

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**AN EVALUATION OF THE NEED TO MAKE PHYSICAL  
EDUCATION AN EXTERNALLY EXAMINABLE SUBJECT IN THE  
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM**



**JUNE, 2015**

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SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

**AUGUSTINE NYAABA**



**A Dissertation in the Department of HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION  
RECREATION AND SPORTS, FACULTY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION,  
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partial fulfilment of the requirements for an award of the MASTERS OF  
EDUCATION DEGREE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

**JUNE, 2015**

## DECLARATION

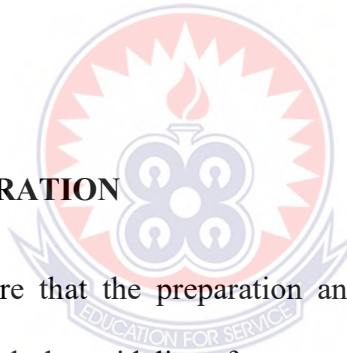
### STUDENTS'S DECLARATION

I, Augustine Nyaaba declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all 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 **J. A. Baba (PhD)** declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

**SIGNATURE**.....

**DATE:**.....

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

It will be necessary to give credit to all whose contributions have complemented my efforts. I mention, first, my supervisor: Dr J.A. Baba (Head of Department, Health, Physical Education Recreation and Sports) for guiding and aiding me to come out with this research work. I say God richly bless you.

Again, I cannot forget the services of Prof. Pufaa also of Health, Physical Education Recreation and Sports (HPERS) Department for his encouragement and advice.

Finally, it would be unforgivable to forget the contribution of friends and relations towards the preparation and presentation of this dissertation.



## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother (Alobase Nyaaba) and my younger brother (James Nyaaba Isildur)



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## ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the perceptions of students, physical education teachers and non-physical education teachers on the external examinability or otherwise of physical education as a core subject in Senior High Schools. This descriptive survey study utilized a sample size which consisted of 170 respondents made up of hundred (100) non-physical education teachers, sixty (60) students and ten(10) physical education teachers. Primary data for the analysis was obtained from the research conducted in three Senior High Schools in the Ejisu-Juaben municipality. The instrument used in the study contained 42 items with closed-ended and open-ended responses which was previously pilot-tested with other two friends to establish content validity. The findings of the study revealed that although, physical education is taught in schools, it was confirmed by majority of respondents in each of the categories ( 68% of students, 80% of physical education teachers, and 70% non-physical education teachers) that the subject was neither examined internally in most schools nor examined externally in whatever form or manner. Several schools had opted to use the physical education periods for sports training, limiting the entire time for the participation of only school athletes while denying non-performers the opportunity to exercise. It was recommended among others that, since majority of respondents agree to the adage that “a sound mind lies in a sound body”, physical education programmes should contain activities such as fitness, dance and outward bound activities to create fun and help participants’ live healthy lives

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

According to Hardman (2007), “Physical education recognises the physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions of human movement, and emphasises the contribution of physical activity to the promotion of individual and group wellbeing.” Physical Education (P.E) plays a critical role in educating the whole student. Like other academic courses of study, physical education is based upon rigorous national standards that define what students should know and be able to do as a result of participation. Physical education is unique to the school curriculum as it is the only programme that provides students with opportunities to learn motor skills, develop fitness, and gain understanding about the importance of physical activity. Students will be provided an individualized, developmentally appropriate, and personally challenging instructional programme that will advance the knowledge, confidence, skills, and motivation needed to engage in a lifelong, healthy, active lifestyle.

With the increase in obesity nationwide, the benefits gained from physical activity include: disease prevention, decreased morbidity and premature mortality, and increased mental health and self-esteem. The benefits of physical education can also affect academic learning. Regular aerobic exercise produces an increased number of capillaries servicing the brain which allows for a greater exchange of nutrients and waste products. This optimizes oxygen and glucose delivery to the brain which can help improve brain performance. Additionally, physical education incorporates concepts of math, reading/English language arts, and science into the physical education realm. The

ultimate goal of physical education will always be participation in health-enhancing physical activity for a lifetime.

Physical education in Ghana is taught in all the pre-tertiary institutions to inculcate the spirit of regular exercise and participation in physical activities among individuals. Governments, past and present therefore affirmed the UNESCO Charter on Physical Education and Sports which states that every human being has a fundamental right of access to Physical Education and Sports which are essential for the full development of his personality. The charter goes on to say that the freedom to develop physical, intellectual and moral powers through sports must be guaranteed both within the Educational System and in other aspects of social life. In most of the Senior High Schools in Ghana, physical education is taught as a core subject from forms one and two. However, in spite of the availability of evidence which justify the significance of teaching physical education in schools as well as the existence of policy pronouncements which make the teaching of physical education mandatory, physical education in Ghana still faces numerous challenges and is not being taught effectively. This observation is strongly supported by Hardman (2003), who contend that “it is clear that in too many schools, in too many countries children are being denied the physical education opportunities that will transform their lives. Some headmasters/headmistresses in Ghana are so much examination oriented that non-examinable but relevant subject such as P.E is given a second fiddle.

Life today has become so complex that examinations have come to play an important part in one’s educational career. Examinations are considered so important that most students are afraid of them. The ability to pass an examination is indeed a valuable quality. It shows that the student is able to express his thought and ideas to a manner others can understand. It also shows that the student has acquired a certain amount of

knowledge in some branches of study. Besides, the mind of a student, even if he is dull, receives good exercise when he prepares for an examination. A student's success in an examination, therefore, helps employers and others to assess his mental or general ability. Physical education one of the subjects in the school curriculum is not examinable in most countries which Ghana is no exception. Considering the importance attach to examinations in our educational institutions, one will be asking if physical education is not as important as the other subjects that are examinable.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Physical education is a compulsory subject which requires every student at the Senior High School level in Ghana to study. Although non- examinable, physical education is currently a taught subject just like any other academic subject in the curriculum but not externally examinable. Time allocated for the subject in Senior High School is 80 minutes for two lessons per week. Currently, there are several arguments about whether physical education in Senior High Schools should be made an externally examinable subject. Whiles some schools of thoughts are of the view that writing exams on physical education will boost students' morale to take the subject serious, to others, physical education is seen as play which involves only jumping, throwing, and running and as such deserves no further attention other than what it is now being accorded.

While physical education is an examinable subject administered by the West African Examination Council (WAEC), Senior High Schools in Ghana, especially, do not allow students to register for the subject although their counterparts in other English- speaking West African countries take the physical education examination at the WASSCE level. Parents are however not provided with reasons why physical education is non- examinable. While it is widely accepted the value of physical education to the total development of the school child, yet, no convincing reason has been attributed to the

external non-examinability of the subject in Ghana. Many school authorities ignorantly assume and equate physical education to sports thereby placing emphasis on intramural and extramural sports to the total neglect of physical education. The desire to win accolades for schools through sports competitions far outweighs the values of physical education to the total well-being of the Ghanaian child. It is this reason that fuels the desire to find out why physical education is being neglected in Senior High Schools and to determine whether this is related in any way to the non-examinability of the subject at the WASSCE level.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate and synthesise the views on teachers' perception about the examinability or otherwise of physical education at Senior High School level.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Evaluate perceptions of teachers on the examinability or otherwise of physical education as a core subject in Senior High Schools.
2. Find out whether the external examinability of physical education will affect the behaviour and attitude of students in SHS towards the subject.
3. Identify the views or opinions of non-physical education teachers in SHS concerning the current non-examinability of physical education and how that affects their own subject areas.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered;

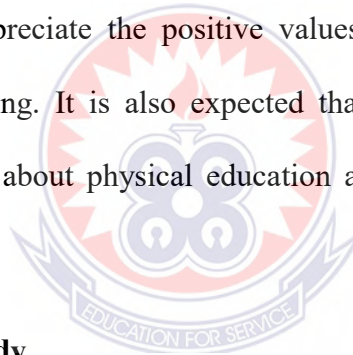
1. How do teachers of physical education perceive physical education as a non-examinable subject?

2. How will external examinations in physical education affect the behaviour or attitude of SHS students towards the subject?

3. How does the lack of external examination of physical education influence teachers' behaviour in other subject areas in SHS?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study is significant because by evaluating the views of teachers towards the teaching of physical education, measures can be taken to address specific challenges that could possibly enhance the teaching and learning of physical education at the Senior High School level. The data collected will produce information to help teachers in physical education provide positive and challenging environments in their physical education lessons for students to appreciate the positive values of physical activity to healthy lifestyle living and wellbeing. It is also expected that this study will address certain myths and misconceptions about physical education as an academic subject in Senior High School curricula.



