Influence of Sports on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The study investigated Influence of Sports on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The design for the study was descriptive survey type of research. The target population for the study comprised of all public secondary schools students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select thirty (30) students from each of the five (5) selected secondary schools from Ijero Local Government Area of the State. A total of one hundred and fifty (150) students were used as samples for the study, these comprise of eighty five (85) male and sixty five (65) female. Four null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The research instrument used for this study was a self-structured closed ended questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instrument was subjected to validity and reliability mechanism. The reliability co-efficient obtained was 0.89. The questionnaires were administered to the students with the help of two (2) trained research assistants and was collected back immediately. The data collected were subjected to Chi-square (X²) and Pearson Product Moment correlation statistical analysis. The findings of the study reveals that there is no relationship between sports and class attendance of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, also, there is no relationship between sport and rate of drop out among secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, also sports participation will influence the educational aspiration of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria. From the findings, the following conclusions were made: sports influences the grades levels of secondary school students. And also, sports did not improve class attendance of secondary school students. It was concluded that there was no relationship between sports and rate of drop out among secondary school students. Sports influenced the educational aspiration of secondary school students. Based on the findings, the appropriate recommendations were made.

Key Words: sports, academic performance, secondary school, secondary school students.

Introduction

Sports have become a major business and attraction for the Nigerian public. The print, radio, television, internet, and cinema media have contributed to the explosive popularity of professional sports. It is not surprising, therefore, that the popularity of professional sports has been reflected in the sports programs of Nigerian secondary schools. Children’s engagement in sports competition is known to contribute to the developmental outcomes for a healthy lifestyle, where children learn about physical, social and cognitive skills. More broadly, engagement in physical activity is also recognized to contribute a range of positive outcomes, specifically; physical and mental health, social wellbeing, cognitive and academic performance (Bailey, 2013). For young people to achieve such outcomes it is recognized that physical education (PE) in schools is an ideal vehicle to promote physical activity due to its availability to all young people. Whilst teachers also have the opportunity to integrate this into the overall education process (Telford, 2012).

Interaction with peers is important for young individuals, approval and acceptance by peers affects self-esteem, academic performance, moral development and social behavior (McHale, Vinden, Bruett, Richton, Shaw & South, 2005). It is known that, within a sport group, specific ways of interpersonal contacts and communications are being formed and developed, characteristic norms and rules of behavior, ways of awarding, sanctioning, cooperation, competitiveness, positions within a group and other psychosocial traits and interactions that can contribute to better academic performance of sport participating students. When children and adolescents participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day, multiple health benefits accrue (MiIlojević, 2004).

Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety (MiIlojević, 2004). Beyond these known health effects, physical activity may also have...
beneficial influences on academic performance. Children and adolescents engage in different types of physical activity, depending on age and access to programs and equipment in their schools and communities. Secondary school students typically engage in free play, running and chasing games, jumping rope, and age-appropriate sports.

The effect of participating in sports as a student on academic performance is theoretically ambiguous. Participation may reduce the time available for studying and learning. Conversely, it has been argued that sports participation increases students' motivation and teaches teamwork and self-discipline, resulting in positive academic spillovers. Darling, Caldwell & Smith (2005) reported that secondary school athletes receive better grades, have higher educational and occupational aspirations, spend more time doing homework, and have a more positive attitude towards school than non-athletes. The associations found for participation in competitive sport and physical activity often yield multiple benefits. Bailey (2013) recognized that such benefits are not autonomous, independent or disconnected, but instead reinforce each other. Despite these recognized benefits, it remains a concern that within schools “the increasing pressures to improve academic performance often lead to additional instructional time for subjects such as mathematics and language at the cost of time for being physically active” (Singh, 2012). Trudeau and Shepard (2008) stated that if we want to improve the academic performance, physical fitness and health of our young people, we should not be limiting the time allocated to Physical Education and school sport. Where possible, this review draws upon evidence that explores the impact of competitive school sport on young people. However, due to the limited research available on these competition specific outcomes, the findings presented focus on the role physical activity, Physical education and school sport play on the holistic development of the child. Particular attention has been paid to the academic, diet and health and wellbeing outcomes for young people.

