



## CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL FITNESS ACTIVITIES IN KWARA STATE UNIVERSITY, MALETE

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### ABSTRACT

The rate of participation in physical fitness is extremely low in women. The objectives of this research are; to determine if there is a safe environment for the female students to involve in physical fitness programme within the school; to find out if there is enough equipment for all the students within the university; The Research design adopted for the study is the survey design. The target population for this study comprises of female students of Kwara State University, Ilorin. The sample size consist of one hundred and twenty (120) female students of Kwara State University, Maleté using a total of 30 female students from each level. 1001 to 4001. A structured questionnaire was used, the research adopted the content validity used the pilot study method for reliability. The T test was used for testing hypotheses Findings revealed that safe environment has a significant effect on women participation in physical fitness, availability of equipment has significant effect on women participation in physical fitness. This study concluded that if solutions are followed to the letter, there is a good chance that the participation of women in fitness activities will increase. The study recommends that the educational components that debunk common myths surrounding women's fitness and highlight the numerous benefits of physical activity should be emphasized.

**Keywords:** Physical Fitness, Women Physical Participation

### Introduction

For century ago, before now socialist all over the world has been debating on the issue of feminine and masculine responsibilities, expectation and activities in the society. Men have always been a major dominant in physical fitness till date. Everyone is involved in physical activity as long as the person walks, jumps, hops, and gallops, swings arms, writes. The rate of participation in physical fitness is extremely low in women. Moderate intensity Physical fitness is one of the preventives medicine practices for century. Physical activity refers to any bodily movement that involves the muscle contraction, relaxation and expenditure of energy.

Physical fitness is one of the health behaviors that deserved attention in other to enjoy healthy living. Physical fitness is aimed at maintaining optimal level of physical fitness and is a regular routine that is supervised (Elendu & Chigbata, 2017). Physical fitness refers to intensive physical activity done for the purpose of getting physically fit. Physical fitness occurs in a supervised setting where time, place, activity, and participants may be restricted and with predetermined goal or goals, which may or may not be achieved (Orunaboka & Elendu, 2019). A healthy lifestyle contributes to the quality of life (Rauzon, 2022). Physical fitness an activity that takes place in a socio-cultural setting and an individual's participation or nonparticipation in it is influenced by many social and cultural factors.

It is a fundamental human right of women to have access, and participate in Physical fitness, recreational activities and sports in a positive and enjoyment environment without any limitations. Engagement in physical fitness is an individualistic behavior. It is only the individual who decides to participate or withdraw from Physical fitness with the absence or presence of barriers or limitation. People failed to participate in physical fitness and sports or reduce their frequency of participation due to some actual or perceived barriers. Shimer (2010) noted that an individual is more likely to participate in regular exercise if he/she enjoys the physical fitness; believes that time can be found for physical fitness; believes that there are relatively few barriers to getting regular fitness; believes the benefits of fitness outweigh the costs; has friends or family members who exercise and support or both his or her getting fit; feels safe exercising outdoor, near home, or work; and has access to an attractive and convenient exercise space near home or work.

Sedentary women have a greater occurrence of endometrial, cervix, and breast cancer Women's involvement in sports and physical exercises is very essential for their health. Gill, et al (2002) reported that exercise among physically active women can reduce the risk of osteoporosis. Clifton (2012) stated that women whom are active in physical fitness experience less insomnia, stress, anxiety and depression. Regular physical activity reduces one's risk of coronary heart disease, hypertension, obesity, noninsulin dependent diabetes mellitus, osteoporosis, and certain forms of cancer (Bouchard, Shephard & Stephens, 2004). Women can clearly benefit by participating in a regular exercise programme. However, initiating and maintaining an exercise programme is a difficult task for many women (Rauzon, 2002). Although, it is now more acceptable for women to

be involved in physical activity, participation rates are low (Rauzon, 2002). Understanding the barriers that limit an individual's involvement in physical activity can provide critical information.

