UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENT-ATHLETES AND NON STUDENT-ATHLETES IN OFFINSO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

RICHARD SAMUEL KWADWO ABIERABA

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Thesis Submitted to the Department of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Sports of the Faculty of Science Education, University of Education, Winneba, in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Master of Philosophy Degree in Physical Education.

JULY, 2015

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Richard Samuel Kwadwo Abieraba, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE : …….

DATE : …….

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba

NAME OF SUPERVISOR : …….

SIGNATURE : …….

DATE : …….

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents Mr. Felix Gour Abieraba and Mrs. Felicity Faara Abieraba.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to compare and ascertain whether participation or non-participation in sports has any influence on the academic performance of OFCE students. The study was intended also to find out whether there would be any difference between the academic performance of female student- athletes compared to non female student-athletes and lastly to study whether there would be differences between male student-athletes compared to malenon student- athletes. Forty student- athletes were purposively selected from among the college's student- athlete population of 124 from the Ashanti/ Brong-Ahafo (ASHBA) team and stratified random sampling was used to select a sample of160 from a population of975 non students- athletes in the college. The non student-athletes were divided into Diploma in Basic Education A- Diploma in Basic Education H separately and then, by random number method of the simple random sampling each student was given the chance to be chosen. The study adopted causal comparative research design with independent t- test as the statistical technique at a significant level of 0.05 of two tailed to answer four research questions and one hypothesis. Students mean cumulative GPA score was used to answer three questions and a sixteen item questionnaire with reliability co-efficient of 0.79 was used to answer one research question. The findings revealed that students have good reasons for playing sports and do not see playing sports to be affecting their academic performance. However, students who play sports for the college were sometimes disadvantaged because they at times get too tired or miss lectures playing sports for the college. There was slight difference in the mean cumulative GPA scores of student athletes as compared to non student-athletes. It is recommended that college authorities and parents should encourage students to actively take part in sporting activities and also train students to plan and manage their time for sports and academic activities.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The role of sport participation in the academic achievement of students has been a topic of debate for decades (Din, 2006). Critics have observed that sporting activities take time away from the classroom, sports divert talent from academic programmes and the students who put their energies into sports are less likely to pursue academic objectives(Din, 2006). They do not have time or energy to achieve excellence and satisfaction in both roles (Din, 2006). Supporters of school sport programmes argue that sport participation improves students' academic achievement, motivation, improves students' grades, keeps them in school, raises their educational aspirations, increase students' overall interest and commitment to schooling as well as their engagement in more student-teacher contact, more positive attitudes about schooling, and more parent-school contact. Some researchers suggested that further studies may be conducted on this topic because previous studies conducted on the topic were limited (Din, 2006).

Kellaghan and Sloane (1993) concluded for example that, family social status or cultural background need not determine a child's academic achievement at school. They propose that for academic success, it is what parents do in the home, and not children's family background, that is significant. Similarly, Redding (1999) indicates that in relation to academic outcomes, the potential limitations associated with poor economic circumstances can be overcome by parents who provide stimulating, supportive, and language- rich experience for their children.

Considering the time made available throughout the academic calendar for various sporting programmes and competitions, provision is made for sport programmes in school curriculum and that leads to the organization of intramural and extramural activities, that is, inter-house, inter-school sport progression and further progression to national level (Jordan, 2000). All headmasters and teachers, parents as well as the students are bound to co-operate for the smooth running of the intramural and extramural sport programmes. Unfortunately, there have been diverse opinions from the public, parents, family members, friends and even participation of their wards in sporting activities at the expense of their academic work(Jordan, 2000).

Playing sport at the college level as a student is a right according to UNESCO charter, Article 1.1 (1978)"Every human being has a fundamental right of access to physical education and sport which are essential for the full development of his personality".Sporting activities at the tertiary levelunderpin the total development of the student in terms of economic gains, intellectual advancement as well as refreshing to the mind and body.

Offinso College of Education (OFCE) is one of the 38 public colleges of education in Ghana with tertiary status which has 1095 students. It is situated in Offinso in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The college was initially opened on the 3rd February, 1955 to train femaleteachers.In September 1971, the college was turned into a mixed institution and has since then been admitting both males and females as students.

The vision of the College is that it shall create excellent teaching and learning environment and opportunities for training quality basic school teachers with emphasis on knowledge, skills and values for quality education, recognizing that education is the key to the human resources development of Ghana.

The college has since the inception been participating in collegiate sports since sporting activities are part of the college of education curriculum. Sporting activities such as athletics, handball, volleyball, netball, football, cross country, and table tennis are the disciplines that are included in the college games.Mostly OFCE students put up marvelous performance. For instance, the college has several times taken the overall trophy during college of education games organized for Ashanti- Brong Ahafo College(ASHBA) Zone biennially.For a student to compete on behalf of OFCE, he or she should first compete to gain selection into his or her hall team. The student will then compete on behalf of his or her hall of residence at general inter-hall games or athletics as the case may be. It is during the inter-hall games or athletics that the highly skillful players or athletes are selected as student- athletes for the college.

According to Hammond (2012), student- athletes find their own ways to make up for loss of contact hours and quizzes as a result of participation in university games. It is a fact thatsome of the time lost can be made up for but majority are completely lost putting the student in a tight corner. It is also possibleand important to indicate that during camping and training periods most athletes shift their attention to sports rather than their academic work. Such situation if not curbedproperly may impede the academic performance of the student athletes in the university.

On the contrary, college students are normally given break during the one week that is used for the ASHBA games, students are given break in order not for student- athletes to loose in terms of academic work (attending lectures).

Also, their training periods during camping are scheduled in such a way that they can easily attend lectures after training. Mostly training starts at 5:00am and end at 6:00am and in the evening it starts at 3:00pm and end at 5:30pm meanwhile instructional time is 7:30am to 1:30pm between which there are two breaks.

In spite of that, sports participation is dwindling gradually in the college. Few of the student athletesparticipate up to the National level. For instance, of the one hundred and twenty-four (124) athletes who were selected from the ASHBA colleges to represent the zone at Colleges of Education Sports Association (COESA) games at Takoradi 2012,thirty-five (35) were from OFCE. Only eleven (11) of them turned up. Also thirty-eight (38) were selected from OFCE to representASHBA zone in 2014at Akatsi and again only nine (9) made it to theCOESA games.

In Ghana, the completion of a bachelor's degree can be befitting measure of academic success in a college or university.Adelman (1990), states that degree completion is the bottom line for university administrators, state legislators, parents and most importantly students.

Also, students' grade point average (GPA) which determines the grade level is the widely accepted means of determining academic success and the degree to which students have learned what they were taught.

Comeaux and Harison (2001) stated that students GPA continued to be a powerful predictor of academic performance for both student- athletes and non student- athletes. The cumulative GPA is very useful and contributes immensely to graduation. With the above, academic performance becomes a level ground to strive by for both student-athletes and non student- athletes.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There has been serious debate on sports and academic performance for years. People who support sports programmes in educational institutions say participation in sports improves students' grade, academic performance, raises their educational aspirations and keep them in schools and colleges. The critics also say, participation in sports takes time away from the classroom and divert students' attention from studies. They continue to say, it is impossible for students to achieve excellence and satisfaction in sports as well as in education. There has been a continuous debate on the role of sports and academic performance of students since long but no consensushas been reached so far.

The researcher has faced a similar situation in OFCE where critics suggest that students' failure inexamination in the college is due to sporting activities that are organized and they insist that non student- athletes do better in academics than student-athletes. This argument started from 2005 when 709 students wereexpelled from the 38 colleges of education in Ghana out of which 29 of them were OFCE students.Twenty-one (21) of these students were student- athletes. In the next academic year, another six (6) students were expelled and four (4) of them were student- athletes.

The expulsion of students has continued up to date.This has therefore become a matter of concern to the researcher.(Institute of education, University of Cape Coast, 2011)

In OFCE, a lot of sporting activities take place and students are highly motivated to participate in all the activities. At the end of every academic year, sports dinner is organized and awards and certificates are given to athletes for being part of the college sports. However, sports is not well and massively participated as a result of fear of failure of examination because sports critics in the college argue that is the sports that cause students to fail their exams and are expelled. There are very good athletes who stay away from college sports because they think it is a waste of timeand invariably a lot of time meant for students own practice is used for academic work.

To answer these, the researcher sought to compare the influence of sports participation on academic performance of students athletes and non student- athletes using students' GPA as the proxy in order to help do away with the misconception at the college and to help motivate students' to participate in sports at the college while knowing that they can still be successful in their academic pursuit.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to compare and ascertain whether participation or non-participation in sports has any influence on the academic performance of OFCE students.Also the study was intended to find out whether there would be difference between the academic performances of female student- athletes compared to female non student- athletes. Lastly to study whether there would be difference between the academic performance male student- athletes compared to male non student- athletes.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- Find out whether sports participation at OFCE influences the academic performance of student- athletes compare with non student- athletes.
- Compare the academic performance level of female student- athletes and female non student- athletes andmale student- athletes and to male non student- athletes.
- Find out thebenefits of sports participating as perceived by students of OFCE?

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions were answered

1. What is the academic performance of student- athletes compared with non student- athletes at OFCE in terms of their grade point average score?
2. What is the academic performance level of male student- athletes compared to male non student- athletes and female student- athletes compared to female non student- athletes?
3. What are thebenefits of sports participation as perceived by students of OFCE?

1.6 Hypothesis

Three hypothesis was tested;

1. There would be no significant difference of sports participation on academic performance of student- athletes and non-student- athletes in terms of mean cumulative GPA.
2. There would be no significant difference between the GPA of male student-athletes compared to non male student- athletes
3. There would be no significant difference between the GPA of female student-athletes compared to non female student- athletes

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study would help contribute to social, psychological and educational development of the study area. i.e. Offinso South Municipal.Accordingto Pennah (2013), Sport is undeniably an integral part of social and educational life ofGhanaians.Therefore, knowing its influence on the development of the youth will enhance its development in thedistrict, region and the country at large.

The research findings would also give relevant information to those who are in doubt about the necessity of students' participation in sporting competitions in the colleges. Such persons would be guided with more information and empirical evidence upon which to draw their own conclusions instead of merely speculating.

Findings would help inform all stakeholders and policy makers the influence of sports participation on academic performance in order to know how to structure the college's sports programme for students.

Again, it would help advance knowledge as a source of reference. This study will help encourage further research on the comparison between sports participation and academic performance.

1.7Delimitation of the Study

1. The study was delimited to only regular students of Offinso College of Education. The students were categorized into two groups. Students- athletes and non student- athletes.
2. The study was also delimited to causal comparative design. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) two weaknesses in causal comparative research are lack of randomization and inability to manipulate an independent variable.
3. Closed ended questionnaire was used in the data collection with sample size of 146. Other instruments with large sample size could have been used by the researcher.
4. Lastly, the study was delimited to t-test as a statistical tool although the researcher could have used coefficient of variations which is best for comparison of variations. (www.fao.org/docrep, 2015).

1.8 Limitation of the Study

1. This study took into consideration the views of regular students of OFCE only. This means that if the views of stakeholders e.g. parents, teachers and school authorities were taken it could have given a different outcome.
2. The researcher did not investigate the cause of the academic performance differences between student- athletes and non student- athletes.

3. The researcher found it difficult to get participants to answer the questionnaire because they worked after the instructional time. Eventually he was able to do that after arranging with the College Authorities.

However, all these listed above did not affect the results of the research.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

1. Academic Performance: The academic grade determined by the cumulative GPA score of the student.
2. ASHBA Games: Ashanti/ Brong – Ahafo colleges of education game organized biennially.
3. Cumulative Grade Point Average: The computed grades of students of the college at the end of every semester as an aggregate of student's academic performance.
4. Non student- athlete: Any student who did not participate in any organized sport competition at the college.
5. Sports participation: Participation in organized sports in the college.
6. Student – athlete: Any student who participated in organized sports competition at OFCE and was selected to represent the college at ASHBA games, Berekum 2014.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The study sought to compare the academic performance of student athletes and non-athletes in Offinso College of Education in Offinso. This chapter reviews related literature under the following sub headings:

1. The Concept of Sport Participation in the College Setting
2. The Need, Aims, and Importance of Sports Participation in Schools and Colleges.
    a. Physical Development and Sports Participation
    b. MentalDevelopment and Sports Participation l
    c. Social Developmentand Sports Participation
3. Sport Participation and Academic Performance.
4. Summary of the Reviewed Literature.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual frameworks are type of intermediate theory that attempt to connect all aspects of enquiry. It is a thought pattern and acts like a map that gives coherence to empirical inquiry.

The study of Human physiology makes us aware that, the human body is naturally designed to use energy to generate energy. Life, by nature is full of activities so the body has to be reorganized and refurbished to face the physical challenges of life. Science has therefore come up with systematic organized physical activities where sport is a main part (Hammond, 2012).

Researches identify the importance of sports and acknowledge that participation in sports or physical activities contribute to human development physically, socially, emotionally, economically and intellectually. It is by this importance that UNESCO, in 1978 came up with the charter on Physical Education in which articles 1 and 2 states among others, that

Every human being has a fundamental right of access to physical Education and sport which are essential for the full development of his personality'. (pg2)

It is not surprising that the UN without hesitation encourages nations to enshrine physical exercises and sports in all institutions at all levels on the educational ladder.

Sports is now everywhere on the globe and force to reckon with in the economic world. In educational circles sport is part of the curriculum in order for all to attain and excel in the academics. Many studies like White (2005), Beckett &Broh (1999) have been done to prove that sport support academic achievement which ultimately leads to national development and the reasons can be linked to the conceptual framework below:

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

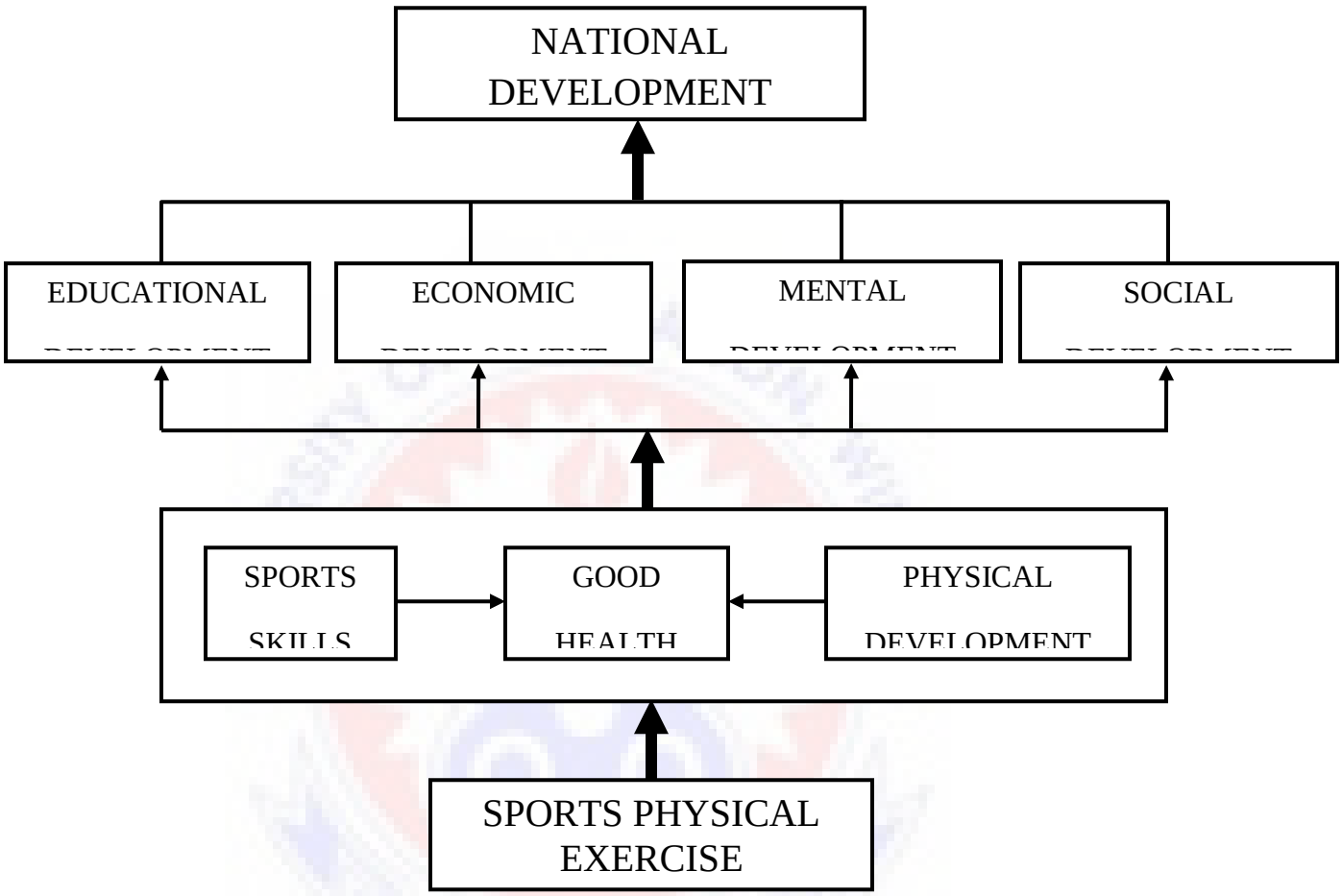

Figure1: Sports and the Students

The figure1 above depicts the conceptual framework of the essence of sports participation and physical exercises by the college students. This is very important and relates to the total development of the college students. The participation of sports and physical exercises leads to acquisition of sports skills and physical development which converge for good health of the student.

