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**Factors Influencing Secondary School Students'
Participation in Competitive Sports in Nairobi County A
Critical Literature Review**

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Abstract

Purpose: The main objective of the study is to determine the factors that influence the participation of secondary school students in competitive sports in Nairobi County, Kenya

Methodology: The paper used a desk study review methodology where relevant empirical literature review was reviewed to identify main themes and to extract knowledge gaps.

Findings: The study revealed that social relationships, gender, household income and playing experiences are factors that influence secondary school students' participation in competitive sports in Nairobi, Kenya.

Unique Contribution to Theory and Practice: The Ministry of Education, through the county Director of Education should ensure that all secondary schools have basic sports facilities and equipment in order to promote sports participation. Schools principals should ensure every student identifies themselves with a sport.

Keywords: *Athlete, competitive sport, motivation, participation, social relationship*

INTRODUCTION

Active engagement in organized competitive sports and physical activities programs has numerous benefits such as health, psychological, cognitive and social development. Engaging in sports leads to development in social skills, leadership skills, self-esteem and academic achievement (Cronin, 2018). Nevertheless, there has been a notable drop in student's adherence to competitive sports in the modern society as a result of rapid advancement in technology (Ratten, 2021).

Engaging in physical activities and competitive sport in the USA has continuously attracted high participation, due to advanced knowledge in physical education and sport (McKenzie, 2015). However, a report by the Commonwealth of Australia (2010) advocates that many secondary school students disengage from sport as a result of barriers to sport delivery experienced within and outside the school. In South Africa, decline in engagement in sporting activities is addressed by Department of Sport and Recreation South Africa (SRSA) by developing strategic policies specifically for sports in both primary and secondary schools (Department of Sport and Recreation, 2005).

Studies have contended that personal abilities, psycho-social environment, social relationship and socialization situations as provided by schools, community and churches are associated with becoming involved in physical activity and sport (Zastrow, 2019) notes that a significant number of successful athletes in Kenya come from families where members are involved in sport.

Depending on playing experience, sport participation can enhance learning life skills and improving academic performance in different ways (Holt, 2018) highlights that through long exposure in playing, an athlete develops strong playing skills, teamwork, self-confidence, respect and hard work, hence high-performance during competition. A sport if well delivered is capable to transform student's character through vigorous and impassive engagement. Sports can transform a person's physical, sociological, ethical, psychological, and emotional well-being.

Socio economic status is another significant factor that influences students' participation in sports. Strandbu (2019) showed that students who participated in sports had a higher socio-economic family background. Similarly, Simmons (2018) revealed that students from lower household's income level had minimal chances of engaging in competitive sports compared to their counterpart from higher household income level.

In Kenya, sports in secondary schools is a tool that has been used to preach peace and bring students from diverse culture and background for the mutual objective of overcoming geographical and ethnicity barriers; promoting acceptance and respect (Ndiwa, 2016). However, athletes encounter a series of physical, psychological, and social demands throughout their competitive seasons or throughout their career. Consequently, the need to investigate how social relationships which includes Physical Education (PE) teachers, coaches, school principals and parents influence participation in sports. The study also found out the influence of gender, playing experience and household's income on participation in competitive sports by secondary school students in Nairobi County.

Statement of the Problem

Engaging in organized competitive activities can enhance the health and life of a student. In the modern society sedentary lifestyle and overweight are common concerns since they lead to cardiac diseases and high blood pressure. Therefore, encouraging students to take part in sports and

helping them lead an active lifestyle contributes to a healthy and fit generation (Winnick, 2016). According to Muniu (2019), youth engagement in physical activities greatly enhances their self-esteem, emotional, physical and social well-being.

