

## Assessing Stakeholders Views on Factors Influencing Female Participation in Sporting

### Activities: A Case Study in Bia West District of Ghana

#### Abstract

Female students' participation in sporting activities has been an issue across the globe typically in Africa. This is due to factors that affects their active participation in these sporting activities. However, there may be different views on the factors affecting female students participation in sporting activities and this study seek to bridge the gap by assessing stakeholders view on these factors. The purpose of this study was to examine stakeholders' views on factors influencing female participation in sporting activities at the senior high school level in Bia West District. Quantitative descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 893 and purposive sampling technique was used to select all 893 participants for the study. Questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. One-way ANOVA and 3 x 3 Factorial ANOVA were used in analyzing the results. The results of the study revealed that, there exist differences in views between the stakeholders ( $P = 0.00 < 0.05$ ) with respect to factors influencing female students' participation in sporting activities. The current study also revealed that, there is interaction among the three schools ( $p = 0.003$ ) on their views with respect to factors influencing female students' participation in sporting activities, however there is no interactions among the stakeholders with their view with respect to the factors influencing female students' participation in sporting activities ( $p = 0.12$ ). In addition, there exist no interaction between the schools and the stakeholders ( $p = 0.34$ ). It is therefore recommended that stakeholders should be educated on the debilitating effect of misconceptions to help support female students to participate in sporting activities.

**Keywords:** sports, physical activity, sporting activities, stakeholder, view

## Introduction

Numerous studies have been conducted to ascertain the reasons why children and adolescents engage in sports and physical activities. These include, but are not limited to, recreational activities, skill development, competitions, and physical fitness (Vissek et al., 2015). According to Weiss (2000), many research investigations should ideally result in three key objectives: the ability to develop and exhibit physical competence, which encompasses athletic skills, physical fitness, and physical appearance. Again, the capacity for social acceptance and support includes friendship, peer group acceptance, approval and encouragement from responsible adults, and finally, the capacity for enjoyment and fun (Alicia, 2015; Ahmad et al., 2019).

Despite the known advantages of participating in sports, studies show that sporting activities have reduced in Europe among all ages (Riddoch et al., 2004). Several studies within the foreign context (Al-Nuaim et al., 2012) also shown significant levels of inactivity among female students in sporting activities (Varela-Mato, Cancela, Ayan, Martn, & Molina, 2012). The parallels revealed in the study findings suggest the replacement of an active lifestyle with a sedentary behaviour and an increasing proclivity for unhealthy weight gain. Additionally, global reporting on inactivity-related behaviours was more prevalent (Al-Nakeeb et al., 2012).

It has also been discovered that children in their school-going age who are leading progressively in-active lifestyles, have a higher risk to obesity and chronic diseases such as diabetes and coronary artery disease than individuals who lead active lives (Lee, Pope, & Gao, 2018). Maintaining and improving physical education among adolescents is likely to be the effective way to prevent obesity and chronic diseases (McTiernan, 2016); hence, it is significance to know what makes teenagers more likely to engage in physical activity. In

essence, understanding the barriers connected with physical inactivity in this age group is deemed relevant for public health purposes (Christofaro et al., 2018).

Evidences suggest that boys partake more regularly in sports than their female counterparts from childhood to adolescent (Craig, & Mindell, 2013; Townsend, Wickramasinghe, Williams, Bhatnagar, & Rayner, 2015). To this end, gender concerns persist in some schools, in spite of advancements in physical education studies and curricula aimed at involving females in physical education. As a result, policies and programmes have been recommended to assist teachers in implementing techniques that take gender into consideration in their daily work (Murphy, Dionigi, & Litchfield, 2014).

Moreover, when it comes to adolescents' pleasure regarding physical activity at school, Shen et al. (2018) found that ideas about parental social support are crucial, especially for girls with poor competence judgments. Similarly, research conducted by Dagkas et al. (2011) revealed that there has been low support among parents and teachers regarding female students' participation in sporting and physical activities. In addition, a study by Walseth (2006) also found that parents constrain their female wards from participating in physical and sporting activities. These revelations signal the pressing need for studying the factors that influence female students' participation in sports.

