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## Effects of Sport Participation on the Lifestyle of Secondary School Adolescents in Uyo Metropolis

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of sports participation on the lifestyle of secondary school adolescents in Uyo Metropolis. Guided by three research questions, the study focuses on the impact of sports participation on the physical health, social behaviors, peer relationships, academic performance, and discipline of adolescents. The target population comprises all secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis, with a sample size of 200 respondents selected through a stratified random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was used as the primary data collection instrument, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and percentages). Findings reveal a significant positive effect of sports participation on the physical health of adolescents, as it enhances physical fitness and reduces the risk of obesity. Additionally, sports participation improves social behaviors, peer relationships, teamwork, and leadership skills while positively influencing academic discipline and performance. However, barriers such as lack of facilities, gender disparities, and societal attitudes were identified as hindrances to effective sports participation. The study concludes that sports participation is vital for holistic adolescent development, recommending schools and policymakers create an enabling environment that encourages more students to engage in sports. Further research is suggested to explore the long-term impact of specific sports and address gender-specific participation barriers.

### INTRODUCTION

Teenage sports engagement has long been understood to be essential for promoting social, psychological, and physical development. Sports can offer an organized setting that fosters social interaction, physical fitness, and emotional resilience during adolescence, a crucial time for personal development. Several studies have demonstrated how athletics can help teenagers enhance their motor abilities, lower their risk of obesity, and improve their cardiovascular health (Strong *et al.*, 2005). Regular sports engagement has also been connected to enhanced mood, increased vitality, and better sleep patterns (Biddle & Asare, 2011). Growing support for sports programs in secondary schools in Uyo Metropolis has resulted from a greater understanding of these advantages and an effort to encourage young people to lead healthy lifestyles.

Participation in sports has a big impact on how teenagers behave and develop their social skills. Teenagers that participate in sports acquire important life lessons like cooperation, discipline, teamwork, and leadership that they can use in other spheres of their lives, like school and relationships with others. Participating in organised sports is linked to improved social skills and decreased antisocial behaviour, according to Eime *et al.* (2013). This is especially crucial in the context of Uyo, where teenage behaviour is greatly influenced by peer pressure and cultural norms. Playing sports can give kids a healthy outlet and foster an environment where they can form positive relationships and learn how to resolve disagreement and compete well.

Adolescents' psychological health, including their sense of self-worth, self-concept, and emotional control, has also been linked to sports engagement. Compared to their peers who do not participate in physical activities, adolescents who regularly engage in physical activities report lower levels of anxiety and depression and higher levels of confidence (Lubans *et al.*, 2016). Teenagers can develop their resilience, learn to accept failure, and create and accomplish personal objectives through sports—all skills that are essential for overcoming the difficulties of puberty. In Uyo Metropolis, where youth mental health problems are frequently underreported, encouraging athletics can be a useful tactic to improve the mental and general wellbeing of the youth.

A further important topic of research is the connection between involvement in sports and academic achievement. Research indicates that kids who engage in physical activity are more likely to exhibit enhanced focus, memory, and classroom behaviour, all of which can lead to better academic results (Singh *et al.*, 2012). In the context of Uyo Metropolis, including sports in the curriculum could aid in addressing the difficulties many secondary school students have in their academic studies. In addition, schools with well-run athletic departments typically cultivate learning environments that strike a balance between extracurricular and academic pursuits, providing students with opportunities for all-around growth.

Even with these advantages, many obstacles prevent teenagers in Uyo Metropolis from playing sports.

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Participation levels can be greatly impacted by elements including poor infrastructure, a lack of access to good coaching, gender bias, and social perceptions of sports (Okeke *et al.*, 2020). To effectively establish strategies and programs to promote sports among secondary school students, it is imperative to comprehend these barriers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how teenage sports engagement affects their lifestyle in Uyo Metropolis, taking into account their physical, social, psychological, and intellectual needs. The results will offer insightful information about how sports might be used to improve the development and wellbeing of adolescents in the area.