However, a study by Molly (2015) demonstrated challenges facing participation in sports for instance, lack of resources, inadequate facilities and unclear sports code. Continued participation in sports can only be enhanced if students get the necessary support from; parents, teachers, peers and friends, and the school environment. Since the participants are not a homogenous group, it is important to establish the role of social relationship, gender, playing experience and SES factors on participation in competitive sports among secondary school students in Nairobi County.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to determine the factors that influence the participation of secondary school students in competitive sports in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Significance of the study

The findings may be important to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to inform their policies guiding physical education and sports participation. The principals of secondary schools may also be able to make informed decision pertaining to student's participation in sports. The students may benefit from the findings of this study by raising their concerns regarding what attracts them to engage in competitive sports. The study findings may enable parents know what hinder and motivate students to participate in competitive sports, while teachers may be able to identify and nurture talents.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Relationship Factors and Participation in Sports

Social relationship factors are bound on the support provided by friends, parents, teachers and coaches' vis-à-vis participation in sports activities. Rintaugu (2015) compared the socialization into sport of secondary school athletes defined by gender, geographical location of their school and influence of family members. Findings revealed that fathers and brothers were the most significant agents of socialization into sport at family level; male athletes started getting involved in sport slightly earlier than girls and mothers and sisters are rarely engaged in sporting activities. Male athletes were oriented into sport by older brothers while female athletes had their initial entry into sport centering on the father.

Ipinmoroti and Ajayi (2013) investigated on the effects of motivation of significant others in sport involvement of athletes (n=216) in Nigeria tertiary institutions. They found that the selected athletes were significantly motivated by their fathers, friends of both the same and opposite genders and physical education teachers to become involved in sport.

Parents of youngsters taking part in sports have wide influence over their child's expertise (Coakley, 2016). Knight and Holt (2014) have shown that oldsters typically have a positive influence, once acceptable parenting approaches are used. They found that parenting efforts are simplest once they are in line with the student's goals and a positive emotional climate. In youth sports throughout the U. S., the dynamics of sophistication relations are evident in however the adult-controlled structure and organization reflects the dominant structure and beliefs within the larger society.

(Fraser-Thomas, Cote and Deakin (2017) examining associations between parents' behaviors and youth sport outcomes found that prime perceived amounts of parent support, encouragement, involvement, and satisfaction are related to a lot of enjoyment, intrinsic motivation, and preference

for challenge. In distinction, high amounts of parental pressure, high expectations, criticism, and low amounts of parental support are related to attenuated enjoyment, augmented anxiety, dropout, and burnout.

Previous analysis on however youth sport participants area unit motivated to participate found that peers were as vital as adults in making a psychological feature climate.

Despite restricted investigation of peers in youth sport contexts, Smith (2012) urged that peer relationships play a crucial role in youth sports, as peers are connected to youths' sense of physical competency, their ethical attitudes, and different emotional outcomes. Wabuyabo, Wamukoya and Shakil (2016) investigation on socio-economic factors influencing Muslim University (n=252) student participation in sports that peer influence (friends and family members) minimally affected participation patterns in sporting activities as 9.4% (6.7% of the males and 2.7% of the females) of the respondents agreed that they did not participate in sports because friends and family members disapproved. The analysis of variance showed no significant relationship between family members support and participation in sports.

From the above studies, it is evident that most of the studies emphasized that social relationship factors including parental support and coaches' motivation influenced participation among athletes in sports. However, majority of these studies were based on sport clubs in which population is homogenous unlike in secondary schools where there are two categories, non-participants and participants. Hence, there is need to conduct a similar study at a different level and setting. Therefore, the current study seeks to examine the influence of social relationship factors on participation in sports among students based on two perspectives: peer pressure, and support from family members.

Gender and Participation in Sports

According to Ramos (2008) children are oriented to play games related to their gender roles. Traditionally boys were expected and encouraged to play complex games which involved strategy and strength. They were taught how to work towards specific goals and promote negotiations to settle disputes encountered during play. Girls on the other hand were discouraged from competitive activities. They engaged in waiting for turns to perform simple repetitive activities such as jumping ropes or playing hop scotch (Wanderi, 2021).

