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Ayobami Honestus Obadiora
Department of Physical &
Health Education, Obafemi
Awolowo University, Ile-Ife,
Nigeria

Adebayo Joseph Obadiora
Department of Arts and Social
Science Education, Obafemi
Awolowo University, Ile-Ife,
Nigeria

Correspondence
Ayobami Honestus Obadiora
Department of Physical &
Health Education, Obafemi
Awolowo University, Ile-Ife,
Nigeria

Social interactional effect of participation in different sports by inmates of ILESA prison in OSUN State of Nigeria

Ayobami Honestus Obadiora and Adebayo Joseph Obadiora

Abstract

Social interaction is limited during imprisonment. Social exclusion hinders inmates' social reintegration after release. It is widely believed that the impact of sports on social outcomes-cohesion and inclusion is greater than the limited evidence base suggests. The study employed experimental pretest-posttest control research design. This study was carried out over a 10 week period at the Ilesa prison in Osun State, Nigerian. 140 inmates were selected for the study. The respondents were grouped into four sports-athletics, badminton, table-tennis and volleyball. The social wellbeing domain aspect of the World Health Organization Quality of Life Scale (WHOQOL-BREF) was used for the study. The data collected were analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics. The study showed that there is a correlation between participation in athletics ($r=0.272$), badminton ($r=.163$), table tennis ($r=.373$) and volley ball ($r=.248$) which is significant at ($P<.05$). It was concluded that there is a social interactional effect of participation in different types of sport by inmates of Ilesa prison in Nigeria

Keywords: Inmates, prison, quality of life, rehabilitation, social, integration, sport

1. Introduction

Quality of life focuses on the personal characteristics and circumstances as influential variables as well as the individual's dynamic interactions with society^[1]. However, social relationships and good health were among the top criterion of quality of life^[2, 3, 4]. Sport presents other two relevant features for the well-being of those who are imprisoned. Firstly, playing sport and taking part in physical activity offers a unique occasion to relax and fight against boredom and this result in a positive effect for inmates due to its reported links to depression, distractibility and loneliness^[5]. Secondly, taking part in sports activities enables inmates to express their needs movement and their rights to take part in educational and cultural activities. From this perspective, sports activities can have double effects: from the one hand they can contribute to develop a positive well-being and offer creative and relaxing activities; from the other hand they can be part of a wider approach concerning the use of sport as a means to foster education and achieve social goals^[6].

The social and educational value of sport has been especially researched for its effect on children, youth and local community in general^[7]. By developing sport in a community it might have meaningful outcomes and contribute to developing community's social value^[8]. Sport involvement provides good opportunities to learn particular social skills, such as tolerance and respect for other and it can contribute to enhance social inclusion and integration^[9]. Considerable evidence shows that sports participants are less likely than non-participants to engage in delinquent or criminal behaviours^[10, 11]; values emphasized in sport context-such as teamwork, cooperation, fair-play-may discourage the legitimization of delinquent or criminal behaviours^[12]. Therefore, sports participation might reduce the amount of unstructured time-with a consequent reduction of possibilities to have anti-social behaviours^[13]-and it might enhance the number of interactions and level of inclusion. In this regard, it is vital to stress that there are a series of dimensions bounded with the concept of social inclusion: relational dimension-in terms of belonging and acceptance-functional dimension-relating to the enhancement of skills and understanding-spatial dimension-concerning the proximity and the closing of social and economic distances- and power dimension, in terms of locus of control^[14].

Sport participation provides a focus for social activity, an opportunity to make friends, develop networks and reduce social isolation thereby promote social support. Social well-being can be conceptualised according to individuals' perception of social support. Conception of perceived social support is understood as the extent to which the individual perceives that his/her needs for support, information and feedback are fulfilled by friends and family [15]. The perception of social support plays an important role in coping behaviour of individuals. The perceived social support scale from family (PSS-Fa) and friends (PSS-Fr) was used to measure social well-being [15, 16]. Good social networks and relationships are often associated with lower risk of premature death and greater well-being. Though, little is known about the potential of physical activity to alleviate social exclusion (i.e. where communities or individuals suffer from clusters of problems such as poor housing and health or to enhance social outcomes (such as increased social interaction and feelings of 'community'), it is likely that the impact of physical activity on such social outcomes is greater than the limited evidence base suggests [17]. Sports provide opportunities for the development of valued capabilities and competencies, and the anecdotal evidence in favour of sport's contribution to interpersonal and intra-personal skills is persuasive [18, 19, 20, 21]. There is increasing believe that sports increases individuals' sense of control over their lives, as well as 'community capital' by extending social networks, increased community cohesion and civic pride [15, 20].

