



Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Physical Activities Among Undergraduate Students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the knowledge, attitude and practice towards physical activities among undergraduate students with and without disabilities. Physical activities means organized and selected body movement produced by contraction of skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure which is low, moderate or high intensity that aims at improving physical fitness of an individual. The investigations were carried out in University of Nigeria, Nsukka Campus. Descriptive survey research design was used and the population for the study consists of all the regular undergraduate students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, campus totaling about 35,600 students as at 2012/2013 academic session. A sample of 320 students was used and multi-stage sampling techniques was adopted to select the sample. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire administered to students with and without disabilities in selected departments in Nsukka Campus. The statistical tools used for the analysis were frequency, percentage and mean. From the findings of the study, the students had high knowledge on physical activities, meaning, they had positive attitude towards physical activities participation and their practice of physical activities was very high. The study recommended that physical activities should be incorporated into school programme to be practiced once in every week. The study ends with some suggestions for further research which includes the motives and barriers to physical activities participation among undergraduates and health implications of body inactivity on undergraduates of UNN.

KEYWORDS

Special education, diverse learners, physical activities, Disabilities

Introduction

It is an undisputed fact that physical activities help in promoting individuals health and healthy living, especially in this sophisticated world. Participating in physical activities is considered as fulfilling a domain of the healthy lifestyles (Wee, 2010). At present, the promotion of physical exercise has become one of the Government's main objectives with respect to public health. This is due to the fact that among the goals to be achieved by the Government, is the prevention of the illnesses caused by sedentarism as well as boost of a healthy and suitable lifestyle (Partrick, Spear, Holt, and Sotka, 2001). Physical activities practiced on a regular basis are associated with a great amount of physical, psychological and physiological benefits, and play an exceptional role in preventing a variety of illnesses (Biddle, 2003).

Physical activities according to World Health Organization, WHO, (2000) are a bodily movement produced by the contraction of skeletal muscle that requires energy expenditures in excess of resting energy. Active People Survey, APS, (2008) Opined that physical activities are wide range of activities involving movement including house work such as vacuuming and digging the garden, active hobbies, walking and cycling, dancing, exercise such as swimming or going to the gym, and sports. This definition is in line with Godbey (2009) who explained that physical activities today can be classified by cultural function thus:

- Physical activities necessary for work, house work and personal care (such as walking to the car, mopping a floor, taking a shower);
- Physical activities undertaken for pleasure (eg, gardening, hiking, playing, tennis, and dancing).
- Physical activities undertaken to improve health like: (aerobics, weightlifting)

Physical activities also include movement done as part of a

job such as walking, lifting and carrying (Kath and Katie, 2011). Dallas (2002) explained physical activities as a particular manifestation of cultural leisure form. For the purpose of this study, physical activities means the organized and selected body movement produced by contraction of skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure which is either low intensity, moderate or high intensity which aims at improving physical fitness of an individual. It is organized and selected because, not every activity can improve an individual's health. For example when a person jumps down from a mango tree, it is an activity but it is dangerous to the person's body.

Planned and regular physical activities boost the immune system and promote the optimal performance of all major systems of the human body: musculoskeletal; cardiovascular; immunologic; neurosensory and gastrointestinal (Sherr, 2004). Some aspects of physical activities are exercise, play, games, sports, recreation and movement etc. These aspects of physical activities are not the same in meaning but people often use them interchangeably. Physical exercise means a subset of the physical activities behavior that involves purposive and repetitive movements with aim of improving cardio-vascular or muscular fitness (Aweto, Oligbo, Fapojuwo and Olawale 2013). Brown (2005) described movement as an act of moving the body or part of the body like hand movement, leg movement etc. movement could be locomotor or non-locomotor movements. Play also means to be involved in a game either to compete against somebody or to make contact with equipment, like ball etc. (Hornby, 2005). Play has no rules or law. Sports according to Online Dictionary Thesaurus(2000), an activity involving physical exertion and skill that is governed by a set of rules or customs and often undertaken competitively. Kent (2006) defined sport as any highly structured, goal directed toward physical activities governed by rules and also involving high level commitment with the aim of excelling above an opponent. Recreation according to Bruce (2005) is the fact of people doing things for enjoyment, when they are

not working which could be football, golf etc. All aspects are related because they involve contraction of skeletal muscles in the execution and practice. An individual's habits towards something are influenced by his knowledge of that particular behavior.

