

## Challenges and Prospects in the Promotion and Development of Sports in Secondary Schools in Awka South Educational Zone

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### Abstract

*This study investigated the challenges and prospects in the development and promotion of sports in secondary schools in Awka South LGA, Educational Zone. A Survey research design was adopted for the study as five research questions were raised to guide the study. The population consisted of the students and teachers in all the public secondary schools in Awka-South Local Government Area of Anambra State. The sample consisted of 200 respondents from five (5) public secondary schools randomly selected from the eighteen (18) public secondary schools in the area. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the upper basic school students and their Physical and Health Education (PHE) teachers as the respondents to whom the instrument was administered to while convenient sampling technique was used in administering the instrument. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire containing 25 items. The instrument's validity was established and test-retest reliability value obtained using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was 0.84. In each of these schools, forty (40) copies of the questionnaire were administered making a total of two hundred (200) respondents with a 97.5 per cent return rate achieved. The data obtained were statistically analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency and mean. Based on the findings, in the area of sports promotion and development, secondary schools in Awka South LGA Educational zone face challenges of inadequate sports facilities/sports centers and equipment; insufficient support from the government, improper use of funds for the development of sports in schools, economic problems and mismanagement amongst others. The researchers hence recommended that the government should establish standard sports centers, stadiums and recreational programs that are attractive to all people especially in Awka-South LGA, to ensure that students participates in sports both at school and at home. Also, Government and school authorities should ensure that sports activities are funded in schools amongst others.*

**Key words:** Challenges, Development, Promotion, Prospects, Sports.

### Introduction

Sports in Nigerian schools have grown from a humble beginning as part of learning, an entertainment and recreational past time to a prominent phenomenon whose influence is felt in all facet of lives of the students. In general, Nigerians are sports loving people with very high appetite for winning. Success at competitions create euphoric atmosphere with an injection of vibrancy and pride in the citizens. Nji and Chuwurah (2015) defined sport as physical activity requiring physical effort and skills performed by students according to fixed rules in special areas otherwise called pitches. Also, Udokanma, Akpu and Onwunaka (2016) defined sports as those physical activities people indulge in either as individual or team for the purpose of achieving all round fitness and development.

The contribution of sports to educational development in secondary schools in Nigeria cannot be overstated. Many researchers like McNally (2003) and Newman (2005) among others have showed that participation in sports and other physical fitness activities have a positive correlation with academic performance among secondary school students. A number of benefits can be reaped from participation in sports or physical exercises. Campbell (2001) noted that participation in sports enhances physical fitness, contributes to good health and mind development. Individuals who actively participate in sports exhibit increased vigor and alertness than those who do not.

McNally (2003) asserted that sports promote greater strength, flexibility and endurance as well as coordination and confidence. Sports being a physical activity help students to cooperate and work with others under the same rules and regulations towards a common goal. Arnoldy (2005) observes that sports can be used as a vehicle for creating a safe space, and an entrance into the public sphere. In emphasizing the role of sports, Turner

and Helms (1999) indicated that muscular effort is seen as one of the best antidotes for emotional stress. Exercise is associated with reduced state of anxiety, depression, reduced stress indices and beneficial emotional effects across all ages and both sexes (Hinzen, 1998).

Importantly too, one known avenue by which the child can be totally empowered, so that he can function meaningfully within the society is by creating for him varied opportunities for a worthwhile movement experiences. In the opinion of Goak and Lee (2001), play provides an inner understanding to the child. Through play, children are able to relate to their unfamiliar world, and gain the desired experiences. In all these experiences, the child not only improves his physical and health status, but along the line develops social relation and self-esteem. It is in this light that Slade (1999), affirmed that exposure to early motor skills through formal learning is a necessary ingredient for the development of excellent sport performance in later years. Essentially, it is a period when the direction of the child's life begins to crystallize. In this regard too, failure to appropriately guide the child's tomorrow may prepare the way for future failure.