Although most students acknowledge that boys and men typically exhibit bigger sports interest than women and ladies, some dispute this or argue that variations in ascertained sports behavior does not represent variations in underlying interest (Brake, 2015).

Historical reviews of sports demonstrate that several societies had substantial feminine participation as an example, in ancient times, women trained and competed in many sports, as well as running and wrestling (Golden, 2018). Notwithstanding, it seems that males are typically a lot more involved than females as per historical societies (Potter, 2012). Cross-cultural anthropology studies of sports in small-scale societies have conjointly documented unambiguous proof of feminine sports participation. For instance, in studies of North yankee, there are several accounts of women and ladies avidly taking part in double ball that involve direct competition and coordinated team play (Craig, 2012).

Studies in larger modern societies conjointly support the claim of a uniform, probably universal, sex distinction in sports participation. These studies systematically report that males play sports a lot of times than females, usually a minimum of double the maximum amount in terms of period or frequency. This is often true whether or not studies area unit supported activity observations. The primary multicounty study of sports participation standardized surveys was recently conducted, and it found that men participated over girls in all thirty seven countries. A vital question is whether

or not the sex distinction in sports participation really reflects a distinction in motivation to participate. This question arises as a result of several societies' women and girls get limited time than do boys and men or are discouraged or prohibited from taking part in sports (Chick, 2014). First, if ladies and girls contend sports less actually because that they had less free time than boys and men, then one may expect they might additionally have interaction in less noncompetitive exercise; but, this typically is not the case (Deaner, 2013). Similarly, studies of students' recreational and extracurricular activities indicate that females' lesser participation in sports for the most part reflects their higher prioritizing of different activities, like assignment (George, 2014).

Secondly, if women and girls contend sports less actually because they have fewer formal opportunities, then one would expect that the sex distinction in sports participation would be nonexistent or smaller in informal settings; but, the sex distinction is significantly larger in these contexts (Deaner, 2013).

Sports participation varies by gender, as way fewer feminine than male students report having been recruited to participate in sports (Shifrer, 2015). Girls' participation in sports benefits more boys since sports give them a chance to develop behaviors or characteristics that were historically deemed unwomanly like strength and contest. They found out that sports participation improves girls' social psychological and educational outcomes. Though cultural attitudes concerning ladies participation in sports have shifted over time, sports stay as a field of displaying masculinity. These structural and cultural forces impact girls' choices to participate in high school sports as well as their motivation for engaging in sports (Shifrer, 2015). This results in sports participation providing fewer benefits for ladies than boys. This study so seeks to ascertain whether or not there is a big relationship between gender and student participation in competitive sports in secondary schools in Westland Sub County.

Playing Experience

Playing experience is defined by earlier involvement in sports activities and in most cases previous experience in sports participation could enhance participants' positive feeling arising from an appreciation of one's own ability in competition and they would likely perform better than others. Sabri, (2015) suggest that experience is an important factor which enables youth to participate in sport activities. Sabri (2015) investigated on factors that motivate youth who participate in different sports at competitive level according to the various parameters and determined that less experienced athletes presented lower scores compared to the ones with more experience. Equally, participation motives differ with experience, in their assessment of 150 University students in different sports they found that experienced players value competition and health while inexperienced players motives wane from skill development to friendship.

Household's Income and Participation in Sport

Wealth and financial position are the foremost vital factors in determining an individual's economic standing (Rothwell, 2016). In America and Europe, the individual's yearly financial gain and family wealth is a crucial index of economic status. The yearly income is the amount of money and allowances an individual or a family earns a year. Customarily, the individual's or family's income in Iran is measured according to their monthly earning.

Studies have shown that class could be a robust predictor of participation in sports (Wabuyabo, 2016). People in higher social categories tend to own higher participation rates in some sports, like keep-fit, out of doors swimming and golf, as compared to those in lower social categories. Student's socio-economic standing influences the selection of sports activities. Those from rich

background like similar sporting activities like golf, court game and polo since they can afford required sporting equipment, facility fee needed for such sports, whereas people from poor backgrounds might not be able to participate in such sports thanks to lack of economic strength to supply basic facilities and sporting gear thereby forcing them to participate in sports whose apparatus can be locally improvised. For example, use of stones or tires as goalposts in soccer and creating picket bats to play table-tennis.

