

## Parental Choice Influence in Promoting Students' Enrolment in Physical Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Enugu State: a Survey of Sampled Experts

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### Abstract

This study investigated parental choice influence in promoting students' enrolment in Physical Education [PE] in Senior Secondary Schools [SSS] in Enugu State. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design and was conducted in Enugu State, Nigeria. A total of 58 PE experts constituted the study population and were studied. Possession of master's degree qualification and working as academic staff in tertiary institutions qualifies an expert. A researcher-designed self-administered instrument called "Parental Choice Influence in Physical Education Questionnaire [PACIPEQ] which demonstrated .91 internal consistency Cronbach's Alpha value was used for data collection. Mean value and standard deviation was adopted for answering research question while independent samples t-test statistics was used to test hypothesis at .05 significance. The study revealed that PE experts considered parents' enlightenment on the need to make choices regarding subject of interest ( $\bar{x}$ =2.98; SD=.99), having corresponding relationship and understanding ( $\bar{x}$ =2.96; SD=1.04) and parents' decisions regarding choice of subjects ( $\bar{x}$ =2.94; SD=1.03) as viable strategies for promoting students' enrolment in PE in SSS. No significant difference was recorded in the parental choice influence in promoting students' enrolment in PE in SSS based on experts' educational qualification and years of work experience ( $p > .05$ ), while difference existed on gender ( $p < .05$ ). Conclusively, the experts considered parents' enlightenment, corresponding relationship and understanding as well as parents' decisions regarding choice of PE subject as viable strategies for promoting students' enrolment in PE in SSS in Enugu State. Therefore, the need for accommodating parental choice in promoting students' enrolment in PE in SSS by the school administration and PE experts regardless of socio-demographic variations becomes paramount.

**Keywords:** Parental choice, Influence, Enrolment, Physical education, Experts

### Introduction

Parental choice plays pivotal role in influencing students' decision on elective subjects particularly at senior secondary school [SSS] level. Available evidence shows that approximately 90% of students at SSS classes solely depend on their parents' guidance in choosing subjects of interest (Federal Ministry of Education [FME], 2021). The education policy encourages comprehensive core curriculum which aims at broadening knowledge and outlook with huge expectation that every student must take core subjects and a minimum of three vocational and non-vocational subjects (FME, 2021; Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2004). Based on the criteria for subject categorization, PE is among the non-vocational elective subjects at the SSS level and thus has been facing a complete non-

enrolment of students (Omeje, 2017). The obvious non-students' enrolment in PE undermines peoples' chances of exploring self-potentials, limiting human development, restricting professional skill acquisition and threatening one's wellbeing (Kelty et al., 2019). Evidences linking the unwarranted situation to some factors such as lack of absolute knowledge of PE programme, limited access to existing PE facilities, ignorance of available prospects and career opportunities, parental choice influences in subject selection for the children, inadequate PE facilities and equipment, lack of manpower to pilot the PE programme, among others (Active Living Research [ALR], 2019; Global Advocacy Council for Physical Activity [GACPA], 2010). There are evidences demonstrating that well-validated approaches or strategies are significantly effective in intervening on issues relating to students' enrolment in educational programs or subjects (Morano et al., 2020; Sabrina et al., 2020; Tamara et al., 2019; Zhou et al., 2019; Patrick et al., 2016; Gioia et al., 2015). Therefore, this research is poised to investigate parental choice factors influencing students' enrolment in PE in SSS in Enugu State. In addition, the study tested a hypothesis of no significant difference on the parental choice influence in promoting students' enrolment in PE in SSS in Enugu State based on experts' demographic variables (gender, educational qualification, and years of work experience). Studies highlighting the significant influence of demographic variables abound (Sabrina et al., 2020; Tamara et al., 2019; Zhou et al., 2019). However, none of such studies considered the situation in Enugu State where the present study was carried out. The outcome of this study would add quantitative data on mechanisms for promoting students' enrolment in subjects. It would equally serve as a positive step in strengthening the cordial relationship existing between the school administration and families of the students particularly in the area of subject selection (PE in this context) at SSS level.

### **Materials and Methods**

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The design was deemed most suitable for the study since it allowed the researcher to explore situations as they existed in their natural setting and at a definite period of time and place (Nworgu, 2015). Several scholars had used the design in related studies and thus considered it very appropriate for use in a study of this kind (Min-Soo & Ji-Youn, 2019; Tamara et al., 2019). The survey was delimited to PE experts in tertiary institutions in Enugu State. There are a good number of tertiary institutions in Enugu State where PE experts are discharging their professional duties diligently. These include the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu State College of Education Technical (ESCET), and Federal College of Education, Ehamufu (National Policy on Education, Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2008; Post Primary Schools Management Board [PPSMB], 2019). A total of 58 PE experts who possessed a minimum of master's degree qualification constituted the study population and were surveyed.