With good health as the basis, the college students develop socially, mentally, economically and physically taking into consideration that ‘a healthy mind in a healthy body’. Eventually, all the above will lead to national development.

The Concept of Sports Participation in the College Setting

Theoretical Framework

Participation in organized sport can have physical and social benefits for children (Malina, 1994). He further said, the younger the participant, the greater the concern about safety and benefits. If organized sports are going to be safe, healthy and beneficial for children and adolescents, there must be reasonable goals for participation and appropriate strategies to attain these goals. Reasonable goals for children and adolescents participating in organized sports include acquisition of basic motor skills, increasing physical activity levels, learning social skills necessary to work as a team, learning good sportsmanship, and having fun (Rowland, 1990).

The involvement of children in organized sport is a relatively recent phenomenon. In the early 20th century, physical activity was a more regular part of life for the average child (Kamm, 1998). Sport and games provided an additional outlet for physical activity and were characterized by play that was generally spontaneous, unstructured and without adult involvement. Participation in such sports and games allowed for development of motor skills, social interaction, creativity and enjoyment for participation (Stryer, Toffler, &Lapchik, 1998).

Playing sport offers people more than just physical benefits. Sports typically help kids academically and socially as well. The benefits are the same whether or not the personactually excels at the sport. Although if they are really good they will probably want to continue playing when they are older. If the person isn't good enough to play competitively on a school or collegeteam try signing them up for a city league or encourage them to just go shoot some hoops with their friends or church group. Batty (2008) suggested ten ways playing sports can benefit the person as:

1. Playing sports is fun. It gives the person something to do and a group to belong to. They have a group of friends that has the same goals and interests.
2. Research has found that people who play sports, especially girls, are more likely to have a positive body image and higher self-esteem. They also are less likely to be overweight.
3. People involved in sports are less likely to take drugs or smoke because they realize the impact that these destructive activities can have upon their performance. Girls who play sports are also less likely to become pregnant.
4. Physical activities are a good way to relieve stress and reduce depression.
5. Sports help kids develop discipline. They learn to set goals and then work to achieve those goals. They learn that by working hard they can accomplish the things that they want to in their lives.
6. People who play sports quickly learn that sometimes you win and othertimes you lose. They learn good sportsmanship and how to accept every situation. It also helps them learn to deal with disappointment and move on.

7. Statistics show that people who are involved in sports while in high school and colleges are more likely to experience academic success and graduate from school.
8. Sports help develop teamwork and leadership skills. People quickly learn that they have to work together as a team to win the game.
9. Motor skills, strategic thinking, and even mathematics skills are learned by playing sports. Students develop strategic thinking as they figure out plays and the best way to get around a player or score a goal. Mathematics skills are used as they calculate scores and statistics.
10. Regular exercise increases quality of life. Children who exercise are more likely to continue the practice into adulthood.

According to Bucher (2000), sport is an institutional competitive activity that involves vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Wuest and Bucher (1995) also defined sport as organized, competitive physical activities governed by rules. Rules standardize the competition and condition so that individuals can compete fairly. Sports provide momentous opportunities to demonstrate one's competence and to challenge one's limits. Competition can occur against an opponent or oneself.

Sport can also be viewed as games that emphasize physical involvement and where strategy and skill play a significant role in the determination of the outcome. People engage in sports for enjoyment, personal satisfaction, and the opportunity to attain victory or obtain rewards.

When sport is highly developed, governing bodies regulate sports and oversee its management. Also, playing sports and participating in physical recreation offers important opportunities to enhance health and well-being, as well as promoting well-documented health benefits (such as reduced risk of cardiovascular diseases).

In the UK, Physical Education (P.E.) is compulsory in state schools until the age of 16 – that is, that sports are compulsory for all as long as education is compulsory. Every year, more and more parents complain to their children's schools about PE; they believe that their children shouldn't have to participate in physical activity if they don't want to and that it is not a conducive educational activity or environment. Proponents of P.E. however, believe that it is a crucial element of all-round schooling and our society's well-being, particularly with the contemporary rise in levels of obesity in the developed world and the proliferation of high-fat, sugary food and drink. They insist PE in schools remains one of the few places whereby the youth can be forced to participate in aerobic exercise (Marshall, & Hardman, 2000).

Sports promote a healthier lifestyle, and participation in sport promotes health. The effect on self-esteem and well-being as a product of sport can only be experienced by certain students if forced by their schools to first participate. A recent report to the European Parliament declared 'physical education is a springboard for involvement in sport and physical activities throughout life (Active Living Research, 2007). Government is, or should be, concerned with the health of its citizens. Encouraging physical activity in the young through compulsory PE fights child obesity and contributes to forming lifelong habits of exercise.

This doesn't have to be through traditional team sports; increasingly schools are able to offer exercise in the form of swimming, gymnastics, dance, weight training, use of a multi-gym, aerobics, etc. (Hardman, 2007).

Physical education and sports helps to forge skills that will prove invaluable in later life. Physical education helps to forge character and the mutual respect required to succeed in an adult environment. Playing team sports builds character and encourages students to work with others, as they would be expected to do in most business or sporting environments (BBC News, 2001). Sport teaches students how to win and lose with good grace and builds a strong school spirit through competition with other institutions. It is invaluable to imbue with children the delicate balance between a competitive rivalry that encourages effort and, on the other hand, losing the fairness and respect required to enjoy sport. It is often the experience of playing on a team together which builds the strongest friendships at school, which endure for years afterwards. As was noted in a report to the European Parliament, P.E. helps children learn to respect and value their own bodies and abilities, and those of others (Hardman, 2007). Compulsory physical education is the only means by which all children can be forced to appreciate such advantages.

Compulsory physical education will improve national sporting achievement. The quest for national sporting achievement begins in schools. If schools don't have compulsory P.E., it is much harder to pick out, develop and equip athletes to represent the country on a wider stage (Hardman, 2007).

Even with a 'sports academy' model run along Australian lines, it's much easier to find suitable individuals with a full sport programme in every school. In the UK, 70% of state-school students are dropping P.E. when it becomes optional; it is no surprise that up to 30% of its Olympic athletes are now privately-educated, where physical education is compulsory until the end of one's education (Active Living Research, 2007). State education is not just about aiding the individual it's also about the state getting a good return on its investment in a well - educated populace to drive business and entrepreneurialism etc. This applies equally in sports.

Sports teams require the support of colleges and the encouragement of physical education. Without school and colleges support, sports will collapse. If compulsory physical education classes aren't in place, then team activities will end by sheer lack of numbers, no matter if several very talented individuals are at the school (or even potentially talented – they'll never know without the programme). New surveys in the United Kingdom have found that they expect to see a fall in sporting events provided in schools and colleges due to cost-cutting, despite the upcoming Olympics inspiring students to want to compete (The Labour Party, 2011). ‘If voluntary take-up of sport in schools and colleges is too low, then schools and colleges will shut down PE programmes so that there is no choice at all. Not everyone is academic: why deprive those talented sports students of their one chance to shine?’ (The Labour Party, 2011, p.34). Athletes who lack academic prowess are required to stick at classes like Mathematics even if it appears obvious their career path is in sport; why should mathematicians escape from their respective obligation to compete in sports?

Laing (2010) opined that with the seriousness of the UK government, schools can punish students who do not participate in the classes with further PE lessons. Compulsory PE lessons can be treated in the same manner an ordinary educational class is treated; if the student refuses to participate and therefore does not do their work, they are punished with extra work of that same class. In this case, that would necessitate added physical education exercises at a later date or immediately after the class. The excuse that the student does not wish to participate in the class should be seen as no different to if it were stated during a Mathematics or English class, where it would not be accepted. The fact that physical education is qualitatively different to those classes is irrespective; once deemed a compulsory subject, and therefore beneficial, it must be accepted and completed.

Depres, Bouchard and Malina (1990), said that participation in sports can offer a social and political space in which to cultivate cultural diversity and promotes social inclusion. Sport is also a form of competitive physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aims to maintain or improve physical fitness and provide entertainment to participants. For children and pre-adolescents, factors such as fun, success, variety, freedom, family participation, peer support, and enthusiastic leadership encourage and maintain participation, whereas others such as failure, embarrassment, competition, boredom, regimentation, and injuries discourage subsequent participant (Rowland, 1990).

The Need, Aims and Importance of Sports Participation in Schools and Colleges

Sports provide numerous opportunities for children and teenagers to grow socially, emotionally, and physically (Steinberger, 1995). Furthermore, they also allow youth to learn and practice in a competitive environment. While sports may increase children's positive social interaction with adults and one another, they can also create stressful environments for children. For example, adults may place unrealistic pressure on their children to perform. Parents and children must find a balance with regard to how many extracurricular activities in which children participate. Team sports participation can be an amazing tool that helps children grow and succeed in their everyday lives and in the future.

Sports appear to be good for children and teenagers. Ask any parent or teacher of a high school or college athlete and you are likely to hear an enthusiastic listing of the benefits of sports. Simple correlations indicate that children and teenagers who participate in sports have better outcomes than those who do not. Data from the 1997 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicates that adolescents who play a sport are less likely to drink, smoke, use drug, have sex, or have suicidal thoughts (Armentrout, 1979).

A recent medical study analyzing these data concluded the positive relationships between sports participation and health behaviours, suggest that physicians should actively encourage young people to join spots teams (Astin, 1982). Two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic, have been of particular interest to researcher in the field of sport participation. (Ryan, 2008). Intrinsic motivation entails participating in an activity for the feelings of fun, pleasure, excitement, and satisfaction associated with it.

While extrinsic motivation involves participation for the attainment of such rewards as money, trophies, and social approval or to avoid punishment.

According to Howard and Rosemary (2002), sport is concerned with the optimum performance that is getting the best of your body and mind. They further expressed the view that with normal development and average liking for physical movement, anyone can enjoy most sports up to a certain level. Similarly, Wuest and Bucher (2000) indicated that sport is an institutional competitive activity that involves vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Sports participation has been an important issue which the general public love to talk about especially among students. According to Kenyan (1999), the nature and degree of participation in sports is directly related to the degree of primary (active) and secondary (spectator) activity during the individual's youthful age.

Robert (2000), classified sports into three spheres on the bases of outcome attributes; Sports of physical skills, Strategy and change. He further went to state that participation in sports can be very broad, would be greater or lesser depending on the bases of sex, age, social and other cultural factors. Participation in sports may also be based on the level of interest in sports, be it primary or secondary. Basically, a person's relation to sports at a certain point in time is dependent upon a complex interplay between heredity and environmental factors, which include nature, mental and physical disposition, type of activity chosen and experience of success or failure on the skills.

Oduyale (1998) said that throughout time, sports have been playing a very significant role in the education, socialization and welfare of man and the society. He cleared this view by quoting Rousseau, a French educator who had this to say, "If you would cultivate the intelligence of your pupils, you cultivate the power to govern and give his body continuous exercise". In relation to this, Sir Gordon Guggisberg era in 1920s emphasized in his educational policies the need for sports. His ninth principle for assistance stated that, organized sports should form part of school life (Mac Williams &Kwamena-Poh, 2000). Sir Gordon Guggisberg went on to say that no extension of schools would be sanctioned unless provision is made for playing fields.

Participating in competitive team sports at an early age gives children an opportunity to understand the healthy aspects of competition in a friendly environment. Students of all ages who participate in sports have been found to cope better with competition in other areas of their life (Yan &McCullagh, 2004). Participation in sports also helps a child's physical well-being. Children who are actively involved in a sport are more likely to describe themselves as being in good physical health than students who do not participate in sports (Piko&Keresztes, 2006). There is a limited research on the risk of injury for young children participating in team sport (Spinks & McClure, 2007). Also, athletically active youth who are more likely to be nutrition-conscious in their food and choices than children who are not actively involved in a sport (Pyle, McQuivery, Brassington, & Steiner, 2003).

Various governments have noted the importance sports play in the socio-political life if the country and have therefore shown interest in helping develop students; interests in sports as well as developing sports (Micklewright, 2002).

While the physical health benefits that sports provide the youth are undoubtedly important, the social benefits may be what draw children to sports. Combating social exclusion, or 'the multiple and changing factors resulting in people being excluded from the normal exchanges, practices and rights of modern society (Commission of the European Communities, 1993). Some writers have urges that sports not only reflect but ca also contributes to girls' social exclusion I sports and wider society. Certainly, the dominance of sports as culturally valued physical activities, and the close identification of sports with masculinity, means that other, non-masculine groups can become pushed against the margins.

However, positive sports experiences do seem to have the potential to, at least, contribute to the process of inclusion by: bringing individuals from a variety of social and economic background together in a shared interest in activities that are inherently valuable; offering a sense of belonging, to a team, a club or a programme; providing opportunities for the development of valued capabilities and competencies; and increasing 'community capital', by developing social networks, community cohesion and civic pride (Micklewright, 2002).

Being able to spend time with their friends outside of school is more important to children than knowing they are physically active. Life skill gains through social interaction can be tremendous (Harrison &Naraya, 2003). Social interaction in team sports teaches youth to; associate with their peers, solve conflict and communicate effectively with their peers, emotional growth is also important for youth. Sometimes, the emotional development of youth is hindered because of the physical and/or emotional absence of parents.

According to the World Health Organization [WHO] (2004), children take inspiration from role models as a way to help them brings out their aims and importance of participation in sport in their various schools with some using the names of their role models. In early childhood, primary role models are parents, with friends and teachers becoming more significant as they enter school, and sport players, coaches and celebrities gaining influence in adolescence (Sabo, Miller, Farrell, Barnes, &Melnick, 1998).

Sports provide youth with opportunities to interact with a caring and supportive adult (Harrison &Naraya, 2003). Adult support outside the family is a major protective factor for high-risk youth. The interaction a child has with his or her coach helps to improve self-esteem as well as lower the chance of depression (Harrison &Naraya, 2003). Sports team membership can also help increase a child's self-worth, especially when the emphasis is on group or team success, rather than individual achievement. Youth of all ages, including those in high school, are likely to receive an end-of-the-season trophy for participating in the team sport. Receiving a trophy with their teammates is intended to help youth feel a sense of accomplishment, teamwork, and recognition (Harrison & Naraya, 2003).

Evidence suggests that from an early age, differences in gender-based attitudes towards and opportunities for sports and physical activities can have a significant influence on children's participation. This may, in turn, affect later involvement in physically active lifestyles, and the social and health benefits that may result for them (Collins & Kay, 2003).

Physical activity prolongs your optimal health. Without regular physical activity, the body slowly loses its strength, stamina and ability to function well. And for each hour of regular exercise you get, you'll gain about two hours of additional life expectancy, even if you don't start until middle age. Moderate exercise, such as brisk walking, for as little as 30 minutes a day has the proven health benefits as well as:

1. Improves blood circulation, which reduces the risk of heart disease
2. Keeps weight under control
3. Helps in the battle to quit smoking
4. Improves blood cholesterol levels
5. Prevents and manages high blood pressure
6. Prevents bone loss
7. Boosts energy level
8. Helps manage stress
9. Releases tension
10. Promotes enthusiasm and optimism
11. Counters anxiety and depression
12. Helps you fall asleep faster and sleep more soundly
13. Improves self-image
14. Increases muscle strength, increasing the ability to do other physical activities
15. Provides a way to share an activity with family and friends
16. Reduces coronary heart disease in women by 30 – 40%
17. Reduces risk of stroke by 20% in moderately active people and by 27 % in highly active ones

18. Establishes good heart-healthy habits in children and counters the conditions (obesity, high blood pressure, poor cholesterol levels, poor lifestyle habits, etc.) that lead to heart attack and stroke later in life
19. Helps delay or prevent chronic illnesses and diseases associated with aging and maintains quality of life and independence longer for seniors (Smith, Segal, & Segal, 2013).

People who are emotionally healthy are in control of their emotions and their behaviour. They are able to handle life's challenges, build strong relationships, and recover from setbacks. But just as it requires effort to build or maintain physical health, so it is with mental and emotional health. Improving your emotional health can be a rewarding experience, benefiting all aspects of your life, including boosting your mood, building resilience, and adding to your overall enjoyment of life (Smith, Segal, & Segal, 2013).

Smith, Segal, and Segal (2013) were of the view that emotions can be effected by brain chemistry, and exercise has a direct effect on brain chemistry. It stands to reason, then, that exercise (or the lack thereof) can alter emotions. All activity, from short bursts of intense exercise to moderate aerobic workouts can raise levels of "feel good" endorphins, as well as adrenaline, serotonin, and dopamine. These chemicals can elevate mood and offer kids who exercise a mental boost. Additionally, even moderate exercise can improve sleep quality, making kids feel more well-rested, energetic, and alert. Anxiety is becoming more common place amongst people of all ages, including kids and teens, but exercise is known to help relieve tension and lower anxiety levels or at least make anxious feelings more manageable.