Over the years, sport has been monolithic in nature and practice. The Coubertin era with its promotion of one dimensional competitive culture gave credence to this approach. Against this narrow perception, Harvey, (2002) has argued that the roles of sports are potential mainly given its highly symbolic, metaphoric and polysemous nature. Consequently, in this regard, Harvey (2002) identified three dimensions in which sports can make contributions. These are social cohesion, citizenship and moral qualities dimensions. However, this can only be made possible when it is perceived as shared common values in which everybody has a stake in the challenges and belong to the same culture.

Conversely, poor performance of sports athletes in some secondary school competitions and Nigerian athletes at international competitions results in a lingering sourness and a contagious sadness that envelope everybody with negative effect on their health, psyche and activities. Sport is therefore as important to Nigerians as the basic necessities of life, like food, clothing and shelter. Consequently, sport has become an important aspect of the Nigerian culture due to its popularity amongst the citizenry.

The Nigerian states recognize the power of sports and have used it to pursue its foreign policy and diplomatic agenda as well as foster national unity and socio-cultural integration. Examples are; the boycott of the 1978 commonwealth games by Nigeria in protest against the apartheid regime in South Africa. The hosting of the 1973 All Africa Games after the Nigerian civil war to demonstrate to the world that Nigeria is united, safe and secured. The introduction of the national sports festival in 1973 was a means of fostering unity and cultural integration after the Nigerian civil war.

Sports has therefore contributed to the oneness of the geographical entity called Nigeria and equally brought about our binding spirit. In sports, Nigerians are detribalized; the Federal ministry of youth development was created in the year 2007, with the mandate to promote the physical, mental and socio-economic development of the Nigerian youth through the advancement of sports and protection of their rights within the Nigerian state, the advancement of their self-actualization. The vision is to empower the Nigerian youth to become self-reliant and socially responsible citizens, while the mission is to provide a sustainable framework for integrated planning and collaboration amongst stakeholders for the development of policy programme, laws and other initiatives that will promote and enhance the development of the Nigerian youth and the protection of their interests. Considering the role of sports in the life of a child especially in Nigeria, government recently came up with a policy aimed at ensuring that; sport is offered as a compulsory subject at the nursery, primary and secondary school levels of the formal educational system. All primary and secondary schools have play grounds for sports as a condition for approval for their establishment. No pupil(s) or student(s) (including those in tertiary institutions) suffers any penalty or discrimination for participating in sports. All schools establish a structured sporting programme, which covers every student except those exempted on medical grounds. Any student in any higher institution of learning offers a minimum of a 4-credit unit course in sports. Secondary schools as used in this study are schools nurturing students from the age range of 11-18 years. Challenges here can be seen as barriers or difficulties that oppose the achievement of a set goal whereas prospects are ways by which an anticipated end can be brought to fruition.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It has been observed that students of secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area perform poorly in the inter-school sports competitions compared to other secondary schools in other Local Government Area of the State. Instances of such poor performance are seen in the 2013 and 2014 inter-school sports competition conducted among secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone. Hence, there is an urgent need to look into the factors responsible for this poor performance otherwise the problem will continue to linger and the students deprived of the benefits of sports engagement. This study is therefore designed to excavate the challenges and prospects to the promotion and development of sports among secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area Educational Zone.

## Research Questions

The following research questions were answered by the study:

1. Sports stadiums or standard sports centers and clubs are existent in Awka South LGA.
2. Students of Awka South LGA are aware of the importance of sports.
3. School authorities and government are aware of the importance of sports to a secondary school child's health, growth and development.
4. What are the challenges encountered by school authorities and students while conducting sports activities?
5. Construction of a sport stadium in Awka South Local Government Area will help to boost sporting activities in the area.

