

Parental Influence on Sports Performance of Athletes in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the parental influence of sports performance of athletes in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It also examined the interest of parents in sports participation of their children and the level of involvement. The study adopted a descriptive research design of survey type. A simple random technique was used to select 738 (495 athletes and 243 parents) respondents in Ekiti State. A questionnaire whose validity and reliability were ascertained was used for the study. The data collected were added for the two categories of respondents (athletes and parents) after which simple statistical tools of frequencies and percentages were used to answer the research questions while inferential statistics of t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant influence of parents in sports performance of their children in terms of encouragement, supports and assistance during training and competition. Also, the study revealed that parental involvement in sports performances were considered significant because some parent prefer combination of academics and sporting activities for their children.

Keywords: Parent, Athlete, Performance, Training, Competition.

Introduction

Successful athletes often credit their families for encouragement, valuing achievement, love and support while dedicating their winning during media chat. However, some athletes speak about their family pressures, discouragement and disappointments. Parents play a key role in influencing athletes' achievements and

performance. Hellstedt (2000) stated that family influences are always present, visibly or invisibly in the athlete's mind during performance.

Any athletes that lack emotional, financial and physical support from their parents may not perform as expected. Motivation plays an important role during the entire process of training and execution.

Motivation has played a significant role in the attainment of excellence in sports.

The parent-to-athlete influences can be adaptive, thus, contribute to the optimal psychological well-being and positive perception of physical self. The athletes whose parents provide support without pressure, value effort and competition over winning and encourage process rather than outcome are more likely to enjoy participating in sports. Also, a family can also have negative effects on an athlete's development. For example, Cox, Enns, and Clara (2002) indicated that the concerns over mistakes, parental criticism, parental expectations are generally associated with maladaptive functioning that is negative to achievement. Parents who pressurise their children to win and communicate either directly or indirectly that the outcome is more important than the process, appear to promote their children in high levels of negative sport-related behaviours.

Athlete's perception of their performance can be influenced by their parents' gender stereotyped perceptions. Some parents belief that performances of boys are higher than girls. Thus parents' perceived beliefs could explain the gender differences seen in a child's own self-perceptions of their physical performance in sports. Serious athletic competition is still viewed by many people as stressful for

woman in Nigeria because it creates a role conflict in the family. Some parents discouraged their female children not to participate in sporting activities because they perceive the female athlete as masculine causing her to feel defensive and unhappy about herself. However, when it comes to children's participation in sporting activities it is undoubted that the family is the primary entity for socialization and provides important stimuli that profoundly influence attitudes values, cognition and behaviour and thus partially predetermine children further development (Duncan, Kalil, Mayer, Tepper and Payne, 2005). Also, through family interactions, attitudes and behaviour patterns can be transmitted from the parent generation to their offspring in sports development and cause the children to have interest in sporting activities.

It is typically claimed that parents work as role models for their children, set an example and thus convey their own class-based sports orientations and practices to their children (Edwardson and Gorely, 2010). However, parents can provide social support for sports activities of their children actively. For instance, they could play sports together with their children, provide equipment and materials needed, encourage them to start sports

activities, sponsor them to competition or even accompany them to competitions.

In families where children have access to a large variety of sports equipment such as swimming pool, volley-ball court, basket ball court, gymnasium and outdoor fitness equipment, it seems more likely that children are inspired to play sport in their leisure time (De Lepeleere De Bourdeaudhui, Cardon and Verloigne, 2015). Therefore, children from higher socio-economic status may be privileged to participate in sporting activities than lower socio-economic classes. So, parent's attitudes and orientations towards sports are considered important in sport participation, while others may not consider it as an important personality development, social skills acquisition and exposure. In families where sport is given more value with regard to developmental outcomes, children may receive more stimulation and may be inclined to exercise by themselves (Wheeler, 2011).

Studies on family involvement and well-being have been conducted in the academic settings, such as Jennifer and Jacquelynne (2005) on adolescents' perceptions of social support by their mothers' and fathers' involvement protected against unhappiness and well-being. The authors revealed that mothers' and fathers' moderate involvements are

positively related to the psychological well-being of the adolescents, as well as the provision of stimulus which makes an important contribution to the adolescent's well-being. Participation in team sports especially for females, may enhance physiological and psychological well-being, and contribute to life satisfaction. Clearly, research on parental influence on sports performance is needed.

This study investigated parental influence on sports performance of athletes in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Research questions raised for the study are:

- (1) What is the interest of parents in sport participation of their children in sporting activities?
- (2) What is the level of involvement in their children's participation?

Research hypothesis formulated for the study include:

1. There is no significant influence of parents on the performance of their children.

Methodology

The population of this study comprises 15 sports with 495 athletes and 243 parents in Ekiti State both government workers and non government workers.

The sample was drawn from 15 sports: Athletics, Badminton, Tennis, Volleyball, Football, Table Tennis, Boxing, Karate, Judo, Taekwondo, Swimming, Hockey, Handball, Basketball and Weight lifting. The purposive random sampling technique was used to selected 738 (495 athletes and 243 parents) respondents in Ekiti State.

