

INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL SPORTS PROGRAMME ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED CHARACTER TRAITS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NORTH CENTRAL ZONE OF NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The study assessed the influence of school sports programme on the development of selected character traits among secondary school students in North Central Zone of Nigeria. The population consisted of 2,808 secondary school students in North Central Zone of Nigeria. The sample size used was 333 respondents. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire, developed by the researcher and was validated by experts in the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. Frequency and percentages were used to analyse the demographic characteristics of the respondents, mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the research questions while Chi-Square was used to analyse the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. It revealed that School sports programme significantly influenced the development of sportsmanship and honesty among secondary school students in North-Central Zone of Nigeria ($\chi^2=220.11$, $p = 0.000$ and ($\chi^2=164.89$, $p = 0.000$). The study concluded that School sports programme has great influence on the development of sportsmanship and honesty among secondary school students. The study recommends that School administrators should prioritize the development of school sports programmes to foster sportsmanship among secondary school students.

Keywords: Character Traits, Influence, Development, School Sports Programme

Introduction

Character development through participation in school sports programme has been difficult to understand. One primary reason is that stakeholders such as coaches, media, parents, and administrators surrounding college varsity sports are not consistently defining character (Pelaez, 2016). Character development has been linked to the coach's influence (Pelaez, 2016). Research suggests that a coach can contribute to the values adopted by athletes. In a qualitative study by Vella (2017) concluded that some coaches/teachers do view themselves as responsible for athletes' character development. Moreover, in a study by Pelaez (2016) there was further evidence of the importance of the coach/teachers as a moral influence on their players. Pelaez (2016) findings revealed that moral development can occur through sports, if purposefully addressed by the coach/teachers. Pelaez (2016) findings also revealed that a coach is an agent of moral influence for athletes through the coach/teacher athlete relationship. Even with these studies, there are lots of room to investigate how specific moral character traits are negatively or positively reinforced by coaches.

Vella (2017) sees character as the combination of qualities or traits that distinguishes an individual or group, moral force and integrity. Lickona (2016) reveals several traits as self-control, integrity, humility, honesty, courtesy, tolerance, self-confidence, loyalty and patriotism. Brown (2015) enumerated the following character traits; fairness, self-respect, responsibility, empathy, emotional intelligence, hope, service and self-awareness.

School athletic programmes help students learn sportsmanship and unselfish team behavior, as well as helping build character. However, certain "evidence suggests that competitive activities not only fail to develop character, but also tend to bring out negative character traits and poor behaviors in participants, including cheating, name-calling, and violence" (Hager, 2015). Moreover, Doty (2016) was of the view that sport experiences can build character, but only if the environment is structured with a stated planned goal to develop character. According to Bolter (2018), coaches and teachers can make an impact on students and athletes' character through modeling, social approval, and motivational climate. Chu (2018) suggests that the athletes' attitudes and behaviors are affected by their perceptions of which actions a coach approves or disapproves. These actions by the coach becomes what is known as the motivational climate.

Ladani (2018) reported that, sport programme have become an important aspect of the Nigerian culture to the level that the popularity and interest in them have affected the political, social, economic and educational fabrics of the nation. Peterson (2014) suggest that youth's potentials needs only to be fostered appropriately for optimal character traits development and further suggested that culture around the world are experiencing the institutionalization of youths sport programmes which is a leading programme to become increasingly accessible to many families. Hellison (2017) emphasize the vital role which school sport programmes can play in facilitating the development of character traits such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, good morals, spirit of sportsmanship, cooperation, respect, fair play, compassion, foster peace, social success, positive peer group relationship and leadership skills. In view of the above, this study examined the influence of school sport programme on the development of selected character traits among secondary school students in North Central Zone of Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

School sport is a vital component of the total school programme which plays a vital role in the total development of the student physically, mentally, morally, socially, and emotionally. Giulianotti (2016) stated that sport being an integral component of physical education has much to contribute towards the achievement of the objectives of general education. However this can only be achieved through a well-planned school sport programme. When the programme is adequately planned and effectively implemented then certain benefits could accrue. A well planned school sport programme plays a vital role in the inculcation of moral and societal values, physiological and social adjustment and development of character traits such as: respect, civility, moral, sportsmanship, good followership, good leadership, loyalty, honesty, etc.

Unfortunately, the researcher has observed over the years with dismay that despite the vital contribution of physical education and sports to human development, the general public does not seems to appreciate its role in the school programme. Sports programmes in school as observed by the researcher are wrongly perceived by both the parents and the school leadership, coaches, teachers and media as mere programme for play or extracurricular activities. This wrongful perception is not only exhibited by parents and school administration, but it cut across the society in general. This wrongful perception as observed by the researcher is probably responsible for lack of proper planning and implementation of the school sportsprogramme in

secondary schools in North Central Zone of Nigeria. Furthermore the researcher observed that the lack of proper planning and proper implementation of the school sport programme might be attributed to lack of recognition which it deserves.