So also, an individual's physical activities habits are influenced by knowledge of physical activities. This means that an individual's knowledge guides his behavior or reactions to some events. Knowledge is the remembering or recall of a material that has been learned previously. All what is needed is the ability to remember or to bring to mind the learned information or skill exactly the way it was learned. Facts such as names of people and objects belong to this aspect of learning (Akudolu, 1995). Once a person's name is learned, it can be reproduced when needed. Vainioh (2002) identified that in normal conversation, knowledge is used to mean: knowing that (facts and information) and knowing how (the ability to do something).

Sometimes we use the word knowledge to mean that we have some information, we know that Mary drinks Lemonade for example. When we have this type of knowledge, then we are able to express it. Stanley (2002) defined knowledge as a familiarity with someone or something which can include facts, information, descriptions or skills acquired through experience or education. This is in line with Brown (2005) who opined that knowledge is the facts, information, understanding and skills that a person has acquired through experience or education. Ezedum (2002), in his view, explained that knowledge is prerequisites to any action (or practice).

In this study, knowledge means familiarity, awareness or understanding gained through experience, study or specific information about physical activities. Knowledge of physical activities therefore means familiarity, awareness or understanding that has been perceived or learned about planned and selected bodily movement produced by contraction of muscles that requires energy expenditure which is low, moderate or high intensity that aims at improving physical fitness of an individual. An individual's physical activity practice is influenced not only by his knowledge of physical activities but also his attitudes towards physical activities participation.

An attitude is a hypothetical construct that represents an individual's degree of like or dislike for an object or item. Attitudes are generally positive or negative views of a person about a place, thing or event (Obi-keguna and Isidore, 2004). Every attitude, positive or negative, acceptable or unacceptable is formed for a purpose. This is in line with Eyo (2005) who maintained that attitude is formed either positively or negatively when one comes in contact with the attitude object. Lambert and Lambert (2004) asserted that attitude is an organized and consistent manner of thinking, feeling and reacting to people, groups, social issues or any event in one's environment. Attitude can also be referred to as the results of either direct experience or observational learning from the environment which could be positive or negative. However, in this study, attitudes of physical activities are generally positive or negative views of a person or an individual about planned and selected bodily movement produced by the contraction of skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditures in excess of resting energy. There is link between attitude and behavior and many agree that attitudes are influential in practice. Since it is believed that attitude do influence behavior, Biddle and Chatzisarantis (2007) opined that attitudes are only part of a more complex decision making process where other factors can also be of influence, values, beliefs, perceptions of control and intentions, moderate attitude and behavior relationship.

According to Hornby (2003), practice is referred to as the means of doing something, a way of doing something that is common or habitual, frequent or systematic repetition, repeated exercise in doing something. The practices include involving in garden, farming, good storage facilities or good preservation practical use or performance as compared with idea,

intention, rules etc. It is a repeated performance or exercise in order to gain skill in some art, game etc. (Mayor, Fox, Combley, Adrianvallance, Marwick, Dignen and Handorf, 2009). BBC English dictionary (2001) explained that something people do regularly or the way in which they do it can be referred to as practice.

In this study, practice is a regular training or exercise in something, or the period of time you spend doing this. Therefore, practice of physical activities is referred to as the means and ways of participating or involving in bodily movement produced by the contraction of skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditures in excess of resting energy which is commonly habitual, frequent or systematic repetition. Practice of physical activities (P.A). could be done by undergraduate students or any other person.

However, Akudolu (2005) explained undergraduate as a university or college student who is studying his/her first degree. Once a student has first degree, he/she is called a graduate and may choose to take a higher degree.

In this study, undergraduate means student who is studying for his/her first degree within the four walls of the university legally. There are different levels of undergraduate study equating from first year to fourth year and also some study up to fifth year. Among the undergraduates, some are males, while some are females. Some are married while some are single. Some undergraduates live in hostel while many prefer off-campus that is, residing outside the school community. There are also different faculties, departments of which the students come from.

