



An Investigation On Secondary School Learners' Willingness To Participate Into School Sports Activities

Kela Gerald^{1*}

Hamutenyah Julia Lettie²

Nkengbeza David³

^{1*}University of Namibia, gkela@unam.na

²University of Namibia, lhamutenyah@unam.na

³University of Namibia, dnkengbeza@unam.na

Academic Homepage: <https://davidnkengbeza.wordpress.com/>

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2750-9021>

***Corresponding Author:** - Kela Gerald

*University of Namibia, gkela@unam.na

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate secondary school learners' willingness to participate in school based sports activities. A total number of 250 respondents 56% (n = 140) were female respondents and (n = 110) 44% were male respondents between the age ranges of 17 - 18 participated in this study. This study used a purposive sampling carried out onto grade 12 respondents and data were collected at one senior secondary school in Katima Mulilo circuit of the Zambezi region in Namibia. Quantitative approach was employed in which a questionnaire was used to collect data which was analysed using SPSS V.21 software. Descriptive statistics were interpreted in percentages and presented using tables. According to the study's results (n = 200) 80% of the respondents were found not to be willing to participate in school sport activities, whereas (n = 50) 20% of the respondents was found to be willing to participate in sports. Moreover, the study found that (n = 61) 24.4% understood and were aware of the importance and benefits of school sports, while (n = 189) 75.6% was found unaware and did not understand the importance of school sports on learners' wellbeing at all.

Keyword: Secondary school learners, Willingness, Participation, School sports activities.

Introduction

Participating in school sports activities has several benefits for learners, these benefits are associated with the enhancement of learners physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, socially and intellectually (Zealand, 2018). School sports activities have been observed over the years as a way to maintain a fit and healthy lifestyle, even though sports' importance in general goes beyond fitness and living a healthy lifestyle. School sports activities such as inter-house and zonal competitions have helped in the whole development of learners (Namibia School Sport Union, 2022). Partaking in sports at school level has been found to impart life lessons such as accountability, responsibility, self-confidence, self-discipline and teamwork (New Era, 2018). Moreover, the willingness to participate in sports activities in schools has helped to prepare learners to be emotional competent when facing challenges related to their lives individually, enhanced physical and mental abilities of learners and help them achieve the goals of their life (Ekinde, 2017). Research has outlined that learners can realize the importance and benefits of sports when they are given an opportunity to participating and represent their schools at regional, national and international sporting events planned and organized worldwide (Grace, 2019).

Moreover, motivation and training of learners in sports related activities begins right from the school level with the involvement of teachers and parental support (Rengi, 2019). Research

indicates that school sports activities have helped learners in the development of sports values, mutual trust, cooperation, development of learners' capacities in taking immediate informed decisions, enhancement of sporting spirit or sportsmanship which improves in the sporting field, accept losing and respect oneself and others (Namibia School Sport Union, 2022). The learners' willingness to participate in school sports activities; gives an opportunity to do best exercises, which support the maintenance of the overall learners' fitness. Regular participation in school sporting activities has been medically observed to prevent chronic related diseases, help improved healthy heart, strong bones, and improved lung function (Zealand, 2018). Moreover, school sports activities have helped numerous learners to manage weight, manage stress levels, control diabetes and enhance blood circulation, good balance of mental and physical growth which makes bones strong and helps tone muscles to repair (Stergiadis & Zealand, 2014).

School sports activities instill in learners the significance of living a healthy lifestyle; it also helps them in preventing obesity and boosting healthy eating habits (WHO, 2019). Learner who are willing to be involved in school associated sports typically are taught how to eat healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, which gives them advantages of having less risks to be obese, and are likely to become physically active as adults (New Era, 2018). Likewise, consistent participation in school sports and physical activity helps prevent infectious and non-infectious diseases (New Era, 2018).

Learners in most schools in Namibia have buried their talents, due to lack of willingness to participate in sports for the reason that school sports is not compulsory anymore (Namibia School Sport Union, 2022). Research shows that the central impact of school sports to nation building is by nurturing spirits of unity, nationwide pride and to reciprocally instill love and nonviolent behaviours in learners (Grace, 2019). On the other hand, cooperation and team-building are principles that are built up by sporting undertakings in schools which help in developing and sharpening learners' character and increase confidence levels (WHO, 2019). School sports activities have been overly reported and observed to help in building a good health position of the middle age citizens of a country, thus good health is associated with high standards of living which increase life expectancy (WHO, 2019). School sports activities serve as a mother body that boosts the growth of sports-related career, which creates employment opportunities and improves the country's economy (Rengi, 2019).