### **1.7 Delimitation of the study**

The study is delimited to Senior High School teachers in the Ejisu-Juaben municipal area. This is because teachers here have the same characteristics as teachers in other districts in Ghana.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

This research should have been broadened to cover the whole nation but due to time and financial constraints the study was limited to only five Senior High Schools in the Ejisu-Juaben municipality of Ashanti Region. The limitation was also due to the fact that the researcher had to combine his normal heavy schedule with this research study.

However, it is believed that the findings in this district will be a true reflection of what happens elsewhere in Ghana.

### **1.9 Operational Definition of Terms**

**A total person-** one who is physically, mentally and emotionally stable

**Active lifestyle-** is a lifestyle that contributes positive to physical, mental and social wellbeing as a consequence of regular exercise

**Assessment -**the collection of information, contextualized by the use of that information

**Authentic assessment-** is the measurement of intellectual accomplishments that are worthwhile, significant and meaningful

**Cognitive function-**an intellectual process by which one becomes aware of, perceives or comprehends ideas. It involves all aspects of perception, thinking, reasoning and remembering

**Inferior-** lower in rank, status, or quality.

**Non-examinable subject-**subjects that are not examined externally

**Sporadic programmes-**programmes appearing in scattered or isolated instances

**Subjective-** influenced by or based on personal beliefs or feeling, rather than on facts.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

Physical education is a compulsory subject that is taught at the basic and High School levels in Ghana. Despite the immense benefits associated with the study of physical education, the subject is not respected by many in the country. “PE teachers do not enjoy the same respect as teachers of compulsory academic subjects... The status of most PE teachers, particularly in suburbs and villages, leaves much to be desired. It is often argued that they lack professionalism in the way they go about their job” (Ammah & Kwaw, 2005, p.321). This study seeks to examine the factor that has attributed to the poor nature of physical education in Ghana and if making the subject examinable or otherwise will change the status it is currently enjoying.

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory of reasoned action (Ajzen, 1991) was adopted for guidance to this study. According to Chris (2004) theories are simply explanations of why things happen as they happen.

#### Theory of Reasoned Action

Theory of reasoned action suggests that a person’s behaviour is determined by his or her intention to perform the behaviour and that this intention is, in turn, a function of his or her attitude towards the behaviour and his or her subjective norm (Ajzen, 1991). So the theory of reasoned action is explaining why children behave the way they do.

The best predictor of behaviour is intention. Intention is a cognitive representation of a child’s readiness to perform a given behaviour and it is considered to be the immediate source of behaviour change. This intention for a change is determined by: learner’s

attitude towards specific behaviour, learner's subjective norms and learner's perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). The theory of planned behaviour holds that only specific attitudes towards behaviour in question can be expected behaviour. When the one participates in physical activity the driving force for the action are attitudes. Playing soccer, netball and all other games in Physical Education, attitudes is the driving force. Finally, perceived behavioural control influences the given behaviour of the person. Then the intention may be established and the participation behaviour will carry on (Ajzen (1991).

## **2.1 Students' Attitudes towards Physical Education**

Having the right attitude is one of the precursors for learning and successful participation in Physical Education and related physical, activities. Several studies have been conducted in different countries to critically assess and evaluate learner's attitudes with a possibility to improve the learning environment and keep learners socialized into the subject. While learner's perception towards Physical Education remains a challenge to the teachers, parents and the curriculum, this study focuses at contributing to the possible solutions.

Hunt (1995) examined the impact of Physical Education program on students' attitudes towards physical activity outside school in United Kingdom. This controlled experimental study compared two groups of schools. While one group of 5 schools had daily Physical Education program, the other 5 group of schools did not have daily Physical Education programs for six weeks. Physical Activity Questionnaire for children was used to collect data. The result indicated that children who had Physical Education daily became socialized into physical activities.

In the United States of America, Silverman and Subramanian (2007), examined middle and high school students' attitudes towards Physical Education. The researchers were

interested in determining the factors that potentially influenced attitudes of children and learning. The participants were grades 6 to 8. Data were collected using the Pre-Adolescent Attitude towards Physical Education Questionnaire (PAAPEQ) developed by (Loumidis & Shropshire (1996). The results indicated that 60% of the children had positive attitudes towards Physical Education. This report identified that the environmental factors influence negatively the attitudes of learners towards Physical Education.

In a related study, Haynes, Fletcher & Mille (2008) investigated the effect of student attitudes towards Physical Education after being grouped into classes in the United States of America. A questionnaire was administered to measure the perceived ability of participants. The structured interview questions were also used to establish student attitudes towards Physical Education. The results indicated that a number of participants reported a change towards Physical Education.

In a study to examine the attitudes of high school students towards Physical Education, Janice, Bibik, Stephen, Goodwin, Elizabeth and Smith (2007) used questionnaires and observations methods to collect data. Results indicated that the majority had positive attitudes towards Physical Education. The minority students, who engaged in negative health behaviours, such as smoking, drinking or using drugs, did not like Physical Education activities.

In Turkey, Arabaci (2009) measured high school children's attitudes towards Physical Education and physical activity. The study used a self-report questionnaire that probed children's attitudes towards Physical Education program and their involvement in physical activity outside school hours. The results indicated that attitudes towards Physical Education were significantly different between high school and secondary school children. Secondary school children's attitudes were higher than high school

children's attitudes. The causes of attitudes towards Physical Education and physical activity were curriculum, lack of spacious schoolyards, teacher, location of residences and Physical Education facilities.

Yilmaz and Ozdemir (2008) examined children's attitudes towards Physical Activity and Physical Education in the urban Ankara city in Turkey. A multiple methods, involving behaviour mapping of children activities during recess, physical assessments and interviews. The age of children range between 13 and 14 years. The questionnaire was administered using face to face interviews. The results indicated that children had a positive attitude towards physical activity but the limiting factors were lack of playing grounds. Children had limited outdoor space for playing during lunch and recess.

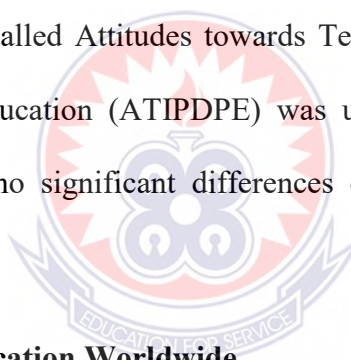
Tomik (2007) assessed the differences of attitudes towards Physical Education and Sport between members of School Sports Club (SSC) and youth of the same age that did not participate in the activities of the sport clubs. The questionnaire was used to collect data from 623 randomly selected school sports club in Poland. The results indicated that SSC members have more positive attitudes towards Physical Education and Sport but the other group of youth who do not participate in Physical Education and Sport had a negative attitude towards Physical Education.

## **2.1 Teachers' Attitudes towards Physical Education and Instructional Skills**

Teachers play a pivotal role in influencing the children's attitudes towards Physical Education. The characteristic of a teacher determines the children's attitudes towards the subject. The way the teacher interprets the curriculum has an impact on learners. Teachers can make children like or hate Physical Education. Hicks (2004) examined the influence of pedagogical characteristics of two Physical education teachers on the children's attitudes towards Physical Education. The teachers were employed in different schools. Questionnaires, interviews, observations and document analysis were used to

collect data. The results indicated that children were more positive with one teacher than the other. This teacher was perceived to have influenced on children's attitudes towards Physical Education. In Zimbabwe, Mushoriwa (2001) assessed primary school teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of blind children in regular classes using questionnaires and interviews. The results revealed that the majority of teachers had negative attitudes towards the inclusion of blind children in regular classes and that male and female teachers were equally rejecting the idea. Mushoriwa further reported that the inclusive education have potential contribution towards social rejection among children.

A study of Bartonova, Kudlacek & Bressan (2007) tested the attitudes of future Physical Educators towards teaching children with disabilities in Physical Education in South Africa. The questionnaire called Attitudes towards Teaching Individuals with Physical Disabilities in Physical Education (ATIPDPE) was used to collect data. The results indicated that there were no significant differences of attitudes among the Physical Education teachers



## **2.2 Status of Physical Education Worldwide.**

Legal and perceived actual status of physical education and its teachers is a contentious issue. Data indicate that equal subject legal status is claimed in 76% of countries. Africa, where only 20% of countries indicate equal legal status of subjects, represents a marked contrast with Europe's 91%.

