

Sports Interest and Enjoyment as Perceived by Street Children

¹Jacklyn Anne D. Toldoya, ²Maria Lorraine Nieva, ³Katrina Christian Barnard Pulanco, ⁴Sherwin Ryan Tiu

Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila

¹jadtoldoya@plm.edu.ph, ²mljnieva@plm.edu.ph, ³kcbtpulanco@plm.edu.ph, ⁴srgtiu@plm.edu.ph

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Corresponding Email:

jadtoldoya@plm.edu.ph

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Abstract. Philippines has been identified as third world country where poverty and corruption is common. Which produces a lot of marginalize family that often produces kids who seek alms and beg in the streets. Street children are those who spend considerable time living and working on the streets to survive. Despite their condition, they still find time to enjoy and play on the streets by engaging in different sports and physical activities that is available in their surroundings. As a concerned society, to intervene for the improvement of welfare of the street children is essential. This study investigated the sports interests and sports enjoyment of the street children to design a specific sports program in accordance with their needs. It delimited its scope to the street children of district 3 of Sta. Cruz Manila ages from 11 – 15 only. Descriptive method of research was used to come up with accurate interpretation of the findings. A survey questionnaire was adapted for the gathering of data. The result of the study shows that basketball is the most favored team sports by the male while volleyball for the female given its popularity in our country while swimming emerged as the most preferred sports by the respondents. Street children find sports as an avenue to meet and be with friends since while exposed in the streets and have unlimited time to play. It was determined that as the street children engage in sports, their total individual aspect (physical, mental, emotional and social) contributed to improving their lives as an adaptable individual despite the plight of being street children who works and live in the streets.

Introduction

Sports is fun because it provides a setting for people to develop their own identities by learning about their capabilities and their limitations. Sports is also considered as play, where an individual tends to create movement with a specific goal and objective that provides fun and enjoyment (Iso-Ahola and Baumeister, 2023). To discover talents and skills through sports, one must have curiosity in it. Ample interest in sports may open doors of opportunities for a new life and a brighter future for each child. It also starts with the word “play” where it is always being identified as a physical activity.

Physical activity can be done because of work, leisure or a routinely activity. It is being used according to its purpose. For many children, physical activity is a form of play where they can do different movements with leisure and enjoyment (Malm et al., 2019). On the other hand, sports are defined as an organized set of activities that has a specific goal and rules to follow which the youth are eager to participate because it provides enjoyment, socialization, fun and leadership aside from the different health benefits. Kids or youth may not realize the positive effects of playing sports, but their participation is still high because of personal liking (Logan et al., 2019). One group of youth that are freely participating and doing sports activities are the street children.

It is identified that Street children is a term often used to describe both market children (who work in the streets) and homeless street children (who work, live and sleep in the streets). The everyday routine of a street child is not far from that of a daily wage earner. Street children start their day early by looking for something to eat for breakfast. Then, they proceed to getting their heads down to feed their family for the whole day. And after hours of laboring, they find time to play with their co street children’s workers. (Consortium for Street Children, n.d.).

The children living in streets work in very hard jobs starting at very early ages which jeopardize their development, health, education, and future. The type of job, the working hours and working conditions can pose a great risk for the children (Turkay et al., 2017). In the Philippines, there are a lot of street children who are basically roaming around the streets to ask or beg for alms, work or they live with their family who doesn't have a place to stay. According to the Commission on Human Rights (2024), citing the report of the United Nations Report last 2022, there were more than 246,000 street children in the Philippines. These children are practically staying more on the street doing their different activities such as begging to other person for them to give alms, selling different foods and products, playing, studying, doing their routinely activities and living on the streets with their families. One of the reasons why street children are more likely to stay on the street is because of their sports interest.

In addition, Child Hope Philippines (2024), mentioned that street children are usually found in the densely populated urban area where the busiest of the city can be seen day to day. These children experienced poverty, limited access to education, health disparity, abuse, exploitation, and vulnerability. But despite these, they still managed to find time to play and move a lot as if those negativity in life is just part of their existence.

