

HUMAN CAPITAL MODEL: A BASIS FOR HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORTS IN NIGERIA

OFFODILE, Humphrey, N., OBIKA Ujuagu(Phd) & UZOR Theresa Nkiru (Phd)

Department of Human kinetics and Health Education,
Nnamdi Azikiwe university, Awka Anambra State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

The Human capital model for physical activity (PA) and sports was formulated with the aim of drawing the attention of stakeholders on the importance of looking at physical activity and sports beyond health benefits alone. The model describes Physical activity and sports as a form of 'capital' just like in economic terms where there is emphasis on value. Thus, the value derived from Physical activity and Sports was encapsulated in six domains of Capital-Physical capital, Emotional capital, Financial capital, Social capital, Individual capital and Intellectual capital. The paper interconnected these domains of capital into three contexts- Lasting relationships, Body appearance and financial relief, and highlighted their implications on human capital development such as self-esteem, entrepreneurship, social networking and job efficiency in Nigeria. The paper concluded by recognizing that PA and sports can contribute to human capital development in Nigeria through active participation and government intervention.

Keywords: Physical, Activity, Human, Capital, Model, and Development

Introduction

The high rate of unemployment and seeming low productivity in Nigeria calls for actions by not only economic experts but also people in different sectors of the economy. The entrepreneurial and productive implications of bodily activities cannot be ignored because of the opportunities and impact it creates towards human capital development in Nigeria.

Human capital development can be defined as the process of enhancing productivity within an organization or any functional group or society. In Nigeria for example, economic experts are holding several debates to articulate possible ways of harnessing the enormous human and natural resources in the country in order to improve human productivity and unemployment. Albeit, these debates tries to identify critical areas of the country's abundant resources and how much it can help to enhance productivity and employability not so much of this is centered on the prospects of Physical activity (PA) and sports in improving productivity.

Caspersen (1985) describes PA as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. However, PA goes beyond bodily movements that aim to improve and manage physical health in people but also for other benefits which are aimed

at improving productivity. It implies that PA in this context captures those bodily activities and exercises which a person engages for the purpose self-esteem, self-development and reward. Bailey, Hillman, Arent and Petispas (2015, 2016) encapsulated this view by conceptualizing the Human capital development (HCM) through physical activity. According to the authors, the HCM is the result of an attempt to draw together an evidence base of the extension and varied benefits of sports and physical activity. The design of this model was necessitated due to the under –representation of the importance of sports and physical activity-both to individuals and the wider society. The model tries to expand the scope of the benefits of physical activity from a narrow view of range of issues including obesity and coronary heart disease. The model explains that, albeit physical health is important, but only represents a fraction of the full benefits sports and physical activity. It goes to explain that the positive outcomes of sports and physical activity are not autonomous and disconnected –they reinforce each other. Hence, the true value of sports and physical activity can only be properly appreciated from a broader perspective.

The HCM conceptualized the relationship between sports and physical activity according to six domains-i) physical; ii) emotional; iii) individual; iv) social; v) intellectual; vi) financial.

- i. Physical capital- The direct benefits of physical activity and sports to physical health and human functions, including the prevention and mitigation of non-communicable diseases and conditions, such as heart diseases, diabetes, cancer and obesity.
- ii. Emotional capital- The psychological and mental health benefits associated with physical activity and sports, including increased levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy, reduced depression and anxiety, reduced social isolation, and greater ability to process stressful events.
- iii. Individual capital- The elements of a person's character-e.g, life skills, interpersonal skills, values-that accrue via participation in play, sports and other forms of activity. Reported benefits in these area include teamwork, cooperation; mind and social responsibility, and resilience.
- iv. Social capital- The outcome that arise when networks between people, groups, organizations and civil society are strengthened because of participation in group-based physical activity, play or competitive sports. The domain of capital includes the development of both pro-social behaviors and social inclusion through participation in physical activity.
- v. Intellectual capital- The cognitive and educational gains that are increasingly linked to participation in sports and physical activity. This feature of capital focuses particularly on the effects of regular exercise on cognitive functioning

- on subject-specific performance at school, and on general academic achievement.
- vi. Financial capital- Gains in terms of earning power, job performance, productivity and job attainment, along with reduced costs of health care and absenteeism / presenteeism (i.e lower productivity among those who are present) that are linked to regular sports and physical activity.