Data indicate that across all regions except Europe, in practice physical education is considered to have lower status than other subjects. Notably in the Middle East and North American regions, all countries/states indicate that physical education's actual status is perceived to be lower than that of other school subjects. High proportions of perceived lower status of physical education are also seen in Africa (80%), Asia (75%) and Central and Latin America (67%), whilst in Europe lower subject status is reported

in less than one third (30%) of countries. Exemplars of physical education's perceived lower status are widespread:

### **Italy**

“In primary schools, PE is often regarded as free play and in the upper levels of secondary schools; it has lower status than other subjects... Legally PE is like other subjects, but often it is the Cinderella of the school” (PE Teacher)

### **USA**

“PE is not an academic subject, so it is inappropriate to have it as an academic subject’...  
‘We do not require students to go to the dentist, take showers, get more sleep, and eat balanced meals – we shouldn’t require PE either” (Grossman, 2009).

Physical education's inferior status and lower value as a mere antidote to academic subjects are evident in parental pre-disposition to favouring academic subjects with time spent on physical education perceived as a threat to academic achievement as testified by European observers:

### **France**

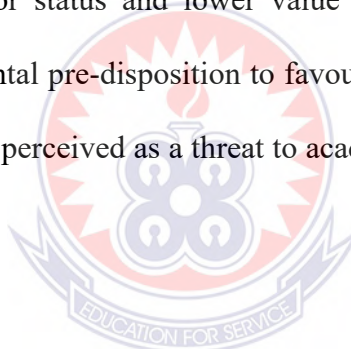
“Unfortunately parents don’t protest (when physical education lessons are cancelled) and it (physical education) is not considered as fundamental” (PE/Sport Teacher)

### **Germany**

“There is absolutely no protest from parents, when PE lessons are cancelled. There is always a protest if lessons e.g. maths, German, English, etc. are cancelled.

Occasionally parents demand that PE lessons are ‘converted’ to maths etc.” (PE Teacher)

Frequency of cancellation of lessons is one indicator of subject status. Evidence indicates that the low status and esteem of the subject are detrimental to its position: in many countries (44%), physical education lessons are cancelled more often than other so called academic subjects; 41% of countries indicate that physical education is the same as all



other subjects when it comes to cancellation; and 5% indicate physical education is less likely to be cancelled than other subjects, with 10% indicating that it is never cancelled. Apart from its attributed low status as of little educational value etc., other reasons for the cancellation of physical education include: government financial cuts; insufficient numbers of qualified physical education teachers; adverse weather conditions; the use of the dedicated physical education lesson space for examinations; preparation for examinations; concerts; ceremonial occasions such as celebratory prize giving; spiritual exercises as at Easter time; and use as dining areas.

The table below shows that in 28% of countries physical education teachers do not enjoy the same status as other subject teachers but there are regional differences. In Central and Latin America, Asia and Europe, over two-thirds indicate that the status is the same. However, in Africa, North America and the Middle East the situation is reversed and in a majority of countries, there are clear indications of lower status accorded to physical education teachers when compared with other subject teachers.

**Table 2.1 Physical Education Teachers Status Globally/Regionally (%)**

Global/Region	Higher Status	Same Status	Lower Status
Global	-	72	28
Africa	-	40	60
Asia	-	67	33
Central/Latin America	-	67	33
Europe	-	85	15
Middle east	-	33	67
North America	-	25	75

The status of Physical Education in Ghana varies from one school to another. In some schools, it has a low status whilst in others, it commands a higher status signified by its featuring on the school time table. The former status is consistent with Amusa, Toriola and Onyewadume's (1999) view that Physical Education in Africa, Ghana included is in a parlous state. This may owe to lack of involvement by teachers in curriculum development. Katzenellenbogen (1994) argues that teacher attitudes play a role in the teaching of a subject. Positive attitudes towards the teaching of Physical Education result from a deep conviction of the worth of the subject on the part of knowledgeable teachers who believe that Physical Education is an essential subject which helps students improve cognitive function as they learn about their abilities, aptitudes, limitations and potential even in other subject areas (Ratey, 2000; Ratey and Hagerman, 2008). California and Texas states in the United States mandated Physical Education learning time and assessment of Physical Education learners. They found that students who attended Physical Education lessons and are physically fit scored higher on their state standardized tests, caused less discipline problems and attended school more often than their less fit peers (NASPE, 2002; Texas Education Agency, 2009; Ziegler, 2005). Amusa et al (1999) assert that traditionally, most African societies associate Physical Education with play and leisure. Such societies think of Physical Education as only involving the physical and not intellectual activities (Amusa et al, 1999). The implication is that a subject viewed as such results in teachers and society contributing negatively towards its teaching. In Africa, teachers perceive Physical Education differently. Some teachers are committed to providing pupils with relevant, enriching, thoroughly and progressively planned, dynamically taught and effectively managed programmes. Others with negative attitudes run 'keep them busy' sporadic programmes manned by unqualified over-worked teachers (Katzenellenbogen, 1999). Rathedi (1997) points out



that in some African primary schools, and one might add Ghanaian primary schools included, Physical Education is not an examinable subject. This is reinforced by the Nziramasanga Commission (1999) which established that since its recognition as a primary school subject in Ghana in particular, Physical Education has always been viewed as a compulsory non-examinable subject. A survey conducted by college lecturers on the status of Physical Education in Zimbabwean primary schools revealed that the subject is timetabled for the sake of student teachers and there is little or no support from school administrators (Musangeya et al, 2000). Owing to this, the status of Physical Education remains shaky and low because teachers consider it low in their scale of values. The Sport Journal (1999) states that in many regions of the world, Physical Education is considered as a non-productive activity, less important to a successful future than academic subjects. In other words, there is a prevailing perception that one cannot build a career on it in spite of the overwhelming evidence that sport is a money-making industry in the western world and in some African countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Ethiopia. The success stories of these African countries in terms of performance in sports are pointers to the fact that society's views about Physical Education are gradually changing (Musangeya et al, 2000). Physical Education in some areas has been seen to make significant contributions to programmes designed to develop a total person, including both physical and intellectual development (Amusa et al, 1999). On a related issue, Masogo, Cooper and Molefe (1997) in Amusa, Toriola and Onyewadume (1999) stress that subjects such as Mathematics and English are deemed productive because they equip students with skills to solve problems they could not solve at the beginning of the course. In other words, there is a sense of outcomes which pervades these subjects which is lacking in Physical Education.

Teachers' beliefs and values is another factor that must be considered. Researchers regarding curriculum change have shown that "teachers' belief systems play decisive roles in the teaching and learning process" (Chen & Ennis, 1996 p. 338). When teaching, the "teacher's cognitive and other behaviours are guided by and make sense in relation to a personally held system of beliefs" (Clark & Peterson, 1986, as cited in Chen & Ennis, 1996, p. 207). This belief system determines what the teacher decides and what content will be taught (Chen & Ennis, 1996). These beliefs are important as they are often very hard to change and have an "influence on students' receptivity to messages received in teacher education" (Culpan, 1998, p. 246).

The perception and beliefs by some see Physical Education as one that separates the mind and body (Culpan, 1996/97) and that "Physical Education is for those students with less intellectual ability", or that "it is not for high achievers, it is for those who are more practical" (Culpan, 1998, p. 4). These perceptions and attitudes have caused barriers to the implementation of Physical Education. However as Tinning et al (1993, cited in Culpan, 1998) argues, "The mind and body are not separate, we act both knowingly and intelligently and learn in and through movement" (p. 4).

Quality Health and Physical Education programmes are largely dependent on how they are perceived and valued by those responsible for teaching it (Morgan et al., 2002). Although Health and Physical Education has been recognized as one of the most valuable mediums for encouraging and promoting active lifestyles, it has been historically marginalized as low status. (Culpan, 1998; Morgan et al, 2002; Johns, 2003; Ha, et al, 2008) and viewed as a subject that is 'easy going' with exercise not necessary or important (Kim & Taggart, 2004; Pereira, 2006).

Because of this view of the subject as inferior, many Physical Education teachers have a tendency to give "students little or no instruction while allowing them free play or other

nonphysical activities during times that have been allocated to Physical Education” (Kim & Taggart, 2004, p. 1). Another reason for this low status can be attributed to the “lack of official assessment” (Hardman & Marshall, 2000 cited in Hay, 2009, p. 214) which according to Hay (2009) some academics in Physical Education have suggested the view of assessment is “a means by which value is attributed to subjects” (p. 214). Assessment also defines the value aspects of curriculum subjects which provide a tool for assigning value in the form of grades for those who possess a value on knowledge and skills (Hay, 2009; Morris, 1996). This is also defined by Chan, et al, (2006) “any activity or method that is designed to “show what a person knows or can do” (p. 135). Rink and Mitchell (2002 cited in Hay, 2009) argued that in Health and Physical Education “one unintended outcome of the standards, assessment and accountability movement is that any program (or subject) not included in high stakes state level assessment, for all practical purposes, does not count” (p. 214).