Certain types of workouts such as yoga and Pilates are especially useful for promoting relaxation and alleviating stress (Smith, Segal, & Segal, 2013). .

In addition to offering relief from unpleasant emotions, regular exercise can help kids and teens to improve their self-image and boost confidence. Many kids today are plagued by body image issues, constantly comparing themselves to peers and even celebrities. Of course, when growing kids, who do not yet have the maturity to understand that the images they see on television, in movies, and on the covers of glossy magazines are not realistic or even honest portrayals of actual people, they often feel inadequate, nonetheless. Kids who participate in sports or other forms of exercise have the opportunity to develop strong, healthy bodies, making them less inclined to worry excessively about how they measure up to others (Smith, Segal, & Segal, 2013).

Physical Development and Sports Participation

The physical health benefits of regular physical activity are well-established (WHO, 1995). Regular participation in such activities is associated with a longer and better quality of life, reduced risks of a variety of diseases and many psychological and emotional benefits (Sallis & Owen, 1999). There is also a large body of literature showing that inactivity is one of the most significant causes of death, disability and reduced quality of life in the developed world (US Department of Health and Human Services, 1996).

Physical activity may influence the physical health in two ways. First, it can affect the causes of disease during childhood and youth. Evidence suggests a positive relationship between physical activity and a host of factors affecting physical health,

including diabetes, blood pressure and the ability to use fat for energy (Malina & Bouchard, 1991).Of all the health problems we suffer from, diabetes can be the most maddening. In the simplest terms, diabetes affects how your body digests food. Your body can't break down sugar, which leads to high glucose levels and potential health problems like nerve damage, kidney failure, vision problems, heart disease and depression. The top risk factor for getting type 2 diabetes is being obese, which is one reason that exercise is such a powerful tool. Exercise also helps manage blood glucose levels and enhance insulin sensitivity. In fact, one study showed that high intensity interval training may improve insulin action in sedentary adults, and another found that adding muscle helps manage glucose levels and decrease the risk of complications due to diabetes (CentreforDiseaseControl and Prevention, 2010).

Second, physical activity could reduce the risk of chronic diseases in later life. A number of 'adult' conditions, such as cancer, diabetes and coronary heart disease, have their origins in childhood, and can be aided, in part, by regular physical activity in the early years (Deprés, Bouchard & Malina, 1990). Also, regular activity beginning in childhood helps to improve bone health, thus preventing osteoporosis, which predominantly affects females. Girls or Ladies who take sports seriously in their early stages to the highest level also benefit as adolescent pregnancy and sexual ill-health are major social problems across the globe(Payne, Reynolds, Brown & Fleming, 2003).

Exercise improves sex life.It may sound like an infomercial promise, but exercise can indeed improve sex life. There is a long list of the benefits exercisers may experience in the bedroom, including:

1. Enhanced sexual performance and pleasure
2. Increased sex drive; more frequent sex
3. Increased sexual satisfaction
4. Fewer problems with erectile dysfunction (Penhollow and Young, 2004).

A healthy exercise programme can also contribute to higher self-esteem and more confidence, two characteristics that draw people to you, both physically and emotionally. Sex burns calories too. A 150-pound person can burn about 72 calories during 15 minutes of vigorous sex. Go for an hour and you'll burn up to 288 calories (Penhollow & Young, 2004).

Although there is a shortage of research in this area, early studies conducted in the US have found that adolescent girls who participate in sports tend to become sexually active later in life, have fewer partners, and, when sexually active, make greater use of contraception than non-sporting girls (Brustad, 1996). Projects are currently underway in the developing world that the use of sports participation as a strategy for empowering girls to avoid high risk sexual behaviour(Vescio, Crosswhite, & Wilde, 2003).

Obesity deserves special mention. There seems to be a general trend towards increased childhood obesity in a large number of countries (Kannus, 1999), and this increase seems to be particularly prevalent in girls from highly urbanised areas, some ethnic minorities and the disabled (Dietz & Gortmaker, 1984). Exercise helps you lose weight and prevent obesity.Besides watching your calories, studies show that exercise is one of the most powerful tools for weight loss. The calories you burn during cardio and strength training help you loose weight, prevent future weight gain, and avoid obesity.

This is critical, since being overweight or obese can put you at risk for a variety of health problems such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure (Okay, Jackson, & Marcinkiewicz, 2009).

Okay, Jackson, & Marcinkiewicz (2009) were of the view that, exercise lowers high blood pressure. High blood pressure, which is considered anything over 149/90 mm Hg, can contribute to a number of health problems including coronary heart disease, stroke and congestive heart failure. Losing weight and watching your salt and alcohol intake are the best ways to lower your blood pressure, and studies have found that 3 to 5 moderate-intensity workouts a week (30 to 60 minutes each) is sufficient to reduce high blood pressure. Regular exercise may even protect you from developing high blood pressure, which can be a problem as we age.

The benefits of participation in physical activities are great, and the potential costs of inactivity can be severe. Many children around the world are not currently able to take advantage of the benefits of regular sports and physical activities due to inequitable access and opportunities (Sabo, Miller, Melnick, & Heywood, 2004). Therefore, a central challenge facing governments, schools, sports groups and communities is to develop forms of physical activity that are sensitive to children's needs and interests. But rather than focusing on 'girl-friendly' sports (Kirk, Fitzgerald, Wang, & Biddle, 2000).

Exercise protects you from Heart Disease.Heart disease is the leading cause of death for American adults. Exercise not only protects you from heart disease, it can actually change how your heart works, making it stronger, more efficient, and better able to function as you age.

What's even better is that a little exercise, regardless of whether you lose weight, can make a difference. Exercising for your heart can start with as little as 20 minutes of exercise most days of the week. Being active can also help you avoid things that strain your heart, like being overweight, having high blood pressure, or being highly stressed. Exercise can even help you recover from heart attacks and prevent or reduce the risk of future heart problems (CentreforDiseaseControl and Prevention, 2010).

Exercise reduces LDL Cholesterol and Raises HDL Cholesterol. There are a number of lifestyle changes you can make that can help reduce bad cholesterol (LDL) and raise good cholesterol (HDL), including eating healthy, quitting smoking and regular exercise. Being sedentary is a major risk factor for high cholesterol, but one study found that walking or jogging about 15 to 20 miles a week can lower LDL (bad cholesterol) and raise HDL (good cholesterol). Other studies have found that working at about 75% of your maximum heart rate, which is a higher intensity, is the best way to raise HDL and lower LDL. Interval training is one way to introduce high intensity training into your workouts. By alternating work intervals with recovery time, you get the benefit of high intensity training without the discomfort of long, hard workouts. We should be looking for ways to make sports and other physical activities more ‘child-friendly’ and ‘youth-friendly’ (CentreforDiseaseControl and Prevention, 2010).

In addition, exercise reduces risk of certain types of cancer. Another great benefit of exercise is a reduced risk of certain types of cancer, including colon cancer, breast cancer, lung cancer, and multiple myelomas. One study found that moderate to vigorous exercise offers the best protection and those exercisers have a 30% to 40% reduced risk for colon cancer as opposed to non-exercisers.

Another study suggests that modifying our lifestyles can reduce the threat of cancer. By eating a healthy diet, staying at a healthy weight, exercising, watching your alcohol intake and quitting smoking, you may actually protect yourself from some types of cancer as you get older (Penhollow & Young, 2004).

Exercise helps protect from Osteoporosis. Bone health is a major concern for women, especially those who are postmenopausal. A number of things can contribute to osteoporosis, including smoking, drinking too much, and a family history of osteoporosis, but one preventable cause is being sedentary. Experts believe that children who exercise can build strong bones and carry that strength into adulthood, giving them some protection against osteoporosis. As adults, we can maintain strong bones and, perhaps, build stronger bones by choosing weight-bearing activities like running, walking, aerobics or any other movement that involves impact. High-intensity strength training is another way to build stronger bones, all while building lean muscle tissue and burning calories. Most evidence shows that working at higher intensities and greater frequency is the best way to increase bone density (CentreforDiseaseControl and Prevention, 2010).

Dunn (2005) was of the view that exercise boosts self-esteem, body image and confidence. Many studies show that exercise not only gives you energy, it can actually improve self-esteem and confidence. This isn't surprising when you consider that how we feel about ourselves is often wrapped up in how we look, how satisfied we are with ourselves and how competent we perceive ourselves to be. Exercise can improve all of those things. By improving your strength, endurance, balance and coordination, you feel stronger and more confident. One study published in the Journal of Health Psychology found that even a small amount of exercise can improve body image.

Researchers reviewed more than 50 studies and found that people who exercise are less critical of their bodies than non-exercisers, regardless of their weight loss results.

Exercise boosts ones' mood. If you're feeling cranky, one of the best things you can do to improve your mood is exercise. We're not sure exactly how it works, but one study shows that just 10 minutes of aerobic exercise can reduce tension, fatigue and anger while increasing feelings of vitality and energy. Cardio seems to be the best way to boost your mood, but other activities can work as well (Dunn, 2005). The CentreforDiseaseControl and Prevention (2010) indicated that exercise protects the elderly from injury. Falling is a major source of injury and, sometimes, death for older people. One study estimates that falls cause 90% of hip fractures. Beyond simple aging, we can fall and hurt ourselves because of loss of muscle, balance and coordination. If you don't exercise, that loss of muscle can contribute to weakness and inflexibility, which can affect your ability to move around with strength and confidence. Studies have shown that seniors can prevent falls and maintain a higher level of functioning with exercise. Working on your balance, flexibility, endurance and strength will improve your quality of life as you get older while protecting you from injury.

Mental Development and Sports Participation

Physical activity is good for mental health. Experts believe that exercise releases chemicals in the brain that make you feel good. Regular exercise can also boost one's self-esteem and help individuals to concentrate, sleep, look and feel better (Neeser, 2005).

Physical activity is also good for your mental health. Experts believe that exercise releases chemicals in your brain that make you feel good. Regular exercise can also boost your self-esteem and help you concentrate, sleep, look and feel better. "When I left the gym that morning I felt as if someone had given me a million pounds – it was the sense of achievement" (Popovic, 1999). Being active doesn't have to mean going to the gym, taking up jogging or wearing lycra. There are lots of ways to be active - and they don't need to cost much money.

As well as releasing natural chemicals that improve your mood and make you feel happier, having an active lifestyle can do more to help your mental health. Taking part in physical activities offers many opportunities. It's a great way to meet people. And it can be a chance to have a well-deserved break from the hustle and bustle of daily life – to find some quiet time. Leading an active life can help raise your self-worth and improve your confidence. It can help you feel valued – and value yourself (Popovic, 1999).

Exercise and physical activity can provide something worthwhile in your life. Something that you really enjoy, that gives you a goal to aim for and a sense of purpose. Here are a few of the benefits:

1. less tension, stress and mental fatigue
2. a natural energy boost
3. improved sleep
4. a sense of achievement
5. focus in life and motivation
6. less anger or frustration

7. a healthy appetite
8. better social life
9. having fun.

Participation in regular physical activity - at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on at least five days per week, or 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity at least three times per week - is critical to sustaining good health. Youth should strive for at least one hour of exercise a day. Regular physical activity has beneficial effects on most (if not all) organ systems, and consequently it helps to prevent a broad range of health problems and diseases. People of all ages, both male and female, derive substantial health benefits from physical activity (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999).

Regular physical activity reduces the risk of developing or dying from some of the leading causes of illness in the United States. Regular physical activity improves health in the following ways:

1. Reduces the risk of dying prematurely from heart disease and other conditions;
2. Reduces the risk of developing diabetes;
3. Reduces the risk of developing high blood pressure;
4. Reduces blood pressure in people who already have high blood pressure;
5. Reduces the risk of developing colon and breast cancer;
6. Helps to maintain a healthy weight;
7. Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints;
8. Helps older adults to become stronger and better able to move about without falling;

9. Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety; and
10. Promotes psychological well-being.

Regular physical activity is associated with lower mortality rates for both older and younger adults. Even those who are moderately active on a regular basis have lower mortality rates than those who are least active. Regular physical activity leads to cardiovascular fitness, which decreases the risk of cardiovascular disease mortality in general and coronary artery disease mortality in particular. High blood pressure is a major underlying cause of cardiovascular complications and mortality. Regular physical activity can prevent or delay the development of high blood pressure, and reduces blood pressure in persons with hypertension (American Cancer Society, 2002).

Regular physical activity is also important for maintaining muscle strength, joint structure, joint functioning, and bone health. Weight-bearing physical activity is essential for normal skeletal development during childhood and adolescence and for achieving and maintaining peak bone mass in young adults. Among post-menopausal women, exercise, especially muscle strengthening (resistance) activity, may protect against the rapid decline in bone mass. However, data on the effects of exercise on post-menopausal bone loss are not clear-cut and the timing of the intervention (e.g., stage of menopausal transition) can influence the response. Regardless, physical activity including muscle-strengthening exercise appears to protect against falling and fractures among the elderly, probably by increasing muscle strength and balance.In addition, physical activity may be beneficial for many people with arthritis (American Cancer Society, 2002).

Regular physical activity can help improve the lives of young people beyond its effects on physical health. Although research has not been conducted to conclusively demonstrate a direct link between physical activity and improved academic performance, such a link might be expected. Studies have found participation in physical activity increases adolescents' self-esteem and reduces anxiety and stress. Through its effects on mental health, physical activity may help increase students' capacity for learning. One study found that spending more time in physical education did not have harmful effects on the standardized academic achievement test scores of elementary school students; in fact, there was some evidence that participation in a two-year health-related physical education program had several significant favourable effects on academic achievement (American Cancer Society, 2002).

Participation in physical activity and sports can promote social well-being, as well as good physical and mental health, among young people. Research has shown that students who participate in interscholastic sports are less likely to be regular and heavy smokers or use drugs, and are more likely to stay in school and have good conduct and high academic achievement.Sports and physical activity programs can introduce young people to skills such as teamwork, self-discipline, sportsmanship, leadership, and socialization. Lack of recreational activity, on the other hand, may contribute to making young people more vulnerable to gangs, drugs, or violence (Vainio & Bianchini, 2002).

Regular physical activity reduces morbidity and mortality from mental health disorders. Mental health disorders pose a significant public health burden in the United States and they are a major cause of hospitalization and disability. Mental health disorders cost approximately $148 billion per year.

Potentially, increasing physical activity levels in Americans could substantially reduce medical expenditures for mental health conditions (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

In adults with affective disorders, physical activity has a beneficial effect on symptoms of depression and anxiety.Animal research suggests that exercise may stimulate the growth of new brain cells that enhance memory and learning—two functions hampered by depression. Clinical studies have demonstrated the feasibility and efficacy of exercise as a treatment for depression in older men and women. Currently, National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) investigators are conducting research comparing the effectiveness of home-based and supervised aerobic exercise to the use of antidepressants in relieving depression in these groups, and reducing relapse rates. Other NIMH researchers are studying whether greater exercise levels result in more symptom improvement. Regular physical activity also appears to enhance well-being (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

The preventive effects of physical activity on mental disorders are less well studied. Some studies suggest physical activity prevents depressive illness. Future research will clarify the extent to which physical activity may actually protect against the development of depression (Vainio & Bianchini, 2002). Regular physical activity may also reduce risk of cognitive decline in older adults, though more research is needed to clarify the mechanism of this possible effect. Among people who suffer from mental illness, physical activity appears to improve the ability to perform activities of daily living (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999).

Powers (2011) was of the view that children and adolescents who pursue sports activities have been shown to exhibit more active brain function, better concentration levels and classroom behaviour and higher self-esteem than their less-active counterparts. Understandably, all of these factors seem to support better academic performance. In 2002, the California Department of Education examined whether any correlation existed between standardized test scores and results from a state-mandated physical fitness exam. In its analysis of data from over 954,000 fifth, seventh and ninth grade students, the study found that students with higher levels of fitness performed better in school. Students who met three or more physical fitness standards experienced the greatest academic gains.

The greatest Greek philosophers of all time, Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, all recognized physical exercise as means to preserve mental health. Convincing evidence from long-term human studies have shown that physical fitness apparently protects the memory centers of the brain and people who exercise are healthier (Powers, 2011). Regular physical exercise helps enhance our mental state by increasing blood circulation, bringing oxygen and endorphins – hormones released after exercise that have benefits on mood and memory – to the brain tissues, helping promote growth of brain cells and is clearly associated with better performance on several cognitive measures, long term brain health and last but not least, general mental well-being (Neeser, 2005).

Dunn (2005) opined that, exercise makes you smarter. Exercise not only strengthens your body, it can also strengthen your mind. One study found that moderate exercise by older adults can reduce the odds of mild cognitive impairment by 30% to 40%.

Some experts believe that exercise can, in fact, keep our minds sharp because it improves circulation throughout the body and the brain, which boosts your attention and ability to concentrate. Exercise may even protect us from developing Alzheimer's disease. In one study, researchers found that older adults who exercise at least 3 times a week are less likely to develop dementia. Exercise can even make you more productive at work. People who exercise during the day perform better, manage their time more efficiently, and are mentally sharper.

