

AN INDEPTH REVIEW OF SPORTS CULTURE AND ADOLESCENTS PARTICIPATION BENEFITS

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Abstract: Sport participation has become a culture all over the world, as people globally participate in it at various levels and dimensions; passively as spectators, actively as participants/players or athletes, as audience (supportive, non supportive or neutral), as producers or consumers of sports products, etc. It has become such a strong binding force in human lives and can no longer be overemphasized. It transcends all known cultural barriers, be it race, colour, creed, nationality, country, region, religion, tribe, socio-economic status, age, gender, politics, etc. However, it is now a global phenomenon that people participate in for various reasons. While some people can explain their motive of participation, a host of others cannot. While some see it as a mere play, others see it as competition, mere running, jumping, throwing objects, socializing agents, a form of recreation, rejuvenation, relaxation, and so on. It is uncommon to hear adolescents discuss about the economic and psychological values inherent in sports participation culture. Whereas, adolescence is a unique and critical period in human development when intense socialisation takes place in all aspects of life, including sporting activities. Sports values, culture of societies and their expressions by adolescents from society to society are universal and parts of human existence. The values ascribed to sports are in different areas. Research evidence confirmed that there is an increase in the rate of adolescents' participation in sports, but the area of sports values which the adolescents imbibe and express has not been fully explored. Hence, this study analytically reviews the concept of sports participation with special focus on the economic and psychological values inherent from its participation culture.

Keywords: Sport participation, participants/players, sports products, nationality, country, participation culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture is the changing patterns of learned behaviour and the products of learned behaviour which consists of attitude, values, knowledge, motor skills, and material objects like sports arena, and equipment that are shared and transmitted among members of the society. Its concept is as fundamental as understanding human social behaviour (Wilbert, 2004). Martens (2005), and Giddens (2003), pointed out that the concept of culture as well as that of society is one of widely used notions in sociology and it has various psychological implications. Hugo and Kegan (2007), described culture as the totality of learned behaviour transmitted from one generation to another and which has the highest probability of occurrence in a society. They further described it as the type of tradition in which symbols are transmitted from one generation to the next through social learning.

Culture is the way of life of the people. It has to do with rules and regulations of a group of people, their beliefs, religion, moral behaviour as well as what they are able to produce with the available materials and knowledge. Culture involves the languages, literature, music, sports and games, dancing, dressing, technology etc. it can be learnt through personal experience, imitation or deliberate teaching and learning. For instance children learn how to cook from their parents. Learning of culture continues for a long time in human beings. Therefore, as man develops, he learns the behaviour that

best fits his status in the society. However, one can safely say that culture is always changing and growing (Odanye, Adeniyi & Fagbohun 2002).

The concept of culture, together with that of society, is one of the most widely used notions in Sociology. Culture consists of the values the members of a given group hold, the norms they follow, and the material good they create. Values are abstract ideals, while norms are definite principles or rules which people are expected to observe. Norms represent the “dos” and “don’ts” of social life. Culture is often thought of when used in terms of ordinary daily conversation as equivalent to the “higher things of the mind” – art, literature, music and painting. As sociologists used it, the concept includes such activities but also far more. Culture refers to the whole way of life of the members of a society. It includes how they dress, their marriage customs and family life, their patterns of work, religious ceremonies and leisure pursuits. It covers also the good they create and which become meaningful for them. ‘Culture’ can be conceptually distinguished from ‘society’ but there are very close connections between these notions, ‘culture’ concerns the way of life of the members of given society – their habits and customs, together with the material goods they produce. ‘Society’ refers to the system of interrelationships which connects together the individuals who share a common culture. No culture could exist without a society. But equally, no society could exist without culture. Without culture, there would be no ‘human’ at all, in the sense that individuals usually understand the term. There would be no language for expression, no sense of self-consciousness, and individual’s ability to think or reason would be severely limited (Giddens, 2003).