Problem Statement

Willingness to participate in school sports activities has numerous benefits for learners such as avoiding sedentary life style, improved classroom concentration, boosting and enhancing of self-confidence, team spirit development, team work and cooperation (Morris, 2015). Moreover, school sport is been acknowledge by researchers as a base for talent discovery, nurturing, skills development and mastery (Stergiadis & Zealand, 2014). The willingness to participate in school sports have detereorated over the past decades in Namibia with a voluntary mode of engagement and sedentary lifestyle behaviours motivated by technological gadgets such as tv, internet and social media, and a lot of learners have been found to be inactive and passive participants (Zealand, 2018). Therefore the purpose of this study is to investigate the secondary school learners' willingness to participate into school based sports' (inter-house) activities.

Research Questions

1. Are learners interested and willing to participate in school sports activities voluntarily?
2. Are learners aware of the benefits of participation in school sport activities?
3. Does the school have adequate available equipment and facilities to support school sport activities?

Literature Review

School sports participation is important for learners' emotional, physical, social, mental and intellectual well-being. According to Zealand (2018) physical education with school related sports are aspects responsible to educate a child as a whole in academic learning environment. Participating in sports related activities daily is beneficial for learners in schools, according to NDF (2017) found that by playing sports in schools learners develops physical skill, make and meet new friends, learn to exercise, have fun, improve self-esteem and learn to be productive

team members. According to Morris (2015) learners who are exposed to physical activities daily are likely to benefit positively from this experience. Some of the health benefits suggested by Morris include decreased heart diseases, reduced high risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and numerous types of cancer. Furthermore, Morris (2015) further found that learners who participate in school sport activities are less likely to use narcotics, smoke and abuse alcohol when compared to learners who do not participate in sports entirely. Moreover, according to The State University of Florida as cited by Morris (2015) found that female learners who participate in school sports activities are less likely to fall pregnant than female learners who do not participate in school sports.

According to Stergiadis & Zealand (2014) learners who participate in school sports were found to improve classroom concentration, develop better social skills and are likely to earn good grades in school. School sports gives learners a fair opportunity to develop friendships, learn to embrace winning and losing, learn to play games by rules and practice conflict management (WHO, 2019). The social interaction experienced in participating in school sport have been found to improve learner's daily mood and mental health (New Era, 2018). The British Journal of Medicine (2018) noted that exercising regularly is one of the least expensive way to stay fit and healthy which is associated with prevention of chronic illnesses, and reduce the high risk of different types of cancer. In addition, Sports benefits learners' health in various ways, include building and maintaining bones, joints, muscles, body weight control and fat reduction, decreased high blood pressure (Ekinde, 2017). In the report by Nord (2020) which emphasised that the significance of school sports and exercise is a powerful tool in the development of a healthy body, mind and soul. On the other hand, whilst several subjects at school are taught mostly in the mainstream classroom, sports and physical education gives a great chance for learners to go outside, be involved, get active, and focus on development and mastery of different new physical sports skills (Kela, 2016). Some of the most important aspects of sports in a learners life associated with sports and games were found to enhance social relationships with others, made learners to be emotionally resilient, helped learners in building anti-social skills, created a great chance with starting a sport careers, elimination of stress and less chances to succumb to peer pressure (Orchids The International School, 2021).

Learners' participation in school sport activities within the school site can take a range of forms, with a wide-ranging arrangement outlining three main forms: school sports, free time activity and physical education classes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). Research has further found that Physical education (PE) in Namibia schools is frequently the main form of physical activity (PA) in schools because of its prevalent and obligation by most school regions (Njubei, 2022). The mechanisms of physical education lessons often differ by teacher, class, season and region. In generally, learners are offered a variety of activities that are discrete or group based, with intervallic testing of precise skills to evaluate fitness levels (Wretman, 2017). Moreover, school sports is a second form of physical activity of growing interest to scholars. Sports within junior and senior secondary schools differ widely by school level and form, grade level, region resources, and individual learner favorites, and school sports can happen both in team e.g., soccer, netball, volleyball and basketball or individual e.g., golf, tennis, gymnastics. Distinct physical education, participation in school sports is hardly delegated by schools or regions (Namibia School Sport Union, 2022).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 1991-2019 cited in weekly report by Kositsky & Peele (2021) found that about 57% of high school learners played at least on school sports or community sport last year, grade 9th 61.9%, grade 10th 57.9%, grade 11th 59.1% and grade 12th with 49.8%. These figures show it clearly that there are learners who are participating in sport voluntarily or willingly with intention to have fun, acquire new skills, for fitness purposes and starting a career in sport related activities (Kositsky & Peele, 2021).