Participation in structured sport activities is said to promote a wide range of “social, physical, and intellectual skills,” leading to better academic performance (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003). In fact, there is a fair amount of evidence to support this claim. As noted above, secondary school athletes on average perform better academically than non-athletes, an association that persists even after controlling for factors such as race, ethnicity, and family background variables. Many researchers in this area have concluded that the link between sports and academic performance is casual. However, much of the empirical work in this area has treated sports participation as exogenously determined. According to Eccles (2003), this empirical strategy risks confusing the effect of participation with unobservable (from the standpoint of the researcher) “characteristics of the youth who sign up for and stay in the programs.

Similarly, it is possible that sport communities in secondary schools have developed a negative reputation with respect to academic performance. While a number of researchers studied sport participation and academic performance in college (Gaston-Gayles, 2005), few studies addressed the relationship between academics and sport participation at the secondary school level. Similarly, these studies have focused on the comparison of non-athletes to athletes; with respect to a variety of dependent variables (Yiannakis & Melnick, 2001). The effect of participation on sports, with respect to its direct effect on the participants themselves, has not been investigated in the literature. Taras (2005) conducted a review of studies on younger students and the effect that physical activity had on school performance. Taras (2005) demonstrated that there may be some short-term improvements due to physical activity, specifically with respect to concentration, but there is no well substantiated long-term improvement of academic performance as a result of more vigorous physical activity.

There has been a lot of criticism about the extensive time students spend in sport activities. Some people argued that schools should be in the business of imparting knowledge to secondary school students and not be so concerned about their social and emotional lives. Indicating that the main and perhaps the only major goal of schooling should be limited to students intellectual development. Also, many parents believed that involving students in sporting activities is a waste of time and have negative effects on student success in academic terrain. However the positive effect of sports on physical, mental and physiological development on child is scientifically proved. This contradiction prevents many parents and even school administrative to channel students to participate sports. Moreover many teachers oppose sports for interfering with academic work required of students. The poverty of successful athletes and density of sedentary life style in our society is the result in lack of realization of the power of sports and facilities.

The role of sport participation in the academic achievement of students cannot be over-looked if schools and parents really care about the mental fitness and academic excellence of secondary school students. One of the problems facing students’ participation in sports activities is the deflection of time away from the classroom. It was perceived by parents and many adults that sports divert talent of students from...
academic programs and the students who put their energies into sports are less likely to pursue academic objectives. Therefore, this study intends to investigate the influence of sports on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were generated for the study and tested:

1. There is no significant relationship between sports and class attendance of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant influence of sports on the grade level of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.
3. There is no significant influence of sports on the educational aspiration of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.
4. There is no significant relationship between sports and rate of drop out among secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Academic performance according to the Cambridge University Reporter (2003) is frequently defined in terms of examination performance and academic performance was characterized by performance in tests, in course work and performance in examinations of students. Academic performance is seen as the knowledge attained or skills, shown in the school subject. It is the school evaluation of the classroom work on the basis of the grades awarded. Academic performance according to Akinboye (2004) is of two types, that is, positive and negative (poor) performance. Academic achievement refers to a student's success in meeting short- or long-term goals in education. In the big picture, academic achievement means completing high school or earning a college degree. In a given semester, high academic achievement may mean a student is on the honor roll. Academic achievement may also refer to a person's strong performance in a given academic arena. A student who earns good grades or awards in science has achieved in the academic field of science. Education associations and schools monitor the overall level of student academic achievement to decide what, if any, changes need to be made in the educational system.

Chambas (2006) asserted that any institution that treats sports development with levity is doing so at its peril. Sport has the potential to provide a cutting edge for an enclave for dropouts. Universities and Secondary School should therefore be the vanguard of moulding sportmen and women who can stand on their own intellectually in all spheres of life through proper sports administration. Consequently the sociologist of sports who works within a Marxist Lenninst ideology perceived sports as a means to an end. Larry (2006) affirmed that the physical qualities of man were in the past, and of this day, one of the fundamental conditions of material production. The starting point is the fact that physical culture and sports are a social process, which in a purposeful and systematic way makes their contribution to turn man into a creative producer of material and spiritual values.

Pastimes such as Internet, television and computer games can make secondary school sedentary and increase the risk of obesity. Students who do not participate in sports or other physical activities are more likely to grow up to be inactive adults. Participation in school sports supports the healthy growth of the heart, lungs, muscles and bones. It also improves agility, coordination and balance. Exercise also helps reduce stress levels, anxiety and behavioral problems. Regular physical activity helps you relax better and reduces muscular tension (Mary & Gavin, 2009).

