

# AN APPRAISAL OF TEACHERS' ROLE IN STUDENTS' PHYSICAL FITNESS IN TWO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF LAGOS STATE

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## Abstract

This paper critically examines teachers' role in students' physical fitness in Amuwo-Odofin and Ojo Local Government Areas of Lagos State. Four hundred and eighty (480) teachers were randomly selected from 30 secondary schools in the areas of study. A self-constructed questionnaire was validated for the purpose of data collection and administered on the selected subjects whose responses were statistically analyzed using descriptive statistics of simple percentage for demographic data while inferences were made using chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. Findings showed that teachers give adequate fitness instructions to students, but do not supervise their activities and guide them towards good fitness habits, and they do not involve the students in recreational activities. It was, therefore recommended that training programmes should be organized for physical education teachers to familiarize them with their roles in school fitness programmes.

## Introduction

One of the sub topics to be taught in Physical Education, as a subject is Physical Fitness, likewise among the objectives of Health Education is to produce a physically fit citizen (Fawole 1988). Physical fitness is an important phase of Physical Education as well as just a phase of total fitness.

Teachers constitute one most essential personnel within the educational system. In the early days of western education, teaching was an interesting profession and the dream to become teachers, because teaching profession was highly regarded in the society (Shobowale, 1997). Teachers play significant roles in training the school students for a better future.

In the aspect of fitness, Ayeni (2002) described the teachers as first among those who should actively be engaged in promoting fitness among school students, and teachers' efforts in ensuring school fitness programme of the students should be consolidated by exercise physiologists, physical therapists and other fitness personnel.

School fitness programme as used in this study connotes schooling in a conducive environment that is free from all kinds of physical, emotional and social health hazards to ensure wellness and good health of the school students. Clarke and Watson (1983) opined that every teacher is a fitness educator, hence they should possess the skills to carry out the requirement of the phases of the school fitness programme. Ogunleye (2002) also mentioned the role of teachers in monitoring the fitness attitude and practices of students in school.

Feitimi and Fawole (1988) asserted that the fitness educator being a facilitator or social catalyst and not just a provider of only one specific aspect of fitness service should act as a stimulating and coordinating agent in a given setting / community, helping people to attain a better understanding of their difficulties and how to overcome them. This responsibility should be much more performed in the school than the larger community.

Ayeni (1995) lists some of the problems associated with unfit persons to include coronary heart diseases, high blood pressure and diabetes mellitus. Sloan and Lamb (1995) added to the list as they opined that diseases of the liver, gall bladder, chronic bronchitis, arthritis and hernia are still among the major fitness problems in the society. The causes of the prevalence of these fitness problems are related to the people's poor fitness habits and practices as well as their attitudes towards diseases and their causes, which are not conducive to desire measures that would lead to the eradication of the problems, according to Uche (1991).

The students need supervision in school because they are exposed to the influence of various fitness hazards, and such supervision, which is basically the role of teachers, enables the school child to

adjust during this vulnerable period.

Ayem (1997) citing Sloan (1975); Lamb (1995)-and Burt (1972) asserted that the importance of students' fitness to educational outcome cannot be over emphasized, for it has been reported that a fit person has a better chance of being successful scholastically and academically.

However, Getchell (2001) stated the following as among the objectives of school fitness programme: -

- (i) It allows for improvement in the physical capacity of the students. With proper training schedules the physically underdeveloped improve on his capabilities to a high level,
- (ii) Ensuring that every student is as fit as possible so as to obtain maximum benefit from education.
- (iii) Ensuring the development of muscular and physical fitness of the students,
- (iv) Promoting and maintaining fitness education in the school.
- (v) Promoting a life of happiness and enjoyment through the acquisition of physical and social skills.

According to Burt (1992) active students are able to do more work and still have enough energy to meet emergencies. School students are growing and it is natural for them to utilize their abundant energy on physical activities. These activities stimulate growth in the students and failures to utilize this abundant energy may stunt growth and bring about emotional problems.

Observations made in the Nigerian schools revealed that physical education and health education are being passively encouraged perhaps due to the fact that this is specifically stated in the National Policy on Education. This study therefore investigated the extent to which teachers in secondary schools of Amuwo-Odofin and Ojo Local Government Areas of Lagos State are involved in the supervision of students fitness programmes.

### **Research Hypotheses**

- (1) Teachers would not significantly give adequate fitness education to students.
- (2) Teachers would not significantly supervise students' activities and guide them towards good fitness habit.
- (3) Teachers' supervision would not significantly influence students habit towards physical fitness.

### **Methodology**

The population for this study includes all the secondary school teachers in Amuwo-Odofin and Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State, but the scope was delimited to 480 teachers of both sexes selected from 30 secondary schools in the area of study at the average of 16 teachers per school; using the simple random sampling technique.

A structured questionnaire, which was constructed by the researchers, was the main instrument used for data collection in this study. The questionnaire was in two sections (i.e. sections A and B), Section A dealt with the bio-data of the respondents while section B which was in four scale likert pattern contained items that seek information on involvement of teachers in ensuring the student's school fitness programme.