Women are underrepresented in the percentage of those participating in regular and vigorous physical activity (Gill, Overdorf & College, 2002). Women have been shown to be less likely than men to participate in vigorous exercise and sports and less likely to be physically active on a regular basis (Bell, 2007) The difference in the proportion of men and women in sports and physical exercises participation suggests that there are challenges which serve as limitations to women. In the thesis of this paper, limitation is an actual or perceived internal or external factor or force which poses a challenge or obstacle that result to one's inability to perform, continue in an activity or a reduction in the frequency with which an activity is performed. Limitations or barriers could be seen in one's non-participation or reduction in the frequency of participation in sports and physical exercises. Limitations to sports and physical exercise participation deprive someone of the potential benefits such as health and fitness The fitness of Nigerian citizens especially the workforce is important for high productivity and economic development. Women as part of workforce need fitness through physical exercises in order to be productive and contribute to national economy. Therefore, limitations to their participation in physical exercises call for investigation. Again, if the fifth goal of United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of improving maternal health is to be achieved through physical exercise, then there is need to examine and address the limitations faced by women in their involvement in sports and physical exercises in every society.

### **Statement of the problem**

One of the major characteristics of the current era is being an era of rapid change in various aspects of our lives. Such characteristic has great influence on different sides of our daily lives. Since physical education is one of the main pillars for the development of a society, it has been influenced by such changes. Physical education is no longer just practicing various sports activities, but it is part of the educational process for individuals and communities. Worldwide, university education has been a critical component of human development. It is considered as an important stage for young people in terms of providing them with required training and education and making them responsible citizens. In addition, university education has been considered as a stage for individuals' preparation and training to face the challenges of the current era. University education is important to provide students with the cultural and scientific training and education. University students spend long time reading and studying. Therefore, they need to participate in recreational and leisure activities to overcome mental and physical stress.

Women are underrepresented in the percentage of those participating in regular and vigorous physical activity (Gill, Overdorf & College, 2002). Female Student in most tertiary institution in Nigeria don't get involved in any physical fitness or participate in one sport or the other. Even those female students in a department that their major course is all about fitness still find it odd to engage in physical fitness activities universities in the Western world made it a mandatory course for every student to involved in physical fitness activities of any kind The aims of this researcher are to interview (physical interaction) undergraduate female student within Kwara state university, Maleta.

### **Purposes of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to :

- i. determine if there is room for physical fitness programme for female students in the University curriculum?
- ii. determine if there is a safe environment for the female students to involve in physical fitness programme within the school?
- iii. find out if there is enough equipment for all the students within the university?

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered

- i. Is there a room for physical fitness programme in the University curriculum?
- ii. Is there a safe environment for the female students to involve in physical fitness within the school?
- iii. Is there enough equipment for all the students within the university?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The hypotheses were tested:

H<sub>01</sub> - Safe environment as no significant effect on women participation in physical fitness

H<sub>02</sub> - Availability of Equipment has no significant effect on women participation in physical fitness.

### **Methodology**

The Research design adopted for the study is the survey design. Quantitative data was used. The target population for this study comprises of female students of Kwara State University, Ilorin. The sample size consist of one hundred and twenty (120) female students of Kwara State University, Maleta using a total of 30 female students from each level .i.e. 1001 to 4001. This research adopted the non-random sampling technique using the convenience sampling method. A structured questionnaire was used as the major instrument for this study. This research adopted the content validity (a test for whether the measure covers the full range, or all of the dimension of a concept's meaning). In order to ensure the reliability of the data collected, the researcher used the pilot study method by administering same questionnaire twice to the same group under the same identical variable and a co-efficient of 76r was gotten which shows that the instrument is reliable for the study.

The research questions will be interpreted descriptively using percentage. The simple percentage was used to analyze the research questions and ANOVA was used for testing hypotheses.