Academic performance among secondary school students is a matter of concern for teachers, parents and researchers. Similarly, the sedentary lifestyle is affecting more and more children and young people, causing, among other, cardiorespiratory ailments and diseases specific to adulthood. In the adolescence, specifically among secondary education students, sports abandonment occurs massively and the main cause is focused on the lack of time to combine sport and studies. According to Capdevila (2013) that the profile with a better academic performance corresponds to female students studying in private schools or state-subsidised schools who play sports (even competitively) and with parents who have higher education and practice sport. In addition, the findings show that athlete students have better study habits and spend less time on sedentary leisure activities than students that do not participate in sport.

At present, educators have looked for both indirect and direct connections. Indirect connections consist of ways in which sports improve various non-cognitive aspects of an athlete's personality—self-esteem, motivation—and how that improvement in turn leads to better academic achievement. Direct connections consist of ways in which competition in sports helps student-athletes actually perform better in...
such similarly competitive events as academic tests and courses. In both cases, the problem remains how to build a construct that allows one to envision how impact is felt across the supposed gap between mind and body. According to Coleman (2006) adolescent culture as distinct from adult culture, and focused on ‘cars, dates, sports, popular music, and other matters that are unrelated to school. Most of all, adolescent culture is characterized by little interest in education. Secondary school students pay little attention to scholastic achievement (Coleman, 2006). Team sport is the only extracurricular activity to make a significant difference to students’ academic grades, new research has revealed.

Teenagers who belong to sports clubs - as opposed to activities such as drama or debating - are also more likely to complete their education and enter higher education. The findings come after a recent survey revealed that physical education in schools has been reduced despite a surge in enthusiasm for sport. Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Farrell & Sabo (2005) maintained that absorption and better academic outcomes are usually proportional to time spent in sports activities. Sports activities ameliorate the working capacity of crucial body systems and improve the degree of alertness among participants. Sports activities not only leave a positive impact on mood, but also increase mental alertness (Mohammad, Jamil, Umar & Uzma, 2012) and it is quite apparent that physically and mentally alert students always perform better, achieve more (Taras, 2005) and like to remain present in their classes. It has been noticed that sportsmen/women show better results in Mathematics, English and science subjects particularly (Broh, 2002 & Nelson, 2006).

Studies based on longitudinal research of children which attempt to use methodologically sound correlational data, showed that extracurricular (sport and physical) activity participation was positively related to Grade Point Average, educational aspirations, educational /occupational attainment and standardized achievement test scores (Jamil, Khan & Kareem, 2012). According to Cornelisken & Christian (2007), revealed that youth sports participation is significantly correlated with their academic enhancement in terms of attainment of a higher school degree more successfully and that there is a comparatively higher impact of sports on academic achievement among the female than the male. Din (2006) indicated that there was no significant impact of school-sponsored sports activities on the academic enhancement of the students taking part in sports. The role of sport participation in the academic achievement of students has been a topic of debate for decades. Critics observe that sport activities deflect time away from the classroom, sports diverted talent from academic programs and the students who put their energies into sports are less likely to pursue academic objectives.

They do not have time or energy to achieve excellence and satisfaction in both roles. Supporters of school sport programs argue that sport participation improves students’ achievement, motivation, improves students’ grades, keeps them in school, raises their educational aspirations, increased students’ overall interest and commitment to schooling as well as their engagement in more student-teacher contact, more positive attitudes about schooling, and more parent-school contact. Some researchers suggested that further studies may be conducted on this topic because previous studies conducted on the topic were limited and their results were not clear (Din, 2006). In educational institutions sports activities are not regarded as essential part education and many people have believed that participation in sports negatively effect on the education of the students (Arnett, 2006). It is also affirmed that relationship between participation in high school sports and academic achievements of students is a topic mostly discussed by the sportman, society members and researchers (Hartman, 2008).

One way in which physical activity levels can be increased is to increase student's involvement in organised community sport (Department of Sport and Recreation, 2013). Organised, community sport and recreational activities have been indicated as exerting a positive effect on academic success and attitude to school. Organised recreation may also have a positive effect on student's attitude and self esteem. Total organised, extracurricular activity participation was examined in a cohort of high school students. The results of this study showed that total extracurricular participation was positively associated with academic self concept, educational aspirations, coursework selection, homework completion, absenteeism, academic achievement and college attendance. One study found that participants doing extracurricular activity alone, or in combination with sports, had higher odds of doing more exercise, liking school and doing more homework. These results suggest that identification with school and school values is enhanced by involvement in organised, community sport or recreation. With evidence that students involved in more organised, community sports or recreation are more likely to perform better academically, there needs to be greater impetus for encouraging and supporting children's involvement in community sports and recreation (Department of Sport and Recreation, 2013).