Prisons are meant to be reformatory homes, where persons who come in conflict with the law are sent to for reformation and eventually reintegrated into the society as a better person. But this is farfetched in the Nigerian context, as most of the prisons punitive centres lacking welfare facilities including facilities for sports and recreational activities [22, 23]. This is so because most of the prisons across the country are far from being described as reformatory homes. The structures are old and dilapidated, which may not be unrelated with the fact that most of prisons were built in the 19th century by the Native Authority [24]. The persistence of the problem have also been attributed to the lack of "fit" between the declared objectives of reformation and rehabilitation and the prisons practical operational realities. It has been argued, considering that the punitive, depriving, and dehumanizing state of Nigerian prisons that the declared objectives of reformation and rehabilitation can hardly be realized [25].

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study Setting

The Nigerian Prisons Service, Ilesa Prison Yard, Ilesa, Osun State, Nigeria is a medium security facility, adjacent to Ilesa Police Area Command Headquarters in Ayeso, Ilesa East Local Government Area of Osun State. Ilesa Prison facility was commissioned in 1943 with capacity to accommodate 600 inmates while the 2013 number of inmates is put at about 526. Despite the population of the inmates which was below the prison capacity, beds and bedding in the prisons were inadequate. In some cells or prison blocks where beds are available, mattresses, bed sheets and blankets were lacking. The prison has an open space of about 60 by 80 m size meant for recreational sports and physical activities. The prison yard lacks basic equipment for sporting activities hence the playing field is hardly put into use.

2.2 Type and period of study

The study employed experimental pretest-posttest control

research design. A total of 140 respondents were selected through purposive sampling technique. The study covered a period of ten weeks. The first week was used to administer pre-test questionnaire, the following eight weeks were used for sports participation. The eight weeks included two weeks of teaching on theory and techniques of sports-skills, rules and regulations and officiating as well as six weeks used for active sports practice and within sport group competition sessions. The last week of the study was used for the administration of post-test questionnaire.

2.3 Population and sample size

The study population comprised male inmates in Ilesa Prison. Study respondents were selected using systematic random sampling technique. The study samples were 140 inmates within age 20 and 35 years, excluding inmates on death sentence and those undergoing medical and/or psychiatric treatment. Inmates within the age range were selected because young adulthood typically covers the period from 20-35 years of age, when both biological function and physical performance reach their peak [26]. The respondents were randomised into two groups of experimental and control to facilitate comparison of collected data. The study excluded inmates on death sentence or those undergoing medical and/or psychiatric treatment.

2.4 Data collection

The WHOQOL-BREF scale was used to measure the social wellbeing domain of QOL among inmates of Ilesa prison. The WHOQOL instrument was developed by WHO and simultaneously tested in diverse cultures across the world, this means that the instrument has a strong potential for easy cross-cultural applicability, since the items are framed in culture-neutral terminology [27]. The scale includes widely valued contextual factors of life that are not generally regarded as health-related. Therefore, it is a generic instrument that assesses health-related QOL (HRQOL), and social, environmental and subjective well-being issues [27]. The WHOQOL-BREF is a 26-item, self-administered, generic questionnaire with response options range from 1 to 5 score [28]. The scale is used to investigate the social wellbeing aspect of the quality of life among the inmates.

2.5 Ethical considerations

The study was approved by the academic and postgraduate committees of the Obafemi Awolowo University as a doctorate requirement. Also, the study was approved by the State Comptroller of the Osun State Command of Nigeria Prison Service (NPS) following the advice of the command's legal officer. The study obtained a voluntary and written consent of the inmates to participate in the study. The inmates are fully aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time during the period of the study.

2.6 Data analysis

The data collected were analysed against each of the age categories (20-27 and 28-35 years) of the respondents with descriptive and inferential statistics. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether differences observed on the interactive effects of age and sports participation on the perceived physical health, social and psychological wellbeing domains of QOL measurements among the inmates are significant. Statistical significance was set at $P < 0.05$.

3. Results & Discussion

The relationship between sport participation on the social wellbeing perception among inmates, mean and standard deviation of scores for sport participation and social well-being were collated and presented in Table 1. The relationship between the sport participation and social well-being scores

were analysed using ANOVA and Multiple Regression Analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in the Tables 2 and 3.

