

# Challenges predisposing female participation in mass sports in Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study investigated the challenges predisposing female participation in mass sports in Nigeria. The population for this study consisted of twenty four thousand female students of the south west colleges of education in Nigeria. A sample of 1200 respondents were selected using multi-stage sampling technique. A structured questionnaire developed and validated by the researcher was used to collect data for the study. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analyses were used to describe the demographic data as well as test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that peer pressure, academic pressure and gender role were factors challenging female sports participation in Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that female athletes should be given incentives such as scholarships, free hostel accommodation and opportunity for make-up tests and examinations in case such have been conducted while away on competition to motivate them to participate in sports.*

**Key Words:** *Gender-Role, Peer-Pressure, Academic Pressure, Female Participation*

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## Introduction

Africa is indeed blessed with high number of population with the high percentage of the population being youths. The researcher observed that majority of these youths lack what to do in terms of jobs with attendant negative effects of youth restiveness, political thuggery, drug addiction, sexual immoralities, rape and armed robbery.

Sports administrators and policy makers are therefore inundated with the task of redirecting the energies of this large population of youths in the right direction towards mass sports participation. The White paper on sports and recreation for the republic of South Africa (2019) stated that mass participation represents the lower section of the sports development continuum and includes efforts to improve participation opportunities in sports and recreation. This involves efforts to expose a lot of people to as many sports and recreational opportunities in the various communities, localities and cities of Africa.

Youths with sports talents abound in Africa but will involve the efforts of Government across nations of Africa to identify and nurture these talents to great achievers whereby coaches and physical education teachers' screens and detects these talents for training for higher performance. The impact of participation on sports cannot be under estimated as youths have opportunities to become professional and thereby earn wages with which to become a better personality in the society and also cater for their families as well as give back to his/her community. Mass sports participation offers opportunity for a wide number of people to develop sports skills and interact socially (Fourie, Slabbert & Saoyman, 2011). Sports bring individuals of various cultures together to participate thereby enhancing common interest for social integration (Bailey, 2005).

Governments in Africa therefore needs to fashion out strategies to provide opportunities for massive youth population to engage in physical activities for economic, social and development of African countries to favourably compete with the advanced countries of the world. The researcher observed that, no doubt there are a number of impediments to mass sports participation is sports among youths ranging from availability of facilities and equipment, funding, cultural bias, religion, gender and lack of information and communication technology. Burnet (2010) found inadequate physical resources, replacement of equipment and lack of skill amongst others as main challenges for non-participation in sports among South African young people.

In Nigeria, female sports participation was found to be low and bedeviled by a number of factors in that females have been stereotyped to taking care of the home and making babies which are traditional and socio-cultural barriers that prevent them from doing so (Onyewadume as cited in Ahmed, 2002). Many other prejudices still prevent women from participating in sports such that for many years the society maintained a greater degree of sports participation for boys than girls (Ahmed, 2002). Also the society

views participation of the female folks in mass sports tend to create the impression that females will lose their womanhood (Oworu, 2003). Adesoye and Aribamikan (2011) submitted that in some states in Nigeria, women cannot expose certain parts of their body and thus, women in this case cannot engage in sports because they have to put on dresses such as bikini for swimming, pants for athletics, shorts and vests for games that would make them free to participate.

The researcher observed that it is possible to command greater efficiency in mass sports, especially female participation in sports if challenges to participation were addressed in Nigeria. Thus, the purpose of the study was to determine the challenges facing female participation in mass sports in Nigeria.

The research question below was raised for the study:

### **Research question**

What are the challenges predisposing mass participation of females in sports in Nigeria?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study.

#### **Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant influence of gender-role and academic pressure on female participation in sports in South West Nigeria.

#### **Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant influence of parental attitude and peer pressure on female participation in sports in South West Nigeria.

### **Research Design**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The survey research enables information to be obtained from a representative sample of the population so as to describe situation as they exist.

### **Population**

The population for this study consisted of all the female students in the Colleges of Education in South West Nigeria. A total of twenty four thousand (24,000) female students were focused for this study.