## Methodology

### Design of the Study

The survey research design was adopted in this study which according to Akuezuilo and Agu (2002), involves collecting and analyzing data from a very few people in items considered to be a representative of the entire group. This design is appropriate for this study as only a small portion of the population was used for the study. Survey research design was also used by Atare and Ekpu (2014) in their study on status of recreational facilities in health promoting tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study area was Awka South Local Government Area. Awka South Local Government Area is one of the twenty-one (21) Local Government Areas in Anambra State and is located in North-East of Anambra State, Nigeria. It is made up of nine (9) towns which include; Amawbia, Awka, Ezinato, Isiagu, Mbaukwu, Nibo, Nise, Okpuno and Umuawulu. The people of Awka generally have been well known for blacksmithing.

### Population for the Study

The target population of this study comprised all the students and Physical and Health Education (PHE) teachers from the public secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area educational zone of Anambra State. The public secondary schools in this educational zone are eighteen (18) in number and they are all Day Schools.

### Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample consisted of 190 upper basic school students and 10 Physical and Health Education (PHE) teachers making a sample size of 200. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of five (5) secondary schools from the 18 public secondary schools in Awka South LGA Educational zone. These schools have upper basic students as well as senior secondary students. Using purposive sampling technique, the researchers due to the fact that in most secondary schools, Physical and Health Education was made compulsory only in the upper basic level, selected the upper basic students alone as the students to whom the questionnaire was administered. However, among the upper basic students are the upper basic 1-3 with each of the level having at least two different classrooms of about 20 students each. The researchers therefore used convenient sampling technique to administer thirty 38 copies of the questionnaire to the upper basic secondary students in each of the 5 selected schools irrespective of the level or class of the students. A total of one hundred and ninety (190) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the students. On the other hand, each of the schools were found to have at least two Physical and Health Education teachers, the researchers however used convenient sampling technique to administer 2 copies of the questionnaire to PHE teachers in each of the 5 schools. This makes for a summation of 10 copies of the questionnaire administered to the PHE teachers. It can hence be concluded that a summative of 200 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents in the course of this study.

### Instrument for Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was the instrument used to elicit information from the respondents which contained 25 items based on the research questions raised. The instrument was designed with 5-points Likert scale assigned in numerical values of; Strongly Agree (SA)-5, Agree (A)-4, Undecided (U)-3, Disagree (D)-2, Strongly Disagree (SD)-1.

To establish the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was given to three lecturers in the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education UNIZIK, Awka, to ensure content and construct validity. For this study, the test-retest method was adopted towards finding the reliability of the test items. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was first administered to 15 respondents which are a fraction of the study population that were not included in the study sample. After 2 weeks, the instrument was re-administered to the same group again. The data collected from them were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation

Coefficient (PPMC) and it yielded a high correlation coefficient of 0.84, which indicates a high level of internal consistency for the items of the questionnaire.

A total of 200 copies of the questionnaire were administered in the course of this study and were all duly collected. However, only 195 copies of the questionnaire collected were found analyzable hence a 97.5 percent return rate was achieved.

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency and mean for onward interpretation. For the decision making and consequent interpretation of the analyzed data, the criterion mean was set at 3.00 hence item with the weighted mean below 3.00 showed that the statement made was rejected and vice versa.

## Result

### Research Question 1

Sports stadiums or standard sports centers and clubs are existent in Awka South LGA.

**Table 1:** Mean responses of the respondents on existence of sports stadiums or standard sports centers and clubs in Awka-South LGA.

S/N	Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total Weight	Mean Score	Decision
1.	There is a football club or any sport club in your school	18	30	40	55	50	195	2.5	Rejected
2.	Adequate sports facilities and equipment like a football field, basketball court, volleyball court, tennis or other sports facilities are present in your school	88	41	39	10	17	195	3.9	Accepted
3.	There is a functional sports stadium around your school	-	-	35	65	95	195	1.7	Rejected
4.	Your school have an indoor game facility	23	12	52	58	50	195	2.5	Rejected
<b>Grand mean</b>								<b>2.65</b>	

Table 1 indicates that item 2 was accepted by the respondents whereas items 1, 3 and 4 were rejected. This shows that sports stadiums or sports centers are not existent in Awka-South, no sport clubs in schools, and no indoor game facilities as well. The grand mean of 2.65 which is below 3.00 shows rejection. This indicates that sports stadiums or standard sports centers and clubs are not existent in Awka South LGA.