Harris (1987) found exercise to be a convenient and manageable way of helping people deal with stresses and worries of everyday life and analysis in this particular area of mental health shows that exercise is a very healthy alternative to other means of dealing with periods of stress and anxiety. Harris (1987) further indicated that exercise gives more energy.It may be ironic, but if one ever felt too tired to workout, exercise is one thing that may cure him/her. Getting enough sleep, reducing stress, and eating a nutritious diet are all important for energy, but one major factor is movement. Studies show that exercise increases feelings of energy and lessens feelings of fatigue. Exercise also teaches the body how to produce more energy, making it more efficient at burning fat.

These common alternatives include the consumption of alcohol or the use of nicotine through smoking. It is also believed that, by being physically fit, an individual's reaction to a stressful situation is reduced to a level that is more capable of controlling (Powers, 2011). In recent years, there has been evidence of disturbingly high rates of mental ill-health among adolescents and even younger children, ranging from low-self-esteem, anxiety and depression to eating disorders, substance abuse and suicide (Anderssen, & Wold, 1992).

Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to anxiety and depressive disorders. By 15 years, girls are twice as likely as boys to have experienced a major depressive episode Wold and Hendry (1998). Girls are also significantly more likely in depressive mood than boys to have seriously considered suicide (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). Depression being the most common form of mental challenge, occurs in various degrees of severity – from being a mild disorder to being a clinically diagnosed illness (Harris, 1987) and according to him research into physical activities and its effects have shown that exercise can help people overcome this state of mind to as high a level as that resulting from extensive psychotherapy.

It therefore appears that regular exercise could be a cheap alternative to expensive psychotherapy, and could lead to no medication being required. It is also understood that those who are stressful in maintaining a regular exercise program over a period of more than two years avoid long term depression (Neeser, 2005). Research suggests ways in which physical activities can contribute to mental health. There is fairly consistent evidence that regular activity can have a positive effect upon girls' psychological well-being; indeed, some studies indicate that girls may respond more strongly than boys in terms of short-term benefits (Friedman & Berger, 1991).

Evidence is beginning to be gathered for exercise as a treatment for clinical depression, with studies finding that physical activity is as effective a treatment as anti-depressants (Hargreaves, 1994), and psychotherapy (Sallis, 1994). Similarly, a variety of non-clinical studies have found that higher levels of activity were related to lower rates of depression.

A position statement of the International Society of Sport Psychologydrew out numerous mental health benefits of physical activity from the research literature, including reduced state anxiety, neuroticism and anxiety, mild to moderate depression, and various kinds of stress (Taylor, Baranowski&Sallis, 1994).

Exercise decreases symptoms of mild to moderate depression. Depression is frustratingly common for many of us, and while there are medications and therapies that can help, exercise is another method of treatment that can provide relief. Studies have shown that exercise can help you fight mild to moderate depression because it:

1. Lifts your mood and gives you energy
2. Offers distraction from your worries
3. Helps you feel more confident and in control
4. Releases feel-good hormones while reducing stress

Even clinically depressed people can find help through exercise. In one study, depressed patients who exercised ranked it as "the most important element in comprehensive treatment programs for depression."Any type of exercise, including cardio, weight-training, and mind/body activities like yoga, can work (Dunn, 2005). Dunn further opined that exercise reduces stress and anxiety. Stress and anxiety can take a toll on your body, mind, and emotional well-being, but exercise can help even if you're experiencing chronic stress. Studies show that consistent exercisers manage their stress more effectively and tend to have lower levels of stress than people who don't exercise. Exercise is also a great way to prevent stress, especially if you consistently exercise at least 3 times a week for 20 or more minutes.

Anxiety is another problem that often accompanies stress and depression, leaving a feeling of agitation, uneasy and struggling to calm down. Studies show that aerobic exercise is one way to reduce anxiety.

Powers (2011), who researched into sleep disorders as mental health problem came up that 30 percent of the overall adult population suffers from sleeping disorders. The direct effects of exercise on the rather alarming number of sufferers are still being studied. Preliminary results have shown that exercising for prolonged periods of time in bright light increases the length of sleep periods and, in the opinion of the individuals studied, increases depth and the quality of sleep (Powers, 2011). It is therefore thought that regular exercise is a suitable means of improving sleep patterns, even for those individuals who do not suffer from insomnia.

Also, Neeser (2005) an expert in the field of self-esteem consider the aspect of self-analysis to be the best indicator of an individual's state of mental health. Studies have shown conclusively that exercise has a positive effect in the way people view themselves, particularly in the area of physical awareness (Neeser, 2005). A positive effect is thus generated by allowing people see themselves as a better person physically. This outcome is most evident in individuals who initially have low self-regard and low physical fitness levels. The resulting change in mental state of mind is one of the most common outcomes of an exercise program and it can be readily observed that this change is directly linked with mental well-being (Powers, 2011).

In addition, exercise reduces risk of stroke.Another health problem that can sometimes be prevented with exercise is stroke. Strokes can happen when blood can't circulate to the brain, and the three major risk factors include high blood pressure, diabetes and smoking. Exercise can help with both high blood pressure and diabetes, and it may actually reduce your risk of experiencing a stroke. Studies show that people who are moderately active have a 20% lower risk of stroke and, if you're more active, those numbers only get better. Exercise can mitigate those contributing factors and may widen the interior of blood vessels, contributing to better circulation. Exercise can also help people recovering from a stroke. One study found that stroke survivors who participated in a walking program were able to walk faster and longer and had better mobility than non-exercisers (Dunn, 2005).

The role of sport participation for high school and college students in the educational process has been a topic for debate for decades. Critics observe that sport activities deflect time away from the classroom (Melnick, Sabo, & Vanfossen, 1992). Supporters of college sport programmes argue that sport participation improves students' achievement, motivation (Casey, 1980; Parker & Johnson, 1981), improves students' grades, keeps them in school, raises their educational aspirations (Melnick, et al.,1992), helps them appreciate health, exercise and fitness, helps them learn about themselves and to handle adversity, and helps them experience team work and sportsmanship (Rasmussen, 2000). Whether college sport programmes benefit or negatively impact the academic achievement of students' participations' remain debatable. While the quantity of research literature in this field is growing, its uneven quality provides no evidence to afford a clear understanding of the nature on the issues (Greendorfer, 1987).

To date, the educational consequences from participating in school-sponsored sport activities for college students are still not fully understood. These have been attributed to parents' fears and concerns regarding safety. This can be a powerful constraint on children's time and access to opportunities for physical activity (Klesges, Eck, Hanson & Haddock, 1990).

But Brown Centre Report in 2002 on American school performance indicated that schools with top-ranked baseball, basketball and football teams were found to have better state achievement exam scores than those with less successful sports programmes. Not surprisingly, public schools with both successful athletic teams and high academic achievement are found in areas with better financial resources: wealthy, suburban neighbourhoods with predominantly white, non-Hispanic populations. According to the report, such advantaged schools are better able to integrate excellence at sports into a broader culture that encourages achievement (Scully, Kremer, & Meade, 1998).

A range of evidence suggests that for many children especially girls, sports and physical activities are positive features of their academic aspirations and achievement. Although academic performance in student athletes does vary between boys and girls, results of the California Department of Education study showed that all of the girls' teams had significantly higher grade point averages than their male counterparts. Bleyaert (2010) cited a 2010 study published in "The Sports Journal" reinforced these findings and showed some interesting comparisons. Boys on the cross-country team had among the lowest grades of all the sports examined, but girls' cross-country teams had among the highest.

The classic study of the relationship between physical activity and school performance was carried out in France in the early 1950s in Vanves (Hervet, 1952). Researchers reduced academic curriculum time by 26%, replacing it with physical activities, yet academic results did not worsen, there were fewer discipline problems, greater attentiveness and less absenteeism. In the 1990s, a new program known as Promoting Achievement in School through Sport (PASS) was added to the curriculum of several California high schools over a four-year period. The programme was a year-long intervention that used sports in an effort to improve academic achievement.

The rationale behind the study was based on the American Sports Institute's (ASI) position that there are positive aspects of the sports culture which can provide a feeling of meaning and self-worth in students, which in turn, will provide an environment in which students want to be in school, want to learn, and ultimately enhance learning (Promoting Achievement in School through Sport, 1996). This view contradicted the traditional notion of the time that at best, sports should take a back seat to academics, or at worst that sports may impede academic success if they take priority over academics (Promoting Achievement in School through Sport, 1996). The notion of a positive sports culture was the sole basis for this programme despite the latter opinion, and indeed had promising results.

The programme had an integrated curriculum whose interdisciplinary aspects included language arts, social studies, philosophy, and physical education. It focused on self-esteem, responsibility and leadership, all aspects seen by the ASI to be derived from sports participation.

The program results revealed 47% more PASS students' improved their grades than students in the control group, with twice as many PASS students increasing their GPA by a full point (Promoting Achievement in School through Sport, 1996). The PASS programme supports the case that a positive sports culture can improve academic achievement.

The now classic study of independent mobility (Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg, 1990) found a connection between restrictions placed on children's freedom to be away from home and participation in both organized and unorganized sports and physical activities. A number of studies have shown significant gender differences in independent mobility, with boys experiencing far more freedom than girls to be active (Matthews, 1987). Very often, girls' freedom to move are curtailed by cultural norms and conditions that determine where it is safe or appropriate for them to go (Brady & Kahn, 2002).

Nevertheless, many girls do take part in out-of-doors physical activities, especially if opportunities are convenient. Literature on the relationship between students' participation in sports and their various psychological and psycho-educational factors provides mixed findings. The findings of a group of studies indicated that participation in sports increased students' overall interests and commitments to schooling as well as their engagement in more student-teacher contact, more positive attitudes about schooling, more parent-school contact (Crain, 1981; Trent & Braddock, 1992). Moreover, Slavin and Madden (1979) found that sports could facilitate positive racial/ethnic relations as well as positive inter-group attitudes and behaviors among different schools.

Although there is currently no directly related research on the graduation rates of student athletes and non-athletes. However, it follows that, based on the research on drop-out rates, the percentage of students-athletes who graduate have found improvements for many children in academic performance when time for physical activity is increased in schools (Sallis, McKenzie, Kolody, Marshall & Rosengard, 1997).

To stress the importance of sports participation in schools and colleges, Daughtery & Woods (1997) said that students' participation in schools provide time to train fully and if organized sports are going to be safe, healthy, and beneficial for children and pre-adolescents, there must be reasonable goals for participation and appropriate strategies to train these goals. Reasonable goals for children and pre-adolescents in organized sports include acquisition of basic motor skills, increasing physical activity levels, learning social skills necessary to work as team, learning good sportsmanship and having fun (Kuh, 2001).

Organized sports sessions should be tailored to match the developmental level of participants. Most pre-school children have short attention spans and are easily distracted; therefore, exercise sessions should be short and emphasize playfulness, experimentation, and exploration of a wide variety of movement experiences (Richards & Aries, 1999).

According to Richards and Aries, reasonable format would consist of no longer than 15 to 20 minutes of structured activity combined with 30 minutes of free play. Concentration will be maximized if instructional sessions take place in a setting with minimal distraction. Instructing younger children using a show-and-tell format with physical demonstration than verbal instructions in schools (Edgerton & Shulman, 2002).

There is an international consensus that participation in physical activities can offer a great deal to individuals, communities and nations. Evidence suggests that from an early age, differences in gender based attitudes towards an opportunity for sports and physical activities can have significant influences on children's participation. This may in turn affect later involvement in physically active lifestyles, and the social and health benefits that may result for them (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001).

Social Developmentand Sports Participation

According to Anderssen & Wold (1992), Socialization theory is one of the most applicable theoretical bases which helps provide a comprehensive mode of understanding to how someone is introduced and exposed. Socialization theory is a common theory that can be used to examine the influencers of sport participation. The theory is considered to be a valuable tool in how sport and physical activity is adopted, maintained and discontinued. According to socialization theory, primary socializing agents exist which provide powerful models that can influence children and the youth toward taking part in sports. (Anderssen & Wold, 1992). The main socialization agents according to socialization literature are the family, peers, school, and mass media.

The school as a socializing agent uses sports participation as one of its main programmes. Here in Ghana, programmes like inter- school sports at all levels of the educational ladder, has been consistently patronized in all schools in various forms. This programme continues to enable students meet and interact thereby learning from each other directly or indirectly.

Socialization research seems to have shed light on a multitude of variables that exist that have the ability to influence a student's introduction to and ultimate decision to participate in sports (Anderssen & Wold, 1992). Often, these influencers cut across personal, social, and cultural lines. The attempt to assess how students become socialized into sport participation and how this socialization influences expectations regarding that participation and their academics is very important and has always been a topical issue.Ultimately, depending on how an athlete is socialized into sport, it may affect his or her quality expectations.

Participation in extracurricular activities increases academic performance. Recent studies show that students involved in extracurricular activities increase academic performance. Participation in extracurricular activities also improves school attendance. Higher school attendance enables a student to complete more class work and perform better on examinations. Melissa Fineman surveyed over 900 students on participation in extracurricular activities and academic performance, presenting her 2010 project summary at the California State Science Fair. Her research concluded that participation in extracurricular activities helps students learn teamwork and develop leadership skills. These skills enhance the student's academic performance (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010).

Sports can enhance children's standing with their peers and improve self-esteem. According to John Holloway of the Educational Testing Service, this enhances learning and may discourage anti-social behaviour. Exercise gets blood flowing to the brain, sharpening concentration. Extracurricular activities can help disadvantaged and children with disabilities feel included.

Drama, dance, music and sport foster social skills, dedication and team spirit. In Japan, clubs and social activities are considered essential and are integral to the longer school day. Holloway reports that children with extracurricular involvements are 50 percent more likely to be academically gifted (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010).

Deborah Vandell of the University of Wisconsin found that children who spend their free hours in unstructured, unsupervised settings have lower grades. She suggests children learn persistence in extracurricular activities that transfers to academic settings. States and schools that institute "No pass, no play" policies may not be helping students' academic performance. Allowing greater participation in sports, music and drama might be a better way to raise grades. Similarly, cutting these extracurricular 'frills' when school budgets are tight may be short-sighted (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010).

Throughout Ghana, schools and most especially the Senior High Schools, run a sports programme that is of uniformity with regards to sports competitions. There are a variety of team games such as soccer, volleyball, basketball, handball, and hockey. There are also individual sports such as table tennis, track and field athletics and cross-country. Sports competition is a continuation of the instructional programme of physical education in the basic as well as Senior High School level. These usually come or are carried out in the form of intramurals and extramural. Special attention is given to the planning and conduct of these programmes as they run throughout the year. Touching on the organization of sports programmes, Udoh, Amusa, Sohi and Agbedi, (1999), strongly asserted that organization for competition in the intramurals is usually best affected by arranging schedules between recognized groups such as houses, classes, sections, clubs,

and associations as well as religious groups. Intramural games are aimed at the enjoyment students derive from taking part in sports competitions and social interactions.

According to Udoh, et al. (1999), Intramural activities are usually easier to organize and they conform to the general calendar schedule by the schools and colleges sports Federation. These games are usually organized with the aim of selecting a team to represent at the zonal and regional level. As such athletes strive to excel in order to be chosen. Like the intramural, extramural competitions are organized at zone, district and regional bases. This meets usually offer students the opportunity to compete at a more difficult level since the best athletes are represented. Inter zonal and district sports competitions as well as regional sports are organized yearly with venues rotating from one zone, district or region to the other. Usually the final of these competitions are organized by the National School and Sports Federation where each of the ten regions presents a team (Udoh, et al., 1999).

For all the competitions athletes are usually camped at a particular school to promote supervision of training. The time allocation for preparation defers for the various stages of the competition. These competitions need careful planning and organization, as such physical education instructors who have been well trained are assigned to task with the help of ordinary classroom teachers who are interested in sports.

At all levels of schools sports competitions, students exhibit high completion spirit because of the singular objective of excelling to gain selections into the school and regional teams.

Although all athletics really like the sports in which they compete, for the simple reason that sports provide them some gains especially in terms of physical and physiological benefits.

Athletes, derive ego satisfaction, natural returns, attractive pay and other internal benefits. According to Wuest and Bucher (2000), sports training and competition, develop a better state of physical fitness of a trained individual than a person who follows a sedentary inactive life. For instance, it has been proved that when two persons, one trained and the other untrained, and are both of approximately the same built are performing an activity which involves the same or moderate muscular work, the trained person has lower oxygen consumption (Wuest & Bucher, 2000). The study also showed that trained person has a lower pulse rate, large stroke volume per heart beat, less rise in blood pressure, greater red and white blood cells count. Furthermore, the trained athlete has slower rate of breathing, lower rate of lactic formation and heart works more efficiently and is able to circulate more blood.

Also for any work of strenuous nature that cannot be performed for any great length of time, the trained person has greater endurance, a capacity for higher oxygen consumption and a fast return to normal of heart rate and blood pressure. From these benefit accrued to sports participations; most athletes will be hesitant to surrender these advantages even at the expense of maintaining minimal academic standard (Sabo, Miller, Melnick & Heywood, 2004).