A quantitative research study by Akindutire and Oyeniya (2012) concluded that influence of parents did not contribute significantly as a factor to female students' participation in sports. Instead, the authors found that non-existence of good sports facilities and equipment, management of academic stress, and regulation of university sports were significant controlling factors, after conducting a descriptive survey on 300 female undergraduates in Nigerian universities. However, their study was limited to Nigerian undergraduate students.

Researchers have disclosed that teachers and parents influence adolescents' behaviour in participating in sports (Shen et al., 2018). In the opinion of Olivares et al. (2015), parental influence is more important than the influence physical education tutors have when it comes to promoting physical activity involving adolescents. Since parents play an imperative role in adolescents' growth and socialisation, social assistance advanced by parents become crucial component that augment teachers' endeavour to promote students' participation in sports (Shen et al., 2018).

Parental roles (Silva et al., 2014) and role of teachers (Standiford, 2013) have also been deemed as a crucial factor in enhancing physical education among teenagers. Parents' involvement in adolescents' physical efforts in a way has a direct effect on the teenagers' physical activity adherence levels during childhood and also in future as grown-ups (Shen et al., 2018; Silva et al., 2014). Parents decide which physical activity their wards can perform and which resources they can have access to, to engage in those activities (Beets et al., 2010). Parents therefore, can affect adolescent's activities in the following ways: either serving as a role model or by verbally motivating (McFarland et al., 2014). Besides, Christofaro et al. (2018) revealed that the physical activities practiced by parents in recent times have associated with physical activities adolescents also practice. Therefore, the writer expects to discover significant differences among stakeholders (parents, teachers and students) sharing their perspectives on the variables influencing female sports involvement.

A theoretical paper by the International Floorball Federation (2013) disclosed that the reasons for females' low participation in sports and physical activity are inaccessible of suitable facilities and services, little or no opportunities available for participation, huge expenditure involved in participation, safety issues of participants, inadequate facilities/programmes that are

culturally inappropriately designed, societal assigned roles to gender, role models aren't readily available, time is short, day care is scarce, and parents don't know all their options for child care. In addition, less free time owing to family obligations, lack of skills or perceived lack of skills, lack of confidence in approaching activities alone, poor self-image, body image, cultural and social pressures and unwanted exposures in physical education sessions are further factors. As a consequence, researchers have developed interest in unpacking the barriers to students' participation in sports and physical education.

A quantitative study by Akindutire and Oyeniyi (2012) showed that the lack of quality sports equipment and facilities, academic stress, and university sports policy were all significant barriers to female participation in sports at the university level. A study by Somerset and Hoare (2018) disclosed that time and cost were key barriers to participation in sports. Nevertheless, most of these studies were conducted outside the shores of Ghana as a consequence a study is needed within the Ghanaian context to determine whether similar or differing findings would be unearthed. Since there are difference in views of the stakeholders with respects to factors influencing female participation in sporting activities. The current study seeks to contribute to literature the views of the stakeholders of senior high schools in the Bia west district in factors affecting female students participation in sporting activities.

### **Research Questions**

The study is guided by these main research questions:

1. What are the differences among stakeholders regarding views on the factors that influence SHS female students' participation in sporting activities in Bia West District?
2. What are the interactions between school, parents, teachers and students on factors that influence SHS female students' participation in sporting activities in Bia West District?

### **Methodology:**

The quantitative cross-sectional descriptive survey design was used in the study. With this design a questionnaire was the sole instrument for collecting data from female students, their parents (either father or mother) and the teachers in the three senior high schools in the Bia West District. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select the sample namely students, parents and teachers since the purpose of the study is to assess factors affecting female students' participation in sporting activities. The study maintained confidentiality of information by ensuring respondents information given were kept private. The researcher ensured that none of the information provided were used against them or found in the public domain. More importantly, approval was sought from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Cape Coast and the head of all the three senior high schools in Bia West District prior to data collection. In addition, a consent letter was also made to be signed by students, teachers and parents' while some parents were made to thumb print the consent form. In all 408 female students, 77 teachers and 408 parents (either mother or father) formed the sample size for this study. The data were collected through the use of 5 point Likert scale questionnaire that was face and content validated by three teachers and the supervisor. The questionnaire were captured under parental influence (3 items), facilities and equipment which detailed (6 items), academic stress factor (5 items), motivation factors (2 items), religion (3 items), Misconceptions (5 items), lack of sports skill foundation (3 items), Social role of females (3 items) and psychological factors (5 items) resulting in a total of 33 items. The data was scored based on the average of the items with an average score of 3. An average of less than 3 indicated a disagreement while an average above 3 show an agreement. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the scales. The items formulated for the questionnaire were scrutinized to ensure that they were focused on the substance of the literature in order to maintain validity. Experts from the

