward goals can help spark and sustain the motivation for involvement in sports (Durstine et al, 2000).

Nwankwo (2008) suggested that equipment for the physically challenged should represent the present skill level of the student, they should vary in size, shape, colour, weight, etc. depending

on the nature of the challenge. The environment of the practice area should be restricted when movement capabilities are limited. These should be designated area for equipment. It is also advisable to keep the equipment away from the students when they are not in use to avoid distraction. The nature of the students' impairment should determine how the environment would be adapted. The first environmental adaptation for the special participants is the instruction and the adapted sport instructor should employ variety of instructional strategies to achieve expected result. The selection of these strategies should be dependent on the ability of the students. The rules guiding participation is another area to be modified for adapted physical education class. The whole rules of the sports to be taught should be modified to encourage the students to be more active in class. This area of adaptation is very important for the students' safety and success in the lesson. Provision of Safety Equipment is another area of adaptation and variety of safety equipment should be provided. The provision should be in accordance with the lesson to be taught. Virtually, every sports equipment has its adapted equivalent. This equipment should be well designed in spite of the type and quality. The teacher should ensure that the equipment for every sport is in useable condition. Those that need further modification should be modified before use. The students should be made to be conscious of the risk involved in being reckless with equipment (Nwankwo, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

People with physical challenges sometimes are less active usually due to their functional limitations (Peacock, 2004). Expectations of inactivity on their own part and that of others may compound their inactivity. The health status differences between people with and without physical challenges have been shown to be insignificant for people who exercise. It has been observed that many students with special needs are not actively involved in sports as a result of some underlining factors such as sport instructor, sports equipment and availability of facility. Ibraheem and Jimoh (2006) identified that social factors influence sport participation among special students in Osun state. Social impediments such as age and gender determine involvement in recreational activities in the study.

Despite the Council of Europe (2012) identification of problem related with inactivity of students with special needs which include an increase in dependence on others, a decrease in social interactions and the development of symptoms such as fatigue, depression, low functional capacity, obesity and pressure sores, the involvement of students with special needs in sports still remain low in Kwara state. Baba et al (2013) examined only the influence of adequate provision of sports facilities and equipment on performances of professional athletes in Kwara state Sports Council while Ibraheem and Jimoh (2006) specifically assessed the psycho-social influence on sports participation among special students in selected secondary schools in Osun state. This study intends to build on these researches by considering other salient determinants of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions for this study;

1. Will sports instructor be a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis?
2. Will availability of facility be a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis?
3. Will sports equipment be a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were postulated for the study;

1. Sports instructor will not be a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis.
2. Availability of facility will not be a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis.
3. Sports equipment will not be a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis.

Methodology

The research design that was adopted for this study is a descriptive research design of the survey type. The population for this study comprised the special students in schools and rehabilitation center for the special needs in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state. Using multi-stage sampling technique, a sample of three hundred and forty-six (346) respondents were randomly selected for the study from seven schools/center.

The instrument that was used for this study is a researcher's developed questionnaire titled "Special Needs Students Sports Involvement Determinants Questionnaire (SNSSDQ)". The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of Human Kinetics, University of Ilorin, their suggestions were used to form new draft of the questionnaire designed on 4-point Likert scale type format. Adopting a test-retest method of reliability test, a pilot study was conducted in Ogbomosho centre for the specially challenged students two times at the interval of two weeks. PMMC was used to analysis the data which generated a coefficient of 0.78. This shows that the instrument is deemed fit for the study.

The research instrument was administered to the respondents with the help of research assistants and prompt retrieval of the completed questionnaire forms was ensured. The data collected for this study was collected, sorted, coded and subjected to appropriate statistical analysis. Section A which entails the demographic data of respondents was analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage, while inferential statistics of Chi-square (χ^2) was used to test hypotheses set for the study at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

H₀₁: Sport instructor will not be a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis.

