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Contribution of Sports and Games to Changing Students' Social Behaviour: A Focus on Selected Public Secondary Schools in Temeke Municipality, Tanzania

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1

Abstract:

This study aimed to assess the contribution of sports and games in changing student behavior in a case of a selected public secondary school in Temeke Municipality. Specifically, the study aimed to investigate students' preferred sports and games in relation to the behavioral change benefits of selected games, e.g., football, on teamwork enhancement among secondary school students and to determine the relationship between sports and games and academic activities. The study employed a mixed research approach and a sequential exploratory research design. Four hundred and twenty (420) participants, including sports and games teachers, students and schools heads, were sampled and exposed to question items on the interviews, documentary sources, questionnaires, and focus group discussions. The results reveal that sports activities play a significant role in fostering physical fitness and emotional well-being among children and adolescents. Engaging in sports activities elicits a range of favourable physiological adaptations, primarily enhancing the cardiovascular and muscular systems. In addition, engagement in sporting activities was found to be positively related to psychological factors related to mental well-being while also facilitating the active integration of children and adolescents into society and overall academic performance. Thus, sports teachers and educators must create environments in the playing fields that support ideal notions of ethics, moral reasoning, character and sportsmanship. In doing so, the sports teachers should have the intention of building character when they are engaging with students. This means that without intentions from students and sports teachers themselves, sports cannot build up character.

Keywords: Sports and games, Social behaviour, Student behaviour, Changing public secondary schools, Temeke, Tanzania

6

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Introduction

The advantages of engaging in sports and games extend beyond the acquisition of novel physical abilities. Engaging in sports activities facilitates the cultivation of effective coping mechanisms among young people, enabling them to navigate the many emotional fluctuations seen throughout life. During the course of engaging in athletic activities, individuals may experience both victories and defeats. Sigribur (2008) has argued that the ability to gracefully accept defeat requires the development of maturity and the cultivation of practical skills. The experience of losing in childhood

fosters the development of resilience by enabling young people to effectively manage disappointment and navigate unpleasant encounters.

According to Tonts (2005), engaging in sports activities facilitates the development of emotional regulation skills in young people, enabling them to effectively manage their emotions and redirect unpleasant sentiments in a constructive manner. Furthermore, this activity facilitates the cultivation of patience in young people, as well as instilling in them the realization that significant improvement in their talents sometimes necessitates a substantial amount of practice. Subsequently, children have the capacity to transfer acquired qualities such as tenacity and resilience to other domains of their existence, including academic pursuits inside the educational setting and engagement in extracurricular activities unrelated to sports.

In Tanzania, the government determined the need to establish sports and games in public schools immediately after independence by establishing the National Sports Council under the Ministry of Education in 1967 with the purpose of stimulating students' academic performance (Adeyemo, 2010). Sports and games improve the health of students, create active and creative students and cover psychological problems. Additionally, the government decided to introduce UMISETA for schools, the football association of secondary schools in Tanzania.

Secondary school students need basic and appropriate information about their body changes since most of them are at the adolescent stage. This stage is characterized by remarkable physical and emotional changes among both adolescent boys and girls. These changes result in a number of psychological, social and health problems. As a result, these changes call for a need to have enough and regular conversation in school and at home with more emphasis on the physical and psychological changes that include stages of sexuality development, sexuality responsibility and peer relations.

A review of the literature from Tanzania indicates that many previous studies have focused on children's and adolescents' changes at the primary school level (Ngirwa, 2005). Their findings are mostly quantitative studies focused on broad and general perception issues without a specific focus on secondary school students. There is a need to have deeper knowledge about secondary school students' development in their relationships among themselves and their parents, their teachers and the community. This knowledge is useful to be able to support their character, namely, their psychological and cognitive development while in school and later in life. Therefore, it was in the interest of this study to assess the contribution of sports and games in changing student behavior in selected public secondary schools in Temeke Municipality.

Literature Review

Each sport has a unique opportunity to maximize the health benefits for adolescents. Involvement in sports activities has a significant positive impact on

students' academic achievement because it can promote character building, which ultimately contributes to the achievement of better grades (Hock, 2018).

Sports activities and games create a supportive learning environment for high school students to achieve their life goals. Participation in sports and games has a positive influence on the formation of students' character by building confidence, discipline, unity, and cooperation. It develops intrapersonal and interpersonal abilities that help students interact with others through group discussions, seminars, and workshops as a means of socialization in the learning process and exchanging experiences.

