

An Assessment of the Current Status, Challenges and the Future Prospects of Physical Education in High Schools of North Wollo Zone, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Introduction: Physical education can contribute to the goals of education in many significance ways. First physical education makes a unique contribution to the development of the total person. It is the only area of the school curriculum that promotes the development in the psychomotor domain. Second a quality physical education program enhances the health and wellbeing of students. Students who are healthy can learn more effectively, have more energy to expend on educational tasks. One of the main objectives of a physical education program is to advance the general well-being of each student (Wuest and Bucher, 1995). *Methods:* The objective of this study to assess the current status, challenges and the future prospects of physical education in the secondary schools of North Wollo zone. The sample consisted of 350 students and 7 physical education teachers drawn from three preparatory schools. The research methodology employed in the study was a descriptive survey. Questionnaires were the major data gathering instruments used in the study. Interview and observation were supportive data gathering instruments. *Results:* The results showed that students participation level and attitude towards physical education were low: high participation in physical education class and in different sport activities (97.35%), highly like to learn physical education class (21.17 %), high attitude towards physical education (13.23 %). Regarding to physical education curriculum: disagree on the existing curriculum of physical education satisfy needs of students (56.76 %), disagree on the contents of physical education can make you actively participate (57.35 %), instructional materials and facilities were adequate (strongly disagree, 52.64 %), the allotted time to physical education was not enough, physical education was not considered as basic subject. *Conclusion:* The findings show that students' level of participation in physical education and in different sports and their attitude towards physical education was low in under study area. Instructional materials and facilities are the major factors for quality physical education in school. Moreover, it has been found that these ingredients were inadequately available in the schools under study. School facilities such as different play grounds, water to wash, different balls and different sport equipment were found to be insufficient.

Keywords: Challenges, physical education, Current Status and Future prospects

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1. Introduction

The basic purpose of education during all periods of civilization, primitive to present has been and is to enable the individual to become a better citizen of a society (Knapps & Hagman, 1953).

Physical education can contribute to the goals of education in many significance ways. First physical education makes a unique contribution to the development of the total person. It is the only area of the school curriculum that promotes the development in the psychomotor domain. Second a quality physical education program enhances the health and wellbeing of students. Students who are healthy can learn more effectively, have more energy to expend on educational tasks. One of the main objectives of a physical education program is to advance the general well-being of each student. To acquire good posture and move about gracefully, physical education attempts to train a person in keeping strong and healthy. Since one primary goal of education is to prepare students to be productive members of society, attention must be give to physical education to improve health and welfare of students (Wuest and Bucher, 1995).

Learning can take place only as it is meaningful to learners. To be effective, therefore, secondary school physical education programs must be based upon an understanding of the general nature of needs, abilities, and behavior, specific characteristics of students which the secondary school serves, and ways in which physical education uniquely contributes to the growth and development of students (Knapp & Hagman, 1953).

One of the roles of physical educators in School is to modify and prepare activities that suit to their students' interest and abilities. Regarding to this Wuest and Bucher, (1995) states that one of the primary goals of physical educators teaching at the secondary school level is to socialize students in to the role of participants in physical activities suited to their needs and interests. Pangrazi and Darst (2006) states that "the most important goal of a secondary school physical education program should be to help youngsters to incorporate some form of physical activity in to their Lifestyle"

The number of students participating in daily physical education is declining, some researches show that, daily participation in physical education by high school students decreased. Physical education programs in high school have been criticized for declining students' fitness level for failure to teach sport skills for lifetime participation, and for poor quality. These criticisms are serious and must be addressed by professionals. School physical education programs also face constraints due to budgetary problems, the time allocated to physical education is decreased (Wuest and Bucher, 1995)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

School based physical education program offer students the opportunity to work towards achieving the goals and objectives of education through an active learning process. Furthermore, school based physical education provide our profession the greatest opportunity to reach students from diverse backgrounds and help them to gain skills, knowledge and habitués for lifetime participation in regular activity.

The status and nature of school physical education programs, at both the elementary and secondary levels, are being challenged. Physical education programs and teachers face problems. Such as large class size, administrative and teacher support for physical education is often lacking. Many professional leaders believe that the underlying problem in school physical education is the lack of acceptance as a fundamentally important subject for children and youth.(Siedentop, 2001).

(Siedentop, 1987), suggests that high school physical education was described as an “endangered species”, with the suggestion that if it continues on its present course, it would eventually become extinct as a part of the secondary school curriculum.