According to Odanye, Adeniyi and Fagbohun (2002), culture is the way of life of the people. It has to do with rules and regulations of a group of people, their beliefs, religions, moral behaviour as well as that they are able to produce with their available materials and knowledge. Culture involves the language, literature, music, dancing, dressing, sport, technology and so on. In a nutshell, it involves all aspects of life of a people. According to them, culture can be learnt through personal experience, imitation, deliberate teaching, etc. learning of culture continues for a long time in human beings. As man develops, he learns the behaviour that fits his status in society.

Concept and characteristics of adolescence

The term adolescence comes from the Latin verb “adolescere” which means to grow into adulthood”. It begins with the onset of puberty and ends with the assumption of adult responsibilities. As one philosopher remarked, adolescence begins in biology and ends in culture. Because societies vary in when individuals are considered sufficiently skilled and mature to take on adult responsibilities, the period called adolescence varies in length. It may be brief, as it is in some simpler societies, or relatively prolonged in some other relatively complex societies. Despite such variations, one aspect of adolescence is universal and separates it from earlier stages of development; the physical and physiological changes of puberty that mark its beginning (Kiel, 2007).

The term puberty refers to the first phase of adolescence, in which sexual maturation becomes evident; puberty begins with the hormonal increase and their manifestations, such as; gradual enlargement of the ovaries in females and testicular cell growth in males. But because these changes are not outwardly observable, the onset of puberty is often measured by such events as the emergence of pubic hair, the beginning of the elevation of the breasts in girls, and an increase in the size of the penis and testes in boys. Sexual maturation is accompanied by a “growth spurt” in height and weight that usually lasts about four years. Adolescence has traditionally been considered a more difficult developmental period than middle childhood, both for children and for their parents. It is a time of physical, cognitive, and emotional changes that move children into adulthood. These changes are often positive and pleasurable, but there are awkward movements and difficult passages as well (Kiel, 2007).

Psychologists have sometimes concurred with this view of adolescence. For instance, G. Stanley Hall, founder of the American Psychological Association (APA) and originator of the scientific study of adolescence, viewed adolescence as a period of “storm and stress”. Sigmund Freud and his daughter, Anna Freud, spoke of adolescence as a period during which conflicts of the oral, anal and phallic stages of development are revisited, following the relative peace of middle childhood, which they called the latency stage. Empirical investigations of typical adolescence suggest, however, that the extent of adolescent turmoil during this period has been greatly exaggerated. A better conception of adolescents may be as challenging and sometimes difficult stage of life, during which several major life transactions occur. Adolescence is, above all, a period of change. The child turning into an adolescent undergoes dramatic physical, sexual, cognitive and emotional transformations. In addition, there are changes in the social demands made by parents, peers, teachers, and society itself. Adolescence, according to Derek (2013) is the period of life between childhood and maturity, which

biologically extends from the age of 10 to the age of 19. Adolescence is really the period of marked and rapid changes in all aspects of personality; psychological, physiological and social aspects of human personality. An individual who does not get to the stages of adolescence cannot be called an adult (Steinberg, 2000).

Adolescence period is the one that begins when an individual attains sexual maturity until that individual is independent of adult authority. It is the period of transition from childhood to adulthood. When seen from the perspective of the life span, adolescence appears as the time when the wave/struggle of life reaches its highest peak. The adolescent's life is or might be full of opportunities to enter into new experiences, to explore new relationships, to feel new resources of inner strength and ability (Adams, 2006). Adedipe (2017), describes adolescence period as being a disturbing stage of life. He sees it as a period where there are conflicts with the individuals and between him and the adult world. At one movement, he has the wish to be independent and to establish himself as an adult and at another time he has the wish to retail all privileges of adulthood. Adolescence period is a stormy and stressful period to both the parents and the adolescents.