Sports interest is something that makes the street children engage in sport activities, that even in their busy schedule (since they spend most of their time finding ways to earn money), they still manage to enjoy and experience leisure through play - usually associated with physical activities and sports - regardless of what reward it may to a person (Gallo, 2023). According to Mc Arthy (2007), sources of enjoyment in sports may be social and life opportunities, perceived competence, social recognition of competence and act of playing. Three possibilities through which children can find enjoyment in sport are: (1) Sport may be considered as play by children; (2) Sport may be seen as success-motivating and; (3) children may find sport enjoyable because the activity itself is absorbing (Kleiber, 1981).

In the locality of Manila, although there is already a big improvement when it comes to facilities and infrastructures, not all are being given the chance to have access to these facilities that will give these street children the chance to play sports and enjoy their time while still young. The opportunity to play the sports they wanted together with the other kids who has a home to stay. Given the fact that they are homeless and needs to stay on the street, they are being left out of the simple things like playing sports that the government should provide and prioritized.

Although there are some non-government organizations who conduct different project for the street children, these are still not enough to provide them the things that they deserve and needed as kids. Using this gap, this led to determine the sports interest and enjoyment of street children to help local government unit identify the additional support they needed for them to enjoy their life as young kids in the streets of Manila.

This study, which was conducted last 2023 aimed to determine the sports interests and sports enjoyment of the street children of District 3 of Sta Cruz, Manila to create a specific grassroots sports program that will pull them away from vices and unlawful activities, and help them grow to their fullest potential and to make their lives better.

Methodology

Descriptive method of research, which is more appropriate in describing the present existing condition (Calderon, 1993), was used in this study. The researchers sought the approval and adapted the Sports Interest Survey of Illinois State Board of Education Accountability Division and the Sources of Enjoyment in Sports Questionnaire by Scanlan and Stein to used as the survey questionnaire. A copy of annual report of the street children in Manila of 2022 from the Department of Social Welfare Reception and Action Center was requested and survey questionnaire are distributed through the help of barangay officials. Quota sampling was employed to get the target number of respondents, which was 300 (194 male & 106 female) street children, from the selected zones of District 3 in Sta Cruz, Manila, with ages ranging from 11 to 15 years old. Physically and mentally challenged street children were not included in this study.

Results and Discussion

The result of the study shows that there are more male street children than the female and there are more of street- working children with connection to families than street -living and -working children. This shows that street children left their homes or lost their ties with their parents due to the reasons such as being deserted, neglected or subjected to violence (Ennew, 2003).

Table 1 shows the sex and classification of street children's respondents under their profile. This determined out of 300 respondents, how many were male and female, and their classification which was adapted in this study.

Profile Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	117	59.1
	Female	81	40.9
	Total	198	100.0
Social Classification	Street-living working children	85	42.9
	Street-working children with connection to families	113	57.1
	Total	198	100.0

Table 1 Profile of Respondents

Table 1 provides the profile of the respondents according to gender and social classification. From the table above, a total of 198 street children respondents were enumerated. With regards to gender, most of the respondents were males, with 117 or 59.1% respondents, while females had 81 or 40.9% respondents. This shows that more street child males participated in the study than street child females.

On the other hand, with regards to social classification, most of the respondents were categorized as street-working children with family connection, with 113 or 57.1% respondents. On the other hand, street-living working children had 85 or 42.9% respondents. Thus, despite the number of respondents who worked or stayed in the streets, a bigger proportion of them was still connected to their respective families.

In general, the table revealed that the respondents were mostly male street-working children who are still connected to their families. This means that despite the number of street children, these children were not totally detached from their families, and yet they were forced to work or live in the streets. Therefore, their gender and social classification play an essential role in determining their sports interest and availability in participating in the sports program.

Table 2 show that the sports basketball is the most preferred by the male street children with 2.91 while for the female preferred volleyball with 2.71. Tuckman & Hinkle (1986) did a research trying a 12 weeks of basketball, volleyball and running workouts to find out the high esteem for their respondents.