### Research Question 2

Students of Awka South LGA are aware of the importance of sports.

**Table 2:** Mean response showing awareness of students of Awka-South LGA on the importance of sports.

S/N	Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total Weight	Mean Score	Decision
1.	Sports help to keep students healthy and free from illness.	75	59	14	33	14	195	3.6	Accepted
2.	Sports improve students' academic performance.	26	44	18	67	40	195	2.7	Rejected
3.	Sports help students develop good social life.	73	51	27	34	10	195	3.7	Accepted
4.	Sports increase the physical fitness level of students.	119	70	6	-	-	195	4.6	Accepted
5.	Sports improve students' concentration, retention and time management.	53	30	65	36	11	195	3.4	Accepted
<b>Grand mean</b>								<b>3.6</b>	

Table 2 which contains 5 items shows that the students of Awka South LGA are aware of the importance of sports to them as students. Only item 2 was rejected out of the 5 items. Also, the grand mean of 3.6 indicates that students of Awka-South are aware of the importance of sports.

### Research Question 3

School authorities and government are aware of the importance of sports to a secondary school child's health, growth and development.

**Table 3:** Mean responses on awareness of school authorities and government on the importance of sports to the secondary school child's health, growth and development.

S/N	Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total Weight	Mean Score	Decision
1.	Your school shows keen interest in sports activities.	16	10	8	74	87	195	1.9	Rejected
2.	Is sports training a major activity in your school	0	23	65	59	48	195	2.3	Rejected
3.	Your school management give free access to student on sports activities, during and after school hour	102	50	23	9	11	195	4.1	Accepted
4.	Your school authority made provision for sports activities daily in the school time-table.	50	55	30	18	42	195	3.3	Accepted
5.	Your school participate in inter school sports competition	58	52	50	23	12	195	3.6	Accepted
6.	Is sport activities an important aspect in your school learning activities	95	45	0	32	23	195	3.8	Accepted
7.	Does government sponsor sports activities by providing facilities and equipment in your school	12	43	39	70	31	195	2.7	Rejected
<b>Grand mean</b>								<b>3.1</b>	

Table 3 shows that items 1, 2 and 7 were rejected by the respondents while items 3-6 were accepted. Inferring from the table above, school authorities and government are aware of the importance of sports to the secondary school child's health, growth and development. Though the government is aware of the importance of sports, the finding shows that they do not sponsor sport activities by providing facilities and equipment in the schools.

#### Research Question 4

What are the challenges encountered by school authorities and students while conducting sport activities?

**Table 4:** Mean responses on challenges school authorities and students encounter while conducting sports activities.

S/N	Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total Weight	Mean Score	Decision
1.	Lack of interest among students and the school authority	26	54	2	52	61	195	2.7	Rejected
2.	Lack of adequate sports facilities and equipment.	130	30	15	10	10	195	4.3	Accepted
3.	Economic problems of mismanagement and other various challenges in your school affect sports activities.	60	25	36	26	48	195	3.1	Accepted
4.	Improper use of funds for the development of sports	140	55	-	-	-	195	4.7	Accepted
5.	Lack of qualified sports teachers or coaches to manage your school sports classes and programmes	2	10	53	125	5	195	2.4	Rejected
6.	Government is not supportive in promoting sports in your educational zone	44	79	11	26	35	195	3.4	Accepted
7.	Teachers do not show interest in administering sports for students.	67	50	46	19	13	195	3.7	Accepted
<b>Grand mean</b>								<b>3.5</b>	

Table 4 above indicates that items 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 were accepted, while items 1 and 5 were rejected by the respondents. This shows that the challenges school authorities and students encounter while conducting sports activities includes; inadequate sports facilities and equipments, economic issues and mismanagement, improper

use of funds, government not supportive enough in promoting sports in their educational zone, and teachers not really showing much interest in administering sports for students.