Having identified the problem, the study answers the following basic research questions through its different phases.

1. What is the present status of physical education?
2. What are the major challenges that affect the teaching learning process and development of physical education in the study area?
3. How do physical education teachers and students view the future prospects of physical education in secondary school?

1.3 Objective

The general objective of the study is to assess the overall conditions (the status, challenges and prospects) of physical education in secondary schools at North Wollo Zone.

2. Research Methodology and Procedure

A descriptive survey method was employed to attain the stated objective. As Sing (1985) states that, descriptive survey attempts to describe and interpret what exists at the present in the form of conditions, practices, processes, trends, effects, attitudes, challenges, interests, beliefs, etc.

2.1 Data Sources

The data sources for the study were from students and physical education teachers at the selected secondary school in North Wollo Zone.

2.3 Samples and Sampling Technique

The North Wollo Zone has a total of five preparatory schools. For the purpose of study, only three preparatory schools were taken as sample schools. The sample schools were selected by using purposive sampling technique.

Concerning the selection of the respondents, physical education teachers were selected and included in the sample on the bases of availability sampling technique. Because of the total student population of the three preparatory schools is relatively large size; simple random sampling technique which is lottery method has been employed to include students from their respective schools.

There are 7 physical education teachers and 3497 students as a population in the sample schools. However the sample size is made of 7 physical education teachers (2 from Filakit-Geregera 3 from Woldeya and 2 from Mersa preparatory school) and 350 students. The information from school administrators indicates that, there are 795 students in Filakit -Geregera- secondary and preparatory, 1504 students in Woldeya preparatory and 1198 students in Mersa secondary and preparatory school. Therefore the sample was drawn proportionally as such 80 students from Filakit -Geregera- secondary and preparatory school, 150 students from Woldeya preparatory school and 120 students from Mersa secondary and preparatory school were selected and involved in the study. This implies that the sample size was 357. The main reason that the sample size is reduced to 357 is to make the data collection process easy and manageable.

2.4 Data Gathering Instruments

For this study, such data gathering instruments as questionnaires, interviews and field observation were used to obtain the required data.

Questionnaire: Questionnaires were used to gather data from students.

Interview: The semi structured interview was take as additional sources of data administered to physical education teachers.

Field observation: Field observation was another data collecting instruments. The observation was conducted during physical education lesson.

2.5 Data Analysis Procedure

In this study both qualitative and quantitative data were used and analyzed accordingly. Mixed methods approach (qualitative and quantitative) method was used. The quantitative data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentage of responses. The qualitative data were obtained from observation, interviews and open-ended questions were analyzed in description forms, following the analysis of each of the quantitative data as needed.

3. Results

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents (sex, age, grade and teachers' experience)

No	Item	Respondents (students=340)		Teachers =7	
		No	%	No	%
1	Sex				
	Male	201	59.12	6	85.71
	female	139	40.88	1	14.29
2	Grade level(students)				
	11	207	60.88	-	-
	12	133	39.11	-	-
3	Age (students)				
	16-18	105	30.88	-	-
	Above 18	235	69.12	-	-
4	Age (teachers)				
	A) <23			-	-
	B) 23-33			6	85.71
	C) >33			1	14.29
5	Teachers experience				
	Below 5 years	-	-	2	28.57
	5 years and above	-	-	5	71.43
6	Qualification for teachers				
	Degree			7	100
	Diploma			-	-

3.1 Analysis and interpretation of the data

The respondents of the study were asked different questions pertinent to the challenges, the current status and the future prospects of physical education in secondary school of North Wollo Zone. Their responses were organized in to tables. Furthermore, the frequency counts- and percentages were computed for the purpose of analyzing and interpreting the findings as follows.

Table 2: Views of respondents on students' participation and attitude towards physical education

No	Items	VH	H	M	L	VL
		N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
1	At what level do you weight your participation in physical education class and in different sport activities?	-	25(7.35)	65(19.11)	135(39.70)	115(33.82)
2	How much you are interested to participate actively in a given activity of physical education class?	50(14.70)	123(36.17)	117(32.64)	36(10.58)	14(4.91)
3	To what extent you are motivated to participate in physical education class attentively	-	88(25.88)	142(41.76)	110(32.35)	-
4	How much do you like to learn physical education class?	-	72(21.17)	109(32.06)	75(22.05)	84(24.70)
5	How about is your attitude (positively) towards physical education?	-	45(13.23)	100(29.41)	195(57.35)	-

(Key: *VH= Very High, H= High, M= Medium, L= Low, VL= Very Low*)

As shown above, Table 2 focuses on students' participation and attitude towards learning physical education. Thus the views from respondents summarized as follows. As indicated in Item (1) of the table 7.35% of students responses show that students' level of participation in physical education class and in different sport activities is high, 19.11% medium, 39.70% is low and 33.82% indicates their participation is very low. This shows that most of students have low level of participation in physical education and different sports. In addition to this, from interview and my observation students' participation in physical education was low and the reason that teachers mentioned were lack of material, large class size, low attitude towards learning physical education and insufficient play grounds.

