

Perceived Effect of Sports Participation on the Quality of Life of Students with Disabilities in Selected Special Schools in Osun State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study focussed on perceived effect of sports participation on the quality of life of students with disabilities in selected special schools in Osun state, Nigeria. It specifically assessed the level of sports participation of students with disabilities, and also determined their quality of life over happiness. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design where population comprised all students in selected public special schools in Osun State. A sample size of 240 respondents was randomly selected from three special schools in Ife-Ijesa Senatorial District. Two research instruments were used for data collection, namely: (i) Physical Activities Involvement Questionnaire (PAIQ) to measure the status of sports participation of persons with disabilities; (ii) Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) Hills and Argyle (2000) to elicit information on the happiness of persons with disabilities. Data collected were analysed using appropriate descriptive and differential statistics. The results showed that majority (63%) of the respondents had low level of sports participation while 9.5% had moderate level of sports participation and 27.5% had high level of sports participation. The results also showed that the majority (51.3%) of the respondents were moderately happy, 32.8% not happy and only 15.9% were highly happy. The hypothesis tested using linear regression showed that the students participation in sports had significant relationship with happiness ($R^2 = 0.351$, $F(1, 239) = 42.91$, $p < .05$). The study concluded that sports participation improved the quality of life in terms of happiness of students with disabilities in the study area and that the parents and guardians should be enlightened in encouraging their children and wards to enrol in schools and participate en masse in sports and recreational activities.

Key word: Quality of life, sports participation, happiness, persons with disabilities, special schools.

INTRODUCTION

Participation in sports has been from time immemorial when people participated in one sporting activity or the other intuitively or otherwise during their pace time or to entertain people during important ceremonies. This reflected in the history of the Greek and is similar to what we have in Nigeria whereby during any chieftaincy title or coronation ceremony, some people used to perform acrobatic display that resemble gymnastics or traditional wrestling and this had made their lives better, meaningful, healthy, improved quality of life and even endowed them longevity (Famayo, 2010).

During Pre-independence, people engaged in other similar sports like sack race, egg and spoon races, though most of these games were performed in nudity. But as soon as the Missionaries came to Nigeria, people ventured into different games and sports, in particular the seaport areas like Port-Harcourt, Lagos, Warri, etc. where aquatic activities as swimming and rowing were the other of the day (Olasunkanmi, 2024). Their purpose of participating was just to relax and derive pleasure from things within their environments. Most of these sports and games began to graduate into competitions when introduced to the secondary schools within these sea port areas (Famayo, 2022). As time went on, Nigeria started engaging in sports and games across local, state and national level and glaringly glued to the international level in sports like athletics, wrestling, boxing and swimming.

Anything that could be the idea of a person from birth to the mark of erection on the terrestrial surface, processes of steady development must take place – creeping, crawling, staggering, walking, jumping, hopping, etc., all in form of activities and exercises (Olasunkanmi, 2024). It is generally accepted that exercise, when carried out in an orderly manner, improves health, physique, and overall body fitness and will benefit everyone (Famayo & Adubi, 2019). In the past, the focal point of sports was principally on able-bodied while the disabled individuals were barred from ray of light not to talk of sport engagement. Such permission and involvement was not granted the people with disability for they are regarded as disgruntled elements to the society of that time (Famayo, 2017).

Retrospectively, limitations and exclusions were imposed on the participation of men and women with disabilities in sports, due to the myth and fear of unknown that physical display and exhibition may further cripple their nature. But the performance of Nigeria at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics' Games between August 24 and September 5, 2021, thrilled the country with hauling of 10 medals comprising 4 gold, 1 silver and 5 bronze respectively with just 22 competitors and whereas their counterparts in Olympic games held ahead at the same venue with over 40 athletes came back home with no single medal (Famayo, 2022). This achievement could not have been possible, if competent personnel were not provided and adequately utilized.

As we have several qualities of life that individuals may derive from active participation in sports by normal population such as happiness, self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-belief and body satisfaction. The physically challenged do not have different qualities of life while doing the same sporting activities in pairing up with their colleagues or able-bodied (Olasunkanmi, 2024). Psychologically, anyone with physical deformity or impairment is regarded to be in low self-esteem, little or no self-actualization and the likes due to their deprivation (Habe, et al. 2021). Notwithstanding, their confidence and determination in certain sporting activity will reduce the degree or extent of their moral and social degradation. The facial expression of persons with disabilities often give the public or society a deep thought for inability to ascertain when they are in good mood or otherwise (Olasunkanmi, 2024). It is glaring among the normal individuals to sense or read their mind when happy or not, but the unfriendly posture or discretion of the physically challenged ones is uncertain (Famayo, 2022; Mensah et al, 2022). However, there are records for normal people involvement in sporting activities for improved quality of life but little or scanty literature for the people with disabilities in Osun State.

