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Challenges and Enjoyment of Physical Education Tutors at Colleges of Education in Ghana

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Abstract:

Physical Education is considered one of the important courses worldwide because of its perceived benefits to the development of the individual. However, tutors training instructors to teach the course in schools are confronted with issues ranging from finances to inadequate supply and equipment. This study was conducted to determine the challenges 12 tutors at colleges of education in Ghana have encountered as well as what they have enjoyed as P.E. tutors. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather information from the participants with content analysis employed as the analytical tool. Findings from the study revealed that PE tutors are confronted with challenges related to misconceptions and biases, inadequate facilities and equipment to teach the course, issues of the subject not being examinable and financial challenges. On what they have enjoyed as PE tutors the study revealed that success in competitions, students understanding of concepts taught, getting equipment and supplies to teach and when students select PE as an elective course were factors that they enjoy the most. Tellingly, PE tutors maintained that they work more than the other tutors as they have to train students during competitions and attend lectures to teach students in addition. It is recommended that the government and other stakeholders should provide incentives, and aid in getting equipment and supplies for the PE tutors to motivate them for a less painful delivery of their work.

Keywords: Challenges, motivations, misconceptions, facilities, course

1. Introduction

The term 'physical education' explains the motivation, confidence, physical competence, understanding and knowledge that individuals develop to uphold physical activity at an acceptable level during their life. Physical education encompasses far more than organised sporting activities, offering instead a broader conception of physical activity, unconnected to capability. By the use of particular pedagogies and the acceptance of new methods of thinking, physical education promises more accurate models of physical capability and physical activity for a broader population, creating avenues for everybody to become energetic and inspired participants (Whitehead, 2010). Therefore, Physical education is an important component of the educational and instructional processes, especially in today's world, in which high values are placed on physical education because of its numerous positive impacts on the life of the individuals.

However, PE is considered as one of the courses that teachers encounter a myriad of challenges in its effective delivery in many countries (Hardman, 2009). These challenges range from reduction in curriculum time to technical knowledge of the teachers, inadequate facilities and supplies to perception of other teachers, students and parents (Nyakwebwa, 2005). Notwithstanding, Van Deventer (2005) argued that the challenges facing PE globally are not limited to only the well-established curriculum issues but also, the politics surrounding the curriculum development and implementation. This promoted Hardman (2009) to develop seven themes to better understand the nature of these challenges across the education systems in different cultures:

- The state of PE in schools: this theme comprises ways the government and policy frameworks support the presence and conduct of PE.
- Allocation of time for PE: this is the time allocated for the teaching of PE to other subjects.

- PE in schools: this focuses on the status as perceived by teachers, students and parents in comparison to other subjects
- PE curriculum: this is relevant to understanding and defining the subject with regards to the aims, content areas and perceived importance of the course.
- Resources for PE: this includes the quality of teachers, access to facilities and equipment and the key role played by the overall financial support towards the success of PE programmes.
- Equity issues encompass the inclusion of all learners in PE lessons irrespective of gender and disability.
- Partnership pathways: PE teachers and students collaborating is relevant to promote the aims of the subject.

Some earlier studies conducted focused on addressing the challenges of teachers based on these themes. In one of such studies, Quay (2014) compared the challenges of PE teachers in Kenya and Australia in a qualitative approach and asserted that there are a lot that can be learned in terms of time allocated for the curriculum, class sizes among others. While these challenges are well researched, some motivational factors have also been noted.

Teachers' motivation to teach physical activity is determined by whether they have all the needed equipment and materials that will make the activity enjoyable and worthwhile, or if they think the objectives are achieved through the various interactions and instructions (Fox, 1991; Martens, 1996). The enjoyment of physical education has been connected to perceived competence and mastery (Wallhead&Buckworth, 2004); teachers find physical activity enjoyable when they can succeed in impacting what the planned activities are (Mandigo& Couture, 1996; Martens, 1996; Whitehead & Corbin, 1997). Physical education is often met with tremendous enthusiasm by tutors in Colleges of Education in Ghana, but this enthusiasm has been found to fade as some tutors face a lot of challenges in both teaching and learning of physical education (Carlson, 1995).

Challenges facing Physical Education teachers in Ghana are well established. In one of the recent literatures, Domfeh and Odoo (2018) examined challenges PE teachers in senior high school's encounter in teaching juxtaposing coaching and maintained that most of the tutors encounter challenges such as; the role of conflict with family, fatigue and job-related stress. However, this study did not examine factors that the PE teachers enjoy the most which can motivate them to work better. Again, this study was conducted in senior high schools without consideration to tutors who are training student-teachers to go and teach PE in schools. Considering this, the present study was intended to top up knowledge by examining the challenges and enjoyment of tutors at colleges of education. The following were the research questions?