### Statement of the Problem

Adolescence serves as the basis of an individual's general well-being throughout their life. Adolescence is a crucial period of development marked by the onset rapid physical, psychological and social changes. This is a stage when forming good habits like routine exercise, eating proper meals at regular intervals along with meditation can provide one the biggest jump start for their growth and most important term of one's life. Having a healthy lifestyle in adolescence can lower the risk of contracting chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. It also helps to reduce the chances of anxiety, depression and many other mental disorders. In addition, participating in positive activities such as sports and play recreation that are opportunities for social interactions also promotes important life skills (e.g.: teamwork, communication skill building) 297-298. These are critical skills necessary for academic outcomes, social adaptation and self-fulfillment. In addition, living a healthy life gives adolescents an essential self-esteem and body image that are important for confidence in themselves and social competence. In essence, being healthy during adolescence is necessary in preparing for the future of an individual's health and well-being. Introduction Participation in sports has been well documented to improve the physical health, psychological well-being, social integration and thus academic success of adolescents; yet there is no focused research on how these benefits manifest themselves within Uyo Metropolis. The adolescents in this region deal with special socio-cultural and economic situations which might affect their participation in sports; thus, reflecting on them for a lifetime. This study on the effects of sports participation toward lifestyle among adolescents in Uyo Metropolis is important as it could give information on the impact moving along with engagements to involvement in efficiency and active activities would have physical fitness, mental strength, socializing skills and academic performances change their lives. Moreover, such insights may help educators and policymakers create targeted policies and programs to promote sports as a way of developing healthy lifestyles or curbing juvenile delinquency among young people, while supporting youth development strategies in general. This localized knowledge is important because without it,

there may be a failure to appreciate sport as a tool for the transformation of young people in Uyo and consequently missed opportunities that can lead youth sports toward addressing societal problems.

### Aim of the Study

The major aim of the study is to examine the effects of sport participation on the lifestyle of secondary school adolescents in Uyo Metropolis.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the effect of sport participation on the physical health of secondary school adolescents in Uyo Metropolis?
2. What is the influence of sport participation on social behaviors and peer relationships of secondary school adolescents in Uyo Metropolis?
3. How does sport participation affect the academic performance and discipline of secondary school adolescents in Uyo Metropolis?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Benefits of Sports Participation for Physical Health

Playing sports has a well-established positive effect on teenagers' physical health, as it increases fitness, lowers the risk of obesity, and improves overall health outcomes. Regular participation in sporting activities has been linked to improvements in muscular strength, flexibility, cardiovascular endurance, and body composition, according to studies (Janssen & LeBlanc, 2010). By burning calories, increasing metabolism, and developing lean muscle mass, sports participation aids teenagers in maintaining a healthy weight. This is important because obesity is becoming a rising global health concern among young people (Tremblay *et al.*, 2011). Sports-related physical activity increases bone density and lowers the incidence of osteoporosis in later life, according to Strong *et al.* (2005). In addition, frequent sports engagement has been associated with reduced blood pressure and enhanced lipid profiles, both of which are crucial markers of cardiovascular well-being (Andersen *et al.*, 2006). Adolescents who participate in sports are more likely to form lifelong physical activity habits, which can lower the risk of chronic diseases including type 2 diabetes and some malignancies, according to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2020). As a result, by encouraging fitness and reducing obesity and related health problems, sports involvement is essential for promoting the physical health of teenagers.

#### Emotional and Psychological Advantages

Adolescents who participate in sports get significant psychological and emotional benefits that impact their general emotional well-being, stress management, and sense of self-worth. Several studies demonstrate how playing sports can provide teenagers a sense of accomplishment, physical confidence, and social

recognition—all of which can greatly increase their sense of self-worth and self-esteem (Ekeland *et al.*, 2005). Bailey (2006) states that playing sports aids in the development of coping mechanisms and resilience in teenagers, both of which are critical for stress and anxiety management. Because physical exertion releases endorphins and other neurochemicals, sports participation has been linked to decreased levels of depression, increased mood, and better stress management (Lubans *et al.*, 2016). Additionally, sports give people a positive way to express their emotions and a sense of community, which lowers feelings of loneliness and increases emotional stability (Holt *et al.*, 2011). During adolescence, a time marked by profound emotional and psychological transformations, this is especially crucial. Biddle and Asare's (2011) meta-analysis confirmed the significance of sports in improving emotional well-being by demonstrating a consistent correlation between physical activity, including sports, and a decrease in symptoms of anxiety and depression.

