

## **Influence of Demographic Variables on Students' Choice of Sports Activities in Lagos State**

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**Abstract:** *This study was conducted to investigate the influence of demographic variables on students' choice of sports activities in secondary schools in Lagos state. The variables studied were socio-economic status, gender, religion and cultural belief of the students. The sample comprised two hundred and fifty (N-250) junior and senior secondary school students of selected schools in Lagos State. Data were collected from the participants with a self-structured validated questionnaire. Results were obtained through descriptive statistics of simple percentage and chi-square analysis used to test the stated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that socio-economic status, gender, religion and cultural belief significantly influenced students' choice of sports activities in secondary schools in Lagos state. Based on these findings it was recommended that demographic variables such as socio-economic status of the students, gender, religion and cultural belief should be considered in construction of sports facilities in secondary schools in Lagos state. The findings further suggested that the demographic variable should be the basis for planning sports programmes in the secondary schools.*

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### **I. Introduction**

According to Fasan (2004), one of the most important phenomena which cut across all human endeavours is sports and that the knowledge of sports has contributed immensely to the art and science of discoveries. Students like to engage in the same sports as their age grades, they feel secured, relaxed and well understood in the midst of their peers and they also overcome challenges together. Age affects participation in sports and the interest of individuals is normally aroused by the presence and success of their friends in a particular sport (Hamafyelto & Badejo, 2002), for instance, Mikel Obi, Taye Taiwo, Dele Adeleye, Chinedu Ogbuke Obasi, were members of the Nigerian Under-20 silver medal winning team at the 2005 Holland Junior World Cup and the National Under-23 Dream Team that won Silver medal at the Beijing Olympics Games in 2008, these players have moved together through the age grade competitions and are now playing at the top level for the senior national team, the Super Eagles. These are motivating factors for young men to take part in sporting activities.

Socio-economic factor influences the choice of sports activities by bringing individuals from the same socio-economic class together; those from wealthy background prefer the same sporting activities such as golf, tennis and polo because their parents have the equipment and facilities for such sports or could afford to provide them while individuals from poor backgrounds may not be able to participate in such sports due to lack of financial strength to provide basic facilities and equipment thereby making them participate in sports that the equipment can be improvised easily, for instance, using stones or tires as goalposts in football, making wooden bats to play table-tennis etc. (Asagba, 2005).

However, Ogunsanya (2000), quoting Dada (1990), stated that Quranic injunction in Islam as a religion discourages women's participation in sports. He asserts that the faithful of his religion often refer to the Quran (sura), chapter four (4), and verse Ten to thirty One (10-31) which states that Women should not engage in sports activities that will expose them. Clothing restrictions make it difficult to participate in some sporting activities. Muslim men and women are not allowed to expose the area between the belly button and knees, and Muslim women are required to wear burkas, enveloping outer garments worn for the purpose of cloaking the entire body. Seventh-Day Adventist proclaim Saturday as their Sabbath, and Adventist abstain from secular work, non-essential business and competitive sports from sunset Friday through sunset Saturday. This affects the choice sports activities on such days (Wikipedia, 2010).

Today, sports are truly global with well co-coordinated programmes. It has moved from the cradle of enjoyment, recreation and entertainment to an instrument of international politics, and nationalism. In support of the above, Awosika (1992) highlighted that sports has become a unifying factor in the country and it has become an essential ingredient toward nation building. He went further to say that, sports cut across all barriers, ethnic, religious or racial and has served as a dialogue in developing youth. If you enjoy sports at school you are more likely to play sport when you leave school and outside of school hours (Wikipedia, 2010).

Sporting activities has economical benefit to the athletes, officials, organizations and the government of a nation. In event of any competition, this usually attracts spectators who pay gate fees, which enhance the economic and financial status of the nation or particular sports organization that stages the competition. Awoyinfa (2005), opined that when sports came into existence some thousand years ago, little did the world realized that it will soon develop to become a socio-economic, political, cultural and religious weapon through which many nations around the globe would seek to rule the world, during competitions. Filley (2005), asserts that sports just as we approach the next millennium has so much developed that it has established itself as a factor to reckon with in international affairs right from the primary school to tertiary institution and of course at local, states, national and international levels.

The following research questions were raised and answered in the study:

- i. Will socio-economic status of the students influence students choice of sports activities in Lagos State secondary schools?
- ii. Will gender influence students' choice of sports activities in Lagos State secondary schools?
- iii. Will religious and cultural belief influence students' choice of sports activities in Lagos State secondary schools?

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this study

- i. Socio-economic status of students will not significantly influence choice of sports activities in Lagos State secondary schools.
- ii. Gender will not significantly influence students' choice of sports activities in Lagos state secondary schools.
- iii. Religious and cultural belief will not significantly influence students' choice of sports activities in Lagos State secondary schools.

## II. Methodology

The research method that was adopted for this study is the descriptive research method. This descriptive research method was appropriate since it determines the influence between the variables focused in the study. The sample used for the study consisted of 400 students made up of 50 students from 8 selected Local Government Areas which include Ikeja, Oshodi/Isolo, Alimosho, Surulere, Mainland, Lagos Island, Shomolu and Kosofe and the sample involved students between ages 12 and 18 in JSS I to SSS 3. The research instrument used was a self-structured and validated questionnaire of Four-Point Likert Attitudinal Scale. The instrument was validated by three (3) experts in the field of Human Kinetics and Health Education after which the instruments were administered. Reliability of the instrument was established through a test-retest two weeks intervals using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) which recorded reliability index of 0.83 respectively.