A total of one thousand two hundred (1200) subjects were sampled for the study using multi stage sampling technique. The South West of Nigeria comprises of six states namely: Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti. For the purpose of this study, a College of Education per state was selected two hundred (200) female students were selected from each of these College of Education from each state.

### **Procedure**

A research questionnaire was designed by the researcher and was used to collect data for the study. The instrument consisted of two sections. The first part dealt with socio-demographic variables of respondents, while the second part contains items on socio-cultural perspectives of female participation in sports. The researcher sought the assistance and guidance of five (5) experts, three (3) in the field of Sports Administration (one from the Department of Human Kinetics Education, University of Ilorin, One from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife and one from the Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti) two (2) experts in sociology, one from University of Ilorin and One from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife in ascertaining the content validity of the instrument.

In order to determine the reliability of the questionnaire and its applicability to the Nigerian context, a pilot study was undertaken. In the pilot test, the questionnaire was administered on twenty (20) female students of the College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti who did not form part of study sample, at two weeks interval. The scores from the two sets of responses were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). A correlation coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. This shows that the questionnaire is stable and appropriate to be used for data collection for the study.

Each respondent responded to the questionnaire independently. Respondent's responses were regarded as reflecting current status of socio-cultural factors affecting female participation in sports. It was assumed that all responses given by the participants were frank and sincere. It is relevant to add that the researcher was a former athlete, sports administrator and an academic and hence had little or no difficulty in interacting with the female students in the six Colleges of Education.

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics included percentages, frequency counts and mean scores, while inferential statistics include Multiple Regression. The dependent and independent variables were the scores obtained from the ratings in the attitudinal scales. All the hypotheses formulated for the study were tested at alpha = 0.05 level of significance ( $P < 0.05$ )

## Results

### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant influence of gender-role and academic pressure on female participation in sports in South West Nigeria.

**Table 1:** Multiple Regression showing the influence of gender-role and academic pressure on female participation in sports in South West Nigeria

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	4.278	.283		15.126	.000
Gender role	8.014	.101	.756	79.054	.000
Academic pressure	1.885	.073	.248	25.915	.000

Multiple R=0.994, Multiple R<sup>2</sup>=0.988, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>= 0.988, F<sub>2,1197</sub>=51303.136

\*p<0.05

Table 1 showed that there was significant influence of gender-role and academic pressure on female participation in sports in South West Nigeria (F<sub>4,195</sub>=51303.136, p<0.05). The null hypothesis was rejected. The table revealed that there is significant positive multiple correlation between the predictor variables (gender-role and academic pressure) and female participation in sports in South West Nigeria (r=0.994, p<0.05). This implied that all the predictor variables are factors that can exert influence on female participation in sports in South West Nigeria. The value of the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>=0.988) indicates that all the predictor variables jointly accounted for 98.8% (R<sup>2</sup> X 100) of the observed variance in female participation in sports in South West Nigeria while the remaining 1.2% unexplained variance is largely due other variables that can account for female participation in sports in South West Nigeria. The regression result in the table reveals that gender-role is better predictor of female participation in sports in South West Nigeria ( $\beta = 0.756$ ) than academic pressure ( $\beta = 0.248$ ). The calculated F-ratio (51303.136) is significant at 0.05 level of significance. This implied that the predictor variables jointly provide a significant explanation for the variation in the female participation in sports in South West Nigeria.

### Hypothesis 2

There is no significant influence of parental attitude and peer pressure on female participation in sports in South West Nigeria.