### Effects on Behaviour and Society

Adolescents' social and behavioural development is significantly impacted by sports participation, which has an impact on leadership, teamwork, and peer relationships. According to Smith *et al.* (2010), sports give teenagers a social platform where they can engage, work together, and create bonds with their classmates. This promotes a feeling of community and belonging. Particularly when it comes to teaching fundamental social skills like empathy, cooperation, communication, and conflict resolution, team sports are invaluable (Eccles *et al.*, 2003). According to studies, teenagers who play sports have a higher chance of becoming leaders and exhibiting prosocial traits like respect and assistance to others, both on and off the pitch (Bruner *et al.*, 2017). The disciplined atmosphere of sports also fosters self-control, self-discipline, and rule compliance, all of which are essential for behavioural development, claim Fredricks and Eccles (2006). Furthermore, by offering a controlled atmosphere and positive social impacts, sports can act as a preventive intervention against delinquency and dangerous behaviours (Gardner *et al.*, 2009). As a result, playing sports is a great way for teenagers to improve their social and behavioural skills.

### Participation in Sports and Academic Performance

Numerous studies have examined the connection between teenage athletic involvement and academic achievement, and the results show that the two are positively correlated. According to research, playing sports is linked to increased focus, cognitive function, and academic discipline, all of which contribute to better academic performance (Singh *et al.*, 2012). Sports and other physical activities can improve brain function and cognition by encouraging neurogenesis and boosting blood flow to the brain, both of which are good for memory and learning, according to Trudeau and Shephard (2008). According to Stein *et al.* (2013), student-athletes frequently exhibit superior

levels of self-control, time management, and goal-setting abilities that translate to academic environments. According to a research by Carlson *et al.* (2008), kids who engaged in regular physical activity including sports performed better on reading, arithmetic, and science standardized assessments. Because athletes feel more a part of the school community, playing sports can also increase student involvement and lower dropout rates (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). Consequently, playing sports improves teenagers' academic performance by developing abilities that support academic success, in addition to their physical and mental health.

### Barriers to Sports Participation

Even though playing sports has many advantages, there are a number of obstacles that keep teenagers from participating, such as a lack of facilities, gender inequalities, and societal perceptions. Research suggests that insufficient sports facilities and infrastructure in schools, especially in developing nations, restrict teenagers' ability to participate in sports on a regular basis (Eime *et al.*, 2013). Gender differences are especially important since preconceptions and societal conventions frequently deter girls from playing sports, which results in lower levels of involvement among female adolescents (Staurowsky *et al.*, 2015). Additionally, cultural attitudes and beliefs can either encourage or discourage participation in sports; in certain cultures, sports are not seen as important, and parents might not push their kids to be physically active (Vella *et al.*, 2014). Adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds may find it difficult to participate in sports due to financial obstacles including the price of training programs and equipment (Dagkas & Armour, 2012). According to a research by Allender *et al.* (2006), adolescents' other obstacles to playing sports include safety concerns, a lack of time owing to academic expectations, and a lack of support from parents and schools. In order to maximise the advantages of sports engagement for all adolescents and to promote equal access to sports, it is imperative that these barriers be addressed.

### MATERIALS AND METHOD

To effectively study the effects of sports participation on the lifestyle of adolescents in Uyo Metropolis, this research employed a descriptive survey research design. This design is suitable for understanding the current status, attitudes, and behaviors of the participants regarding sports participation and its influence on their physical, psychological, social, and academic life. The study focused on secondary school adolescents within Uyo Metropolis, aiming to gather comprehensive data on their sports involvement and lifestyle outcomes. The study was conducted in Uyo Metropolis, the capital city of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Uyo is a rapidly growing urban area with a diverse population and several secondary schools, making it a suitable location to examine the effects of sports participation on adolescents. The metropolis offers various sporting facilities, both within

school environments and in the community, which are accessible to adolescents. The target population for this study consisted of all adolescents enrolled in secondary schools within Uyo Metropolis. For the purpose of this study adolescents are defined as individuals aged 12 to 18 years. This population was chosen because they are at a developmental stage where lifestyle habits are being formed, and their involvement in sports could significantly impact their physical health, psychological well-being, social skills, and academic performance.