Assessment is used as a means of providing grades after teaching has taken place to satisfy requirements and as a record or report about learning progress (Chan, et.al 2006; Siedentop,1991). In Hong Kong, a research conducted by Chan, et al., (2006) found that certain schools subjects were perceived and legitimized as being of academic value and counted towards the final years’ results, whereas Physical Education was not and this even included students who performed well in Physical Education examinations.

In Ghana physical education is perceived to be a subject for the less achiever and is only used to entertain. The status of most physical education teacher, particularly in suburbs and villages, leaves much to be desired. It is often argued that they lack professionalism in the way they go about their job (Ammah&Kwaw, 2005, p.321)

### **2.3 Means of Physical Education Assessment in Ghana**

Assessment can be defined as any “planned technique used to measure, judge or diagnose a student’s achievement and to make inferences based on that evidence for a variety of purposes, including planning” (Doolittle, 1996).

Assessment is an official test that shows one’s knowledge or ability in a subject for the purpose of evaluations. Assessment plays a vital role in the lives of students and teachers alike for numerous reasons, including; first of all assessment is student’s motivation to learn more. They compel us to solidify what we have learnt, study further and practice skills. Thanks to assessment, we have to revise old lessons till we obtain all new knowledge. Assessment sharpens our logical and critical thinking, which is an essential skill in life. After all, if there were no assessment, then we would naturally rather play than study. The primary goal of assessment should be seen as the enhancement of learning, rather than simply the documentation of learning (NASPE, 1995).

Assessment is lacking in many physical education classes (Lund, 1993). Rather, many teachers base evaluations on student behaviour and participation (Matanin & Tannehill, 1994). However, as Doolittle (1996) noted, teachers need to collect factual data on daily basis, rather than relying on subjective information about students’ progress. Hay (2006) defines assessment as “the collection of information, contextualized by the use of that information” (p. 312). Thus, for assessment to be meaningful, it has to be conducted in real-life or authentic situations (Hensley, 1997). Historically, however, traditional modes of assessment in physical education have included sport skill tests, knowledge tests, and physical fitness testing.

Assessment has had two main purposes: assessment for accountability and assessment for learning (Stiggins, 2002; Wiggins, 1998). Stiggins (2002) argues that when teachers use assessment for learning, they provide information for students to advance, rather than

merely checking on student learning. Research has shown that assessment helps students to focus on learning and better understand teacher expectations (James, 2001). Assessment can also help teachers improve the teaching-learning process by aligning assessment with the national content standards for physical education (Lambert, 1999). High-stake standardized testing in schools is guided by the concept of assessment for accountability. Blackmore (1988) noted that assessment is often used as a political instrument of control. Assessment aligned with the standards measure the degree students can demonstrate, in context, their understanding and performance relative to identified standards of learning (Lambert, 1999). It may help teachers to more clearly see the connections of how assessment fits with curriculum and the instructional process (James, Griffin, & France, 2005).

Increasingly, teacher educators recommend the use of authentic measures for assessing students (Goodman, Arbona, & De Rameriz, 2008). Wiggins (1990) defines authentic assessment as one which requires the students to use knowledge of skills to produce a product or complete a performance.

The over reliance on traditional assessment forms tend to ignore the unique nature of children in physical education classes (Kritt, 1993). Also, authentic assessment provides the most meaningful way of assessing games in physical education (Dyson, Griffin, & Hastie, 2004). Moreover, research shows that physical education teachers perceive authentic assessment to have a positive impact on students' self-concept, motivation, and skill achievement (Mintah, 2003).

Despite the need for teachers to increasingly use authentic assessment, Lund (1993) and Veal (1988) reported that many physical education teachers do not assess due to problems such as: large class sizes, lack of time, and lack of preparation. Even though, some teachers set instructional goals, they do not assess them (Matanin & Tannehill,

1994; Mintah, 2003; Veal, 1992). Furthermore, some teachers often assess students solely on the basis of student behaviour and participation (Matanin & Tannehill, 1994).

Limited research shows that the most commonly used authentic assessments include teacher observation, self-observation checklists, demonstration, peer observation, and event tasks. Alternatively, the least commonly used techniques were the essay and the portfolio techniques (Mintah, 2003).

Many former colonial countries have embarked on reforms to make schooling relevant to their cultural contexts, but their modes of assessment remain unchanged (Sutton, 2000).

Research, for example, has shown that classroom discourse in sub-Saharan African schools emphasizes recitation and rote memorization without encouraging pupil understanding (Hardman, Abd-Kadir, & Smith, 2008; Kanu, 1996; Pontefract & Hardman, 2005). Instructional approaches that focus on rote learning are limited in their ability to assess higher levels of knowledge among students. The problem is exacerbated in physical education—a marginalized subject. For example, Akyeampong, Pryor, and Ampiah (2006) reported that a group of Ghanaian classroom teachers indicated that the use of written work to assess physical education was “inappropriate and therefore they relied on observation.” (p. 168). Finally, most of the recommended assessment practices in the physical education syllabi for Ghanaian senior secondary and basic schools are traditional modes of assessment (Ministry of Education, 1990, 2001a, 2001b).

From the above exposition, it is very clear that assessment plays a vital role in the field of physical education because it arms both teachers and students to give off their best.

#### **2.4 Status of Physical Education Examination**

Although physical education is a taught subject at the Senior High School level in Ghana’s educational system, it is not externally examined as it is with other African states. Whereas some schools give credence to the teaching of physical education, others

have relegated the subject to the background. This could be attributed to the attitude of some physical education teachers and school authorities. There are instances where physical education teachers have switched from the teaching of the subject to coaching or other subject areas. This leaves them not to conduct any internal exams let alone to advocate for the external examinability of the subject.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports on the 11<sup>th</sup> may, 2003 expressed grave concern about the downward trend of sports development the country in recent times and has directed that the teaching of physical education in all basic and senior secondary schools should be compulsory.

It consequently reminded all heads of schools that under no circumstances should the preparation of schools teams for participation in competitive sports be erroneously substituted for the teaching of physical education.

A statement issued by the Ministry on Friday said it has observed with great concern that Physical Education (PE) as a subject is not being taught in most first and second cycle institutions as it should be.

It said teachers rather use the period for this equally important subject for other subjects sometimes on the instruction of heads of institutions for what is now termed as extra classes leaving the children with no practical exercises.

It said the Ministry regretted the situation where PE teachers were compelled in a way to concentrate on their second subject areas at the expense of PE, which was their major subject.

The statement also said some sports programmes which should normally be organised in the afternoon, especially in the boarding schools, are not in existence probably due the numerous extra classes. The Ministry therefore blamed teachers for their lukewarm attitude towards the teaching of their own subject and reminded heads of schools that the

policy of the Ministry and for that matter Ghana Education Service (GES) on the teaching of PE in the basic and senior secondary schools remained unchanged and every pupil or student was expected to be taught at least twice for 45 minutes in PE lessons per week. This, the statement said, will help the sector produce healthy individuals needed for the development of the country. GNA (2003)

In a wider view on the examinability of physical education, Coutts (1981) considered the status of Physical Education as a subject. He researched the topic of "Physical Education in selected schools in Natal." Although respondents were from the white population group only, this research had relevance for the present study. Coutts surveyed 59 schools and conducted structured interviews in 30 of those schools. Only teachers of Physical Education were involved in the study. The focus of this study was the physical educator and the problems encountered by that person in historically white schools for boys in Natal. Coutts (1981) noted that despite being an integral part of the curriculum, Physical Education tended to be separated. He quoted from Lund (1993) regarding the marginal role of the subject and the Physical Education teacher stereo type:

His subject may lack prestige and he may be viewed as a trainer-instructor.

Physical Education is sometimes seen to be a marginal subject, peripheral to the central instrumental functioning of the school, which is passing exams (pp.14).

Hay (2009) gave further insight into the status of Physical Education by referring to the classification of subjects as either "universal" such as Mathematics, English and Physical Education or "optional" such as Classics, Music, and Russian and Economics.

A further categorisation would be between "central" and "peripheral" A subject defined as central would be one which is essential for students at a particular age. For example Mathematics would be both universal and central whereas Physical Education although



universal would be peripheral. Stiggins (2002) wrote of this conflict between academic work and physical activity as follows:

There is an emphasis on academia in crowded curriculums....The implications for programming become very significant and responsibility often falls back on the ability of the Physical Education staff to promote their key learning area and win over curriculum time for their subject (pp.21).

