

Teaching of Physical Education Course as a Fundamental Right of Students in Secondary Schools in Kenya: A Study of Bomet District

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the gap in policy between the promise and reality in physical education in secondary schools in Bomet District - Kenya. The objective was to establish the extent to which the teaching of physical education formed a fundamental right for students in secondary schools. Biological Sciences Curriculum Study model guided the study. This study utilized descriptive survey method of research. Sampling designs used were simple random, purposive and stratified random sampling. Questionnaire, interview guide and observation schedules were used to collect data and a total of 281 respondents took part in the study. Data analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics. It was found that the students were denied their right to be educated physically in secondary schools in Bomet District. This research recommends that the Directorate of Quality Assurance should deploy specialist physical educators to district levels that are responsible for the periodic supervision and evaluation of physical education in secondary schools.

Key word

Physical education

1 Introduction

The quality of an individual's (and a country's) well-being and health may be in direct proportion to the quality of physical education curricula experienced. Insuring physical education curricula is a responsibility of physical educators, and insuring quality physical education experiences for every student calls for advocacy by the profession; and professional physical educators are primary care-givers of learners with regard to physical education; and schools are primary venues through which physical education should be delivered. It was therefore vital to establish whether learners in secondary schools in Bomet District were receiving adequate physical education instructions.

2 Literature review

The International Charter of Physical Education and Sport and supported by UNESCO Member States (Preamble Art. 1, 1978; reaffirmed by ICHPER.SD (International Council for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport, and Dance) in 1991) declares access to physical education for all as a fundamental right. And Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, Art.29, Sec. 1a, b, September 2, 1990), states that education shall be directed to: the development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to his/her fullest potential; the development of respect of human rights. ICHPER.SD resolved to develop global standards identifying essential knowledge and skills central to school programmes (Seoul Resolution on the Right of School-Age Youth to be Physically Educated, World-Wide Survey, July, 1997). It also advocates for and enables developing of quality daily physical education programmes in schools worldwide; it further urges other multi-national organizations and non-government groups to advocate for greater prominence of and right of all school-age youth to quality physical education programmes. The World-Wide Survey (Hardman and Marshall, April 2000) with the support of ICSSPE (International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education) and other international and regional agencies, affirmed that physical education has been pushed into a defensive position, suffering from decreased time allocation, budgetary constrains, low academic status, and under valuation by authorities. The survey advocated increased, action oriented partnerships of all concerned organizations and agencies; concerted international actions by all concerned to enable compliance with UNESCO's advocacy statement espousing the principle of physical education as a fundamental human right.

As we trace our professional roots from an era called physical training to a time of education through the physical, today known as physical education, the intent has always been to help students enjoy and participate in activities throughout their lifetime. Wood (cited in Lee & Bennett, 1985a:22) while speaking in the International Congress on Education indicated how physical education should fit into the complete education of students. He suggested:

Physical education must have an aim as broad as education itself, and as noble and inspiring as human life. The great thought in physical education is not the education of the physical nature, but the physical relations of physical training to complete education, and then the efforts to make physical contribute its full share to the life of the individual, in environment, training, and culture.

No other discipline can have more effect upon the physical aspects of the human body, healthy lifestyles, and enjoyment of lifelong activity as physical education. As countries, nations or schools push for academic excellence, physical education must be required in order to contribute to the individual's well-being and avoidance of pre-mature death resulting from physical inactivity. Hailing the United Nations backed campaign in 2005 to harness the power of sport and physical education to transform lives worldwide, former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan called on all stakeholders to work together to make sport an essential component of efforts to reach the world's development goals (UN 4th April, 2006). That means ensuring full support from governments and the UN system for programmes using sport as a tool for development and peace from the fight against HIV/AIDS to the empowerment of women and governments. The UN General Assembly proclaimed 2005 as the International Year to help focus worldwide attention on the importance of sport in society and on how sport and physical education programmes could be used as tools to help achieve the MDGs, a set of ambitious UN - backed targets ranging from reducing by half extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by 2015.

Subsequently, a series of global conferences and events and the publication of research documents aimed to promote the value of sport and physical education for health, development and peace as well as education were organized. This means strengthening cooperation and partnerships between all actors including family, school, clubs, local communities, youth sports associations and decision makers as well as the public and private sectors in order to ensure complementariness and to make sports and physical education available to everyone. Adolf Ogi (The Secretary General's Special Advisor) presented a report on 3rd April 2006 in New York saying "many people had been made aware of the power of sport and physical education to help build a better world". He further said that this was done more with passion than with money and summed up by stressing that sport was not just for entertainment but that recreation and physical education were also tools for social-economic development and peace.