In addition, sports and games play a role in preventing diseases and psychological problems in students by providing energy, confidence, refreshment, excitement, and improving physical fitness. Hill and his colleagues (2004), as cited in Lunenburg (2010), identified a wide range of influences of sport and play on students, including reinforcing learning, supplementing subject matter, integrating knowledge, and creating a democratization of learning.

Through participation in sports and games, students can learn to work together and acquire new skills, which allows them to integrate with others and have productive free time. Ahmad and his colleagues (2015) argue that student involvement in sports and games not only builds positive character but also increases class attendance as well as better self-confidence and self-concept.

Acar and Gündüz (2017) define extracurricular activities as activities such as sports, music, painting, theater, and literature that are carried out outside the classroom context but still within the school environment. Jamal (2012) states that extracurricular activities go beyond classroom activities and must meet two basic requirements: first, they are not included in the regular school curriculum, and second, they are structured to create a pro-social interactive environment.

It is clear that the participation of students in these activities allows them to socialize and build integration with peers, which helps them to become good members of the school and society in general. Hill and his colleagues, as cited in Lunenburg (2010), identified several functions of extracurricular activities for students, namely strengthening learning, complementing subject matter, integrating knowledge, and democratizing.

According to Lunenburg (2010), extracurricular activities have become part of the values and virtues not only in American education but also in democratic governance. Extracurricular activities make a great contribution to the development of students in terms of talent and discipline through participation in various activities carried out in schools.

According to the Josephine Institute Center of Sport Ethics (2006), students who participate in sports and extracurricular activities show better school attendance rates, lower dropout rates, fewer discipline problems, and less drug use. Students who have

left school also suggest that the physical education curriculum be continued because it can provide sports knowledge to encourage adolescents to participate in physical activity (Omar-Fauzee, et al., 2009b).

Another positive impact is that sports participation is negatively correlated with school dropouts and delinquent behavior (McMillan & Reed, 1994; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). This shows that sports create students' interest in attending school and avoiding negative behavior.

Some researchers argue that sport does build character, but there is also a debate that sports do not build character. To fill the void in character formation, perhaps intentions, planning, and strategies reinforced by the environment (coaches, parents, participants, spectators, etc.) should work together to ensure that positive character can be built (Doty, 2006).

This is evident when leadership and verbal persuasion from coaching staff are identified as the two main reasons why students participate in sports (Omar-Fauzee, et al., 2009). This shows that the coaching staff influences athletes to participate and motivates athletes to pursue excellence. Therefore, coaches and educators must create an environment on the playing field that supports the ideal concepts of ethics, moral reasoning, character, and sportsmanship. In doing this, coaching staff must have the intention to build character when they teach. This means that without the intention of the athletes and coaches themselves, sports cannot build character (Austin, 2010).

Methodology

The study employed a mixed research approach and a sequential exploratory research design. The target population was obtained from Temeke Municipality. Four hundred (420) participants, including 17 sports and games teachers, 400 students and 3 heads of school, were sampled through probability and nonprobability sampling techniques and were exposed to question items on the interview guide and questionnaire. Four techniques were used in data collection in this study: interviews, documentary sources, questionnaires, and focus group discussions. Content validation and member checking were used to ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments' results, respectively. Qualitative data were categorized according to themes related to the main and specific objective of the quantitative data, which were coded, organized, analysed and presented in the form of a table using simple descriptive statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) software.

Result and Discussion

Students preferred sports and games in relation to behavior change

Sports and games contribute greatly to building teamwork among students. This is a positive effect of sports and games on students. In Table 1, approximately 153 out of 212, which is 72% of the male respondents, participated in football, while only

25% of the girls participated in football, which is a good number compared to many girls in secondary school who are now playing football and receive support from their parents. In handball, only 26% of boys participate compared to 15% of girls. Other sports in which students in Temeke participated included volleyball (21% of boys and 8% of girls), athletics (16% of boys and 10% of boys), and table tennis (11 boys (5%) and 5 girls (3%)).

Table 1.
Sports and Games in Secondary School that Contribute to Teamwork.

Variables	Male(212)	Male participation in sport	Female(198)	Female participation in sport
Football	212	153(72.16%)	198	50(25%)
Netball	212	10(4.7%)	198	132(67%)
Handball	212	56(26%)	212	30(15%)
Basketball	212	67(32%)	198	25(13%)
Volleyball	212	45(21%)	198	15(8%)
Athletics	212	33(16%)	198	20(10%)
Table tennis	212	11(5%)	198	5(3%)

Source, Field Data, (2023).

