

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Influencing Factors Hindering Female Sports Participation in Senior Secondary Schools in Sokoto, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study examined the factors hindering female participation in sporting activities in Nigerian senior secondary schools. A descriptive research design type of survey was employed for the study, and a self-structured questionnaire was used to collect information from a sample of 539 female secondary school students. Primary data collected were used to analyze descriptive statistics. Relative Importance Analysis was used to achieve the Relative Importance Index and to identify the factors that hinder female participation in sports in Sokoto State, Nigeria. From the findings, it was revealed that the female student cannot combine academic work with sports, and are mostly sidelined in sports activities. Also, the school policy does not give opportunities for sports participation by making it compulsory, but the female student does crave sports participation which is not supported by their parent. Finally, funds are not released for the development of sports facilities in secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria. From the holistic point of view, secondary senior school policy on sport is the major factor hindering female participation in sports in Sokoto State, Nigeria. From the findings, recommendations were drawn that academic curriculum should be redesigned and flexible such that it will give room for a female student to manage academic stress and be able to participate in sporting activities; private and public stakeholders should participate in funding sporting activities in the Nigerian senior secondary schools; and the secondary school policy programs should be formulated in such a way that female will be inclusive in sport participation.

**Keywords:** Hindering factors, female, sports participation, secondary schools, Nigeria.

## 1. Introduction

Sport is a way of life, and a means to achieving and maintaining healthy living. The World Health Organization (WHO) reached an agreement that health is a condition of social, mental and physical wellbeing of an individual (Li *et al.*, 2021). Granger *et al.* (2017); Pawlowski, Downward and Rasciute (2011); and Bull *et al.* (2020) noted that sports participation is an effective way of improving mental wellbeing. This condition signifies that the healthy

development of the human body is germane for the realization of healthy society. Trost *et al.* (2002) is of the view that regular sports participation enhances healthy living which is crucial for developing nations like Nigeria.

According to Gbadamosi (2000), sport is one of the unifying instruments that unite human beings regardless of gender, race, class, and other differences. In his study, it was further stressed that sport emerged as a global institution which entails socio-cultural

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vibes that unites the world. The tourism industry and the aviation industry have significantly grown because of sporting related activities. As mobility is essential for spatial interaction, economic advantages, and social integration (Adeniran and Ben, 2018), so also is sports connected to healthy living of human which is the life-wire of economic development.

In the study of Mohammed (1998), it was revealed that sport can be used to achieve diplomatic treaties and peace talk in areas where that is regarded as war-zone. It was used to facilitate peace talks in Jews and the Arabs nations, in England and Argentina, in Ghana and Togo and others. Onifade (2001) identified that sport has gradually become an inexorable part of modern society. Its significance is being felt in all parts of national life and has also grown to be a symbol of national peace and unity which governments employ to legitimize themselves.

It is important to note that there cannot be sporting activities without active participation whether at the local, national, and international levels. Hence, all these advantages are connected to sport participation. In the world, particularly the developed countries, institutional sports has for all time been the source for the choice of athletes that will be adopted for international competitions. Apart from this, the institutional sport has been employed by students to keep fit, socialize, and prolong life. Participation in sports makes athletes fit for sporting activities that they engage in.

The twentieth-century phenomenon is evidenced by the active women's participation in sport. In the first Olympic Games that occur in the 776 B.C, women were not allowed to actively participate and they were not allowed to participate as spectators (Bucher, 1979). Even though no law barred women from participating in sports activities since 776 B.C., women first appeared in the Olympics in 1900. Since 1900 till the recent time, the participation of females in sporting activities seems low. The reason for this low participation may be as a result of societal beliefs (Oworu, 2003) which prevent women from undertaking activities that are perceived to be done by men only. This submission was corroborated in the studies of Ojeme, (2007) and Okonkwo (2011) where they perceived that the activities of women are shaped by their cultural prejudices.

Most Nigerians does not take cognizance of sports participation despite the health advantages that are embedded in it. In the studies of Li and Li (2018); Ng

*et al.* (2014); and Liu, Chung and Chen (2014), it was reported that women encounter more limitations than men with respect to knowledge, psychology, interest and partners. Both males and females participate in sports to keep fit and maintain a healthy living devoid of disease or any infirmity. Many schools worldwide provide sporting facilities for both male and female students to keep them relaxed after rigorous academic work. At times female secondary school students participate in sports to be physically fit. Female participation in sports has been a contentious issue in the world and Nigeria in particular. Their involvement in sports has revolved in which those that participate in sports have different motivations for participation. In the past, the motivations for participation in sports were for the singular purpose of survival, but in recent times, there are intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for participating in sports. Among the reasons were self-satisfaction, financial, psychological, social, and personal fulfilments.

