



SPORT PARTICIPATION AND FACILITIES AS PREDICTORS OF MARKETABLE SKILLS IN SPORT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

Dada, Oluseyi Akintunde¹

Ukpata, Christiana Ofie²

¹Department of Special Education,
University of Calabar, Nigeria

²Department of Human Kinetics &
Health Education, University of Calabar, Nigeria

Abstract:

It is alarming to suspect that no University has provision for people with disability in terms of accessible sport facilities and motivation for participation as perceived by Nigerian University students with disabilities. This was conceptualized as a great discrimination, exclusion and wastage of potentials especially for economic skill in sport. To provide empirical prove of the interest and potential of students with disabilities in marketable skills in sport, a survey of 60 purposively selected students with disability were carried out in three Universities to investigate how participation and access to facilities predict their marketable skills in sport. Data was collected using Sport Marketable Skills Scale (SMSS- reliability = .071) as well as Facilities and Participation Questionnaire (FPQ- reliability = .80). Data collected was analyzed using multiple regression statistic and findings show that participation and facilities are significant predictors ($F_{(2, 57)} = 186.34$ and $p < .05$) and accounted for 48% of marketable skills in sport among the students. It was recommended that sport for persons with disability be established in the Universities consequently, sport facilities be expanded to ensure access and participation of persons with disabilities so as to give them optimum development of marketable and social skills advocated in the global inclusion of all.

Keywords: participation in sport, access to sport facilities, marketable skills in sport, persons with disabilities

1. Introduction

Sport for persons with disabilities is not a new concept, but its full potential as a powerful, low-cost means to foster greater inclusion and well-being for persons with disabilities is only beginning to be realized. Sport, gymnastics specifically, was first used in Sweden in the late 1800s as a means of therapy for persons with disabilities. Since then, sport for persons with disabilities has blossomed to include more than 17 international games, including three Olympic-level competitive games targeting athletes with disabilities – the Deaflympics (for those with hearing impairments), the Paralympics (for those with all other forms of physical disabilities such as limb loss and blindness), and the Special Olympics (for those with intellectual disabilities).

Adaptive sports also known as disability sports or Para sports are sports played by persons with disabilities, including physical and intellectual disabilities. While sports have value in everyone's life, it is even more important in the life of a person with disability. This is because of the rehabilitative influence sports can have not only on the physical body but also in the integration of people with disability into the mainstream of the society. Studies show that adaptive sports provide numerous benefits including: less stress, more independence, higher achievement in education and employment, reduced dependency on pain and depression medication, fewer secondary medical conditions (Hidde & Pleog, 2004). UNESCO (2008) noted that in educational setting, disability comes into play whenever a child's education programme is officially altered from what would normally be provided to students through an individual education plan.

Disability has been defined as any physical or mental condition that limits a person's movement, senses or activities. The term disability is conventionally used to refer to attributes that are severe enough to interfere with or prevent normal day to day activities. The United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities states: person with disabilities include those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (United Nations, 2008). Disabilities can affect people from birth or be acquired later in life through injury or illness. It can be permanent, temporary or episodic. The World Bank (2004) estimates that approximately 600 million people or 10% of the world's population have a disability and that 80% of these people live in developing countries.

Shukshin (2005) observed that disability is both a cause and a consequence of poverty. This relationship is particularly acute in developing countries. Studies have shown that 98% of children with disabilities living in developing countries do not

receive appropriate education. This number is however higher for girls with disabilities. As a result, a disproportionate number of persons with disabilities in developing countries live in extreme poverty. At the same time, people living in poverty are more likely to experience disability as a result of inadequate nutrition, health care, unsafe living and work environments. The correlation between poverty and disability has direct implications for the capacity of developing countries to marketable economic skills. Poverty cannot be addressed without confronting disability and economic exclusion of persons with disabilities. As long as 10% of any country's population is unemployed, the country will have difficulty meeting its economic needs.

Persons with disabilities are often faced by societal barriers and, disabilities still evokes negative attitudes and discrimination in many societies. Sports for persons with disabilities is not a new concept, but its full potential as a powerful low-cost means to foster greater inclusion and wellbeing for persons with disabilities is only beginning to be realized (Sherril, 2004). United States statistics on disability sports stated that sports participation among disabled people is significantly lower across all age groups compared to non-disabled (Disabled World, 2004). Barriers to participation in physical activity include high costs, poor access to facilities and unsafe environments. Other more complex barriers relating to identity and shifting social networks also have a great influence. Participation can also be interpreted to include persons with disabilities participating as score keepers, and not active participants. When efforts are not made to ensure participation is inclusive, sports remain simply another area where discriminatory attitudes and practices towards persons with disabilities are perpetuated. Even when the decision is made to make sport more accessible and inclusive, without basic steps to foster understanding, knowledge and communication about how to adapt sports appropriately, intolerance can be exacerbated and divisiveness can ensue. With appropriate communication, knowledge and skill, sports can be a powerful tool for transforming community attitudes and empowering individuals through the acquisition of new physical and social skills, self-confidence and positive relationships (Sport England, 2003). Physical activity is associated with many health and social benefits. It is applicable to those individuals with disability. Hidde & Pleog (2004) noted that physical activity do not only reduce the risk for secondary health problems but also improve all levels of functioning.

