

Pull factors in University Sports- The Case of Kenyan Universities

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Abstract: - Students at the University tend to have different reasons for participating in sports. While at the international level concept such as participating in the Olympic games is a driver, in Kenya the reasons tend to be more varied and could be associate with the lower echelons of the Maslow hierarch. The study was carried out in Kenyan Universities where the researcher went out to find the factors involved in drawing student into the sports field. The study used a descriptive research design. 268 students were randomly sampled from students who participate in extramural games and 38 administrative staff of Kenyan Universities. A questionnaire was used to seek for reasons students' participation in sports. The results indicate that public universities had more students attracted to extramural than the private universities in Kenya. Further, the students were asked to rank the reasons that attracted them to the sports fields. Fitness, recreation and enjoyment were ranked highest while national team selection was ranked lowest. The findings agreed with other findings that suggested that university students in Kenya are not driven by attributes that suggest playing at the highest level.

Key words: Extramural, pull factors, fitness, national teams

I. INTRODUCTION

Motivation is a condition whereby human beings are driven to participate in doing something from the inside caused by some need, desires, impulses, wishes, motives that are directed towards achieving a set goal and objective Petz (2005). Students are mostly attracted to participate in sports specifically for the following reasons; fun, enjoyment, to improve their skills, acquiring more knowledge, company of other friends, success and winning and finally living a healthy life style. (Waldon and Dieser, 2010) Studies conducted by various researchers have shown that young people are not physically active and may not understand the benefits of active physical activity (Strel and Sila 2010). To lead a healthy lifestyle one must be physically and psychologically fit. A healthy physical and psychological life is possible through regular workouts and participation in physical sporting activities. Being active keeps the body away from the monotony of life's routine which is a leading disorder of our age, therefore it is advisable that one spends time in physical activity during leisure and recreation time, these helps in physical, psychological and mental health (Ekmekci et al 2010). Studies have continued to show that regular physical activity is associated to long term benefits that include cardiovascular and muscular fitness, improved psychological and mental fitness, lower rates of obesity and high academic

achievements (Ng, 2011). Despite all physical activity and sports benefits, it has been noted that young children and the youths are not physically active and the rate of being physically active continues to decline (Cooper, Schuett and Philip, 2011).

In a study conducted by Woodruff and Schallert (2008), it was noted that participation in sports while at institution of higher learning brings several benefits to a human being, these include, improving health of the students since students at this level have a lot of energy. Sports are used to channel out surplus energies. Secondly, sports help students have respect for competition and rules, these helps the sport student to constrain from delinquent behaviors such as cheating and consuming illegal substances. Third, it helps promote societal values, integrity and building good character. Fourth, sports help students to have fun and enjoyment. Fifth sports encourage students to socialize and make new friends. Sixth, it is a way to opening new opportunities and career development in sports. Seventh, sports helps students know how to deal with failures in life and making them good in judgment.

Participation in sports is therapy for a happy healthy life for every human being (Good and Brophy, 2000). Good and Brophy (2000) in their study continue to note that incentives in sports are a pull factor for students to participate in sports at institutions of higher learning. Deci and Rayn (1985), in their study on intrinsic motivation noted that, pull factors in sports vary from one individual to the other; human beings have different reasons as to why they participate in sports. This paper therefore went out to discover the pull factors for students participation in sports at both public and private universities in Kenya. It presents data on pull factors in University sports in Kenya.

Objectives

- i) To rank the pull factors for sports participation in Kenyan Universities
- ii) To determine if Kenyan University sports students participate in the national teams

II. METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey research design was used to gather data from 268 students drawn from public and private universities and 38 members of the administrative staff of the Kenyan universities. The research was qualitative in nature. Sampling

was purposive; respondents were sports men sportswomen from Kenyan universities. Questionnaires were also used as tools for data collection.

The study targeted sports men and sports women in both public and private universities in Kenya. About 5% of the students who enroll in universities participate in either scholastic or interscholastic sports translating to a target population of 10,000. Kenya University Sports Association (KUSA) is the body mandated nationally to run sports. It's divided into six conferences. Three conferences were purposively sampled namely; Nairobi conference, Western conference and KUSA central. Further fifty percent from each gender were sampled. This translated to 300 students and out of the 300 students 268 which is 91% responded to the questionnaires. The study also involved personnel who work in sports directorates and departments, this were directors, chairmen, games tutors and sports coaches. Questionnaires were used as a tool for data collection. The researcher personally delivered questionnaire to the respondents. Data was collected and analyzed using qualitative research technique. This specific research looked at the following reasons for students' participation in sports;

- i) Fitness
- ii) Recreation
- iii) Fun and enjoyment
- iv) Represent University at competition
- v) Peer pressure
- vi) Financial reward
- vii) Trips out of the University
- viii) Popularity to be noticed
- ix) Students scholarships
- x) Selection to the Kenya national team