Thus, the paper highlights these views in relation to Nigeria in 3 contexts-

Lasting relationships

Social capital usually emphasizes the role of groups or networks and views as individual stock of social resources (Berkman, Kawachi and Glyman 2014). The implication of this is that there are elements of social capacity in every individual which are necessary ingredients in building networks of friends or associates. Consequently, social capital has been viewed from two broad perspectives- bonding and bridging. According to Schulenkorf (2013), bonding social capital enforces intra –group connections or social networks of homogenous groups of people regardless of their social class, race, ethnicity and other characteristics. Whereas, Chang-Fu and Zongfu (2018), describe bridging social capital as a means to connect between community residents whose status and power are different from each other or in order words; building heterogeneous social networks.

Physical activity and sports tries to attain these perspectives of social capital by bringing people of diverse status into one space for various relationships. For instance, the implication of social capital obtained from physical activity and sports in a country like Nigeria with over 200 ethnic groups and over 200 million population is that it can narrow down the cultural and socio economic differences within a physical activity and sports environment. This implies that as vast as the Nigerian population is, physical activity and sports is capable of bringing different people and cultures together as a microcosm of the larger society. In this way bridges of friendships are built through cultural experience, skill development, business ties and other wise. This is Bailey *et al.*, (2012,2013) explanation of breaching the gap in social capital.

Social participation has been recognized as a form of structural and behavioral aspect of social capital that develop one's social networks and sense of social integration (Szreter and Woolcock 2004, Swaroop and Morenoff, 2006). However, social networks cannot be isolated from individual attitudes. For instance, Abbot and Freeth (2008) stated that current research on social capital and physical activity emphasizes trust and participation as psychosocial mechanisms related to enhance networks. Bailey *et. al.*, (2012, 2013), emphasized the need to develop the right attitudes and characters to foster strong and lasting relationships. Thus, people must have the right emotional attitudes to strengthen

relationships and ties. According to Bailey *et.al.*, (2012,2013), physical activity and sports has the ability to provide the right attitudes towards sustaining relationships. In other words, physical activity could develop the emotional dimension of social capital which aids and sustains relationships. Some of these emotional dimensions could be -happiness, self-esteem, lack of anxiety, high serotonin and dopamine levels in the brain etc. All of these culminate in a lasting relationship in people.

Social capital has been effective within workplaces and schools. For instance, Naczenski, Vries, Madelon and Van-Hoff (2017) suggest that regular physical activity participation with work colleagues may also be associated with additional psycho social health benefits among employees. Similarly, several group –based physical activity interventions at work places have shown remarkable improvements, not only in physical activity participation levels but also relatedness satisfaction in leisure time physical activity (LTPA) (Palvarine, Kautianen and Kiviranta 2019).

The association between leisure time physical activity and positive attitudes towards physical activity and sports among children and young people creates opportunities to be friends and developing close ties and relationships as well as gaining social status (Rubin, Bukowshi and Parker, 2006). Physical education presents a social function of children even though it has been widely neglected in Nigeria. According to Bailey (2006), physical education provides a foundation for children and young people to foster relationships and develop skills. Therefore, the outcome of social capital in schools depend on how schools work to encourage participation (Sallis, Comway, Prochaska *et.al.*, 2001).

Body Appearance

Initial works of Pierre Bourdieu on physical capital was centered on the benefits of sports and physical activity beyond physical health but body physicality. Pierre Bourdieu explained that body physicality's help to develop one's self-esteem. In other words, a position reflection of one's body image provides value placed on aspects of self (Jackson, Marrow, Hill and Dishman 2004). These days in Nigeria, it is observable to see men and women making efforts to keep good body shapes and sizes. These shapes and sizes can be appreciated not only on the basis of disease prevention and management but also self – esteem and productivity. For instance, the fashion modeling exhibitions that require young men and women to have certain body sizes and shapes, the fierce and muscular men who stand by the doors of event receptions and those who guard VIPS and so on are all examples of how much PA can impact on livelihoods. Although, it is yet to be quantified as to how much employment has been created from body appearance but by mere observation, it is becoming an avenue for job creation in Nigeria.

