

## THE STRATEGIES USED BY SCHOOLS TO RECOVER THE TIME SPENT IN SPORTS AMONG STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IMENTI NORTH SUB-COUNTY, MERU COUNTY, KENYA

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#### Abstract

This study sought to identify the strategies used by schools to recover the time spent in sports among students in public secondary schools in Imenti North Sub-County, Meru County, Kenya. This study employed a descriptive research design. Fifteen schools were identified in the study using stratified sampling based on the zones. The sample size comprised 15 principals, 15 games masters, 15 class teachers, and 225 from three students. Data was obtained through structured questionnaires, oral interviews, and primary and secondary sources to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. After the data was collected, it was sorted, cleaned and coded. Subsequently, the data was keyed into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Version 27) for processing. Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilised for data analysis. This study established that there were various strategies used by schools to recover the time spent in sports among students in public secondary schools in Imenti North Sub-County, Meru County, Kenya. The study concluded that the schools had extra classes to recover time spent in sports and other strategies to recover time spent in sports among public secondary schools in Imenti North Sub-County, Meru County, Kenya. The study recommends that policymakers should draw academic calendars that ensure students who engage in sports do not lose much on academic contact hours.

**Key terms:** Recovery, schools, sports, strategies, time spent.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sport as a co-curricular activity in schools has had a significant impact on the holistic development of students. For that matter, most countries in the globe have developed cost-effective strategies, structural conditions and policies within secondary schools that have provided student-athletes with the platform for excelling both in their studies and sporting activities. For instance, in Ireland, the governing agency in charge of student sports has a four-pillar strategic plan focusing on organisation, physical activity, sports clubs, and high performance (Gomez et al., 2018). The governing body normally places emphasis on the high-performance pillar as they are mandated with the general development and promotion of a conducive environment that allows student-athlete to effectively balance their schoolwork and sporting activities (Hacifazlıoğlu, 2021).

In addition, the European Union has been influential in acknowledging the challenges of balancing sporting activities and academic performance in public schools. For that reason, they outlined some key guidelines, which have been used in championing the crafting of policies that promote the concept of dual careers in schools. One of the key policy agenda, advocate for dialogue between public schools and sporting agencies to implement an academic curriculum that is flexible and which embraces post-athletic support to student-athletes (Gomez et al., 2018). Therefore, it made it necessary for this study to establish the strategies used by the schools to recover time spent in sports among public secondary schools in Imenti North Sub-County, Meru County, Kenya.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Limiting the time for physical education also limits the cognitive development of learners. Citing Kuana et al. (2019), physical activities contribute immensely to brain functioning and development. During physical education exercises, the heart pumps more blood to the brain. Additionally, physical activity increases the release of growth factors that stimulate the development of new brain cells (Brenner et al., 2019). Additional brain cells increase cognitive functions such as short-term and long-term memories, which are important in academic development. Hence, physical education is expected to improve academic performance in students by improving their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive aspects.

Physical education helps to relieve stress and anxiety. During physical education, the instructor may guide the students to perform a variety of physical activities such as jogging, yoga, aerobics, and jump rope. During physical activity, the brain secretes more endorphins (Meenapriya et al., 2018). These peptides work on the opiate receptors in the brain, and they increase the feeling of pleasure and well-being for the individual. This means that increased endorphin secretion in the brain as a result of physical activity may relieve stress. When students are less stressed and happy, they are more likely to concentrate on their academics, and as a result, they perform better than stressed ones. Therefore, physical education improves academic performance by relieving bad emotions such as stress and sadness.

Students interact with one another during physical education. Some scholars assert that people interact and communicate during physical activities (Brailovskaia et al., 2018). As observed earlier,

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these interactions help individuals to build a sense of togetherness and belonging. When students have good communication skills, they can interact with each other and collaborate effectively on academic projects. Moreover, Brailovskaia et al. (2018) argue that students also learn other social skills, such as tolerance and respect towards others. These skills are useful in attaining better educational outcomes since they are not only determined through test grades but through development in all areas, which will allow the student to become successful in their professional and personal life.