Sports participation enables students to develop meaningful friendships and cultivate a strong sense of community belonging. Athletic activities provide opportunities for students to develop respect for others, practice mutual assistance, demonstrate consideration for teammates, provide motivation to fellow group members, and acquire positive values through the development of robust social connections within their teams. Sports create social networks that extend beyond just the student participants to include parents, team supporters, spectators, and all individuals who are connected to athletic programs either directly or indirectly. These relationships serve to enhance social cohesion and foster a deeper sense of community among students and all stakeholders involved in sports activities. As Tonts (2015) said, *“participation in sport provides access to social networks and helps provide a sense of connectivity amongst residents.”*

During an interview when asked about the contribution of sports and games in character building, one of the sports masters in school A explained:

“Currently, there are many sport activities available in schools, and students can join many types of sport activities. By joining those activities, students could polish their skills, such as in football, basketball, softball, squash, tennis, etc. Hence, this could give them the opportunity to stay healthy and have self-discipline in controlling what they do and eat to have a good life in our school; those students who participate in sports and games, most of them have good character.”

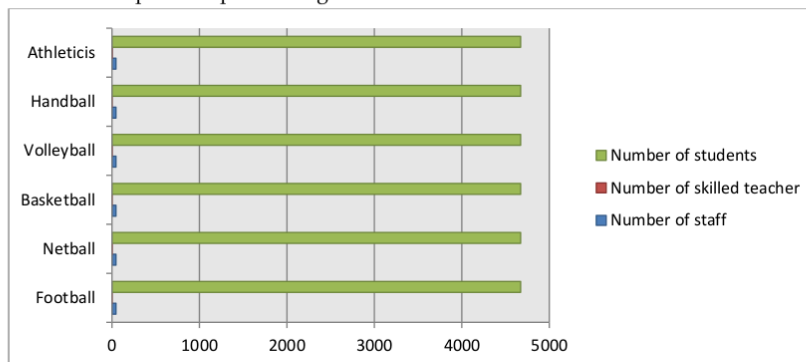
When interviewed, another sports master in school B highlighted the following:

“Sports promote good health for students, whereby those involved in sports normally have good stamina and are healthier than others. These students are normally active, more confident and cheerful. Sports are physical activities that help humans sustain health and prevent chronic diseases such as obesity, anxiety, depression, heart attack, and diabetes. Teenagers who participate in outdoor sports can be more energetic and physically fit because they are able to burn fat and calories. In addition, sport could develop muscles and help body coordination. We lack those good facilities in our school, we don’t have even a single ground, but when we have sports competition, we use neighbor’s ground, our students are talented, and fantastic, we dominate the Mtemvu Cup from 2017 to 2021. In football, this proved how students are like sports to make their health good and stable.”

The head master of school C, when interviewed about the contribution of sports and games in building teamwork among students, commended the following:

“Sports promote good values for students and can prevent students from becoming involved in negative activities. By engaging in sport activities, students could reduce boredom and use time effectively. Sports attributes to positive interaction, build teamwork, friendship, self-esteem and their like. Unfortunately, students currently prefer to spend their leisure time engaging in bad activities such as loitering, drug use, alcohol problems, vandalism, and snatcher. Some students like to spend time at home playing computer games, watching movies online, chatting, Facebook, Twitter and many other uses of computers. This is good, but if not controlled, these students will hook into it. Not to mention, the possibility of students being involved in online gambling, pornography, pirating, hacking, and other bad online activities.”

Another question aimed to determine the availability of skilled and competent teachers to supervise sports and games.



Source: Field Data, (2023)

Figure 1. Skilled Teacher for Sports and Games

Journal of Education and Teacher Training Innovation, 2025, 3(1), 25-39

From the study, it was revealed that 70% of teachers in sampled secondary schools have no interest in sports, some of the teachers supervise sports and games due to procedural responsibility to meet the school time table only, and most of them have no training or regular seminars for the development of sports in schools. As mentioned by Kelly (2020), sports is a highly diversified social phenomenon encompassing various forms of physical activity from high-level competition through school-, club- or community-organized programmes to spontaneous and informal physical activity. Sports are played by players in their individual capacity, such as races, jumps, and athletics. Teachers are ambassadors to students in sports and games, and having expert teachers in sports would encourage students to participate well in sports in school.

During an interview with the head of school C about the skilled teachers in promoting and supervising sports in school, she narrated the following:

“Skilled teachers assist athletes in developing to their full potential. They are responsible for training athletes in a sport by analysing their performance, instructing them in relevant skills and providing encouragement. However, they are also responsible for the guidance of the athlete in life and the chosen sport. Unfortunately, we don’t have skilled and trained teachers in sports in most schools, but we have teachers who are athletes, so they use their experience in helping students to be good athletes. For instance, here, in my school, we have almost 4272 students. Despite the large number that we have, we don’t have even on pitch for students to play, how could teachers do to encourage sports for students?”