Statement of the Problem

Sports participation is no longer news that it brings recognition, pride, honour and some other things to individuals that participate in it, their family, the state and the country they represent at large. With this recognition gained from involvement in sporting activities and other areas, people with disabilities are not given such recognition to even showcase their talents in the similar way due to their conditions. According to Sonchan et al. (2019), persons with disabilities have not, in general, been given chances to access the opportunities and benefits that participation in sports might provide such as increased self-confidence, improved communication skills, and new practical skills. In the past, parents disallowed their able-bodied children from engaging in sports and music as they saw it as fields reserved for dullards and lazy people in the society not to talk of persons with disabilities (Famayo, 2024). But today, the rejected stone now served as corner stone for the builders to an extent that everyone wanted to be reckoned with as prominent musician and athlete/player whether able-bodied or persons with disabilities. Persons like Kanu Nwankwo, Falilat Ogunkoya, Sunday Oliseh, Taye Taiwo, Late Stephen Keshi, Late Peter Rufai and many others are examples of able-bodied athletes and players in the country.

Coming back to people with disabilities, even though when these people were totally ignored, society believed that they were to live a sedentary life throughout because of their conditions but as events are unfolded, they are being allowed to participate in sports gradually since Government has promulgated that education be given to all and sundry not limited to able-bodied alone but including people with physical challenges, sports inclusive (Famayo, 2022). But with the advent of modern technology, and in the area of sports, mobility impairments (light-weight wheelchairs for ball games and athletics), visual impairments (two-seated tandem racing bicycle, visually impaired cyclist pedals in rear, while a sighted “pilot” sits in the front) are being provided across globe (Zhang, et al., 2022). These people have been performing well in the area of sports, but

there is need for merging the gap between the able-bodied involvement in sporting activities and persons with disabilities for quality of living.

According to Adetoyese (2017), sports participation enhances the psychological well-being of persons with disabilities through the provision of opportunities to form friendships, express creativity, develop a self-identity, and foster meaningful and purposeful life. It is on records that Nigerian athletes at Paralympics' game, surprised their able-bodied counterparts in winning 10 medals (4 gold, 1 silver and 5 bronze) while at the normal Olympic same year, their counterparts with huge number of athletes came home with no single medal. This boosts their personal and social recognition within the nook and cranny of the land. So, this is telling us that these categories of people are being recognized and released by their parents to participate in different sporting activities. Therefore, there is more to sports than the belief that people are vulnerable to injury while taking part. In this wise, there is need to shed more light on how parents can be duly informed on all these achievements so that they can also enrol their own children and wards in sporting activities for their qualities of life (level of sports participation and happiness) to be improved and brought fame and popularity to the family (Olasunkanmi, 2024). There is little or no record to equate their mass participation in sporting events in Nigeria with their normal counterparts for improved life qualities, hence, this study.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. assess the level of sports participation by students with disabilities in the study area and
2. determine the quality of life (happiness) of students with disabilities in selected special schools in Osun state, Nigeria.

Research Questions

Based on the problems under investigation, the following research questions were drawn for the study.

1. What is the level of sports participation of students with disabilities in the study area?
2. What is the quality of life (happiness) of students with disabilities in the study area?

Research Hypothesis

Based on the research questions postulated for this study, this hypothesis was advanced.

.Sports participation will not have significant influence on happiness of students with disabilities in selected special schools in Osun State.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted in this study was the survey research design. The population for the study comprised all students in selected public special schools in Osun State, Nigeria. The sample for the study was 240 respondents. The sampling technique for this was a multi stage sampling method. Three Local Government Areas were selected from Ife-Ijesha Senatorial District. Three special schools were selected from the three Local Government Areas. 80 respondents (male and female) were selected each from the special schools in Ife North, Ife Central, and Ilesa West respectively. Cumulatively, 140 boys and 100 girls were selected for the study. The research instrument used for the study was an adapted questionnaire. Two research instruments were used for data collection, namely: Physical Activity Involvement Questionnaire (PAIQ) to determine the level of sports participation and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) to elicit information on happiness of students with disabilities.