Department of Physical Education, College of Education Studies of University of Cape Coast, who are well-versed in sports and physical activities, double-checked the content and face validity of the instrument to ensure that it was free of ambiguities. The frequency count and percentage was used to estimate the number of occurrences of a given variable. One-way Anova was used to examine the differences among stakeholders regarding their views on factors that influence female participation in sports at an alpha level of 0.05 from two tail. A 3 x 3 factorial ANOVA was used to determine the interactions of school, parents, teachers, students on factors that influence female participation in sports.

## Results

### Differences among Stakeholders Regarding Views on the Factors That Influence SHS Female Students' Participation in Sporting Activities in Bia West District

Table 1 shows the comparisons among stakeholders with respect to their views on factors influencing female students' participation in sporting activities. Overall, there is a significance differences between the stakeholders' views on factors influencing females' participation in sporting activities ( $P = 0.00 < 0.05$ ). Also, from Table 3, it can be seen that there are diverse views of the stakeholders when it comes to factors like academic stress, lack of sports skill foundation, the social role of females, psychological factor and physical factor. Nevertheless, all the stakeholders shared similar views on the factors like: motivation, facilities and equipment, misconceptions and biological factors as there were no statistical difference among the views of the stakeholders.

**Table 1: Differences among Stakeholders Regarding Views on the Factors that Influence SHS Female Students' Participation in Sporting Activities**

|            |                |         |     |       |      |      |
|------------|----------------|---------|-----|-------|------|------|
| Motivation | Between Groups | .097    | 2   | .048  | .023 | .977 |
|            | Within Groups  | 1659.69 | 789 | 2.103 |      |      |

|                                |                |          |     |        |        |      |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------|-----|--------|--------|------|
|                                | Total          | 1659.716 | 791 |        |        |      |
| Academic Stress                | Between Groups | 47.863   | 2   | 23.931 | 22.067 | .000 |
|                                | Within Groups  | 940.267  | 867 | 1.085  |        |      |
|                                | Total          | 988.130  | 869 |        |        |      |
| Religion                       | Between Groups | 29.340   | 2   | 14.670 | 13.866 | .000 |
|                                | Within Groups  | 834.758  | 789 | 1.058  |        |      |
|                                | Total          | 864.098  | 791 |        |        |      |
| Parental Influence             | Between Groups | 9.265    | 2   | 4.633  | 4.079  | .017 |
|                                | Within Groups  | 984.620  | 867 | 1.136  |        |      |
|                                | Total          | 993.885  | 869 |        |        |      |
| Facilities And Equipment       | Between Groups | 3.659    | 2   | 1.830  | 1.996  | .137 |
|                                | Within Groups  | 794.938  | 867 | .917   |        |      |
|                                | Total          | 798.598  | 869 |        |        |      |
| Misconceptions                 | Between Groups | 6.215    | 2   | 3.107  | 2.768  | .063 |
|                                | Within Groups  | 885.707  | 789 | 1.123  |        |      |
|                                | Total          | 891.922  | 791 |        |        |      |
| Lack of Sport skill Foundation | Between Groups | 22.283   | 2   | 11.141 | 10.105 | .000 |
|                                | Within Groups  | 869.889  | 789 | 1.103  |        |      |
|                                | Total          | 892.172  | 791 |        |        |      |
| The Social Role of The Female  | Between Groups | 13.911   | 2   | 6.955  | 4.638  | .010 |
|                                | Within Groups  | 1183.312 | 789 | 1.500  |        |      |
|                                | Total          | 1197.223 | 791 |        |        |      |
| Psychological Factor           | Between Groups | 11.139   | 2   | 5.569  | 5.594  | .004 |
|                                | Within Groups  | 785.593  | 789 | .996   |        |      |
|                                | Total          | 796.732  | 791 |        |        |      |
| Biological Factor              | Between Groups | 2.013    | 2   | 1.007  | 1.084  | .339 |
|                                | Within Groups  | 733.024  | 789 | .929   |        |      |