University is an academic environment where many youths acquire skills that will enhance their marketability. Adebayo (2011), opined that university education is important in the development of manpower in any nation. It is the level of education a citizen proceeds to after secondary education with the broad aim to become a professional. It provides acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will

enable individual to be self-reliant and useful members of the society. Also, universities develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society. Sport participation is such element that develops youths in the university environment. Every sport has unique characteristics that appeal to one's interest, abilities and expectations. There is also a complex mixture of social and economic factors influencing patterns of behavior and sport participation choices. The decision to participate in one sport or activity over another or to participate at all is usually the result of many interacting factors. Participation is the process whereby two or more persons influence each other in the decision.

Business dictionary defined skill as an ability or capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carryout complex activities or job functions involving ideas, things and or people. Thus, for a skill to be marketable, it imply staying up to date on market trends which helps individuals determine how to position themselves a valuable resource for years to come. Understanding marketable skill is important because in today's fast moving world, the demand for various skills rapidly shifts over time. It promotes more educated and career choices (Career Professionals of Canada).

Similarly, Dooley (2015) identified a sport facility or otherwise sport venue as a building, structure, or a place in which sporting competition or activity is held. A facility depicts a type of sporting event that should be carried out. Types of facilities are Arena, Gym, Baseball park, Stadium, Billiard hall, Autodrome, Swimming pool, Velodrome. Although, various sports require varied equipment that enhances performance, sport wheelchairs and other equipment applicable to specific sports are to support sports participation by disabled persons. Consequently, sports such as swimming, cycling, soccer, handball, weightlifting and gymnastics are noted as beneficial to persons with disability (Health Encyclopedia, 2016). The growth of sport for persons with disabilities is reflected in the academic periodicals and journals that focus on adaptive physical education and recreation, and the many news-letters published by disability sports organizations (Special Olympics, 2007).

According to Fuluchi (2007), sports works to improve the inclusion and wellbeing of persons with disabilities in two ways by changing what communities think and feel about persons with disabilities to reduce stigma and discrimination associated with disability. Secondly, by changing what persons with disabilities think and feel about themselves so as to empower them and help them recognize their potential. Sports not only improve economic development of those with disabilities and make them marketable but help reduce the isolation of persons with disabilities and integrate them more fully into community life. Sports changes community perceptions of person

with disabilities by focusing attention on their abilities and moving their disability into the background. Through sports, persons with disabilities encounter persons with disabilities in a positive context and see them accomplish things they had previously thought impossible. This greatly reduces the tendency to see the disability instead of the person.

The gradual acquisition of skills and accomplishments, builds self-confidence needed to take on other life challenges such as pursuing education or employment. Through sports, persons with disabilities learn vital social interaction skills, develop independence and become empowered to lead and make change happen. In the words of a disabled participant: *"...it was amazing when I came to know the thinking sport (of blind soccer)" since I couldn't imagine that I could play soccer exactly the same as my sighted friends.... By playing blind soccer, I experience a series of challenges, recreation for my daily life, and wonderful comrades. In mastering new technique and challenges each game through team work, I felt a sense of mastery, which makes me confident and proud, I believe sports encourage the spirit of challenge and self-reliance, both of which are essential for our lives"* (Special Olympics, 2007).

In Nigeria, Yakmut (2016) advocated for the use of sports as means of promoting social inclusion and empowering people with disability. According to Yakmut, sport is the most organized activity that youth engage in either as recreational sport or competitive sport. Sport offers an opportunity for physical and psychological safety, skills and character building. Finally, to ensure economic diversification for self-reliance in Nigeria, persons with disability should be encourage into diverse sports of choice. This will enhance their acquisition of marketable skills in sports and further reduce their dependence and alleviate poverty.

2. Statement of the problem

Sporting activities over the years have paved ways for marketable skills in sport such as sales of sporting equipment, employment as sport official and players. However, it has been observed that while the non-disabled persons in the University engage in diverse sporting events including NUGA, their disabled counterparts seem not to harness such activities. This is assume to be due to poor participation resulting from many factors including reinforcement to participate and or lack of sporting facilities which should have positively motivated their participation. Consequently, poor participation by persons with disability is thought to be hindrance to their marketable skills in sport. Thus, the study conceptualized a gap in the marketable skills in sport among persons with disabilities (PWDs) and therefore sought to provide answer to a researchable

problem in the question; to what extent does participation and facilities influence Marketable Skills in sport in terms of being a player, a seller of sport wares and perhaps a sport official?