In order to boost the morale of athletes participation in sports colleges in Germany, Kahn (1998), observed that top college athletes in Germany are provided with financial support from Deutsch sport life (Germany sport Aid). The purpose of this is to compensate athletes for the time and money spent in preparation and participation in international sports. Moreover, this assistance continues after school until the athlete secures a job. With this numerous motivational instructs and personal aspiration, there is no doubt has sports participation has assumed such a high standard in the schools.

There is a lot of truth to the old saying, "Families that play together, stay together." Today's families are busier than ever, with even children feeling the pressures associated with performance expectations and over-scheduling. Oftentimes, family members have so many commitments that family time is a rare pleasure, rather than an everyday part of life. Unfortunately, this disconnect can have a significant effect on children and teens, who may feel distanced from the very people who love them the most. Families that make time to play actively together benefit in a number of ways. Obviously, families who make exercise and fitness priorities are inclined to be physically healthier than those who do not, but the pay offs do not end there. Spending time together helps to build strong emotional ties and reassures children that they are high on their parents' list of priorities, making them feel valued (Dunn, 2005).

Brady & Kahn (2002) were of the view that sport helps kids stay active. Whether kids exercise now and into adulthood often depend on the parent. One study shows that girls are more likely to exercise when they have knowledge about exercise and when their mothers are active.

Boys exercise more when they have exercise knowledge and when they get information from their dads. Being a good role model means your kids have a better shot at a healthy, active future.

Sports keep one fit for seasonal activities. If one likes to ski in the winter or hike in the summer, regular exercise is a must for giving the body a strong foundation for these kinds of irregular activities. There are a number of things we do that depend on the season and the weather, which can set you up for an injury if you don't maintain a base level of fitness. Regular exercise can give the stamina, strength and endurance needed for seasonal activities like shoveling snow, raking leaves, long bike rides or canoe trips, backpacking, skiing or snowboarding.

Dunn, 2005, opines that sports help one to live better and longer.If you've ever wished there were such a thing as a fountain of youth, I'm thrilled to make your wishes come true. Studies have shown that regular exercise can actually add years to your life, whether you start exercising at 15 or 50. Even better, those extra years are less likely to include disability, which means a higher quality of life as you age.

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According to Odigo (1995) school sports activities are designed to assist the physical and emotional development of students. Sports provide numerous opportunities for children and teenagers to grow socially, emotionally, and physically. Furthermore, they also allow youth to learn and practice in a competitive environment. Sports also increases children's positive social interaction with adults and one another, these activities are carefully selected, guided and are to reflect the available facilities and meet the individual student needs and capabilities. To stress the importance of sports participation in schools and colleges, Daughtery and Woods (1997) Said that student's participation in sports provides time to train fully and if organized sports are going to be safe, healthy, and beneficial for children and pre-adolescents, there must be reasonable goals for participation and appropriate strategies to attain these goals. Reasonable goals for children and pre-adolescents participating in organized sports include acquisition of basic motor skills, increasing physical activity levels, learning social skills necessary to work as a team, learning good sportsmanship, and having fun (Kuh, 2001).

Participation in school sports have positive impact on children who would otherwise be at risk of dropping out. A Massachusetts study of deprived, inner-city middle-school youth found that boys and girls who played sports were less likely to try marijuana. A study at Stanford University looked for a common factor in urban teenagers who were achieving well and avoiding drugs against the odds. The study discovered these students had deliberately chosen not to "hang out" in the neighbourhood, seeking sports, dance or YMCA activities instead (Scully, Kremer, & Meade, 1998). The study followed-up on these disadvantaged students who had sought structured activities and found that in early adulthood they achieved superior academic success, had good jobs and contributed to their communities. Professor Christy Lleras of the University of Illinois found that 10 years after graduation, students who had participated in extracurricular activities completed more levels of higher education and were higher earners than peers with similar test scores but less extracurricular involvement.

US Department of Health and Human Services (1996) said that the physical health benefits of regular physical activity are well-established. Regular participation in such activities is associated with a longer and better quality of life, reduced risks of a variety of diseases and many psychological and emotional benefits. There is also a large body of literature showing that inactivity is one of the most significant causes of death, disability and reduced quality of life in the developed world.

Physical activity may influence the physical health of girls in two ways. First, it can affect the causes of disease during childhood and youth. Evidence suggests a positive relationship between physical activity and a host of factors affecting girls' physical health, including diabetes, blood pressure and the ability to use fat for energy Armstrong

& Welsman, (1997). Second, physical activity could reduce the risk of chronic diseases in later life (Sabo, Miller, Melnick & Heywood, 2004). A number of 'adult' conditions, such as cancer, diabetes and coronary heart disease, have their origins in childhood, and can be aided, in part, by regular physical activity in the early years (Freedman, Khan, Dietz, Srinivasan, & Berenson, 2001). Also, regular activity beginning in childhood helps to improve bone health, thus preventing osteoporosis, which predominantly affects females (Mechelen, & Kemper, 1995).

Obesity deserves special mention. There seems to be a general trend towards increased childhood obesity in a large number of countries, and this increase seems to be particularly prevalent in girls from highly urbanized areas World Health Organization (1997), some ethnic minorities and the disabled. (Dietz, & Gortmaker, 1984) Obesity in childhood is known to have significant impact on both physical and mental health, including hyperlipidemia, hypertension and abnormal glucose tolerance. (Steinberger, 1995). Physical activity can be an important feature of a weight control programme for girls. (Corbin. &Pangrazi, 1998), increasing calorific expenditure and promoting fat reduction. Indeed, recent systematic reviews on both the prevention and treatment of childhood obesity recommend strategies for increasing physical activity (Sallis & Owen, 1999).

Sports Participation and Academic Performance

In all of the studies the researcher found, sports participation was generally agreed to improve academic performance. In each of the studies, the correlation made enables us to determine how and why this occurs. In a report to the President of the United States by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education, a landmark 1996 Surgeon General's report, "Physical Activity and Health" is cited, indicating that evidence points to a correlation between participation in sports and improvement in academic performance (Carter, Kannus, & Khan, 2001).

Although research has not been conducted to conclusively demonstrate a direct link between physical activity and improved academic performance, such a link might be expected. Studies have found participation in physical activity increases adolescents' self-esteem and reduces anxiety and stress. Through its effects on mental health, physical activity may help increase students' capacity for learning.

One study found that spending more time in physical education did not have harmful effects on the standardized academic achievement test scores of elementary school students; in fact, there was some evidence that participation in a 2-year health-related physical education programme had several significant favourable effects on academic achievement." The government study indicates that the increase in self-esteem and the reduction in stress and anxiety brought about by sports participation has a positive effect on the mental outlook of students, thereby increasing their capacity to learn (Carter, Kannus, & Khan, 2001).

Proponents stated high school academic achievement is positively affected by athletic participation. In fact, supporters concluded high school athletics positively impacts the high school, its students and the community - academically, personally and socially (Yancey, 2007) Burnett (2001) concluded high school athletics keep students out of undesirable activities. Yancey discussed and stressed the positive effects of athletics on the school culture. He found athletic participation reduces student absences and develops positive student teacher relationships. However, the positive effect of high school athletic participation found by Yancey (2007) is not relegated to a student-athlete's high school experience. Athletic participation can serve as a catalyst for post-secondary academic success (Reid, 2005).

Reid's study focused on high school seniors who graduated in 1992. He compared and contrasted non-athletes and student-athletes who served as team captains of their particular sport, junior varsity and varsity athletes, and intramural participants. Reid found the student-athletes demonstrated higher rates of physical activity and smoked cigarettes at a lesser rate compared to their non-athletic peers eight years later. Reid referenced conclusions from another study which stated students participating in high school athletics demonstrated advanced performance figures pertaining to grades, school attendance, graduation rates, and discipline records.

In addition to males, high school athletics participation revealed positive benefits for females. Peckham (2008) found female athletes who participated in high school athletics revealed higher undergraduate degree completion rates six years later when compared to their non-participating peers.

Brooks (2002) compared high school sophomore female athletes (females participating in a high school sport) and non-athletes (females not participating in high school sports). Brooks found in the areas of happiness and satisfaction, intellectual and school status, the female athletes demonstrated average scores six points higher than non-athletes.

The positive characteristics of playing high school athletics were expanded upon by Carlson, Fulton, Maynard, Brown and Kohl (2008). Carlson et al. (2008) utilized a sample of 10th grade students who graduated from high school in 1992. Eight years later they assessed the progress of the target students in the areas of education, employment and health. Carlson et al. found the students involved in scholastic sports achieved greater educational and professional success when compared to their non-scholastic peers. Furthermore, the athletic group engaged in cigarette smoking at a substantially lesser rate and demonstrated tangibly higher physical fitness rates when compared to the nonathletic group (Carlson et al., 2008).

In addition, the positive effect of athletic participation for student-athletes infiltrated achievement areas. White (2005) compared the GPA, class rank, and math GPA of high school athletes divided into two groups: high participant and low participant. High participant was defined by White as follows: a student whose number of seasons participating in athletics was equal to or greater than, their years in high school.

Low participant was defined as a student whose number of years in high school exceeded their seasons of athletic participation. White referenced the perceived allotted time requirements of playing numerous sports.

White found the high participant group outperformed the low participant group in all three of the studies' measures: 1) GPA, 2) class rank, and 3) math GPA.

White (2005) cited the findings of Silliker and Quirk (1997) who concluded the grade point averages of high school soccer players were higher in-season than out-of season. The impetus for Silliker and Quirk's investigation was a study conducted in the late 1970s which compared the academic performance of in-season and out-of-season wrestlers. Silliker and Quirk's study focused on 123 students (64 females and 59 males) who attended five rural high schools and participated in interscholastic soccer. They stated extracurricular participation foster interpersonal and intrapersonal relations, lofty career expectations, and lower degrees of deviant behaviors for high school students.

Silliker and Quirk (1997) concluded "that participant had significantly higher GPAs in season than out-of-season" (p. 288). In addition, they confirmed their hypothesis which stated, "TAP in athletics for high school students does not endanger, and may enhance, academic performance" (p. 288).

Whitley (1999) compared the academic performance of athletes and non-athletes in one state's high schools. Whitley analyzed the GPAs, graduation and dropout rates, attendance records, and discipline referrals for the 1995 school year for 126,700 students from 133 high schools. He utilized eight subgroups comprised of black male, black female, white male, and white female groups with an athlete and non-athlete group for each racial identifier. In all of the measurable categories, Whitley's findings confirmed a rejection of the null hypotheses as the athlete subgroups outperformed the non-athlete subgroups as a whole and within each subgroup.

Whitley noted the mean GPA between the two subgroups was appreciably higher in seven of the eight subgroups for the athlete subgroup. In conclusion, in 20 out of 21 comparisons the performance of the athlete subgroup was superior to the non-athlete subgroup (Whitley, 1999).

Sitkowski (2008) conducted a quantitative study which compared the grade point averages (GPA) of the following groups: 1) in-season and out-of-season sophomore and junior athletes at the target high school, 2) student athletes participating in certain sports. In addition, he compared athletes and non-athletes in the areas of state achievement testing, classroom grades, and daily school attendance. Sitkowski found sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis as the GPA scores of male athletes were higher in season for male student-athletes compared to their out-of-season GPA. Sitkowski concluded males participating in certain sports demonstrated differences in GPA scores.

However, he stated females demonstrated no difference between in-season and out-of season GPA, or differences in GPA based on specific sport participation. Bishop (2008) concluded America's zeal for sports is proliferating to unprecedented levels. Unfortunately, Bishop found America's veracity for sports negatively affects the intangible value of sports for children and their families. Bishop denounced the recent trends permeating youth sports: parental pressure on student athletes to procure athletic scholarships, athletic contests devoid of uninhibited enjoyment, and student-athletes focusing on one sport. He found glaring differences between student athlete's athletic abilities and expectations. Bishop further asserted parents are seeking Division 1 college scholarship and athletic acclaim for their student athletes.

In their quest to achieve athletic goals, Bishop concluded student-athletes and parents abandon core values and principles. Bishop encouraged parents and children to develop a holistic view of athletic participation: develop values, build relationships, and explore new opportunities.

Sports and education are inter-married especially at the pre-university level as proposed by the educational reforms of Sir Gordon Guggisburg in the 1920s in Gold Coast (Ghana). And his point was buttress by the President of the Ghana Football Association (GFA), Kwesi Nyantakyi, who recently said his outfit will insist on education for footballers because it is the key to sustainable development in football. (ghanafa.org, 2012).

He said the GFA as part of its development plans has made education a key component of their strategy for player development and will ensure all players selected into the juvenile teams are educated and acquired the requisite knowledge. “If we discover a player who is not educated, we as an institution (GFA) will arrange an evening class for the player to ensure that his/her level of education is raised to an appreciable level.

After that, the player will be made to join main stream education” (ghanafa.org, 2012). Virtually all Senior High Schools whether private or public, are engaged in some form of inter-school sports and participation and teaching of Physical Education (activities).

Being the primary societal institution with responsibility for promoting physical activity in young people, school physical education has the potential to be a powerful force against sedentary lifestyles. The potential of PE to reach virtually all children makes it a uniquely important resource (Bailey, 2004).

Especially important, in this regard, is the Primary/Elementary phase of schooling, which has the advantages of relatively high engagement in physical education lessons (Deem, 1986), and students who are curious about their bodies and receptive to health information (Brady & Kahn, 2002). Whilst the amount of actual activity experienced during many Physical Education lessons is probably inadequate to deliver health outcomes (Thompson, 1995), Physical Education is well placed to facilitate the development of a foundation of movement skills. (Calfas & Taylor, 1994) and positive attitudes towards recreational physical activities Brady, (1998), which are likely to positively contribute to health.

It ought to be stressed that physical education lessons do not necessarily promote physical activity in children. It is however difficult to say to what extent sports contributes to education.

Participation in sports provides numerous opportunities for healthy, positive development-physically, socially, and morally for all children. Regular sports activities are the preparatory gateways for children in their vital growth years in creating a sense of self that will guide them throughout their lives. Research indicates that participation in sports can promote healthy development.

Participation in sports helps children obtain crucial exercise that their growing bodies need; sports enhance a child's academic life in school; and most importantly sports assist in improving a child's self-esteem, Scully, Kremer, & Meade (1998).

According to Kahn (1998), there are indeed contrary views widely held that sports are believed to detract the educational goals of schools. The study conducted by Kahn revealed that some critics believed that while students' participation in sports might lead to some sportsmen becoming academically good, others have the opinion that when students participate in sports, they might become academically weak. In other words according to Kahn, the successful athletes after basic education, gain admission to high school or college and later on to university. In this way, sports participation has the positive effect of encouraging students to attain more educational heights than they might otherwise reach. This in turn increases their opportunities for success outside the sport world.

A controversy among the public, parents, educators and social scientists is whether the emphasis on competitive sport interfered with intellectual and academic performance of the students. Most parents and guardians contend that in many schools, sports have partly taken the position of academic work. (Schulman & Bowen, 2001).

They argue that whatever the contributions of sports are to character development and physical fitness, an appreciable amount of time, energy and attention are diverted from academic work is rather limited in scope. One of the important studies in terms of authenticity and recognition is reported by Coleman (2001). The main implication of Coleman's research is that sports participation interferes with scholastic performance.

When he refers to the relative "flow of energy" into sports and academics, he implies that sports "recruits" many boys who might have become students and that once "recruited", they are maintained in the profession by the spirit of popularity, publicity and prestige to give off much of their time and energy as possible to sports events at the expense of scholastic endeavour.

Hanks' (1979) posited that participation in high school athletics has a basically salutary effect on the educational achievement of high school students. The results of this study certainly indicated that the educational performance of athletes is better than that of non-athletes. This finding true when analyses were conducted along both racial and n gender lines. The analysis of data for the different subgroups showed that all of the athlete subgroups outperformed the non-athlete group as a whole, as well as their non-athlete subgroup peers.

On the other hand, according to some researchers, the time demands of athlete programs force student-athletes to sacrifice attention to academics (Meyer, 1990; Parham, 1993), making it difficult for them to devote time to study or earn good grades (Cantor & Prentice, 1996). Greater commitment to the athletic role and less to academics is associated with lower grade point averages in college (Simons, Van Rheenen & Covington, 1995). Furthermore, recruited athletes are often given an admissions advantage, entering college with less impressive academic records (Hood, Craig & Ferguson, 1992; Purdy, Eitzen & Hufnagel, 1985; Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Stuart, 1985).

When pre-college differences are controlled for, some researchers find that the academic achievements of intercollegiate athletes and non-athletes does not differ (Hood et al., 1992; Pascarella & Smart, 1985), but other researchers find more negative consequences for college athletes. For example, Shulman and Bowen (2001) found athletes who played all types of sports to under- perform academically, but the under-performance was more pronounce for athletes who played high-profile sports (football, basketball and hockey).

MacEtroy and Boston (1998), Otoo and Alwin (1997) and Spady (2000), conducted some researches on the influence of sports activities on educational achievements. All of them found that social-economic status (SES) have been shown to be influential in developing educational motivation and attainment. In their separate reports on quality of educational opportunities, they concluded that social-economic status accounts for more of the variance in educational aspiration than those involved in sports activities. Leonder (2002) found that those who take part in spot in their schools not perform creditably in their studies. Even though little empirical data exist to directly address this allegation, evidence suggests that this assertion has doubtful meaning.