There is need for change of attitude if the attitude towards beneficial events is negative (eg) if participation in physical activities attitudes of people are negative, there is need for change to positive attitude. Nutbeam and Harris (2004) explained that in order for behavior change to take place, an individual must first believe that change is both possible and beneficial, and that the benefits of changing outweigh any perceived costs of making the change. For example, if a student does not consider his body to be inactive or less active, he is unlikely to make any significant physical activities change to improve his health especially if he perceives that doing so would mean substituting his studying time for some other activities which are capable of changing their behavior, can be a lay determinant of physical activities practice. Brug (2008) in his own view stated that researchers have recommended that motivational education techniques may be useful in influencing personal belief and therefore support sustained attitude change. Kath and Katie (2011) pointed out that work commitments, lack of leisure time, caring for children and not having enough money are perceived barriers to participate in physical activities. While more leisure time, skill development availability of good facilities, increased motivation, advice from a doctor or nurse would encourage them to take part in more physical activities. For one to happily engage in physical activities, he or she must be motivated to do so, and there should be adequate facilities, equipments and supplies.

Methods

A descriptive survey research design was used in this study. According to Nworgu (2006), descriptive survey research design demands collecting data on and in a systematic manner, the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. According to Wellington (2000), a survey is essentially a fact finding mission and it involves the use of a questionnaire, to give a wider picture or an over view. This method of research design is considered suitable because it enables the investigators to reach a good number of the respondents.

The population for the study consists of all the regular undergraduate students with and without disabilities of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka campus. There are nine faculties in the Nsukka campus with a total of about thirty five thousand, six hundred (35,600) students as at 2012/2013 academic session (Registrar Department, 2013).

A sample of three hundred and twenty (320) students was used for the study which is approximately (2%) of the estimated population. According to Nwanna (2000), a researcher can use one percent (1%) of population when studying several thousands.

The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to select the sample. The multi-stage sampling procedure implies sampling in stages. In stage one, balloting without replacement was used to select 6 faculties out of nine (9) faculties in the campus. Second stage, the same technique will be used to select twenty (20) departments under the six (6) selected faculties. Finally, based on these, a total number of sixteen (16) students was selected systematically from each of the twenty (20) selected departments to correspond with the sample size which comprised 320 undergraduates from University of Nigeria, Nsukka Campus.

The instrument that was used for data collection was the close-ended questionnaire. The researchers developed a questionnaire after thorough review of related literature. It was made up of three sections A, B, and C. Section A consists of questions on knowledge of physical activities possessed by undergraduate of University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Section B consists of questions on attitude of undergraduates of University of Nigeira, Nsukka, towards participation in physical activities and the questionnaire for section B was designed according Likert scale formula with four (4) points options vis-à-vis SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree nad SD = Strongly Disagree. Finally, Section C consists of questions on practice of physical activities by undergraduates of University of Nigeria, Nsukka. To ensure fact and content validity of the instrument, copies of the questionnaire were submitted to three lecturers in the Department of Health and Physical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their corrections and contributions helped the researcher to modify the instrument and produce the final draft which was used for data collection. The split – half method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered to twenty students from University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus (UNEC). This was because, students in UNEC has similar characteristics with university of Nigeria, Nsukka Campus. The completed instrument was divided into two, odd and even numbers and the responses of the two groups were used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument using Spearman's rank order.

The questionnaire was administered on the respondents by hand and was collected on the spot after completion by the researchers. In order to enable the investigators to administer their questionnaire, a letter of introduction was collected from the Head of Department of Health and Physical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and this letter was presented the Deans of Faculties and Head of Departments seeking for their cooperation. 320 questionnaire were distributed and 316 were returned, out of 316 that were returned, 306 were usable while other were not. A total of 320 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 306 copies duly completed were used which gave 95.6% of the return rate.

The completed copies of the questionnaire were examined for completeness of responses. The statistical tools used for the analysis were the frequency, percentage and mean. The result in the items A and C was put to frequency table and later converted into percentage. Okafor, (2007) provided modified criteria to determine knowledge of people which was used in this study. The percentage ranking as he described are below 20% is very low, 20 – 39% is low, 40 – 59% is moderate, 60 – 80% is high and above 80 is very high.

The Mean was used to analyze items in section B which were designed to answer research question 3. The responses were weighed and their Mean calculated. The criterion Mean score were obtained by adding all the scores that were assigned from agree to disagree to a statement or an item and dividing it by the number of possible responses to the statement as follows:

$$\frac{4 + 3 + 2 + 1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.5$$

Where, Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2 and finally Strongly Disagree = 1.

In this study, the attitude was considered positive when the Mean of responses is greater or equal to 2.5 and low when the Mean responses is less than 2.5. Research hypothesis was tested using standard “t” test statistic at 0.05 level of significant and at the appropriate level of degree of freedom. Finally, the results were presented in tables according to research questions and hypothesis and each table were followed by a brief interpretation of its content.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the knowledge of physical activities possessed by undergraduate students with and without disabilities at the University of Nigeria Nsukka?