- What are the challenges facing PE tutors at colleges of education in Ghana?
- What are some of the things enjoyed by PE tutors at colleges of education in Ghana?
- Findings from this study will recommend ways for stakeholders to identify challenges confronting PE tutors and assist to overcome them. Again, it will unveil some of the things PE tutors enjoy in their work.

2. Method

2.1. Design

The study adopted a qualitative case study research strategy to gather detailed information from the participants. Creswell (2007) maintained that in qualitative research, the researcher focused on acquiring in-depth information about an event, an activity, individual or process to describe the situation naturally. This is relevant where the researcher intends to seek detailed information and understanding of a social phenomenon and is interested in finding answers to why, how and what questions (Ellinger et al., 2005).

2.2. Participants

Purposive sampling was applied for the present study. In a study of this kind, the researcher is interested in getting detailed information on the topic and therefore, require participants with in-depth knowledge (Buchanan, 2012). 12 tutors at colleges of education were selected because they are aware of challenges they have encountered as PE tutors in addition to what they have enjoyed the most. As Patton (1990: 184) posited, in qualitative researches' sample size is acquired in agreement to the aim, what will be beneficial and reliable; what can be done with the time and resources researchers have; that's why there is no method for sample size in qualitative studies. The participants were given codes T1 to T12. The purposive sampling technique was applied to select the tutors for this research.

2.3. Instrument

A semi-structured interview was used as a data collection tool in the study. This involved both closed and open-ended questions. Probing questions were used to elicit more information from the participants. The data collection tool was created on two themes; challenges facing PE tutors and enjoyable moments as PE tutors.

2.4. Data Analysis

Responses from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim. Content analysis was used in analysing the interview texts into Microsoft Word. Codes were first created with several codes combined to form themes.

3. Findings

The first research question was; what are the challenges facing PE tutors at colleges of education in Ghana? The findings are displayed in table 1.

Theme	Codes	Participants
Frequencies		
Challenges		
Facing PE	Misconceptions and biases	T1, T2, T4, T3, T5, T8, T9, T11, T12
		7
Tutors	Facilities and equipment to teach PE	T6, T14, T3, T7, T1
5		
	Subject not examinable	T4, T2, T1, T3
4		
	Finance	T3, T4, T11
3		

Table 1: Challenges Facing PE tutors

Based on the responses from the interview, the most important challenge facing PE tutors at colleges of education in Ghana were misconceptions and biases about the course followed by facilities and equipment to teach PE lessons. Again, it could be observed that PE tutors have issues with the course not being examinable while getting finance to run programmes and purchase items was also a challenge. The following are some of the direct quotes from the interview:

'The perception of some teachers, even heads of institutions and even some students towards the subject of physical Education are also another challenge, and a lot of misconceptions about the subject, but all in all, I will try to do my best to make the work effective'. [T3] On the part of facilities, a participant asserted *'And the major cause is the facility and the equipment we need to teach the course. Because the course is purely practical and we don't get the needed equipment and materials to teach it, it becomes very difficult teaching it for people to also go and teach it at the basic school the few ones available to us we used it to facilitate our teaching and learning'. [T6]* *'The challenges are numerous looking at our course and the perception out there, the issue of it not to be examinable which is a fact at the SHS and the college per se, when people don't select it as an elective. Some years they don't select, other years even when they select it as an elective just two or three people select it as an elective it does not discourage us, we keep on teaching the few who select it as an elective'. [T4]*

The second research question was, what are some of the things enjoyed by PE tutors at colleges of education in Ghana? The results based on the interview are displayed in table 2.

Theme	Codes	Participants
Frequencies		
Things Enjoyed by	Competition Successes	T1, T2, T3, T4, T6, T7, T9.
PE Tutors	Students understanding	7
	Concepts taught	T4, T5, T6, T8, T11
	Students selecting	5
	PE as an elective	T2, T4, T6, T7, T12
	Getting Equipment and	5
	Supplies to teach PE	T10, T11, T12.
		3

Table 2: Enjoyable Moments as PE Tutors

From table seven, 7 of the 12 PE tutors were happy with their successes at competitions. Five of the tutors stated that they were happy when students understand the concepts delivered while a similar number maintained that when

students select the course as an elective, they become complacent. Lastly, 3 confirmed that when they get equipment and supplies to teach the course, they become very happy tutors. Some statements mentioned to support what tutors enjoy are: *'Then competitions, inter-colleges, ASHBA games, national games are the most enjoyable achievements that have always been winning competitions and most especially if you can impact your knowledge and skills on your students, teaching them, training them and they acquiring the needed skills and knowledge putting them into practice and also, winning competitions for themselves, as a coach you sit back and this is our joy'[T3], 'when I go for a championship and I win, I become happy, I become happy when you train for let's say, for about one month and you go for a tournament and win [T6], 'our college is purely male so we compete in only the male-dominated area. So, we have about five competitions. If we even win two out of the five, I become happy' [T7]. Well, anyway I have loved my course and loved everything about it. 'When it is time for me to send the students out for competitions, I enjoyed so much of their company, the jama, I mean my just dressing up as the PE madam makes me fulfilled and winning' [T9]. 'When people select it as an elective, I become happy. When I make a requisition for sports items and management gives to me, I become happy. When I go for a championship and I win, I become happy. I become happy when you train for let's say, for about one month and you go for a tournament and win. In a tournament, we have about five trophies'. [T1].*