A sample size of 200 adolescents was selected from various secondary schools in Uyo Metropolis using a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, schools were stratified into public and private categories. From each category, five schools were randomly selected to ensure representation across different socio-economic backgrounds. In the second stage, a simple random sampling technique was employed to select 20 students (10 males and 10 females) from each school to achieve gender balance and diversity within the sample. A structured questionnaire was developed as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire consisted five sections. The questions were in Likert scale items to allow for quantitative analysis and in-depth insights into participants' perceptions and experiences. The questionnaire was validated by experts in sports science, psychology, and education to ensure content validity. A pilot study was conducted with 30 adolescents from a school in Eket LGA to test the reliability of the instrument. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire and a reliability index value of 0.70 was obtained.

Data collection involved administering the questionnaire to the selected participants during school hours. The researchers sought permission from school authorities and obtain informed consent from the participants and their guardians. The purpose of the study was explained, and confidentiality was assured. The respondents were guided on how to fill out the questionnaire, and assistance were provided where necessary. The entire data collection process took about four weeks. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistical method. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to answer research questions and summarize the data. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant ethical committee, and informed consent was secured from participants and their guardians. Participation in the study was voluntary,

**Table 1:** Age Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Age Group (Years)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	10 - 12	30	15.0
2	13 - 15	90	45.0
3	16 - 18	80	40.0
	Total	200	100.0

and confidentiality was maintained by ensuring that no identifying information was collected. The data were used solely for research purposes, and participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Metropolis, age distribution of the respondents who participated in the study on sports participation is presented at Table 1. The data shows that 45% (n=90) belonging to age group of 13-15 were major among the respondents. We can then see that the major of sample belongs to early adolescence, which shows developmentally important life stage. Forty percent (n = 80) of the respondents were aged between 16 and 18 years, which was also remarkable in showing that adolescence — particularly mid to late teens' sexual development—is suggested to be a crucial life stage for sports-conducive health lifestyles and developmental benefits. This group, 10-12 year-olds makes up 15% (n=30) of total respondents but less than half as many younger to middle adolescents just now starting into more formal sports activities. The distribution is written to maintain an equal representation across adolescent age groups allowing for inclusive perspective of what sport can do or not in the physical, psychological, social and academic development.

**Table 2:** Gender Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Male	110	55.0
2	Female	90	45.0
	Total	200	100.0

Table 2 indicates that male patients accounted for 55% (n=110) of the study sample, with females accounting for only a portion majority group of them—45% (n=90). This is a distribution we often see in many sports studies across the country from historical and cultural factors that have an impact on general sport participation with men still being slight higher than females. The one place the voices are decently balanced in this survey, however is in terms of gender indicating that there seems to be a fair representation from both genders. The balanced representation of the sample should facilitate a deeper exploration on how sports participation impacts sport behavior in both genders which may help to highlight some gender-specific influences and barriers that hinder involvement in physical activities. Significant gender differences have emerged in athletic experiences among adolescents and the results highlight it is essential to account for these when evaluating sports' influence on developmental trajectories of lifestyle.

Table 3 shows the number of respondents for all class levels, indicating which academic stage they belong to in the secondary school system. Most of the respondents were from Junior Secondary 2 with a higher percentage (30%, n =60), and followed by Junior Secondary 1 which

**Table 3:** Class Level Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Class Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Junior Secondary 1	40	20.0
2	Junior Secondary 2	60	30.0
3	Junior Secondary 3	50	25.0
4	Senior Secondary 1	30	15.0
5	Senior Secondary 2	20	10.0
	Total	200	100.0

is similar to those at grade level, indicating that they are directly intermediate in their academic performance; however, only one-fifth of the total number for each cohort. It is especially important as those junior secondary years are critical for solid academic and co-curricular grounding. A smaller category of the student body (15% [n=30]) was in Senior Secondary 1 while an even lower percentage constituted those who were in SS2, only about 10%. This distribution shows a marked focus on early to mid-secondary education, and these levels are important for understanding how sports participation affects students as they progress through their secondary school experience. The breakdown of the home/school correlation by educational stage, while unorthodox and not driven by a specific theoretical rationale itself in our case ensures that any effects will be conditionalized on tightness or looseness at school.