Summarily, adolescence can be defined as the period of:

- (i) Chronological age;
- (ii) Physiological changes;
- (iii) Socio cultural phenomenon;
- (iv) Cognitive development;
- (v) Decision-making;
- (vi) Rapid and profound changes;
- (vii) A state of mind or a combination of these concepts.

Concept of Sports and Sports Participation

Sports and human existence cannot be separated because movement and competition have always been part and parcel of human existence. Wilbert (2008), submitted that life itself is a struggle, that only the fittest survives. According to him, sport participation prepares one for the competitive nature of living. Uduk (2013) opined that, man moves, walks, runs, throws, sings, dances and climbs, right from the beginning of the age and human beings wherever they exist, exercise this body, probably this started with Adam when he ran from the call of God on the account of original sin.

Sport has been a part of civilized societies throughout history. In some cases, as in Greece in the fifth century B.C., sport was of central importance to the culture. At other times, as during the repressive asceticism of the middle age, sport was officially frowned at, but still enjoyed by common people in villages and towns. At the height of the Roman Empire, athletes form a strong labour union, bargaining for higher appearance fee and prices and keeping out athletes who would not support the union. Sport even flourished in varied forms in early American, despite the puritan sanctions against it. Until recently, however, few people tried to examine and analyze sport, to understand what it is, from what human motivation in springs, and what role it occupies in culture (Siedentop, 2004).

Sports participation is as old as man himself. In the Stone Age, man had to strive hard for food, hunt to kill animals, farm and look for shelter. And during his adventure for daily bread, he might likely be chased by wild animals thereby forcing him to run for his dear life. Hence, the early man's participation in sporting activities was an instrument of survival (Oladimeji, 2018). Adedje (2002) asserted that, in the olden days, most traditional societies were sport lovers in the real sense and they organized their activities in accordance with seasons, where youth or men and women were seen displaying their skillful skills with ease and grace in sport or competitions in an indirect manner. Thus, sports participation may be viewed to have originated from various traditional activities.

Also Adedje (2002), in another work stated that sport participation is as old as man, because in the traditional society, people engaged in various forms of play activities during their leisure time. Such activities for youth include swimming, dancing, wrestling, singing and the likes. But what is called organized sports, probably came into existence with the advent of Greek civilization, people participate in one form of physical activity or the other in different nations all over the world. However, those who participate in sports have different reasons for doing so. The early man's participation in physical activities was as an instrument for survival. Participation in sports can be described as either active or passive.

Human beings are bound to play whether organized or unorganized, competitive or non-competitive sports. In traditional African Society, men and women do engage in various forms of sports during their leisure time. In Hausa (Sokoto state) culture, such activities for adolescents include traditional boxing (Dambe), wrestling, while children take part in play activities like swimming, running, dancing and the rest. The type of sports involvement referred to here could be either active or passive. Active in the sense of actual participation, while passive refers to the spectators and the promoters of sports. Sport is a universal phenomenon that encompasses all forms of physical activities in various dimensions primarily designed for the growth of the individuals physically, mentally and socially. The history of sports dates back to the “Stone age” when man used physical activities as a means of hunting and protecting himself from wild animals (Van Dalen & Bennet, 2001). They stated further that among the early people, physical activities were regarded as only useful for searching for food and survival requirements acquired through the development of strength, endurance, agility and skills needed to withstand the rigours of outdoor (Sporting) activities. Sport has played a part in the lives of people all over the world and today sport is seen not just as a mere physical activity, but a means of livelihood and a political weapon as well as unifying factors.

Sport, according to Deford (2006) has been a vital, vibrant aspect of human life since the days of man as a hunter of game and gatherer of fruits. Today, sport bestrides man’s leisure and work; and as a result of his technological advances enabling satellite – relayed live broadcast of sporting events, sport has become an instant global experience. The Hellenistic ideals of beauty and good health, which the ancient Greeks depicted in their marble sculptures and their philosophical saying “Mensa na in corporasano” meaning a sound mind in a sound body were pursued by them through sport. (Van Dalem & Bennett 2001). Eleyae (!989), viewed sports as organized and institutionalized struggle for supremacy between two or more opposing sides or against natural objects. He also considers it as an institutionalized game demanding the demonstration of physical progress. However, the Federal Government of Nigeria defined sport as a highly organized physical activity of high intensity regulated by accepted rules and regulations.