(Katzenellenbogen, (1999) stated that the subject's non-examination status contributed to the teacher failing to maintain professional identity within the hierarchy of the school. He wrote:

The problem of ignorance in terms of the aims and content of the subject is compounded by the fact that Physical Education is not seen to be aligned to the main function of the school.

Coutts (1981) stated, Social attitudes, especially those of parents and employers towards examinations and certificates emphasise the importance of examinations with the obvious danger that success in an examination may come to be regarded as the principal aim of education. Waiter (1990) reported that in the Ciskei, this attitude was prevalent even among teachers. She stated it as follows:

In many examination subjects there is also a shortage of suitably qualified teachers and with Physical Education being a non-examination subject it is not considered a priority. Two very disturbing factors were that 41% (of respondent schools) were not teaching Physical Education because it was a non-examination subject and that 16% were unaware that Physical Education was part of the school curriculum (pp.9).

Coutts (1981) summed up this issue. 'That a subject might come to be considered to be deficient because it is not examined is an indictment of the system of education itself,

rather than the subject in question." This philosophy that educating the child was more important than examining explained why, in Britain pupils did not write end of year examinations which determined whether they passed or failed and repeated a year of study. However, as Anne Williams (1989) pointed out, physical educationists in Britain sought recognition for the subject through it being included as an examination subject. This happened in 1976 when over 9 000 pupils wrote the CSE examination and by 1992, 16 000 pupils from 777 schools were examined. In 1994 there were 7 476 candidates in New South Wales who wrote the Physical Education HSC examination (Sydney Morning Herald) Physical Education became an optional theoretical examinable subject in Year 11 and 12 in the 1980's in Australia but it was rarely examined in the younger age groups. In advocating evaluation in Physical Education, Tinning and Fitzclarence (1992) criticised the Australian approach which had as its main objective keeping pupils "busy, happy and good" in the 1980s and had this to say:

"Without the forms of assessment that drive student application in most other school subjects (how many students would work hard at Maths or English unless it was formally required of them?) Physical Education is still trying to find the happy medium between appealing to enjoyment and interest and extending students beyond their limited experiences and capacities (pp.35).

Bressan (1995) recognised that the subject of Physical Education provided far broader educational values than examination subjects. She explained that Physical Education addressed "life realities" by increasing social skills and improving health, whereas examination subjects, which were perceived as being the basics for life limited pupils to a narrow range of knowledge for passing examinations. She illustrated this concept: Anyone who has lived in this world knows that if you cannot get along with other people, it doesn't matter how much you know. If you have a low self-esteem, you will

limit yourself and the contributions you make to society. If you have poor health, you will never achieve your potential and you may in fact become a burden to your society. Physical Education addresses each of these "life realities", yet decision-makers in education continue to discount the subject.

## **2.5 The Impact of Examination on Curricular Physical Education.**

An additional issue associated with the increasing popularity of nationally, recognised, public examination in physical education is the relationship between examinations in physical education as core or curriculum physical education. Physical education teachers in England have reported that the bureaucracy associated with providing examinable physical education place extra burdens on physical education departments in a variety of ways (green, 2001). These ranges from detracting from extra-curricular physical education provision to placing added pressure on the budget of physical education departments compelled to the allocating scarce resources to such things as textbooks and videos that might otherwise have been spent on sports equipment; for example, some of the boys in Bramham's (2003:66) study of 15 year old boys in four inter-city schools reported having to cut off on school sports and out- of -school active lifestyle because of the academic demands of GCSE. Of greater significance, perhaps, is the evidence to suggest that in some schools the time allocated to GCSE physical education replaces part (sometime all) of curriculum physical education, so, non-examination or core physical education programme are in effect competing for timetable space with other forms of physical education, including examinable physical education (Stidder and Wallis, 2003). In many schools, nevertheless, time is allocated GCSE physical education in addition to the average time assigned to NCPE at key stage 4; that is between one and two hours per week. This has not prevented critics. Some are of the view that formal education could destroy the recreational value of physical education and the enjoyment of the subject for

its own sake. Others are also of the view that there will be difficulties in objectively assess some dimensions of the subject (i.e. the process of learning to improve performance) might lead to distortion of the subject through increasing emphasis on more easily measurable aspects.(e.g. theoretical understanding of concepts and knowledge related to physical education)

## **2.6 Summary of Literature Reviewed**

This chapter provided reviews on literature relating to the examinability or otherwise of physical education in Senior High Schools. From the literature it was clear that Students who have the opportunity to participate in physical education activities have more positive attitude towards physical education and sport. Those who do not get the chance to participate in physical education and sport have a negative attitude towards the subject. These students engage in negative health behaviours such as smoking, drinking or using drugs.

Teachers' attitudes also play a role in the teaching of a subject. Positive attitudes towards the teaching of physical education results from a deep conviction of the worth of the subject on the part of knowledgeable teachers who believe that physical education is an essential subject which help students improve cognitive function as they learn about their abilities, aptitudes, limitations and potential even in other subject areas. Teachers with negative attitudes run "keep them busy" sporadic programmes.

Physical education has enjoyed poor status across the world. Whereas, subjects like mathematics, science and social studies enjoy over six periods per week, physical education is given just a period per week. The perception and beliefs by some people is that physical education separates the mind and body and that physical education is not for those students with less intellectual ability or that it is not for high achievers, it is

major perceptions and other attitudes have caused barriers to the implementation of physical education in Senior High School. Because of this view of the subject as inferior, many physical education teachers have a tendency to give students little or no instruction while allowing them to free or other non-physical activities during times that have been allocated to teach physical education. Another reason for this low status can be attributed to the lack of official assessment.

Assessment is lacking in many physical education classes. Rather, many teachers base their evaluations on students' behaviour and participation. Physical education teachers do not assess students due to problems such as large class size, lack of time, and lack of preparation. Even though, some teachers set instructional goals, they do not assess them. However, teachers need to collect factual data on daily basis, rather than relying on subjective information about students' progress.

Externally examinability of physical education is yet a dream to be realised. Although, the subject is taught at the Senior High School levels in Ghana, it is not an externally examinable in Ghana as in other African states. Views raised on the examinability of the subject includes, the difficulties in objectively assessing some dimension of the subjects (i.e. the process of learning to improve performance) might lead to distortion of the subject through increasing emphasis on more measurable aspects ( e.g. theoretical understanding of concepts and knowledge related to physical education.)

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes and explains the methodology deployed in the study and is made up of the research design, population from which the sample of the study is derived, the sampling technique, validity and reliability, instrumentation, data collection and analysis procedures.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

A research design is a plan of action for providing answers to the raised research questions. Seale (2004: 130) highlights that a research design addresses specifically ideas leading to formulation of the research questions, a robust methodology and a design of the methodology that considers the ethical research issues. In consideration to the above, the descriptive survey design was used in this study. This design is flexible and convenient because it can be used to convey or present details and valid information concerning the phenomenon under study. It involves recording, describing, analysing and explaining conditions as they exist. It also enables the researcher to do some types of comparisons to discover relationships or disparities between variables and in this case, teachers' perception on whether physical education should be made examinable or not in Senior High Schools.

#### **3.2 Population**

The total population of this study comprised of all Senior High School teachers in the Ejisu-Juaben municipality. Ejisu-Juaben municipal area is about twenty minutes' drive from Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. It is located along the Kumasi-Accra highway.

There are five senior high schools in the municipality namely; Ejisuman Senior High School, Achinakrom Senior High School, Juaben Senior High School, Bonwire Secondary Technical, and Church of Christ Senior High School.

### **3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling technique was used by the researcher in the selection of schools. Since the interest was on Senior High School teachers, purposive sampling was used because the focus of the study was eliciting views of Senior High School teachers on the externally examinability or otherwise of physical education in senior high schools.

Simple random sampling was used to select three out of the five Senior High Schools in the municipality. The researcher used the lottery method where by “yes” and “no” were written on pieces of papers and put in a box. Out of the five pieces of papers, three (3) bore “yes” while two (2) bore “no”. Five friends of the researcher representing the five schools were made to pick. In the end, Ejisuman Senior High School, Juaben Senior High School and Achinakrom Senior High School were used for the study.

The same approach was used to select 60 students from the three sampled schools. Purposively, the second year students were sampled because they had enjoyed physical education lessons and were believed to be in a better position to views as against the first year students who had just entered senior high school. Second year classes in the sampled schools were further randomly to get one class to represent each of the schools. Here too the lottery method was deployed to get 20 students from each of the sampled classes in the three schools. 20 pieces of papers bearing “yes” with the rest bearing “no” were used with the aim of retaining those who selected yes for the study.