Table 1:

Knowledge possessed by undergraduate students on physical activities (n = 306).

S/N	Item statements	Correct freq.	Responses percentages (%)	Incorrect Freq.	Responses Percentage (%)
1.	Students knowledge regarding meaning of physical activities	203	66.34	103	33.66
2.	Students knowledge regarding the benefits of physical activities	298	97.39	8	2.6
3.	Knowledge on types of physical activities	214	69.93	92	30.07
4.	Students knowledge regarding the hindrances to participation in physical activities	252	82.35	54	17.65
	Grand total		79.00		20.99

Table 1 above shows the frequencies and percentages on the knowledge of students regarding physical activities. 66.34% of the respondents indicated high knowledge on what physical activities is, while 33.66% of the respondents lack knowledge on what physical activities are all about. 97.39% of the respondents have the knowledge about the benefits of physical activities, while 2.6% of the respondents do not have the knowledge. This shows that they have very high knowledge regarding the benefits of physical activities. The respondents also have high knowledge of types of physical activities (69.93%). While 30.07% do not know it. The Table 1 above also shows that the respondents have very high knowledge regarding the hindrances to participation in physical activities (82.35%), while 17.65% of the respondents failed to know this.

Research Question 2

What is the attitude of undergraduate students with and without disabilities at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, towards physical activities participation? The data answering the above question can be seen in the table 2 below.

Table 2:

Attitude of the students towards physical activities, (Keys: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, TWS = Total weighed score) n = 306.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	TWS	\bar{X}
5.	An individual who engages in physical activities will live longer than people who do not participate in physical activities.	150	141	12	3	306	1050	3.43
6.	A person who often participates in physical activities is always active in thinking.	135	138	21	12	306	984	3.22
7.	I hate participating in physical activities.	33	54	111	108	305	624	2.04
8.	I like reading materials on physical activities.	130	72	90	14	306	930	3.04
9.	Physical activities are for everybody.	108	100	37	61	306	867	2.83
10.	Unmarried young girls should not participate in physical activities.	22	40	113	131	306	565	1.85
11.	Frequent participation in physical activities makes one look healthy.	114	105	48	39	306	906	2.96
12.	Physical activities can be used to manage illness like diabetes or obesity.	100	120	21	65	306	867	2.83
13.	I feel comfortable discussing physical activities with my friends and siblings.	129	120	33	24	306	966	3.16
14.	I feel happy participating in physical activities	100	121	17	68	306	865	2.82
15.	I like associating with people that do participate in physical activities	59	111	45	91	306	750	2.50
16.	Participating in physical activities increases blood circulation.	54	102	63	87	306	735	2.40
	Grand mean (\bar{X}) total							2.82

Table 2 above shows that students in University of Nigeria, Nsukka had positive attitude towards physical activities participation. This was evident from the grand mean (\bar{X}) score of 2.82 which was above the criterion mean (\bar{X}) of 2.5. The Table shows that the students had the highest mean (\bar{X}) score of 3.43 for “an individual who engages in physical activities will live longer than people who do not participate in physical activities”. This was followed by mean (\bar{X}) score of 3.22 for “a person who often participate in physical activities is always active in thinking”, Mean (\bar{X}) score of 3.16 for “I feel comfortable discussing physical activities with my friends and siblings”. Mean score of 3.04 for “I like reading materials on physical activities”, 2.96 for “frequent participation in physical activities makes one look healthy. It was also indicated in the table that 2.83 was for both “physical activities are for everybody and physical activities can be used to manage illnesses like diabetes and obesity”. 2.82 is for “I feel happy participating with people that do participate in physical activities, 2.50 for I like associating with people that do participate in physical activities. 2.40 for “participating in physical activities increases blood circulation”, 2.04 for “I hate participating in physical activities” and finally, 1.85 for “unmarried young girls should not participate in physical activities” which is the lowest mean (\bar{X}) score.

Research Question 3

What is the practice of physical activities by undergraduates with and without disabilities at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka?

Table 3:

Practice of physical activities by the students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka (n = 306).