Framework

This current study was framed and informed by Green's (2005) Model of Sport Development which examines factors related to sport participation. The Model of Sport Development encompasses three stages such as enlistment, retention and transition. Green's model aims to understand the aspects which are serious to the growth of sport, more exactly the combination

of aspects which influence participation rates and the obligation to sport of individuals. The application of the Model of Sport Development to this study guided the study’s framework and allowed it to explore in-depth information in school sports participation.

Research Methods

According to Bodnar (2015) , defines quantitative research as is proper, independent, systematic procedure in which numerical data are used to get information about the world. This research method is used: to define variables; to scrutinize relationships among variables. This study used a quantitative research approach to examining secondary school learners’ willingness to participate into school-based sports activities.

Population

The population of interest is the study’s target population that it intends to study or treat (Majid, 2018). The population of this study comprised of all grade 12 senior secondary school learners at a selected school in Katima Mulilo circuit of the Zambezi Region in Namibia.

Sample

Sampling is the procedure of choosing a statistical descriptive sample of people from the population of study (Majid, 2018). All Grade 12 learners at this particular school were purposively sampled to participate in this study based on the number of years spent at this school.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection method is an organized method to correctly gather data from numerous sources to provide understandings and responses, such as testing a proposition or assessing results (EGNYTE, 2021). Quantitative data is numerical in nature and can be mathematically computed. Quantitative data measure uses different scales, which can be classified as nominal scale, ordinal scale, interval scale and ratio scale (Kabir, 2016). Data was gathered with questionnaire consisting of 16 items.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis is a process of analysing number-based data (which contains categorical and mathematical data) using numerous statistical techniques such percentages, mean, mode, frequencies and median (Jansen & Warren, 2020). Data derived from questionnaire was analysed using SPSS V21 (frequencies and percentages), interpreted in tables.

Results

This part includes statistical analysis, presentation and interpretation of gathered data collected from questionnaire designed by the researcher.

Table 1 below shows demographics information of grade 12 learners who participated in this study. A total number of (n = 250) participated in this study (n = 140) representing 56% were female respondents, whereas (n = 110) with 44% were male respondents. The respondents were all senior learners between the ages of 17 - 18 in their final year of matric.

Table 1: Demographic Key informants

Year in School	Age Range	Gender	(n)	%
Senior	17 – 18	Female	140	(56%)
	17 - 18	Male	110	(44%)
Senior Total			250	(100%)

Table 2 shows item 1 – 4 derived from the questionnaire. Item 1 emphasised on whether respondents have a favourite sport at their school, to which (n = 215) agreed with 86% while (n = 35) respondents represented with 14% said no. Item 2 emphasised on respondent’s sports participation at school level, (n = 200) 80% said they not participate in their favourite sport, while (n =50) 20% were found to be in agreement. Item 3 examined if school sport was compulsory to all at the school level, (n = 250) 100% said no, implying that school sports is not compulsory to all. Item 4 examined whether school sport was voluntary to which respondent agreed by 100%.

Table 2: Items 1 - 4
Items

		Yes(n) %	No(n) %
1.	Do you have a favourite sport at your school?	215 (86%)	35 (14%)
2.	Do you participate in your favourite sport at your school?	50 (20%)	200 (80%)
3.	Is school sport compulsory at your school?	0 (0%)	250 (100%)
4.	Is school sport voluntary at your school?	250 (100%)	0 (0%)

Item 5 in table 3 below was envisaged explore the willingness of respondents to participate in school sports if the mode of participation was compulsory, (n = 184) 74% responded with yes that would definitely participate, whilst (n = 64) 25.6% said no, that could participate. Item 6 focused on voluntary participation to which (n = 22) said they will get involved in sports voluntary, (n = 228) 91.2% said they will enjoy sport while been watched by other learners. Item 7 focused on respondents' conform to sit idle while watching others participating in school sport activities, (n = 205) 88% said yes while (n =45) 18% said no to sitting idle without actively getting involved. Item 8 scrutinized if respondents enjoyed been watched while performing to which 88% (n = 205) said no, whereas (n = 45) 18% said yes.

