

**PERCEIVED INHIBITORS OF PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS  
AMONG FEMALE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AKOKO SOUTH  
WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ONDO STATE**

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**Abstract**

*The study focused on the perceived inhibitors to participation in sport among female students in secondary schools in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State. The variables included; fear of injuries, cultural barrier and masculinity. The study involved 200 students selected from five secondary schools. A self-structured questionnaire was used in data collection of all variables affecting female participation in sports. The questionnaire forms were personally administered to the respondents in their respective schools, and were collected on the spot with the help of three research assistants who were properly trained to administer the questionnaire. Variables of Injuries, cultural barrier and masculinity are good inhibitors of female sport participation. The variables accounted for 75% of variation for female participants in sports. Inferential statistics of Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) was used to test the three formulated hypotheses. It was concluded that fear of injuries, cultural barrier and masculinity are significant inhibitors to participation in sport among female students in secondary schools. It was recommended that State Government and private agencies should provide financial incentives for the provision of essential amenities in secondary schools. Teachers should promote and share information about the positive contributions of female involvement in sport.*

*Keywords: Female, masculinity, participation, sport, students*

**Introduction**

The history of mankind has always been connected with physical activities, which were not intended for their own present benefits. History has shown that certain tendencies in humans have been responsible for their formal and informal participation in sports. People participates in physical activities for the search for food to satisfy hunger, the desire for protection against enemies, the drive from mating and propagation, the urge to manipulate situation for fear of strange and unknown and the need to associate with others (Onifade, 2001).

Every nation throughout the world participates in sports. Nigeria is not an exception. This is because its influence cuts across all facets of national life. Awosika, (2004), established the fact that a lot of people spend precious hours and hard-earned money on sport while the various governments spend millions of naira on it, this prompt one to take a look at the participation of female in sports; when he said that sport obviously has become a symbol of national unity and cohesion.

Sports are an integral part of general education and it contributes to the intellectual growth and development of youths. Mgbor and Obiyemi (2001), Opined that active sport participation by female students play an important role in the maintenance of their physical well being, health and academic excellence. Also sport helps in re-shaping the life of the youth for better future. Institutions all over the world organize sport programme to fulfill the social and other veritable objective of sport. Intramural sport are comprehensive programme of sport competition and recreational activities carried out within the walls of an institution (Oduyale and Okundase 2002).

Akinsanmi and Oloyede (2001), stated that sport contributes to character building, discipline, economy, ideology, patriotism, education, mental development, human communication, physical fitness and health. Sports are one of the greatest endeavours in human experience. It is a celebration of physical excellence which involves health in such a situation that one would be able to walk, run, think and move the parts of the body as may be demanded. It is a medium through which competition, friendship, tolerance, unity, discipline, endurance and diplomacy are promoted. Awosika (2004) said that sports are a unifying factor when he mentioned that if there is a bond that unites the diverse people of Nigeria, it is sport. Further, Bonchard and Lorties (2002) cited sports and physical education as a programme that can reduce school dropouts and hold youngsters emotionally to the schools. They concluded that physical activities provide a conducive environment to human growth, development and behaviour which in turn contribute to the development of better citizens.

Irrespective of these hindrances like (injuries associated with sports, cultural barriers, academic performance and fear of masculinity) there has, now been a growing concern about participation in sports by the females. Anyanwu and Asogun (2006) opined that it is gratifying that certain performance in sports by the Nigeria sports women in recent years have been outstanding. Their success have heightened the awareness of the state, federal government, private organization and the society at large to recognize the place of women in sports in Nigeria society. The emergence of female participation in sports has always been punctuated by a lot of miss-conceptions, false assumption, prejudice and myths. However, the female participation needs to be encouraged to perform better. There are lots of perceived inhibitors to participation in sports among female students in secondary schools in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State.

## **Methodology**

### **Study Area**

The population of the study comprised of female students in senior secondary schools (SSSI, and SSSII) exempting the female students in Senior Secondary III due to the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination in selected public secondary schools in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample was selected from five secondary schools in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State using simple random sampling. The schools were also selected using stratified simple random sampling. The Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State was stratified into two autonomous communities: Akungba autonomous and Oka autonomous community. Three schools were randomly selected from AkungbaAkoko while two schools were randomly selected from Oka Akoko. Forty girls were randomly selected from each school to give the sample of 200 respondents.

### **Research Instrument**

A self-developed questionnaire was used for data collection. The research instrument consisted of two sections. Section A focused on the demographic profile of the respondents, while section B elicited information on the perceived variables inhibiting female sports participation in schools.

#### **Validity and Reliability of the Instrument**

The self-developed questionnaire was given to experienced researchers and other experts in the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko to establish the face and construct validity. The corrected version of the questionnaire forms were administered to 25 respondents drawn from students who were not part of the respondents used for the study.