On the other hand, Rarich and Mckee (2004) who studied twenty three (23) graders grouped those who achieved excellent or good rating in reading, writing and comprehension. They found that they grow with high motor proficiency, performed better than the group with low motor efficiency. Humphrey (1998) found that motor activities are beneficial in developing skills and concepts in reading, mathematics and science. He says that if academic skill or concept is practiced during a physical education, that skill or concept is learned forever.

He further indicates that many advanced academic skills and concepts can be introduced to children at an early age through the use of motor activity as a vehicle for learning.

In the debate about athletic participation and academic performance, it is often assumed that sport activities of adolescents are harmful to their educational outcome. Since the time spent on sport activities crowds out time devoted to schooling, the impact of sport is negative. However, empirical investigations find a rather positive correlation between sport and educational attainment (Long & Caudill, 1991; Barron, 2000). The underling line of reasoning is oversimplified: since the time spent on sport activities crowds out time devoted to schooling, thus impact of sport becomes negative.

According to Phillips, (1971) "athletes tend to exceed comparable non-athletes their achievement of educational goals" Although this research was performed in the late 1960's and focused solely on boys, theoretical concepts of Phillips and Schafer (1971) study, seem to remain true today. The theory that athletes excel in academic endeavours as well as athletic ones, was described as the direct result of the cultural influence imposed by team members, coaches, and the overall sports culture formed by sporty teams. Schafer (1969) indicate d "athletes are less likely to be deviant than comparable non-athletes", and argued that "there must be some influences in athletics that deter boys from engaging in delinquent behavior".

In a second study on student athletes results support the earlier findings, whereby he defined delinquency to be smoking, drinking, maintaining late hours, wearing beards or long hair, breaking laws, disrupting the community (Schafer, 1969).

Schafer further concluded that playing sports influences students to see school as a positive experience deterring them from rebelling against it. Together, Phillips and Schafer (1971) argued that the influence is due to the "subculture" that exists in the world of sport.

Although Phillips and Schafer (1971) research did not have strong conclusive data, they reported that athletes tended to befriend other athletes and that athlete overall were "more positive in educational attitudes, aspirations, and behaviours", leading them to have had "greater exposure to pro-educational influences" (Phillips, 1971). They further reported that both teachers and counsellors encouraged athletes to go on to college, and concluded that these combined findings indicate that student athletes receive rewards and support in school, which in turn lead them to "develop a pro-school subculture" (Phillips,1971). Philip and Schafer (1971) again, argued that athletes are faced with the influence of their teammates, coaches, teachers, and counselors to perform well in school and due to this influence, perform better academically than their comparable non-athlete peers.

Twenty years following Phillip and Schafer (1971) research, trends of student athletes doing well in school was noted by another researcher. Chambers (1991), in a review of the effect of students' participation in sports, concluded "academic achievement can be fostered through sports." He linked this fostering of academic achievement to the influences of coaches as well as the heightened self-esteem which he found was a result of playing sports. Chambers noted that in most cases of his review of empirical research, students who played sports experienced fun, which lessened feelings of stress and anxiety (Chambers, 1991).

He went on to state that this fulfillment leads to "a greater perceived competence and control" (Chambers,) and that this self-esteem and feeling of competence aids student athletes in academic endeavors as well. Furthermore, Chambers commented that athletes "perceive [their coaches as] significant influence[s]" (Chambers,) on their future goals, and is why he concluded that coaches played large roles in student academic achievement.

Although Chambers did not use the term "athletic sub-culture" that Phillips and Schafer used throughout their research, his work shared the underlying theme of coach influence on athletes which results in better academic achievement, and adds to the notion of heightened self-esteem due to sports participation as a positive influence on academics success. Participation in sport may lead to experiences, attitudes, self-perceptions, and treatment that enhance the academic role for the following reasons: (1) if one is participating in sport there may be an increased interest in the school, including academic activities; (2) to maintain athletic eligibility the athlete is motivated to perform at a higher academic level; (3) athletic success may lead to a heightened sense of worth that spills over into academic achievement; (4) coaches, teachers, and parents take a personal interest in athletes, including their classroom performance; (5) athletic participation may lead to membership in the elite peer groups and an orientation toward academic success; and (6) the athlete may have the hope or expectation of participating in athletics in college (Snyder, 1990). Looking at these six perceived influences for academic success in athletes, the notions of coach/parental pressure and influence, positive relationship with the school due to sport, heightened sense of self-esteem, and pressure due to eligibility requirements are all repeats of prior mentioned research.

As the literature shows, one such benefit is that participation in sport activities could provide extrinsic rewards to students and help them form social bonds and relationships within school (Crain, 1981; Slavin & Madden, 1979; Trend & Braddock, 1992).

In a longitudinal study, Manners and Smart (1995) noted that athletic team participation was related to identify foreclosure, particularly for males. With respect to whether students' participation in sport activities was beneficial to their academic goals, Marsh (1988) reported that participation in too many activities produced diminishing returns. Participation in sports and other extracurricular activities was consistently beneficial, but participation in some activities had mixed or predominantly negative effects. With regard to the relationship between athletic participation and higher educational goals, Spreitzer and Pugh (1973) found an association between athletic participation and higher educational goals. Sport involvement was not necessarily detrimental to academic pursuits. Influence of sport involvement was particularly strong for boys who were not otherwise predisposed to attending college. Sport involvement tended to engender high-perceived peer status, which in turn stimulated a desire for further status acquisition through college attendance.

Maloney and McCormick (1993) found a strong negative in-season effect of intercollegiate athletic participation in revenue sports (e.g. basketball, football), i.e. during the season the time devoted to learning shrinks, which negatively affects course grades. Whether we expect a negative time allocation effect depends on how time-consuming the sport and the studies actually are. Moreover, there might be some direct positive effects of sport on educational productivity.

Firstly, the better health status of athletes could increase productivity and lead to more investments in human capital, because healthier people will probably have a longer life span and, hence, a longer amortization period. Secondly, sport does not only train functional skills like dexterity and balance but it also teaches soft skills like taking orders, leadership, teamwork, performing in a regulated system, and socialization.

Thirdly, sport can help to form the character of young people because it teaches behavioral habits like motivation, discipline, tenacity, competitive spirit, responsibility, perseverance, confidence, and self-esteem, which cannot always be acquired in classroom. Hanks' (1979) said that these behavioral aspects should lead to reduced truancy, increase the willingness to succeed in school, and encourage social interaction with other students, which are associated with higher efficiency of learning because time is used more productively.

A study conducted by Patranella (1983) in the North side Independent School in San Antonio, Texas. A total of three thousand, five hundred and thirty-five athletes and non- athletes were selected from the school. Grade point average (GPA) is used as a measure of academic achievement. It is found that the athlete's group attained more favourable scores. Then also it is discovered that, those who participated in sports most seemed to take the more difficult schedule of course and make better grades. Selected difference between athletes and non- athletes with respect to grade level, sex and ethnicity are also found.

Watson (1995) also conducted another research which involved two hundred and two athletes and two hundred and ninety three non- athletes in University of Minnesota. Using grade point average (GPA) as a measure of academic achievement, it found out that athletes and non- athletes had about the same grade point average.

The role that coaches, teachers, and parents play in adolescent sports is perhaps the most obvious and significant example of environment influence. Some of the most successful sport education programs are those that can effectively integrate parents, teachers, and coaches into the high sport experience (Hartmann, 2003).

Each of these groups can add an extra level of attention and encouragement to a successful sport and academic experience, but this too is dependent on context. Coaches who also teach and strongly encourage academic success (above athletic success) and teachers who support athletics are the most effective in promoting academic achievement (Coleman 1991; Gould et al. 2007). Children who have extracurricular interests generally have better school grades. The value of extracurricular activities is a matter of balance.

If children participate in so many that they have no time for homework or are tired in school, this impacts negatively on grades. Some teachers feel children's extracurricular involvement takes attention away from school work. Others say parents put too much pressure on children to excel in too many areas. In general however, school grades are higher in children who participate in extra-curricular activities.

It is clear that from the above-mentioned researches on academic orientation, a number of factors such as background characteristic, type of sport, socio-economic status of the participation, socialization and extent of involvement contribute to educational aspiration and academic performance in schools.

Summary

This paper has examined the issue of whether or not participation in sports can lead to improved academic outcomes for college students (Din, 2006). Not only is school culture on both the high school and college level embroiled in a debate over the primacy of athletics over academics, but a number of studies have documented how poorly student-athletes have done academically. Moreover, the pressures created by the professionalization of sports at the collegiate and high school levels has not only demoralized the traditional values of sports culture, and all of the values-oriented benefits sports are said to give a person, but has lead to numerous abuses which further undermine the viability of the "student-athlete" construct.

In the context of this highly negative environment, a number of researchers continued to argue that participation in sports can help some students achieve more academically. Most of these arguments have been based on what are termed the non cognitive benefits of sports, not only that it builds character, but more importantly that sports, if not demoralized by win-only pressure, can build self-esteem, confidence and motivation which can and do transfer over into academic affairs (Comeaux, 2007).

Moreover, the motivation to participate in sports on a higher level (for high school students, the motivation to move on to college or even professional sports), while deemed a pipedream by some researchers, nonetheless has been found to keep many students in school. In most cases, if these student-athletes did not have their eye on college sports participation, they might have dropped out of high school. In this indirect manner, then, sports does lead to improved (if still substandard) levels of academic achievement. But the crux of the question remains, does participation in sports lead to better academic achievement on a strictly cognitive level? Many studies have found that sports participation is correlated with higher academic achievement. Reports that seek to determine if participation in sports actually makes participants smarter and thus better able to achieve academically are few however. Ryska & Vestal (2004) presented a mixed construct (in the sense of mixing non-cognitive and cognitive strengths) to explain how participation in sports can actually sharpen a student's abilities when it comes to academics. If an athlete is task- and goal-oriented then he or she is much more likely to transfer their sense of confidence and motivation into any other life context, including academics, and, more pointedly, more likely to make use of studying and learning strategies that are proven to improve academic performance. By this bridge, then, task-oriented athletic behaviour translates into using strategies to improve academics, and actually does improve academic outcomes. This construct, combining motivation and intelligence, offered a strong positive link between a certain kind of participation in sport and high academic achievement among college students.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discussed the methods and procedure that were used in the study. This include the following research design, population, sample and sampling technique, instrumentation, Validity of the Instrument, Reliability of the Instrument, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The design for the study is causal comparative. In this type of research, the investigator attempt to determine the cause or consequences of differences that already exist between groups of individuals (Glattorn and Joyner, 2005). The researcher comparedsports participation on academic performance of two groups: student- athletes and non student- athletes to establish cause and- effect relationships between sports participation and academic performance.This method does not deal with controlling and manipulating variables. It rather deals with finding out what abilities, capacities and experiences which the subject has and then the effects of these on his/ her present and future performances. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1998) causal-comparative research attempts to identify a cause-effect relationship between two or more groups. Causal-comparative studies involve comparison in contrast to correlation research which looks at relationship. This research design was found suitable because the researcher did not investigate the cause of academic performance differences between athletes and non-athletes. However, the focus was to compare the academic performance of these two groups of students in OFCE.

3.2 Population

A population is a group of individuals or items that share one or more characteristics from which data can be gathered and analyzed (Sage, 2002). According to Business.com (2008), population is all elements, individuals, or units that meet the selectioncriteria for a group to be studied, and from which a representative sample is taken for detailed examination.

The target population of this research consists of all regular students (athletes and non student- athletes) of Offinso College of Education in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The target student- athlete population is the student- athletes who trained and competed in ASHBA games at Berekum, 2014while non student- athlete population is any student who did not participate in any organized sport competition at the college. Records at the college indicated that there were 611 students in Offinso College of Education.

The component of the team size for the various disciplines that represented OFCE at ASHBA games at Berekum, 2014 are as follows:

TABLE 1: Team size for various disciplines

SPORT	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
Handball	14	14	28
Volleyball	12	12	22
Soccer	18	18	36
Table tennis	4	4	8
Athletics	14	14	24
TOTAL	6262124		

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample of 40of student- athletes was purposively selected from among the college's student- athlete population of 124 from the Ashanti/ Brong- Ahafo (ASHBA) team. Purposive sampling was used because the researcher has experience or knowledge about all participant and also participants share similar characteristics example the same course and level. Stratified random sampling was then used to select 160 non student-athletes from 975 non student- athletes in the college. Stratified random sampling technique was used for non student- athletes because there is the need for each category of class (Diploma in Basic Education A (DBEA) to Diploma in Basic Education H (DBE H) students) to be proportionately represented and also to obtain a sample representation of both male and female. The non student- athletes were divided into DBE A- DBE H separately and then, by random number method of the simple random sampling each student was given the chance to choose a number either one or zero. 160ones and 835 zeros were the options they had to choose from. All students who chose ones were used as the sample. The sample from the student- athletes and non student- athletes was merged into one to constitute the sample for the research work. In all 200 participants were used for the study.

3.4 Instrumentation

Close ended questionnaires were also used to collect data from two hundred (200) students in order to ascertain their views on their interest in sports participation,perception towards sports participation and perceived benefits of sports participation. The questionnaire was divided into three major sections; A, B & C.

Section A was on background information which sought to find out basic information about respondents; age and WASSCE aggregate. Section B looked at reasons/perception towards sports participation in school whilst Section C sought to find out the perceived benefits students derived from sports participation. The items at the Sections B and C of the questionnaire were of a four point Likert scale type that required students to indicate whether they agree, strongly agree, disagree, or strongly disagree on the sixteen items.

3.5 **Validity of the Instrument**

The instrument was pilot tested to check content validity at Wesley College of Education in Kumasi because students of this college have similar characteristics as the OFCE students. This was to help the researcher to fine tune the instrument in terms of removing or rewording questions that were not clear to the understanding of students or respondents. Hitherto, the concern and approval of the supervisor was sought to conduct the pilot study. The supervisor critically examined the content of the questionnaire to determine the content validity and subsequently gave approval for the instrument to be used. This ensured the validity of the instrument.

3.6 **Reliability of the Instrument**

The instrument was administered on fifteen students in Wesley College and the reliability Cronbach Alpha co-efficient was determined to be r = 0.79, an indication that the instrument was good to be used to collect data for the main study.

3.6 Procedure for Data Collection

The academic records of students of Offinso College of Education for the first and second semester 2013/2014 academic year was used as the main source of data collection for the study. This was obtained from the College's examination officer. The researcher sent an introductory letter from the Head of Department Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Sports (HPERS) to the Principal of the College and copied the examination officer to enable easy access to the student results and also to have access to work with the students. The information gathered on the participants was grade point average of students, gender of student, level of studentand age of students.

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher. The researcher employed the services of two research assistants who helped in the administering of the questionnaire.The participants were put into two groups (student- athletes in a group and non student-athletes in the other group); the researcher supervised one group and the research assistants also supervised the other group. Student- athletes and non student-athletes were confined to each room containing 40 and 160questionnaire respectively. This was to avoid the situation where students would discuss the questionnaire and produce the same responses. In addition, it helped in quickly collecting the questionnaires after they have been completed. In effect, all the questionnaires were retrieved the same day after the students had completed them.

3.7 Procedure for Data Analysis

The data was interval scale therefore researcher used inferential statistical testing technique called an independent t- test to determine whether:

1. The two sample means (mean cumulative GPA scores of student- athletes and non student- athletes) differ reliably from each other.
2. There is significant difference between the mean performances of the male student- athletes and nonmale student- athletes
3. There is significant difference between the mean performances of the female student- athletes and nonfemale student- athletes.
4. Participation in sports benefits students. The items in the questionnaire were arranged, organized and after coding, was processed through statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 and analyzed to answer this question.

4.8 Grading Scheme

First class	-	3.50- 4.00
Second class upper	-	3.00- 3.49
Second class lower	-	2.50- 2.99
Third class	-	2.00- 2.49
Pass	-	1.00- 1.99
Fail	-	0.00- 0.99

Source: Transcript from University of Cape Coast, Institute of Education.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results, findings and discussions from the study. In this study, forty (40) student- athletes were purposively selected from the college's student-athletes population of one hundred and twenty-four (124) for ASHBA games-Berekum, 2014. Also one hundred and sixty (160) non student- athletes were selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques.

Comeax and Harison (2001) identified GPA to be a powerful predictor of academic performance of both student- athletes and non student- athletes. With the statement above, academic performance becomes a level ground to strive for both student- athletes and non student- athletes. The mean cumulative GPA scores as the performance index was used for the analysis and questionnaire as well for the purpose of this study. The study was guided by four research questions. Three of the questions were answered using the mean cumulative GPA of students and the last question was answered by sixteen items questionnaire.

The statistics of the academic performance of selected student- athletes and non student- athletes for the study are presented in Table 2 below. The table revealed students academic grades, the range of cumulative GPA scores obtained by the student- athletes and non student- athletes, together with the standard deviation units and mean of cumulative GPA scores. The performance of these selected samples for the study was again grouped into high and low GPA achievers according to University of Cape Coast classification criteria.