**Answering of Research Questions**

**Research question one: Is there a room for physical fitness programme in the University curriculum?**

| S/N | STATEMENTS  | N   | SA   | A    | D    | SD  | Mean | SD   |
|-----|---|-----|------|------|------|-----|------|------|
|     | <b>Room for Physical fitness in curriculum</b>  |     | %    | %    | %    | %   |      |      |
| 1   | The school curriculum includes the physical fitness which encourage the need to be fit as women                                   | 120 | 25.8 | 60   | 14.2 | -   | 2.87 | .735 |
| 2   | The physical fitness in the curriculum promotes gender equality and inclusivity in sports and activities                          | 120 | 34.4 | 44.3 | 19.7 | 1.6 | 3.51 | .653 |
| 3   | The physical fitness curriculum provides a variety of activities that cater to different fitness levels and preferences of women. | 120 | 24.5 | 56.6 | 15   | 3.3 | 3.05 | .689 |

**Source:** Authors Computation, 2023

Average Mean = 3.14

Decision Rule: 2.5

From the table above 26.2% strongly agree and 59% agree that school curriculum includes the physical fitness which encourage the need to be fit as women while 14.8% agree. It also showed that 34.4% strongly agreed and 44.3% agreed that physical fitness in the curriculum promotes gender equality and inclusivity in sports and activities while 19.7% disagree and 1.6% strongly disagree. The table also showed that 24.6% strongly agreed and 57.4% agreed that physical fitness curriculum provides a variety of activities that cater to different fitness levels and preferences of women while 14.8% disagree and 3.2% agree.

Generally, the result on table above indicates that the average mean score for responses on if there is room for physical fitness participation in curriculum is 3.14, which is above the cut off mark of 2.5. This implies that there is room for physical fitness participation in curriculum

**Research Question two: Is there a safe environment for the female students to involve in physical fitness within the school?**

| S/N | STATEMENTS  | N   | SA   | A    | D    | SD   | MEAN | SD    |
|-----|---|-----|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
|     | <b>Safe Environment for physical fitness</b>  |     | %    | %    | %    | %    |      |       |
| 1   | The fitness environment is welcoming and inclusive for women                                | 120 | 29.2 | 63.9 | 6.9  | -    | 3.17 | 0.839 |
| 2   | Fitness facilities and programs promote a positive body image and self-acceptance for women | 120 | 52.5 | 36.1 |      | 11.4 | 3.48 | 0.540 |
| 3   | Females are often harassed during fitness activities  | 120 | 29.5 | 31.1 | 36.1 | 3.2  | 3.59 | 0.603 |

**Source:** Authors Computation, 2023

Average Mean = 3.41

Decision Rule: 2.5

The table showed that 29.2% strongly agree and 63.3% agreed that fitness environment is welcoming and inclusive for women while 6.9% strongly disagree. It also showed that 52.2% strongly agreed and 36.1% agreed that Fitness facilities and programs promote a positive body image and self-acceptance for women while 11.4% disagree. The table also showed that 29.5% strongly agreed and 31.1% agreed that Females are often harassed during fitness activities while 36.1% agreed and 3.2% strongly disagree.

Generally, the result on table above indicates that the average mean score for responses on if safe environment for women participation in physical fitness is 3.41, which is above the cut off mark of 2.5. Based on the result, we can deduce that safe environment for women participation in physical fitness

**Research question 3: Is there enough equipment for all the students within the university?**

| S/N | STATEMENTS   | N   | SA   | A    | D    | SD  | MEAN | SD    |
|-----|--|-----|------|------|------|-----|------|-------|
|     | <b>Enough Equipment for physical fitness</b>                                   |     | %    | %    | %    | %   |      |       |
| 1   | Fitness facilities are fully equipped and accessible                           | 120 | 21.3 | 52.5 | 26.2 | -   | 3.55 | 0.678 |
| 2   | Fitness facilities have gender-neutral changing rooms and facilities to ensure | 120 | 54.1 | 27.9 | 14.8 | 3.2 | 3.46 | 0.715 |

|   |   |     |      |      |      |   |      |       |
|---|---|-----|------|------|------|---|------|-------|
|   | women's comfort and privacy   |     |      |      |      |   |      |       |
| 3 | Females feels intimidated or unwelcome in fitness-related spaces dominated by men | 120 | 27.9 | 45.9 | 26.2 | - | 3.49 | 0.621 |