Another head of school B said:

“Having skilled sports teachers, school sports will improve specific skills through increased opportunities in school and the wider community, providing a better physical, technical, tactical and mental understanding. This will also develop fundamental life skills through sport, including communication, teamwork, fair play and leadership, sport coaches can also contribute to raising the achievement agenda in school by developing the confidence and self-esteem in children through sport, whilst educating them on the importance and value that sport has, now students understand that sport is employment, reaching the success of Mbwana Samata, Messi and other icon players we need skilled teacher to guide them.”

When responding to the question, one physical educational expert from the Department of Physical Education at the University of Dar es Salaam explained:

“Developing a child’s enjoyment of physical activity and sport at a young age is key to promoting a lifelong participation, so introducing a sports coach into school who is passionate about physical activity and sport themselves will automatically provide children with a positive role model, motivating them to have involvement within various activities linked to physical education and sport, students will gain physical and mental

skills will also help them to learn basis like collaboration, friendship, team-work, self-esteem, so having coach or expert teachers in sport is very important”

Furthermore, the data revealed that 73% of schools do not have playgrounds for sports. Temeke Municipality is among the areas with many talented, but unfortunately, schools lack playgrounds. This is due to the environment and school location. Most schools have been surrounded by dwellers, and their houses are close to schools, which makes it difficult for students to have areas for playing. Approximately 65% of all secondary schools in Temeke still had inadequate playgrounds. The study found that students used community ground/public ground or other open spaces near the school for sports and games. Luckily enough, Ilala Municipality has been listed among the best areas for producing the best student athletics in Umiseta for a long time.

Research findings regarding the barriers faced by students in participating in sports and games show that limited facilities are a major obstacle. In addition, inadequate playing areas, lack of qualified coaches, and lack of awareness are also significant challenges. The results of this study reveal some important findings. First, the inadequacy of facilities, including inadequate playgrounds, is a major barrier to student involvement in sports and gaming activities. Second, there were no comments that showed that parents were a barrier to student participation in sports and games, indicating that parents had the potential to be mobilized to support their children's involvement in sports activities.

Education experts and social scientists have long sought to understand the correlation between sport and education (Khan et al., 2012). Proponents of sports programs in educational institutions found that children who engaged in sports activities showed superior academic achievement compared to those who did not participate (Ademayo, 2010). Involvement in sports can improve students' grades and academic achievements, enhance their educational aspirations, and maintain their presence in schools and colleges (Khan et al., 2012). Participation in sports activities can also provide unique development opportunities for students, which positively impacts their social self-concept. However, the absence of a playing field and a shortage of skilled teachers/coaches can destroy students' talents and undermine their future plans (Wilson, 2009). This shows the importance of providing adequate infrastructure and human resources to support sports programs in an educational environment.

Students' participation in sports and games

This particular area was assessed from two perspectives: participation of the students as per the school time table and in interschool competition from 2018-2022.

Table 2.
What Motivates Students' Participation in Sports

S/No	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	%	%	%	%
You like Playing	87	6	2	5
Teachers encourage sports at schools	67	12	12	9
Sports facilities are enough for you	0	6	17	77
Sports makes us disciplined	79	12	4	5
Sports builds good Relationship among students	60	17	3	10

Source: Field data, 2023.

From Table 2, 85% of students agree that they participate in playing football, netball and basketball, and none of the students or teachers denied freedom to student participation in sports. Life is a struggle, and only individuals with healthy, strong bodies can face and overcome it successfully. In addition to improving health and strength, exercise develops many qualities both in the mind and heart. Sports strengthen endurance and encourage discipline, fair play and team spirit. Sports develop problem-solving skills in young students. Young men and women are trained to face defeat with a smile and maintain humility in victory. Exercise is the best and healthiest way for refreshment and recreation.

Students' participation in sports stimulates the habit of loving school life; hence, it paves the way to strengthening healthy minds. They fill one with joy, zeal, vitality and enthusiasm, which help a person face the actual odds of life without yielding to gloom or pessimism. At the same time, a lack of trained physical education teachers, inadequacies in the quality of teachers, tight budgets, the attention given to physical education by schools, inadequate facilities, and a lack of equipment and literature contribute to a lack of improvement in physical education. Parents and the general public, to some extent, are relatively unaware of the many positive changes that can occur. Better communication is necessary among physical educators and those who support education and make curriculum decisions. Without improved communication, the feeling that physical education is a kind of play period for students to run off steam and learn traditional team sports will continue to exist.