Sport and Physical Education has power to unify peoples and cultures. Sports and physical education is vital for all ages, but especially for children and youth, because it encourages teamwork, respect for cultural diversity, and the need for peace. Importantly, it also encourages self-confidence among women and girls.

UNESCO, the specialized UN Agency promotes the rights of children to accessing facilities for practicing physical education and sport. This right needs to be protected within the context of national education systems. UNESCO is in the primary planning stages of organizing an International Forum to raise awareness of this subject with governments, NGOs and the private sector alike in the broader context of MDGs. The International Forum on the Right of Children to Accessing Physical Education and Sport Facilities in autumn 2008 placed special focus on the African continent in this context.

In January 2003, while meeting at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris for a Round Table of Ministers of Physical Education and Sport from 103 countries, 45 ministers and numerous senior officials adopted a communiqué in which they called for sport to be given its rightful place in education systems. The participating states invited the Director-General of UNESCO to:

...bring the conclusions of this Round Table to the knowledge of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, drawing his particular attention to the importance of physical education and sport, the desirability of debating this topic in the General Assembly, and asking for the collaboration of the United Nations Organizations and other competent UN System Agencies... (UNESCO Communiqué 2003 point 3 c)

In their communiqué, the 103 participating states also noted that in many countries, physical education faces “increasing marginalization within education systems” and this at a time when sport has become a significant economic activity and gained unprecedented prominence and visibility across the world. On the local scene, for example, an article that featured in The Standard Newspaper (Kenya) of Monday 16th April 2007, showed an economic boom in Eldoret town (Kenya) where elite athletes are changing the face of this town by investing in palatial homes and other high-rise business buildings like the Komora Centre, The Grandpri Hotel etc. During the 11th IAAF (World Athletics' Championships) meet in Ossaka Japan in 2007, Kenyans raked in Kshs. 21 million in the five athletes who won gold medals in the competition (Daily Nation, 4th September 2007).

To reverse the marginalization mentioned above, they (ministers) committed themselves to

work actively so that the place of physical education and sport within education system is fully recognized and developed, ... by combating all forms of discrimination linked to gender, income, social origins, location or disability(UNESCO Communiqué 2003 art. 2 b).

The participants also undertook to put in place monitoring systems to, regularly review the situation of physical education in their countries and to revitalize the practice of traditional sports and games, a key expression of cultural identities.

From the fore going, there is a particular challenge in making opportunities for physical education available in less developed countries. At the International Seminar in Saly, Senegal in 2006, a benchmark was set on the quality Physical Education and Sports (PES) in the education system. Two mechanisms were established to improve and reorganize the quality-indicators of PES. These include reinforcement of the capacity of teaching training structures in sub-Saharan Africa and to increase the operation and performance of the network of PES institutions in this region.

In Kenya, physical education and sports provide excellent opportunities for young people to learn to communicate, cooperate, work in teams, respect others, acquire discipline and accept defeat - all aspects that are becoming daily more important in a world of globalization in which cultural identities are under threat and in which learning to live together in peace and harmony is a prerequisite. A case in point was the chaos witnessed after the controversial 2007 presidential poll that put many lives and property in jeopardy. Physical Education as a key component of quality education and an integral part of lifelong learning contributes to the acquisition of ethical values and the encouragement of fair play practices.

There is also the danger of young athletes and sports men and women going against sporting ethics. This is using drugs or simply doping. This is a danger to public health and threatens to kill sport as surely as it “kills” athletes. To combat the risk that is developing among young people, prevention is the best defence. This prevention is conducted through education information, dissuasions, control, and sanctions imparted by the teachers of physical education through such developed systems as appropriate curriculum.

There ought to be a commitment to work actively so that the place of physical education and sport within and outside education systems is fully recognized and developed - through actions to improve the curriculum, sport facilities and equipment, the status of physical education and the initial and in-service training of teachers. The government should also put in place monitoring systems to; regularly review the situation of physical education in the country. All these are done with the prospect of making physical education accessible to every student.

In February 2001, the IOC sponsored a project with a working title “**The Role of Physical Education and Sport in Education**” presented by Professor Dr Margaret Talbot on behalf of the ICSP (International Committee of Sport Pedagogy) and the ICSSPE. This proposal was based on the rationale that the World Summit on Physical Education held in Berlin in November 1999 called attention to the serious decline in the state and status of Physical Education in schools, all over the world (Hardman, 1999). The quantitative and qualitative evidence from countries in all parts of the world confirmed the many reports, which ICSPE had been receiving from member organizations. The time and resources allocated to Physical Education in schools had in almost all cases, been seriously reduced and urgent action is required both to improve the quality of physical education in schools, and to secure its place in

curriculum time (Hardman 1999, Talbot 1999).