A higher grade is one of the effects that extracurricular activities have on students participating in sport. Self esteem can be a predictor of grade level. Participation in extracurricular activities provides...
students an opportunity to create a positive and voluntary connection to their school. In a study done by the USDE, it was revealed that students who participate in extracurricular activities are three times more likely to have a grade point average of a 3.0 or higher. This is higher than students who did not participate in extracurricular activities (sport). This is regardless of their previous background or achievement. Students that participate in extracurricular activities (sport) also showed positive changes in students self confidence, teacher perception, and greater confidence, and then developed positive school related adult attachments (Cosden, Morrison, Gutierrez & Brown, 2004).

Extracurricular activities increases a student connection to school, raises their self esteem, and positive social nature. Since the time spent on sport activities crowds out time devoted to schooling, the impact of sport is negative. However, empirical investigations find a rather positive correlation between sport and grade of the students (Barron, 2000). These findings are supported by two main arguments. The first extends the simple allocation of time model by introducing additional activities. The second acknowledges that leisure activities can have direct positive as well as negative effects on educational productivity. In the debate about athletic participation and academic achievement of the student, it is often assumed that sport activities of adolescents are harmful to their educational outcomes. The underlying line of reasoning is oversimplified: Since the time spent on sport activities crowds out time devoted to schooling, the impact of sport is negative.

When looking at the relationship of physical activity and sports team participation with grade point average (GPA), sports team participation was independently associated with a higher GPA for high school girls and boys. The effect of sports team participation had an independent effect on GPA beyond physical activity. This suggests that other factors involved in sports team participation beyond physical activity play a role in academic outcomes. Possible explanations from the authors included: sports participation promotes identification with school and school related values, such as doing well academically; pro-educational social norms among teammates and coaches; and academic requirements for participation. They also note, "For adolescent students, in particular, sports team participation may be the major route by which they are physically active, and multiple studies suggest that participation on sports teams is also associated with better academic outcomes (Fox, 2010).

Although academic grades stems from a complex interaction between intellect and contextual variables, health is a vital moderating factor in a child's ability to learn. The idea that healthy children learn better is empirically supported and well accepted for active sports participation among secondary school students (Basch, 2010). Studies have confirmed that health benefits are associated with physical activity, including cardiovascular and muscular fitness, bone health, psychosocial outcomes, and cognitive and brain health (Strong, Malina, Blimkie, Daniels, Dishman, Gutin, & Trost, 2005). Many researchers agreed that participation in sports will not guarantee a better GPA. Hartmann (2008) stated that it is both useful and important to think about secondary school sports not as an inherently and automatically positive educational force but rather as more of a tool whose social meaning and use and impact is dependent on the ways in which it is employed. If not properly manipulated or utilized, sport can be detrimental to educational performance and outcomes.

One way to measure students' academic achievement is by their grade point average (GPA). Several researchers have looked at this aspect of academic achievement in regards to students' school-sponsored sport participation. Eccles, Barber, Stone and Hunt (2003) stated that extracurricular activities promote academic performance. Their study found that students who were involved in sports were more likely to see increases in GPA while in high school. Marsh & KLETTMAN (2002) found that in-school extracurricular activities positively associated with higher grades along with other academic outcomes.

Attendance is the concept of people either individually or as a group, appearing at a location for a known scheduled event. Measuring attendance is a significant concern for many organizations and schools, which can use such information to gauge the effectiveness of their efforts and to plan for future efforts. Poor attendance by a student in a class may affect their grades or other evaluations. Poor attendance may also reflect problems in a student's personal situation, and is an indicator that students are not developing the knowledge and skills needed for later success (Franklin, 2008). Attendance is crucial to positive long term outcomes for students and numerous studies have shown that 6th graders who are chronically absent have lower high school graduation rates (Holton, 2016).

