

Status of Implementation of Physical Education in Primary Schools in Uasin Gishu County Kenya

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Abstract: Physical education (PE) programs ensure that students continue to receive health and fitness and this can improve their academic proficiency. But, the implementation of PE is inhibited by many barriers key among them being teachers' perception. Notably a PE teacher perception may play a role on how their attitudes, confidence and ultimately behavior towards PE implementation are shaped. This could result in regarding PE as a non-important activity that acts as a means of compensating for other academic work. This study sought to investigate the extent to which PE is being implemented in public primary schools. The study was guided by the covariation model. The sample consisted of 13 public primary schools and 162 teachers. Cross-sectional descriptive survey design was employed to conduct the study. The research instruments used were questionnaire for the teachers, interview guide for the head teachers and PE panel chairperson and an observation checklist. Data collection was done by self administration of the questionnaire. Face to face Interviews for the head teachers and PE panel chairpersons were conducted at their convenient time and the researcher used the observation checklist to ascertain PE activities in schools. Quantitative data was coded and summarized into means, frequencies and percentages with the help of SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences). Qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions on the questionnaire, interview guide and observation checklist was summarized into themes as they emerged from the responses and presented in a narrative form. The study revealed that PE implementation is low in public primary schools, Recommendations made include: The Ministry of education through the QASO to device ways of visiting schools so as to advice and direct teachers on the methodologies to use so as to implement PE as prescribed in the syllabus, organize seminars and workshops for teachers at the county level so as to enable the teachers update their knowledge and skills on PE teaching. The Ministry of education and the curriculum developers should infuse in the primary school syllabus PE competitions and award the pupils who do well in these activities as well as promoting the teachers involved as this can influence the perception of teachers. The government should put up special schools meant to teach sports and other talents discovered in children.

Key Words: Physical Education, Implementation

I. INTRODUCTION

Implementation of physical education programs differ from school to school and the difference lies on how much time spent each week and also type of programs offered (Morgan & Hansen, 2006). Although recognized as one of the most valuable and important vehicle for encouraging and teaching children to lead active lifestyles (Hardman & Marshall, 2001), Primary school PE is inhibited by low status, reduced time in

the school curriculum, and poor quality programs and thus inadequate implementation.

Globally, there was found to be significant differences between the Physical Education curriculum requirement in countries and the actual implementation. In Canada, a survey was carried out on elementary schools which revealed that curriculum time for PESS averaged 55.9 minutes per week, just over-half of the provincial guidelines and one-third of the national recommendations of 50 (Taylor, 2000).

Although in 71% of cases physical education was being implemented according to the curriculum requirement, in 29% of cases, only the minimum requirement was provided and in some areas even dropped for the sake of other subjects. A report from Malawi concurs with the above highlighted survey PE is a way of passing time. Teachers do not teach PE lesson as prescribed on the PE curriculum but children are just provided with a ball to play while the concerned teacher prepares for examinable subject (Tembo, 2002).

The above statement is echoed by Jinhee and Taggart (2004) on a study conducted in Korea on the teachers' perception of the culture of physical education at Hana primary school. The study sought to explore the silences at Hana School. The study employed ethnography design. Data collection was through participant observation, field notes, informal interviews and journals. Purposive sampling was used to select 17 teachers to participate in the study. The study highlighted major factors impacting the proper implementation of PE curriculum. Key among them being that PE is accorded low status. The national curriculum in Korea mandates three lessons per week of a total of 51 per 17 week semester but instead teachers taught PE for 22 hours for a whole semester. Further findings from the teachers interviewed on the same study revealed that when teaching PE, they used traditional methods as that of playing on the play ground and when PE is taught in class, they only make students underline the vital points in the text books and no specific skill is stressed. This study was conducted only in one school (Hana primary) therefore it is not possible to generalize the findings to all urban primary schools in Korea as recommended by the researcher but the objectives of the study should be described in sufficient detail to enable readers to connect the findings to other contexts if appropriate. The current study intended to cover public primary schools in

Uasin Gishu County to allow the findings to be generalized to the same study area.