A total of 400 copies of the validated questionnaire were administered with the help of two research assistants who helped in the distribution and collection of the questionnaire from participants. The questionnaire were collected on the spot. The data analysis reflected according to the hypotheses raised for the study using descriptive statistics of percentage and inferential statistics of Chi-square to test significance at a 0.05 level.

## III. Results

The analysis of the study on the influence of demographic variables on students' choice of sports activities in secondary schools in Lagos state.

**Table 1 – Chi-square analysis on the influence of demographic variables on students' choice of sports activities in secondary schools.**

Variables	N	Calculated Chi-Square Value (calc. X <sup>2</sup> value)	Critical Chi-Square Value (crit. X <sup>2</sup> value)	Degree of Freedom (df)	Significant Level (L.S.)	Remarks
Socio-economic status of the students will not significantly influence choice of sports activities in secondary schools.	400	324.74	21.03	12	0.05	"S" Significant
Gender will not significantly influence students' choice of sports activities in secondary schools.		179.5	21.03	12	0.05	"S" Significant
Religion and cultural belief will not significantly influence students' choice of sports activities in secondary schools.		168.94	21.03	12	0.05	"S" Significant

Hypothesis one states that socio-economic status of the students will not significantly influence choice of sports activities in secondary schools. The findings of this study revealed that hypothesis one chi-square value of 324.74 was greater than the critical chi-square value of 21.03 established at a 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that the stated null hypothesis one was significant. This implies that socio-economic status of the students influence choice of sports activities in Lagos State.

Hypothesis two states gender will not significantly influence students' choice of sports activities in secondary schools. Calculated chi-square value exceeded the critical chi-square value, calculated  $X^2$  value = 179.5 > critical  $X^2$  value = 21.03, at  $p > = 0.05$ . Hypothesis two was significant. This implies that gender influenced students' choice of sports activities in secondary schools.

Hypothesis three states that religion and cultural belief will not significantly influence students' choice of sports activities in secondary schools. The result revealed that the calculated chi-square value of 168.94 was greater than the critical chi-square value of 21.03 established at 0.05 alpha level. The null hypothesis three was significant. This implies therefore that religious and cultural belief influenced students' choice of sports activities in secondary schools.

#### **IV. Discussions of Findings**

Hypothesis one revealed that socio-economic status of the students influenced the choice of sports activities in secondary schools. This finding is supported by Asagba (2005) which asserted that "Socio-economic factor influences the choice of sports activities by bringing individuals from the same socio-economic class together; those from wealthy background prefer the same sporting activities such as golf, tennis, and polo because their parents have the equipment and facilities for such sports or could afford to provide them while individuals from poor backgrounds may not be able to participate in such sports due to lack of financial strength to provide basic facilities and equipment thereby making them participate in sports that the equipment can be improvised easily, for instance, using stones or tires as goalposts in football, making wooden bats to play table-tennis".

Hypothesis two revealed that gender of the students influenced the choice of sports activities in secondary schools. This finding is evident in a study carried out by Odedeji (1993) on influence of gender on the choice of recreational activities among individuals between 20 and 35 years, it was reported that 97% of the female were attracted to the same activity which are less rigorous in nature while 99% of the male were found in rigorous activities, it was concluded that gender influences the choice of recreational activity. In a similar study, Odogwu (1998) found out that gender influence the choice of sports among students in boarding school with the girls participating in the same sport likewise the boys.

Hypothesis three revealed religious and cultural belief of the students influenced the choice of sports activities in secondary schools. This finding is registered by Ogunsanya (2000) quoting Dada (1990) that "Quranic injunction in Islam as a religion discourages women's participation in sports". He asserts that the faithful of his religion often refer to the Quran, chapter four (4), verse Ten to thirty-one (10-31) which states that Women should not engage in sports that will expose them. According to Oyewunmi (2009) religion of parents will significantly affect the students' attitudes towards their choice of sporting activities. His study found that 58% of Christian, 30% Muslims and 11.6% traditional worshippers among parents had favourable attitude towards students' choice of sports activities. Adedeji (1992), opined that women are gentle, shy, fragile conventional and subordinate to the male sex. Traditionally, women have always been regarded as the weaker sex, whose natural charm, beauty and femininity may be destroyed by rigorous physical activities.

#### **V. Conclusion and Recommendation**

The findings revealed that socio-economic status of the students, gender, religious and cultural belief of students influenced the choice of sports activities in secondary schools. Therefore, the following were recommended that:

In view of the findings obtained and the conclusion reached above the following recommendations were hereby made.

1. Many sports should be included in the curricular sports programme in secondary schools to cater for various diversified socio-economic groups in secondary schools.
2. Enlightening campaign should be carried out in all Lagos state secondary schools by both the government and private bodies on the benefits of sports activities for male and female gender sports participation.
3. Religious groups should be encouraged to participate more in sports programme.
4. The government should also put into consideration the cultural belief of students in their quest for sports participation and selection of sports of their choice.

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