A test-retest method was used to test the reliability of the instrument after time duration of two weeks. The results of the data collected were subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability test. The reliability coefficient perceived inhibitors of female sports participation was  $r = 0.75$  which meant that the results of the test-retest method of reliability was consistent in conveying the same meaning to the respondents.

### **Procedure for Data Collection**

The copies of the questionnaire were personally administered to the participants in their respective schools, and were collected on the spot with the help of three research assistants who were properly trained to administer the questionnaire.

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to

analyze the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) was used to examine the inhibiting variables affecting female sports participation among the students. Correlation coefficient was applied to examine the relationship between perceived inhibitors and female sport participation. Alpha level of 0.05 was used for all statistical tests of significance

## Results

### Hypothesis 1

Fear of injuries associated with sports will not be significantly perceived as inhibitors to female participation in sports.

**TABLE 1**

Variable	Respondents Number	$X^2$ Cal	$X^2$ Crit.	df	Sig. Level	Remark
Fear of injuries	200	61.65	21.03	12	0.05	Rejected

$P < .05$ ;  $df = 12$ ; critical- $r = 21.03$

Since the calculated value (61.65) is greater than the table value (21.03), the null hypothesis which stated that, injuries associated with sports will not be significantly perceived as inhibitors to female participation in sports is rejected, while the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

### Hypothesis 2

The issue of cultural barriers will not be significantly perceived as inhibitors to female participation in sports

**Table 2**

Variable	Respondents Number	$X^2$ Cal	$X^2$ Crit.	df	Sig. Level	Remark
Cultural barriers	200	68.67	12.03	12	0.05	Rejected

$P < .05$ ;  $df=12$ ; critical- $r=12.03$

Since the calculated value (68.67) is greater than the table value (12.03), the null hypothesis which state the issue of cultural barriers will not be significantly perceived as inhibitors to female participation in sports is rejected, while the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

### **Hypothesis 3**

The fear of masculinity will not be significantly perceived as inhibitors to sports participation among females.

**Table 3**

Variable	Respondents Number	X <sup>2</sup> Cal	X <sup>2</sup> Crit.	df	Sig. Level	Remark
Fearof masculinity	200	56.5	21.03	12	0.05	Rejected

$P < .05$ ;  $df=12$ ; critical- $r=21.03$

Since the calculated value (56.5) is greater than the table value (21.03), the null hypothesis which state that, the fear of masculinity will not be significantly perceived as inhibitors to sports participation among females is rejected, while the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

### **Discussion**

The discussion of findings is organized according to the results of each of the hypothesis tested. The result of hypothesis one which tested whether injuries associated with sports is perceived as inhibitors to female participation in sports shows that injuries associated with sports is highly perceived as inhibitors to female participation in sports and this is consistence with the view of Roy and Irvin (2003), that injury is a real factor, not because the female is more affected to injury but because of the difference in actual strength. Despite the fact that injury is one of the strongest arguments that has been stated against female participation in sports, statistics have however shown that the genital areas have the lowest incidence of injuries. The breasts occasionally, suffer contusions, though these are usually minor.

Hypothesis two revealed that cultural barrier is perceived as inhibitors to female participation in sports. And this agreed with the observation of Okonkwo (2002) that where few females manage to get into these positions, they meet great difficulties especially as it often conflicts with traditional roles in their families.

Also, hypothesis three which tested the fear of masculinity revealed that fear of masculinity is perceived

as inhibitors to sports participation among females and this affirms the position of Ridern (2001) that “females fear in what is being labeled feminization is the development of pronounced muscular, muscular definition of the quadriceps and gastronomies. likewise the view of Williams (2003) that, there is growing evidence that highly skilled female athletes possess great natural strength and essentially mesomorph body structures, but the supposition that girls will become heavily muscled, men-like structures as consequence of intensive training to a tragic distortion of reality.

### **Conclusion**

Females' participation in secondary school sports should be encouraged. As much as the above statement is true, there are inhibiting factors that affect the participation of females in sports. These factors are injuries associated with sports, cultural barrier and masculinity. It is therefore, important that relevant stakeholders (government, NGOs, parents, secondary school authorities) should do all that is necessary to curb the inhibiting factors.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. School authorities and teachers should ensure that there is development of sports programmes to provide equal opportunities for female development and recognize the potential of sports to achieve development objectives in secondary schools in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State.
2. Government should encourage the media to positively portray and significantly cover the breadth, depth, quality and benefits of female's involvement in sports in secondary schools in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State.
3. Secondary school teachers should ensure a safe and supportive environment for female participation in sports at all levels by taking steps to eliminate all forms of harassment and abuse, violence and exploitation and gender testing in schools in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State.
4. Schools management authority should start workshops and seminars on the places of female in sports participation and the need to encourage them in school sport in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State.

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