Regarding the 2nd item, students' interest to participate actively in physical education class, 36.17% of students' said that we have medium interest to participate actively in physical education class, 32.64% have low interest to participate actively in physical education class, 14.70 have very high, 10.58 have low and 4.91% have very low interest to participate actively in physical education class. It indicates that majority of students have high interest to participate actively in physical education class.

As it is clearly observed in item (3) of the table, 41.76% of students have medium level of motivation to participate in physical education class attentively, 32.35% have low motivation and 25% of students have high motivation to participate in physical education class attentively. This indicates that most of students have medium motivation to participate in physical education class attentively.

In Item (4) of the table, 21.17% of students have high level of like to learn physical education, 32.06% have medium, 22.05% have low and 24.70% of students have very low level of like to learn physical education.

As indicated in item (5) of table 1, 13.23% of students have high, 29.41% of students have medium and 57.35% of students have low attitude towards physical education. This indicates that majority of students have low attitude towards physical education. As I have got from interview part also, most of physical education teachers said that students have low attitude towards physical education and they undermine the subject. This affects the quality as well as the development of physical education in secondary schools.

Table 3: Views of students on motivation of physical education teachers and attitude of school administrators towards physical education

No	Items	VH	H	M	L	VL
		N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
1	How is the school administrator positive attitude towards physical education?	-	-	-	184(54.12)	156(48.88)
2	How much your physical education teacher encourages you to learn	-	-	20(5.88)	79(23.24)	241(70.88)
3	How is the interest of your physical education teacher to teach physical education?	-	-	62(24.41)	160(47.05)	118(34.70)

(Key *VH= Very High, H= High, M= Medium, L= Low, VL= Very Low*)

Table 3 summarizes the response of students concerning motivation and interest of physical education teachers and school administrators' attitude towards physical education.

Accordingly, as dedicated in the first item of Table 2, 54.12% of students indicates that the school administrator have low and 48.88% of students side that school administrators have very low attitude towards

physical education. In addition to this in interview part some physical education teachers indicate that school administrators have low attitude towards physical education. It implies that, low attitude of school administrators can affect quality of physical education in schools.

Accordingly, as shown above in item (2) of the table, 5.88% of students indicated that medium, 23.24% of students low and 70.88% of students indicated that physical education teachers provide very low level of encouragement for students to learn physical education. This shows that physical education teachers give low encouragement for students to learn physical education and it affect students' participation, the status and quality of physical education in the school.

In table 2 the last item (3) is concerned on the interests of physical education teacher to teach. Regarding this 24.4% of students indicated that physical education teachers have medium interest, 47.05% indicated that physical education teachers have low interest and 34.70% of student said that physical education teachers have very low interests to teach physical education. This indicates that the majority of physical education teachers have low interests to teach physical education.

Table 4: Views of respondents regarding the curriculum of physical education

No	Items	SA	A	U	D	SD
		N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
1	The existing curriculum of physical education satisfy your needs	-	-	-	193(56.76)	147(43.23)
2	The existing curriculum of physical education consider your background	-	65(19.12)	41(12.06)	102(30)	132(38.82)
3	The contents of physical education can make you actively participate	-	-	45(13.23)	195(57.35)	100(29.41)
4	The content of physical education are very boring	123(36.18)	150(44.11)	-	67(19.70)	-
5	The curriculum of physical education is relevant to your real life conditions	-	-	75(22.06)	166(48.13)	99(29.18)

(Key: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U= Undecided, DA= Disagree and DS= Strongly Disagree)

According to item (1) of table 5, about 56.76% and 43.23% of students disagree and strongly disagree on the existing curriculum of physical education satisfies the needs of students respectively. It implies students declared that the existing curriculum of physical education is not relevant to their needs.