**Table 2:** Multiple Regression showing the influence of parental attitude and peer pressure on female participation in sports in South West Nigeria

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	-6.936	.449		-15.436	.000
Parental influence	2.863	.137	.335	20.969	.000
Peer pressure	5.300	.128	.663	41.502	.000

Multiple R=0.990, Multiple R<sup>2</sup>=0.979, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>= 0.979, F<sub>2,1197</sub>=28224.718

\*p<0.05

Table 2 showed that there was a significant influence of parental attitude and peer pressure on female participation in sports in South West Nigeria (F<sub>4,195</sub>=28224.718, p<0.05). The null hypothesis was rejected. The table revealed that there was a significant positive multiple correlation between the predictor variables (parental attitude and peer pressure) and female participation in sports in South West Nigeria (r=0.990, p<0.05). This implied that all the predictor variables are factors that can exert influence on female participation in sports in South West Nigeria. The value of the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>=0.979) indicates that all the predictor variables jointly accounted for 97.9% (R<sup>2</sup> X 100) of the observed variance in female participation in sports in South West Nigeria while the remaining 2.1% unexplained variance is largely due other variables that can account for female participation in sports in South West Nigeria. The

regression result in the table revealed that peer pressure was better predictor of female participation in sports in South West Nigeria ( $\beta = 0.663$ ) than parental influence ( $\beta = 0.335$ ). The calculated F-ratio (28224.718) is significant at 0.05 level of significance. This implied that the predictor variables jointly provide a significant explanation for the variation in the female participation in sports in South West Nigeria.

### Discussions

Finding of this study revealed that peer-group had influence on female participation in sports. This is in agreement with the study conducted by Ahmed (2002) where she stated that the opportunity to learn athletic skills and to evaluate one's perception of ability is likely to occur in childhood among peers. Participation of friends in sports, assistance with sporting equipment by friends and attire worn by females friends encourages participation in sports as well as prizes won and brought home by friends encouraged female participation in sports. Also, corroborating the above, Synder and sprietzer as reported by Ahmed (2002) stated that female athletes received more support from female friends than from male friends. Greendoffer (1978) earlier reported that peers constituted important agent stimulating interest in most sports.

Another finding in this study showed that gender- role influenced female participation in sports. This was confirmed by the new South Wales info sheet (2006), which highlighted time constraints of family commitments. It was observed that female participation in sports is seen as an aberration and this confirmed the discrimination against women in sports because females are expected to be engaged in domestic duties rather than participating in sports and females are seen not to have the physical attributes to participate in sports. This is in contrast to the study of Nwankwo (2001) who discovered that female athletes generally enjoyed good health and score high in most indices of physical fitness. The author further submitted that sports have no adverse implications in any way or form to women participants. This study confirmed that there were a lot of avoidable obstacles, which men or societies have put on the way of female participation in sports. Omokhondion (2001) while confirming the unprecedented low ratio of women in sports stated that in spite of the increase in the participation of women in sports worldwide, they are still faced with a lot of avoidable obstacles which men or societies have put on their way.

Another finding of this study was that academic pressure /programme had influence on female participation in sports. This is in agreement with Alla (1992) that active participation in sports by female students in institutions of learning has been considered an anti-intellectual influence by greater sections of the public. In line with the above, Akindutire (2005) stated the erroneous belief is that, the academic workload and tension in the university do not provide the slightest room for sports participation. In the words of Amuchie (1981) several educational administrators are rather sceptical about the compatibility of sports participation an academic achievement. The parent are especially interested in how early their children would be able to grab their degree certificates and thus, become lawyers, medical practitioners, accountants', engineers etc., and would do all things to dissuade them from taking part in sports and still perform well academically, in fact sports men and women must be academically sound to excel in sports. Enahoro (1987) believed that one can perform well both athletically and academically so far he sets his priorities right by sacrificing sleeps and other pursuits for him to have enough time for his studies

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was discovered that peer-group, gender-role and academic pressure had negative influence on female sports participation in mass sports in Nigeria. It was therefore recommended that females should be encouraged to ward off any discouragement from their peers in order to participate in sports; females should be given equal opportunities with their male counterparts in the use of facilities and equipment as well as given positions in the sports administration at the states and National levels and competitive nature of sports should be deemphasized for females; female athletes should be given incentives such as scholarships, free hostel accommodation and opportunity for make-up tests and examinations in case such have been conducted while away on competition to motivate them to participate in mass sports.

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