A researcher-designed self-administered instrument called "Parental Choice Influence in Physical Education Questionnaire [PACIPEQ] which demonstrated .91 internal consistency Cronbach's Alpha value was used for data collection. The acceptance of reliability index was based on experts' recommendation (Salmon et al., 2019). The questionnaire was designed following critical review of related studies from previous researchers such as Antonio et al. (2020). In order to ensure the soundness of the questionnaire, the draft copy was subject to validation by five expert validates who constructively made inputs before the final draft used for the study. The questionnaire which has two main sections of A and B was prepared in simple English language. The section A of the questionnaire contained information regarding demographic profile (gender, educational qualification, and years of work experience) of the experts. Section B part of the questionnaire generated data on the parental choice influence in

promoting students’ enrolment in PE in SSS. In order to have maximum access to the experts, a letter of introduction, duly signed by the Head, Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka, was obtained by the researchers and further presented to the experts. The study approval was in accordance with the ethical regulations and principles of the World Medical Association’s Declaration of Helsinki for conducting studies involving human subjects (World Medical Association, 2013). The experts were given sufficient time to indicate the appropriateness of the parental choice influence in promoting students’ enrolment in PE in SSS. As agreed by the experts and the researcher, both date and time for collection of the responded copies were reached. Mean value and standard deviation was adopted for answering research question while independent samples t-test statistics was used to test hypothesis at .05 level of significance.

### Results

Table 1

**Analysis of Parental Choice Influence in Promoting Students’ Enrolment in PE in SSS (n=49)**

S/N	Items	$\bar{x}$	SD
1.	Parents’ enlightenment by the school authority during the parent teachers association’s meetings on the need to choose PE subject at the SSS level.	2.98	.99
2.	Routine visitation by PE teachers to the families of students to interact with their parents on the need to choose PE subject at the SSS level.	2.61	.98
3.	Initiating corresponding relationship and understanding with the parents and the school authorities in making choices regarding elective subjects at the SSS levels.	2.96	1.04
4.	Educating parents by PE professionals and other experts in related subject areas such as the guidance and counseling units on the prospects and career opportunities in PE during school and community visitations.	2.92	.98
5.	Involving the parents by the school authority in decision making processes regarding choice of subjects and selection at the senior secondary school levels.	2.94	1.03
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>2.88</b>	<b>1.00</b>

Note:  $\bar{x}$  = mean; SD = standard deviation; Appropriate Strategy  $\bar{x} = \geq 2.50$ ; Inappropriate Strategy  $\bar{x} = \leq 2.50$ .

The finding in Table 1 shows that overall, PE experts considered parental choice influence in promoting students’ enrolment in PE in SSS very appropriate ( $\bar{x}=2.88$ ;  $SD=1.00$ ). Specifically, the PE experts considered enlightening the parents on the need to make choices regarding subject of interest ( $\bar{x}=2.98$ ;  $SD=.99$ ), having corresponding relationship and agreement ( $\bar{x}=2.96$ ;  $SD=1.04$ ) and parents’ decisions regarding choice of subjects ( $\bar{x}=2.94$ ;  $SD=1.03$ ) as more viable strategies.

Table 2.

**Summary of Independent Samples t-test showing Parental Choice Influence in Promoting Students’ Enrolment in PE in SSS Based on Experts’ Characteristics (n=49)**

Variables	Index	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Std.EM	t	df	p-value
Gender	Male	27	14.93	3.06	.589	1.108	47	.03
	Female	22	13.77	4.22	.900			
Edu.Qual.	M.Sc/M.Ed	42	14.36	3.75	.578	-.238	47	.38
	Ph.D	7	14.71	3.09	1.169			
Years of Work Exp.	Below 5yrs	9	13.11	2.71	.904	-1.190	47	.15
	Above 5yrs	40	14.70	3.78	.600			

Note:  $\bar{x}$ =mean; SD=standard deviation; Std. EM=standard error mean; df=degree of freedom, Exp.=experience; Ph.D=Doctor of Philosophy; yrs=years; Edu.Qual.=educational qualification; M.Sc/M.Ed=Master's of Science/Education.