Table 3: Items 5 - 8

Items	Yes(n) %	No(n) %
5. If school sport was compulsory for the entire learners would you participate in your favourite sports with all your peers?	186 (74%)	64 (25.6%)
6. If school sport was voluntary would you participate in your favourite sports while been watched by other learners?	22 (8.8)	228 (91.2)
7. Do you enjoy watching others participate?	205 (88%)	45 (18%)
8. Do you enjoy been watched while you perform?	45 (18%)	205 (88%)

Table 4 item 9 examined nervousness (shy) felt while performing school sport activities in the presence of spectators, (n = 230) 92% expressed dissatisfaction and uncomfortable of been watched by other. While (n =20) 8% of the respondents said that they were comfortable to perform in the watchful eyes of others. Item 10 examined self-confidence while watching peers perform school sport activities, (n =185) 74% said yes, that they felt more confident watching than getting involved, (n =65) 29% said no to idleness. Item 11 looked at the importance of school sports to respondents, (n = 61) 24.4% understood and were aware of the importance of school sports for learners. While (n = 189) 75.6% said no, they did not understand the importance of school sports for learners. Item 12, viewed respondents' participation in school based planned and organised sport competitions, (n =50) 20% said yes they always participate in school competitions while, (n = 200) 80% said no they hardly get involved in these competitions.

Table 4: Items 9 - 12

Items	Yes(n) %	No(n) %
9. Do you feel shy if you perform while your peers are watching you?	230 (92%)	20 (8%)
10. Do you feel confident watching your peers perform?	185 (74%)	65 (26%)
11. Do you fully understand the importance of school sports for learners	61 (24.4%)	189 (75.6%)
12. Do you participate in your school inter-house competition?	50 (20%)	200 (80%)

Item 13 in table 5 investigated willingness to watch others while they are performing in competitions, (n = 225) 90% watched the school competition proceedings while (n = 25) 10% said no. Item 14 looked closely at parental support, (n =245) 98% said parents were not supportive of school sports with on (n = 5) 2% supporting sport at school level. The 16th last item looked at the availability of sport equipment and facilities to support school sport, (n = 150) 60% said no, the school did not have enough to support sport, while (n =100) 40% said yes, that the school had a little more to be utilized for school sports.

Table 5: Items 13 - 16

Items	Yes(n) %	No(n) %
13. Do you always watch the school inter-house competition?	225 (90%)	25 (10%)
14. Are your teachers helping in talent discovery and nurturing?	40 (16%)	210 (84%)
15. Are your parents or guardians supportive with school sports activities?	5 (2%)	245 (98%)
16. Does your school have sufficient equipment and facilities for school sports activities?	100 (40%)	150 (60%)

Discussion

The main aim of this study was to investigate secondary school learners’ willingness to participate into school-based sports activities. In accordance with the study’s results items were grouped in each table for clarity purposes.

According to the results of this study presented in item 1 (n =215) 86% respondents indicated to have a favourite sport that they either would like to participate in or watch while others perform. Item 2 results shows that (n = 200) 80% of the respondents were found not participating in their favourite school sport activities, with only (n = 50) 20% that were found to participate in sports. The participation results of only 20% shows that learners are not willing to participate in school sport activities despite having favourite sport they love to watch. These result supports the findings of the Namibia School Sport Union (2022) which found that learners in most schools in Namibia have buried their talents, due to lack of willingness to participate in sports because sports participation. Moreover, Zealand (2018) found that willingness to participate in school sports activities; gives learners an opportunity to do best exercises, which support the maintenance of the overall learners’ fitness. Regular participation in school sporting activities has been medically observed to prevent chronic related diseases, help improved healthy heart, strong bones, and improved lung function (Zealand, 2018).