There are several evidence that shown participation in extra-curricular activities varied by gender and girls are usually less participative than boys. Jacqueline (2012) investigated gender dynamics in the valuing of extra-curricular activities (sport) and their survey results show a significant difference in the proportion of participation in sports of male and female students. Results show that approximately 76% of male students participate in sports compared to only 48% of female student. Osiki, Jonathan & Ohiorenuan
Studies across the country show that student-athletes are more likely to graduate from high school than non-athletes. An analysis of national data found that students who do not play sports or participate in other extracurricular activities are 57% more likely to drop out of high school (Mahar, 2006). Sports participation correlates more strongly with low dropout rates than any other activity (Rosewater, 2009). For disadvantaged students, the influence of sports on school retention is even more profound (Rosewater, 2009). Student-athletes performed at a higher rate than non-athletes. Improved rates of college enrollment, retention and graduation are all linked to sports participation. This correlation is stronger for students who start off with low test scores and lack enthusiasm for education. Among girls, sports participation is also associated with an increased desire to attend college (Rosewater, 2009).

Sports participation has also been found to be beneficial in terms of increased physical health, decreased adolescent suicide, drop-out rates, academic achievement, and educational attainment. Across race and gender, however, the role of participation in sports is argued to vary. Sports participation has particular relevance for African-American males, as it has long been deemed a “dramatic means of improving one’s station in life, of gaining economic advantage and prestige that would have been impossible to achieve without”(Rhoden, 2006). African-Americans represent the majority of the professional basketball and football players, though only approximately twelve percent of the general population (Eitzen, 1999). In 2006, secondary school students comprised 79% and 68% of the National Basketball Association and the National Football Association, respectively (Smith, 2007). To that end, two-thirds of males students between the ages of 13 and 18 believe that they can earn a living playing professional sports (Eitzen, 1999). Thus, the participation of students in sport can go a long way to discourage rate of school dropout and enhance school completion of secondary schools students.

The numbers bear this out. Successful extracurricular activities—and sports in particular—are the best predictors of adult success. There is actually a correlation between sports participation and lower dropout rates. With up to a third of our young people not finishing high school, it may be time to encourage even wider sports participation, the best way to ensure students stay enrolled and do well in school. A Women's Sports Foundation survey found that high school athletes have higher grades and lower dropout rates than non-athletes. High school athletes also can boast of a higher grade point average and more frequent college attendance. And athletes who played two sports had an even higher GPA. Dropouts themselves report a variety of reasons for leaving school, including school-related reasons, family-related reasons, and work-related reasons (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006; Rotermund, 2007).

The definition of ambition is given by a standard dictionary as an ‘eagerness’ for honour, superiority, power or attainment. It suggests a personal uplifting. Aspiration means the goal of individual that he sets for himself in a task. Aspiration has three important aspects. First, what performance or aspect of it the individual considers desirable or important. Second, how will he expect to perform especially in the important aspect? Third, how important the performance is to him, either as a whole or in its different aspects. Webster dictionary defined aspiration as a strong desire for realization of ambition, ideas or accomplishment. Kumar (2013) considered aspiration as level of possible goal (score) an individual sets for himself. The use of term aspiration has made in a number of field such as sociology, psychology, religion, ethics vocational and educational guidance immediate aspiration are the goals that the individual sets for himself for immediate future such as goals for passing exams, the goals for future and called as remote aspirations.

An individual’s aspiration level represents him not as he is at that particular moment but also as he would like to be. It is a “measure of his intentional dispositions, an important element of his long range behaviour. It is an index of the person as an individual helps to determent by the amount of self esteem he needs to maintain. An individual aspire for things out of immediate reach for two reasons. Sport provides secondary school students with much more than stronger and fitter bodies. Sport can help to engender a healthy body image. A good deal of previous research shows that secondary school student's participation in school sponsored sports favorably influences youth development and aspiration for greater educational achievement (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). Sports participation has been found to elevate adolescents’ grades (Lipscomb, 2007), commitment to graduating high school, educational aspirations and educational attainment, attending college and graduation from college (Fox, Barr-Anderson, Neumark-Sztainer & Wall, 2010). Athletic participation among secondary school students can also deter
delinquent (Hartmann & Massoglia, 2007). Previous research also shows that social class differences, gender, and race and ethnicity influence the synergies between sports and educational outcomes and aspiration of the students in secondary or high schools (Sabo & Veliz, 2008; Veliz, 2012).