According to Deford (2006) sport has been in existence in virtually every society since the beginning of humankind. Deford’s work and those of Ladani (2019) and Margolis (2000), revealed that the universality of sport in all societies prior to recorded history, is evident in archaeological findings and in the persistence of indigenous or traditional sports among ethnic groups on the continents of the world. Fadoju (2003), regarded sports as activities involving the use of vigorous physical skills by individuals who are motivated by the intrinsic rewards gained through participation, sports according to him is one area of endeavour that cuts across various barriers such as age, sex, race, creed, economic status among others. But one salient point is that those who participate in sports do so because of the expected gains or reward, whether intrinsic or extrinsic. This means that rewards expected by people could be good health, enjoyment, fun, (intrinsic) or money, scholarship, promotion, etc. (external).

Loy (2016); and Nixon and Jewett (2016) agreed that sport is such a pervasive social phenomenon introduced on all aspects of daily life. From the definition of sport, it is an integral part of the society through which useful values and aspirations of the society are passed from generations to generations; sport in many ways contributes immensely to socializing young ones, even at the remotest parts of the country into major cultural, social and behavioural pattern of the society in which they live. Sporting activities have been from immemorial and are still as old as man himself and are part of life in our contemporary society. Human beings both young and old have been involved in sporting activities either as organized sports or unorganized sport.

Generally, sport is not a concept which is precisely defined, as the concept of sports and games are mostly used interchangeably. Sport can be regarded as an institution and social system with far reaching effects for human beings in many social contexts, such as; sociological, psychological, political, economic and to mention just a few. According to Bucher (2019), sport again is an institutionalized competitive activity which involves strenuous exertion or put differently, the use of relatively complex physical skills by the individual whose participation may be motivated. As it is thus regarded as a social institution that faithfully teaches and reinforces societal values, thereby contributing to socializing athletes into major cultural, social and behavioural patterns of the society.

According to Grimes (2001), the idea of organized sports came into existence with the advent of Greek civilization. Since then organized sports were seen by some as personal contests in which individuals compete against individuals, while others view them as political contests in which the honour of one nation is pitched against that of another. He stated further that, the nationalistic attitude has long been with sports, since the ancient Olympics, even when Baron Pierre de

Couberton reviewed modern Olympics, he did it with the aim of re-invigorating the youth of France. Hitler saw the Berlin games as a test of the power of the German Youth and Nazism. United States and Soviet Union maintain that these games serve as a test of their respective political systems. Developing countries sought nationalistic benefits from participating in international contests. In the seventeenth century, sports and games were frequently used interchangeably, although the former has more general sense of divertissement pastime about it and the latter had closer connotation to gaining the gambling. Nevertheless, many writers have rationalized the concept of sports in their attempt to define and explain it (Coakley, 2019; Kenyon, 2018; Loy, 2018; & Hurzinga, 2015).

To synthesize all definitions and explanations, Eitzen and Sage (2008), defined sports as any physical activity that is competitive in nature and is guided by rules. Coakley (2019), expanded and elaborated more, he said in his explanation that such activities must be institutionalized, imploring complex physical skills by the participants, hence his participation is motivated by intrinsic and external rewards. Goldstein (2009) claimed that sports should be embedded with two theories, if they are to maintain their elements, the recreational theory which allows for people to restore and rejuvenate their energies to work and deal with life by playing; while in the diversion theory, sport participation is an escape from work and other tedium of life. The conceptualization that deals with sports in a psychological dimension is that which concerns sports as leisure; Cheek and Burch (2006) stressed that leisure is omni-present, i.e. present in all human behaviour, bursting forth variously in work and other occasions, leisure being a state experienced by an individual in which all necessity is absent. Sports participation in this context connotes involvement or active participation in sports. Sports participation is as old as humanity and as far back as the Anthropologist can go in man's history; there is evidence of sports participation.