During the physical education sessions, instructors explain the benefits of physical activities to the physical health of students. As explained by Weeldenburg et al. (2020), many youths and children in the world are obese. Being overweight contributes to other issues, such as diabetes and cardiovascular issues, which affect the quality of life of the students. Lifestyle diseases such as diabetes affect the ability of the student to concentrate on academic performance, and in some instances, the student may be absent from school for a long time. These outcomes contribute to poor academic performance by the students, proving that physical activities are necessary to improve performance. When students understand the implications of physical activities on their physical well-being and academic attainments, they are more likely to undertake healthy measures such as indulging in sports. Moreover, indulging in physical activities reduces obesity, which is associated with low self-esteem and stress. Therefore, physical education can improve the academic performance of students by preventing some diseases, such as diabetes and preventing esteem issues associated with obesity.

In striking a balance between sporting activities and academic performance, other countries have continued to be strategic through the development of theoretical models designed to sustain student-athletes. For instance, the United States stands out as one of the leading countries with well-organised school-based systems for supervising and improving student-athletes (Gomez et al., 2018). Such schools are usually characterised by a curriculum that supports both sports and academic studies. In other countries, institutions have developed strategies like offering student-athletes a chance to join specialist sports high schools where they can specialise in specific sporting activities within the regular academic curriculum (Hacifazlıoğlu, 2021). Other schools have introduced sports academies to their students, which affords the students the opportunity to have comprehensive study and training schedules.

Public schools need to help students balance participating in sporting activities while continuing their academic excellence (O'Neill et al., 2015). Some schools have done well in motivating their student-athletes through the provision of scholarships and specialised programs. Such endeavours have proven influential in inspiring student-athletes to pursue both sports and academic excellence. Public secondary schools also need to assign student-athletes a case manager who could help in providing pastoral care, mentorship, and assistance on issues affecting such students (O'Neill et al., 2017). To effectively motivate students into sporting activities, the school needs to implement a curriculum approach focused on individual goals, schoolwork schedules, and time management concerning sporting activities. Lastly, public schools ought to embrace technology in their curriculum delivery to keep student-athletes apprised of their coursework, class assignments, or any

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other form of curriculum development while they are absent. Thus, this study identified the strategies put in place by the schools to recover time spent in sports among the public schools among students in public secondary schools in Imenti North-Sub County, Meru County, Kenya.

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design. The purpose of descriptive research design is to determine and report the way things are (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). Orodho (2009) argues that a descriptive survey can be used when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any of a variety of education or social issues. According to Ngechu (2004), a research design is a detailed outline of procedures and approaches on how data is gathered for exhaustive evaluation, which consists of data identification, data collection tools and techniques, how the tools are administered and how the collected data is organised and analysed. This study employed a descriptive research design. The purpose of descriptive research design is to determine and report the way things are (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). Orodho (2009) argues that a descriptive survey can be used when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any of a variety of education or social issues. Hence, the descriptive research design was appropriate in examining the strategies used by the schools to recover the time spent in sports among students in public secondary schools in Imenti North Sub-county, Meru County, Kenya. A descriptive research design was appropriate because of its suitability in gathering data on the perception of the population in addressing research questions (Ponto, 2015).

## 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Strategies Used by Schools to Recover the Time Spent in Sports

The study sought to identify the strategies used by schools to recover the time spent on sports in public secondary schools. To answer the research question corresponding to this objective, the opinion of the students, games teachers and principals on the strategies utilised by schools to recover the time spent in sports was sought.

