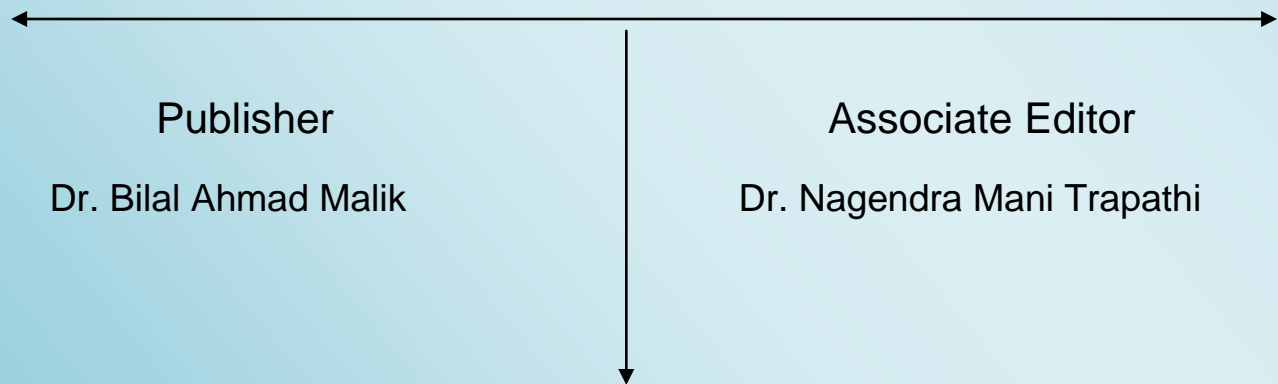


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AN EVALUATION OF THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to evaluate the financial support given to physical education and sport in 20 secondary schools in the Hwange district of Zimbabwe. The objectives of the study were to establish the financial support of physical education and sport in schools. This quantitative study employed the descriptive survey research design. The main research findings were that financial support to physical education and sport is minimal as priorities are inclined to academic subjects. Communities are not prepared to finance sport activities in schools as they see it as the duty of government and the private sector. There are also no sports academies in the district to develop and nurture the identified sport talent. It was recommended that the government should come up with a substantial budget specifically for financing school physical education and sport.

Key words: *Financial support, physical education, sport, development, funding.*

INTRODUCTION

According to United Nations (2003) sport is increasingly becoming recognised as an important tool for development and peace efforts to help people create a better world. Donnelly and Coakley (2002) asserts that the idea that participation in sport has some utility (other than being enjoyed for its own sake) can be traced to the mid- nineteenth century United Kingdom. Then, middle- class reformers in the areas of education and urban welfare began to develop the idea that sport participation, appropriately directed, could be involved in the development of character, work discipline, teamwork, fair play and other socially approved characteristics. sport became justified in education as an important tool (physical education and organised games), in youth detention centres and urban agencies, such as the Young Men Christian Association, (YMCA) to improve the

characters and behaviours of participants. These ideas quickly spread to other high income countries, and also became a part of the system of colonisation, where the British games and traditions were often transferred to colonised populations (Donnelly and Coakley, 2002)

It is important to understand the link between physical activity and health. Physical education helps to improve the overall health of individuals by improving their cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, power and flexibility. Siedentop (2004) notes that physical education in children enhances weight regulation, bone development, posture, skilful movement and promotes active lifestyle habits and constructive use of leisure time. In adults, physical activity can be used to promote wellness. Wellness as a concept is about getting and staying well, healthy and active. An adoption of such lifestyle by a larger percentage of the population can increase productivity at workplaces

Some school heads have the view that physical education and sport are concerned with the physical and not with the emotional, intellectual and social development of pupils. The results of this view is that teachers are reluctant to teach physical education as they consider the long distances that pupils run to and from rural schools enough to cater for physical development (Barker1998).

In terms of human resources most schools in Zimbabwe lack adequately trained teachers to teach physical education. Those teachers that are trained in the subject are made to teach other subject (Musangeya 2000). Barker (1998) says many teachers lack sufficient knowledge of what to teach, how to teach it and why? Teachers who lack knowledge of the subject usually prefer to teach subjects that are better prepared for. This is evident in some physical education lessons where pupils are just given a ball to play with while the teacher marks outstanding work in examinable subjects.