Male	M	VI
Basketball	2.91	Most preferred
Volleyball	1.73	Sometimes preferred
Football	2.23	Sometimes preferred
Softball	1.43	Least preferred
Female	M	VI
Basketball	1.66	Sometimes preferred
Volleyball	2.71	Most Preferred
Football	2.10	Sometimes Preferred
Softball	1.28	Least Preferred

Table 2. Team Sports Preferred by the Male and the Female Street Children

Table 2 below presents the preference ratings for the team sports by the male and female street children respondents. The male respondents gave basketball a mean score of 2.91 which is interpreted as Most Preferred. This means that basketball is the favorite team sport among the males, probably due to its popularity and ease of playing in the streets.

Volleyball was the most preferred team sport among the females. This can be seen from the highest mean score of 2.71 which is interpreted as Most Preferred.

The other leading sports were sometimes preferred by the male and female respondents while softball was least preferred. This can be observed by the low scores it got from the respondents.

In conclusion, it can be said that the favorite team sport among the male street children is basketball whereas volleyball is the favorite team sport among the females.

Table 3 shows that the individual and dual sports preferred by both male and female respondent is swimming with a mean of 2.56 and 2.60 as interpret as the most preferred. While on the table 4 combative sports have the least preferred perceived by the street children except for the wrestling that has sometimes preferred by male respondent.

Male	M	VI
Badminton	2.12	Sometimes Preferred
Lawn Tennis	1.61	Sometimes Preferred
Table Tennis	1.73	Sometimes Preferred
Swimming	2.56	Most preferred
Track and Field	1.58	Sometimes Preferred
Female	M	VI
Badminton	2.10	Sometimes Preferred
Lawn Tennis	2.01	Sometimes Preferred
Table Tennis	2.21	Sometimes Preferred
Swimming	2.60	Most Preferred
Track & Field	1.78	Sometimes Preferred

Table 3. Individual/dual Sports Preferred by the Male and the Female Street Children

The Table 3 presents the individual/dual sports favored by the male and female street children. From the male street children, swimming scored the highest mean of 2.56 which was considered as Most Preferred. The rest of the sports like badminton, lawn tennis, table tennis, and track and field were considered as Sometimes Preferred.

From the female street children, swimming again scored the highest mean of 2.60 which was considered as Most Preferred. Badminton, lawn tennis, table tennis, and track and field were also considered as Sometimes Preferred.

On the whole, from the data presented in the table above, it can be seen that swimming is the most preferred individual/dual sport by both the male and female street children.

Male	M	VI
Wrestling	2.12	Sometimes Preferred
Karate	1.08	Least Preferred
Arnis	1.03	Least Preferred
Female	M	VI
Wrestling	1.00	Least Preferred
Karate	1.18	Least Preferred
Arnis	1.0	Least Preferred

Table 4. Combative Sports Preferred by the Male and the Female Street Children

The preferred combative sports among the male and female street children are shown in Table 4. Wrestling has the highest mean score of 2.12 among the male respondents, which was interpreted as Sometimes Preferred. Karate and arnis, on the other hand, were both interpreted as Least Preferred.

Among the female respondents, all combative sports including wrestling, karate, and arnis were interpreted as Least Preferred, with mean scores from 1.00 to 1.18.

In summary, it can be concluded that combative sports are not much preferred among the participants, particularly among female street children. This implies that combative sports are not ideal as the primary focus in developing sports programs, except for wrestling for male participants.

The result shown in table 5 confirm that the street children enjoy playing sports and as a social and life opportunities for them. As a social concept sports plays an important role for the development and changing the personalities of the people and establishing a healthy generation. (Özdiñç, 2005). This is also in agreement with the study of Mc Carthy about A Qualitative Study of Sport Enjoyment in the Sampling Years (2007), concludes that younger and older children's sources of

enjoyment are perceived competence and social involvement such as friendship and support coming from co-street children.

	Male	M	VI
Social and life opportunities		2.68	Always
Act of play		2.91	Always
	Female	M	VI
Social and life opportunities		2.80	Always
Act of play		2.63	Always

Table 5. Perceived Sources of Sports Enjoyment

Table 5 presents the perceived sources of sports enjoyment among male and female street children. For the male respondents, act of play received the higher mean score of 2.91, while social and life opportunities obtained 2.68. Both were interpreted as Always, which means that males consistently enjoy sports because of the fun of playing and the opportunities to interact with others.