The learners' perception of strategies utilised by schools to recover the time spent in sports was examined using five parameters captured in item twenty-one of the students' questionnaire. Item 21(i) of the students' questionnaire sought to establish whether the schools had extra classes to recover time spent in sports. As shown in Table 1, all the participants pointed out that the schools had extra classes to compensate for time spent in sports, where (90.6%) agreed and (9.4%) strongly agreed. These results signify that, in the opinion of student participants, the schools had extra classes to recover time spent in sports. None of the participants held a contrary opinion. In regard to Item 21(ii) of the students' questionnaire, the participants were asked whether they carried books to study when out for sports. The majority of the participants (55.2%) indicated that they did not carry books to study when out for sports. On the other hand (44.8%) pointed out that they carried books to study when out for sports, where (35.5%) agreed and (9.3%) strongly agreed. These results signify that it was not common practice for students to carry books to study when out for sports.

In regard to Item 21(iii) of the students' questionnaire, the participants were asked whether they joined students in host schools for preps when out for sports. The majority of the participants

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(64.0%) pointed out that they joined students in host schools for preps when out for sports, where (54.7%) agreed and (9.3%) strongly agreed. In contrast, (36.0%) of the participants indicated that they never joined students in host schools for preps when out for sports. These results suggest that students joining host schools for prep was a strategy utilised to recover time spent in sports. This strategy worked for nearly two-thirds of the participants. In regard to Item 21(iv) of the students' questionnaire, the participants were asked whether their schools had remedial lessons for students who engaged in games. More than nine-fifths of the participants (90.7%) disagreed, while (9.3%) agreed. These results signify that, in the opinion of student participants, most schools did not have remedial lessons for students who engaged in games. Only a tenth of the participants indicated they had.

In regard to Item 21(v) of the students' questionnaire, the participants were asked whether they carried assignments when out for sports. Nearly two-thirds of the participants (62.1%) pointed out that they did not carry assignments when out for sports. On the contrary, 37.9 per cent indicated that they carried assignments when out for sports, where (28.6%) agreed and (9.3%) strongly agreed. These results signify that the culture of carrying assignments when out for games was not common in the schools sampled. Only less than two-fifths of the participants attested to its utilisation.

**Table 1: Strategies Used by Schools to Recover the Time Spent in Sports**

Time recovery Item	SA		A		D	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
We have extra classes to make up for the time spent on sports	19	9.4	184	90.6	0	0
When out for sports, students carry books to read	19	9.3	72	35.5	112	55.2
When out for sports, students join the host school for preps	19	9.3	111	54.7	73	36.0
We have remedial sessions for students who engage in sports	0	0	19	9.3	184	90.7
Students out for sports carry their assignments	19	9.3	58	28.6	126	62.1

Item five of the games teachers' questionnaire inquired about the strategies adopted to recover time spent in sports. The majority of the games teachers interviewed indicated that extra classes were the major strategy through which time spent in sports was recovered. Some of the participants hinted that before the games, teachers went out for games, and they made up classes to mitigate the lessons anticipated to be lost during the sporting season. A few of the participants pointed out that their students carried books and utilised the evening and morning preps in the host schools for revision.

Item six of the principals' questionnaire sought to establish the strategies adopted to recover time spent in sports. The majority of the participants indicated that the students are expected to write all the notes and do all the assignments once they are back from games. Some participants pointed out that students achieving low grades are not allowed to represent the school in the scheduled

tournaments. Subsequently, the said students do their best to improve their grades in order to be allowed to represent the school in games. A few participants indicated that students who are out for games carry assignments that they are required to find their own time to complete before they return to their school.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Conclusion:** This study concluded that the schools had extra classes to recover time spent in sports. Other strategies to recover time spent in sports include sports participants joining the host school in preps, games, teachers organising make-up lessons before they went for games and sports participants doing all assignments issued while they were out for sports.

**Recommendations:** School administrators should enlighten students on the benefits of engaging in sports and spend funds meant for sports to improve sports facilities. In addition, Policymakers should draw academic calendars that ensure students who engage in sports do not lose much on academic contact hours.

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