S/N	Item Statements	Correct Freq.	Responses Percentages (%)	Incorrect Freq.	Responses Percentages (%)
17.	Have you ever participated in physical activities?	291	95.09	15	4.9
18.	Do you participate in physical activities everyday?	213	69.6	93	30.4
19.	Do you participate only during your leisure time?	219	71.6	87	28.4
20.	Do you prefer team sports to individual sports?	264	86.3	42	13.7
21.	Do you like participating with partners?	240	78.4	66	21.6
22.	Do you prefer practicing with your friends to your family members or spouse?	279	91.2	27	8.8
23.	Is your level of activities in physical activities participation very active?	219	71.6	87	28.4
24.	Do you make use of sports and leisure facilities?	261	85.3	45	14.7
25.	Do you make new friends whenever you participate in physical activities?	249	81.4	57	18.6
26.	DO you always feel happy each time you participate in physical activities?	276	90.2	30	9.8
27.	The friends you make during physical activities, do they add good things to your life?	228	74.5	78	25.5
	Grand Total		81.38		18.6

Table 3 above shows that 95.09% of the respondents indicated the true practice of physical activities, while 4.9% of the respondents have not participated in physical activities. 69.6% of the respondents participates in physical activities everyday, while 30.4% do not participate everyday. 71.6% of the respondents participate in physical activities only during their leisure time, while 28.4% participates anytime they feel like. Also, 86.3% of the respondents prefer team sports to individual sports while 13.7% prefer individual sports to team sports. 78.4% of the respondents like participating without a partner(s), while 21.6% like participating without a partner. 91.2% of the respondents prefer practicing with their friends to their family members or spouse, while 8.8 prefer practicing with their family members or their spouse to their friends.

71.6% of the respondents agreed that their level of activeness in physical activities participation is very active, while 28.4% do not believe so. 85.3% of the respondents make use of sports and leisure facilities, while 14.7% do not use sports and leisure facilities. 81.4% of the respondents make new friends whenever they participate in physical activities, while 18.6% do not make new friends when they participate in physical activities. 90.2% of the respondents always feel happy anytime they participate in physical activities, while 9.8% of the respondents are not always happy each time they participate in physical activities.

Finally, 74.5% of the respondents believed that the friends they make during physical activities participation added good things to their life, while 25.5% of them did not believe so.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the attitude of male and female undergraduate students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, towards physical activities participation.

students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka should be sustained

Table 4:

Summary of t-test Analysis Regarding Attitude of the Male and Female students towards physical activities participation.

Class	n	X	SD	t-cal	t-table	Df	p
Male	162	2.74	2.02				
				0.669	1.96	304	.05
Female	144	2.58	2.31				

Table 4 above shows that the calculated t-value was 0.669, while the table value was 1.96 at .05 levels of significance. The hypothesis of no significant difference between the male and female students with regard to their attitudes towards physical activities was accepted.

Discussion

The results of the study are hereby discussed in order to reach conclusions from the findings made in the study. Table 1 revealed that the knowledge possessed by the undergraduates is high with 66.34% based on Okafor's criteria which says that less than 20% is very low, 21 – 39% is low, 40 – 59% is moderate, 60 – 80% is high and 80% and above is very high. Majority of the students (66.34%) had correct knowledge that physical activities means selected activities that promotes well-being of and individual and also develops healthy soul in a healthy body. This finding is in agreement with the observation made by Aweto, Oligbo, Fapojuwo and Olawale (2013) that conducted a study on knowledge attitude and practice of physiotherapists towards promotion of physically active lifestyles in patient management in Nigeria.

Another finding of this study was that the grand mean was 2.82 and was recorded in twelve items used in answering research question 2. Based on the criterion mean of 2.5 for this study, the finding revealed that undergraduates of University of Nigeria, Nsukka had positive attitude towards physical activities participation. The finding agrees with that of Ugwoke and Odeja (2010) who reported that undergraduates of University of Nigeria, Nsukka has positive attitude towards physical activities participation. The findings showed that most of the undergraduates believed that an individual who engages in physical activities will live longer.

It was also revealed that the undergraduate students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka's practice of physical activities was very high with grand total of 81.38%. The findings indicated that 95.099% of the undergraduates had participated in physical activities before. This is in line with HSE (2007), where a study was conducted on physical activities practice of adults in U.K.

Conclusion

Sequel to the findings of this study the following conclusions were drawn

- 1) The students possessed high knowledge of what physical activities are all about.
- 2) The students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, had positive attitude towards physical activities participation
- 3) The practice of physical activities by the undergraduate students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka was very high

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made

- 1) The university authority should continue to provide future students with and without disabilities with the opportunity to acquire more knowledge of physical activities
- 2) The positive attitude of students of the university should be maintained by students
- 3) The practice of physical activities by the undergraduate

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