The questionnaire was subjected to a thorough scrutiny by the experts in the field of Sports Psychology and Adapted Physical Education in the Department of Kinesiology, Health Education and Recreation for face and content validity forming the final copy approved for the study. A pilot study for the research was taken to the school, Oduduwa College, Ile-Ife and tested on the identified respondents for the first time and repeated at 2

weeks interval using Linear Regression Analysis. A coefficient of $r=0.75$ was obtained, that showed that the instruments used in the study were reliable.

The instrument was administered by the researchers and six research assistants who were trained by the researchers. The school principals and teachers were consulted for their permission before administering the questionnaire. In each school, teachers joined hands with the research assistants to emphasize seriousness and commitment on the parts of the respondents.

The data collected for the research were coded and analysed. The hypothesis-by-hypothesis procedure was used in presenting the analysed data. All the data were analysed using appropriate statistical tools (Linear Regression Analysis).

FINDINGS/RESULTS

Results

Data were collected on perceived effect of sports participation on the quality of life of students with disabilities in selected special schools in Osun State, Nigeria. Based on the stated hypothesis, the dependent variable was sports participation while the independent variables were level of sports participation and happiness. For the purpose of this study, frequencies and percentage of responses and the Linear Regression Analysis were used

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Gender	Male	140	58.3%	58.3%
	Female	100	41.7%	100.0%
Age	8-10years	30	12.5%	12.5%
	11-13years	97	40.4%	52.9%
	14-16years	77	32.1%	85%
	17 & above	36	15%	100.0%
Residence	Rural	70	29.2%	29.2%
	Urban	170	70.8%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The results in Table 1 revealed that 140 (58.3%) of the respondents were males while 100 (47.7%) were females; variable age, 8-10 years (12.5%), 11-13 years (40.4%), 14-16 years (32.1%) and 17 and above (15%); rural dwellers 70 (29.2%) and urban dwellers 170 (70.8%).

Research Question One: What is the level of sports participation of students with disabilities in the study area?

Table 2: Level of Sports Participation of Student with Disabilities

S/N	Level of Sports Participation	SA F(%)	A F(%)	SD F(%)	D F(%)
1	I don't do regular vigorous sports now, and not intending to start in the next six months.	64 (26.7%)	71 (29.6%)	46 (19.2%)	59 (24.6%)
2	I don't do regular sport now, but thinking	62 (25.8%)	62 (25.8%)	50 (20.8%)	66 (27.5%)

	of starting in the six months.				
3	I am trying to start doing vigorous sports, but not regularly.	60 (25.0%)	82 (34.2%)	23 (9.6%)	75 (31.3%)
4	I don't do regular sporting activities in school.	40 (16.7%)	86 (35.8%)	53 (22.1%)	61 (25.4%)
5	I am trying to start doing regular sporting activities in school.	72 (30.0%)	63 (26.8%)	19 (7.1%)	86 (35.8%)
6	I rarely or never do any sporting activities.	44 (18.3%)	77 (32.1%)	53 (22.1%)	66 (27.5%)
7	I do some light or moderate sporting activities but not every week.	65 (27.1%)	87 (36.3%)	23 (9.6%)	65 (27.1%)
8	I do some light sporting activities every week.	76 (31.7%)	74 (30.8%)	27 (11.3%)	63 (26.3%)
9	I do 30 minutes or more of moderate sporting activities a day, and 5 or more days in a week.	57 (23.8%)	65 (27.1%)	52 (21.7%)	66 (27.5%)
10	I do 20 minutes of vigorous sporting activities and 3 to 4 days a week.	58 (24.2%)	69 (28.8%)	38 (15.8%)	75 (31.3%)

SA- Strongly Agree; A- Agree; D- Disagree; SD- Strongly Disagree

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Responses summarized in Table 2 revealed that 56.3% of the respondents did not do regular vigorous sports and did not intend to do it in the next six months; 51.6% did not do regular sports but were thinking of starting it in the next six months; 52.5% did not do regular sporting activities in school and (50.4%) agreed they rarely or never do any sporting activities in school. Similarly, (63.4%) respondents agreed they do some light or moderate sporting activities but not every week; (62.5%) agreed they do some light sporting activities every week and (50.9%) agreed they do participate in 30 minutes or more of moderate sporting activities a day, and 3 to 4 days per week.