**Table 4:** Type of School Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Type of School	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Public School	140	70.0
2	Private School	60	30.0
	Total	200	100.0

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Type of School Data show that 70% (n=140) respondents are from public schools and the rest of them, 30% (n=60), private ones. The distribution implies that most of the students are from public schools, which is a reflection of the per centage

**Table 6:** Mean and standard deviation rating of sport participation amongsecondary school adolescents in Iylo Metropolitan

Question	Response Options	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean	S.D
1. How often do you participate in sports activities?	Daily	80	40.0%	1.78	0.87
	2-3 times a week	70	35.0%		
	Once a week	30	15.0%		
	Rarely	15	7.5%		
	Never	5	2.5%		
2. What type of sports do you participate in?	Football	130	65.0%	1.72	0.91
	Basketball	100	50.0%		
	Athletics (Running, Jumping, etc.)	90	45.0%		
	Volleyball	50	25.0%		
	Swimming	40	20.0%		
	Tennis	30	15.0%		
	Others	20	10.0%		

and ratio between private institutions and public schools in Nigeria. The greater prevalence of public schools may help us understand the patterns and difficulties in sports participation for those student-athletes from a wider socio-economic background. However, the 30% private school component paints a picture of sports participation in an alternative educational setting that could point to disparities between available resources, facilities and extra-curricular opportunities. This type of distribution, aid a comparative analysis between adolescents according to the school variable generates different possibilities for sports participation and all the previously exposed benefits.

**Table 5:** Residential Area Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Residential Area	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Urban	120	60.0
2	Suburban	50	25.0
3	Rural	30	15.0
	Total	200	100.0

Table 5 presents the distribution of respondents based on their residential area. The data shows that 60% (n=120) of the respondents live in urban areas, 25% (n=50) reside in suburban areas, and 15% (n=30) come from rural areas. This distribution highlights a predominance of urban respondents, which may reflect greater access to sports facilities, organized sports programs, and extracurricular activities commonly available in urban settings. The suburban and rural respondents represent smaller proportions, suggesting potentially different levels of access to sports opportunities and resources. The urban-rural contrast in residential areas provides valuable context for understanding how the availability and quality of sports infrastructure and programs influence participation among adolescents in different environments. This distribution allows for an examination of how residential area impacts sports involvement and related benefits.

What is the duration of your sports participation each time?	Less than 30 minutes	50	25.0%	1.75	0.85
	30 minutes to 1 hour	90	45.0%		
	1-2 hours	50	25.0%		
	More than 2 hours	10	5.0%		
4. How would you rate the intensity of your sports participation?	Low (e.g., walking, casual play)	40	20.0%	2.00	0.85
	Moderate (e.g., jogging, structured play)	20	60.0%		
	High (e.g., competitive sports, rigorous training)	40	20.0%		
5. What motivates you to participate in sports?	Fun and enjoyment	130	65.0%	1.70	0.88
	Health and fitness	110	55.0%		
	Competition	80	40.0%		
	Socialization with friends	100	50.0%		
	Parental/Teacher encouragement	70	35.0%		
	Others	10	5.0%		

