

**Gender Issues in Physical Education and sports
in schools:**

Female Students' perspectives and Experiences

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Conceptualization of PE and Gender

Physical education

- Physical Education (PE) for secondary schools in Tanzania is a part of the curriculum for secondary education
- Physical education may mean different things in different contexts: **play, sports, physical exercise** (Macdonald, Rodger, Abbott, Zivian, & Jones, 2005)
- PE is an **educational dimension** performed through the use of **physical activities** and **human body movements** that contain elements of play, games, sports and exercise to serve education purposes (Akker , 2003)
- Physical education is **a programme** that forms an integral part of the formal education process that uses various forms of physical activities to achieve educational goals (Wuest & Bucher, 1995)

Conceptualization cont...

- In this study PE is a subject which is uniquely characterised by the interactions between physical activity and human movements in its implementation process. This physical activity include games, sports, dance, exercises and life-long skills.
- Therefore, PE is the subject integrated in school curricula to meet several perceived needs, such as **perpetuation of the development of sports, recreation and leisure activities, serves educational purposes** of imparting and acquiring knowledge and skills **of and through physical activities** (MICS, 1995; MoEC, 1995; 2005a; 2005b)
- PE is considered a platform for sport development in educational settings (MICS, 1995)

Conceptualization cont...

The goals of PE and Sports for secondary schools in Tanzania are;

- a) to develop a sense of obedience, responsibility, self-confidence and cooperation regardless of gender, and socio-economic background
- b) to develop strength, perseverance and mental abilities
- c) to develop skills and ability of students with and without special needs to participate and value physical exercises, sports and recreational activities
- d) to interpret and apply health rules, render first aid and safety precautions for personal and community well-being (MoEC, 2005b: p.v)

Conceptualization cont...

Gender issues in PE

- gender in various educational settings have been debated extensively nationally and globally.
- PE and sports are fundamental rights for all and that PE must be guaranteed both within the education system and in other aspects of social life ([MICS, 1995](#)).
- Though female and male students use the same PE and sport syllabuses but females participation in PE lesson is low compared to male students
- Analysing gender gap in PE was not simply by numerical difference persistence, but to explore the reasons and experiences that influenced female students' decisions to choose to or not to participate in PE

Significant of the study

- The findings informs and creates awareness (to students, parents and public) about PE and gender issues from a Tanzanian perspective
- Documents the reasons that influenced female students' decisions for choosing to or not to participate in PE (added knowledge in the information data bank)
- Serves as a guide for policy makers and implementers for adoption of the appropriate strategies to deal with the trend accordingly.

Theoretical underpinnings

- The **Social cognitive theory** (Bandura 1986) comprise of the psychological and sociological parameters.
 - The **psychological approach** emphasize the role of knowledge; beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and emotions domination that inspire students' participation in physical activity.
 - **Sociological approach** take into consideration that behaviour of others and factors in the external environment play a role in influencing participation decisions. Behaviour is affected by personal factors, socialization environment and attribute of behaviour itself.

Theory cont...

- **Motivation theory** (Duda 1993, Whitehead, 1993, Nichols 1989, Harter, 1978) comprises of **intrinsic** and **extrinsic** participation motives.
- The **participation motives** include the **reasons** to **engage, continue** and **sustain involvement** in PE and reasons they choose not to participate
- **intrinsic motivation**- **incentives derived** from **inherent desires** and **curiosity** of adopting optimal skill or challenges in physical activity
- **extrinsic motivation** - **external sources** such as **social approvals, material rewards** and **competitive emphasis on winning**

Theory cont...

- **Amotivation** is a state in which an individual is **not stimulated** to make an effort toward engaging in an activity or behavior (Biddle, 1999), attributed to feelings of incompetence (Bandura, 1986) or a failure to value the activity (Ryan, 1995)

Methods

- The study adopted qualitative research approach /methodology
- Participants were thirtytwo female students purposively selected from four secondary schools offering PE.
- Focus group interview method was used for data collection
- NVivo version 7 was used for descriptive statistical data analysis

Results

Reasons for female students' participation in PE

Motives that influence female students to make their decisions of choosing to or not to participate in PE are;

- past experience in sport acquired since primary schools
- perceived benefits embedded in PE (health, physical fitness, learning sport skills, overcome stress, recreational purposes, enhancing sports performance)

Results cont...

- love of sports
- Expectations of scoring high grade in PE examinations
- after school interests such as employment
- enrolment procedures imposed by the policy and school regulations

Results cont...

Reasons for female students not to participate in PE

- Some female students perceived PE and sports as less important subject
- it was wastage of time to enrol in PE and sports which had no continuity to High education or professional training.
- Some students were not enrolled in PE because of lack of knowledge, skills and experience in PE and sports.
- Lack of teaching and learning resources, such as PE teachers, textbooks, sports equipment and facilities

Results cont...

- Some students who were in school sport teams (netball, volleyball and basketball) and some who were doing exercise said it was enough and did not need to enrol in PE lessons.
- Parents negative attitude about PE and Sport
- Lack of information about existence of optional subject such as PE
- Physical education was not included in the school timetable

Results cont...

- the implementation Sport for All projects, sport academy and projects for empowering school girls through sport in some secondary schools have;
 - increased attendance of girls and boys in schools
 - reduced early teenage pregnancies
 - activated girls in the learning process

Results cont...

- the projects have provided girls in schools with sport skills, knowledge of life skills and leadership which lead them become self-reliant, able to cooperate, take responsibilities, actively participate in decision making
- The project improved the girls' health, physical fitness and interaction with other within and outside the school

Conclusions

- The results revealed that female student who participated in PE were intrinsically and extrinsically motivated and influenced by personal, social (peer or significant others) and environmental factors to make decision of opting to participate in PE lessons
- The reasons for not participating in PE lessons among female students included personal, social, environmental and amotivation factors. If this situation persist female non-participants are likely to acquire coronary diseases and unactive lifestyle.

Question to reflect on

1. What does PE mean in your country?
2. what is the status of gender representation in PE and sport in your countries?
3. How should the females' underrepresentation in PE and sport be addressed?
4. What role should the High Education' EFA,SFA and CRC Play on gender issues in PE and sport?

Recommendations

Recommendations for action

- Physical education teachers should provide a positive learning environment that motivates all students to want to be present and to learn, but perhaps more concern and attention should be given to the female students in classes
- Teachers should build classroom community and motivate female students to be engaged in their own learning by asking them for their opinions many times during the instructional sessions and to make it clear that their input is valued

Recommendations cont...

Recommendations for policy

- PE and sports should be open to all students independent of gender and be compulsory subject/ programme for all students in secondary schools
- There is need for critical curriculum review to address the content, pedagogical practice and instructional materials so that to integrate gender issues
- There is need for leading agent (individual or person or unit) who is passionate, knowledgeable and an advocate of PE and sports in schools for providing girls with positive perspectives on and experiences in PE and sport

Recommendations cont...

Recommendations for further research

- There is need for further research on how PE Curriculum fulfils one's potential and desirable social relations for gender justice and academic excellence

Implications of the study

There are

- * i) Policy implications: calling for curriculum change to accommodate gender issues
- * ii) Need for PE advocacy : creating public awareness and understanding gender in PE
- * iii) Need for intervention on practice: for improvement of PE practice in secondary schools

Thank you for listening