Table 1: Chi-square Analysis showing sport instructor and sports involvement of students with special needs

Item	N	df	Calculated χ^2 value	Critical/Table χ^2 value	Remark
Sports instructor and sports involvement of students with special needs	346	12	210.01	21.03	Ho Rejected

@0.05 level of significance

The table 1 showed the calculated χ^2 value of 210.01 which is greater than the table χ^2 value of 21.03 at the degree of freedom of 12 and at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the calculated χ^2 value is greater than the critical χ^2 value, therefore, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected, meaning that sport instructor is a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis.

H₀₂: Availability of facility will not be a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis.

Table 2: Chi-square Analysis showing availability of facility and sports involvement of students with special needs

Item	N	df	Calculated χ^2 value	Critical/Table χ^2 value	Remark
Availability of facility and sports involvement of students with special needs	346	12	471.04	21.03	Ho Rejected

@0.05 level of significance

The table 2 showed the calculated χ^2 value of 471.04 which is greater than the table χ^2 value of 21.03 at the degree of freedom of 12 and at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the calculated χ^2 value is greater than the critical χ^2 value, therefore, the null hypothesis was not accepted, meaning that availability of facility is a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis.

H₀₃: Sports equipment will not be a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis.

Table 3: Chi-square Analysis showing sport equipment and sports involvement of students with special needs

Item	N	df	Calculated χ^2 value	Critical/Table χ^2 value	Remark
Sport equipment and sports involvement of students with special needs	346	12	471.04	21.03	Ho Rejected

@0.05 level of significance

The table showed the calculated χ^2 value of 323.61 which is greater than the table χ^2 value of 21.03 at the degree of freedom of 12 and at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the calculated χ^2 value is greater than the critical χ^2 value, therefore, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected, meaning that sport equipment is a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis

Discussion of Findings

The study reveals that sport instructor is a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis. This findings is in line with Goldberg (1995) reported that sport instructor or persons who are involved in organised sport and physical activity can be involved as players or in non-playing roles. Non-playing roles include coach, instructor or teacher; referee or umpire; committee member or administrator; scorer or timekeeper; medical support; or other non-playing involvement. Sport is a term that encompasses a broad spectrum of experiences that include the social, recreational, and competitive mostly handled and organized by sport. Physical activity is widely accepted as a necessary component for individual health. Over recent years, there has been increased emphasis on the role of sport and physical activity in enhancing health and quality of life of individuals with impairment and chronic illness.

This study reveals that availability of facility is a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis. This findings is in line with Nwankwo (2008) opined that spotters are those who support and guard others during performance of physical activities and also ensure that sport facilities are made available. The special population needs spotters more than other of persons during physical activities. The report of Baba, et al (2013) agreed with the findings that availability of sports facilities has significant impact on professional performance in sport competition. The essence is to watch and support the physically challenged students during performance to avoid any form of accident that may occur as a result of their involvement especially in complex physical activities while using the available sport facilities. Availability of sport facilities is a factor of more significant determinants for sport participation than characteristics of the children themselves.

The study further revealed that sport equipment is a significant determinant of sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis. This findings corroborated with Nwankwo (2008) who suggested that equipment for the physically challenged should represent the present skill level of the student, they should vary in size, shape, colour, weight, etc. depending on the nature of the challenge. The environment of the practice area should be restricted when movement capabilities are limited. These should be designated area for equipment. It is also advisable to keep the equipment away from the students when they are not in use to avoid distraction. Ibraheem and Jimoh (2006) supported the findings and suggested that there should be mandatory provision of sporting equipment for the special needs students which will be in conformity with their condition. The teacher should ensure that the equipment for every sport is in useable condition. Those that need further modification should be modified before use. The students should be made to be conscious of the risk involved in being reckless with equipment (Nwankwo, 2008).

Conclusion

Conclusively, the study discovered that sport instructors personality determines sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis; availability of facilities contributes to sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis; and sport equipment affects sports involvement among students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Sport instructors should always ensure they give their best and are of the friendly individual so as to encourage the special students to regularly get involved in sporting events that will improve their physical condition.
2. Modern sports facilities should be made available by the school authority state and the federal government to support and encouraged the special students towards sports involvement.
3. Sport equipment must be readily made available in the school by school authorities for the special students so as to enable participate in their favorite sports.

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