A self-developed questionnaire was used as the instrument for the collection of data. The questionnaire had two parts: Section 'A' and Section 'B. Section A sought information on the demographic data of respondents which included name of town, sports participated in and the status of respondents. Section B sought information on the independent variable (parental involvement and athlete performances) of the study.

The responses for each of the strongly agree, and agree and those for the strongly disagree and disagree were added for the two categories of respondents (parent and athletes). Simple random sampling technique was used to distribute questionnaire to respondents. The data collected for the study were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages while the hypothesis was tested using inferential statistics of t-test. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the interest of parents in sports participation of their children in sporting activities?

Table 1: Percentage showing frequency of interest of parents in sport participation of their children in sporting activities

Interest of Parent	Responses SA / A %		DA / SDA %	
	F	%	F	%
Parents encourage their children to sporting activities	384	52	354	48
Parents introduce sports to their children	464	62.9	274	37.1
Parents prefer academics to sporting activities	422	47.2	316	42.8
Parents assist in training and competition	338	45.8	400	54.2
I always ensure that my children in training for better performances	431	58.4	307	41.6
I believe that training has improve the performances of my children	480	65	258	35
I love to have input in my children training and competition	464	62.9	274	37.1
I enjoy watching my children during training and competition	473	64.1	265	35.9

Table 1 shows the interest of parents in sport participation of their children in sporting activities. The results showed that 52% of the respondents agreed that parents encourage their children to sporting activities while 48% disagreed. 62.9% of the respondents agreed that parents introduced sports to their children while 37.1% disagreed. Also, 57.2% of the respondents agreed that parents prefer academics to sport activities while 42.8% disagreed. 45.8% of the respondents agreed that parents assist their children in sports' training and competition while 54.2% disagreed. Also, 58.4% of the respondents agreed that parents always ensure their

children engaged in training for better performances while 41.6% disagreed. 65% of the respondents agreed that training always improve the performances of their children while 35% disagreed. 62.9% of the respondents agreed that they have input in their children training and competition while 37.1% disagreed. Also, 64.1% of the respondents enjoy watching their children during training and competition while 35.9% disagreed.

Research Question 2: What is the level of involvement in their children's participation?

Table 2: Percentage showing frequency of level of involvement of parents in their children's participation in sporting activities

Level of Involvement of Parents	Response	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Very often	302	40.9
Fairly often	194	26.3
Not often	233	31.6
No response	9	1.2

Table 2 shows the level of involvement of parent in their children's participation in sporting activities. The results showed that 67.2% of the respondents involved in their children's

participation in sports while 31.6% of the respondents did not involved.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of parents on the performance of their children

Table 3: t-test analysis showing significant influence of parents on the performance of their children

Variable	Mean	Std.D	N	df	t-cal	t-tab	Result
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Parents	12.79	12.22	243	737	12.34	1.96	Significant
Athletes	8.87	8.7	495				

***P<0.05**

Table 3 above showed that calculated t-test value 12.34 was greater than the table value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. It means there is significant influence of parents on the performance of their children.

The analysis of the data revealed shows that parental involvement plays a significant role in sports performance of athletes in Ekiti State.

Discussion

Parental influence in athletes performances have been seen to be a potent instrument for energizing athletes into greater performance. Since the members of a family function within a system and share a variety of complex interactions, it is impossible to understand an individual's situation without exploring their general family process as well as specific family member that is family member interactions. For instance parents who invested money, time, and all their resources into their children's sports development might experience tension, feelings of being left out once their children are not take along during national and international

competitions. As a result, an athlete might become or made more aware of the financial and emotional costs of the family and starts to be more compelled to succeed (Ryska, 2003).

Parental involvement in sports performances, the maturity level and competence and experience of the parent were considered significant in the study because some parent prefer combination of academics and sporting activities for their children. This is particularly true in Ekiti State where athlete has to combine training with his/her academics because Ekiti State is known with academics.

Lack of parental influence has resulted in fire-brigade preparations of some athletes for major sporting competitions and we are all aware of the disastrous consequences. It is the researcher's opinion that parental influence on sports performance of Ekiti State athletes has a smooth path to achieving sports objectives. The glamour for sports excellence cannot be achieved if appropriate supports from parents are not there.

Conclusion

The study revealed the significant influence of parent on sports performance of athletes in Ekiti State and there is a positive improvement on athletes' performances as a result of supports from their parents. However, majority of the athletes were of the opinion that it is more advantageous when getting incentive from their parents. Also, majority of the parents find it interesting while seen their children performing well during competition as a result of their supports towards their achievement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

- (i) Parents and athletes should jointly plan with the coaches, programmes that would boost the performance of Ekiti State athletes for better result.
- (ii) The cooperative deals between parents and athletes as far as sports is concerned will yield a progressive achievement always. Parent pride and ego are boosted by sports and all hands must be on deck to encourage athletes who bring such honour.
- (iii) Parents should continue supporting their children both in training and competition period to achieve enviable results in sports.

- (iv) Parents and athletes should jointly set up intermediate training for better performance because parent who supports their children during training and competition increase self confidence, pride in achievement and willingness to accept future challenges.

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