Many writers have come up with compelling evidence of the value of Physical Education and Sports to the education system; for children's overall development; for the development of sports; and as a contribution to school life and physical education (Kidd, 1999). For girls and young women, the education system introduces the skills and knowledge required for life-long participation in sport and physical activity (Talbot, 2001). These benefits have been recognized and embraced within many other international policy declarations, issued or endorsed by influential international organizations, for example, the IOC, ICHPER and the WHO.

Despite this international recognition of the compelling case for physical education and sport to be delivered within the education system and of their value to the life and development of the education system and schools as a whole, it remains difficult to convince policy makers and decision-makers at both the Ministry of Education and its consistent organs of Teachers Service Commission and Kenya Institute of Education. There is little base-line evidence to demonstrate the value of physical education and sport to the education system because there has been no systematic collection of data to support the case. Similarly, there has been no research evidence, which has already been carried out at our local University (Moi) or at the national levels recently.

There is also the problem that, even in countries where official policy requires the teaching of physical education in schools, implementation of the policy does not always follow (Hardman, 1999). There are many reasons for this breakdown of putting policy into practice, including lack of adequately trained teachers, especially in elementary schools; school head teachers' and principals' lack of awareness of the educational benefits; and the perception that physical education and school sport are unnecessary extras, especially in countries with major economic challenges. There is little apparent recognition of the essential and distinctive experiences of good quality physical education and school sports, which directly contribute to the major objectives of the school and education system. These include, for example, supporting cognitive development; raising standards of literacy and numeracy; increasing school achievement; improving school attendance and retention; enhancing the social and spiritual life of the school; improving social and personal development; raising self-esteem and providing positive alternatives to risk behaviour (it has cathartic effect); encouraging attitudes of fairness; respect for others and valuing unity in diversity.

The pressure of examination and general apathy from all quarters right from learners, teachers, administrators and other stake-holders has dealt a blow to the implementation of the physical education curriculum in schools. Most researchers especially in the first world have concentrated on the above areas of research because it is assumed that implementation is taking place and hence few studies to ascertain the level of implementation. Therefore, unless the disparity in policy and practice is addressed, it will deal an irreparable loss to this and coming generation in this country. It is hoped therefore that by resolution, the physical education profession will assume its responsibility for helping to insure quality physical education curricula for every student in Kenya by advocating for access to quality physical education as a fundamental human right for every student.

3 Research question

To what extent does the teaching of Physical Education Course form a fundamental right for students in secondary schools in Bomet District?

4 Theoretical Framework

BSCS (Biological Sciences Curriculum Study) model was used in this research. It was a national curriculum development project of 1960s. It is an example of the ideological curriculum. Ideological curriculum is the ideal curriculum as construed by scholars and teachers. This model was used because the ideological curricula are formulated at a high level of generality in Kenya and are most often presented as policy recommendations, lists of goals and general recommendations about the content sequence of a field of study by KIE (Kenya Institute of Education). The BSCS model has the following components:

- **Awareness - Laying the foundation for change.**
- **Selection - Making evidence-based decisions**
- **Scaling up - Designing support for implementation.**
- **Sustainability - Monitoring the capacity for reform**

5 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive survey method of research. The study sought to analyse and describe the aspects of physical education as they are found in secondary schools in Bomet District. This included focusing totally on what the individuals surveyed thought or felt about the topic. This survey study provided both qualitative and quantitative information from a representative sample of the sampling frame. The interview guide administered to the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer and the head teachers or their deputies, and observation of aspects of Physical Education in the schools sampled threw up qualitative information. Yet again, the use of questionnaire on teachers and form three students yielded quantitative data.

6 Sampling Procedures

To get a representative sample and significantly reduce chance error in the study, all the schools in the District were stratified as Boys', Girls', and Coeducational (Mixed). The purpose of stratifying was to organize the sampling frame into homogenous subjects from which a sample was drawn, ensure parity in representation of each category, and provide each school with an equal chance of being drawn for the study. To calculate the number of sampled schools per category, the total numbers of schools in each category were multiplied by the ratio of schools sampled to the total number of secondary schools in the District (Too, 2004).

After stratification of schools into three strata as above, each school in each category was given a number. The number was then written in a piece of paper, then folded and placed in a fishbowl. The entries were shuffled sufficiently and the required number of entries drawn randomly. The same was done for stratum two and three. This gave every school in these categories equal chance of being selected for the study.