Level of Sport Participation

This section assesses respondents' level of sports participation, and happiness.

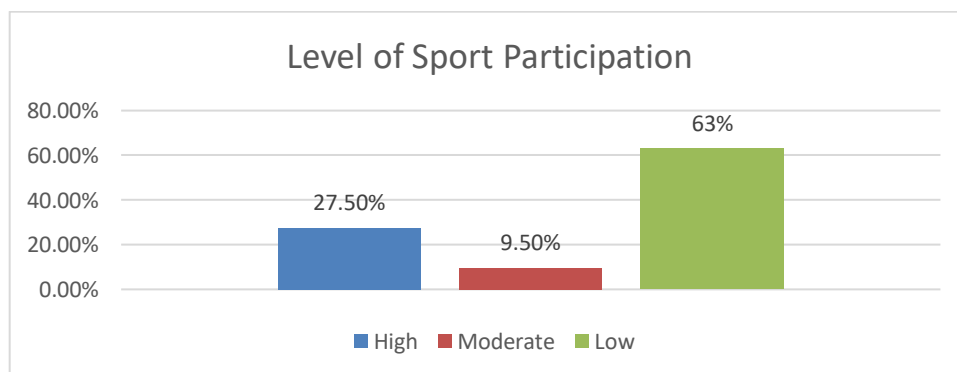


Figure 1 Bar Chart showing Level of Sports Participation of Student with Disabilities

The bar chart indicated 63% of students had low sports participation, 9.5% moderate level of sports participation and 27.5% with high level of sports participation.

Research Question Two: What is the quality of life (happiness) of students with disabilities in the study area?

Table 3: Quality of life (Happiness) of Students with Disabilities

S/N	Quality of life (happiness)	SA F(%)	A F(%)	SD F(%)	D F(%)
11.	I have very warm feelings towards almost everyone	126 (52.5%)	68 (28.3%)	11 (4.6%)	35 (14.6%)
12.	I find most things amusing	111 (46.3%)	77 (32.1%)	15 (6.3%)	37 (15.4%)
13.	Life is good when you are not alone	103 (42.9%)	86 (35.8%)	15 (6.3%)	36 (15.0%)
14.	I do not believe that the world is a good place with my exceptional condition	58 (24.2%)	68 (28.3%)	37 (15.4%)	77 (32.1%)
15.	I am well pleased about everything in my life	97 (40.4%)	79 (32.9%)	19 (7.9%)	45 (18.8%)
16.	I am always in happy mood when people rally round me	92 (38.3%)	75 (31.3%)	8 (3.3%)	65 (27.1%)
17.	I find beauty in the nature as landscape, etc.	113 (47.1%)	86 (35.8%)	12 (5.0%)	29 (12.1%)
18.	I often experience joy and elation when people come to my aid	78 (32.5%)	109 (45.4%)	24 (10.0%)	29 (12.1%)
19.	I don't particularly have good memories of the unpalatable events.	46 (19.2%)	61 (25.4%)	34 (14.2%)	99 (41.2%)

S- Strongly Agree; A-Agree; D- Disagree; SD- Strongly Disagree

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Responses summarized in Table 3 revealed (80.8%) respondents had very warm feelings towards almost everyone; (78.4%) agreed they found most things amusing and (78.7%) also agreed that life is good when they were not alone. Besides, (73.3%) agreed they were well satisfied about everything in their lives; (69.6%) agreed they were always in happy mood when people rally round them and (77.9%) agreed they often experience joy and elation when people come to their aid.

Level of Respondent Quality of Life (Happiness)