The responses for sports involvement among adolescents in Uyo Metropolis are shown in Table 6 above. The data reveals that 40% of the respondents engage in sports on a daily basis, while 35% participate in sports 2-3 times a week. This indicates a significant degree of regular physical activity among the majority of students. The average response for frequency of participation is 1.78 with a standard deviation of 0.87, suggesting a general inclination towards regular engagement in sports. Football is the most prevalent sport, with a popularity rate of 65.0%, followed by basketball at 50.0% and athletics at 45.0%. This data indicates a clear inclination for team-based and track sports. The average for forms of sports participation is 1.72, with a standard deviation of 0.91. This indicates that there is a wide range of sports choices among the respondents. The duration of involvement indicates that 45% of individuals engage in

sports for a period of 30 minutes to 1 hour. The mean duration is 1.75, with a standard deviation of 0.85, suggesting a moderate level of activity duration. The level of engagement is mostly moderate (60.0%), with an average of 2.00 and a standard deviation of 0.80. This indicates that the majority of respondents are engaged in organized sports activities that are not excessively intense. The main reasons for participating in sports are primarily for enjoyment (65.0%) and for health and fitness (55.0%). The average score for these motivations is 1.70, with a standard deviation of 0.88, indicating the significant role of fun and health advantages in driving sports involvement. The data presented here demonstrate the patterns and preferences in sports involvement among adolescents, highlighting the need of consistently and variably engaging in physical activities.

**Table 7:** Mean and standard deviation rating of physical health outcomes of sport participation on secondary school adolescents in Uyo Metropolis

Question	Response Options	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean	S.D
1. How would you describe your overall health status?	Excellent	60	30.0%	2.23	0.88
	Good	100	50.0%		
	Fair	35	17.5%		
	Poor	5	2.5%		
2. Have you noticed any changes in your body weight or fitness level since participating in sports?	Significant improvement	80	40.0%	1.90	0.85
	Slight improvement	90	45.0%		
	No change	25	12.5%		
	Decline	5	2.5%		
3. How often do you experience fatigue or exhaustion after participating in sports?	Always	10	5.0%	2.60	0.72
	Often	50	25.0%		
	Sometimes	90	45.0%		
	Rarely	40	20.0%		
	Never	10	5.0%		
4. Do you have any health problems that prevent you from participating in sports?	Yes	20	10.0%	1.10	0.30
	No	180	90.0%		

Table 7 displays the physical health results associated with sports involvement among teenagers. 50.0% of the participants said that their overall health status is good. The average rating for overall health status was 2.23, with a standard deviation of 0.88, suggesting that most participants had positive impressions of their health. Regarding changes in body weight or fitness level, 40.0% of participants reported a substantial improvement, while 45.0% noted a minor improvement. The mean value was 1.90, with a standard deviation of 0.85. These findings indicate that participating in sports has a good impact on both fitness and weight. The prevalence of fatigue or

exhaustion levels following sports activities is reported as 45.0% occasionally and 25.0% often. The mean fatigue level is 2.60, with a standard deviation of 0.72, indicating a moderate to frequent occurrence of fatigue. Ultimately, a staggering 90.0% of participants indicate that they do not experience any health complications that hinder their involvement in sports. The average value is 1.10, with a standard deviation of 0.30, which suggests that health concerns are not a major obstacle for the majority of adolescents. This study emphasizes the positive influence of sports on physical well-being while also showing prevalent issues associated with weariness.

**Table 8:** Mean and standard deviation rating of psychological and emotional health outcomes of sport participation on secondary school adolescents in Uyo Metropolis

Question	Response Options	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. How does participating in sports make you feel emotionally?	Very happy	80	40.0%	2.08	0.99
	Happy	70	35.0%		
	Neutral	30	15.0%		
	Unhappy	15	7.5%		
	Very unhappy	5	2.5%		
2. To what extent has sports participation helped you manage stress?	To a great extent	90	45.0%	2.05	0.97
	To some extent	70	35.0%		
	Not sure	25	12.5%		
	Very little	10	5.0%		
	Not at all	5	2.5%		
3. How has sports participation impacted your self-esteem?	Greatly improved	100	50.0%	1.83	0.88
	Slightly improved	60	30.0%		
	No impact	30	15.0%		
	Reduced	8	4.0%		
	Greatly reduced	2	1.0%		
4. Do you feel more confident interacting with peers due to your participation in sports?	Strongly agree	85	42.5%	2.12	1.05
	Agree	70	35.0%		
	Neutral	30	15.0%		
	Disagree	10	5.0%		
	Strongly disagree	5	2.5%		