In the study of Jones, Ainsworth and Croft (1998) and Vuori (1995), frequent physical activities are pertinent behavior to promoting health, regulating neuromuscular disorders, preventing back, neck and shoulder pains, and reducing the risk of developing hypertension, heart diseases, diabetes, obesity, and cancers. Females that participate in sport-related activities generally perform better are healthier, and more confident than those who do not participate (Orunaboka and Nathan, 2007). Panahi and Tremblay (2018); Pratt (2021); Yu and Schwingel (2019); Wang *et al.*(2017); and Sanderson *et al.* (2003) revealed that educational background, domestic roles, cultural background, and economic background influences female's participation in sports. Trolan (2013) found that the cultural background of different countries may impact female's participation in sports.

Kara and Demirci (2010); Laar, Shi and Ashraf (2019); and Laar *et al.* (2020) highlighted that family issue, overcrowding, lack of knowledge, financial issue, long-distance, and lack of time are the most significant factors hindering females' participation in sports. Senne (2016); Rosenfeld (2017); and Downward and Rasciute (2015) found that motivational factors, lifestyle, socioeconomic, availability of sports facilities, and support from government support were the major factors influencing females participation in sports. This implies that these factors may hinder females from participating in sports. In Malaysia, Hanlon *et al.* (2019) found that lack of professional knowledge in sports influences female participation

in sports. In the United States and Southern Asia, Dave *et al.* (2015) found that lack of awareness about sport advantages, family constraints, and socio-cultural norms are major factors that influence female participation in sports.

Babatunde, (2001) revealed that the feminine image of women may seem to militate against females' participation in physical activities. Okonkwor, (2007) found that women are not allowed to expose certain parts of their body in some regions in Nigeria, and this can make it difficult for such women to wear a bikini for swimming, pants for athletics, shorts, and vests for other sporting activities. Given all these, it can be inferred that culture, age, gender, ordinal position, parents are socio-cultural factors that can influence female participation in sports.

Despite the advantages of sports to female secondary school students, many factors seem to be hindering their participation. These factors include parental influence, non-availability of standard sporting facilities and equipment, academic stress, and secondary school policy on sports. Many parents usually scowl at their children's participation in sports while some parents do give them push. In recent times, with the level of prosperity of many sports participants, the majority of parents usually encourage their children to participate in sport-related activities.

In Nigeria, many secondary schools lack adequate standard facilities and equipment that are usually needed for sports participation. The study of Oyeniyi (2002) supports that sports facilities and equipment are the engines of sport which are indispensable for sports competition and recreation. Nevertheless, studies have not shown whether these could be found in senior secondary schools in Sokoto State. Thus, this study, therefore, examined the factors hindering female participation in sporting activities in Nigerian senior secondary schools in Sokoto State using the following variables; such as parental influence, the inadequacy of standard sports facilities and equipment, the inability of students to manage academic stress in the senior secondary school, and secondary senior secondary school policy on sport.

## 2. Methodology

A descriptive research design type of survey was employed for the study, and a self-structured questionnaire was used to collect information from the population of senior secondary school female students in Sokoto State, Nigeria. According to Zikmund (2003), the various error allowances were

determined and the suitable one was chosen based on the discretion of the researcher. The chosen error allowance of 0.04 was employed to establish the sample size as shown in the equation below:

The formulae for achieving sample size:  $n = \frac{Z^2}{4E^2}$

where; n = Sample size; Z = Z score for the confidence interval (2.05); E = Error allowance (0.04). When inserted into the formula, Sample Size was 656.6406, and approximately 657. It is therefore crucial that the questionnaire distribution targeted six hundred and fifty-seven respondents who are female senior secondary school students in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

As regards the accepted sample size for a meaningful data analysis, Adeniran, Stephens and Akinsehinwa (2020) recommended that sample size should be at least 200. Their submission corroborated the perspective of earlier scholars such as Comrey and Lee (1992); Gorsuch (1983); Cattell (1978); and Guilford (1954). They further noted that the sample size of a hundred is poor; a sample size of two hundred is fair; a sample size of three hundred is good; a sample size of five hundred is very good, and a sample size of one thousand or more is excellent. Adeniran (2018) however noted that all these principles are suitable for parametric techniques. But in the situation whereby a non-parametric technique was adopted, the sample size should not be more than 30 for it to behave inferentially. Primary data were collected systematically and purposively and were used to analyze descriptive statistics. Relative Importance Analysis was employed for the analysis. Data collection was done through the help of research assistants.