However, quota sampling procedure was used to select the teachers for the study. The researcher contacted the school authorities of the three sampled schools for the years of

service of teachers. This aided the researcher to select teachers who had taught for five (5) years and more for the study. In the end, 41 teachers of Ejisuman Senior High, 37 teachers of Juaben Senior High and 22 teachers of Achinakrom Senior High were gathered from the records provided in the various schools respectively. The sample size together was 100 teachers.

Finally, all the 10 physical education teachers were also sampled to take part in the study. This was done because it is their area of specialisation and they supposed to contribute immensely in the study.

### **3.4 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument**

In this study, the researcher gave out the questionnaire to the supervisor to provide face and content validation. The questionnaire was again piloted first as a way of reducing errors during the actual study so as to increase its validity.

The researcher pilot tested the instrument in Bonwire Senior High School in order to ascertain that it was reliable in terms of clarity of the questions and ease of understanding. Errors were detected and revised to provide internal consistency. In this study, the pilot testing was conducted by allowing selected students and teachers in Bonwire Senior High School who were not part of the real study to answer questions to show their levels of understanding given to the instruments.

### **3.5 Instrumentation**

The primary data of the study was collected with the aid of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was appropriate instrument taking into account the large number of respondents. Questionnaires were chosen because they have the ability to collect required data within a short period of time. Respondents were made to answer questions



designed to elicit their opinions on whether Physical Education be made externally examinable at the Senior High School level. In all, the questionnaires were grouped into three categories for students, physical education teachers and non-physical education teachers. The students' questionnaire comprised of 10 items of which 8 of them were structured in the closed-ended manner where students selected "yes" or "no". 2 open ended items catered for those areas the respondents were needed to provide answers subjectively. Such items expected different range of answers based on how they perceive P.E as far as external examinations are concern. Physical education teachers' questionnaire also comprised 12 items with 3 of them demanding respondents to select "yes" or "no", 5 items with multiple answers to choose from and lastly, 4 items which elicited divergent views from respondents. The third category of questionnaire focused on views of non-physical education teachers. It was composed of 19 item of which 15 close ended items captured specific areas where respondent were given options to choose from. They included 10 simple "yes" or "no" items, and 4 multiples choice items. These closed ended items were selected because it was meant to restrict respondents to stick to what was given to them

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

Prior to field study, the researcher sought permission to conduct the study from Headmasters of the participating schools in the Ejisu-Juaben municipal. Before the start, the author was introduced to the teachers by the Headmaster. In effort to increase the quality of data, questionnaire was administered to respondents in teachers' staffroom settings during the break period and teachers responded to them with ease. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The researcher went round to collect the questionnaires as soon as they were ready. At the end of the work, a statement to thank the respondents for volunteering to give the information was made.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The data gathered was coded into sub-themes and themes to be able to analyse and synthesize. . Depending on the kind of study, data analysis may involve organizing data into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing, and searching for main categories with meaning (Bogdan & Biklen, (2000), Cohen & Manoin (2000).

Data were also summarized and linked with the research questions. The descriptive data were analysed using simple percentages and tables to discuss the information with the aid of Microsoft excel 2010 programme.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter seeks to analyse and discuss data collected from the field in response to the study conducted to find out whether physical education should be made an externally examinable subject in the Senior High School curriculum. The respondents were selected students, physical education teachers and non-physical education teachers in the Ejisu-Juaben municipality.

#### **4.1 Analysis**

The analysis and discussions are based on the responses from students, physical education teachers and non-physical education teachers. Out of the 170 questionnaires administered to students, physical education teachers and non-physical education teachers, all were received duly completed. Out of the number, 60 participants representing 35% were students, 10 participants representing 6% were physical education teachers and 100 participants representing 59% were non-physical education teachers

#### **4.2 Analysis of data from students' questionnaire**

##### **4.2.1 Relationship between participation in physical education activities and academic performance**

Out of the 60 students, 40 of them (66%) were of the view that participation in physical education affected academic performance positively, while ten (10) of them in this category (17%) said participation in physical education affected academic performance negatively. Another ten (10) students representing 17%, however, had no idea as to whether participation in physical education affected academic performance negatively or

positively. Also 50 respondents (84%) believed that a sound mind lies in a sound body with only 10 respondents disagreeing. Of the number of research participants, 73% of them participate in a variety of physical activities while the rest do not.

**Table 4. 1. Teaching and Studying of Physical Education in Schools**

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	54	90
No	6	10
Total	60	100

The table above indicated that 90% of student participants studied physical education as a subject in school while 10% said they didn't study it as a subject. However, 48 respondents said they wrote exams in physical education in their various schools at the Senior High School level. On the aspect of physical education that students prefer, one half the number of participants selected both practical and theory, while 33% and 17% preferred practical aspect and theory aspect respectively.

#### **4.2.2. Influence of Non- Physical Education Teachers on students' participation in Physical Education.**

When students were asked as to whether teachers of other subject areas contributed in discouraging them from participation in physical education activities, 16 out of the 60 students representing 26.7% agreed that they had been discouraged by teachers of other subject areas from participating in physical education activities while the rest had not been influenced by teachers. Put another way, about 70% of the study participants felt that other subject area teachers in their schools had been influential in encouraging them to participate in sporting activities.

Majority of student participants in the study (66.7%) had a favourable opinion about physical education and would have opted to study it, if offered at the WASSCE level. However, when they were further asked to expatiate on their choice, twenty (20) out of those who had a favourable opinion of physical education said it would be easy to score a grade A in the exams whilst the remaining ones gave varied reasons ranging from becoming fit to becoming a big star. Twenty (20) student participants (33.3%) had unfavourable opinion about the subject. This was because majority of them were of the opinion that physical education demanded a lot of energy and had negative effect on their studies in other subject areas. A few of them were of the view that it was time wasting and should not be included as an examinable subject at the WASSCE level.

#### 4.3 Analysis of Data from Physical Education Teachers

**Table 4.2. Activities of physical education teachers**

Response	Number	Percentage
Organise sports and games	6	60%
Teach P.E	2	20%
Others	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Table 2 above showed the duties performed by physical education teachers in schools. The table shows that teachers organise sports and games in the schools 60% of the time, teach physical education 20% of the time and perform other duties 20% of the time. On the number of classes the respondents taught per week, 50% taught 5-8 periods per week while 30% taught 9 or more periods per week with 20% teaching less than 4 periods per week.

#### **4.3.1 Physical Education Teachers' Responses on How Teachers of Other Subject Areas and Students Perceive Physical Education**

Participants in this category were asked to review the opinions of teachers of other subject areas in their schools concerning physical education. One half the number of participants were of the view that teachers of other subject areas viewed physical education as a relevant subject. However, some respondents (30%) thought that teachers of other subject areas were said to view physical education as an irrelevant subject. Two other respondents had no opinion on this subject. Seven (7) respondents said students viewed physical education as very relevant in their lives.

#### **4.3.2 How Physical Education Teachers view physical education as a Non-Examinable Subject.**

Among the respondents, physical education teachers' who were asked to express their views on the non-examinability of the subject, 80% perceived the non-examinability of physical education externally to be irrelevant since it does not exert pressure on students to be actively involved in physical education lessons. A few of them (20%) were not able to decide as to whether it is relevant or irrelevant. However, eight (8) respondents were strongly in support of it. When asked why, the dominant view they expressed was that it is a sure way to recapturing the lost image of physical education in the country's educational system. Two (2) respondents on the other hand, were not in support of the subject been examined externally due to the fact that the number of trained physical education teachers in the country cannot teach effectively to achieve any success. They also raised issues of inadequacy text books and lack of sports equipment and facilities as the strong impediments to the external examinability of the subject.

Asked to suggest aspects of physical education that should be examined, three (3) respondents (30%) were in favour of it being examined practically, one (1) respondent

said the subject should be examined on only the theoretical aspect of the subject while six (6) respondents (60%) preferred that both the practical and theory aspect of the subject should be examinable.

Also on the areas of physical education to be examined, 50% of the respondents said fitness should dominate the teaching of physical education since it aids students to be more active. Some participants (30%) also suggested that since physical education deals with the human body, anatomy and physiology should dominate the teaching of physical education while 20% of the respondents opined that the teaching of sports should be the main concentration of the physical education curriculum.

