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# **AN INVESTIGATION INTO SPORTS PARTICIPATION INTEREST AMONG SPECIAL PEOPLE ON SELECTED LAGOS MAJOR ROADS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to examine and bring to limelight sports' participation interest among special people and to investigate the factors motivating their participation.

**Methods:** The respondents for this study were seventy-five (75) special people sampled Purposively 25 each from these three locations in Lagos state: Alaba-Rago/Okoko in Ojo L.G; Oyingbo/Sabo in Lagos Mainland L. G; and Ikotun/Egbeda in Aliinoshosho L.G areas respectively. The information gathering tool was a self-structured oral interview format of two sections: closed and open-ended.

**Data Analysis:** The raw data collected was analyzed through frequency counts, percentages, and chi-square statistical analysis set at 0.05 significant Level.

**Results:** The results of the study revealed that a lot of special people are potential athletes. However, they need: recognition, remuneration, easy access to suitable facilities, coaches with special skills, and they prefer sport participation to begging.

**Key word:** Special people; Special sports; Sportpotential; Facility development

## INTRODUCTION

The growing importance of sport locally, nationally and globally cannot be overemphasized. It is conveyed in a World Bank (1999) report that sport is a catalyst for economic development. Globally, the sport sector is valued at US \$36 billion and is predicted to expand by 35 % per year (World Bank, 1999). UNDP (2000) stated that sport is an effective tool for job creation. It observed that by developing new activities based on sport or by effectively using existing sports facilities; sport and community-based programmes can create jobs, particularly for young people, and especially where unmet demand is identified.

However, optimal exploitation of sports especially by potential elite athletes depends on certain factors such as availability, accessibility and suitability of sport facilities. Eboh (1994); Umeakuka (2001); Anajo (2004); and Boye (2004) posit that the provision and utilisation of sport facilities and equipment dictate the level of involvement and performance in any kind of sport all over the world. Specifically, special people require special facilities for sport participation.

In spite of the limitations of the special people, there are abilities in disabilities. This informed the acceptance of the challenged individuals into all the endeavours of life. Some special people had risen to an enviable height in their chosen career. Nigeria topped the medals table at All African Games (COJA 2003) as a result of the superlative performance of Nigerian special athletes in their special sports. Hence, since special people are that relevant in Nigeria sport performance at competition, no effort will be too much to ensure an instant actualisation of special people's sport potentials in Lagos state. Umeakuka (2001) posits that the annual budget for sports by successive governments in Nigeria is a serious problem confronting sports facility and equipment provision in Nigerian schools system. He added that the more government puts money on sport programmes, the better the chances of such government at projecting its image because sport had been identified as a social service that projects the image of the nation.

Ojeme (1999) also confirms facility and equipment funding as an integral part of facility and equipment development. All components of sports facilities and equipment require financial input. Hence, any country that is desirous of achieving meaningful development in this area

must also be prepared to provide on a continuous basis the needed financial recourses.

### **Hypotheses**

These hypotheses were generated for the purpose of the study:

- I. Availability of sports facilities will have no significant impact on special people's interest in sports participation.
- II. Accessibility to sports facilities will have no significant impact on special people's interest in sports participation. .
- III. Suitability of sports facilities to the limitations of special people will have no significant impact on their interest in sports participation.

### **Methods**

The population of this study includes all the special people in Lagos state. However, seventy-five (75) special people were purposively sampled from three locations of the state. Twenty-five (25) each from: Alabarago/Okoko in Ojo L.G; Oyingbo/Sabo area of Mainland and Ikotun/Egbeda in Alimosho L.G respectively. The data gathering instrument was a self-structured interview format of two parts: closed and open-ended. The 'interview format has in its part A: Agree; Disagree and Undecided items while its part B sought respondents perceived opinion on relationship between sport facility and their participation and performance. This fact-finding task was personally carried out by the researcher with a complementary support of a research assistant. Both descriptive (frequency count and percentage) and inferential statistics (chi-square) were used for the analysis of the collected data. The section A of the instrument consists of 15 items and section B (open-ended) is used for recommendations.