Wabuyabo, (2016) showed that two socio-economic factors such as household income and parental economic status had significant difference when tested. This implies that socio-economic factors positively influenced participation in sports. There is also a need to conduct a similar study to establish the difference in patterns. Therefore, this study seeks to determine whether or not there is a major relationship between socio-economic factors of household income and parental economic status and student participation in competitive sports in secondary schools in Nairobi County.

Empirical review

Moseti (2017), conducted a study on the determinants of participation in sports among students with hearing impairment in secondary schools for the deaf of Kenya. The study, therefore, sought to evaluate determinants of participation in sports among students with hearing impairment in Kenyan secondary schools for the deaf. The specific objectives of this study were to: establish the effect of gender on sport participation among students with hearing impairment; identify the type of sports in which most of the students with hearing impairment participate; establish the most commonly available sports facilities in secondary schools for the deaf, and establish the extent of participation in sports among students with hearing impairment in term one and two. The study adopted a descriptive research design the study targeted 574 students with hearing impairment and 88 teachers in 7 public secondary schools for the deaf. Purposive sampling was used to select all Form 2 and 3 students as well as 3 teachers from the 7 schools translating to a total of 21 teachers and 327 student respondents. Two questionnaires; one for students and another for teachers were used in data collection. Data collected from the field was processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The results of the study showed that gender was a significant variable to sports preference and participation among students with hearing impairment. The findings revealed that more male students participate in sports than female students. Majority of these students were motivated to participate in sports for fun. Football was the most preferred sport type by male students while female respondents had a strong preference to volleyball and netball. Most commonly available sports facilities were football and volleyball pitches. Majority of the students with hearing impairment actively engaged in sports in term one compared to term two due to the scheduling of national competitions for SNE in term one.

Rimbogi (2015), conducted a study on the factors influencing the level of learners participation in physical education, sports and games in secondary schools: a case of Nyeri Central District. This study was set to investigate the level of student's participation in PE, sports and games in secondary schools being the dependent variable. The variables of study or the independent variables were facilities and equipment, personnel and training. This study involved a sample population of 8 secondary schools randomly selected but including all categories of schools i.e. public, private, boys' schools, girls' schools, mixed ones, day and boarding schools. There were 379 students sampled, 8 Principals and 8 Games Masters from the sample schools who were served with questionnaire. Interview schedule was arranged with QASO and observation schedule with the Games Masters. The data collected was converted to percentages and presented in graphs,

charts, pie charts histograms and tables. The results of the study showed that the level of student participation in PE, sports and games was greatly influenced by the availability of, facilities and equipment, personnel and training, knowledge and awareness of the benefits of participating in PE, sports and games and Principals attitude towards participation in PE sports and games.

Kabunge (2012), conducted a study on the factors affecting the performance of students in sports the case of students in selected secondary schools in Mombasa County. Sports are an essential part of the normal school curriculum. This piece of work was designed to work on some factors that affect success in sports among the youth with a focus on secondary school students within Mombasa County. The few factors that were being looked at in this study include the sports and games programs implemented in secondary schools, the availability of sports facilities and equipment in secondary schools, training of personnel especially, teachers in sports and games programs, time allocation in the school timetable for sports and games and the attitude for sports and games among the teachers and students. The study was designed generally as a descriptive survey, and in particular an ex-post facto because it was not the intention of the researcher to manipulate such variables as the nature of sports facilities and equipment already in use in schools or sex, qualifications or administrative experiences of the respondent school principals, their deputies or the sports teachers. The results of this study showed that most administrators (the principals and their deputies) are not trained in sports despite, their position being too crucial in the management and administration of all sports resources. However, majority of games teachers have undergone through some form or level of training in sports. The main undoing in sport within the county is the inadequacy of sports facilities and equipment. This definitely puts pressure on both the students and the sports staff on how to achieve higher level of performance within the limited time that is shared with academic work.