3. Discussion

The challenges facing the teaching of Physical Education are well researched in the pieces of the literature. However, there is little research on the challenges and enjoyment of physical education tutors from the Ghanaian perspective. Therefore, this study was conducted to top up knowledge by examining the challenges and enjoyment of PE tutors in Ghana. This section discusses the findings of the current study. The study adopted a qualitative case strategy to gather detailed information from the participants. Purposive sampling was applied to the study. 12 tutors at colleges of education in Ghana were selected because they are aware of the challenges they have encountered as PE tutors in addition to what they have enjoyed the most.

The study emphasised the findings which Carlson (1995) stated that 'physical education is often met with tremendous enthusiasm by tutors in Colleges of Education in Ghana, but this enthusiasm has been found to fade as some tutors face a lot of challenges in both teaching and learning of physical education. The results of the study showed that seven participants narrated the most important challenge facing PE tutors at colleges of education in Ghana are misconceptions and biases towards the course. A verbatim quote to substantiate some of the challenges *'The perception of some teachers, even heads of institutions and even some students towards the subject of physical Education are also another challenge, and a lot of misconceptions about the subject, but all in all, I will try to do my best to make the work effective'.* Another challenge was facilities and equipment to teach PE lessons. Five participants observed that PE tutors have issues with the course not being examinable. Participant quoted that *'The challenges are numerous looking at our course and the perception out there, the issue of it not to be examinable which is a fact at the SHS and at the college per say when people don't select it as an elective. Some years they don't select, other years even when they select it as an elective just two or three people select it as an elective' [T4].* The last was getting finance to run programmes and purchase items were also a challenge. The following were verbatim quotes from participants *'And the major cause is the facility and the equipment we need to teach the course. Because the course is purely practical and we don't get the needed equipment and materials to teach it, it becomes very difficult teaching it for people to also go and teach it at the basic school the few ones available to us we used it to facilitate our teaching and learning'.*

The second of the objectives looked at the enjoyment in the teaching of PE. From table two, it was deduced that seven PE tutors were happy with competition successes. The enjoyment of physical education has been connected to perceived competence and mastery (Wallhead & Buckworth, 2004); teachers find physical activity enjoyable when they can succeed in impacting what the planned activities are (Mandigo & Couture, 1996; Martens, 1996; Whitehead & Corbin, 1997). Some verbatim quotes to support those teachers were happy with competition successes. One of the participants said *'when I go for a championship and I win, I become happy, I become happy when you train for let's say, for about one month and you go for a tournament and win [T6].* Another quote to support the joy of teaching PE from a participant *'Well, anyway I have loved my course and loved everything about it. 'When it is time for me to send the students out for competitions, I enjoyed so much of their company, the jama, I mean my just dressing up as the PE madam makes me fulfilled and winning' [T9].*

The other factor that brought enjoyment were Students understanding concepts taught, five participants said when *'most especially if you can impact your knowledge and skills on your students, teaching them, training them and they acquiring the needed skills and knowledge putting them into practice and also, winning competitions for themselves, as a coach you sit back and this is our joy'.*

Additionally, five participants who contributed to students selecting PE as elective said *'Some years they don't select, other years even when they select it as an elective just two or three people select it as an elective, it does not discourage us we keep on teaching the few who select it as an elective'.* The last one was getting equipment and PE supplies to teach PE because the course is purely practical and we don't get the needed equipment and materials to teach it, it becomes very difficult teaching it for people to also go and teach it at the basic school the few ones available to us we used it to facilitate our teaching and learning'.

4. Limitations

The sample size could have been large to curtail for mixed methods to involve more PE tutors to have shared their lived experiences. Besides, there are other areas of PE which were not exploited to come out with additional challenges and enjoyment of physical education tutors in colleges of education in Ghana.

5. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the research study it can be concluded that physical education teachers enjoyed teaching their subjects no matter the numerous challenges they faced day in day out. Facilities, equipment and finances should be provided to help make easy the teaching and learning of the subject. The framers of the curriculum should make the teaching of physical education at Senior High school an elective option for students to continue to further it at the colleges of education. Teachers' motivation to teach physical activity is determined by whether they have all the needed equipment and materials that will make the activity enjoyable and worthwhile, or if they think the objectives are achieved through the various interactions and instructions (Fox, 1991; Martens, 1996).

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