The researcher also observed that the unfortunate situation in secondary school sports programmes are perceived by many stakeholders such as parents, media, coaches, and administrators to have become riddled with a decline in morality, ethical behavior, integrity, and image over character development. Additionally, the researcher noted that there is lack of principles or guidelines that could serve as model which coaches/teachers can use to plan for character education through sports programme. In view of the above, the researcher is prompted to carry out this research work on the influence of school sport programme on the development of selected character traits among secondary school students in North Central Zone of Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study answered the following research questions:

1. Will school sports programme influence the development of sportsmanship among secondary school students in North Central Zone of Nigeria?
2. Will school sports programme influence the development of honesty among secondary school students in North Central Zone of Nigeria?

Hypotheses

1. School sports programme will not significantly influence the development of sportsmanship among secondary school students in North-Central Zone of Nigeria.
2. School sports programme will not significantly influence the development of honesty among secondary school students in North-Central Zone of Nigeria.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The population of this study comprised of all student's athletes totaling two thousand, eight hundred and eight (2,808). The sample size for this study was three hundred and thirty-three (333) students' athletes. The sample of the study was guided by research Advisors, (2006) which opined that for a population of two thousand eight hundred and eight (2,808), three hundred and thirty-three (333) is an adequate sample. Based on the confidence level of 95% with a marginal error of 0.05. The researcher used multistage sampling procedure to select the sample for the study. The instrument for data collection in this study was the researcher's self-developed questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared on a five (5) point Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA) 5 points, Agreed (A) 4 points, Undecided(U) 3 Points, Disagreed (D) 2 points and Strongly Disagreed (SD) 1 point. For the analysis of the research questions, the criterion or acceptance mean of 3.0 was used in taking decisions. In order to establish the face and content validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to vetting by experts in the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Prior to the collection of data, an introductory letter was obtained from the Head of Department, Human Kinetics and Health Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria which was taken to the authorities of the sampled Secondary Schools in North Central Zone, Nigeria to seek permission to conduct the study. After permission was granted, the researcher employed the services of four (4) research assistants who helped in administering and retrieving the questionnaire within two weeks. The duly completed and returned questionnaire were analyzed. The data collected was analyzed with the use of SPSS package version 23. The following tools were used; descriptive statistics

of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Chi-Square was used to test all the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Out of the total of three hundred and thirty-three (333) administered questionnaire, three hundred and thirteen (313) which represents 94.0% were successfully completed with the required information and were used for the study. The data collected were analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS)

Research Question one: Will school sports programme influence the development of sportsmanship among secondary school students in North Central Zone of Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Scores of Responses on the Influence of School Sports Programme in Development of Sportsmanship among Secondary School Students

S/N	Influence of School Sports Programme on Sportsmanship	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Built positive life skills both in and out of sports	4.48	0.793
2	Treat others with respect	4.41	0.779
3	Be fair and ethical to both teammates and the opponents	4.41	0.763
4	Avoid disrespecting others during game time	4.17	1.072
5	Be supportive of my team even when they are losing	4.29	0.868
6	Avoid insulting my teammates over their game play.	4.29	1.022
7	Prevented me from damaging sporting equipment as a result of losing	4.18	0.783
8	To always tell the truth	4.32	0.985
Aggregate mean		4.32	0.880

(Benchmark = 3.0)

Table 1 above reveals that the respondents were generally of the opinion that the school sports programme had major influence on the development of sportsmanship among Secondary School students as indicated with their mean scores. The respondents agreed that the school sports programme has helped them to build good habits towards teammates, spectators, opponents among others and treat people with respect. The respondents were of the view that the school sports programme influenced students to be fair and ethical to both teammates and their opponents and help them to avoid disrespecting others during games' activities. However, the aggregate mean score of 4.32 was obtained which is greater than the decision mean of 3.0. This implies that most of the respondents agreed that the school sports programme had major influence on the development of sportsmanship among the selected Secondary School students in the zone.

Research Question two: Will School Sports Programme influence the development of honesty among Secondary School Students in North Central Zone of Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean scores of response on the influence of School Sports Programme in the development of honesty among the Secondary School Students

S/N	Influence of School Sports Programme on Honesty	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Be real with myself and about who I am	4.17	0.985
2	Promote openness	4.36	0.792

3	Respect the rules and the spirit of any game	4.14	0.866
	Create a sense of fairness that allows me to compete to the best of	4.34	0.756
4	my ability.		
5	Show respect for opponents and the officials in the game I play	4.24	0.782
	Encourage me positively to interact with players inside and outside	4.27	1.024
6	the games		
7	Be responsible and persevere	4.14	1.086
8	Be a good and responsible leader	4.33	0.959
Aggregate mean		4.25	0.910

(Benchmark = 3.0)

