

EFFECTS OF SPORTS AND GAMES ON SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN MOROGORO URBAN DISTRICT, TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine whether participating in sports and games has effect on students' academic achievement in Morogoro urban district secondary schools. It also investigated challenges facing students who participate in sports and games as well as students' opinions on the roles of sports and games in academic performance. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 120 students. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare academic performance between non players, minimum players, regular players and frequent players. Descriptive statistic (frequencies and percentages) were used to assess students' challenges on sports and games as well as their opinions on role of sports and games on academic performance. The results reveal that there is no statistically significant difference between non players, minimum players, regular and frequent players ($F = 0.60, p = 0.66$). Study also found that lack of facilities, including playing grounds to be the main challenge facing students in sports and games. As regard to students' opinions on roles of games and sports in academic performance, the result found that majority of the students had inconclusive opinions, even though most had positive opinions on the existence of sports and games in schools. It is recommended to the stakeholders (parents, schools, government) to promote sports and games by addressing the raised challenges.

Key words: sports, games, academic performance

1.0 Introduction

The educationists and social scientists have been working since long to determine the relationship between sports and education (Khan *et al*, 2012). The supporters of sports program in educational institutions find that children who participate in sports are more successful academically than those who do not (Ademayo, 2010), sports improve students' grades, academic achievement, raises their educational aspirations, and keep them in schools and colleges (Khan *et al*, 2012). Participation in sports may also provide students with unique development opportunities that positively impact the student's social self-concept (Wilson, 2009). A student's identification and involvement with school sports creates a social network (*ibid*), children who participate in sports have been shown to have better social skills and to be more socially mature than children who do not participate in sports (Fletcher *et. al.*, 2003 as

cited by Robert, 2006). Sports activities not only leave a positive impact on mood, but also increase mental alertness (Hills, 1998 as cited by Khan et al, 2012).

Some researchers criticize games and sports programs in schools. Critics say that participation in sports deflects time away from the classroom and divert students' attention from study. They further say that it is not possible for students to achieve excellence and satisfaction in sports as well as in education (Khan *et al*, 2012). Extracurricular including games and sport activities often cost money (Wilson, 2009).

Participation in sports teams also corresponds with greater rates of alcohol consumption and illicit drug use (*ibid*). Although it needs to be noted that these outcomes can depend on the quality of coaching, a person's peer group, and the cultural meaning of the activity within the school and community (Gilman, 2004 as cited by Wilson, 2009)

In educational institutions sports activities are not regarded as essential part education and many people have believed that participation in sports negatively affect the education of the students (Arnett, 2006 as cited by Khan *et al*, 2012).

Din (2005) conducted a study to determine whether participating in sport activities had any impact on students' academic achievement in rural high schools of Kentucky area of the Appalachian Mountains region in US, results indicated that there was no significant differences between the students' pre-season and postseason grades, which suggest that participating in school-sponsored sports activities did not affect the academic achievement for the participating rural high school students.

Ip *et al* (2008) in determining if there is a link between the frequency with which computer and video games are played, and academic achievement, used a sample of 713 students of Swansea University in the UK. The results reveal that examination marks are in fact negatively correlated with gaming frequency i.e. frequent gamers generally achieve lower marks than less frequent gamers.

In finding whether participation in extracurricular activities had a statistically significant and positive relationship with student achievement in selected North Carolina high schools, using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), George (2012) found that there was a positive difference for students that participated in extracurricular activities. A participant had an average weighted GPA that was .65 points higher than a non participant. The study further found that there was a statistically significant relationship between academic achievement and participation in extracurricular activities based on gender.

Khan et al (2012), revealed that there is a link between participation in sports and performance in education. Participation in sports improve the Grade Point Average (GPA), class tests results, ability of students to succeed academically, and mental or cognitive development, the study confirmed that Sports activities are very useful and helpful for enhancing the academic mission of colleges. The study further concluded that sports and games have positive influence on memory and students concentration in education.

Adeyemo (2010) conducted a study in selected four senior secondary schools in Mainland Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. The results showed that students' participation in sports and games influences their achievement in physics. This study concurs with Fung and Wong (1991) who found that apart from improving academic performance, involvement in sports and games was positively related to personality and peer acceptance.