A study conducted by Petrie, Jones and McKim (2007) on physical education in primary schools in New Zealand sought to explore if primary school teachers are still holding to the past or heading for different future in terms of teaching methods employed in PE teaching. The study sample frame consisted of ten schools and interviewing was the major data collection technique. The findings of the study show that teachers hardly planned PE lessons. Since they knew the composition as to involve keeping children moving, getting fit and being able to play, teachers structured their lessons around the fore stated components regardless of the topic. The same teachers reported that PE is teacher centered and children need not be given a chance to invent their ideas. This study only utilized interview as a major data collection tool to improve on the disadvantages of the said instrument such as its subjectivity, the current study employed questionnaires and observation guide to collect data this was intended to improve on the validity of the instruments.

Nyakweba (2012) conducted a study on the status of PE in secondary schools in Butere division Kenya. The purpose of the study was to determine the actual status of PE in secondary schools. Survey design was employed. Stratified sampling and simple random sampling were employed to select 30 students and six schools to participate in the study. Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers. Results of the study indicate that teachers and students value PE but lack of adequate and trained teachers and lack of facilities are the major obstacles to PE implementation. This study was conducted on secondary schools but the current study focused on primary schools in Uasin Gishu County the reviewed study sampled students while the current study sampled teachers because of their varied experiences in teaching PE, and it was expected that they would provide information which enabled the researcher gain a depth understanding of the problem.

Physical education is a fundamental right of students as a study conducted by Kipngetch and Too (2012) on secondary schools in Bomet district in Kenya revealed. Purpose of the study was to investigate the significant difference in physical education requirement and the actual

PE implementation. The sample study consisted of 281 students who were sampled through simple random sampling, purposive and stratified sampling. Data collection was through questionnaires, interview guide and observation schedules. Data was analysed through inferential and descriptive statistics. The study was conducted on students and thus it would be intriguing to conduct a study on professionals such as teachers and specifically focus on teachers' perception.

II. METHODOLOGY

In this study cross-sectional descriptive survey design was employed. This design was preferred as it allows data to be collected at one point in time and survey allows data to be collected from a large population (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The target population of the study included all primary teachers, principals and PE panel chairpersons of public primary schools. The sample for this study was drawn from 42 primary schools and 786 teachers. Stratified simple random sampling was used to select teachers. Data collection was done using a questionnaire, interview and observation guides. To determine the content validity of the instruments, PE experts from the ministry of education and the university were consulted. Advice given by these experts helped the researcher to determine the validity of the research instruments. This enabled the researcher make necessary changes. To improve on the validity of the instruments the researcher used methodological triangulation where three different instruments of data collection were used. In order to ascertain the reliability of the research instruments employed, Cronbach Alpha was used. This method was preferred because most questions on the questionnaire are at a likert scale. Means, percentages and frequencies were used to establish the extent of PE implementation.

III. RESULTS

Respondents were asked to respond to indicators on PE implementation such as if PE is allocated enough time, preparation of instructional records is done, teachers utilize PE facilities, teachers use PE lessons to teach other subjects, teachers design activities to cater for the physically challenged and the responses are shown on Table 1

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents' Responses on Indicators of PE Implementation

Statement	SA		A		UN		D		SD		Mean
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	
Safety of PE learning environment	4	2.5	17	10.7	1	0.6	64	40.3	73	45.9	4.2
Time allocation per a week	65	40.9	86	54.1	1	0.6	7	4.4	0	0	1.7
Time allocation for PE per term is adequate.	57	36.1	94	59.5	3	1.9	3	1.9	1	0.6	1.7
Preparation the necessary instructional records	1	0.6	7	4.4	9	5.7	85	53.5	57	35.8	4.2
Preparation of PE records of work covered.	1	0.6	4	2.6	7	4.4	81	52.3	62	40	4.2
There is guidance during PE lessons.	8	5	9	5.7	5	3.1	76	47.8	61	38.4	4.1