According to Johnson and LeBreton (2004), relative importance index is a type of importance analysis that aids in finding the contribution of a particular variable that enhances the prediction of a criterion variable both by itself and in combination with other predictors variables. Relative Importance Analysis can be calculated with the formula below  $RIA = \frac{\sum W}{A+N}$

where, W is the weight given to each statement by the respondents and ranges from 1 to 4; A is the Higher response integer (4), and N is the total number of respondents.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Descriptive Analysis and Response Rate

The targeted female participants in the survey were approved to voluntarily take part in the exercise. Also, the aim of the study was made understandable

to them. Significant effort was ensured to realize confidentiality and anonymity of information elicited from the respondents which result is solely for this study. Research assistants were enlightened regarding the etiquette in data collection to comply with research ethics during the process of data collection.

From six hundred and fifty-seven copies of questionnaires that were administered to female secondary school students in Sokoto State, five hundred and thirty-nine copies of valid questionnaires were returned and fit for data analysis. This analysis was shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** A response rate of respondents

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Administered	657	
Returned	539	82
Not Returned	118	18

Field Survey (2022)

According to Fadare and Adeniran (2018), a 50 percent response rate is adequate for data analysis and reporting, a 60 percent response rate is good for data analysis and reporting, and 70 percent or more response rate is excellent for data analysis and reporting. On this note, an 82 percent response rate is excellent for data analysis and reporting.

Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5 depicts the respondents' perception of the factors hindering female participation in sporting activities in Nigerian senior secondary schools in Sokoto State. Respondents' perception on parental influence was presented in Table 2, respondents' perception on the

**Table 2.** Parental influence on female participation in sports

Parental Influence	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
My parent perceived sport as a waste of time	48.7	20.4	18.2	12.7
My parent bought sports equipment	42.5	6.4	8.3	42.8
My parents usually encourage me to participate in sports	20.3	15.2	6.2	58.3
My craving for sports is the most priority, not my parent.	69.2	15.8	10.8	4.2

Field Survey (2022)

**Table 3.** Standard of sports facilities and equipment on female participation in sports

Standard sports facility and equipment	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Poor facilities discourage female participation in sports	53.4	31.7	7.3	7.6
Sports equipment is not available for female participation	60.1	19.9	11.4	8.6
Sports equipment are meant for males participants only	40.7	27.8	23.6	7.9

Field Survey (2022)

inadequacy of standard sports facilities and equipment was presented in Table 3, respondents' perception on the inability of students to manage academic stress in the senior secondary school was presented in Table 4, and respondents' perception on secondary senior secondary school policy on sport was presented in Table 5 based on the four-point scales of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

By merging the respondents' responses under Strongly Agree for all sub-variables in Table 3, 108.7 percent of respondents acknowledged that parental influence is a factor hindering female participation in senior secondary school sports in Sokoto State.

By merging the respondents' responses under Strongly Agree for all sub-variables, 154.2 percent of respondents acknowledged that poor standard of sport facility and equipment in the school is a factor hindering female participation in senior secondary school sports in Sokoto State.

By merging the respondents' responses under Strongly Agree for all sub-variables, 239.3 percent of respondents acknowledged that Management of academic stress in the school is a factor hindering female participation in senior secondary school sports in Sokoto State.

By merging the respondents' responses under Strongly Agree for all sub-variables, 263.8 percent of respondents acknowledged that Secondary senior school policy on female participation in sports is a factor hindering female participation in senior secondary school sports in Sokoto State.

**Table 4.** Management of academic stress on female participation in sports

Management of academic stress		SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
I am engaged with lectures throughout the day		47.8	30.2	11.4	10.6
Class-work and assignment take most of my time		58.9	18.5	9.7	12.9
Female teachers dislike sports participation by female students		60.2	21.6	16.5	1.7
I cannot combine academic work with sports		72.4	20.4	5.1	2.1

Field Survey (2022)

**Table 5.** Secondary senior school policy on female participation in sports

Secondary senior school policy on sport		SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Females are sidelined in sport		73.6	19.6	2.2	4.6
There is no female sport competition		62.5	16.6	6.4	14.5
Funds are not released for the development of sport facilities		56.3	32.2	10.1	1.4
The school does not allow sports participation by making it compulsory		71.4	21.2	4.5	2.9

Field Survey (2020)

### 3.2 Factors Hindering Female Participation In Sports

On a four-point scale, Relative Importance Analysis was used to achieve the Relative Importance Index and to identify the sub-variables that hinder female participation in sports in Sokoto State, Nigeria. From the analysis, as shown in Table 6, it was revealed that the female student cannot combine academic work with sports, and is mostly sidelined in sports activities.