The mean scores in table 2 above reveal that the respondents agreed that the School Sports programme has major influence on the development of honesty among Secondary School students. The respondents agreed that the influence of the School Sports programme has made the students to be real with themselves and about who they were and promote openness in their dealings. The respondents agreed that the influence of the School Sports programme has help students to respect the rules and the spirit of any game and create a sense of fairness that allows them to compete to the best of their abilities. The aggregate mean score (4.25) on the table is higher than the benchmark (3.0) which is an indication that the respondents were of the agreement that the School Sports programme has major influence on the development of honesty among Secondary School Students in the zone.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: School Sports Programme will not significantly influence the development of Sportsmanship among Secondary School Students in North-Central Zone of Nigeria.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis on the influence of School Sports Programme on the development of Sportsmanship among the Secondary School Students

Variable	N	χ^2 Cal	χ^2 Crit	Df	P value	Decision
influence of School Sports programme on development of sportsmanship among the Secondary School students	313	220.11	41.3	28	0.000	Rejected

X² Cal (220.11) > X² Crit (41.3), P < 0.05

Results on table 3 above shows that School sports programme has significant influence on the development of sportsmanship among secondary school students in North-Central Zone of Nigeria. Reasons being that the P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 alpha level of significance while the chi square (χ^2) Cal. value of 220.11 is greater than the chi square critical value of 41.3 (**X² Cal (220.11) > X² Crit (41.3), P < 0.05**) at df 28. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that “School sports programme will not significantly influence the development of sportsmanship among secondary school students in North-Central Zone of Nigeria is hereby rejected. The result revealed that School Sports programme significantly influence the development of sportsmanship among the Secondary School students in North Central Zone.

H₀₂: School Sports programme will not significantly influence the development of honesty among Secondary School students in North-Central Zone of Nigeria.

Table 4: Chi-Square on Influence of School Sports Programme on the Development of Honesty among the Secondary School Students

Variable	N	χ^2 Cal	χ^2 Crit	Df	P value	Decision
Influence of School Sports programme on development of honesty among the Secondary School students	313	164.89	41.3	28	0.000	Rejected

X^2 Cal (164.89) > X^2 Crit (41.3), P < 0.05

Results on table 4 above shows that School sports programme has significant influence on the development of honesty among secondary school students in North-Central Zone of Nigeria. Reasons being that the P-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 alpha level of significance while the chi square (χ^2) Cal. value of 164.89 is greater than the chi square critical value of 41.3 (X^2 Cal (164.89) > X^2 Crit (41.3)) at df 28. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that School sports programme will not significantly influence the development of honesty among secondary school students in North-Central Zone of Nigeria is hereby rejected. The result revealed that School Sports programme significantly influence the development of honesty among the Secondary School students in North Central Zone.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one revealed that School sports programme significantly influenced the development of sportsmanship among secondary school students in North-Central Zone of Nigeria. The findings agreed with that of Ajayi & Ogunleye (2022) who found out that students who engaged in sports activities exhibited greater sportsmanship, learning values such as teamwork, respect, and fair play, which are essential for ethical competition. The findings further support that of Oluwafemi (2021) who assessed that participation in school sports influences the behavior of students. The researcher was of the opinion that involvement in sports cultivates a spirit of sportsmanship, leading students to demonstrate better conduct both on and off the field, as they internalize the principles of fair play. Also the study by Ishola & Balogun (2023) observed the development of student’s involvement in school sports over several years, in which they reported that those who participated in sports consistently showed higher levels of sportsmanship, thereby attributing this to the structured environment that sports provide for learning ethical behavior.

Hypothesis two revealed that the respondents involved in the study were of the agreement that School sports programme has significantly influenced the development of honesty among Secondary School Students in North-Central Zone of Nigeria. The reasons being that the P-value of 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance while the chi square (χ^2) Cal. value of 164.89 is greater than the chi square critical value of 41.3. The result revealed that School Sports programme has significantly influenced the development of honesty among the Secondary School Students in North Central Zone of Nigeria. This finding made by Ajayi & Ogunleye (2022), examined the role of extracurricular activities in fostering ethical behavior among secondary school students in the South-West region. They found out that participation in school sports encouraged students to adopt honest practices, as they learned the importance of integrity in teamwork and competition. The findings further support that of Ishola & Balogun (2021) which focused on the impact of school sports participation on character development in Secondary Schools. The researchers noted that students involved in sports exhibited higher levels of honesty and accountability, attributing this to the values instilled through sportsmanship. Also a study conducted by Adebayo (2020) investigated the effects of school sports on moral development, highlighted that engaging in sports provided students with opportunities to practice honesty, especially in competitive settings where fair play is emphasized. The findings of the current study, complemented by supporting evidence from

these studies, underscore the essential role of school sports programs in cultivating honesty among secondary school students. As educational policymakers and stakeholders in Nigeria focus on character development alongside academic achievement, the integration of well-structured sports initiatives can effectively promote integrity and ethical behavior among youth.

Conclusion

School sports programmes have significantly influenced the development of sportsmanship and honesty in North-Central Zone of Nigeria.

Recommendations

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

1. School administrators and policymakers should prioritize the development and expansion of comprehensive school sports programmes to foster sportsmanship among secondary school students
2. Teachers and coaches should incorporate activities and training modules that specifically target the development of honesty and integrity within the school sports programmes

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