Data in Table 2 show that there was no significant difference in the parental choice influence in promoting students' enrolment in PE in SSS based on experts' demographic variables (except on gender with existing significant difference:  $t=1.108$ ,  $p\text{-value}=.03<.05$ ; while others such as educational qualification:  $t=-.238$ ,  $p\text{-value}=.38>.05$ ; years of work experience:  $t=-1.190$ ,  $p\text{-value}=.15>.05$  recorded none). This implies that experts' educational qualification and years of work experience did not differ significantly in the parental choice influence in promoting students' enrolment in PE in SSS.

## **Discussion**

This survey established that PE experts considered parents' enlightenment on the need to make choices regarding subject of interest, having corresponding relationship and agreement and parents' decisions regarding choice of subjects as more viable strategies. According to Davis (2016), sustainable strategies are appropriate to enhance high school students' enrollment in elective physical education. Also, no significant difference was reported in the parental choice influence in promoting students' enrolment in PE in SSS based on experts' educational qualification and years of work experience. This implies that experts' educational qualification and years of work experience did not differ significantly in the parental choice influence in promoting students' enrolment in PE in SSS. These findings are expected and are in accordance with other researchers' findings. For instance, Arora et al. (2021) reported appropriateness of intervention strategies for the enrolment of physically challenged adolescents in school-based physical activity programme. Also, Maureen et al. (2021) revealed that intervention strategies on improving enrolment of female athletes with disability in physical activities, exercises and sports programmes was appropriate. Also, Vikram et al. (2022) revealed appropriateness of workplace intervention strategies in promoting enrolment of school administrators into physical exercise programmes and mid-week sports. According to Aaron et al. (2017), school-based exercise programme was significant on the improvement of fitness, body composition, and insulin sensitivity in overweight individuals. Also, Tamara et al. (2019) reported the significant effect and the appropriateness of interventions in preventing obesity. Similarly, Tao et al. (2021) recorded effectiveness of sedentary lifestyle reduction education programme for reducing sedentary diseases. These findings present significant implication to education, research and policy. Within the educational institutions, the parents play pivotal roles in influencing student's choice of course of study. The future researchers can leverage on the outcome of this study as a reference point or material. These findings might serve as a viable framework for policy formulation by experts or modification of existing ones that would accommodate parental choice influence in enrolling in subjects or programmes by the children. Interestingly, this finding demonstrate the need for the parents to be proactive in parent teachers' association meetings at all levels of education where critical issues relating to students' specialization as well as welfare matters are discussed. Literature evidences confirmed that parents' visitations to schools or programme centres encourages healthy interaction, relationship and choice of specialization in specified field by the children (Gioia et al., 2015; Federal Ministry of Education, 2021). Also, there are indications that making choice on elective subjects particularly at the senior secondary school level should be jointly carried out by the school guidance and counselling personnel, the parents and the students (Theesza, Yang, Malmon, & Bezerra, 2020; Ren, Jolley, & Zhu,

2021). In addition, the need for effective education of the parents by PE professionals on the prospects and career opportunities in PE as well as parents' involvement in decisions relating to choice of subjects and selection at the senior secondary school levels is paramount. Arto and Anthony (2017) recommended the adoption of motivational model of PE and links to enjoyment, knowledge, performance, total physical activity and body mass index as appropriate measures to improve students' enrolment in PE. Similarly, Anam and Ahueansebhor (2017) buttressed on the need for adopting reliable strategies to enhance enrolment of students into PE subject in secondary schools. Also, Daniele and Bratti (2019) suggest the need to introducing a Research Evaluation Exercise (REE) on students' enrolment in programmes. The above reviewed studies reported no significant differences on experts' educational qualification and years of work experience. These reviewed studies are similar in content in exploring the enrolment status of students in subjects and programs in secondary schools. It is therefore plausible to attribute these peculiarities in the findings to the experts' composition and the suitability of the research design used in the study.

The strength of this study lies primarily on the use of appropriate methodology. However, its major limitation was the use of questionnaire to generate quantitative data. Future studies adopting qualitative approaches are recommended to explore experts' views and experiences as well as to facilitate generalization of findings.

### **Conclusion**

The experts considered parents' enlightenment, corresponding relationship and understanding as well as parents' decisions regarding choice of PE subject as viable strategies for promoting students' enrolment in PE in SSS in Enugu State. Therefore, the need for accommodating parental choice in promoting students' enrolment in PE in SSS by the school administration and PE experts regardless of socio-demographic variations becomes paramount.

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