

## Perceived Health Benefits of Sports Participation on Intellectual and Social Well-being of the Undergraduate Students in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

This study is a survey to find out the perceived health benefits of sports participation on the intellectual and social well-being of university undergraduates. The descriptive survey research design was employed for the study while self-structured modified questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample from the target population which comprised the students of Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. The total of two hundred and thirty-one (231) respondents participated in the study forming the sample size for the study. The statistical tools used for the study included the percentage counts, frequency, and standard deviation. It was concluded that sports participation in the university should be encouraged by the stakeholders for the promotion of intellectual and social well-being of the students. And that sports participation should not only be regarded as extracurricula activities but as an integral part of the school curriculum for total development.

Key words: Intellectual well-being, social well-being, sports participation, wellness

### **Introduction**

Dating back to Aristotle, the state of functioning involves the interconnectedness of the mind, body, spirit, and individuals' pursuit for maximum functioning (Archer, Probert, & Gage, 1987). The training of the body and mind was paramount to the existence of man. Asagba (2006) asserts that involvement in physical activities such as sports result to a significant improvement in intellectual performance of university undergraduate students. The need to be physically fit has gained acceptance in many countries of the world because of the fact that physical fitness is fundamental to an individual's well-being and perhaps to the progress and security of a nation (Ogunleye & Odetunde, 2005). Intercollegiate and interscholastic sports competitions have contributed immensely to national development and love for education among

the collegiates. It is evident that regular and active participation in physical activities that are recreational in nature may reduce unhealthy behaviour and habits such as smoking, promiscuity, alcoholism and overeating that are detrimental to the health of university undergraduate students (Akindutire & Adegboyega, 2012). Participation in physical activities also promotes the active functioning of the brain due to increase in supply of glucose to the brain.

University students face many challenges and experience various stresses related to their normal development stage in life (Osborn, 2005). It is therefore important to understand that participation in extracurricular physical activities may influence the mental well-being of young people by reducing stress, keeping fit and feeling better about their appearances (Daley & Leahy, 2003). Intellectual and social well-being are significant integral components of the total personality of a modern day university undergraduate student. Participation in sports activities promotes social well-being through teamwork, fairplay and enthusiasm of winning. The accomplishment of a set goal in training or exercise session increase sense of self-worth and self esteem. The promotion of sports participation on university campus is perpendicular to the social network and mental health of the students (Adegun, Adegboyega, & Peter-Ajayi, 2013)

Wellness is a method of conducting oneself in a manner that allows one to reach their maximum potential as self-defined (Dunn, 1961). According to Myers and Sweeney (2005), wellness could be described as purposeful, enjoyable living or, more specifically, a deliberate lifestyle choice characterized by personal responsibility and optimal enhancement of physical, mental and spiritual health. Wellness is at the midline of a continuum ranging from illness to fitness. Furthermore, Adegboyega and Olanipekun (2010) explain that high level of wellness involves giving good care to physical self, using mind constructively, expressing emotion effectively and being creatively involved with people around oneself. The well-being of an individual depends on the type of selected lifestyle. Similarly, the production capacity of a nation's labour force largely depends on the wellness of the youths since they contribute a large quota to the labour force. The body needs a healthy lifestyle and the mind needs creative activity for optimal living. Wellness provides the perspective for understanding human functioning and how individuals choose a way of life in order to live life more fully (Myers & Sweeney, 2005).

### **Research questions**

1. Are the undergraduate students aware of the health benefits of sports participation on their intellectual well-being?
2. Are the undergraduate students aware of the health benefits of sports participation on their social well-being?

### **Materials and Methods**

#### **Participants**

A total of 231 students of Afe Babalola University participated in the survey in proportion of 78 male (33.8%) and 153 female (66.2%) whose age ranges from 14 and above who voluntarily participated in the study. The setting for this study was the campus of Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. Ado-Ekiti is a semi-urban community in South-West, Nigeria.