Participation in sports is believed to depend to a large extent on various biological, psychological and cultural antecedents (Carlett & Mokgwathi, 2016). Many researchers hold the opinion that success in sports does not limit itself to performance alone, but also to the general life style of a people. Indeed, sports and games are a touchstone for understanding how people work, live, think, and may also serve as a barometer for depicting how a nation/society progresses in civilization (Coakley 2019); Cozens and Stempg (2006). This concept has been clearly proven by the dominance of the two World's super-powers, United States of America and U.S.S.R., in modern Olympic games and other international competitions. Many analyses have shown that the fun of sports is becoming less important than its seriousness. According to Coakley (2019), sports are viewed as becoming more serious than fun. He stressed that participation in sports is no longer a matter of personal interest, but rather, a venture that serves the goal of either creating products or meeting other goals, political inclusive.

Dimensions of Sports Participation

Participation in sport all over the world has taken a new dimension and those who are involved in it have different motives. The motive of the early man was for survival. But today, participation in sports and physical activities are used not only for survival, which is mainly biological in nature, but for motives such as; social, psychological, financial, intellectual, moral and spiritual (Eboh, 2014). Participation in sports is in two dimensions; the competitive and recreational. According to Kane (2015), competition is any situation in which two or more individuals struggle for the complete or large share of a particular goal and in which the success of their performances is relative to each other. Church (2018) opined that, competitive sport apart from tactical and technical proficiency demands a strong fighting spirit in order to succeed. Competitive sport is a double-edged sword inculcating higher values on one hand and nurturing ruthless drive on the other (Singer, 2017). According to Wankel (2006), participation in competitive sport is directly related to one's skill acquisition, interest and motivation among other factors, for example, Gould, Horn and Weiss (2014), confirmed that children cite multiple reasons for participation in competitive basketball game. Such reasons as; focusing primarily on improving skills, having fun, being with friends, enjoying excitement, experiencing success and developing physical fitness.

Sports Participation Motives among Adolescents

Participation in organized sports programme and physical activity is often viewed as a means to promote health during successive phases of the life cycle. Napranic (2014), posited that physical exercise is a vital factor for the preservation, strengthening and improving of health. He stated further that health and social security budgets can create substantial safety, if people take up or participate in sport and that intensive physical activities, it plays preventive roles in the

incidence of disease. Exercise is often used in clinical medicine for diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic purposes, and that participation in exercise/sport helps to reduce risk factors that are associated with coronary heart diseases. According to Eboh (2014), the beneficial effect of regular participation in physical activities and sport programmes on health, have been documented.

Carron (2004), corroborated this by reporting that, active population maintain better health than sedentary populations, while the health of inactive population improved with regular physical activities. The conviction that health is linked with physical, mental and emotional activities goes back to antiquity. Ogunniyi (2012), revealed that even the World's Empire Builders like the Romans, Greeks, Great Britain, China, Russia, the United States of America used sports and cultural activities, and are still using them, to develop the nations socially, politically, psychologically and physiologically. He advanced further that a nation that ignores the components of sports and cultural activities to improve the health of her citizens might spell her doom. Some countries are also highly respected because of their performance in sports. Adolescents are always proud of their country anytime they won in any sports competition and sports participation can be used to gain peoples' support during politics, as the more the victories in sports, the more the fame or popularity. Sports participation is an avenue for teams and individuals to show supremacy and superiority over others. It could also serve as an instrument of national unity and world peace.

