

Sporting Activities as an Agent of Peace and Unity Among Secondary School Students in Ilorin South Local Government

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Abstract. The study investigated sporting activities as an agent of peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local government. Sport has become a world language, a common denominator that breaks down all the walls and barriers. Descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the research, the population of the study comprised of all public secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government. Multistage sampling technique was used to select 288 students used for this study. A researcher structured Questionnaire was used. The study found out that: Extracurricular activities has significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school in Ilorin South local government with cal value $547.20 > \text{crit. Value } 16.92$ at 9 df and 0.05 level of significance, organized inter-house sport has a noticeable influence on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government with cal value $439.14 > \text{crit. Value } 16.92$ at 9df and 0.05 level of significance, major competitions influence peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South local government with cal value $400.02 > \text{crit. Value } 12.59$ at 6df and 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that extra-curricular activities, organized inter-house sports, and major competitions have significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government. Based on the findings, some

recommendations were made, extracurricular activities should be organized more often in secondary schools so as to promote tolerance, teamwork, trust and respect for others among students.

Keywords: sporting activities, peace, unity

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, sport has been a means of bringing people of different culture and creeds together. Sporting event serves as avenue where people of different genders, ages and religious background and political affiliations meet without any feelings of resentment. It is a social agent where people of different ages and political backgrounds meet as either producers or consumers (players and spectators). According to the United Nations General Secretary, Ban (2007), Sports has become a world language, a common denominator that breaks down all the walls and barriers. It is a worldwide industry whose practices can have a widespread impact, most of all; it is a powerful tool for progress and development.

Ademola (2014) defined sports as any competitive activity that uses physical and intellectual capacity done by an individual or between individuals in order to significantly

contribute to their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and financial wellbeing. Sport in its many forms has at its roots the fundamental principles of body movement and physical activity that contributes to our life experience. Sports in this context is defined as “all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental wellbeing and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organised or competitive sport, and indigenous sports and games”.

United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sports for Development and Peace, (2008) affirmed that for any nation to develop and be able to effectively compete on the world stage, its youths and students must be well catered for, and there must be unity and peaceful co-existence amongst its citizens. Any nation that neglects its youths, and allows intolerance and disunity to grow within its borders will fail to make any meaningful progress because the most important segments of a nation’s populace is the youths. (United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sports for Development and Peace, 2008).

The term “peace” originates most recently from the Anglo-French “pes” and the Old French “pais”, meaning “peace, reconciliation, silence, agreement”. (11th century). Online Etymology Dictionary (2012), defined peace as a period of harmony between different social groups that is characterised by lack of violence or conflict behaviours, and the freedom from fear of violence.

The world presently is characterized by various acts of violence such as terrorism, kidnappings, cultism, corruption and other social vices that have led to the loss of lives and property, emotional traumas and so on. This worrisome trend has caused national governments, regional bodies and world organizations such as the United Nations, African Union and others to consciously evolve strategies in addressing such acts. One of the strategies is the use of recreational activities in peace building to ensure a culture of peace in secondary schools and society (United Nations 2003 and World Health Organization 2008).

Sports have come to be recognized as one of the most active ways of building and moulding of characters and personalities of the individual. Therefore all concerned with character, moral and spiritual training of individuals must be involved in sports. The secondary schools in our society, inclusive of “private and public” believed to be character moulders, should be actively involved in sporting activities, which have been known to be an integral component of the educational programme of all nations, to achieve its set goals. Sport is an essential tool for building strong individual and vibrant communities and for enhancing collective pride, identity and sense of belonging. Sport is also a valuable tool to initiate social development and improve social cohesion, especially when implemented with young people. With the power or to be a major influence on marginalized and under- represented groups and individuals at risk, sports development, self-esteem and helps to overcome personal and social challenges(Coakley& Pike, 2009).

Sporting activities have been part of the culture, customs and natural living of man; they have direct relationship with plans, purposes and goals of human beings. Since have existed with education since primitive times, when man developed skills like hunting, handling of weapons, tests of strength, endurance and courage (Okediji, 2015). Sports are the various activities which man engages in from childhood to adulthood which promote the acquisition of mental, physical, spiritual, aesthetic, emotional and educational wellbeing to make the individual contribute meaningfully to the development of the society (Badmus, 2009).