#### **4.4 Analysis of Data from Non-Physical Education Teachers**

##### **4.4.1 Relevance of Physical Education**

All respondents of the study considered physical education as an important subject. Majority of the respondents revealed that they were active participants in physical education while in high school. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (89%) believed in the principle “a sound mind in a sound body”

It was also observed that, 93% of non-physical education participants agreed to the fact that physical education as a subject should be taught in senior high schools. To support their choice of answer; most of them stated that by engaging in the subject, students become very active. Seven of the participants (7%) were not in support of the subject being taught Senior High Schools because it is all about play and students can do that on their own.

Physical education is not a preferred subject for majority of the respondents in this category of the study. Most respondents (84%) would prefer to teach English or mathematics as a second option than to teach physical education.

#### **4.4.2. Relationship between fitness and academic performance**

Data showed that out of the 100 respondents of the study, 76% agreed that is a high positive relation between fitness and academic performance.

**Table 4.3 Influence of Physical Education Activities on Other Subject Areas in the Curriculum**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	70	70
No	30	30
Total	100	100

A greater percentage of respondents (70%) in this category of the study asserted that activities of physical education really affected their lessons negatively.

#### **4.4.3 Examinability of Physical Education in Senior High Schools**

On the need for physical education to be examined at the Senior High School level, it was observed that 63% of participants in this category had a fair opinion on physical education and they endorsed the relevancy of the subject. Twenty two percent of them however, were not in the position to decide whether it was relevant or irrelevant to take exams in physical education. Those with the view that the subject be made examinable cited reasons such as helping students to appreciate the importance of the subject. Those participants who endorsed the irrelevancy of examinations in physical education said, examination was not the only means to prove the worth of a subject.



On the relevancy of physical education as an externally examinable subject at the WASSCE level in Ghana, 74% of the respondents said it was relevant to consider physical education as an externally examinable subject because it is equally an important subject.

## **4.5 DISCUSSIONS**

The main purpose of the study was to evaluate views on physical education teachers', students and non-physical education teachers' perception about the examinability or otherwise of physical education at Senior High Schools. The discussions are based on the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data obtained.

### **4.5.1 The Teaching Of Physical Education**

The fact that physical education was being taught in the schools that were sampled was one of the important findings of the study. This was testified to by 90% of students' participants, all of physical education teachers sampled and 93% of the non-physical education teachers, which is significant in two ways. First it augers well for the physical fitness of the students who learn the subject in those schools and actually participated in its activities. As it is generally known by educators, body fitness makes students alert and enables them to understand what is being taught by their teachers. Since learning comes through understanding the importance of fitness, this fact needs no emphasis. Besides making students physically fit, the importance of this fact lies in its conformity with the findings of a study that was conducted in Texas and California states in the United States of American which opines that students who attended physical education lessons were physically fit, scored higher on their state standardized tests, caused less discipline problems and attended school more often than their peers (NASPE, 2002; Texas Education Agency, 2009; Ziegler, 2005).

#### **4.5.2 Perceptions of Physical Education.**

Both teachers and students had favourable perceptions regarding the teaching of physical education. This is testified by the fact that 60% the respondents of each group agreed to the question of whether the subject should be made examinable. They certainly could not have done this if they considered the subject as being unimportant. In support of this too, was the indication by 80% of the student respondents and all of the teacher respondents that the subject was beneficial, and wished that the subject was examined externally.

#### **4.5.3 Attitudes of Teachers towards Physical Education as a Subject.**

From the various analyses, it was noticed that non-physical education teachers had a good attitude towards physical education. When asked as to whether physical education was important, all the respondents agreed and suggested that it should be taught in Senior High Schools. In all, 87% of research respondents acknowledged that they had participated in physical education lessons as students. The only difference that was noted however was that 70% of teachers of others subject areas said physical education activities affected their subjects, because students became tired after practical physical education lessons and most of them dozed off in classes afterwards. Surprisingly, teachers of physical education who should champion the course of teaching physical education exhibited a lukewarm attitude towards the teaching of the subject. It was observed that majority of the teachers used 60% of their time in organising sports and games, 20% in teaching and 20% of the time performing other duties in their schools.

#### **4.5.4 Attitude of students towards physical education.**

Students demonstrated a positive attitude towards physical education with 83% of them agreeing to the dictum that “a sound mind lies in a sound body” and it is through physical activities that one can acquire this status. Some of the respondents (59%) said participation in physical education activities affected their academic performance

positively. Furthermore, 79% of students engaged in physical activities at their own time which indicating an immense interest towards physical activity education. It was also evidenced that majority of the respondents sampled (90%) studied physical education as a subject in school. On the issue of whether or not teachers of other subject areas discourage students from participating in physical education, majority of the respondents (73%) said they had not encountered this as students. Finally, 67% of students said they would have registered to write physical education at the WASSCE level if it were offered. The above findings reveal that students have positive attitudes towards physical education.

#### **4.5.5 Non-Examinability of Physical Education as a Core Subject**

Majority of students (68%), physical education teachers (80%) and nonphysical education teachers (74%) agreed that physical education is not an externally examined subject at WASSCE level. This makes the teaching of the subject uninteresting. This assertion is Waiter (1990) who found this attitude prevalent even among teachers and stated it as follows:

In many examination subjects there is also a shortage of suitably qualified teachers and with Physical Education being a non-examination subject it is not considered a priority. Two very disturbing factors were that 41% (of respondent schools) were not teaching Physical Education because it was a non-examination subject and that 16% were unaware that Physical Education was part of the school curriculum. (pp41)

Sections of the respondents who were not in support of the examinability of physical education opined that it was not the only means to prove the worth of a subject. This view agrees with Bressan (1999) who recognised that the subject of Physical Education provided far broader educational values than examination subjects. She explained that

Physical Education addressed "life realities" by increasing social skills and improving health, whereas examination subjects, which were perceived as being the basics for life limited pupils to a narrow range of knowledge for passing examinations. She illustrated this concept further as follows:

Anyone who has lived in this world knows that if you cannot get along with other people, it doesn't matter how much you know. If you have a low self-esteem, you will limit yourself and the contributions you make to society. If you have poor health, you will never achieve your potential and you may in fact become a burden to your society. Physical Education addresses each of these "life realities", yet decision-makers in education continue to discount the subject.(pp61)



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of this research was to analyse perceptions of students, physical education teachers and non-physical education teachers on the examinability or otherwise of physical education as a core subject in Senior High Schools. Data was gathered through questionnaires. Additional information was obtained from books, journals, unpublished post graduate thesis and newspapers. Primary data for the analysis was obtained from the research conducted in three Senior High Schools in the Ejisu-Juaben municipality.

This chapter consists of the summary of the findings of the study; conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations made to improve the current state of physical education in Senior High Schools in the country.

#### 5.1. Summary of the study

In analysing the data, the following were unearthed:

Data gathered in the study revealed that majority (90%) of the respondents in the three categories of participants agreed that physical education as a subject is taught in most Senior High Schools.

Additionally, both teachers and students have favourable knowledge on the subject. A majority of respondents in each of the three categories of the study understand and agree with the adage that, “a sound mind lies in a sound body”. Also, 80% of students, 90% of physical education teachers and 70% of non-physical education teachers opined that physical activities improve the well-being of individuals.

A majority of students (80%), all the physical education teachers and 80% non-physical education teachers exhibited positive attitudes towards physical education advocating that physical education be made externally examinable at the WASSCE level in Ghana.

Results from data analysis confirmed that all Physical education teacher respondents in the study desired that physical education is made externally examinable. Contrary to this, it was sad to note that 80% of allocated teaching time was used in organising sports and performing other duties while only 20% of the time was reserved for the actual classroom teaching of physical education. Although, data revealed that physical education is taught in schools, it was confirmed by majority of respondents in each of the categories (68% of students, 80% of physical education teachers, and 70% non-physical education teachers) that the subject was neither examined internally in most schools nor examined externally in whatever form or manner. Several schools had opted to use the physical education periods for sports training, limiting the entire time for the participation of only school athletes while denying non-performers the opportunity to exercise.

## **5.2. Conclusions**

Physical education as an externally non-examinable subject in Ghana is confronted with a lot of challenges ranging from it being a subject for lower achievers to it being considered as an unimportant subject. Amusa et al (1999) assert that traditionally, most African societies associate Physical Education with play and leisure. Against this backdrop, the study gathered views on how students, physical education teachers and non-physical education teachers perceive physical education as a non-externally examinable subject and the following conclusions were drawn.

First and foremost, physical education is a core subject taught in almost all the schools sampled. This means that the subject is recognised and is therefore not marginalised as perceived by many. This agrees with the recommendations for physical education as stated in the Legal Instruments of the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport (UNESCO, 1978). “Everyone must have full opportunity to participate in physical education and special reference must be given to young people” (UNESCO, 1978).