3. Purpose of the study

The general purpose of this study is to examine if sport participation and facilities influence Marketable Skills in sports in terms of being a player, a seller of sport wares and sport official among persons with disabilities in Nigerian Universities.

Specifically, the study seeks to;

1. Determine the relative influence of participation and access to sport facilities on marketable skills in sport among persons with disability in Nigerian Universities.
2. Examine the joint effect of participation and facilities on marketable skills among persons with disability in Nigerian Universities
3. Establish if any difference exist in the relative contribution of participation in sport and access to facilities in marketable skills of persons with disability in Nigerian Universities

3.1 Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant influence of sport participation and access to facilities in the prediction of marketable skills in sport among students with disabilities in Nigerian Universities.
2. The joint effect of participation and facilities do not significantly predict marketable skills in sport among students with disabilities in Nigerian Universities.
3. There is no significant difference in the relative prediction of sport participation and access to sport facilities to marketable skills in sport among students with disabilities in Nigerian Universities.

4. Methodology

The design of the study is a correlation survey of the predictive type. A purposive sample of sixty (60) students which constitute approximately 40% of the target population were selected from three purposively selected Universities (University of Calabar, University of Ibadan, and University of Jos) with the Department of Special Education consequently have students with disabilities. Data was collected using Sport Marketable Skills Scale (SMSS- reliability = .071) and Facilities and Participation

Questionnaire (FPQ- reliability = .80). The instruments were validated by expert and the reliabilities were obtained from Cronbach estimate of reliability after a trial testing. Data was collected in a group focus method during the meeting that was previously schedule with the students' association. Consented respondents were made to give independent response to the instrument in each of the Universities. Data collected was analyzed using multiple regression analysis.

5. Results

The result of the data analysis is presented in tables 1, 2 and 3 with respect to the hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of sport participation and access to facilities in the prediction of marketable skills in sport among persons with disabilities in Nigerian Universities.

Table 1 shows the result of the data analysis with respect to hypothesis 1. Table 1 present the correlation matrix of the marketable skills with sport participation and access to sport facilities. The result show that there is significant strong positive correlation between marketable skills in sport with both participation in sport ($r = .61, p < .05$) and access to sport facilities ($r = .68, p < .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix of the Marketable Skills, Sport Participation and Facilities (N = 60)

	Marketable Skills	Sport participation	Sport facilities
Marketable skills	1.000	*.61	*.68
Sport participation	*.61	1.000	*.52
Sport facilities	*.68	*.52	1.000

Where * mean the correlation is significant at .05 level of significant

There is also a fair correlation that is not so strong between participation in sport and access to sport facilities. The findings drawn from these results revealed that marketable skills in sport are strongly related to both participation and access to facilities in sport among Nigerian University students with disability. And by being positive correlations, it implies that the more the students participate and given access the more they develop marketable skills in sport.

Hypothesis 2: The joint effect of participation and facilities do not significantly predict marketable skills in sport among persons with disabilities in Nigerian Universities.

Table 2 shows the result of the joint effect of sport participation and access to sport facilities on marketable skills in sport among Nigeria University students with disabilities. The findings revealed that the joint influence is significant at $F_{(2, 57)} = 186.34$ and $p < .05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Again, the adjusted $R^2 = .48$ implies that the joint effect of the participation and access to sport facilities accounted for 48% of the prediction in marketable skills in sport of students with disability in Nigerian Universities.

Table 2: Model summary and ANOVA from the regression analysis of sport participation and facilities on marketable skills in sport among persons with disabilities in Nigerian Universities

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.68	.47	.48
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square
	Regression	2	3403.37
	Residual	57	18.26
	Total		14532.48
		F	Sig.
		186.34	.000

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Participation , Facilities
b. Dependent Variables: Marketable Skills in Sport

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the relative prediction of sport participation and access to sport facilities in marketable skills in sport among students with disabilities in Nigerian Universities.

Table 3: Beta Coefficients of the Prediction of Sport participation and Facilities on Marketable Skills in Sport among Persons with Disabilities in Nigerian Universities

	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std Error	Beta		
(Constant)	50.97	1.27		40.03	.00
Sport Participation	.63	.06	.43	10.22	.00
Access to Sport Facilities	.18	.02	.36	.87	.00

If the relative contribution of participation in sport and access to sport facilities is compared, it is revealed in table 3 that participation in sport contributes more (standardized $B = .43$) significantly than access to sport facilities (standardized $B = .36$). The $t = 40.03$ is also significant at $p < .05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This

implies that there is significant relative difference in the prediction of sport participation and access to sport facilities

6. Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that participation in sport and access to sport facilities are significant predictors of marketable skills in sport among person with disabilities. It was also revealed that these two variables accounted for 48% person of the prediction of marketable skills among the subjects. Again, that participation has more influence when compare to access to facilities but both of them contribute significantly. The implication of these findings cannot be overemphasized as they draw attention to the fact that marketable skills in sport can be harnessed by people with disabilities if they are provided opportunity to have access and participate in sport. Among the skills that people with disabilities considered marketable for them are athletic, trading of sport wares and working as sport official in any of the sport that involves people with disabilities.