Shepherd and Trudeau (2008) studied linkage between academic achievement and involvement in physical education, school physical activities and sport programs, based on a systematic review of literature. The study found that allocating up to an additional hour per day of curricular time to physical activities programs does not affect the academic performance of primary school students negatively, even though the time allocated to other subjects usually shows a corresponding reduction. An additional curricular emphasis on physical education may result in small absolute gains in grade point average (GPA), and such findings strongly suggest a relative increase in performance per unit of academic teaching

The reviewed literature shows that effects of games and sports on students' academic performance vary from one area to another and between types of games/sport. This study aimed at assessing the effect of students' participation in games and sports on academic performance using secondary Schools in Morogoro urban district as a case study.

Although games and sports have been included in Tanzania education curriculum for secondary school education but its implementation is still poor. Students' participation in games and sports are still considered detrimental to their academic achievements. Facilities for games and sports are lacking in most schools. The lacking facilities includes playing grounds, balls, team uniforms and lack of competent sports trainers or (teachers)

Many parents in Tanzania discourage their children to engage in games and sport with a thought that games and sports affect students' performance. In short the effects of students' participation in sports and games are not clear among education stakeholders. Researches about effects of students' participation in games and sports on students' academic performance is lacking in Tanzania. This study is therefore aiming at assessing the effect of students' participation in games and sports on students' academic performance.

There are numerous claims that students' participation in games and sports is educationally harmful, but there has been little formal investigation into whether or not students' participation in such games and sports actually affects their academic performance. Arguments against students' participation in sports and games are built on the ground that if a student concentrate much on games and sport, he/she will not have enough time for study and hence may perform poorer in his/her exams. On contrary, as students meet during sports and games they may not only benefit in terms of sports and games only, but they may benefit academically as some students make group discussions and also borrow books and other learning materials from their friends. Sports also keep students away from misbehaviors like drug abuse, alcoholism and sex. Another important aspect of sports is that it helps to keep students healthier hence they can attend school. The seeming contradicting arguments on the effect of sports and games on students' academic performance forms is the basic motivation towards this study.

Therefore, this study explored the issue by analyzing the relationships between students' participation in sports and games and their academic performance, challenges facing students who participate in games and sports and assessed the opinions of students on the role of sports and games in academic performance.

Hopefully, this study will be useful to education officers, school administrators, school boards, and policy-makers. The study will be helpful to researchers who would be interested to study further about the games and sports in schools.

Students' academic performance is not innately formed. There are many factors that influence a student's capacity to achieve academically. Some stem from variables that are outside of the academic realm, while others are controlled within the school (George, 2012). These include home backgrounds, student factors and school factors. Extracurricular participation can now be regarded as a possible contributor to higher academic achievement (Ibid). Therefore, this study will only concentrate on impact of extra curriculum activities especially students' participation in games and sports.

2.Methodology

2.1 Study Area, Target Population and Sample size

The study was done in Morogoro urban area targeting students in form III belonging to 28 secondary schools which existed in Morogoro urban area when the study was conducted. Based on the method of data analysis (regression analysis and Analysis of variance), a sample of 120 students was targeted.

2.2 Sampling Procedures and Data Collection

A two-stage cluster sampling was adopted. In the first stage 3 secondary schools (10%) were randomly selected from the 28 secondary schools. In the second stage 40 from III students were randomly selected from each of the selected schools making a total of 120 students. Thereafter questionnaires were distributed to students to fill among others their demographic characteristics, types of sports and games they play as well as the frequency of pray. Further to this, the questionnaires had question asking students about challenges they face on sports and games and Likert scale questions to capture students' attitudes towards sports and games. Data on students' performance were taken from the website of the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA) for the year 2014. These results included national form two examination results which belonged to the form three students in the year 2015.