PE activities are designed for physically challenged learners.	0	0	8	5.1	4	2.5	78	49.4	68	43	4.3
Teachers utilize PE equipment and facilities.	5	3.2	14	8.9	4	2.5	87	55.4	47	29.9	4
Timely transition of PE lessons is observed	8	5.0	9	5.7	6	3.8	90	50.6	46	28.9	4
Preparation is done prior to PE lesson	2	1.3	5	3.1	8	5	85	53.5	59	37.1	4.2
PE periods are for examinable subjects	107	67.3	31	19.5	3	1.9	11	6.9	7	4.4	1.6
Total mean score											4.2

Majority of the respondents 138 (86.8%) agreed that they use PE periods for revision of examinable subjects. This may be attributed to the fact that our Kenyan education system puts much emphasis on academic subjects and might be also because the entry mark to form one is stressed in that a pupil with low KCPE marks may not get admission to a good secondary school. Further the interviewed two head teachers and one PE panel chair person reported that:

It is better if teachers utilized even PE time to teach examinable subjects because when pupils sit for KCPE no stakeholder (parents, educational officers) asks any school to produce the mean score of PE and further for teachers to be promoted to next grade performance in their various subjects (value added) is a key consideration so teachers use PE time to boost their subject mean scores.

According to Table 1. above, 151(95.6%) of the respondents agreed that time allocation for PE per term is adequate. This may indicate that most public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County adhere to the guidelines from the ministry of education which stipulates clearly how much time each subject should be allocated to Republic of Kenya (2002). However, most respondents disagreed with the following statements on PE implementation that;137 (86.2%) of the respondents do not check for the safety of PE learning environment before conducting a lesson,142 (89.3%) do not prepare all the necessary instructional records such as lesson plans, schemes of work. This is likely to cause laxity among teachers on PE teaching as preparation before conducting a lesson helps to build confidence in a teacher on how to handle a lesson. As reflected on Table 1 above, 137 (86.2%) of the respondents reported that they do not guide pupils on which activity to learn each PE lesson. This indicates that pupils are left alone and thus they hardly learn a meaningful skill. Further, three interviewed PE panel chairpersons and two head teachers reported that:

If teachers are too busy marking books or one is just tired we encourage them to release children to go to the field and they may be given a ball to play but those who wish to remain in class and complete home work can remain.

This finding corresponds with a claim by Tembo (2002) which states that in Malawi PE is a way of passing

time. Teachers do not teach PE lessons as prescribed on the PE curriculum but children are just provided with a ball to play while the concerned teacher prepares for examinable subject. Among the respondents who participated in the study, 134(85.4%) reported that they do not utilize PE equipment (like balls, ropes) when teaching PE. This may imply that PE teaching is not effectively done because not all PE lessons can be taught theoretically like game ball skills (kicking the ball, scoring goals). This finding concurs with Kinyajui (1997) on his study on utilization of media resources in primary teacher colleges where he revealed that these resources were available but only chalkboard and handouts were utilized because trainees' performance was not practically tested at the end of the course.

Respondents disagreed with the indicators on PE of implementation in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County which is reflected by mean score of 4.2 as indicated in Table 1 This mean score may imply that public primary school teachers hardly value the contribution of PE to the development of children as PE implementation is low. Further, it indicates that PE is accorded low status in most public primary schools in and thus its set objectives have not been achieved. This finding corresponds with Hardman and Marshall (2001) who reported that primary school PE is inhibited by low status, reduced time in the school curriculum, poor quality programs and thus inadequate implementation.

How to improve on PE implementation

To find out what can be done to improve on PE implementation, respondents were asked to respond to an open-ended question on the questionnaire. Also head teachers and PE panel chair persons were interviewed on the same and the results are as follows.