7 Sample

From 21 schools sampled, 2 Boys', 4 Girls', and 15 Co-educational were selected using simple random sampling. Respondents (students) from the Boys and Girls' Schools were selected by use of systematic random sampling while, proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select respondents from the Co-educational Schools. Form three students responded to the questionnaire in a ratio of 1:4. This was a senior class safe for the form fours (who were preparing and sitting for national examinations) in the school and their responses were assumed mature enough for the nature of the tools of collecting data. All teachers who teach or are trained in Physical Education and their respective head teachers or deputy head teachers in the 21 sampled schools responded to the research questionnaire and interview guide respectively. A total of 237 students responded to questionnaire. This figure was arrived at by using a generalized scientific guideline for sample size decision by Krejcie, and Morgan (1970).

Table 1: Sampling frame and the sample size

Category	Total No. in District	No. sampled
Boys' schools	0 5	02 (28)
Girls' schools	0 8	03 (30)
Coeducational	58	16 (179)
Heads/ Deputy Heads	71	21
Teachers of P.E	N/A	21
QUASOs	04	0 1
Total		280

(The figures in brackets are the number of respondents from sampled schools)

8 Research Tools

This study was carried out using questionnaires, interview guides and observation schedules. The teachers of Physical Education, and students completed the questionnaires. Interview guide was administered to the head teachers, or deputy head teachers and a QUASO. The researcher also used observation schedules. Information on the objectives of the study was used to develop items in the research instruments. Test/Re-test method was used to determine the reliability of the Teachers and Students' questionnaires then **Pearson Product Correlation Co-efficient (r)** was calculated. The calculated **r** for the Teachers' Questionnaire was 0.798 and that for the Students' Questionnaire was 0.808. The instruments were thus considered reliable.

9 Data analysis and results

Descriptive statistics were employed in data analysis that included frequency tables, pie charts, bar graphs, percentages, standard deviations, means and histograms. The sampled students and teachers agreed that students have a right to attend and be taught Physical Education lessons by 94.6% and 66.7% respectively. Although many teachers supported this assertion, the majority (61.9%) said they did not teach physical education as they did other

subjects in the curriculum like math and English. This information was corroborated by 82.7% of the sampled students who said that teachers were using Physical Education lessons to teach other curriculum subjects. It was observed that in 76.2% of the schools that had Physical Education timetabled, the students were either just basking in the sun during the lessons or the lessons were being used by other teachers to teach different subjects. The research further established that 38.1% of the sampled schools had not included Physical Education lessons on the school timetable as required by the MOE (Ministry of Education) policy, the scenario was worse with the form four classes. This could be the reason why 90.5% of the sampled teachers felt that there was a need to improve the teaching of physical education in secondary schools in the District.

Head teachers interviewed candidly said they were aware of the right of students to physical education, but it was the nature of the curriculum they have in schools that make teachers use physical education lessons for remedial teaching and others to extend their lessons to physical education ones. In schools where physical education was not included in the timetable, most school heads said they were ‘not aware’ and others referred the researcher to heads of various departments.

It also emerged that school programmes such as concerts and Continuous Assessment Tests utilized Physical Education periods. The District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer was emphatic that nobody knows what to “look for” in physical education during their routine supervision in schools and more so that they are not aware whether physical education falls under the sciences or humanities in the curriculum.

10 Conclusion

It is therefore not enough for teachers to know that students have a right to Physical Education lessons but they should be seen to deliver quality lessons to the learners in their respective classes. Physical education and activity play varied roles that are important and the early the physical educators in Kenya realized this, the better for the learners in schools. The research found that the students in secondary schools were largely denied a chance to participate fully in physical education. Their fundamental human right as stipulated by **The International Charter of Physical Education and Sport** of 1978 supported by UNESCO Member States and reaffirmed by ICHPER.SD in 1991 through **Convention of the Rights of the Child** was infringed upon. It came out clearly that there are very few teachers of physical education currently practicing and their other subjects of specialization over worked the few who were in the field. The majority of teachers given the responsibility of delivering quality physical education were not trained. This is a pointer to a serious problem affecting the teaching and learning of this subject.

11 Recommendation

This researcher recommends that

- The Directorate of QAS sends QUASOs to district and divisional levels that are responsible for periodic monitoring and evaluation of Physical Education in schools.
- There should be established national professional standards for quality physical education curricula in schools; and promulgating adoption and actualization of the national professional standards by national professional organizations like Kenya National Union of Teachers, Kenya Medical Association, Kenya Secondary Schools Sports Association, IOC (Kenya Chapter), Ministry of Sports, Youth and Gender, Athletics Kenya (AK) among other stakeholders.

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