Perspectives of Physical Education and After-School Sports in Ghana


Learning objectives:

1. Examine the historical role of physical education in sport development.
2. Understand how the Colonial Era influenced the development of physical education and sport in Ghana.
3. Examine and contrast the role of indigenous games and sports during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods.
4. Discuss colonial and post-colonial reforms that influenced sport and physical education.
5. What are the pros and cons for after-schools programs?
6. Discuss levels of sports competition and explain how they influence sports development.
7. Discuss the social, economic and political role of physical education or after school sport programs.
8. Examine the connections between PE and after school sports programs

Introduction: Ghana in Brief, geographical and cultural facts

The Republic of Ghana extends inland from the Gulf of Guinea on the western “bulge” of Africa, and bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the south, Togo to the east, Burkina Faso to the north and La Cote d’Ivoire to the west. With a surface area of 238,837 sq km, it is similar in size to Great Britain or the American state of Oregon. Most of the country is relatively flat, has a tropical climate, and divided into five different geographical regions. The coastline is mostly a low, sandy shore while the northern part of the country features high plains. Southwest and south central Ghana are made up of forested plateau, the Ashanti uplands, the Kwahu Plateau, and the hilly Akuapim-Togo range along the country's eastern border.
The Volta Basin also takes up most of central Ghana. Ghana's highest point is Mount Afadjato which is 885 m (2,904 ft) and is found in the Akwapim-Togo Ranges. The eastern coastal belt is warm and comparatively dry, the southwest corner is hot and humid, and the north is hot and dry. There are two main seasons in Ghana: the wet and the dry seasons. Northern Ghana experiences its rainy season from March to November while the south, including the capital Accra, experiences the season from April to mid-November.

Ghana is an ethnically diverse country; thus, Ghanaian culture is a mixture of all its ethnic groups, the Akan, Ga, Ewe, Mamprusi and Dagomba, among others but, the culture goes in line with the demographics and is thus predominantly Akan. Ghana's cultural diversity is most evident in Ghanaian cuisine, the arts and clothing.

The music of Ghana is diverse. The sound varies from ethnic group and region. Ghanaian music incorporates several distinct types of musical instruments such as the talking drum ensembles, goje fiddle and koloko lute, court music, including the Akan atumpan, the Ga kpanlogo styles, and log xylophones used in asonko music. The most well known genres to have come from Ghana are Afro-jazz which Ghanaian artist Kofi Ghanaba created and its earliest form of secular music is called highlife. Highlife originated in the late 19th century and early 20th century and spread throughout West Africa. In the 1990s a new genre of music was created by the youth incorporating the influences of Highlife Afro-reggae, dancehall and hiphop. This hybrid was called Hiplife. Ghanaian artists such as R&B and soul singer Rhian Benson and highlife singer Kojo Antwi have had international success.

Ghanaian dance is as diverse as its music. Each ethnic group has their own traditional dances and there are different dances for different occasions. There are dances for funerals,
celebrations, storytelling, praise and worship etc. Some of these dances include bamaya, adowa, kpanlongo, klama, agbadza, atsiagbekor, atsia, bɔbɔɔbɔ, and agahu.

**Educational Context: Indigenous and Western**

**Indigenous Education**

Africans had a traditional system of education prior to the arrival of Europeans to the continent. Due to the absence of permanent school buildings, many writers on African education described the African educational process as mainly informal (Marah, 2006). However, as Ociti (1973) commented, “like any good system of education, it had [African education] its objectives, scope and methods which clearly reflected the ways of life or cultural patterns of the clan or chiefdom” (p. 105). African education of the young involved intellectual, physical and character training, respect for elders and those in position of authority, and the promotion of the cultural heritage of the community at large (Fafunwa, 1974). That is, the physical, social and spiritual contexts of pre-colonial African societies determined the content of traditional education (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2002). Moreover, Omolewa (2007) argued that, Africa had already reached a high level of educational development before the arrival of foreign observers on the continent.

According to Marah (2006), the process of traditional education in Africa was intimately integrated with all aspects of society. Ociti (1971) identified five principles that undergirded African education. First, African education was to prepare boys and girls for their respective roles in the society. Second, traditional education was functional—it was participatory in
nature. Thus, the learner was well-integrated into the local community; “graduate unemployment” was non-existent in the traditional society. Third, every member of the community had a responsibility in the education of the child. Fourth, African education served to preserve and transmit cultural norms from one generation to the next. Fifth, African education was holistic in nature—it equipped the learner with a wide range of skills.

Common teaching methods in traditional African societies included folklores, stories, and proverbs (Grenier 1998). Griots memorized the history and legends of the people, and would recite them to the students or audience (Marah, 2006). Stories were passed down from one generation to the other. Initiation ceremonies also served as common teaching methods in many African societies. African education uses the age grade system (Omolewa, 2007). Children are initiated from one age group to another until they attain adulthood. Attainment of adulthood culminates into initiation ceremonies, for example the dipo ceremony among the Krobos of Ghana.