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 below shows the reasons given by the students for getting involved in sports at the university. Students at most of the universities in Kenya stay on campus and sports activities are one of the activities on offer for their social well being. Although the students had different motivating factors and graded the reason for their participation differently, it was observed that majority of the students who participated in the study were keen on sports participation for fitness 39.62% (as rated top by 105 out of 268 respondents), this is clear that most students who participate in sporting activities in Kenya do it for fitness, though the percentage looks low it is evident that the healthy life style is key to most Kenyan sports students. The least most likely reasons being access to trips outside the university, to be noticed, student scholarship and selection to the Kenya national team. it is evident that Kenyan sports students at the university do not rank selection to the national team as a reason why they participate in sports yet countries like the USA and Australia has majority of the team composition from university and especially at the Olympic games. This is a clear indication that students in

Kenyan universities had scant interest in professionalism since majority of them indicated fitness as the main motivation. Kenyan universities need to rethink how to motivate sports men and women so as to get a bigger number of representations at the national level since only 1% of the students indicated that they participated in sports for selection to the national team. Feedback did not differ significantly by university category (between public and private universities).

University scholarships seem not to attract a big number of students who participate in sports at the Kenyan Universities. Only 45 (17.11%) seem to participate in sports for scholarship reason. This is an indication that Kenyan universities do not offer sports scholarships to their students, may be one or two universities do because the number of students who participate in sports for scholarships seem to be low compared to those who participate for fitness reasons. Trips out of the university, popularity to be noticed and competitions did not attract many students as reason for participation to sports at the university. The study therefore concluded that majority of the students who participate in sports are aware of the benefits of physical activity and sports.

Table 1: Reason for Participation in University Sports

Reason for participating in sports	Frequency	Percentage	Private University	Public University
Fitness (n=268)	105	39.62	35	38
Recreation (n=268)	93	35.23	18	27
Fun and enjoyment (n=268)	95	36.12	14	10
Represent university at Competitions (n=268)	72	27.80	23	10
Peer pressure (n=268)	29	11.28	5	3
Financial reward (n=268)	40	15.09	4	5
Trips out of the university (n=260)	27	10.38	0	3
Popularity to be noticed (n=268)	25	9.58	2	1
Student's scholarship (n=268)	45	17.11	0	1
Selection to Kenya national team (n=268)				

2. The highest level a student can be involved with sports nationally is being recruited to represent a country in a sport at international level. This process is referred to as capping. The students were asked about their involvement at the national level. Figure 2 below shows their response.

Discussion figure 2

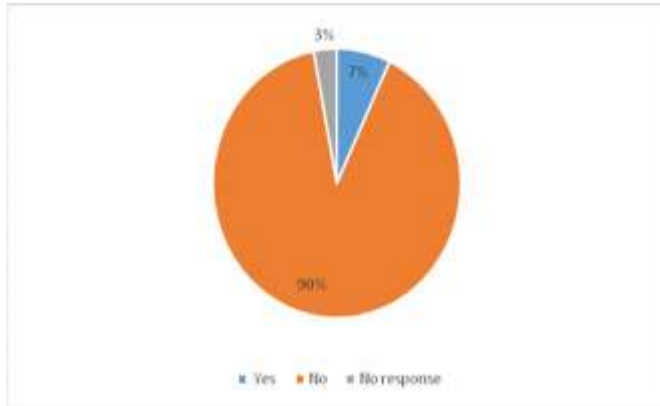


Figure 2: University Students Participation in the Kenya National Team

From the findings in the figure 2, it can be deduced that very few respondents 7% (20) had participated in the Kenya national team regardless of the sport they play. This finding is very important to the study because one of the objectives is to determine if Kenyan university sports students participate in the national team. This reveals that the proportion of university students who actively participate in national games is very small and most of the students (90%) have never participated in any national team. Further, fewer females (6%) than males (10%) were observed to participate in the Kenyan national team. In a study conducted by Mwisukha, and Wanderi (2014) it was noted that world over; countries identify talent by creating an environmentally friendly situation for students to participate in competitive sports. They indicated that incubation centers for breeding talents are universities. Universities in Kenya need to embrace this finding because clearly this is not happening, if 90% of the students who participated in this study have never participated in national teams, something needs to be done as suggested by Mwisukha et al.

IV. IMPLICATIONS

All universities in Kenya should have a sports scholarship program to encourage students' participation in sports. Sports management personnel should come up with proposals on sports scholarship and share with university management. This will encourage more students to participate in sports and also take up sports related degrees to fill up the gap of personnel qualified in this area of study.

V. CONCLUSION

Students in Kenyan universities barely participate in sports for professionalism, but rather for sentimental goals particularly fitness, recreation, fun and enjoyment.

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