Sport and recreation positively contribute to many of the factors which build social cohesion, such as better physical and mental health, high educational attainment, reducing crime and antisocial behaviour, creating better employment opportunities and earning potential, and ensuring a fit and healthy workforce. Through recreation, children learn to exercise judgement and think critically while finding solutions to problems, promote the spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play, teaching teamwork, self-discipline, trust, respect for others, leadership and coping skills (Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2012).

Intramural principles originally documented by Dr. Elimer Mitchell have remained largely unchanged with the new concept recreational sport, representing the diverse recreational interests of participants and relates to both theory and practice. The term intramural sport may be used in any recreational sport setting, for instance, on sport programme sponsored by a faith based organization, community etc (Juan Silliezar, 2014).

Intramural and extramural sporting activities such as inter house sports, football, volleyball, basketball and athletics competitions are organised by the school and also other major competitions such as National School Sports Festival, Guaranty Trust Bank Football competitions for secondary schools, Milo Basketball competition and so on have also been used as avenues to contribute immensely to peace building and foster unity among students by bringing the students together from different backgrounds, locations, family and religious backgrounds which in turn creates friendship, teamwork, tolerance and so on.

Extramural is an extension of the intramural sport programme. The participants are usually champions of intramural sports programme for example, champions of Nigerian University Games (NUGA), Nigerian College of Education Games (NICEGA). They compete out of their natural setting against champions from other institutions. A high quality intramural or extramural sport programme encourages maximum participation in voluntary and wholesome sport activities for all. Equal opportunities in sport are made available to all interested individuals regardless of age, gender, race, or religion.

2. Research Questions

- (i) Will organizing extracurricular activities have significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government?
- (ii) Will organizing inter-house sports have significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school

students in Ilorin South Local Government?

- (iii) Will major competitions such as National School Sports Festival have significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government.

3. Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- (i) Organizing extracurricular activities will have no significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government.
- (i) Organizing inter-house sports will have no significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government.
- (ii) Major competitions such as National School Sports Festival will have no significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government.

4. Methodology

The design adopted for this study was descriptive research design of the survey type. This research design was considered appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to collect personal and general information for sporting activities as an agent of peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin south local government.

The population of this study comprised of all public senior secondary schools in Ilorin south local government as at the time of this study. Sample size of 288 students was selected with the use of multi - stage sampling technique. Stratified sampling technique was used to group all public secondary schools in Ilorin South into wards, simple random sampling technique was used to select 6 schools out of the 22 available

public senior secondary schools in Ilorin South (Kwara State Ministry of Education, 2016). Proportionate sampling technique was used to select 10.5% from each school while systematic sampling technique was used to the students from each class.

The instrument that was used for this study is a Researcher structured Questionnaire measuring how sporting activities serve as an agent of peace and unity among secondary schools in Ilorin south. A total of two hundred and eighty eight (288) Questionnaires was distributed to the respondents in their classrooms. The completed

Questionnaire forms was collected and coded immediately for data analysis. Frequency percentage was used to analyse demographic information from the respondents while inferential statistics of Chi-square was used to analyse null hypotheses postulated at 0.05 level of significance.

5. Results

Ho1: Extracurricular activities will have no significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government .

Table 1: Chi-square analysis on the influence of Extracurricular activities among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	ROW TOTAL	df	CAL. VALUE	TABLE VALUE	REMARK
1	Extracurricular activities make students from different tribes comes together and helps to promote peace and unity.	183(63.5%)	98 (34.0%)	37 (15.8%)	7 (2.4%)	288				
2	Extracurricular activities encourages maximum participation in voluntary and wholesome sport for all.	134 (46.5%)	145 (50.3%)	7 (2.4%)	2 (.7%)	288				
3	Extracurricular activities provides equal opportunities for students to participate irrespective of their age, gender, race or religion.	137 (47.6%)	115 (39.9%)	29 (10.1%)	7 (2.4%)	288	9	547.20	16.92	Ho Rejected
4	Extracurricular activities encourages healthy competition among students from different schools.	145 (50.3%)	121 (42.0%)	13 (4.5%)	9 (3.1%)	288				
Column Total		599	479	86	25	702				

P < 0.05 alpha level

The findings from the analysis in the table 1 indicated that calculated Chi-square value of 547.200 and the table value of 16.92 with the degree of freedom of 9 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that Extracurricular activities has significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local

Government. This finding confirm the opinion of Juan and Silliezar (2014), who stated that a high quality extracurricular sport programme encourages maximum participation in wholesome sport activities for all. Equal opportunities in sport are made available to all individuals regardless of age, gender, race or religion.