**Procedures**

A self-structure modified questionnaire was used to collect information on the perceived health benefits of sports participation among the students of Afe Babalola University, Nigeria.

**Methodology**

The study was to find out the perceived health benefits of sports participation. Descriptive survey method of research was used for the study. The population comprised the students of Afe Babalola University, Nigeria. Simple random sampling techniques were used to select the respondents for the study. A total of two hundred and thirty-one (231) respondents made up of male and female students from various colleges participated in the study. The instrument was validated at 0.82r correlation coefficient. Reliability of the instrument was done through a pilot test of test-re-test method on the sample of neutral population outside the study area. The instrument was administered personally by the researcher. The result was tabulated and coded appropriately using both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

**Analysis**

Descriptive statistics of percent count, frequency count, were used to summarize the data collected. Spearman rank correlation was used to test the level of significance of perceived health benefits of sports participation by the respondents. The significance level was set at 0.05 alpha level.

**Results**

**TABLE 1  
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF SEX**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
male	78	33.8	33.8
female	153	66.2	100.0
Total	231	100.0	

**TABLE 2  
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF AGE**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
14-16	19	8.2	8.2
17-19	158	68.4	76.6
20-22	46	19.9	96.5
23-25	4	1.7	98.3
26 and above	4	1.7	100.0
Total	231	100.0	

**TABLE 3**  
**FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COLLEGE**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Science	54	23.4	23.4
Social and Management Sciences	75	32.5	55.8
Engineering	90	39.0	94.8
Law	12	5.2	100.0
Total	231	100.0	

**TABLE 4**  
**FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF RELIGION**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Christianity	182	78.8	78.8
Islam	30	13.0	91.8
traditional	14	6.1	97.8
others	5	2.2	100.0
Total	231	100.0	

**TABLE 5**  
**FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF LEVELS OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
recreational	113	48.9	48.9
amateur	76	32.9	81.8
professional	42	18.2	100.0
Total	231	100.0	

**TABLE 6**  
**FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF LEVELS OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
soccer	90	39.0	39.0
basketball	48	20.8	59.7
volleyball	19	8.2	68.0
tennis	19	8.2	76.2
table tennis	19	8.2	84.4
athletics	27	11.7	96.1
badminton	6	2.6	98.7
none	3	1.3	100.0
Total	231	100.0	

**TABLE 7**  
**FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF LEVELS OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Bentley	32	13.9	13.9
Blazer	30	13.0	26.8
Phantom	20	8.7	35.5
Legends	23	10.0	45.5
Highlanders	18	7.8	53.2
Titans	16	6.9	60.2
Raiders	8	3.5	63.6
none	84	36.4	100.0
Total	231	100.0	

In the table 1 above, out of the 231 respondents that participated in the study, 78 (33.8) were male while 153 (66.2) were female. The age category of 17-19years totalling 158 students (68.4%) formed the largest age category of the respondents. Most of the students who participated in the study were from the College of Engineering with a total of 90 (39%) respondents. Most of the participations were Christians with 182 (78.8%) students. Most of the respondents engaged in the recreational level of sports participation with 113 (48.9%) students. Most of the respondents preferred football as their choice of sports with 90 (39%) students. Most of the respondents 84 (36.4%) did not belong to any of the existing sports clubs in the Institution.

TABLE 8

ITEMS	SPORTS PARTICIPATION AND INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS	Yes	No	I don't know	Total	X	SD
1	Sports participation improves mental wellness	187 (81%)	14 (6.1%)	30 (13%)	231 (100%)	1.32	0.69
2	Sports participation prepares the body in a more relaxed way for mental assimilation.	178 (77.4%)	24 (10.4%)	29 (12.2%)	231 (100%)	1.35	0.69
3	Sports participation helps to think more constructively	139 (60.2%)	47 (20.3%)	45 (19.5%)	231 (100%)	1.59	0.79
4	Sports participation contributes meaningfully to academic excellence	122 (52.8%)	53 (22.9%)	56 (24.2%)	231 (100%)	1.71	0.83

