

Factors Associated with Poor Performance of Students in Physical Education Subject in Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

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Abstract – In recent time, the performance of students in physical education subject at the junior secondary school level is not encouraging most especially in Rivers State and this may not be unconnected with the attitude of school authorities, parents and government who may not see any good in the subject. Given the fact that physical education not only provide a sound mind in a sound body but an avenue to discover and nurture world class athletes and leaders, the need to provide an enabling environment for the subject to thrive at the junior secondary school level becomes imperative. Therefore, the study examines the factors associated with poor performance of students in Physical education subject in junior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Keywords – Poor Performance, Physical Education Subjects, Junior Secondary schools

I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, man has invented means of interacting socially with others and one of these is the aspect of physical education which gives room for social interaction and providing an avenue for lasting friendship. Teaching of physical education is majorly done in junior secondary schools where students are given opportunities to discover their hidden talents in sports skills. It is an important aspect of junior secondary school curriculum where physical education is taught directly and indirectly. Physical education is taught directly through class instructions and practical and indirectly through engagement of students in school's annual inter-house sport activities. Mgbor (2006) submitted that physical education is the process of education that concerns activities which the human body requires for maintenance and development. Ogonor (2001) also noted that physical education is the study of the characteristics of human movements and the effects of risky activities on the physiological and psychological characteristics of individuals in the social environment. These assertions by the scholars are a testament to the fact that physical education as a subject is quite interesting and rewarding and therefore, junior secondary school students need not record poor performance in the subject.

II. CONCEPT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Adedeji (1985) remarked that functional Physical Education falls within the continuum of education through the physical, the aim of which is the resultant desire for specific skills to be acquired through balanced and well-planned physical activities. He classified sports practices into three categories:

- i. **Political:** which focuses on the production of national and international champions which can bring national prestige, pride and recognition.
- ii. **Economic:** which rewards the athlete after a performance, and
- iii. **Educational:** which encourages the concept of sport for all and sport for excellence.

Owolabi (1997) noted that human movement and physical activities including sports are the tools of Physical Education which can be conceptually divided into education through the physical, education about the physical and education of the physical. Similarly, Lawal (1996) stated that physical education is an all-encompassing term, including fitness, skills, movement, dance, recreation, health, games and sport plus the appropriate values and knowledge of each. Thus, the skills developed through a good physical education programme are critical in ensuring that students have success in many of the sport and leisure activities common to the community. Consequently, it has been stressed that physical education has a major role to play in the development of young people because it is an integral part of the total education of any child and is closely linked to other creative and learning experiences and skill acquisition that make a significant contribution to the all-round harmonious development of the mind and body.

In view of the foregoing, Lawal (1996) therefore suggested that the planning and management of the Physical Education Curriculum in Schools should always have children as the focus of attention, with the overall purpose of providing rich and varied experiences.

III. UNAVAILABILITY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Adeboyeje (2000) described a teacher as someone who underwent a long period of socialized training and is regarded as moral instructor, moral educator and a moral model for his students. Idehen (2004) referred to a teacher as a professional who imparts skills, knowledge, information, and attitude among others to the learner. Teaching therefore cannot be done by just anybody because it involves a body of knowledge being imparted to a less experienced or immature person through conscious and deliberate approach.

Most junior secondary schools in Nigeria are poorly staffed in terms of the number of physical education teachers and their level of preparation and motivation and these conditions have dramatically lowered teachers' level of motivation (Mgbor, 2006). Idehen (2004) revealed that physical education instructions in secondary schools are poorly carried out. This he emphasized is because teachers who do not have substantive knowledge about the demand of physical education are asked to teach the subject. In the same vein, Emetarom (2004) posited that many physical educators preferred to teach other subjects apart from physical education due largely to lack of motivation.

A research conducted by Atanda and Lameed (2006) showed some physical education teachers listing various reasons why they wanted to do away with teaching of the subjects and their reasons ranged between their inability to cope with practical lessons to satisfying all the students with materials and equipment required for practical classes. These factors which Amusa, Toriola and Monyeki (1997) claimed as being necessary to facilitate effective teaching of physical education by a good physical educator may seem too many to cope with by new entrants into the profession. In the same vein, Adedeji (1994) enumerated some problems facing the teaching of physical education at the secondary school level including an undefined programme of physical education, problem of indiscipline, shortage of sports equipment, and poor financial strength of schools. However, Ajayi (1999) noted that the physical education profession needs teachers who possess the enthusiasm, culture and other qualities that include neatness, excellent health with poise and emotional stability.

IV. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Facilities are material resources that enhance teaching and learning thereby making the process meaningful and purposeful. School facilities can be referred to as school plants. According to Adeboyeje (2000) and Emetarom (2004), school facilities are

the physical and spatial enablers of teaching and learning which will increase the production of results. School facilities serve as pillars of support for effective teaching and learning. Puffa (1988) sees school facilities to include permanent and semi-permanent structures such as machinery, laboratory equipment, the blackboard, teacher's tools and other equipment as well as consumables. From all indications, school facilities are physical resources that facilitate effective teaching and learning.