From the selected Matabeleland North provincial sports teams in 2015 ranging from soccer, netball, basketball, tennis and cricket to represent the province at national level, very few were selected from Hwange district. Outside the school environment there are no sports academies meant to identify and develop sporting talents and consequently no significant sports personalities have emerged from Hwange District. There is lack of partnership between the school and the communities in the overall sport development strategies. There is lack of a well defined strategy for a transition from in- school sport to out -of school sport, hence there is a lack of vibrant sport programmes in the communities. This research therefore sought to find out the financial support given to physical education and sport in Hwange ruraldistrict secondary schools. Hwange district is located in the North West of

Zimbabwe in Matabeleland North Province. According to the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2012) Hwange district has a population of 133976 people, of whom 62670 live in rural areas while 71306 live in urban centres of Victoria Falls and Hwange.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is insignificant financial support in physical education and sport activities in secondary schools, which has led to poor performance in this subject at secondary school level.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to achieve the following research objectives:

- To establish the extent to which schools get financial support for physical education and sport as a subject.
- To establish the effectiveness of government's financial support on physical education and sport.
- To examine the extent to which local communities financially support local schools in physical education and sport.

HYPOTHESIS

Inadequate funding for physical education and sport in schools leads to poor performance in the subject area.

Inadequate funding for physical education does not lead to poor performance in the subject.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Sport has a number of benefits, at individual level; it promotes the development of individual potential and well being thereby changing his behaviour. At community level it changes the perceptions of how people view sport through a sustained participation. At organisation level it helps to increase the number of sporting activities as a result of increased demand of activities at institutional level like the government, it helps policy makers to review their policy.

Hardman (2008) reported on the worldwide situation of school physical education as well as developments since the physical education world summit held in November 1999 in Berlin. The data generated from the surveys show inadequate provision that the economically under-developed and developing regions has changed little since that

Berlin summit. Concerns include insufficient curriculum time allocation, perceived inferior subject status, inadequate provision of facilities and equipment and teaching materials often associated with underfunding. Physical education has become an item on the political agenda, with UNESCO actively pursuing attempts to support physical education. (Marshall and Hardman 2013).

Hardman (2009) focused on post-Berlin developments and found that the majority of African countries had either no or minimal provisions for physical education for children. This widely reported impact of funding limitations motivated the current study. In another related study by Hardman and Marshall (2013) found out that school physical education is in a perilous position in all continental regions of the world. Issues addressed included inadequacies in financial material and human resources as well as scepticism about the subject's future. The crux of the matter is that there is a gap between promise and reality. 'Gap' is seen in the rhetoric of official documentation on principle, policies and aims and actual implementation into practice.

Innovative financing for physical education and sport is needed if secondary schools are to contribute significantly towards the building of national teams. It is through school sport that national teams are built the world over, hence it is necessary to fund the school sports.. Financial resources are a necessity particularly in financing sport events. Musangeya (2000) notes that governments in developing countries have never prioritised facilities and equipments for physical education and sport. An important aspect of innovative financing efforts in physical education and sport is to raise the profile of the subject in particular sporting events.

The family is the first point of contact between a child and the world. It provides the child with discipline and guidance and teaches him/her the norms and values of society. Parents who are interested in sport will normally urge their children to partake in sport. Sport by its nature provides discipline. In support of this Dekker and Lemmer (1993) asserts that, habits and the desire to learn should be inculcated at home. It is in the parental home that the foundation of the child's self understanding, his expectations of life and values are consolidated and where his intellect and spirit is influenced. If parents are enjoy sport, they would help much in boosting the child's performance in school sport and therefore, will motivate both the child and the school in implementing sport activities effectively. Clark (2001) argues that, a family's ability to equip its young members with survival and success knowledge is determined by the parent's upbringing, the parents' relationship and experiences in communities and institution.

It is a fact that sport cannot be financed by government alone but other social institutions are necessary in the overall development of sport. Brown (2001) asserts that, the social institutions of our society to which sports are closely linked are the family, education, the media, politics, religion and the economy. These institutions play an important role in the development of sport in our society. For example the family is the first institution which the child is first initiated into play through informal instruction. Education formalises the knowledge that the child gained through informal instruction. Other institutions complement sport development through moral and financial support.