3.1 Tables

Table 1: mean and standard deviation of sport participation and social wellbeing

Subjects		Sport participation				Social well-being			
		Athletics N= 16	Badminton N=16	Table Tennis N=14	Volley ball N=24	Athletics N= 16	Badminton N=16	Table Tennis N=14	Volley ball N=24
Experimental	Mean (X)	5.34	5.09	5.96	5.40	30.75	29.38	31.00	35.42
	SD	2.548	2.988	3.294	2.819	7.18	10.25	9.11	10.93
Control	Mean (X)	3.41	3.75	3.07	4.35	32.50	28.28	28.18	38.52
	SD	1.341	.842	.858	1.564	5.388	10.033	10.187	8.053

Table 2: ANOVA of the Relationship between sports participation and social wellbeing

ANOVA					
Social Well Being					
	Sum of Squares	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3711.867	10	371.187	4.424	.000
Within Groups	22571.901	269	83.910		
Total	26283.768	279			

P<0.05

Table 3: Coefficients of regression analysis between sport participation and social wellbeing perception

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	β	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	26.004	6.231		7.147	0.001
Athletics	9.419	.114	.888	5.026	0.002
Badminton	8.422	.386	-.701	8.112	0.001
Table-Tennis	5.111	.764	.246	7.321	0.000
Volley Ball	7.214	.844	-.357	7.717	0.001
R-Square = 0.791, Adjusted R-Square = 0.512					
a. Dependent Variable: Social wellbeing					

p. <0.05

3.2 Discussion

Table 2 shows Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the relationship between sport participation and social well-being perception of inmates in Ilesa prison. All the results of the respondents in experimental and control groups were merged and analysed using ANOVA to test if the differences observed in the social well-being perceptions of inmates in Ilesa Prison were statistically significant. Table 2 shows that the calculated F-ratio of 4.424 for inmates perception of their social well-being was significant at *p*=0.000 when tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The results of multiple regression analysis in Table 3 shows that social well-being of the inmates' increases as they participated in athletics (β =9.419). Similarly, findings revealed that prisoners social wellbeing increases as they participated in badminton (β =8.422) and the contribution of this sport to inmates' social wellbeing was found to be statistically significant. The result of t-test (*t*=8.112; *p*=.001) confirmed this. Furthermore, findings show that social wellbeing of inmates increases as they participated in Table Tennis as well (β =5.111). The result of the t-test further shows that the contribution of Table Tennis to the inmates' social wellbeing is statistically significant (*t*=7.321; *p*=.000). In the same vein, findings reveal that the social wellbeing of the inmates' increases as they participated in volley ball (β =7.214). Furthermore, the result of the t-test shows that the contribution of volley ball to the social wellbeing of the inmates is statistically significant at (*t*=7.717; *p*=.001). The

cumulative *R-square* for these entire variables was put at 0.791. The coefficient of determination (R-square) indicates that the model adequately fit the data. This implies that about 79.1% variance in social wellbeing of the inmates was explained by all the predictors variables entered into the regression model. This study results show that there is a positive relationship between sports participation and social wellbeing perception among inmates of Ilesa Prison.

The study findings showed improvement in social interactional perceptions by inmates both experimental and control groups. This is showed that both active and passive participation in sports has positive effects on social wellbeing. The inmates in control groups were allowed to participate as spectators which provided them with opportunity for social relationship and interaction outside the prison cells but within the prison walls. Both the inmates in control and experimental groups were therefore provided with opportunity to make friends, develop networks and reduce social isolation thereby promote social support. Also, inmates' participation in team sports such as double table-tennis and badminton, volleyball and relay race enhanced their perception of team support. It was agreed that social wellbeing can be conceptualised according to individuals' perception of social support. The perception of social support plays an important role in coping behaviour of individuals [15]. The perceived social support scale from family (PSS-Fa) and friends (PSS-Fr) was used to measure social wellbeing [15, 16].

The study findings also showed that both active and passive participation in sport improves social interaction and wellbeing of the inmates. There is general improvement in social wellbeing of respondents while there is no significant difference in the perceptions of inmates in experimental and control groups. The study showed that social interaction of inmates can be enhanced through active and passive participation in sport programme. This finding agreed with the assertions that sport-based projects, delivered in a specific, well-coordinated, task-oriented and well-allocated way can promote social interaction, integration and reduce anti-social behaviours [8, 29, 30, 31, 32]. This finding further agreed with previous findings that outdoor sport provides opportunity to increase quality of life and heighten social interaction, enhance community spirit, reduce offending, increase social skills, self-efficacy and locus of control behaviour and foster a more socially inclusive society [6, 33, 34].

3.3 Limitations of the study

The respondents were limited to male inmates within the age of 20 and 35 years for maximum participation. More than 48 percent of inmates below 20 and above 35 years were excluded from the study due to age. The results of the study may not be applicable to female prisoners and male inmates outside the age between 20 and 35 years.

4. Conclusion

Regular participation in sports by prison inmates will improve their social interaction skills. Sport has potential to improve inmates' adaptation to prison environment, promote community and prison relations and enhance post-release social integration which reduces the risk of recidivism. Sports in prison should be considered as a vital and cost-effective programme of inmates' rehabilitation. In fact, participation in sport activities can be a vehicle for developing inclusion, acceptance and social skills of inmates during and after imprisonment.

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