Ho2: Inter-house sports will have no significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school students.

Table 2: Chi-square analysis on the influence of Inter-house sports on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	ROW TOTAL	Df	CAL. VALUE	TABLE VALUE	REMARK
1	Inter-house sports helps to promote tolerance among secondary school students.	152 (52.8%)	113 (39.2%)	18 (6.2%)	5 (1.7%)	288				
2	Inter-house sports helps to promote positive values such as cooperation, respect and trust among students.	128 (44.4%)	135 (46.9%)	23 (8.0%)	2 (.7%)	288				
3	Inter-house sports helps to promote social interaction among secondary school students.	169 (58.7%)	105 (36.5%)	11 (3.8%)	3 (1.0%)	288	9	439.14	16.92	Ho Rejected
4	Inter-house sports helps to promote teamwork among secondary school students.	163 (56.6%)	102 (35.4%)	12 (4.2%)	11 (3.8%)	288				
Column Total		612	455	64	21	1152				

P < 0.05 alpha level

The findings from the analysis in the table 2 indicated that calculated Chi-square value of 439.140 and the table value of 16.92 with the degree of freedom of 9 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that Inter-house sports has influence on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government. This was supported by Coakley and Pike (2009), who postulated that sport is an essential tool for

building strong individual and vibrant communities and for enhancing collective pride, identity and sense of belonging. Sports have come to be recognized as one of the most active ways of building up and moulding of characters and personalities of the individual. Therefore, both public and private secondary schools who are believed to be character moulders should be actively involved in sporting activities which have been known to be an integral part of all nations to achieve its set goals.

Ho3: Major competitions will have no significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis on the influence of Major competitions on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	ROW TOTAL	Df	CAL. VALUE	TABLE VALUE	REMARK
1	Sport is a valuable tool for initiating social development and unity when implemented with young people.	148 (51.4%)	137 (47.6%)	3 (1.0%)	0 (0%)	288				
2	Organizing major competitions helps to overcome low self-esteem and offer a sense of belonging to students.	149 (51.7%)	119 (41.3%)	13 (4.5%)	7 (2.4%)	288				
3	Participating in sport competitions helps to build a strong individual and vibrant communities.	173 (60.1%)	104 (36.1%)	5 (1.7%)	6 (2.1%)	288	6	400.02	12.59	Ho Rejected
Column Total		470	360	21	13	864				

$P < 0.05$ alpha level

The findings from the analysis in the table 3 indicated that calculated Chi-square value of 400.02 and the table value of 12.59 with the degree of freedom of 6 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that Major competitions have significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government. This is in compliance with the findings of Badmus (2009) that sports are the various activities which man engages in from childhood to adulthood which promotes the acquisition of mental, physical, spiritual, aesthetic, emotional and educational wellbeing to make the individual contribute meaningfully to the development of the society. Through sports, friendship, solidarity and fair play, teamwork, self-discipline, trust and respect for others are being promoted.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

Organizing extracurricular activities have significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government, Major competitions have significant influence among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government. Inter-house sports have significant influence on peace and unity among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- (i) Extracurricular activities should be organized more often in secondary schools so as to promote tolerance, teamwork, trust and respect for others among students.
- (ii) The government should be involved in sponsoring major sport competitions both at national and state levels as this will help in bringing students

from different backgrounds, tribes, states and communities together there by promoting peace and unity among secondary school student.

- (iii) The school authorities should also organize annual inter house sports in their various schools and students should be encouraged to take part in various activities as this plays a significant role in social development and interaction, promotes the spirit of friendship and also contributing positively to peace and unity among secondary school students.

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