



Youth Sports Programmes in Harare, Zimbabwe: Dropout Rates and Behavioural Health Impacts

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Abstract

Youth sports programmes are increasingly recognised for their potential to enhance physical health and social skills among school-age boys in Zimbabwe. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with participants, coaches, and parents, supplemented by observation notes. Data analysis employed thematic content analysis. Dropout rates varied significantly across different sports categories, with soccer experiencing the highest rate (47%) compared to volleyball (12%). Youth sports programmes in Harare can mitigate behavioural health issues if dropout rates are effectively managed and support structures strengthened. Programme administrators should prioritise retention strategies for high-risk groups, such as those involved in soccer. Parents and coaches need training on mental health resources to better support participants.

Keywords: *African youth, rural studies, qualitative research, social development, health impacts, dropout analysis, community engagement*

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