For the female respondents, social and life opportunities received the higher mean score of 2.80, while act of play obtained 2.63. Both were also interpreted as Always, showing that females enjoy sports mainly because it allows them to socialize, build relationships, and experience positive opportunities.

Overall, the table shows that both male and female street children always find enjoyment in sports through playing and social interaction. This suggests that sports serve not only as recreation but also as a way for street children to connect with others and experience enjoyment despite their difficult situations. The resiliency comes with the knowledge that they can still enjoy life amidst poverty as long as they are with friends, improvised resources, and support with other street children (Singco, 2021).

Sports	AWM	Rank
Swimming	2.58	1
Basketball	2.29	2
Volleyball	2.22	3
Football	2.16	4
Badminton	2.11	5
Table Tennis	1.97	6
Lawn Tennis	1.92	7
Track and Field	1.68	8
Track & field	1.52	9
Wrestling	1.56	10
Karate	1.13	11
Arnis	1.01	12

Table 6. Sports Preference of the Street Children

The result in sports preference for the street children is the sport swimming that rank 1 with 2.58 AWM while the least is the Arnis that rank last with 1.01 AWM. Furthermore, the NDF (2017) says the enhancement of physical and mental development of children is certainly the most important contribution of sports for children.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the result of the study, majority of the children are male maybe because they tend to be more adventurous and aggressive in taking chances in living and working in the street. On the other hand, fewer children are living on their own, while most of them are still dependent to their families: living and working together to survive everyday living.

The result also shows that basketball and volleyball are the most preferred team sports by street children despite the short height of Filipino athletes, especially male, while swimming is their next choice.

Basketball is the most preferred team sports by the male while volleyball for female being the most popular sports in our country considering the lack of height of Filipino athletes followed football for both genders. While swimming is the most preferred sports by the street children

Since it requires little space, no maintenance, no expensive gear, and no required number of players for a social game, basketball carries well across the poverty-stricken Philippines, where it staves off boredom for countless Filipino teenagers. Besides being easy to learn, the sport also fits well in the Philippines because of its strategic and dynamic nature, making the game rewarding for both players and spectators (dela Cruz, 2017).

In light of the findings of the research, it is strongly recommended that a community-based sports program be established to help street children become more physically active, develop interpersonal relationships, and gain other benefits from their participation in sports. This recommendation is supported by Sta Maria et al., (2014) who emphasize that Filipino street children experience and encounters different forms of risks and protective factors in their surroundings and environment, therefore, structured community programs may serve as a source of support, protection, social connection, and positive development. The program may be supported by the local government, barangay officials, schools, universities, NGOs, and other sports organizations in order to ensure the success, safety, and sustainability of the activities. The sports program should take into consideration the fact that street children like playing sports as both an act of play and as an opportunity to socialize and gain life experiences. Therefore, it should be focused not only on physical activities, but also on friendship, teamwork, discipline, confidence, and positive social interactions among participants.

According to the preferences of the respondents, it is recommended that the following activities be included in the sports program: swimming, basketball, and volleyball. For example, swimming may be practiced at schools or public swimming pools in the area, while basketball and volleyball may be played in barangay courts and open spaces within communities. It is also recommended that the sports program considers the preferences of boys and girls as basketball is the most popular sport among male respondents, while volleyball is preferred by females. However, it should be noted that all street children should be allowed to participate in any kind of sports they prefer. Football, badminton, table tennis, and other games may be also included in the program.

Since street children often lack the financial means to purchase uniforms, equipment, or pay for the transport, it is important that the activities are easily accessible, low-cost, and suitable for their condition. It is also necessary to ensure that all activities are safe for children. It may be done by providing sufficient supervision, first-aid support, clear rules of conduct, and qualified facilitators of activities. Some combat sports such as karate and arnis may not be prioritized since they were least popular among street children; however, they may be included as well provided that proper training with an emphasis on discipline and self-control is provided.

Finally, it is also recommended that future researchers conduct follow-up studies to examine the effect of sports activities on the physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development of street children. This way, it will be possible to design a grassroots sports development program that meets the interests and needs of street children.

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The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study; all data used were obtained from previously published sources as cited in the reference list.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.