



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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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

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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

Unique opportunities for improvement exist within each sport to maximize the health benefits for teens. Sports participation has more benefits and positive impacts

on educational work, as it stimulates character building, resulting in higher grades for students (Hock,2018). Sports and games create a conducive environment for students in secondary schools to learn better and achieve their expected goals in life. Sports and game participation have a positive impact on students' character building or success since they build confidence, discipline, unity and cooperation, which bring both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills to students that help them interact with others through group discussion and different seminars and workshops, simply to socialize with others in the process of learning or acquiring skills, experience and knowledge from each other. Additionally, sports and games prevent students from developing diseases and psychological problems by offering energy, confidence, refreshment and joy and creating physical fitness for students who become involved in sports and games. Hill et al. (2004), as cited in Lunenburg (2010), identified some influence of sports and games on students, including reinforcing learning, supplementing coursework, integrating knowledge and democratizing.

By participating in sports and games, students are able to cooperate with each other and learn new skills, allowing students to integrate with others and provide leisure time. This view is identified by Ahmad et al. (2015), who argued that participation in sports and games for students provides positive character building for students as well as benefits to them by attending class more regularly and having higher self-confidence and self-concept.

Acar and Gündüz (2017) identified extracurricular activities such as sports, music, painting, theatre, and literature that are out of class room contexts and performed in school. Jamal (2012) stated that "extracurricular activities go beyond the classroom" activities and must fulfil two basic conditions: 1) they are not part of regular school curricular programmes and 2) they are structured towards a pro-social interactive environment. It is clear that students' participation in these activities allows them to socialize and build peer integration, which helps them to be good members of the school and society in general. Hill et al., as cited in Lunenburg (2010), identified some functions of extracurricular activities for students, namely, reinforcing learning, supplementing coursework, integrating knowledge and democratizing. By participating in extracurricular activities, students are able to learn new skills, integrate with others and provide leisure time. This view is supported by Ahmad, Rahman, Ali, Rahman and Al Azad (2015), who argued that participation in extracurricular activities benefits students by allowing them to attend class more regularly and have a higher self-concept. According to Lunenburg (2010), extracurricular activities have become part of values and virtues not only to American education but also to democratic life. It is true that extracurricular activities contribute greatly to students' development in terms of talent and discipline due to participation in different activities performed in school.

This section contains the analysis and synthesis of literature related to the specific objectives. Therefore, this section has reviewed various related literature contextualizing the assessment of the influence of sports and games on the academic performance of students in public secondary school.

According to the Josephine Institute Center of Sport Ethics (2006), students who participate in sports and extracurricular activities have better attendance in school, lower drop-out rates, fewer discipline problems, and less drug use. Students who have left school have also suggested that the physical education curriculum should be continued because it can provide knowledge of sports to encourage adolescents to participate in physical activities (Omar-Fauzee, et al. 2009b). The other positive impact is that sports participation is negatively correlated with school dropout and delinquent behavior (McMillan & Reed, 1994; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). This shows that sports create interest among students in going to school and avoiding negative behavior.

Some researchers argue that sports do build character; on the other hand, some debate exists that sports do not build character. To fill the empty spaces of character building, perhaps the intentions, planning and strategies reinforced by the environment (coaches, parents, participants, spectators, etc.) should work together to ensure that a positive character can be built (Doty, 2006). This is true when leadership and verbal persuasion from coaching staff were identified as the two main reasons why university students participate in sports (Omar-Fauzee, et al., 2009). This shows that coaching staff influenced athletes to participate and motivated athletes to pursue excellence. Thus, coaches and educators must create environments in the playing fields that support ideal notions of ethics, moral reasoning, character and sportsmanship. In doing so, the coaching staff should have the intention of building character when they are teaching. This means that without intentions from athletes and coaches themselves, sports cannot build up 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).

Through sport, students can enjoy friendship and have a sense of belonging. Students could learn to respect others, help each other, think of other people, encourage each group member, and learn good value through strong social bonding among team members. Through sports, social bonding is created not only among students but also among their parents, supporters of the sports team, audiences and those involved directly or indirectly in sports collaboration. This relationship could strengthen social bonding and promote a sense of belonging among students and other people involved. 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.”

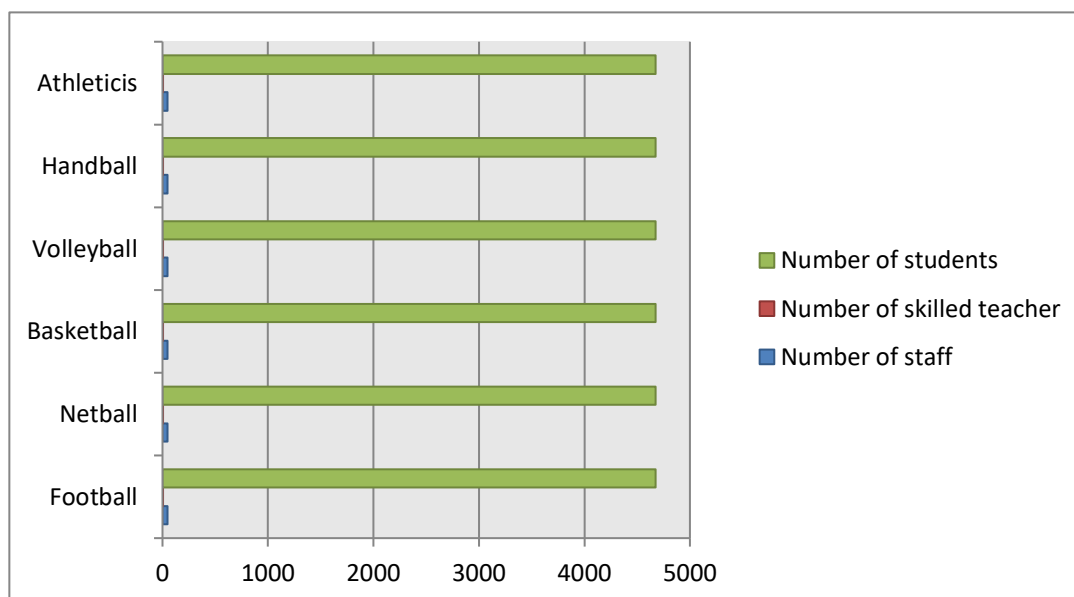
When interviewed, another sports master in school B highlighted the following:

“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

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:

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

“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.

The results on the challenges facing students participating in sports and games reveal a lack of facilities as the main challenge, followed by inadequate playing grounds, lack of coaches and lack of awareness. These results reveal major findings. First, a lack of facilities, including inadequate playing grounds, is the major obstacle to students’ participation in sports and games. Second, there were no comments on parents being obstacles to students’ participation in sports and games, which suggests that parents could be mobilized to support students’ participation in sports and games.

Educationists and social scientists have long worked to determine the relationship between sports and education (Khan et al, 2012). Supporters of sports programs 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 and academic achievement, raise 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, and a lack of play grounds and inadequate skilled teachers/coaches demolishes students' talents and future plans (Wilson, 2009).

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 a person with a healthy and strong body alone can face and tackle it successfully. In addition to promoting health and strength, sports develop many good qualities of the head and the heart. They strengthen the power of endurance and promote discipline, fair play and team spirit. Sports develop problem-solving skills and abilities in young students. Young men and women are trained to face defeat with a smile and maintain humility even in victory. Sports are the greatest and the healthiest means of 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

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

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

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 (Mandelbaum, 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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