### Research Question 5

Construction of a sports stadium in Awka South Local Government Area will help to boost sporting activities in the area.

**Table 5:** Mean responses of the respondents on if construction of a sports stadium in Awka-South LGA will help to boost sporting activities.

S/N	Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total Weight	Mean Score	Decision
1.	Construction/provision of sports facilities will boost sports activities.	160	30	5	-	-	195	4.8	Accepted
2.	Provision of different sports equipments will boost sports participation.	138	53	4	-	-	195	4.7	Accepted
<b>Grand mean</b>								<b>4.75</b>	

Table 5 shows that items 1 and 2 were accepted by the respondents, which indicates that construction of sports stadium in Awka-South will help to boost sporting activities. Also, the construction of a sports stadium in Awka-South LGA is of great benefit as it will bring in development, community integration and economic growth to Awka-South.

### Discussion of Findings

It was observed that there are no standard sports centers or stadium present, relating to no sport club in schools, no indoor game facilities as well. This finding agree with the view of Ojeme (2002) who described the intramural programme as an all year programme of activity with an intention of mass participation and broad based activities, which there will be need for adequate sport facilities and equipment if participants are to have a fair share of participation in sports. According to Atare and Sanubi (2009) recreation cannot be done in isolation without facilities, so if we want recreation to shape the attitude and behaviour, facilities in schools become a necessity. The finding was also in congruence with that of Ajidua, (2002) who stated that sport facilities in Nigerian secondary schools are in pitiable state and in most cases don't even exist. He further stated that if students in Nigerian secondary schools are to be gainfully involved in sports there must be that enabling environment, sport facilities, equipment and sport programme in schools.

The respondents were of the opinion that sports helps to keep students healthy and free from illness, develops students' social life positively, improves students' physical fitness and improves their concentration, retention and time management. Corroborating the above, in statistical terms Brown (2013) reported that a total of 2673 interviews with college students were completed across 16 campuses during February 2002. The study found that participation in recreational sports programmes and activities is a key determinant of college satisfaction, success, recruitment and retention. Also, Ongonga, Okwara and Okello (2010) stated the benefit of sports relating to the importance of having sport centers in Awka-South LGA which includes; improving physical fitness, improving agility, builds self-confidence outside sport situation, good use of leisure time, development of talent, keeping away from immoral activities. On the other hand, they were not aware of the fact that sports can improve students' academic performance hence indicating the need to intensify teaching on importance of sports participation in the area of academic performance.

The respondents indicated that school management give free access to students on sports activities, during and after school hours, school authority provide period for school sports activities in the school time-table daily, school participate in inter-school competition and sport activities is an important aspect in school learning activities. In relation to this finding, the National Sports Policy of Nigeria, (2005) stated that sports organization was established in 1910 with the objective of developing athletes, coaches, technical officials, sports scientists, sports medicine practitioners, sport administrators and promoting school and institutional sports development and competitions at all levels. Using physical education and sports as the vehicle, with the elementary and secondary school seen as an appropriate starting point. But based on findings it was discovered that school authorities and government have not being able to achieve all the objectives because of the challenges they face which includes; problems of administration and management, financial status, facilities and equipment for development, sports education and sports security.

In other words, the National Policy on Education (2013) took cognizance of the needs of the Nigerian child at all levels of learning, in the same vein; the subjects offered in school curriculum were given prime attention. Physical education was made compulsory at the upper basic school level and optional at the senior

secondary school. Taggart (2003) stated that physical education as a school subject have the capacity to increase the individual's ability and desire to participate in a socially responsible way both in and out of school. With the perceived importance to the individual, that led the National Policy on Education to specifically recommend that specialist and physical education teachers be trained and employed to teach the subject at the secondary school stage.