However, it has been argued that the potential psychological and social benefits of physical education, physical activity and sport may indirectly enhance academic aspiration by enhancing mental health, improving feelings of connectedness with school and by enhancing positive social behaviours (Trudeau & Shephard, 2010). Numerous studies have shown that participation in interscholastic sports leads to acquiring virtues such as citizenship, sportsmanship, lifelong lessons, teamwork, self-discipline and aids in the physical emotional growth of the nation's youth, developing positive attributes like discipline, increased self-esteem, hard work and determination (Mwihaki, 2007 and Muniu, 2009).

Similarly, studies have reported that athletes are likely to have better attendance records, lower dropout rates and less likely to engage in drugs than non-athletes (Rintaugu, Mwisukha & Amusa, 2012). However, a number of studies have reported no association between sport participation and academic aspiration (Williams, Sarraf & Umbach, 2006). However, other studies found that students who participated in interscholastic athletics did not have better grade point average (GPA) (Shulman & Bowen, 2001). Reeves (2008) stated that there is a strong association between student involvement in extracurricular activities and improved attendance, behaviour, and academic performance.

Singh's (2000) study on higher secondary school students of both sexes found that (a) male students had significantly favourable attitude towards sports as compared to female students higher secondary school students studying at rural. Schools had less favourable attitude towards sport this students from urban schools the attitude towards sports was measured through the self prepared scale for the purpose by the author. Kaur (2001) in her study value dimensions of post graduate students in relation level of aspiration and intelligence concluded that high and low aspiration male groups very in their performances for different value dimensions. The value of high group are theoretical, political, economic, social religious and ascetic, which for the low group these are political theoretical, ascetic, economic, social & religious. Babita (2004) studied the level of aspiration and attitudes towards games & sports of high and senior secondary school girls. She found that players have a good attitude towards games & sports then non players and also have higher aspiration level. The aspiration level also positively correlated with the favorable attitude than non players. After review of the literature the investigator felt the need to study the level of aspiration of the athlete in compression to that of non athletes, and also to compare their attitude towards game. In addition to this the study also expect to explore the inter actions effect of attitude towards games and sports and the aspiration level among athlete students. So the problem can be stated in the following wards.

Methodology

The design for the study was descriptive survey type of research. The target population for the study comprised of all public secondary schools students in in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Simple random sampling technique was used to select thirty (30) students from each of the five (5) selected secondary schools from Ijero Local Government Area of the State. A total of one hundred and fifty (150) students were used as samples for the study, these comprise of eighty five (85) male and sixty five (65) female. The simple random sampling technique was also used to select students from each of the schools and sixty respondents were randomly selected from each of the selected secondary school. The selection cut cross both male and female students from SSS I, SSS II and SSS III classes. Four null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The research instrument used for this study was a self-structured closed ended questionnaire designed by the researcher. The questionnaire is designed to elicit relevant information. The instrument was subjected to validity and reliability mechanism. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained using split half method. One of the schools that did not form part of the study was used. Thirty (30) students were randomly selected. The instrument was administered to the selected respondents and two sets of data were generated from the split. The data collected was analysed by using inferential statistics of Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Spearman Brown’s formula. The co-efficient obtained was 0.89. The questionnaires were administered to the students with the help of two (2) trained research assistants and was collected back immediately.

The data collected were subjected to Chi-square ($X^2$) and Pearson Product Moment correlation statistical analysis.
Results and Discussion

Hypothesis 1
There is no significant influence of sports on the grades levels of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.

**Table 1: Chi-square analysis of level of influence of sports on the grade level of secondary school students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>X²-cal</th>
<th>X²-tab</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Do students who participate in sport receive better academic grade level than their non participants?</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.98</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Do student athletes show excellent performance in class?</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Will student’s grade level worsen if they did not participate in sport.</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Does concentration level of student athletes in sports help them to have better grade in school work?</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Do student’s athlete show good mastery of knowledge and this influence their grade level in class performance?</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 above shows the chi-square analysis of influence of sports on the grades levels of secondary school students. The chi square calculated (X²-cal) value was 8.98, the chi square critical value (X²-tab) was 3.84 with the degree of freedom (df= 1) at 0.05 level of significance. Since the X² calculated value was greater than X² critical value, hypothesis 1 which stated that there will be no significant influence of sports on the grades levels of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria was rejected. This implies that sports influenced the grades levels of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2
There will be no significant relationship between sports and class attendance of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.

**Table 2: Pearson correlation coefficient of relationship between sports and class attendance of secondary school students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>No of cases</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Calculated r-value</th>
<th>Critical r-value</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>0.950</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NS= Not significant.