Table 2: Distribution of Responses on PE Implementation Improvement

What can be done	Frequency	Percentage
In-servicing the teachers	146	92
Not over-emphasizing the mean score	143	90
Employment of the teachers	142	89
Sensitizing the parents	124	78
Training of PE specialist teachers	127	80

The data in Table 2 show that 146 (92%) of the respondents indicated that one of the ways to improve PE

implementation is by retraining the teachers on new methodologies of PE teaching. The induction courses can be organized by the Ministry of Education in form of workshops and seminars. At school level, the head teachers and the PE panel chairpersons can invite the prominent sportsmen and women to induct the teachers on the importance of teaching PE. Further, two interviewed head teachers said that:

There is need for the teachers to be re-trained because the only knowledge on PE that they have is that which they received when undertaking primary teaching course. Can you imagine a teacher who left college in 1977? What does he or she remember on the methodology used on PE teaching?

This implies that continues professional development on PE teaching has been ignored for considerable length of time and perhaps the reason why PE implementation is low in public primary schools yet professional development is important to proper classroom practices as indicated by (Sarah 2007).

According to the data in Table 2, 143 (90%) respondents suggested that the ministry of education should not emphasize the mean score of examinable subjects because it compels teachers to utilize the PE lessons to teach them. Further, two interviewed head teachers and four PE panel chair persons explained that “teachers use PE lessons to teach examinable subjects so that they can boost the mean scores of the examinable subjects”. This finding may imply that much emphasis of the primary curriculum is put in the examinable subjects and may be due to this the pupils’ social, physical and mental development is ignored. It may imply that talents of pupils are hardly explored.

Employment of more teachers is a key measure that can be employed to improve PE implementation as pointed out by 142 (89%) of the respondents Table 2. This implies that the population of pupils is large making it difficult for the teachers to handle. This could be attributed to the Free Primary Education program where children of all school going age are required to be in school. The same view was observed by a majority of the respondents when they were asked to respond to an open ended item on the questionnaire on what can be done to improve on PE teaching in public primary schools. The other reason for employing more teachers could be that most of the current teachers are elderly and may be they are uncomfortable to conduct PE activities to the young pupils. In regard to this finding five of the interviewed head teachers reported that “the population of pupils is large in some schools; one stream has got over 100 pupils. One teacher managing them when they are in the field may be difficult”. Probably this might be one of the reasons why teachers have not taken PE teaching seriously. This finding is in agreement with Xiang, Lowy and McBride (2002) who reported that in America teachers were more interested in academic subjects than PE and they perceived PE environment to be uncomfortable to teach in because of large classes.

According to data presented in Table 2, 124 (78%) of the respondents observed that sensitizing parents on the importance of PE would improve PE implementation. This can be done during school general meetings and also during school open days. Six of the interviewed PE panel chair persons explained that:

Parents have indirectly instilled fear in teachers in regard to PE teaching. When they see pupils outside especially those schools near the road, they brand that particular school as a school where pupils just play and little teaching is done.

This implies that the parents ignore the importance of PE and due to this they may have contributed to the negative perception which teachers have towards PE teaching in public primary schools in Uasin Gishu County and hence the low rate of PE implementation. This finding corresponds with the finding of Mafuniko and Pangani (2008) who reported that in Tanzania secondary school PE is regarded as a mere sport just meant for leisure and recreation by parents and teachers.

Training of PE specialist teachers can help in improving PE teaching in public primary schools as reported by 127 (80%) of the respondents Table 2. According to the respondents report, “PE training offered in primary teacher colleges is not adequate because every teacher-trainee is compelled to take PE regardless of whether you have a liking to it or not”. The respondents explained that college training was just for passing exams but once you have graduated teaching it is almost zero. The training of PE specialist teachers can be done by primary teacher training colleges in collaboration with the ministry of education devising an improved curriculum to accommodate this view.

IV. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings of the study the researcher concluded that PE implementation in public primary schools is low as teachers accord it low status as compared to other subjects like mathematics. It was also concluded that time allocated to PE on the curriculum has been reduced since the teachers indicated that they utilize PE lessons to boost the mean score of the examinable subjects.

V. RECOMMENDATION

From the conclusion of the study it was recommended that the Ministry of education through the QASO to device ways of visiting schools so as to advice and direct teachers on the methodologies to use so as to implement PE as prescribed on the syllabus. The Ministry of education should organize seminars and workshops for teachers at the county level so as to enable the teachers update their knowledge and skills on PE teaching.

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