Schooling enlarges children's social world. Schooling formally teaches pupils a wide range of knowledge and skills. Education conveys a host of other lessons informally through activities such as sport. Through sport pupils develop lifelong skills, for example organisational, communication and leadership skills are enhanced through participation in sport. Sport is played according to accepted laid down rules. All participants are expected to abide by the rules.

It is important to understand how the debate on the link between education and sport has unfolded over the years. Research indicates that there is no significant disagreement among researchers on the link between education and sport. The United Nations (2003) notes that: education is central to the achievement of all the development goals and sport has a natural place in education, whether the approach used is formal, non formal or informal. In school, physical education is a key component of a quality education and can be used to promote schooling among young people.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was informed by positivistic philosophy in order to ascertain financial support given to physical education and sport in secondary schools in Hwange district. Positivism as a philosophy adheres to the view that only factual knowledge gained through observation, including measurements is trustworthy (Cresswell 2014). The philosophy notes that variables emphasize on quantitative data and that reality is objectively given. This study employed the descriptive survey research design.

DELIMITATION / SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was confined to evaluating the financial support given to physical education and sport in secondary schools Hwange District from 2013 to 2016.

Twenty secondary schools in Hwange district sampled from 23 schools were the focus of this quantitative study. The schools provided information about physical education and sports activities that took place in their areas. They also indicated the resources that were available to undertake the activities as a means of creating strong foundation for future sport development later in society. The sources of financial support from which the schools got their support were from government, local authorities, the parents and the private sector. Below is a profile of Hwange district.

Population

The study population comprised 46 respondents who included school heads and deputy heads from 23 secondary schools in Hwange district.

Sample of the research

In this research 20 schools were selected from a population of 23 secondary schools. Each school provided 2 respondents, thus making a total of 40 respondents.

Sampling procedure

This study employed the stratified random sampling to select respondents for this study. The lottery technique was used to select a sample of twenty (20) schools from a total of 23 secondary schools. When using the lottery sampling approach method, the population is classified sequentially and assigned numerical identifications. Corresponding numbers were marked on separate cards and deposited into a closed container. The numbers were shuffled to allow for each participating number equal chances of being selected. Then one card bearing a number was selected randomly from the container. The selected number was recorded and the card was tossed back into the pool again. This approach ensured that every participating number had an equal chance of being selected.

In this study, each participating school was allocated a numerical and corresponding number which was recorded on cards and put in an empty container from which they were thoroughly mixed before each card was picked and recorded. This process was repeated until 20 schools were selected out of the 23 secondary schools found in Hwange district.

Research instruments

This study used a questionnaire as the principal data collection instrument. Questionnaires were issued to 40 targeted respondents from the twenty sampled schools.

Data collection procedure

The researcher made appointments for visits to each selected school in the sample through school heads. Explanatory letters spelling out the purpose of the research was sent prior to the actual date of the investigation.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study sought to establish who the responsible authorities was for each school in the survey. Four categories of schools were established. 3(15%) of the schools are run by government, 3(15%) are church/mission schools, 3(15%) are owned by mines and 11(55%) are run by rural district council. The significance of these figures is that the researcher would have an appreciation of how these authorities finance physical education activities. This is important when making conclusions and recommendations for this study.

24(60%) of the school heads and deputy heads were between 41 to 50 years and 16(40%) were above 51 years. The oldest respondents were above 51years the significance of these ages is that the researcher would have an overview of the people involved in the administration, implementation and consumption of sports policies. In terms of gender distribution 24(60%) of the school heads were male while 16(40%) were female.

25% of respondents of school heads indicated that they financed physical education and sport at their schools through governments' grants. 20% of respondents indicated that they financed physical education and sport at their school through funding from the local authorities, while 55% said physical education and sport is financed through sports levies. Donations and fundraising recorded 0% response. This means that the providers of education, which is the government and local authorities, contribute less in physical education and sport. The result of this inadequacy for funding leads to poor performance in the subject.