Research Gaps

A knowledge gap exists when desired research findings provide a different perspective on the matter being discussed. For example, Moseti (2017), who conducted a study on the determinants of participation in sports among students with hearing impairment in secondary schools for the deaf of Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design the study targeted 574 students with hearing impairment and 88 teachers in 7 public secondary schools for the deaf. Purposive sampling was used to select all Form 2 and 3 students as well as 3 teachers from the 7 schools translating to a total of 21 teachers and 327 student respondents. Two questionnaires; one for students and another for teachers were used in data collection. Data collected from the field was processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The results of the study showed that gender was a significant variable to sports preference and participation among students with hearing impairment. On the other hand, our current study focused on the factors influencing secondary school students' participation in competitive sports in Nairobi County.

In addition to that, a methodological gap can be identified; for instance, Kabunge (2012), applied a descriptive research design in studying the factors affecting the performance of students in sports the case of students in selected secondary schools in Mombasa County. The results of the study showed that most administrators (the principals and their deputies) are not trained in sports despite, their position being too crucial in the management and administration of all sports resources. While on the other hand, our current study adopted a desktop study review methodology where relevant empirical literature was reviewed to identify the main themes of the study.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop literature review method (desk study). This involved in-depth review of studies related to the factors that influence secondary school students' participation in competitive sports in Nairobi County. Three sorting stages were implemented on the subject under the study in order to determine the viability of the subject for research. This is the first stage that comprised of the initial identification of all articles that were based on the factors that influence secondary school students' participation in competitive sports in Nairobi County. The search was done generally by searching the articles in the article title, abstract, and keywords. A second search involved fully available publications on the subject of the factors that influence secondary school students' participation in competitive sports in Nairobi County. The third step involved selection of fully accessible publications. Reduction of the literature to only fully accessible publications yielded specificity and allowed the researcher to focus on the articles that related to the factors that influence secondary school students' participation in competitive sports in Nairobi County. After an in-depth search into the keywords (Athlete, competitive sport, motivation, participation, social relationship), the researcher arrived at 3 articles that were suitable for analysis.

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study sought to examine the influence of social relationship on participation in competitive sports among secondary school students in Nairobi County. Findings revealed that most students

who participated in competitive sports got support and encouragement from parents who supported and encouraged them when playing. Majority of students were also influenced by peers who participated in sports and thus they too wanted to engage in the same. Students also reported that friends and teachers also encouraged them to play because it is good mental growth and physical development.

The also study sought to determine the influence of gender on participation in competitive sports among secondary school students in Nairobi County. From the study findings, it was apparent that male means score on participation in competitive sports was higher compared to that of female. Findings indicated that gender had a positive and a light influence on students' participation in competitive sports. Further, results of the analysis revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of participation between the boys and girls. This shows that both male and female students were equally given opportunities in relation to participation in sports.

The also sought to assess the influence of playing experience on participation in competitive sports among secondary school students in Nairobi County. The study findings revealed that play experience greatly influenced students' participation in competitive sports in the schools under study. However, there was no significance relationship between playing experience and students' participation in competitive sports in the schools under study.

Lastly the study sought to investigate the influence of household's income on participation in competitive sports among secondary school students' in Nairobi County. The study findings indicated that most students participating in competitive sports in secondary schools under the study had financial challenges and henceforth limited their participation in such sports.

Recommendations

The Ministry of Education, through the county Director of Education should ensure that all secondary schools have basic sports facilities and equipment in order to promote sports participation. Schools principals should ensure every student identifies themselves with a sport. This can be done by requesting that each student register and participate in sport while in school. Free accessibility to sporting facilities in and out school time ought to be addressed by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Sports and Gender in collaboration with the Ministry of Education should develop attractive sport programs more based on recreational side rather than just introducing competitive once.

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