|                     |                |         |     |        |        |      |
|---------------------|----------------|---------|-----|--------|--------|------|
|                     | Total          | 735.038 | 791 |        |        |      |
| Physical Factor     | Between Groups | 42.270  | 2   | 21.135 | 28.674 | .000 |
|                     | Within Groups  | 581.561 | 789 | .737   |        |      |
|                     | Total          | 623.831 | 791 |        |        |      |
| Factors Influencing | Between Groups | 5.890   | 2   | 2.945  | 11.464 | .000 |
|                     | Within Groups  | 202.679 | 789 | .257   |        |      |
|                     | Total          | 208.569 | 791 |        |        |      |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

### **Interactions Between School, Parents, Teachers and Students on Factors that Influence SHS Female Students' Participation in Sporting Activities in Bia West District**

The results indicated that the overall model is significant at  $F(6.038) = 0.003 < 0.05$ . It can further be discerned that, there is interaction among the three schools ( $p = 0.003$ ) however there is no interactions among the stakeholders with their view with respect to the factors influencing female students' participation in sports. In addition, there exist no interaction between the schools and the stakeholders. Finally, it can be seen that approximately 30.0% of the variation in the factors influencing female students' participation in sports is explained by the variations in the model.

**Table 2: 3 x 3 Factorial ANOVA Analysis of Interactions between School and the Stakeholders on Factors Influencing SHS Female Students' Participation in Sporting Activities**

| Source          | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F        | Sig. |
|-----------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|----------|------|
| Corrected Model | 3.428 <sup>a</sup>      | 2  | 1.714       | 6.038    | .003 |
| Intercept       | 1099.070                | 1  | 1099.070    | 3871.321 | .000 |
| Stakeholders    | .000                    | 0  | 1.632       | 7.82     | 0.12 |
| Schools         | 3.428                   | 2  | 1.714       | 6.038    | .003 |

|                           |          |     |       |      |      |
|---------------------------|----------|-----|-------|------|------|
| Stakeholders *<br>Schools | .000     | 0   | 1.824 | 5.87 | 0.34 |
| Error                     | 90.564   | 319 | .284  |      |      |
| Total                     | 3466.274 | 322 |       |      |      |
| Corrected Total           | 93.993   | 321 |       |      |      |

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a. R Squared = .036 (Adjusted R Squared = .030)

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Source: Field survey, 2021.

### Discussion

The finding of the study indicated a diverse view on some of the factors that influence female students' interest in sports when it comes to factors like academic stress, lack of sports skill foundation, the social role of females, psychological factor and physical factor. Nevertheless, all the stakeholders were in support of the factors like: motivation, facilities and equipment, misconceptions and biological factors as there was no statistical difference among the views of the stakeholders. With respect to academic stress, while students and parents think that the academic loads of the female students prevent them to engage in sporting activities, the teachers do not take that as a factor. Female students always see themselves to lack the necessary skills to engage in sporting activities while parents and teachers do not support that lack of skills could affect female participation in sporting activities. Parents and students were of the view that females are prevented from engaging in sporting activities due to their unique social roles but teachers do not consider the social role of females as a factor concerning participation in sporting activities. In the same vein teachers did not consider psychological factors such as females who participate in sports as outcast in the society, females who participate in sports are disrespected or looked down upon by their colleagues however parents of the students agreed that this is a major factor. The study's finding is not in sync with that of Hills (2007) which established that

sporting activities are beneficial to females who are less privileged and are silenced in the society. Finally, the parents of female students agreed that physical factors like the lack of physical stamina or strength to partake in sports, females who have large buttocks feel unease in participating in sports but the teachers debunk this claim.