Societies admired overweight people in the middle of the 19th century. However, in contemporary times social acceptability and marital commitments are a reflection of one's body image. Pop (2017) explains that the 20th century debuted with new beauty standards

especially for women –a slender, graceful and healthful silhouette was promoted in motion pictures, on stages, post cards and illustration. These are elements of the creative and entertainment industry which individuals can be mindful about in order to enhance their own productivity and employability through physical activity.

Grogem (2008) views that a lot of women experience negative body image. According to Ali and Lindstrom (2006), many of them are dissatisfied with their body size and weight gain because slimness is seen as a desirable standard for beauty pattern. Therefore, the advocacy of physical activity helps to stem this stressor occasioned by our world today. Thus, psychological impact of physical activity in restoring acceptable body sizes and appearances increases self esteem and productivity in people. According to Bailey, Parnell, Cope and Reeves(2016), even among children in school, physical appearance is known to attract children to one another and those children who are obese tend to struggle to make friends.

Financial relief

Physical activity and sports has proved to be effective in preventing and treating various health morbidities. Karacabey (2005) summarized thus, physical activity is known for a long time to increase physical adequacy, to decrease the risk of diseases and maintain good health. However, the economic burden imposed on societies when people do not get involved in physical activity and sports is considerable. For instance, according to Cadilhac, Cumming and Magnus (2011), the estimated proportions of natural health care expenditure in countries like Australia, Canada, China, Japan, New Zealand, US and UK attributable to inadequate physical activity were estimated in the range of 0.3%-4.6%. The statistics also reveals that precisely in Australia the prevalence of physical inactivity could cost AD 672 million annually in the health sector which otherwise could have been saved. In Nigeria, there hasn't been any statistics to show the impact of physical inactivity on the health sector. However, the rising cases of cardiovascular diseases such as hypertension among Nigerians as reported by World Health Organization WHO (2013), may point to the fact that sedentary lifestyles are becoming more prominent among citizens.

According to Hafner, Yerushalimi, Philips et.al (2019), reduced presenteesm drives the highest proportion of economic gain as a result of increasing physical activity. This means that regular physical activity reduces man hours in a task or a job or in other words, productivity is increased from regular physical activity and therefore, the financial burden of long hours in a job is saved. On the other hand, the authors stated that regular physical activity reduces absenteesm which could reduce GDP loss. The implication of physical activity on financial capital is such that people are healthier to face their tasks which otherwise could be lost from sickness.

Conclusion

In conclusion, human capital development through physical activity and sports impacts immensely towards building a healthy and productive society. For instance, Social capital has a direct consequence on emotional wellbeing of individuals. In addition, it transforms relationships beyond mere acquaintances into business relationships that can impact the growth of a nation. On the other hand, people tend to be productive when they have the right physical capital. From body guards, beauty models, clothing models etc all these can create millions of jobs in Nigeria and also reduce the rate of unemployment through the micro economy. Even within our organizations, regular PA within work forces has shown to create financial capital by reducing costs and increasing output and productivity for financial gains.

Recommendations

As earlier stated, the high rate of unemployment and seeming low productivity in Nigeria calls for actions by not only economic experts but people in their different dispositions. As well as the entrepreneurial focus on bodily activities cannot be ignored because of the opportunities it creates in reducing the rate of unemployment in Nigeria. Therefore, government is advised to look at those areas where especially our teeming youths are engaging bodily activities through physical activity and sports for the purpose of income generation and ultimately job creation.

It is recognized that different people of different backgrounds can meet in a place of physical activity and this has the ability to foster all kinds of relationships including business ties. The advantages of meeting in such places is that it cuts bureaucracy of meeting in a board room or otherwise and this is why business men and women are encouraged to engage in one physical activity or the other because of its ability of presenting a meeting point. Although, the value chain of such meetings are yet to be quantified but it is only left to imagine how much time is saved and how much productivity is enhanced.

Finally, the value capital of self-esteem, business organizations and also cutting socio economic and cultural barriers are attainable when embarking on physical activity. Thus, in summary the paper recommends that-

1. Government should create more opportunities for people to participate in physical activity and sports by creating physical activity and sports centers in various neighborhoods and cities across the country.
2. School sports programmes should be engaged more seriously by heads of schools in order to develop and nurture young talents as a way of impacting human capital development.

3. Government should formulate policies aimed at increasing physical activity and sports participation at work places for better productivity.
4. Government should create financial schemes aimed at supporting entrepreneurs in the fitness industry as a way of enhancing human capital development.

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