TABLE 9

ITEMS	SPORTS PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL WELLNESS	Yes	No	I don't know	Total	X	SD
1	Sports participation helps to relate well with other students	142 (61.5%)	35 (15.2%)	54 (23.3%)	231 (100%)	1.62	0.85
2	Sports participation helps to understand how others feel	116 (50.2%)	59 (25.5%)	56 (24.2%)	231 (100%)	1.74	0.83
3	Sports participation helps to develop self-esteem	149 (64.5%)	34 (14.7%)	48 (20.8%)	231 (100%)	1.57	0.83
4	Sports participation helps to develop team work	188 (81.4%)	24 (10.4%)	19 (8.2%)	231 (100%)	1.27	0.62

### Discussion

The aim of this study is to report the perceived health benefit of sports participation on the intellectual and social well-being of students of Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti. Table 1 revealed that a larger percentage of the participants of this study are female students. Most of the respondents are within the age range of 17-19 years. And 48.9% of the respondents choose to participate in sports at recreational level. Sports clubs comprising seven different clubs are designed by the school sports science department to meet diverse interest in sports through intramural competitions. Nevertheless, the largest percentage of the respondents for this study had no club affiliation. According to Wann, Brame, Clarkson, Brooks, and Waddill (2008), adult males prefer doing exercise and fitness in their free time while women choose passive activities in their leisure. Therefore it can be concluded that although university students have high levels of interest in sports and other activities, they will only participate for recreational purposes not for professional career. The study also revealed that due to the nature of the game of football, it

was most preferred to other sports. This result is similar to that of Kroupova (2002) who focused on the relationship between students' interest in sports and their participation in physical activities. The study concluded that the most popular activities are the ones that are not organized but are taken up by students in their leisure time.

Under sports participation and intellectual wellness, 81% of the respondents agreed that sports participation improve mental wellness, while 77.4% also agreed that sports participation helps to prepare the body in a more relaxed way for mental assimilation. Furthermore, 60.2% of the respondents also agreed that sports participation helps one to think more constructively, while 52.8% agreed that sports participation contributes meaningfully to academic excellence. Under sports participation and social wellness, 61.5% of the respondents agreed that sports participation helps in relating well with others, while 50.2% also agreed that sports participation helps in understanding how others feel. Furthermore, 64.5% of the respondents also agreed that sports participation helps in developing self-esteem, while 81.4% agreed that sports participation helps in developing the spirit of teamwork.

This study therefore agreed with Wilson (2009) that participation in structured extracurricular activities promotes not only academic achievement but also personal/social development. Wilson further states that youths who participate in physical activities can learn important skills, such as teamwork or leadership skills, and these skills may help them in other areas of their lives. When furthering their education, those who participated in sporting activities are more likely to make friends easily, adjust to a new environment, and show leadership based on prior experience in extracurricular activities.

### **Conclusion**

This study revealed the awareness level of the undergraduates students on the perceived health benefits of sports participation in relation to intellectual and social well-being. Therefore it can be concluded that sports participation in the university should be encouraged by the stakeholders for the promotion of intellectual and social well-being of the students. The provision of sports infrastructural facilities could be a viable weapon to eliminate juvenile delinquency if the students would prefer to go for sports instead of engaging in destructive social vices.

### **Recommendation**

1. Sports participation should not only be regarded as extracurricula activities but as an integral part of the school curriculum for total development. In as much as exercise participation could avert health related problems caused by sedentary lifestyle, school infrastructural design should create ample space for sports participation.
2. Sports as a tool for the development of intellectual and social well-being of university undergraduates should be the next agenda for every Nigerian university in order to stay afloat in educational development.
3. The rehabilitation of school sports should no longer be seen by the stakeholders as keeping the students busy to avert misdemeanours but as health benefits for building wellness.

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