Table 2: Distribution of Academic Performance of student- athletes and non student- athletes

Sample	Gender	Grade	Status in GPA	No. Observed	Range of CGPA scores		Mean of CGPA	SD of CGPA
					Min.	Max.		
ATHLETE		1st Class	High	1	3.50	3.50	3.50	-
		2nd Class(Upper Div.)	High	3	3.05	3.25	3.18	0.12
		2nd Class(Lower Div.)	High	3	2.55	2.80	2.72	0.14
		3rd Class	Low	9	2.05	2.40	2.22	0.13
		Pass	Low	4	1.40	1.95	1.65	0.23
	MALE	Fail	Poor	0	-	-	-	-
		MALE ATHLETE		**20**	**1.40**	**3.50**	**2.39**	**0.57**
		1st Class	High	0	-	-	-	-
		2nd Class(Upper Div.)	High	1	3.10	3.10	3.10	-
		2nd Class(Lower Div.)	High	2	2.85	2.90	2.88	0.04
		3rd Class	Low	10	2.05	2.35	2.20	0.11
		Pass	Low	7	1.15	1.85	1.55	0.28
	FEMALE	Fail	Poor	0	-	-	-	-
		FEMALE ATHLETE		**20**	**1.15**	**3.10**	**2.08**	**0.51**
NON ATHLETE		1st Class	High	0	-	-	-	-
		2nd Class(Upper Div.)	High	9	3.00	3.45	3.26	0.19
		2nd Class(Lower Div.)	High	26	2.50	2.85	2.66	0.12
		3rd Class	Low	40	2.00	2.45	2.23	0.16
		Pass	Low	24	1.00	1.95	1.58	0.30
	MALE	Fail	Poor	1	0.75	0.75	0.75	-
		MALE NON-ATHLETE		**100**	**0.75**	**3.45**	**2.26**	**0.55**
		1st Class	High	0	-	-	-	-
		2nd Class(Upper Div.)	High	1	3.05	3.05	3.05	-
		2nd Class(Lower Div.)	High	8	2.50	2.80	2.63	0.12
		3rd Class	Low	22	2.00	2.45	2.16	0.14
		Pass	Low	27	1.00	1.95	1.62	0.28
	FEMALE	Fail	Poor	2	0.75	0.75	0.75	-
		FEMALE NON ATHLETES		**60**	**0.75**	**3.05**	**1.95**	**0.49**

SOURCE: FIELD DATA (2015)

KEY: The higher the mean CGPA the better the results and the lower the S.D. the better the results.

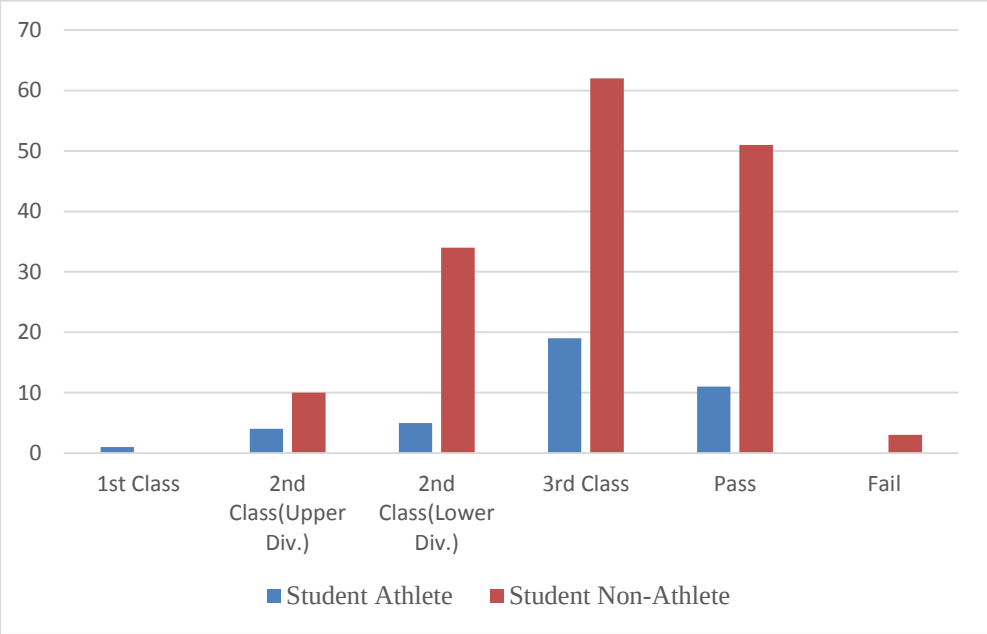

Fig2: Graphical representations on the academic performance of the sampled data.

A glance at figure 2 above showed significant variations on the data of academic performance of the selected sample.

In table 2, the mean cumulative GPA scores of the student- athletes were mostly higher than that of non student- athletes and even its only one student- athlete who had 1st class for the male category of students with a cumulative GPA score of 3.50. The table indicates, ten (10) student- athletes out of forty (40) had 1st class to 2nd class lower which are high grades. The breakdown is as follow: one 1st class, four 2nd class upper and five 2nd class lower. Nineteen (19) of them had 3rd class and eleven (11) had pass which are low grades. None of the student- athletes failed.

In the case of the non student- athletes, none of them had 1st class, ten (10) and thirty four (34) had second class upper and lower respectively which are high grades, sixty four (64) had 3rd class and fifty one (51) had pass which are low grades and three (3) of them failed.

A further look at the difference in academic performance of table 2 of the research sample for the study indicated that, the standard deviation units of the data between the student- athletes and non student- athletes were slightly different. This necessitated a view of data according to gender.

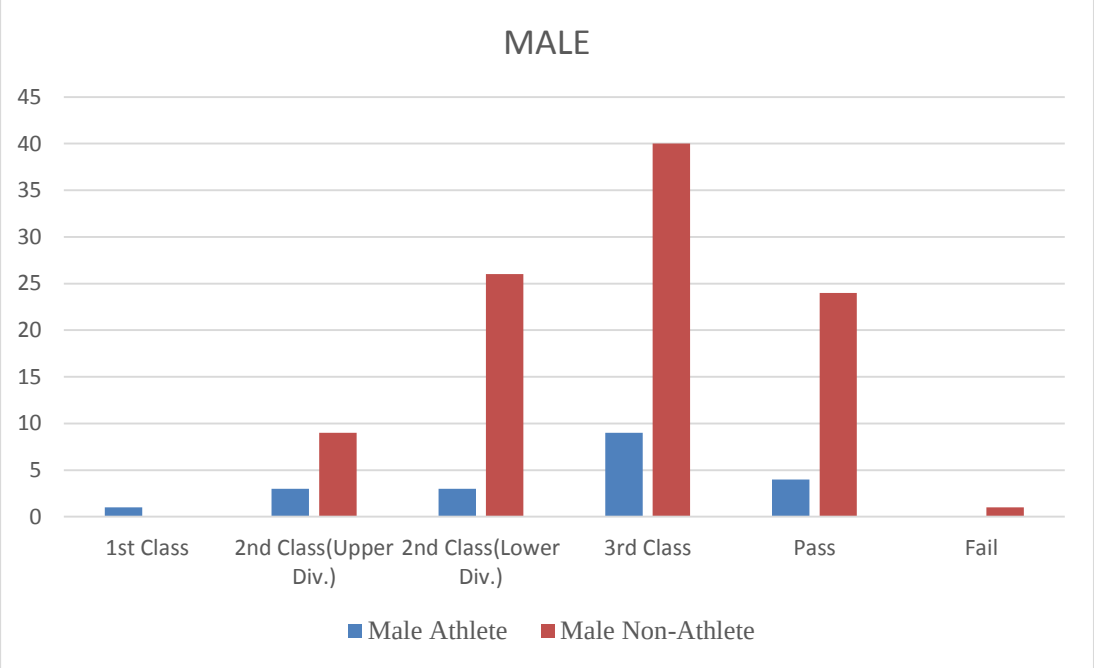

Fig 3: The mean academic performance of male selected sample.

The results from table 2 indicated that, one male student- athletes fell in the 1st class category, three got 2nd class upper and three had 2nd class lower. These are high grades. Nine and four had 3rd class and pass respectively both which are low grades. None of the male student- athletes failed. The mean CGPA of male student- athletes was 2.39 and S.D. of 0.57. The range of CGPA was 1.40- 3.50.

With the male non student- athletes no one had 1st class, nine got 2nd class upper, nine made 2nd class lower which are high grades. Forty and twenty four had low grades. The former representing 3rd class and the latter being pass. Male non student- athletes had mean CGPA of 2.26 and S.D. of 0.55. Range of CGPA was 0.75- 3.45.

This data indicates that, male student- athletes performed slightly better than their counterpart male non student- athletes with mean CGPA difference of 0.13 and S.D difference of 0.02.

The female category also recorded no 1st class for both female student- athletes and female non student- athletes. One female student- athlete had 2nd class upper, two got 2nd class lower, ten had 3rd class with seven having passes with no one failing. The mean of CGPA for female student- athletes was 2.06 with S.D. of 0.55 and range of 1.15- 3.10.

In the female non student- athletes side, one recorded 2nd upper, eight got 2nd class lower, twenty-two had 3rd and twenty-seven had passes. Two of them failed.

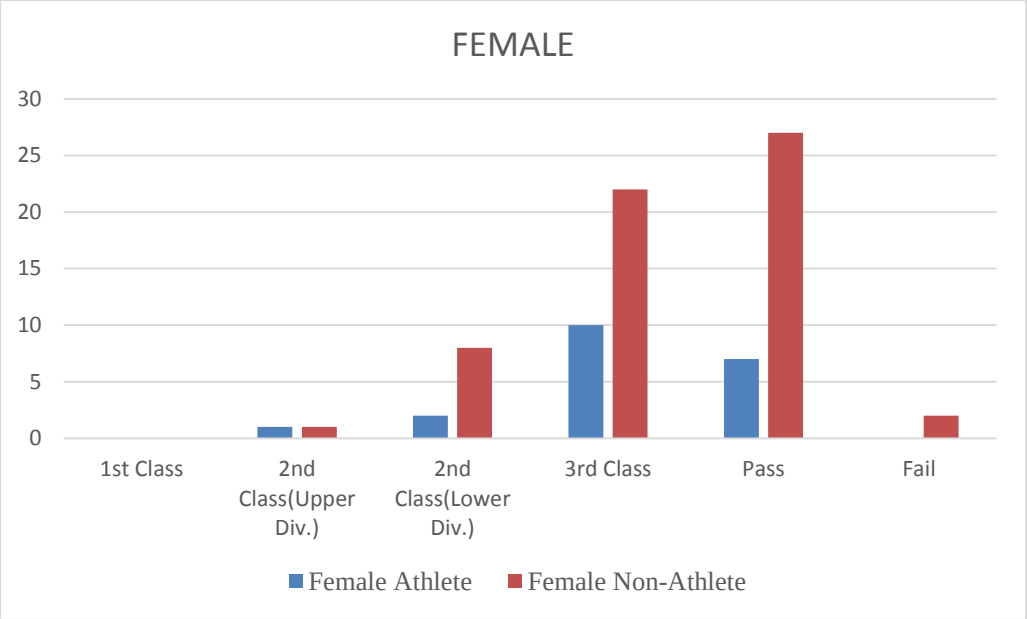

Fig 4: The mean academic performance of female selected sample.

This data clearly showed that with mean CGPA of 2.08 which is 3rd class for female student- athletes and mean CGPA of 1.95 also pass for female non student-athletes one can say that, although they are both low grades in the University of Cape Coast criteria there is a slight difference in the performance of female student- athletes from the female non student- athletes. The difference in the mean CGPA was 0.13 and S.D. was 0.02.University of Cape Coast is the examination body for all the colleges of education and it sets the standard for grading at the colleges.

Generally, a second look at table 2, fig. 1, 2 and 3 suggest that, the academic performance of student who participate in sports whether male or female as the case may be performs slightly better than those who do not participate in sports at OFCE.

Secondly, there were some few individual academic performances which were outstanding and therefore contributed to the spread of the performances of the student-athletes sampled for this study.

The background characteristics of two hundred respondents (student- athletes and non student- athletes), their interest in sports and perceived benefits they derive from sports participation at OFCE were analyzed in the sixteen items questionnaire. These items took into consideration the level of respondents, age categories, grade in WASSCE, interest in sports, students' perception towards sports participation and perceived benefits of sports participation.

Table 3i: Background of students (Level)

Level	Number of Students	Percentage
DBE A	24	12.0
DBE B	25	12.5
DBE C	25	12.5
DBE D	26	13.0
DBE E	25	12.5
DBE F	25	12.5
DBE G	24	12.0
DBE H	25	12.5
	199	99.5

Source: Field data (2015)

Table 3i revealed, only one student did not name his or her class showing 99.5% response to the items. Also, all the students offer the same course but in eight different lecture hall namely: DBE A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H.

Table 3ii: Background of students- athletes and non student- athletes (Age category)

Age Category	Number of Students	Percentage %
16- 18	3	1.5
19- 21	80	40.0
22 and above	106	53
No response	11	5.5

Source: Field Data (2015)

It can be observed from table 3ii that, most of the respondents were above teenage and therefore can easily discern issues that are critical about their academics and social life.

Table 3iii:Students- athletes and non student- athletes WASSCE Grade

WASSCE Grade	Number of Students	Percentage %
6- 10	9	4.5
11- 15	72	36.0
16- 20	96	48.0
21- 25	18	9.0
26 and above	3	1.5
No response	2	1.0

Source: Field Data (2015)

Table 3iii clearly showed that, few of the respondents (4.5%) were excellent while 36% of them were above average and 48% were also average before they got admission into the college. An indication that, each respondent had a chance of performing better if he or she studied hard.

Table 4i: Students interest in sports

Statement	Respondents	Yes No.	%	No No. %
Do you like sports?	Athletes	37	92.5	2
	Non athletes	62	38.8	2.5
				76
				47.5
Did you play sports in SHS	Athletes	39	97.5	1
	Non athletes	41	25.6	2.5
				118
				73.8
Do you currently participate in sports?	Athletes	40	100	- -
	Non athletes	30		128
		18.8		80

It can be deduced from table 4i that, 37(92.5%) athletes liked sports, but 62 (38.8%) of the non student- athletes liked sports. Additionally, 39 (97.5%) student- athletes played sports in SHS while 41 (25.6%) non student- athletes played sports at SHS. Lastly, all student- athletes (100%) currently participate in sports and only 30 (18.8%) non student-athletes currently participate in sports.

Students perception towards sports participation and Perceived benefits of sports participation

From the analysis one could observe that, 32 (80%) of the student- athletes disagreed with the perception that participation in sports affects students' academic performance. Eighty-four (84) out of one hundred and sixty non student- athletes representing 52.5% also disagreed with the assertion. Twenty-six of the student- athletes representing 65% were of the view that playing sports has no negative influence on students' academic performance, a view also shared by ninety-five (59.4%) of non student- athletes.

Both student- athletes (67.5%) and non student- athletes (62.5%) disagreed with the view that playing sports has no positive influence on students' academic performance. Majority of the student- athletes (90%) disagreed with the notion that participating in sports is a waste of time. This was supported by (82.5%) of the non student- athletes.

The analysis still indicated that, while 23 (57.5%) of the student- athletes held the view that some teachers discourage students from participating in college sports, 68 (42.5%) on the other hand had the same assertion. Twenty-five representing 62.5% of student- athletes as against 78 (48.8%) agreed that their friends think participating in sporting activities affect their studies.

The students were directly asked whether engaging in sports affected their studies or not. Thirty-two (80%) student- athletes disagreed to this assertion supported by 89 (55.6%) non student- athletes. Thirty-four representing 85% of student- athletes disagreed that playing sports results in poor academic performance as against 97 (60.6%) of non student- athletes holding the same view. Both student- athletes (67.5%) and non student-athletes (80%) admitted that, sports men at times get tired after playing sports that they miss lectures. Also, 21 (52.5%) of the student- athletes indicated lectures at times take place when sports men are playing for their college and was supported by 93 (58.1%) of non student- athletes. This seriously scared some students from sports participation in the college.

Majority of the students both student- athletes 39 (97.5%) and non student-athletes 145 (90.6%) agreed that they undertake sporting activities to keep themselves fit. Additionally, 33 (82.5%) of student- athletes and 128 (80.0%) of non student- athletes

disagreed to the fact that, sporting activities could not help them release tension. Both student-athletes (90.0%) and non student- athletes (76.9%) agreed that they undertake sporting activities to improve upon their skills. Twenty-nine representing 72.5% of student- athletes and one hundred and seven representing 66.9% disagreed that, sporting activities do not give them pleasure. Both student- athletes and non student- athletes disagreed that sporting activities do not refresh them for studies with 32 (80%) and 100 (62.5%) respectively.

From the above discussions, it can be said that generally; students of Offinso College of Education have good perception about students' sports participation for the college. The student- athletes do not see sports participation for the college as a factor that could affect their academic performance. This could be because the student- athletes still perform well academically so they do not see sports participation as having negative effects on them.

Discussion of findings

Research Question One: what is the academic performance of student- athletes compared with non student- athletes at OFCE in terms of their GPA score?