School facilities have been observed as a potent factor to qualitative teaching of physical education. The importance to teaching with the provision of adequate instructional facilities for education cannot be over-emphasized. Owuamanam (2005) noted that the inadequacy of equipment and facilities were major problems facing the Nigerian educational system. The school facilities and equipment according to him are grossly inadequate to match the student's population while the available ones are poorly maintained. Ogonor (2001) reported that large amount of money invested in school system is wasted when school buildings, equipment and facilities are left to deteriorate without giving proper attention.

Therefore, facilities and equipment in the school needs a proper attention as they have a great value in the support of teachers and students' morale. Additionally, Asiyai (2012) noted that school facilities and equipment impact on student achievement, attendance and teacher retention. Balogun (1982) submitted that no effective education programme can exist without facilities and equipment for teaching. This is because facilities and equipment enable teachers to teach well. According to Ogonor (2001), equipment and facilities when provided will aid teaching learning processes and consequently improve academic achievement. However, Obiyemi and Abayomi (1995) suggested some reasons why physical education teachers often preferred teaching other subjects, among which are lack of equipment in the schools for practical lessons and the exposure of physical education teachers to hardships often caused by this.

According to Ajayi (1999) adequate equipment and facilities are essential for modern programme of physical education and they must be supplied in sufficient quantities to ensure that each child has opportunity for action and developing skills if physical education is to produce satisfactory results. Therefore, Mgbor (2006) posited that in order to achieve attainment in physical education in junior secondary schools, there is need to improve on the facilities and equipment of physical education, such as having the following:

- Standard play ground;
- Basketball court;
- Volley ball court;
- Gymnasium;
- Standard track and field etc.

Adeboyeje (2000) however warned that for physical education programmes to be successful, the desired equipment and facilities must be made available.

V. PROBLEMS OF FINANCE

Finance has been regarded as the financial activities of public authorities in terms of taxing, spending, borrowing and lending and it involves the means of providing for the expenditure involved in the staffing, equipment and maintenance of educational institutions (Ajayi, 1999). The financing of education as an aspect of public finance embraces all aspects of funding of education including the sources of funding and how the money earmarked for education is spent especially for the purchase of goods and services (Ogonor, 2001). Thus, the financing of education is a vital area of ensuring that physical education is well taught (Adedeji, 1994).

Consequently, the successful performance of any junior secondary school in physical Education depends largely upon the resources available to it. Physical education requires huge spending in many areas like getting equipment, building a sporting arena, paying workers, providing first aid care to people, giving health talks and so on. These areas have been neglected and it poses a major problem in the promotion of physical education. Ajayi (1999) reported that most of the Nigerian junior secondary schools' facilities are dilapidated due to inadequate funding. Such situation he submitted hinders effective teaching and learning thereby making the process rigorous and uninteresting to students and teachers.

VI. STUDENTS INTERESTS

In Nigeria, a great number of people neglect physical education because they do not consider or understand its values or that they feel that without these activities, education can still be given to the child. Adedeji (1985) observed that some students believe physical education adds a great value to them while some think that physical education adds little or no value to them. Puffa (1988) noted that in physical education classes, teachers do a great deal of soliciting before students respond and put-up positive attitude in physical education classes and if this is the true situation of things, PE teachers will therefore feel that they need not continue to persuade students to learn physical education. This attitude of students is so because of their mindset that the subject has no future for them.

However, to achieve a positive attitude to the teaching of the subject and stimulate the interest of the junior secondary schools' students in physical education in Rivers State, there is need for physical education teachers to be more creative and show great enthusiasm when teaching the subject, while government and school authorities should ensure the provision of adequate facilities and equipment that would encourage students to participate.

VII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has succeeded in advancing the need for government and stakeholders in physical education to be proactive in their quest to ensuring students do well in physical education subject in junior secondary schools through training and re-training of teachers, provision of equipment and facilities, making funds available at the appropriate time as well as encouraging parents to support their wards to be serious with the physical education subject.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

In view of the foregoing, the following suggestions are hereby made;

1. P.E teachers should be trained and re-trained so as to be abreast of the teaching method appropriate for 21st century teaching and learning processes.
2. Adequate facilities and equipment should be provided in order to facilitate the teaching and learning of physical education in junior secondary schools.
3. Government should provide funds for schools when needed especially for the procurement of the needed facilities and equipment that will facilitate effective teaching and learning of physical education.
4. Parents should encourage their wards to embrace physical education subject as this would not only develop their overall wellbeing but it would also engender lasting friendship and prepare them for leadership roles.

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