Also, the school policy does not give opportunities for sports participation by making it compulsory, but the female student does crave sports participation which is not supported by their parent. Finally, funds are not released for the development of sports facilities in secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria. From the holistic point of view, secondary senior school policy on sport is the major factor hindering female participation in sports in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

**Table 6.** Relative importance analysis of factors hindering female participation in sports

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	ΣW	RIA	RII
<b>Parental Influence</b>							
My parent perceived sport as a waste of time	262	111	98	68	1645	0.763	12
My parent bought sports equipment	229	34	45	231	1339	0.621	14
My parents usually encourage me to participate in sports	109	83	33	314	1065	0.494	15
My craving for sports is the most priority, not my parent.	373	85	58	23	1886	0.875	4
<b>Standard sports facility and equipment</b>							
Poor facilities discourage female participation in sports	288	171	39	41	1784	0.827	8
Sports equipment are not available for female participation	324	108	61	46	1788	0.829	7
Sports equipment are meant for males participants only	219	150	127	43	1623	0.753	13
<b>Management of academic stress</b>							
I am engaged with lectures throughout the day	258	163	61	57	1700	0.788	11
Class-work and assignment take most of my time	317	100	52	70	1742	0.808	10
Female teachers dislike sports participation by female students	324	117	89	9	1834	0.851	6
I cannot combine academic work with sports	390	111	27	11	1958	0.908	1
<b>Secondary senior school policy on sport</b>							
Females are sidelined in sport	397	105	12	25	1952	0.905	2
There is no female sport competition	337	89	35	78	1763	0.818	9
Funds are not released for the development of sport facilities	303	174	54	8	1850	0.858	5
The school does not allow sports participation by making it compulsory	385	114	24	16	1946	0.903	3

Authors' Computation (2020)

This finding corroborates with the findings of Droomers, Schrijvers and Mackenbach (2001), and Orsini *et al.* (2007), which revealed that the higher the education level, the more positive the attitude toward sport participation. This implies that in the environment where education is not properly embraced for female, there will be less participation in sport. The findings also agrees with Xiong (2011), Wang and Zhai (2013), which revealed that married women spend less time on sports, because they tend to be family-oriented and devote less time to leisure. This implies that if a female grew up in a society where young females are quickly given for marriage, such will not be able to embrace sport participation. It is also reflected in the findings of Sanderson *et al.* (2003), which found that parents with higher level of income easily influenced their children (both males and females) to participate in sports. This implies that if a parent is a low income earner, the children will be engaged in other small petty business to argument the family; therefore, such children will not be able to participate in sport.

This finding slightly agrees with the revelations of Yuan *et al.* (2021), which found that females with overweight and obesity tendencies had less time for sports participation. This implies that the weight of female is a significant factor that can be used to determine whether female will participate in sports or not. This is corroborated in the studies of Pitanga *et al.* (2016), and Kaestner, Xu and Title (2010) which found that women with overweight and obesity are not usually willing to participate in sports. Lunde and Gattario (2017), and Tiggemann (2015) revealed that they may be unwilling to participate in sports because they tend to feel vulnerable, embarrassed, and low self-esteem. As a result, they usually avoid sports participation. Joseph *et al.* (2015) further revealed that females with poor physical appearance have higher anxiety which usually leads to fear when participating in sports. The studies of Fang *et al.* (2022) and Prince *et al.* (2016) found that the family population is a factor that determines whether female will participate in sports. It was further stressed that if the number of persons in a family is less than three, females from that family are more likely to participate in sports. But in the situation whereby the numbers of persons are many and more wives, the females will be less likely to participate in sports.

#### 4. Conclusion

The study examined the factors hindering female participation in sporting activities in Nigerian senior

secondary schools. A descriptive research design type of survey was employed for the study, and a self-structured questionnaire was used to collect information from a sample of 539 female secondary school students. Primary data collected were used to analyze descriptive statistics. Relative Importance Analysis was used to achieve Relative Importance Index and to identify the factors that hinder female participation in sports in Sokoto State, Nigeria

From the findings, it was revealed that the female student cannot combine academic work with sports, and are mostly sidelined in sports activities. Also, the school policy does not give opportunities for sports participation by making it compulsory, but the female student does crave sports participation which is not supported by their parent. Finally, funds are not released for the development of sports facilities in secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria. From the holistic point of view, secondary senior school policy on sport is the major factor hindering female participation in sports in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

#### Recommendations

From the findings, the following recommendations were drawn:

- i. The academic curriculum should be redesigned and flexible such that it will give room for a female student to manage academic stress and be able to participate in sporting activities;
- ii. Private and public stakeholders should participate in funding sporting activities in the Nigerian senior secondary schools;
- iii. The secondary school policy programs should be formulated in such a way that females will be inclusive in sport participation.

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