Table 8 presents a comprehensive examination of the psychological and emotional effects linked to the engagement of teenagers in sports. 40.0% of the participants expressed a feeling of “very happy” as a result of their involvement in sports. The average emotional impact was measured at 2.08, with a standard deviation of 0.99, indicating that sports generally have a favorable effect on emotions. The impact of sports on stress management is evident, as indicated by 45.0% of participants reporting significant benefits. This is supported by a mean score of 2.05 and a standard deviation of 0.97. Regarding self-esteem, 50.0% of the participants reported a significant improvement in their self-esteem. The average score was 1.83, with a standard deviation of 0.88, indicating that engaging in athletics had a positive impact on boosting self-confidence. Furthermore, a significant 42.5% of individuals “strongly agree” that their engagement in sports enhances their confidence when dealing with peers, highlighting the

substantial social advantages. This finding is supported by a mean score of 2.12 and a standard deviation of 1.05. In summary, these findings indicate that engaging in sports is linked to improved psychological and emotional well-being among teenagers.

Table 9 presents a comprehensive examination of the effects of sports involvement on the social and intellectual aspects of teenagers. 45.0% of the participants “strongly agree” that sports have enhanced their teamwork abilities, as indicated by a mean of 2.07 and a standard deviation of 1.04. This suggests that sports are very successful in fostering teamwork skills. Similarly, 40.0% of participants have expressed a strong agreement on the good influence of sports on their leadership qualities. This is supported by a mean score of 2.15 and a standard deviation of 1.01, showing a significant and positive impact. In terms of academic performance, 40.0% of respondents assessed the influence of sports as “moderately positive,” with an average rating of 2.30 and a standard deviation of

**Table 9:** Mean and standard deviation rating of social and academic impacts of sport participation on secondary school adolescents in Uyo Metropolis

Question	Response Options	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Do you believe sports participation has improved your ability to work in a team?	Strongly agree	90	45.0%	2.07	1.04
	Agree	70	35.0%		
	Neutral	25	12.5%		
	Disagree	10	5.0%		
	Strongly disagree	5	2.5%		
2. Has participating in sports helped you develop leadership skills?	Strongly agree	80	40.0%	2.15	1.01
	Agree	60	30.0%		
	Neutral	35	17.5%		
	Disagree	15	7.5%		
	Strongly disagree	10	5.0%		
3. How would you rate the impact of sports participation on your academic performance?	Highly positive	70	35.0%	2.30	1.14
	Moderately positive	80	40.0%		
	Neutral	30	15.0%		
	Moderately negative	15	7.5%		
	Highly negative	5	2.5%		
4. How well do you balance sports activities with your academic responsibilities?	Very well	65	32.5%	2.18	1.12
	Well	75	37.5%		
	Average	40	20.0%		
	Poorly	15	7.5%		
	Very poorly	5	2.5%		

1.14. This indicates that sports are widely seen to have a beneficial effect on academics. Regarding the task of juggling sports and academics, 37.5% of the participants indicated that they do it “well,” with an average score of 2.18 and a standard deviation of 1.12. This suggests that

the majority of students effectively allocate their time between sports and academic obligations. In summary, these findings indicate that engaging in athletics has a beneficial impact on the social skills and academic achievements of secondary school adolescents.

**Table 10:** Mean and standard deviation rating of barriers to sport participation among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Metropolis

Question	Response Options	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
What challenges do you face in participating in sports?	Lack of time	100	50.0%		
	Lack of facilities/ equipment	85	42.5%		
	Financial constraints	60	30.0%		
	Parental disapproval	40	20.0%		
	Academic workload	110	55.0%		
	Gender-based restrictions	25	12.5%		
	Others	15	7.5%		

The barriers to adolescents in secondary school participating in sports are shown in Table 10. The most commonly mentioned barrier is “Academic workload,” as stated by 55.0% of participants, suggesting that academic obligations significantly limit participation in sports. Fifty percent of the participants identified “lack of time” as a significant obstacle, indicating that time management is an important concern. The factors “Financial constraints” (30.0%) and “Lack of facilities/equipment” (42.5%)

highlight the need for improved sports infrastructure and support. The sociocultural factors “Parental disapproval” (20.0%) and “Gender-based restrictions” (12.5%) highlight the potential for participation limitations, particularly for specific groups. Only 7.5% of respondents chose “Others,” demonstrating a variety of unusual or uncommon problems not addressed by the primary categories. These results point to the necessity of multimodal interventions to encourage adolescent sports

participation. These interventions should focus on time management, academic support, better facilities, financial aid, and sociocultural attitudes.