Source: Authors Computation, 2023

Average Mean = 3.5

Decision Rule: 2.5

The table above showed that 21.3% strongly agreed and 52.5% agreed that Fitness facilities are fully equipped and accessible while 26.2% disagreed. It also showed that 54.1% strongly agreed and 27.9% agreed that Fitness facilities have gender-neutral changing rooms and facilities to ensure women's comfort and privacy while 14.8% disagreed and 3.2% strongly disagreed. From the table, 27.9% strongly agreed and 45.9% agreed that Females feels intimidated or unwelcome in fitness-related spaces dominated by men while 26.2% disagreed.

Generally, the result on table above indicates that the average mean score for responses on if there is enough equipment physical fitness is 3.5, which is above the cut off mark of 2.5. Based on the result, we can deduce that there is enough equipment physical fitness

**Hypotheses Testing**

**Hypotheses one: Safe environment has no significant effect on women participation in physical fitness**

**Model Summary**

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .550 <sup>a</sup> | .302     | .296              | 3.12474                    |

a. Predictors: (Constant), safeenvir

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F      | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
|       | Regression | 499.441        | 1   | 499.441     | 51.151 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
| 1     | Residual   | 1152.151       | 118 | 9.764       |        |                   |
|       | Total      | 1651.592       | 119 |             |        |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: women participation

b. Predictors: (Constant), safe environment

The model summary as indicated in the table below shows that R is 0.550 while R square is 0.302 This implies that 30.2% of variation. The table above summarizes the results of the analysis of variation in the dependent variable with large value of regression sum of squares (499.441) in comparison to the residual sum of squares with value of 1152.151. This value indicates that the model explains the variation in the dependent variables. However, the estimated F-value at 51.151 as given in the table below is significant at p-value 0.0001, which is less than p-value of 0.05 (p<0.05) which means that safe environment has significant effect on women participation in physical fitness programme.

**Hypothesis two: Availability of Equipment has no significant effect on women participation in physical fitness**

**Model Summary**

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .818 <sup>a</sup> | .670     | .667              | 2.15018                    |

a. Predictors: (Constant), availability of equipment

| ANOVA <sup>a</sup> |            |                |     |             |         |                   |
|--------------------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| Model              |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F       | Sig.              |
| 1                  | Regression | 1106.047       | 1   | 1106.047    | 239.235 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|                    | Residual   | 545.545        | 118 | 4.623       |         |                   |
|                    | Total      | 1651.592       | 119 |             |         |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: women participation  
b. Predictors: (Constant), availability of equipment

The model summary as indicated in the table below shows that R is 0.818 while R square is 0.670. This implies that 67% of variation. The table above summarizes the results of the analysis of variation in the dependent variable with large value of regression sum of squares (1106.047) in comparison to the residual sum of squares with value of 545.545. This value indicates that the model explains the variation in the dependent variables. However, the estimated F-value at 239.235 as given in the table below is significant at p-value 0.0001, which is less than p-value of 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ) which means that availability of equipment has significant effect on women participation in physical fitness programme.

**Conclusion**

The study concluded that physical fitness should be incorporated in the school curriculum to increase women participation in physical fitness programme in the university, safe environment should be created for physical fitness activities, necessary equipment, first aid kit for emergency purpose, experienced instructor to supervised physical fitness should be available. There should be a reorientation on religion perspective to reposition the attitude of women to physical fitness activities to increase their participation.

**Recommendations**

- i. The study recommends that the school curriculum should give room for physical fitness activities. This will motivate women to participate as it will become requirement in academic activity.
- ii. Safe environment should be ensured in the physical fitness centers in the school.
- iii. Equipment and facilities should be put in place. The availability of equipment for physical fitness in site will encourage participation in fitness activities.

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