Secondly, the subject enjoys good perceptions as far as the data gathered in this study is concerned. Students were eager to select physical education as an option in their external exams. If they had bad perceptions of the subject, this could not have been the result. This agrees with a study conducted by Janice, et al. (2007) to examine the attitudes of High School students towards Physical Education. Questionnaires and observations methods were used to collect data. Results indicated that the majority had positive attitudes towards Physical Education. The minority students, who engaged in negative health behaviours, such as smoking, drinking or using drugs, did not like Physical Education activities.

Teachers of other subject areas were also enthusiastic with the subject and were eager to help mostly during inter-house sports competitions. It was also observed that some non-physical education teachers encouraged students to actively involve themselves in physical education lessons.

Most Physical education teachers are switching from their areas of specialization to perform roles like coaching, teaching of other subjects and organisers of sports and games. Katzenellenbogen (1994) argues that teacher attitudes play a role in the teaching of a subject. Positive attitudes towards the teaching of Physical Education result from a deep conviction of the worth of the subject on the part of knowledgeable teachers who

believe that Physical Education is an essential subject which helps students improve cognitive function as they learn about their abilities, aptitudes, limitations and potentials even in other subject areas. This behaviour, exhibited by 60% of the physical education teachers is something that further thwarts the efforts toward building the image of the subject.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

Having vividly analysed the data collected on the topic, the researcher deems it appropriate to recommend the following aimed at improving the status of physical education at the Senior High School Level in Ghana:

1. Physical education should be made internally and externally examinable at all levels of learning throughout the country to whip up interest and enhance mass participation.
2. Since majority of respondents agree to the adage that “a sound mind lies in a sound body”, physical education programmes should contain activities such as fitness, dance and outward bound activities to create fun and help participants’ live healthy lives.
3. In-service training programmes should be organised periodically for physical education teachers to instil in them the discipline and zeal in teaching physical education at all levels in the country’s educational system.
4. A clear distinction need to be made between physical education and sports as most physical education graduates begin to assume roles of sports teachers concerned only with competitive sports. This emphasis must be included in their training at the university and through training workshops.
5. Whole practical assessment externally would be difficult and costly; some form of cognitive assessment in imperative so that physical education teachers can be



held accountable for the healthy lifestyle learning of students in Senior High Schools.



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## APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION RECREATION AND  
SPORTS

I am a student of the school of graduate studies undertaking a research to find out whether Physical Education should be made an externally examinable subject in the Senior High School curriculum. I would be grateful if you could provide answers to the following questions. All information provided by you will be treated confidentially.

### STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

#### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Name of school.....

Programme of study.....

Form of student.....

Gender: male [ ] female [ ]

Age of student .....

SECTION B: please tick or fill in the option against the statement that is most appropriate to you

1. Do you believe in the statement, “a sound mind lies in a sound body”?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

2. In your view, does participation in physical education affect academic performance?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

3. Do you participate in any physical activity? Yes [ ] No [ ]

a) If yes, which activity do you do?

.....  
.....

b) If no, give reason(s) why

.....  
.....

4. Do you study physical education as a subject in your school? Yes [ ] No [ ]

5. Do you take exams in physical education in your school? Yes [ ] No [ ]

6. If yes, which aspect of physical education is most interesting to you?

A) Practical [ ] B) Theory [ ] C) Both practical and theory

7. Do teachers of other subject areas discourage you from participating in physical education activities? Yes [ ] No [ ]

8. Do subject area teachers other than physical education encourage your participation in sports activities in your school? Yes [ ] No [ ]

9. If physical education were an option course at WASSCE, would you register to take it?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

a) If yes, why?

.....

.....  
.....

b) If No, why?

.....  
.....  
.....



## APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION RECREATION AND  
SPORTS

I am a student of the school of graduate studies undertaking a research to find out whether Physical Education should be made an externally examinable subject in the Senior High School curriculum. I would be grateful if you could provide answers to the following questions. All information provided by you will be treated confidentially.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

#### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Name of school.....

Years in service.....

Gender: male [ ] female [ ]

SECTION B: please tick or fill in the option against the statement that is most appropriate to you.

1. Is physical education on your school's time table? Yes [ ] No [ ]
2. What do you do as a physical education teacher?
  - a) Organise sports and games [ ]
  - b) Teach physical education [ ]
  - c) Any others [.....]



3. How many physical education classes do you teach in a week? .....

4. In your view, how do other teachers view physical education in your school?

A) relevant [ ] b) Irrelevant [ ] c) Undecided [ ]

5. In your view, how do students view physical education in your school?

A) Relevant [ ] b) Irrelevant [ ] c) Undecided [ ]

6. How do you perceive physical education as a non-examinable at the WASSCE

level in Ghana? A) relevant [ ] b) Irrelevant [ ] c) Undecided [ ]

7. Give reason(s) for your answer in question 6 above

.....  
.....  
.....

8. Would you wish that physical education be examined externally?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

9. If yes, which aspect of physical education should be externally examined?

A) Practical Aspect B) Theory Aspect C) Both Practical and Theory

10. Give reasons for your answer in question 9 above.

11. If physical education is made externally examinable, which areas in your expert opinion, should be examined?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

12. Should students be made to specialise in any of the areas you have mentioned above in question 11.      Yes [  ]      No [  ]



## APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION RECREATION AND  
SPORTS

I am a student of the school of graduate studies undertaking a research to find out whether Physical Education should be made an externally examinable subject in the Senior High School curriculum. I would be grateful if you could provide answers to the following questions. All information provided by you will be treated confidentially.

### NON-PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

#### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Name of  
school.....

Teaching experience: 1-4years [ ] 5-10[ ] above 10years [ ]

Area of teaching  
.....

Gender of teacher: male [ ] female [ ]

SECTION B: please tick or fill in the option against the statement that is most appropriate to you

1. Did you participate in physical education classes as a student in S.H.S?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

2. Is physical education an important subject to you? Yes [ ] No [ ]

3. If yes, should it be taught in Senior High Schools? Yes [ ] No [ ]

4. Give reason(s) for your answer in question 3 above?

.....  
.....  
.....

5. Do you believe as true the principle “a sound mind in a sound body”?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

6. What do you understand by the principle?

.....  
.....

7. In your view, is there a positive relationship between fitness and academic performance? Yes [ ] No [ ]

a) If yes, why?

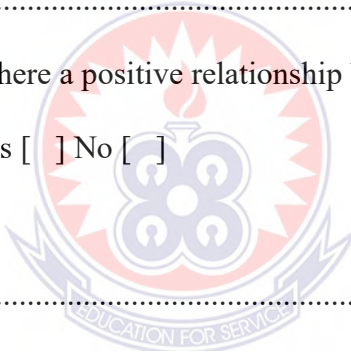
.....  
.....  
.....

b) If no, why?

.....  
.....  
.....

8. Do activities in physical education affect the teaching of your subject in school?

Yes [ ] No [ ]



9. In what ways do physical education activities affect the teaching of your subject?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

10. In your view, should physical education as a subject be examinable in your school?    Yes [ ] No [ ]

11. Give one good reason for the choice of answer in question 10 above.

.....  
.....  
.....

12. Apart from the subject(s) you teach, which other subjects would you wish to teach if you had the opportunity? (Select three)

- a) Mathematics                    [ ]
- b) English language            [ ]
- c) Social studies                [ ]
- d) P.E                                [ ]
- e) Geography                    [ ]
- f) ICT                                [ ]
- g) Biology                         [ ]
- h) Economics                    [ ]
- i) Others.....

13. How do you perceive the relevance of physical education as an internally examinable subject in the school curriculum?

Relevant [ ] Irrelevant [ ] Undecided [ ]

14. How do you perceive the relevance of physical education as an externally examinable subject at the WASSCE level in Ghana?

Relevant [ ] Irrelevant [ ] Undecided [ ]

15. Should physical education be limited to only sports activities?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

16. Give one reason for your answer in question 15 above

.....  
.....  
.....



17. Do you assist the physical education teacher in your school? Yes [ ] No [ ]

18. If yes, what role do you participate in?

a) Time keeper [ ]

b) Umpire [ ]

c) Masseur [ ]

d) First aider [ ]

e) Coach [ ]

f) Referee [ ]

g) track judge [ ]

h) Any

others.....

19. Do you think student-athletes should be allowed to take exams at the  
WASSCE in those sports activities they participate in?    Yes [  ] No [  ]