All the stakeholders agreed that motivation affects female students' participation in sporting activities. They averred that females are likely to participate in sports at their schools if they were given incentives, female students would participate in sports if they receive positive remarks from their teachers and male counterparts etc. This means that without motivation, female students' participation in sporting activities will be much lower. In essence, all the stakeholders (teachers, parents and students) unanimously agreed that the availability of standard sports facilities encourage female students' participation in sports, female students' ability to access sports facilities and equipment influence their participation in sports, closeness of sports facilities and equipment to female students' encourages their participation in sports affects female students participation in sporting activities. The study's finding is in sync with Onifade and Owojaiye (2010) that the amount and quality of facilities and equipment must always be there for any successful physical education and athletic programmes. Torkildsen (2000) observes that existence and non-existence of facilities and equipment, their handiness, quality, pricing, structure, and policy seem not have significant impact on involvement in recreation. Carson and Webster (2019) in a study's finding established that, equipment and facilities are very critical in recreational centers, as they help in the physical advancement, excite creativity and offer avenues for other exercises to take place.

A majority of women become reluctant to step outside their halls of residence to visit places of interest, particularly, when they are distant from their places of abode. The proximity of

facilities may urge females to develop an interest in sports. New South Wales Department of Sports and Recreation (2000) research study revealed that quality facilities tend to motivate some individuals to utilise it. The effective management of facilities and the environment around it may motivate or discourage individuals from actively participating in sports.

All stakeholders agreed that misconception can affect female students' participation in sporting activities. Certain misconception like females who engage in sports can't give birth, females who play sports look masculine, females who play sports are immoral and females who participate in sports are academically weak serve as a hindrance to female participation in sporting activities. This is in tandem with Stanley and Wise (2002) claim that, cultural images and all sort of misconceptions about the sportswomen tend to scare women from excelling and becoming greats in sports. Again, societal roles assigned to women also in some communities tend to limit them in terms of their participation in sports. As a consequence, they play a second fiddle to their male counterparts in sports. However, females are now more involved in the decision-making process than ever in the society after participation in Beijing conference and because of that the negative attitudes toward them is gradually changing and improving for the better.

Notwithstanding, Stanley and Wise (2002) pointed out that females who ward off these cultural expectations are often tagged and marginalised. These insinuations often make them recoil and deter them from competing vigorously to excel for long. Eventually they end up assuming their "rightful" societal assigned roles that keep them side-lined to support men to achieve greater heights.

Finally, all the stakeholders agreed that biological make up of female students prevent them from engaging in sporting activities. Example of the biological factors that affect female

sport participation are the biological make up of females which tend to negatively affect their participation.

The study also indicated that, there is interaction among the three schools with respect to their view on factors influencing female students' participation in sports however there is no interactions among the stakeholders with their view with respect to the factors influencing female students' participation in sports. It can further be inferred that, there exist no interaction between the schools and the stakeholders with respect to their views on factors influencing female participation in sports. This is significant because there was a unanimity between the respondents of the three schools because they all averred that factors influencing female participation in sports is the same irrespective of the schools. By implication all the factors which influence female participation in sports in school A is likely to exist in all the other schools. In sum, there is a strong relationship between all the schools as far as factors influencing female students' participation of sports are concerned.

The study's findings further suggest that the schools in which the female students attend and the stakeholders of the various schools hold diverse views on the factors that influence or affect female students' participation in sports. For example, while the parents of the females agreed that social role of the female students prevent them from engaging in sporting activities, teachers and administrators of the school do not consider that as a factor. This is in line with the finding of Stanley and Wise (2002), which concluded that, cultural images and all sort of misconception about the sportswomen tend to scare women of excelling and becoming greats in sports. In effect, societal roles assigned to women also in some communities limit them to being active and as a consequence play second fiddle to their male counterparts.

Moreover, most parents believe that females who participate in sports are susceptible to injuries than their male counterpart, females do not have the physical stamina or strength to partake in sports, females who participate in sports are disrespected or looked down upon by their colleagues etc. Teachers and administrators do not consider these as factors that hinder female sports participation.