When efforts are not made to ensure that sport participation is inclusive, sport remains simply another area where discriminatory attitudes and practices toward persons with disabilities are perpetuated. Even when the decision is made to make sport more accessible and inclusive, without basic steps to foster understanding, participation and facilities for adapting sports appropriately, intolerance can be exacerbated and divisiveness can ensue. Appropriate communication, knowledge and skill, are powerful tools for transforming community attitudes and empowering individuals with disabilities through the acquisition of new physical and social skills, self-confidence and positive relationships are needed for their economic life. This is in line with the discussion of National Disability Authority (2014) that only coordinated and concerted efforts will be successful in addressing this complex range of barriers. From their research five main factors emerged including, stronger leadership, improved and expanded inclusive community facilities, provision of adequate Physical Exercise and physical activity experiences, adequate and accessible information services and comprehensive training and coaching programmes as essential if quality experiences in physical exercise/sport are to be had by people with disabilities.

7. Conclusion

Sport participation among students with disabilities in Nigeria has great potentials including to improve their inclusion, well-being, improve positive self-esteem,

empower and ensures potential realization, positive community perception of disability, reduce stigma and discrimination associated with disability, reduce the isolation and integrate them more fully into community life. It is rather unfortunate that Nigerian university does not have adequate provision for students with disabilities in sport like their counterpart without disability. Meanwhile, this study have revealed that people with disability have great believe that sport is a good avenue of marketable skills and that their participation and access to facilities in sport is strong indication of their involvement in marketable skills in sports.

8. Recommendations

The following recommendations are critical from the findings and discussion in this study as a matter of urgency in order to better the lots and life of people with disabilities in Nigeria.

1. Government should institute a disability sport in Universities and other institutions of higher learning managed by specialists in the area of disability and sport.
2. Universities should improve and expand inclusive sport facilities including playgrounds that are physically and socially accessible as well as materials and equipment for the participation of sports by persons with disabilities.

References

1. Adebayo, F. A. (2011). University education and poverty alleviation as mechanisms for enhancing youth development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Psychology and Counseling*, 4 (1), 1-5
2. Dooley, J. (2015). Macadam MUGA sports venues. Retrieved 2012-04-24. <http://broom03.revolvy.com/main/index.php>
3. Fuluchi, K. (2007). My hope for an inclusive society sports. *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. <http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/sport>.
4. Health Encyclopedia (2016). Sports and children with special needs. www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/content.aspx?contenttypeid=160&contentid=20. University of Rochester Medical Center.

5. Hidde, P; A & Pleog H. V. (2004). Physical activity for people with disability: A conceptual model. *Sports Medicine*, 34(10), 639-649.
6. National Disability Authority (2014). *Promoting the Participation of People with Disabilities in Physical Activity and Sport in Ireland*. Dublin- Ireland: The National Disability Authority
7. Sherril, C. (2004). Young people with disability in physical activity/sport in and out of schools technical report for the World Health Organization" online: ICSSPE <http://www.icsspe.org/pontal/download/youngpeople.pdf>.
8. Shukshin, A. (2005). Disabled often among the poorest of the poor. Bulletin of the World Health Organization at 241-320, online 83:4: WHO <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/83/4/news0405/en/print.html>.
9. Special Olympics (2007). The right to play becomes reality in Bourges. *Press release* online. <http://www.specialolympics.org/special+Olympics+public+website/English/press-Room/Global-news/Right+to+play.htm>.
10. Sport England (2003). *Driving up participation in sport-the social context, the trends, the prospects and the challenges*. London: Sport England
11. UNESCO (2008). *Education for all global monitoring report*. Published Nov.29, 2007. Council on foreign relations. www.cfr.org/education/education-all-global-monitoring-report-2008-unesco/P14950.
12. United Nations (2008). Convention on the Rights of persons with disability. Retrieved: 3 May 2008, online <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r58.htm>.
13. World Bank (2004). Disability and HIV/AIDS. Online: World Bank/home/tropics/health/publichealth/HIV/Aids/disability www.worldbank.org
14. Yakmut, A. (2016). Positive youth development through sport. *The Guardian Nigeria*. September 8, 2016.

Creative Commons licensing terms

Authors will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Special Education Research shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflict of interests, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated on the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](#).