Table 2 shows the Pearson product moment correlation analysis of relationship between sports and class attendance of secondary school students. The r-calculated value of -0.029 was negative and lower to the critical r-value of 0.950 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated r-value was lower than critical r value, hypothesis 2 which stated that there will be no significant relationship between sports and class attendance of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria was not rejected. This implies that there was no significant relationship between sports and class attendance of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.
Hypothesis 3

There will be no significant relationship between sports and rate of drop out among secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.

**Table 3: Pearson correlation coefficient of relationship between sports and rate of drop out among secondary school students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>No of cases</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Calculated r-value</th>
<th>Critical r-value</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>0.950</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P< 0.05 (significant), NS= Not significant.

Table 3 shows the Pearson product moment correlation analysis of relationship between sports and rate of drop out among secondary school students. The r-calculated value of 0.025 was negative and lower to the critical r-value of 0.0950 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated r-value was lower than critical r-value, hypothesis 3 which stated that there will be no significant relationship between sports and rate of drop out among secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria was not rejected. This implies that there was no significant relationship between sports and rate of drop out among secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.

**Hypothesis 4**

There is no significant influence of sports on the educational aspiration of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.

**Table 4: Chi-square analysis of influence of sports on the educational aspiration of secondary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>X²-cal</th>
<th>X²-tab</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Does participation in sports provide opportunity for scholarship to students to further their education?</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Will participating in sport motivate student’s athlete towards educational aspiration.</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Are student athletes likely to further their education in higher institution?</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.51</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Are student athletes able to face educational challenges than non athlete?</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Will students’ level of participation in sports determine their level of educational attainment?</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 above shows the chi – square analysis of influence of sports on the educational aspiration of secondary. The chi square calculated (X²-cal) value was 7.51, the chi square critical value (X²-tab) was 3.84 with the degree of freedom (df = 1) at 0.05 level of significance. Since the x² calculated value was greater than x² critical value, hypothesis 4 which stated that there will be no significant influence of sports on the educational aspiration of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria was rejected. This implies that sports influenced the educational aspiration of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.

**Discussion of results**

Hypothesis 1 which stated that there will be no significant influence of sports on the grade level of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria was rejected. This implies that sports influenced the grade level of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria.

The finding of the study supported the finding of Marsh & Kleitman (2002) who reported that in-school extracurricular activities positively associated with higher grades along with other academic outcomes. This indicates that active participation in sports by secondary school students enhance students' intelligence quotients and helps to improve the grade level in school work. A student who participates in sports actively becomes mentally alert, emotionally stable and more ready to learn. An athlete student always attend come early to school for morning training and physical fitness warm up and all this prepare
them for not just to participate in sport but to be effective and agile in participation which enhance good performance in their area of concentration in sport event.

The finding of the study contradicted the finding of Hartmann (2008) who stated that it is both useful and important to think about secondary school sports not as an inherently and automatically positive educational force but rather as more of a tool whose social meaning and use and impact is dependent on the ways in which it is employed. If not properly manipulated or utilized, sport can be detrimental to educational performance and outcomes. This indicates that sports participation may help keep the students alert but not really have impact on the grade level of secondary school students. The finding of the study also buttressed the assertion of Basch (2010) who asserted that the idea that healthy children learn better is empirically supported and well accepted for active sports participation among secondary school students. A higher grade is one of the effects that extracurricular activities have on students participating in sport. Self esteem can be a predictor of grade level. Participation in extracurricular activities provides students an opportunity to create a positive and voluntary connection to their school. Sports and after school extracurricular activities have for a long time been viewed as beneficial to children’s overall performance in school and how children behaved socially.

Hypothesis 2 which stated that there will be no significant relationship between sports and class attendance of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria was not rejected. This implies that there was no significant relationship between sports and class attendance of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria. Poor attendance by a student in a class may affect their grades or other evaluations. The finding of the study contradicted the study of Lumpkin (2008) who concluded that sport athletes had higher percentages of days of school attended, graduation rates and assessment scores and lower dropout rates than non-athletes. But the finding from this study stated otherwise which showed that having secondary school students participating in sports regularly does not make him/her to have high class attendance level but he or she could only have interest in extra-curricular activities of the school and not the real school work.