Sport participation is a pervasive human activity such that ignoring it is to overlook one of the most important aspects of contemporary Nigerian society. It is a social phenomenon, which extends into education, politics, economy, art, the mass media and even international diplomatic relations. Nowadays, involvement in sport, either directly as a participant or indirectly as a spectator, is almost considered a public duty by many people all over the world. Sport participation is very visible in the politics of many nations; politicians realize the pervasiveness of sport participation and make every effort to use it for political gains. Presidents and Heads of States are well aware of the political potential of big-time sports participation, and this is why they never miss any opportunity to publicly associate themselves with sports. The linking of politics to sport extends beyond the local, state and national levels into international affairs. Politicians from local to national levels capitalize as much as possible on sports for self-political promotion (Adesanya, 2001).

2. SUMMARY

This study reviewed the participation motives of sports culture among adolescents. Sports participation was revealed to be a provider of opportunities for the adolescents irrespective of their different socio-economic backgrounds to become friends and play together. It creates avenues for them to meet old friends, make new ones and it also creates avenues to meet and discuss issues as well as exchange ideas with other adolescents. Sports participation was also discovered to be a good way of making adolescents of a country to work and play together irrespective of their religious, tribal, state, geo-political region, province or ethnic group's affiliations.

From this review, it was discovered that good character can be developed through sports participation and that sports promote the spirit of give and take, such as; kindness, generosity and co-operation. Sports participation was also discovered to be a moulder of character, as it can make participants to be self-disciplined by having respect for rules and regulations. The feelings of self-worth, self-concept and self-esteem can also be achieved through sports participation. It was also reviewed that adolescents through sports participation feel recognised and respected in the society. They think well about themselves and feel real good after participating in sports.

Through the revelation from this review, it was discovered that sports participation helps to relief anger and worries. Sports participation also helps to improve one's thinking skills, to promote mental health, and to relieve or reduce mental disturbance as well as making adolescents fast thinkers. Sports participants also have less time to think of doing evils. The study, also explained that sports through competitions, adolescents are taught on how to put extra efforts into whatever they do, as it gives them the spirit of determination to be successful. Sports participation also teaches them tolerance, obedience, loyalty, peace and fair-play. It was also reviewed that through participation in sports, adolescents can easily learn that life and sports competitions are synonymous in nature, as life is a struggle (survival of the fittest), so also is sports competition. Participation in sports prepares one to be able to cope with the successes and failures in life and in sports competitions. And finally, through sports participation, adolescents learn how to make good use of their body, how to become good citizens of their country and also learn how to be physically, socially, mentally and emotionally stable.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the critical review of the literature on sports culture and adolescents' participation motives, it is therefore recommended that;

1. Adolescents should be educated on the values and the need to participate in sports. This will to a large extent enable the adolescents to know the values of sports participation, hence will spur them to participation.
2. Parents should always be approachable, lenient, sincere, fair and firm when dealing with their children or wards on sports participation issues. This will enable the adolescents to know that their parents approve of their participation in sports and as such will make them feel free to participate in sports.
3. Corporate bodies should endeavour to sponsor sports programmes. This will not only provide opportunities for adolescents to participate in sports but it will help in advertising their business, as well as help them in keeping the adolescents busy and as such reduce the rate of crimes, juvenile delinquencies and also enable them to make a wise use of their free time through their involvement in the sponsored, wholesome and worthwhile sports programmes.
4. Government, individuals (Philanthropists), Private or Corporate bodies should help in the provision of various sports facilities and equipment to the adolescents, through construction and rehabilitation of sports facilities in schools, recreation centres and stadia for easy accessibility for the adolescents.
5. Sports Administrators should be interested in the development of sports by finding means to promote it, rather than working towards its downfall. Such means as, looking out for philanthropists like private, corporate or government bodies to sponsor their sports programmes.
6. Sports Administrators should organise sports programmes regularly and ensure that the competitions they organise are genuinely for the promotion of sports, rather than for making money. They should also make sure that funds meant for sports programmes are not diverted to another programme or misappropriated.

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