In a synopsis, the study found that students who participate in sports and games have good health and physical readiness for learning; approximately 53% of the students sampled in the study strongly agree that they perform well when they are physically fit. Moreover, 75% of teachers and

Journal of Education and Teacher Training Innovation, 2025, 3(1), 25-39

Students strongly agree that sports and games build relationships between students themselves and student-teacher positive relationships. These findings are very similar to those of Ahmad et al. (2015), who find that participation in sports and games for students provides positive impacts as well as benefits in attending class more regularly and having higher self-confidence and self-concept. The author further argues that sports also keep students away from misbehaviors such as drug abuse, alcoholism and sex. Participation in these activities helps students develop good behavior and become well disciplined. Another important aspect of sports is that it helps keep students healthier; hence, they can attend school.

Additionally, the study findings support the idea of Zapletina (2015) that sports and games are important parts of the everyday life of children and adolescents and affect various aspects of their life, from academic achievement to manifestations of deviant behavior, although boys are addicted to them. Sports and games provide energy and health to students as well as a sense of unity, cooperation and discipline, which promote their academic performance. Sports and games create interest among students in going to school and avoiding negative behaviors.

Moreover, this study supports the idea of Mandelbaum's theory of sport, which states that sports and games bring a diversion from the routines of modern life, which is the most positive effect of sports, and that sports and games promote a conducive environment for mental and physical fitness, making participants, especially students, feel better able to handle other activities, particularly academic affairs, to bring success as well as achievements. This means that they can perform other activities that help them build their talents, and they can enjoy being in school. Believing only in the formal curriculum may destroy other students' talents and discipline, especially for those who are not well gifted academically (Mendelbaum, 2005).

Furthermore, the data revealed that sports and games help students to be punctual in various places, which is one of the important disciplinary indications for any school. Additionally, students who participated in sports and games had fewer indiscipline cases than those who did not participate in sports and games. This finding is similar to what Adeyemo (2010) and Njoroge (2015) found. Adeyemo explained that these activities are good in enriching students' skills, discipline, physical fitness, and talents, and students who participate in extracurricular activities become creative. Sports and games serve as a powerful tool for self-discipline - not only helping children with behavioral problems in the classroom but also boosting focus, academic achievement and in-classroom engagement. Njoroge (2015) observed that peer influence, drug abuse, stress and negative attitudes toward school were the primary causes of discipline in the county. This has led to strikes, school dropout, truancy and increased drug abuse. Njoroge further avers that sport and game participation can lead to school connectedness and eventually reduce indiscipline in schools. This finding is

more relevant to what Mandelbaum's theory intended when addressing the importance of sports and games in behavior change and attitudes.

The implication of these findings for the government is that sports and games should be given priority in enhancing discipline for students, as curriculum developers proposed that sports and games can be used in teaching students from kindergarten to the secondary level, as occurred in Thailand and the U.S.A.

Conclusion

Sports activities encompass many forms of physical activity that require exertion and contribute to overall health. These activities include active leisure play and organized sports, which may be engaged in by individuals of varying skill levels. According to the findings of this study, sports activities play a significant role in fostering physical fitness and emotional well-being among children and adolescents. Engaging in sports activities elicits a range of favourable physiological adaptations, primarily enhancing the cardiovascular and muscular systems. In addition, engagement in sporting activities has been found to positively impact psychological factors related to mental well-being while also facilitating the active integration of children and adolescents into society. According to the study conducted by Rodríguez and colleagues (2016), engagement in sports activities had a mitigating effect on aggressive behaviour among children and adolescents. This finding implies that participation in such activities may contribute to the enhancement of cooperative tendencies and the development of sharing traits in this population. According to Lee et al. (2017), engaging in sports activities has been shown to enhance an individual's social skills and problem-solving capabilities. Furthermore, a study conducted by Moeijes et al. (2018) demonstrated that engagement in physical activities among children and adolescents is associated with enhanced social behaviours and reduced interpersonal difficulties.

Thus, sports teachers and educators must create environments in the playing fields that support ideal notions of ethics, moral reasoning, character and sportsmanship. In doing so, the sports teachers should have the intention of building character when they are engaging with students. This means that without intentions from students and sports teachers themselves, sports cannot build up character. For the country to realize these benefits, the government should have a clear national sports policy, good sports administration and sports organization, plans, and sports programmers in schools. These aspects help to improve sports development in schools.

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