Furthermore, item 5 in table 3 examined respondents’ willingness to participate in school sport if the mode of participation was compulsory, (n = 184) 74% said yes while (n = 64) 25.6% said no. These results suggest that respondents can and will only fully participate in school sports if sports are made compulsory for all. These respondents’ results disagree with the Namibia School Sport Union (2022) which emphasise that participation in school sports activities should be voluntary and offered to those willing to do so. Respondents’ results suggest that if the mode of participation is compulsory more learners get involved. On the other hand, if the mode of participation remains voluntary fewer learners will participate in school sports activities. Item 7 results shows (n =228) 88% enjoyed sitting idle watching others participate in sports, while (n = 45) 18% they felt comfortable participating in sports. According to Morris (2015) learners who are exposed to physical activities daily such are likely to benefit positively from this experience. Some of the health benefits include decreased heart diseases, reduced high risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and numerous types of cancer.

Table 4 item 9 found that (n = 230) 92% of felt nervous to participate in school sports while been watched by their fellow learners, while (n =20) 8% felt confident to participate while others watching. According to NDF (2017) found that by playing sports in schools learners develops physical skill, help learners to make and meet new friends, learn to exercise, have fun, improve self-esteem, improve confidence and help learners to be productive team members. Item 11

examined the importance of school sport for learners. The results found shows that (n =61) 24.4% understood the importance of school sport, while (n = 189) 75.6% did not understand the importance of sports. According to Morris (2015) learners who are exposed to physical activities daily such are likely to benefit positively from this experience. Some of the health benefits include decreased heart diseases, reduced high risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and numerous types of cancer. Furthermore, Morris (2015) further found that learners who participate in school sport activities are less likely to use narcotics, smoke and alcohol comparatively to learners who do not participate in sports entirely. Moreover, the state University of Florida reports that female learners who participate in school sports activities are found to be less likely to fall pregnant than female learners who do not participate in school sports (Morris, 2015).

Table 5 item 14 looked at parental support to which, (n = 245) 98% of the respondents said parents were not involved at all and only (n = 5) 2% of parents supported school sport. According to the findings projected by the Njubei (2022) suggest that parental involvement in a child's sporting life plays a significant role in sharpening the child awareness with health eating, and fitness, therefore parents should support their children and schools to maintain a good sporting culture that benefits their children to be active in sports. Item 16, found that (n = 150) 60% found equipment and facilities were not available to support school sport, while (n = 100) 40% said were happy with the little equipment and facilities the school had to support school sport activities. In a study conducted by Kela (2016) found that adequacy, availability of sport equipment and facilities motivated learners to participate in school sports activities, while the opposite discouraged students to participate in sports.

Conclusion

This study intended to investigate secondary school learners' willingness to participate into school-based sports activities. The findings show that learners are not willing to participate in school sport unless the mode of participation is changed from voluntary to compulsory. Moreover, this study found that sedentary lifestyle have taken a stool among school learners with some feeling anxieties to participate and other feeling that it is unfair to be watched by others while participating in sport. Therefor this study concludes that:

- Respondents have some sports interest despite not willing to participate in school sport activities.
- Respondents were not happy with the mode of participation (voluntary participation) offered by the school and wished school sport was supposed to be compulsory for all the learners. Voluntary participation is associated with less involvement, whilst compulsory participation is inclusive and helps in discovering new talent.
- Respondents were found to have poor self-confident and low self-esteem which buried their inner self and talents.
- Most of the respondents were not aware of the importance and benefit of school sport that is why they did not engage in sport fully.
- Teachers did not help in the nurturing and discovering of new talent.
- Parents were not supportive of school sport activities neither did they support their children to participate in school sport.
- Respondents were not happy with inadequacies of availability of sports equipment and facilities to support school sport activities

Recommendation

Based on the study results, the following recommendations are suggested with the intention to encourage learners to participate in school bases sport activities. The schools should run awareness programmes to teach the importance of sport and exercising to learner annually. This activity will ensure that learners are motivated, encouraged and informed of the benefits of sport. The school should provide adequate equipment and facilities required in support of school sport activities. Teachers should advocate, educate, advise, discovery and nurture sport talent to those learners who are will to advance in sports. The ministry of education, policy makers, and sport stakeholders should make school sport compulsory as it was before Namibia's independence; with this all learners will have access to show what they can do best.

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