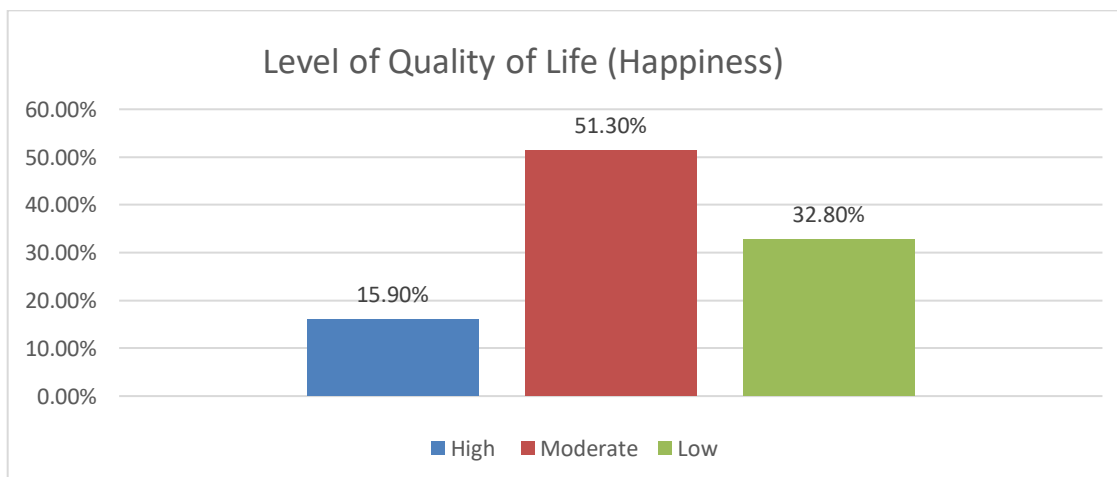


Figure 3: Bar Chart Showing Level of Happiness of Students with Disabilities

The bar chart revealed that majority (51.3%) of the respondents was moderately happy, 32.8% not happy and 15.9% highly happy.

Hypothesis: Sports participation will not have significant influence on happiness of students with disabilities in selected special schools in Osun State.

Table 3: Linear regression showing relationship between sports participation and happiness of students with disabilities.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
(Constant)	74.21	3.43		20.8	0.00
Happiness	2.18	0.98	2.41	3.21	0.01

($R^2 = 0.351$, $F(1, 239) = 42.91$, $p < .05$)

The table indicated that sports participation had a significant relationship with happiness among students with disabilities ($R^2 = 0.351$, $F(1, 239) = 42.91$, $p < .05$). Thus, the null hypothesis which states that sports participation will not have significant influence on happiness of students with disabilities is rejected indicating that sports participation has significant influence on the happiness of the persons with disabilities. Sport participation was able to explain 35.1% variation in students with disabilities happiness.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

With regards to the study on the quality of life of students with disabilities in selected special schools in Osun State, Nigeria, it was found out that majority of the respondents had low level of sport participation and satisfied with their body. The views of the people in the society was that many parents and guardians have no rare hope in children with disabilities engaging in sports as it is mere waste of time and energy and they are already cheated by nature. They also maintained that instead of spending huge amount on these children they better throw the money away or dash it out to thieves. This further heightens the low level of sports involvement by the persons with disabilities. As advanced by Famayo and Adubi (2019), no matter the zeal or aspiration of person with disabilities for sports, their morale will be dampen if their parents and guardians do not give them encouragement and government failing in her responsibility to mount campaign and awareness for the need of the parents and community to join hands together with the government in ensuring their mass participation in sports, their dreams may not be feasible. Participation in sports will bring confidence, happiness and joy to the physically challenged as it reflects in their motto, "If I cannot win let me be brave in an attempt" This was in conjunction with the submission of Sefotho (2021) that engagement in sporting activities can assist children with disabilities to have room for happiness and joy as they are equally important in the society. . He further reported that sports investment adds to positive advancement of brain and body prompting higher fearlessness, confidence, body fulfilment and happiness. This is also in tandem with (Famayo & Adubi, 2019) that sports participation exerts significant influence on the quality of life of persons with disabilities as long as they take it as part of their daily capsule. The research carried out by (Okunrotifa & Okelia, 2018) also agreed that the quality of life of children with disabilities will only be well polished if dedication and consistency is given to their regular participation in physical activities and recreation programmes.

However, according to Salami (2020), children with disabilities who participate in sporting activities possess heightened self-esteem, self-confidence, self-satisfaction, perceived physical competence, happiness, and peer acceptance compared with those living a sedentary lifestyle. Along, low turn up of children with disabilities in sports will continue to ensue and be on the increase, except home supports and encouragement emanate from the parents, siblings, and enlightened ones within the neighbourhood (Lampousi et al, 2020; Famayo, 2024 & Olasunkanmi, 2024). With this, sense of belonging and confidence will surface and spirit of regular involvement will form their slogan, "I must train today" to avoid boredom and inactiveness (Famayo, 2024). This will definitely help individuals with disabilities to improve on their skills and recreational activities.