2.3 Data Analysis

As regarding the effects of sports and games on students' performance, students were categorized in four categories, non-players, minimum players, regular players and frequent players. Minimum players were those playing once in week, regular players were those playing between 2 and 3 days in week while frequent players were those playing in all days of week. ANOVA was used with a dependent variable being a student' score in a form two national examination measured by the points attained in the division. While ANOVA was used for

explorative analysis, regression analysis which included control variables was used for final Analysis. To capture the challenges facing students on sports and games as well as students’ opinions on the role of sports and games on students’ academic performance frequency and percentage were used in the analysis.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Characteristic of the Student

Table 1: Respondents Background Information

Secondary school	gender		total
	male	Female	
kihonda	19(16%)	21(18%)	40(34 %)
Uluguru	22(18%)	18 (15%)	40 (33%)
Kigurunyembe	12(10%)	28(23 %)	40(33%)
Total	53(44%)	67(56%)	120

3.2 Effects of students’ Participation in Games and Sports on Secondary School students’ Performance

Effects of students’ participation in games and sports on secondary school students’ performance was first assessed using one-way ANOVA and the results are shown in Table 2

Table 2: Students Performance Based on frequency of Playing Sports and Games

Frequency of playing	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
non players	120	2794	23	8
minimum players	120	3206	27	15
Regular players	120	3051	25	46
Frequent Players	120	2983	25	5

F=0.60, p-value= 0.66

The results in Table 2 indicates the students’ average performance based on the frequency of playing sports and games. As it can be seen there is no significance difference in performance across different frequencies of playing sports. One could of course argue that students were not randomly allocated into the mentioned categories of frequency of playing and thus other factors could influence their performance apart from frequency of playing. These results concur with findings from other parts of the world. Din (2006) found that participating in school-sponsored sports activities did not affect the academic achievement for the participating rural high students in the Kenttcky area of Appalachian Mountain region. Rasbery et al(2011) suggests that physical activity is either positively related to academic performance or that it has no influence to academic performance. Contrary to the said view, Wilson (2009) suggest that when balanced with academic learning, extracurricular activities which includes games

and sport may help students’ self -esteem, develop school spirit and connect with the adults in the community in a positive manner creating a good situation for all.

3.3 Challenges Facing Students who Participate in Sports and Games

Results on the challenges facing students participating in sports and game reveals lack of facilities as the main challenge, followed by inadequate playing grounds, lack of coaches and awareness (Table 3)

Table 3: Challenges Facing Students who Participates in Games and Sports

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of facilities	120	100%
Inadequate playing grounds	84	70%
Lack of coaches	48	40%
Lack of awareness	2	2.5%

These results reveal tow major findings. First, lack of facilities including inadequate playing grounds are the major obstacle for students’ participation in sports and games. Second there were no comments on parents being the obstacles for students’ participation in sports and games, which suggest that parents’ could be mobilized to support students’ participation in sports and games.

3.4 Students’ opinions on the Role of Sports and Games in students’ Academic Performance

Statements in five-point Likert scale were finally converted into 3-point Likert scale to indicate parentage of students who agree, disagree and those who ae neutral on the given statements. There was in total six statement whose results are given in Table 4.

Table 4: Students’ Opinions on the Roles of Games and Sports on Students’ Academic Performance

S	Statement	A	N	D
1	Sports activities play a good role on students’ life	89%	2%	9%
2	There is link between participation sports and academic performance	30%	50%	20 %
3	Students who participates in sports and games demonstrate excellent academic performance	40%	7%	53%
4	Participation Sports and games has negative influence on students’ concentration in education	52%	2%	46%
5	Elimination of sports and games from school calendar would improve students’ academic performance	20%	2%	78%
6	It is better to give a very minimal time for sports and games in the school calendar	20%	3%	77%

The results in Table 4 indicates that students' opinion on the role of sports and games on their school life is generally positive (89%), even though most of them do not think whether there is a link of sports and games to their academic performance (50%). Only 40% of them believe that students who participates on sports and games demonstrate excellent academic performance and only 46% think that sports and games have negative effect on students' academic performance. Nevertheless, their opinion on the existence of sports and games in schools is very positive (78%, 77%). In summary students have positive opinion on the role of sports and games in school life, though not very clear on its role on academic performance.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study investigated role of sports and games using empirical data on students' frequency of participation in sports and games against their academic performance, challenges facing students who participate in sports and games and students' opinions on role of sports and games in academic performance. The study found no conclusive evidence on the role of sports and games in academic performance. Equally well students' opinions on the role of sports and games in academic performance are inclusive. As regarding the challenges, lack of facilities including playing grounds appear to be the major obstacle. Based on the fact that students are positive with sports and games at least from the refreshment point of view, the government and other stakeholders need address the said challenges so as to promote sports and games in schools.

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