**Table 1: Availability of facilities and sports participation and performance of special people**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)	X <sup>2</sup>
Agree	68	90.7	71.3
Disagree	02	2.7	
Undecided	05	6.6	
Total	75	100	

Cal. X2 value: 71.3      Table value: 9.49

Ho: rejected

Table 1 shows the summary of the finding that availability of facility has a significant impact on sports participation and performance of special people. The table indicates that out of 75 (100%) respondents, only 5 (6.6%) were undecided about the impact of facility on sport participation and performance. 2 (2.7%) respondents of the total subjects disagreed. The remaining 68 (90.7%) respondents agreed that availability of facility attracts participation and enhances performance. From the statistical analysis on table 1, the calculated chi-square value of 71.3 is greater than the table value of 9.49 at 0.05 alpha levels with four degree of freedom.

Resultantly, the null hypothesis which states that availability of facilities has no significant impact on sports participation and performance of special people is rejected. It means that availability of sport facilities is significant in sports participation and performance of all, special people inclusive. This result agrees with Omoera (1986)'s view that readily available, attractive and suitable sport facilities/equipment could motivate a child to take part in sports. Brain (1997) also posits that high performance in sports is certainly proportional to the availability of quality sport facilities and equipment for training and competition.

**Table 2: Accessibility to sport facilities and sports participation and performance of special people**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)	X <sup>2</sup>
Agree	65	86.6	69.1
Disagree	5	6.7	
Undecided	5	6.7	
Total	75	100	

Cal. X2 value: 69.1      Table value: 9.49

Ho: rejected

Table 2 shows the summary of the finding that accessibility of facility has a significant impact on sports participation and performance of special people. The table indicates that out of 75(100%) respondents, only 5 (6.6%) were undecided about the impact of accessibility to facility on sport participation and performance. 5 (6.6%) respondents of the total subjects disagreed. The remaining 65 (86.6%) respondents agreed that having access to facility attracts participation and enhances performance. From the statistical analysis on table 2, the calculated chi-square value 0169;1 is greater than the table value of 9.49 at 0.05 alpha levels with four degree of freedom.

Resultantly, the null hypothesis which states that accessibility to facilities has no significant impact on sports participation and performance of special people is rejected. It means that having access to sport facilities is significant in sports participation and performance of special people. Akintunde and Akintunde [2010] emphasize the importance of sports facilities and equipment in development of sports, especially in preparation of athletes for competitions. This is also applicable to the special athletes for successful performance. Similarly, Ojo [2010] also mention that accessibility to facility and equipment is very important for achievement of goals in sports just like many other activities.

**Table 3: Suitability of available sport facilities to sport participation and performance of special people**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)	X <sup>2</sup>
Agree	66	88	70.2
Disagree	4	5.3	
Undecided	5	6.7	
Total	75	100	

Cal. X2 value: 70.2      Table value: 9.49

Ho: rejected

Table 3 shows the summary of the finding that suitability of facility has a significant impact on sports participation and performance of special people. The table indicates that out of 75 (100%) respondents, only 5 (6.7%) were undecided about the impact of suitability of facility on sport participation and performance. 4 (5.3%) respondents of the total subjects disagreed. The remaining 66 (88%) respondents agreed that suitability of sports facilities attracts participation and enhances performance. From the statistical analysis on table 3, the calculated chi-square value of 70.2 is greater than the table value of 9.49 at 0.05 alpha levels with four degree of freedom.

Resultantly, the null hypothesis which states that suitability of sport facilities has no significant impact on sports participation and performance of special people is rejected. It means that having suitable sport facilities is significant in sports participation and performance of special people.

This result agrees with Akinsanmi (1995) who submits that without the provision and effective maintenance of sport equipment and facilities, sports practices will be hampered, reduced and in some cases made impossible. Ojeme (1999) further buttresses that funding is an integral part

of sport facilities and equipment development. Ojeme (1999) and Umeakuka (2002) made similar submissions that the level and standard of sport facilities provision in Nigeria generally is very low.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that availability, accessibility and suitability of facilities have significant importance on the sports participation interest of special people. It is therefore recommended that:

- I. Talented special people that show interest in sports should be adopted by Lagos state government for active sport participation and performance.
- II. Special people's uniqueness should be considered in the construction of sports facilities in Lagos state for suitability purposes.
- III. Fund raising programmes should be organised and more proactive sponsorship sought for special sports' instant and rapid facilities' development in Lagos state.
- IV. National Institute for Sports (NIS) should include training of coaches in special sports.
- V. Since provision of sport facilities is capital intensive, further scholastic efforts should be intensified and directed at initiating sources of financing facility development for special people.



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