Subsequently, the review figured out that larger part of the respondents felt good and alright whenever they engage in sporting activities while the rest opposed it. This corroborates the submission of (Falcao, Boom & Bennie 2017) that friendships and interactions of children with disabilities have a significant influence in their psychosocial development (emotions, personality, and self-esteem) and behaviour. Inclusively, they submit that building fellowships is one method for guaranteeing positive sports insight. The children with disabilities perform well under the influence of an external factor (coach) and this will raise their level of morale and mass participation in sports (Famayo, & Adubi, 2019). There is significant impact and advancement of other life-related abilities and mentality, including autonomy, correspondence, inspiration, and readiness to perform tasks. In the same vein, peer/partners can either advance or upset sports support of persons with disabilities. Positive communication with peers stands as a vehicle to improve inspiration to take part in sporting activities for persons with handicaps (Adams & Daniel, 2015). This is the more reason en masse sports engagement by persons with disabilities must be facilitated not only on paper but be put into action.

Furthermore, the research reported that greater part of the respondents felt moderately in a happy mood when people rally round them, while the rest felt unconcerned. Ben Webb, a neuroscientist and professor of psychology, stated in 2019 that any cardiovascular sports like running and cycling that are accompanied by periods of high intensity will release endorphins, which can improve mood. He likewise asserts Yoga is perfect to battle tension and discouragement. In the same vein, participation in sporting activities by both persons with disabilities and non-disabled children boosts their level of happiness, self-esteem, joy, and lower the rate of anxiety and phobia in them (Sahlin & Lexell, 2015, Rajendran et al., 2019, and Adetoyese, 2017). They also stressed that when an individual exercises, it increases endorphins, dopamine, adrenaline, and cannabinoid—these are all cerebrum synthetic substances related with feeling cheerful, certain, and skilled, less tension and surprisingly, less actual torment. This suggests that sports participation exerts significant influence on the quality of life (happiness) of students with disabilities.

On this premise, Famayo (2022) ascribed that the involvement of the persons with disabilities in sports and recreational activities removes emblems of a sedentary lifestyle in them and thus welcome personal development and advancement in specific skills, resulting in boosting self-consciousness, confidence, and self-independence.

The postulated hypothesis revealed that sports participation has significant influence on happiness of students with disabilities. More so, sport participation was able to explain 35.1% variation of the students' happiness. Linear regression showed a statistically significant relationship between students with disabilities' happiness and participation in sports; ($R^2 = 0.351$, $F(1, 239) = 42.91$, $p < .05$). Majority of the respondents confirmed that they were moderately in a happy mood when people rally round them like in group doing something in common like sports or recreational activities. Adetoyese (2017) alluded that participation in sporting activities by both handicapped and non-disabled children boosts their level of happiness, self-esteem, joy and lower the rate of anxiety and phobia in them. The result is in consonance with the views of Pennington & Pennington (2020) that when people participate in sporting activities, it promotes their subjective well-being as happiness and self-esteem. Any cardiovascular games like running and cycling will ginger up the enthusiasm in individuals to the point of full activeness for the rest of the day.

CONCLUSION

Participation of individuals in physical activities and sports is a great way to the success and happiness of normal people and those with disabilities in the society. As non-disabled persons derive enjoyment and satisfaction from their regular involvement in physical activities, those with disabilities need it more based on their inactivity and sedation in life. The lifestyle of persons with disabilities must be intensively integrated into the society for full acceptance and equal opportunity accorded to their normal counterparts should not elude them. Therefore, the consent of the parents/ guardians is relevant to release their children/wards for active participation in sporting to rejuvenate them and bring more lively things to improve and enhance their psychological perspectives. In summary, persons with disabilities should not be ignored or relegated in the society, especially in the area of sports as they can also add more colours to the glimpse and beauty of life where motivation, enjoyment, happiness and host of other qualities of life will be fully spread.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were advanced:

1. Persons with disabilities should be encouraged by parents and government to show interest in sports and recreational activities that can improve and sensitize their belongingness in the society.
2. School authority in conjunction with the community leaders can mount campaign for children with disabilities reason and need to expose them to the outside world for the quality-of-life improvement.
3. Regular mini and minor games including mini competition be encouraged in order to boost their morale, body satisfaction and level of happiness in life.
4. Future research may be carried out to assess changes in sports participation in other states of the country.

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