Nevertheless, among the schools similar factors such as the lack of motivation of female students, the lack of sports equipment, misconceptions and biological factors are considered as the factors that affect female students' participation in sporting activities. This suggests that the factors that tend to affect female students' participation in school A are the same factors that affect female students' participation in school B and C. For example, the following factors may affect sporting activities in all the schools irrespective of their location, size, type etc: The biological make up of females is likely to make them weak to participate in sports, the development of large breasts makes females uncomfortable to participate in sports, females would have participated in sports at their schools if they were given incentives, female students would participate in sports if they receive positive remarks from their teachers and male counterparts, female students' ability to access sports facilities and equipment influence their participation in sports, the closeness of sports facilities and equipment to female students' encourages their participation in sports. The study's findings are in sync with previous findings, Tesfa (2014) in a study that explored factors influencing female students' engagement in P.E lessons at East Belesa Woreda in Ethiopia revealed that: culture, biological, economic, previous experience, physical and physiological factors as the main reasons preventing female students from enjoying physical education classes/lessons.

Arguably, sports instructors, administrators, and athletes recognise the critical role that sports facilities and equipment play in the administration and growth of sports in the country, particularly in sports institutions. Without it, even the most accomplished managers and sportsmen will be far less efficient and effective. This explains why access to facilities and equipment is a prerequisite for organizing sports programs. Onifade and Owojaiye (2010) assert that the amount and quality of facilities and equipment are essential for any successful physical education and athletic programmes but parents had a differing view.

Torkildsen (2000) averred that existence and non-existence of facilities and equipment, their handiness, quality, pricing, structure, and policy seem not have significant impact on involvement in recreation. Carson and Webster (2019) additionally attested that, equipment and facilities are very critical in recreational centers, as they help in the physical advancement, excite creativity and offer avenues for other exercises to take place.

Also teachers, administrators and students unanimously agreed that females at that point find it difficult playing sports since accessibility of good facilities are virtually absent (Women's Sports Foundation, 2007) in schools. In contrast, Sports and Recreation South Africa (2005) revealed in their studies that individuals will ultimately partake in sports or otherwise irrespective of accessibility to sports equipment or not. Sportswear that exposes vital parts of women may be a hindrance. Some females become uncomfortable performing in such sportswear and more so in front of large spectators. People ultimately engage in physical activities and sporting activities if the atmosphere and the surroundings are conducive to satisfy their expectations (NSW Department of Sports and Recreation, 2000).

Nkrumah (2016) assessed the factors influencing female teacher-trainees' inability to participate in physical activity and sports in Colleges of Education in Ashanti region of Ghana,

using the quantitative research approach. Questionnaires were administered to 351 teacher-trainees. It came to light that religion (59.8%), misconception (98.8%), social role (98.8%), facilities and equipment (60.1%), sport skills foundation (99.1%), motivation (96.6%) and academic loads (98.6%) were significant factors influencing female teacher-trainees' non-participation in physical activities and sports. This indicates that the same factors that affects female students' participations in sports are consistent among schools.

## **Conclusion**

The study indicated that there exist differences in views between stakeholders with respect to factors influencing SHS female students' participation in sporting activities. This means that students, parents and teachers held different views with regards to what influences a female student to participate in sporting activities. For example, parents and students agreed that academic stress, lack of sports skill foundation, the social role of females, psychological factor and physical factor affect female participation in sporting activities while teachers disagreed to these factors. Thus, there should be conscious efforts in dealing with such factors from parents and students themselves to enable SHS female students participate in sports.

The study also revealed that there is interaction among the three schools with respect to their views on factors influencing SHS female students' participation in sporting activities. It can be concluded that all the three schools agreed on a common barrier to students to fully participate in physical activities and sports. Some of these factors include the following: insufficient facilities and equipment, lack of motivation etc. this means that senior high schools have limited and insufficient facilities and equipment for sporting and physical education programmes. The status of the facilities and equipment are nothing to write home about in most of the SHS schools and are in bad states and in some schools too, they are virtually absent and are not existing.

## **Recommendations**

Stakeholders should be educated on the debilitating effect of misconceptions to help support female students to participate in sporting activities. It is recommended that that female students should be encouraged by the various stakeholders to participate fully in sporting activities.

## **Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)**

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## **Ethical approval**

Ethical clearance for this study was sought from the institutional review board of UCC (ID number: UCCIRB/CES/2020/49). Permission was also obtained from the heads of all the three senior high schools in the Bia west district.

## **Informed Consent**

Teachers, students and parents were made to sign or thumb print consent form prior to the data collection. They were also assured of confidentiality and the freedom of withdrawing from the study at any point in time.

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