The study also sought to find out the frequency of financial support for physical education and sport in schools. 22 (55%) of the schools get financial support termly, 10(25%) get it occasionally and 8(20%) got a once off sponsorship. This indicates that most schools get their financial support termly. The significance of this is that

schools can engage in sport throughout the year. However what is important is the adequacy of these funds. The follow-up question sought to find out if these funds are adequate or not. 40(100%) of the school heads and deputies said the funds were inadequate. This confirms that physical education and sport programmes were compromised as a result of inadequate financial support. As a result some programmes fell off because of the insufficient funding. Asked how schools coped with the challenges posed by under funding in implementing physical education and sport curriculum 40 (100%) of the school heads and deputies indicated that they resorted to the strategy of abandoning some physical education disciplines. The implication is that schools would offer partial programmes in physical education and sport which on its own has negative effect on the development of sport as a whole.

The study sought to establish that, in the face of limited government grants, where did the schools get extra funding for physical education and sport. 22 (55%) respondents indicated that they got extra financial support from parents. 12 (30%) said they got extra funding from donors, while 6(15%) said they got extra funding from local business people. The majority of schools got extra funding from parents. As already stated parents had other obligations to meet other than paying school levies and therefore their contributions were minimal and could not fully support the needs of sports programmes in schools. One needed to take the economic situation in the country to appreciate that parent; in particular, those who lived in rural areas had no extra funds to spare. Therefore their contributions were inadequate to finance projects such as sport in schools.

On the question of the extent to which local communities support physical education and sport financially. 22 (55%) respondents of the school heads and deputies said the support is minimal. 18 (45%) said the support was moderate. None said to a large extent. While 18(45%) said the support was moderate, it must be understood that communities were hard pressed with other social obligations and as such these funds were inadequate for any meaningful sports programmes. However the communities realise the need to help government finance sport.

The study sought to find out the number of recognised sport personalities that emerged in schools in the last 10 years. 2 (5%) Heads of schools indicated that there were 1 to 2 sports personalities and 2(5%) indicated that they had 2 to 5 sports personalities. The rest 36 (90%) said they had none. The idea of sports is to produce world class sports personalities. the researcher wanted to establish the number of sports icons in schools, in order to measure the effectiveness of the school programmes. The results show that there were only a limited number of sports personalities who emerged from schools. This may be a result of insufficient funding. Sport can only thrive were

funding is adequate. Lack of sound funding leads to half backed sports persons. This actual is a reflection of underfunding.

On who should finance physical education and sport in schools, 40 (100%) respondents said the government and local authorities should be responsible for financing physical education and sport in schools. Respondents said since the government and local authorities were the providers of education, they had the obligation to finance the subject. The reason being that it was government which prescribed the national curriculum to be taught in schools. Considering the fact that the government made policies for implementation by schools, it is prudent that it funds the sports in schools. It makes no sense to come up with a policy without considering resources available for the policy to succeed.

The study also solicited for suggestions for sustaining physical education and sport activities in schools. 40(100%) of respondents said national associations and the private sector in partnership with government should come up with funding strategies. The reason given to this suggestion being that national associations benefit from school sport through scouting talent from schools. Considering the fact that the private sector had some social responsibility, the suggestion by respondents seemed in order. However for the private sector to fund sport schools should provide high quality tournaments. The private sector would always want to associate their products with viable sports tournaments, because viable tournaments give them the audience. So the both the private sector and sports benefit. Sport benefit from funding while the private sector benefit from the audience.

CONCLUSIONS

The study established that there were five major sources of finance for physical education and sport. These were government grants, donations, local authorities and fundraising. Among them, the most prevalent was through government grants. The problem with government grants was that they were insufficient. Since the government's financial responsibilities embraced the under-privileged learners under the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), this implied that in actual terms, not much was channelled towards physical education and sport.

Furthermore, the responses to the questions in the questionnaires revealed that the most pronounced barrier were related to the time frame. Physical education and sport, like any other subject on the school curriculum required continuity in terms of funding and administration of the actual activities. Unfortunately, this study unearthed a gloomy picture in which schools got financial support towards physical education and sport only once a term.

This meant that the subject was seasonal due to inadequate financial support. The sponsors were not easy to come by and this made the teaching and learning of physical education even more challenging.

The question of how far, if at all, the schools could sustain physical education activities from the financial resources made available to them, brought out pessimistic scenario. Physical education has been found to thrive where all resources were adequately provided. Among the necessary inputs, financial resources could be said to be pivotal because without them there was no equipment and infrastructure.