In comparing to find the difference in the mean cumulative GPA scores of student- athletes and non student- athletes, an independent group t- test was used. Jackson (2006) recommended an independent group t- test as the most appropriate parametric statistical test for this purpose because it compares the means of two different samples of respondents from a single population.

Table 5: T-test on the academic performance of the student- athletes and non student- athletes

Student	Number	Range of CGPA	Mean of CGPA	S.D
Student- athletes	40	1.15 - 3.50	2.24	0.56
Non student- athletes	160	0.75 - 2.15	2.15	0.55

It can be observed from table 5 that, the range of CGPA of student- athletes was 1.15- 3.50 with a mean of 2.24 and standard deviation of 0.55 (M= 2.15, S.D= 0.55). Also the range of CGPA of non student- athletes is 0.75- 3.45 with a mean CGPA of 2.15 and S.D of 0.55 (M=2.15, S.D= 0.55). Therefore, the mean differences between the two samples are 0.09. The results of this analysis shows that at p value of 0.05, there was statistically slight difference in the mean CGPA of student- athletes and non student- athletes resulting in student- athletes performing slightly better than non student- athletes.

The findings confirmed that of Hank (1979) who opined that participating in high school athletics has a basically good effect on the educational achievement of high school students where the educational performance of athletes was better than that of non-athletes.

Also, Phillips (1971) indicated that athletes tend to exceed comparable non-athletes in their achievement of education goals.

Research Question Two: What is the academic performance level of female student- athletes compared to female non student- athletes andmale student- athletes compared to male non student- athletes?

To answer this research question, the results of the female student- athletes and female non student- athletes were analyzed comparing the mean cumulative GPA scores of the two groups. T- test of significance at P value of 0.05 was used to examine the scores to find out if there exist a distinct variation in the way in which academic performance were achieved and whether the difference if any at all, could be attributed to being a female student- athlete or female non student- athlete.

Table 6: T-test on the academic performance of the female student- athletes and female non student-athletes

Gender	Number	Range of CGPA	Mean of CGPA	S.D
Female student- athletes	20	1.15 - 3.10	2.08	0.51
Female non student- athletes	60	0.75 - 3.05	1.95	0.49

It can be seen clearly from table 6 that, there was a slight difference between the two groups in terms of the mean CGPA. The female student- athletes had mean CGPA of 2.08 with S.D of 0.51 while the female non student- athletes had mean CGPA of 1.95 with S.D of 0.49. This means that, although athletes tend to miss lectures sometimes due to tiredness, they go extra miles to study on their own privately to enable them perform well academically. Therefore, we have sufficient evidence to infer that, female student-athletes at OFCE performs slightly better in academic than female non student- athletes.

This research question sought to ascertain the difference in the academic performance of male student- athletes and male non student- athletes in terms of their mean cumulative GPA.

The raw scores of the students were entered onto the SPSS programme and analysis of the academic performance was done using t- test at a significant level of 0.05.

The results of the analysis showed that the mean cumulative GPA of male student- athletes was 2.39 with S.D of 0.57 and the mean cumulative GPA of the male non student- athletes was 2.26 with S.D of 0.55. This means, the male student- athletes performed slightly better than the male non student- athletes.

The findings are in line with Casey (1980), Parker and Johnson (1981), Melnick, et al (1992) and Rasmussen (2000) who were of the view that sports participation improves students' achievements, motivation, improves students' grades, keep them in school, raises their educational aspirations, help them learn about themselves and to handle adversity and help them experience team work and sportsmanship.

Research Question Three: What are the benefits of sports participation as perceived by students of Offinso College of Education?

The study sought to know among others the interest of students in sports participation,students' perception towards sports participation and perceived benefits of sports participation at Offinso College of Education. To answer this research question, sixteen items were posed to elicit the interest, views and perceptions of the students. Their responses are presented in table 4ii above.

To determine the interest of the students in sports, the respondents were asked three questions. The students response in table 4ii revealed that, most student- athletes liked sports, played sports at SHS and currently participate in sports at the college unlike

the non student- athletes who do not like sports that much, did not play sports except few of them and currently do not participate in sports.

Students from table 4ii showed that, they have good perception about sports participation in the college. However, sports should not be held concurrently with studies such that student- athletes will miss lectures.

From the five point Likert scale items on the questionnaire, students responded to the extent to which they agree or disagree to the perceived benefits of sports participation at the college. The response ranged from strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree. But for the purpose of discussion, the researcher grouped the response to three categories namely: agree, uncertain and disagree. This means that, strongly agree and agree were considered as "agree" and strongly disagree and disagree were considered "disagree"

It was found that, students of Offinso College of Education perceived that they undertake sporting activities to keep fit, release tension, and improve upon their skills. This implies that the student- athletes are more likely to continue sports participating so as to keep themselves strong, release tension and improve upon their skills. The findings confirm related literature reviewed on benefits derived from sports participation. Literature suggests that people engage in sports for enjoyment, personal satisfaction and the opportunity to attain victory or obtain rewards (Kuh, 2001; Richards & Aries, 1999).

Popovic (1999) was of the view that, exercise and physical activity can provide something worthwhile in life. Something that one really enjoys, that gives a goal to aim for and a sense of purpose.

Popovic listed some benefits of engaging in sports as: less tension, stress and mental fatigue, a natural energy boost, improved sleep, a sense of achievement, focus in life and motivation, less anger or frustration, a healthy appetite, better social life, and having fun (Rowland, 1990).

Test of Null Hypothesis one

Ho: There would be no significant difference of sports participation on academic performance of student- athletes and non student- athletes in terms of mean cumulative GPA.

To find the difference between the mean cumulative GPA score of student- athletes and non student- athletes, an independent t- test was used to test our null hypothesis one.

Table 5: T-test on the academic performance of the student- athletes and non student- athletes

Student	Number	Mean of CGPA	S.D	t	df
Student- athletes	40	2.24	0.56	-859	198
Non student- athletes	160	2.15	0.55	-813	198

The results of this analysis indicated that at p value of 0.05, t = -859, df = 198, X = 2.24 and S.D = 0.56 for student- athletes and t = -813, df = 198, X = 2.15 and S.D = 0.55 for non student- athletes, there was statistically slight difference in the mean CGPA of student- athletes and non student- athletes resulting in student- athletes performing slightly better than non student- athletes. Based on this the researcher reject the null hypothesis Ho.

This research work confirms what Pilapil, Stecklein, and Liu (1970) studied. They studied the academic characteristics of student- athletes and non student- athletes at the University of Minnesota and using mainly descriptive statistics, found that the student-athletes had slightly higher GPA scores: 2.42 as against 2.40 for the non student- athletes. This finding support the findings of Pilapil et al (1970) in which the academic performance of the selected student- athletes was slightly better than the selected non student- athletes.

Test of Null Hypothesis two

Ho: There would be no significant difference between the GPA of male student-athletes compared to non male student- athletes

Table 7: T-test on the academic performance of the male student- athletes and male non student-athletes

Student	Number	Mean of CGPA	S.D	t	df
Male student- athletes	20	2.39	0.57	14.092	19
Male non student- athletes	100	2.260.55	40.806	99	

Establishing the level of significance at $p < .05$, the critical value for one sample t- test is + 0.000 at that level. Our obtained value t= 14.092, df= 19, S.D= 0.57 and X= 2.39 for male student- athletes and for the male non student- athletes, t= 40.806, df= 99, S.D= 0.55 with a X of 2.26. Therefore, the researcher had sufficient information to reject the null hypothesis and to conclude that, there was a significant difference in mean of academic performance between the two samples of data.

Test of Null Hypothesis 3

Ho: There would be no significant difference between the GPA of female student-athletes compared to non female student- athletes.

Table 7: T-test on the academic performance of the female student- athletes and female non student-athletes

Student	Number	Mean of CGPA	S.D	t	df
Female student- athletes	20	2.080.51	22.836	19	
Female non student- athletes	601.950.49	41.103 99			

Given the level of significance at $p < .05$, the critical value for a one sample t- test was 0.000 at that level. The female student- athletes had CGPA of 2.08 with S.D of 0.51, t= 22.836 and df= 19 while the female non student- athletes had mean CGPA of 1.95 with S.D of 0.55, t= 41.103 and df= 99. This means that, female student- athletes performed slightly better in academics than female non student- athletes. The researcher therefore had enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Summary of findings

This research was carried out in order to compare and ascertain whether participation or non-participation in sports has any influence on the academic performance of OFCE students. It was also intended to find out whether there would be difference between the academic performance of female student-athletes compared to female non student-athletes and male student-athletes compared to male non student-athletes.

The study adopted the causal comparative design which involved 200 students of Offinso College of Education in the Ashanti Region. The Researcher used purposive sampling, stratified sampling and simple random sampling technique to select respondents from both student-athletes and non student-athletes groups. Students mean cumulative GPA score of the second semester 2013/2014 academic year was used as the proxy or performance index to answer three research questions and a 16 item questionnaire was used to answer one research question.

The instrument was pilot tested at Wesley College of Education, Kumasi to ascertain the reliability and validity. The chronbach alpha coefficient was determined as r= 0.79. An indication that the instrument was good enough to be used to collect data for the study. Considering the kind of raw data obtained, t-test was obviously the statistical

technique most preferred for the analysis of the difference between the mean cumulative GPA score of student-athletes and non student-athletes.

Using the statistical package for social science (SPPS) version 17, the t-test was used to answer whether:

1. The academic performances of student of student-athletes differ from non student-athletes.
2. The academic performance of female student-athletes differs from female non student-athletes andmale student-athletes differs from male non student-athletes.
3. Offinso College of Education student have some perceived benefits of sport participation in the College.

Literature was reviewed under the following themes: The concept of sports participation in the College Setting, the need, Aims, and Importance of sports participating in schools and Colleges (Physical health, mental health, Educational and social development, and sport participation), Education, Sports Participation and Academic performance.

Analysis of the result revealed the following:

1. The academic performance of the sampled student-athletes differed slightly from that of the sampled non student-athletes. This means the mean cumulative GPA of student-athletes was slightly better than that of the non student-athletes.
2. Both sampled female student-athletes and sampled female non student –athletes had low grades according to the University of Cape Coast criteria of grading although female student-athletes performance slightly better.

This led to the conclusion that, there is slight difference in the academic performance of sampled female student-athletes compared to female non-athletes.

3. There was slight difference between the sampled male student-athlete and male non student-athlete and in terms of cumulative GPA.
4. Majority of the students of Offinso College of Education like sports and believed that sports has no negative influence on them. They also disagreed that, sports waste their time and affect their academic performance.
5. Lastly, they agreed that, sports improve their social status, help them to release tension, refresh them for studies and give them pleasure although they sometimes miss lectures.

5.2 Conclusion

The impact that sports exert on academic performance has been debated over the years, some say the impact is positive, while others say it is negative. Early analysis of the effect of participation in sports on academic performance produced inconsistent evidence (Broh, 2002). Even today, there is inconsistent evidence but most research tends to lean towards the idea that participation in sports does, in fact improve academic performance.

The results of this particular study indicated that sports participation does not significantly influence the academic performance of student-athletes compared to non student-athletes of Offinso College of Education.

Although there is controversy as to whether or not sports participation enhances or decreases academic performance, there have been several studies and surveys that provide evidence. For instance Whitley (1999) compared the GPA, graduation rates dropout rate, attendance rates and discipline referral rates for the 1995 school years of participatory students (students participating in high school sports) and non-participatory students (student not participating in sports). Whitley (1999) found the athlete subgroups outperformed the non-athlete subgroups as a whole in all of the measurable categories. Whitley concluded the GPA scores of the athlete subgroups were higher than the GPA scores of the non-athlete subgroups.

On the contrary, Eitzen and Purdy (1986), also using t-test and descriptive statistics, found that student-athletes of Colorado in the United States of America had lower GPA scores than the general student population, confirming earlier study by Purdy et al (1982) who found at University of Colorado that, students-athlete who were scholarship holders, blacks and participants in major revenue producing sport of football and basketball had the lowest GPA scores.

The above findings are from United States of America but in Ghana, Hammond (2013), Assessed the influence of sports participation on academic achievement of student-athlete of University of Education, Winneba. Ghana and find out that, the academic achievement of the sampled student-athlete did not differ from that of the sampled non student-athletes did not differ from that of the sampled non student-athletes. Meaning none of the two did better than the other.

Pennah (2013) also did a comparison of academic performance of student-athletes and non student-athletes of Mfanstipim Senior High School in the Central Region of Ghana and concluded that, students have good reasons for participating in sports and do not see participating in sports to be affecting their academic performance and when the academic results of the athletes and non-athletes were compared the mean CGPA of the athletes was higher than the mean CGPA of the non-athletes.

In Ghana, student-athletes go through the same challenges as the general student population unlike in the United State of America where commercialization is another venture for college athletes and therefore are given preferential treatment. This imposes pressure on Ghanaian student-athletes to take their studies very serious because, there is no guarantee that they could do the sports to professional level.

Different demography and conditions can affect how sports participation influence academic performance, therefore caution must be taken when one wants to conclude using this current findings as a yardstick.

From this study, it can be concluded that,student- athletes performed slightly better than non student- athletesand also students have good perception about students' sports participation at the college. Student- athletes do not see sports as a factor that could affect their academic performance. This could be because students still perform well academically so they do not see sports participation as having negative effects on them.

5.3 Recommendations

With respect to the findings and conclusion drawn from the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The fact that the student-athletes sampled for this study had slighter better mean cumulative GPA than the non student-athletes appears safe to conclude that sports participation at Offinso College of Education does not influence the academic performance of student-athletes. There should be specific initiatives focusing on the individual student-athletes challenges both personal and environmental that may impact student-athletes dual role in the college. Some of the specific programmes recommended include academic monitoring, personal counseling, career guidance, assignment and compatible academic advisors, inculcation of skills, establishment of student-athletes tutoring, sessions among others. This will always help maintain academic performance and sport participation without any difficulty.
2. A lot goes into what makes a student- athletes successful in combining his academics and sports participation and may require uniquely different strategy as it relates to each college sports team as well as individuals. The old adage “one size fits all” may not be a suitable method for helping every student-athlete to make the grade. This is to say that with the student-athletes who could not attain good academic performance, appropriate academic support programmes could be put in place by the college authorities to relieve the handicap. It will help student-athletes manage and balance their time for sports and academic activities.

3. The College authorities, staff and parents should encourage and motivate students to actively participle in sport since this research has proven that student-athletes perform slightly better than non student-athletes.
4. College authorities should as much as possible avoid organizing sports and lectures concurrently since student-athletes are disadvantaged as they miss lectures.
5. College authorities are entreated to organize the college curriculum in such a way that it will give sports the required place and time thereby encouraging all sports educablestudents to participate in sports.
6. Student-athletes should also learn how to apportion their time properly for both sports, and academic work.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The researcher suggest any further studies on the comparative study of the academic performance of student-athletes and non student-athletes with an exclusion of participants from Offinso College of Education 2013/2014 academic year group.

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UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, RECREATION AND SPORTS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

This study seeks to compare the academic performance of student- athletes and non student- athletes in Offinso College of Education in Offinso. It will be very much appreciated if you could answer all the questions honestly. You assured of anonymity and the use of the data solely for academic purpose. Thank you.

Section A: Back ground characteristics of respondents

Please respond by ticking [√] in the appropriate box provided.

1. Level: DBE A [ ] DBE B [ ] DBE C [ ] DBE D [ ]
   DBE E [ ] DBE F [ ] DBE G [ ] DBE H [ ]
2. Age : 16 – 18 [ ] 19 -21 [ ] 22 and above [ ]
3. What is your grade in WASSCE.? ……
4. Do you like sports?
   a. Always [ ] b. Not always [ ] c. Not at all [ ]
5. Did you play sports in Senior High School? A. Yes [ ] b. No [ ]
6. Do you participate in sports currently? A. Yes [ ] b. No [ ]
7. Are you an athlete? A. Yes [ ] B. No [ ]

Section B: Why students participate in school sports

Respond to the reasons why students participate in sports by ticking one of the options.

Key: SA – Strongly Agree, A- Agree, D- Disagree, SD – Strongly Disagree.

Reason for participating in sports	A	SA	D	SD
1. Participating in school sports affect academic performance				
2. Playing sports has no negative influence on one's academic performance				
3. Playing sports has no positive influence on one's academic performance				
4. Participating in sports is a waste of time				
5. All students should participate in sports because it improves one's social stature				
6. Some teachers discourage me from participating in school sports				
7. My friends think my participation in sporting activities will affect my studies				
8. Engaging in sporting activities affect my studies				
9. Playing sports results in poor academic performance				
10. Sports men at time get tired after playing sports that they miss lectures				
11. lectures at times take place when sports men and women are playing for their college				

Section C: Benefits for sports participation

Please respond to the reasons why students participate in sports by ticking one of the options. Key: SA – Strongly Agree, A- Agree, D- Disagree, SD – Strongly Disagree.

Benefits for participating in sports	A	SA	D	SD
1. I undertake sporting activities to keep myself fit				
2. Sporting activities cannot help me release tension				
3. I undertake sporting activities to improve upon my skills				
4. Sporting activities do not give me pleasure				
5. Engaging in sporting activities do not refresh me for my studies				

Thank you for being part of the study.