Sports activity programme provide valuable lessons for practical situations – teamwork, sportsmanship, winning and losing, and hard work. Through participation in active sports programme, students learn self-discipline, build self-confidence and develop skills to handle competitive situations. But it is only when the students is ready and has intention to learn that is when it can help class attendance and improve students’ performance. Students who participate in sport activity programme tend to have higher grade-point averages, better attendance records, lower dropout rates and fewer discipline problems than students generally. But the result from this study stated otherwise.

The finding of the study also supported the finding of Holton (2016) who stated that attendance is crucial to positive long term outcomes for students and numerous studies have shown that senior secondary school students who are chronically absent have lower high school graduation rates. Their absent from class may be due to participation in the sporting events while the class is ongoing. They tend to devote much of their time to sports participation and in the process forget their primary assignment. Because of the nature of athletics it may be necessary for him/her to miss a class due to travel or competition. It is important for each student-athlete to be responsible for the absences they may have. The stereotype of the dumb jock has been around almost as long as sport itself.

Hypothesis 3 which stated that there will be no significant relationship between sports and rate of drop out among secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria was not rejected. This implies that there was no significant relationship between sports and rate of drop out among secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria. The finding of the study contradicted the finding of Zaff et al. (2003) who stated that students who participate in extracurricular activities are also likely to demonstrate gains in college admissions test scores and are less likely to drop out of school. This implies that secondary school students’ participation in sports is not a yardstick to reduce rate of school drop outs. School with good sport facilities can encourage high level of participation of students among secondary school students but that does not the basis to keep the students in school. Many factors predate and determine students rate of school drop out among which are poverty, low parental motivation, school environment, teacher motivation and poor academic performance of the school in external examination. So if students come from a home with low income earning, then it is possible that such a student may not be able to remain in school to complete his or her education and then leads to poor academic aspiration.

The finding of the study disagreed with Rosewater (2009) who he stated that sports participation correlates more strongly with low dropout rates than any other activity. He believed that participating in
sports by secondary school students will reduce dropout rate. For disadvantaged students, the influence of sports on school retention is even more profound (Rosewater, 2009). Student-athletes performed at a higher rate than non-athletes. Improved rates of college enrollment, retention and graduation are all linked to sports participation. But students possibility of completing schooling is not only attached to participation in sport but to other environmental factors, socio economic factors and parental influence.

Hypothesis 4 which stated that there will be no significant influence of sports on the educational aspiration of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria was rejected. This implies that sports influenced the educational aspiration of secondary school students in Ijero Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria. An individual aspire for things out of immediate reach for two reasons. Sport provides secondary school students with much more than stronger and fitter bodies. Sport can help to engender a healthy body image. The finding of the study concurred with the finding of Feldman and Matjasko (2005) who reported that secondary school student's participation in school sponsored sports favourably influenced youth development and aspiration for greater educational achievement. This implies that secondary school students’ participation in sports enhance educational aspiration and help students to complete their education with little distraction.

Sports participation has been found to elevate adolescents’ grades (Lipscomb, 2007), commitment to graduating high school, educational aspirations and educational attainment, attending college and graduation from college (Fox, Barr-Anderson, Neumark-Sztainer & Wall, 2010). The aspiration level also positively correlated with the favorable attitude than non players. Many of the previous researcher felt the need to study the level of aspiration of the athlete in compression to that of non athletes, and also to compare their attitude towards game. So the problem can be stated in the following wards. Babita (2004) studied the level of aspiration and attitudes towards games & sports of high and senior secondary school girls. She found that players have a good attitude towards games & sports then non players and also have higher aspiration level. The aspiration level also positively correlated with the favorable attitude than non players.

Conclusions
From the discussion of findings of the above result, it was concluded that sports influenced the grade level of secondary school students. Also, the sports participation did not determine the class attendance of secondary school students. It was also concluded that there was no relationship between sports and rate of drop out among secondary school students. Sports influenced the educational aspiration of secondary school students.

Recommendations
Based on the results of the findings, the following recommendations were made:
1. The researcher recommended that state government and association of principals of secondary schools should encourage competitive school sports among secondary school students to enhance grade level in school work.
2. School administrators should encourage and give proper monitoring to the secondary school students to avoid negative effects of sports participation on school work.
3. State Ministry of sports and education should work together to ensure that school sports are well planned and structured so as to become a tool that minimize rate of drop out among secondary school students.
4. State government should give scholarship to students who participate in sports so as to motivate and encourage them for better and greater educational aspiration.

References