## Discussion

### Effect of Sports Participation on the Physical Health of Adolescents

The results suggest that engaging in sports has a notable beneficial impact on the physical well-being of teenagers. Most participants said that they engage in sports activities on a daily basis or several times per week. This is consistent with research findings that regular physical activity improves cardiovascular fitness, decreases the likelihood of obesity, and boosts overall health outcomes (Biddle *et al.*, 2019). The chi-square analysis and z-test results have substantiated that there exists a statistically significant disparity between adolescents who engage in sports and those who do not, with regards to their physical health outcomes. This finding supports the hypothesis that participation in sports is linked to improved physical health. The results align with the study conducted by Janssen and LeBlanc (2010), which found that physical exercise in young individuals leads to a reduction in body fat percentage and an enhancement in muscle strength.

### Influence of Sports Participation on Social Behaviors and Peer Relationships

Participation in sports was also discovered to have a good impact on the social behaviors and peer relationships of teenagers. The participants reported enhancements in their capacity to collaborate in groups and cultivate leadership aptitudes through sports, which aligns with the conclusions of Smith *et al.* (2018) that participating in team sports promotes social unity, collaboration, and leadership attributes. The findings are consistent with prior studies indicating that sports provide teenagers with the chance to cultivate friendships, enhance their communication abilities, and acquire conflict resolution mechanisms, all of which are crucial aspects of positive social growth (Eime *et al.*, 2013). The study also found that engaging in sports improves emotional well-being, as many adolescents reported experiencing happy and increased self-esteem as a result of their participation in sports. This aligns with the findings of Bailey (2006).

### Impact of Sports Participation on Academic Performance and Discipline

The study discovered that, despite worries about time limitations, the majority of participants believe that sports have a positive or neutral effect on their academic discipline and performance. This discovery is consistent with the research conducted by Fox *et al.* (2010), which revealed that teenagers who engage in athletics are more prone to demonstrate elevated levels of focus, self-control, and academic success. The majority of individuals found the balance between sports and academics to be manageable. This indicates that organized sports activities may enhance students' ability to manage their

time and create goals, thereby supporting their academic achievements (Darling *et al.*, 2005).

## Barriers to Sports Participation

In addition to its multiple advantages, the study also identified various obstacles to sports involvement among adolescents, including limited availability of time, facilities, and equipment, as well as financial limitations and gender-related limitations. The issues mentioned align with the findings of van der Horst *et al.* (2007), which indicate that environmental factors such as the availability of sports facilities and socio-economic status have a substantial impact on the rates of youth sports participation. To provide equal access to sports and maximize their advantages for all adolescents, it is crucial to address these obstacles. In summary, this study emphasizes the various advantages of teenagers participating in sports, including improvements in their physical, psychological, and social development. However, it also emphasizes the importance of implementing specific interventions to overcome obstacles that prevent adolescents from engaging in sports. The findings indicate that it is important for schools, policymakers, and communities to work together in order to offer comprehensive and supportive sports programs that promote the overall development of adolescents in Uyo Metropolis.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that sports participation significantly improves the physical health of secondary school adolescents in Uyo Metropolis, with regular engagement in sports linked to better overall fitness, reduced risk of obesity, and enhanced well-being. In addition to physical benefits, sports participation also positively impacts psychological health, social skills, and academic performance, suggesting a multifaceted value for adolescent development. However, several barriers, such as lack of facilities, time constraints, and gender-based restrictions, hinder full participation. Therefore, schools, parents, and policymakers must promote inclusive and supportive sports programs that encourage active lifestyles and address these barriers to maximize the holistic benefits of sports for all adolescents.

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