Unfortunately, inconsistency in physical education policy implementation in schools may have been responsible for the poor handling of the subjects in schools (Dankadai, 2001). This no doubt contradicts the prescription of the NPE. However by way of reducing this nonchalant attitude the National Sports Development Policy (2003) made the following provisions:

- I. Participation in sports shall be compulsory in primary, secondary schools and institutions of higher learning.
- II. The federal government through the federal ministry of education shall provide facilities and funding for sports in institutions of learning at all levels (NSDP, 2003 & NSP, 2009)

From the responses gathered, it was discovered that inadequate sports facilities, economic problems, improper use of funds, teachers not showing interest in administering sports, insufficient support of the government in promoting sports in their educational zone were the challenges faced by school authorities and students in conducting sports activities. In more specific terms Onyewadume and Nwaogu (2006) in a survey of recreational facilities in Southern Botswana schools listed recreational facilities required in a school setting to include soccer pitches, swimming pools, badminton, handball, tennis court, basketball court, archery, table tennis, indoor gymnasium, bowling and goal ball. For effective promotion and development of sports in Awka-south and beyond, these facilities need to be duly provided in schools. In relation to these challenges, Ajibua, (2006) stated that for sport promotion and development to have a strong footing in Nigeria, effort should be made at ensuring that a body of knowledge is developed to prepare competent people that will handle the ever increasing job opportunities in sport activities in Nigeria.

Collins (2001) asserted that great vision without great people is useless. He further stated that for an organization to get to the top, the right people must be in the right position. Non-professionals venturing into sports activities in Nigeria is a major factor for poor promotion and development of sports in secondary schools. The problem with sport organization and activities is lack of discipline in picking the right people to handle the right position in sport organizations in Nigeria as people from diverse fields having nothing to do with Physical and Health Education are kept at the helm of affairs in sports organizations at the National and state level. This gives credence to the lack of interest shown by teachers in administering sports activities as found in this study.

Ajibua, (2006) opined that Nigeria will be more effective in all activities; all facet of her sports if there is a sport policy to guide and give direction for the development of sports. In other words, the policy must explain concretely the strategies for sport activities development; specify goals and roles of relevant agencies and authorities. Unfortunately the present sport policy does not address all these. To further give credence to the findings of this study, Atare and Ekp (2014) in their study on Status of Recreation Facilities in Health Promoting Tertiary Institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria also found that government and non governmental authorities in Akwa Ibom State have not paid sufficient attention to the status of recreational facilities in tertiary health promoting institutions hence the need for the government to see to the construction of sports facilities in schools.

From the last table, it is explicit that the construction of a sport stadium in Awka-South LGA will be of great benefit as it will bring in development, increment in sports participation and events, community integration and economic growth in Awka-South. This is in concordance with the benefits of sports as asserted by Ongonga, Okwara and Okello (2010). Nigeria have got much talented youths to bag most of the trophies in Olympic and other sports competitions as opposed to the number of medals we have got recently in a few games. If these talents are to be harnessed, the need for development of sports facilities and equipments, creating enabling environment and greater motivation for the youths is germane even from the secondary school level.

## Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is lucid that participation in sports is generally beneficial to students in secondary schools and every individual by keeping them physically fit and healthy, improving the level of discipline, helping in character development, improving students rationality and objectivity in thoughts of which brings up high retention rate in schools, all of which boosts academic performance. However, economic problem of mismanagement of funds, lack of facilities and equipment, lack of interest on the side of the teachers to administer sports to students and government not playing a supportive role are the challenges sports promotion and development is facing in secondary schools within Awka-south LGA Educational zone.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should establish standard sports centers, stadium and recreational programs that are attractive to all people especially in Awka-South LGA, to ensure that students participates in sports both at school and at home.
2. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youths and Sports through the school authorities should organize seminars and workshops on the values and benefits of sports to the students especially on the role of sports in improving students' academic performance.
3. Government and school authorities should ensure that sports activities are funded in schools.
4. Proper policies should be formulated against the embezzlement or mismanagement of funds meant for sports development.
5. Sports facilities should be constructed in all schools and the equipment made available for students' use at appropriate time.

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