Students also requested to forward their opinion about the existing curriculum of physical education and student's background. Thus, as noted in the table of item (2), the majority of the respondents, 38.81% of students strongly disagree and 30% of students disagree on that the existing curriculum of physical education consider students' background; and the rest of, 12.06% and 19.12% of students, undecided and agree on this statement respectively.

As shown the above tables of item (3), about 57.35% of students disagree and 29.41% students strongly disagree on the contents that included in physical education curriculum can make students actively participate, 13.23%, of student undecided on this idea.

In the case of item (4) of table 6, the majority of students agree on the contents of physical education are very boring (36.18% and 44.11% of students strongly agree and agree respectively) and the rest 19.70 % of students disagree on this statement.

In item (5) of Table 6, students also requested that whether the curriculum of physical education relevant to students real life conditions. Regarding this 22.06% of students undecided, 48.53% of students disagree and 29.18 % of students strongly disagree on the curriculum of physical education is relevant to student's real life conditions.

In general, from students' response and interview of physical education teachers, the existing curriculum of physical education can not satisfy students need and is not relevant to students' real life conditions. The contents that included in the curriculum of physical education are very boring and cannot make students actively participate.

Responses to open ended question items at the end of the questionnaires, most of the respondents have commonly mentioned problems such as lack of materials for practical class, insufficient play grounds and the existing play grounds are not comfortable, lack of motivation from their physical education teachers, the allotment of time is short, large class size. Finally students were request to suggest solutions to improve quality of physical education in secondary schools. Thus, the majority of them suggest that:

Material for physical education and play grounds should be available

- Minimize the class size
- Increase the allotment of time
- Physical education teachers should motivate students
- School administrators should give attention like other subject

3.2 Conclusions

Based on the major findings of the study, the following major conclusions were drawn.

- 1) Students' active participation in physical education and different sports in school is necessary to get benefits from physical education and sport. But the findings show that students' level of participation in physical education and in different sports and their attitude towards physical education was low in under study area. Students' low level of participation in physical education and sport can affect the development of school physical education.
- 2) Attitudes of school administrators and interest of physical education teachers towards physical education are determinant factors for quality school physical education. However, the findings indicate that attitudes of school administrators towards physical education and interests of physical education teachers to teach were low. These conditions, therefore, lead to conclude that due to this school physical education become lowly developed and students' participation also decreased.
- 3) Instructional materials and facilities are the major factors for quality physical education in school. Moreover, it has been found that these ingredients were inadequately available in the schools under study. School facilities such as different play grounds, water to wash, different balls and different sport equipment were found to be insufficient.
- 4) Preparation and development of a curriculum should be considered in light of the interests, needs and educational backgrounds of the students and their level of performance. But it was revealed in the finding that the existing curriculum of physical education does not consider students need and background, the contents of the curriculum are very boring and the allotment of time for physical education is not enough which in turn affects the quality of physical education as well as students' participation in under study.
- 5) The Findings of this study revealed that most of physical education teachers in under study area were not competent to teach physical education.
- 6) According to Siedentop (1987, cited in Siedentop, 2001:273) high school physical education was described as an "endangered species", with the suggestion that if it continued on its present course, it would eventually become extinct as a part of the secondary school curriculum. In the study regarding the future prospects of physical education in secondary school found that most of students said that if the concerned body is not taking measurement the status of the future physical education will be very low and students cannot get the necessary benefit from physical education. In addition to this from interview of teachers, they express that if it is going on this way secondary school physical education become endanger or decline.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are forwarded.

- 1) Different stakeholders should play their part to improve students' participation. Accordingly:
 - Policy makers should give attention for physical education and fulfill instructional materials and different and comfortable play grounds in secondary schools.
 - Physical education teacher should encourage students to participate actively in physical education and different sports.
 - Schools should consider physical education is one basic subject like others. Here, physical education teachers and experts should create awareness on schools and communities about physical education.
 - Colleges and universities should produce competent physical education teachers
 - Ministry of education should provide in-service training opportunity to improve physical education teachers' teaching methodology as well as subject knowledge.
 - School based physical education program to be effective the curriculum expertise should be change the curriculum based on students' need, background, ability, and consider the current issue.
 - Physical education and sport professional must do the following:
 - ✓ Creating awareness about physical education on students and communities
 - ✓ Become a positive role model for a fit and healthy lifestyle, so that others will be favorably influenced to emulate this life style.
 - ✓ Make a commitment to conduct high quality programs that are sensitive to individual needs, so that physical education potential to enhance the health and quality of life for all people can be achieved.

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