The analysis of the effectiveness of government's financial support for physical education and sport revealed. Respondents stated that while schools received sports grants termly, the funds were largely inadequate. It is an open secret that virtually nothing can be done without financial resources. Lack of funding was in itself the biggest challenge which placed physical education and sport at the nadir of the school curriculum. The findings of the study therefore showed that the majority of the schools were not financially supported in the provision of teaching and learning of physical education and sport.

The periodic support was found to be inadequate too. This was attributed more to the quantity of funds made available than to the time frame. Termly/ seasonal financial support which focused on athletics activities in the first term and ball games in the second term also emerged that it was inadequate. The termly / seasonal financial support was found to fall short of what the discipline of physical education and sport required. The subject has theoretical and practical demands that must be met throughout the year. Such obligations could not be met without the requisite funding. The study established that the majority of school heads declared that funding was not adequate at all. The few who said their funding was adequate were subsidised by communities and well-wishers. In a nutshell, the funding from government was simply inadequate.

As already alluded to, schools had to find mechanisms of dealing with financial shortages. The majority of them were compelled to do away with some sport disciplines. The study discovered that some schools resorted to parents and local business people for financial support. However the socio- economic status of many parents was unfavourable as the area under study was a predominately rural and poverty stricken. Support from donors was very much appreciated but could not be relied upon because it was erratic.

On the extent to which Hwange communities financially supported local schools in physical education and sport, the study showed that the communities had serious socio-economic problems, which hindered their full support towards physical education and sport.

The study also wanted to establish how the unsponsored disciplines were catered for. The study found that most of the sport disciplines had to be abandoned. For the learners this spelt disaster in the sense that they never got exposure to all the unsponsored disciplines. The next option for schools were to confine the unsponsored disciplines to school level. Such disciplines could never be developed for inter-school's competitions.

It emerged from school heads and deputies that all schools were averse to the use of loans as source of financial support for equipment. A few schools relied on the recreational facilities that were owned by the mines and local authorities. That did not provide any solution to the predicament of schools because the same facilities were used by other stakeholders. On the whole, financial support for the much needed equipment remained a challenge.

Very few sports personalities like soccer stars and renowned athletes emerged from the schools studied. This could be attributed to the barriers that were encountered in the teaching and learning of physical education and sport.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above research findings and conclusions the researcher recommends that the government should come up with a substantial budget specifically for financing school physical education and sport. Currently the government provides per capita grants to schools. The study has revealed prejudice against physical education and sport and it is recommended that policy stipulates that certain percentages of the per capita grant be directed to the development and growth of physical education and sport. Schools do not prioritize the subject since it is not examinable and so they would need to comply with a policy which deliberately promotes physical education and sport. This would facilitate the development of infrastructure, acquisition of appropriate equipment for sport and enable talent identification among students. Such an initiative by the government would most likely make physical education occupy its rightful place in the school curriculum.

An array of responsible authorities run schools along the government. These include church organizations, rural district councils and mines. It is recommended that the said responsible authorities fully play their role in sharing cost of education with the government. Admittedly, they provide infrastructure for their schools, pay incentives to

their teachers and even pay support staff. It is encouraged that they go beyond these responsibilities and specifically direct certain allocation of funds to sports disciplines. The responsible authorities could go a long way in supporting physical education and sport if they all worked towards the development of infrastructure and acquiring the necessary equipment. Such funds would cater for the maintenance and payment of resource persons. Once they prove that they value and prioritize physical education and sport just like the attention paid to subjects like mathematics and science, then the research problems identified by this study would be almost solved.

The community should be encouraged to support sport in general. The partnership between teachers and parents/guardians could be nurtured and consolidated for purposes of promoting physical education and sport. Bearing in mind that families are the first agents of socialisation of the child, it is of great advantage to solicit their active involvement in, matters relating to physical education and sport. For the running of sporting activities, parents/guardians are also called upon to make financial contributions, over and above the levies which have proved to be inadequate. There could lessen barriers against physical education and sport if all communities could take it upon themselves to develop physical education and sport in both monetary and non- monetary terms.

It is also recommended that the government establish sports academies that will cater for the gifted pupils during school holidays. The principal role of the academies would be to identify, develop and nurture talent. In addition academies would facilitate the transition from in-school-sport to out- of- school. This would have a positive impact on the development of sport nationally. As the national teams would draw their players from them.

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