



Category: sports and socialization



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ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS

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ABSTRACT

The thrust of this study was to examine the validity and correctness of the theory that participating in sport by learners increases their academic performance, yet most parents believe that doing sport at school is wasting valuable time and it contributes to failure rate. Former „O“ level students from 2010-2013, Heads of schools and class teachers were respondents through interviews and documentary analysis. Study findings were that students active in sport can also do better in academic subjects; sports provide opportunities that enhance learning. It was recommended that parents should encourage their children to do sport as a compulsory subject.

INTRODUCTION The main aim among most parents for sending their children to school is to see them excelling well in academic subjects that pave way for better employment in the world of industries. Therefore, parents have a common belief that participating in school sport activities by their children is being playful if not wasting the valuable time for studies. This understanding has been fuelled up by having Physical Education and Sport not being an examined subject in India and other developing countries, leading most parents to regard it as irrelevant practical subject meant for the less intelligent learners at school. Several studies, [3], [4], [12], reported that sport participation increases childrens academic performance. Those findings validity and applicability may remain untrust and unrealistic to present schools, therefore this research study traced the academic performances of those students who were into sport in government secondary schools.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM The prevailing conception among parents in India is that sport participation by their children at school retards them to perform better in academic subjects, yet the contemporary theory is that participating in sport activities by learners enhances their performance in academic subjects. School authorities are blamed by parents for poor performance at school work by their children attributing this to wasting study time doing sport at school. Children at school are caught in between, to participate in sport or leave sport and concentrate on academic work only. The dilemma among students is that; is it true in Govt. school situations that a good participant in sports can also excel in academic subjects?

Sport Enhances Academic Performance Hetherington (1910) in [10] confirms that sport can contribute to academic achievement. The argument by most parents might be of substantial truth regarding the deteriorating pass rates among secondary students,. However, it is imperative in this study to highlight some case studies by other researchers pertaining the relationship between sport and academic performance in schools. A study conducted in the Trois-Rivieres region (Quebec) between 1970 and 1977 involving 546 primary school students noted that students involved in an experimental 5 hours of physical education per week had a higher academic performance than their control counterparts who were enrolled in the normal school program for 40 minutes per week, [11]. [8] analysed results from the US National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health; they observed that adolescents who were active in school were more likely to have high



grades. [2]'s cross-sectional survey of 9000 Australian school children demonstrated a significant association between academic achievement and physical activity.

The Opportunities and Challenges Learners Face [11] found out that factors like positive classroom behaviour, self-esteem, self-image, school satisfaction and school connectedness have been postulated as determinants of academic achievement. The advantages that sport active students enjoy seem to be that they become too close to their teachers who happen to be their coaches in sport disciplines. More so, a sports student is always present at school. This makes the students attend most lessons as they fear to lose training sessions. [7] argue that self-identification as a school athlete is associated with a lower rate of reported misconduct at school. A student who refrains from misconduct enjoys respect and extra favours from teachers; this gives the learner much closer relationship with the instructors who can afford to use some calculations in physics, e.g. velocity of the projectile, Newton's laws, lever systems, and biological terms about body systems during aerobic and anaerobic performances. A sport student finds these terms not unfamiliar as they meet these in their academic subjects in the classroom, which is an added advantage unlike those who do not participate in sport. Sport builds self-esteem and actualization as the highest order of motivation and development, [9]. This behaviour is transferred to academic performance by the student.

CHALLENGES SPORT PARTICIPANTS FACE AT SCHOOL LEVEL. It is assumed that balancing the demands of school work, like home- work, and group work versus training loads can become tiresome for the student in sport, leaving either the school demands unattended to. The general parents' belief and expectation from their children is to see them excelling in academic work so that the graduate is employable, and doing best in Physical Education and Sport is venturing into unknown waters. Another drawback is exacerbated by the fact that P.E.S (Physical Education and Sport) is not an examinable subject in most African examination bodies. Therefore, there is much attention to academic performance than to P.E.S learning. [1] posit that players with disabilities are prone to discrimination at school level sports activities. The girl child in Indian states is not accorded the same sport opportunities as the boy child does due to some unequal cultural considerations. Girls who are active in sport are more prone to various disturbing circumstances that arise from hegemonic masculinity to sport equipment, [5]. For instance, most African cultures expect a girl child to be at home before sunset to assist parents with house chores and are feared to be abused by boys if they go home late. Whoever does not observe this is suspected to be unruly and disobedient, unlike boys who can stay at school at sport practice sessions until any time. Most schools have no conducive sport attire for girls who fear to expose their body parts like thighs, buttocks and breasts during sport exercises. Such scenario prejudices the girl child who has the sport talents.

SOLUTIONS In light of the above challenges faced by students active in sport, this study has sought solutions from other authorities.[13] urges schools to establish Youth Sport Trust, supported by sponsoring partners to develop resources and programmes which are proven in demonstrating positive impact on young people and changing lives. [6] Suggest schools to use gender responsive pedagogy approaches to accommodate the needs of both boys and girls during teaching and learning sessions. Parents and teachers should be conscientized to support sport talented students so as to balance their studies. Schools should give priority to sport budgets so that they purchase proper sport attire and equipment and train more coaches who are also teachers of academic subjects.

Recommendations Basing on the above conclusions, the study recommends that:

- Parents should encourage their children to take up Physical Education and Sport as a subject as it enhances their learning of academic subjects.
- Ministry of Education to draw up transitional plans in partnership with Ministry of Sports, Arts and Culture for students active in sport so that those student graduates are employable by the corporate world.



- Schools should practise the Child-Friendly Model in order to be pedagogically responsive.
- Parents should encourage their children to participate in sport activities since by doing this students enjoy more learning benefits.
- Physical Education and Sport as a subject should be examinable in most education curricular in Africa so as to gain recognition by parents and students.

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