This questionnaire was given to four authorities in physical education for content and construct validation. It was thereafter subjected to test-retest to establish its reliability co-efficient. The data collected were statistically analyzed via PPMCC and this gave a result of  $r = 0.81$ .

The instrument was administered on the subjects by the researchers. To make data collection easier and faster, ten undergraduate students of Department of Physical and Health Education, Lagos State University were employed as research assistants to cover some of the selected schools.

All copies of questionnaire administered were retrieved the same day; this gave 100% retrieval. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage on the demographic characteristics. Hypotheses of the study were tested and inferences were made via chi-square statistics. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Results**

Of the total 480 respondents, 220 representing 45.5% were female teachers while 260 representing 54.5% were male. On work experience, 8% of the respondents were below 4 years while 21.8% were between the ranges of 6 to 10 years while 70.2% were between the ranges of 11 to 15 years respectively.

**Table 1: Chi-Square Analysis on the Adequacy of Teachers' Fitness Education to Students**

	SA	A	D	SD
0	157.3	172.9	85.0	64.8
E	120	120	120	120
O-E	37.3	52.9	35.0	55.2
(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	1391.29	2798.41	1225.0	3047.04
(O-E)/E	11.59	23.32	10.21	25.39

$X^2=70.51, df=3(p>0.05)$

Critical value = 7.82 \* Significant

### Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis one, which states that teachers would not significantly give adequate fitness education to students, was statistically tested in the above table and the table shows that the calculated chi-square value of 70.51 was greater than 7.82 critical value at 0.05 level of significance. Based on this, the above stated hypothesis was rejected; connoting that teacher would give adequate fitness education to students.

This finding is in line with the opinion of Ayeni (1995) and Clarke and Watson (1983) that every teacher is a fitness educator, hence they should possess the skills to carry out the requirements of the phases of the school fitness programme. Ayeni (1997) stresses further that teachers must teach Physical and Health Education as an organized subject and use those methods that facilitate behavioural change.

**Table 2: Chi-Square Analysis on Teachers' Supervision and Guidance of Students Fitness Habit**

	SA	A	D	SD
0	127.2	U2.5	117.8	122.5
E	120	120	120	120
O-E	7.2	7.5	2.2	2.5
(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	51.84	56.25	4.84	6.25
(O-E)/E	0.43	0.47	0.04	0.05

### Hypothesis 2

Teachers would not significantly supervise students' fitness activities and guide them towards good fitness habits. The result of analysis in Table 2 tests the validity of the above hypothesis. The table shows that the calculated chi-square value 0.99 was less than 7.82 critical value at 0.05 level of significance. Based on this result, the stated hypothesis would not be rejected. It means that teachers do not give adequate supervision to students' fitness activities, and do not give proper guidance towards students' fitness habits.

This finding is contrary to that of Feitimi and Fawole (1988) which asserted that the fitness educator being a facilitator or social catalyst and not just a provider of only one specific aspect of fitness service should act as a stimulating and coordinating agent in a given setting/ community helping people to attain a better understanding of their difficulties and how to overcome them. This is responsibility should be much more performed in the school than the larger community. Fabiyi and Ogunbodede (1997) recommend that physical education teachers should carry out routine postural evaluation on students to ascertain the cause of gcnu valgum (GVK). Ogunleye (2002) also mentioned the role teachers in monitoring the fitness attitudes and practices of students in school.

**Table 3: Chi-Square Analysis on Teachers' Supervision and Its Influence on Students' Habit Towards Physical Fitness**

	SA	A	D	SD
0	131.9	124.6	109.3	114.2
E	120	120	120	120
O-E	11.9	4.6	10.7	5.8
$(O-E)^2$	141.61	21.16	114.49	33.64
$(O-E)^2/E$	1.18	0.18	0.95	0.28

$\chi^2=2.59, df=3 (P<0.05)$

Critical value =7.82.

### Hypothesis 3

Teachers<sup>1</sup> supervision would not significantly influence students' habit towards physical fitness. This hypothesis was tested based on the result of analysis on Table 3. The table indicated that the calculated chi-square value 2.59 was less than 7.82 critical value at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis was therefore accepted, meaning that teachers<sup>1</sup> supervision do not significantly influence students' habit towards physical fitness.

Alakija (2002) opined that teachers are to make sure that every student is as fit as possible, so as to obtain maximum benefit from education. And physical fitness can only be adequately acquired through regular involvement in sports and recreational activities that demand physical exertion (Venkateswarlu, 1991; O'Neill, 2000).

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study; it was concluded that, though secondary school teachers in Arnuwo-Odofin and Ojo Local Government Areas of Lagos State do give adequate fitness instructions to students, they do not pay serious attention to adequate supervision of students' activities, hence they do not guide them towards developing good fitness habits. It was also concluded that there is laxity in the teachers' engagement of students in regular exercise and recreational-activities for the purpose of fitness.

### Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, it was therefore recommended that:

- Training programmes / workshops should be organized by Ministry of Education for secondary school teachers to familiarize them with their roles in promoting fitness of the student.
- Teachers, especially those in training should be exposed to varieties of exercise and fitness activities that they could engage the students in for fitness purpose.
- Further studies should evaluate the fitness knowledge, attitudes and practices of secondary school teachers towards physical fitness.

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