The African traditional system of education had inherent limitations. First, the non-literate nature of African education (Foster, 1965; Marah 2006) was a major weakness of the system. Second, details about cultural and/or historical facts were lost overtime, due to the overreliance on oral traditions and folklores. Third, African traditional education tended to focus on particular ethnic groups, and therefore exclusive of others who did not belong to those groups (Marah, 2006). Fourth, African traditional education also demanded conformity, but not individuality, creativity or individual uniqueness (Ocitti, 1973). That is, it tended to be conservative in nature, not making room for changes in society. Finally, the traditional system
of education relied on fear and punishment to ensure that students conformed to norms and customs of society.

In spite of these limitations, indigenous African education still plays an important role in many African societies. It serves as the agent of socialization for many African youths who never attend Western types of schools (Woolman, 2001).

**Western System of Education**

State organized Western-style of education started in Ghana (then Gold Coast) during the last quarter of the 19th century (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Before that, Western formal education was provided by European merchants in the castles. The Portuguese taught the three Rs and religious knowledge (Graham, 1976) to children at the Elmina Castle as far back as 1529. The primary purpose of the Castle schools was to produce clerks and translators for the European trading companies. Beneficiaries of these schools were typically mullato children, off-springs of European castle staff and African women. Later, children of important African merchants and local chiefs also benefited from the castle schools. Other schools were later opened in the Cape Coast and Christianborg castles.

The signing of the Bond of 1844 between the British and a number of coastal chiefs in the Gold Coast signified the beginning of increased activities by the colonial government. Governor Guggisberg’s Sixteen Principles of 1925 stressed practical and vocational education. Guggisberg’s proposals were, in part, to address the academic nature of educational system and to improve the manpower needs of the country. The proposals also recommended that games and sports should be part of school life (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975).
Colonial education excluded several traditionally desired skills and behaviors from the curriculum (Booth, 1997). For instance, African indigenous games, dances, and songs were prohibited in schools. But as Foster (1965) noted, formal education must be incorporated in a meaningful way into the local society.

After independence in 1957, Ghana inherited a pre-university educational system of 17-year duration. Education before 1987 was composed of a 6–4–5–2 structure, representing primary, middle, secondary, and university preparatory course respectively. Just like its predecessor—colonial education—post-independent education continued to be academic in nature.

Based on the Dzobo Committee Report of 1973, Ghana implemented the Educational Reform Program of 1987. The reform shortened the length of pre-university education from 17 to 12 years, introducing a 6–3–3 school system. The system comprised of six-year primary, three-year junior secondary, three-year senior secondary, and four-year university education. The new system placed emphasis on vocationalization at the junior secondary level. The goal of vocationalization, especially at the junior secondary level was to eliminate the distaste of manual work (Yamada, 2005).

In spite of the reforms, secondary schools offering grammar-type curricula are still preferred to those running technical and vocational programs. In addition, subjects such as physical education are marginalized in school curricula at the pre-university levels (Sofo, Belcher, Ocansey, & Kanton, 2010).

**History of Physical Education and Sports: Early Beginnings**
Gordon Guggisberg, the then Governor of the Gold Coast formulated what was known as the “16 Principles of Education” in 1925. One of the principles required that games form part of school life (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). However, physical education did not become a school subject until the passage of the 1944 Education Act in Britain (Van Dalen & Bennett, 1971). The postcolonial physical education curriculum in Ghana appeared not to have undergone any major reconstruction since the subject was introduced in schools during the colonial era (Opoku-Fianko, 1985). Many African scholars and policy makers continue to view indigenous games and dances as inferior to Eurocentric activities (Wanderi, 2005, cited in Wanderi, 2006).

Considering that games and sports are important cultural elements, many scholars (see Wanderi, 2006) have called for the reinstatement of African games in schools. Moreover, research has shown that Ghanaian primary mathematics teachers who experienced games in their mathematics classes as students were more likely to use games in their lessons as teachers (Nabie & Sofo, 2009). That is, physical education teachers who experienced indigenous African games and dances as students would likely teach them in their physical education classes. Sub-Saharan Africans, as a people, need to reformulate the purposes of education (Abdi, Puplampu, & Dei, 2006).

Sport, as a microcosm of society, represents in Ghana part of the cultural narrative of the country’s socio-political struggles through time. The country’s political and economic narrative portrays its people’s competitiveness and ingenuity in harnessing resources to improve their lives even before the advent of colonialism and imperialism. Ghanaians are so proud of their heritage so much so that, the celebration of their culture is often a narrative of
the sociopolitical struggles of the people evoked through dance, poetry, and traditional competitive physical and recreational activities. Probably, nowhere is traditional culture manifested with so much pomp and pageantry than in Ghana’s cultural celebrations as seen in festivals such as: Homowo Festival of the Ga people, Yam Festival of the Ewe people, Damba and Fire Festivals of the people of northern Ghana, Hogbetsotsoe Festival of the Anlos in the Volta Region, Bakatue Festival of Elmina, Aboakyir Festival of Winneba, Akwasidae Festival of Ashanti, Akwambo Festival of Gomoa, Afahye Festival of Cape Coast or Odwira Festival of Akwapim. Even in sporting manifestations the sound of cultural drums, singing and dancing pervade the stadium.

Ghanaians are not just recognized as Black Africans; they are members of a distinctively proud culture and possess a complex chain of behaviors, traditions, languages, values, and symbols that are unique, profound and distinct from other cultures in and outside Africa. Their local subcultures place a very high premium or value on traditions, symbols, cultural accomplishments, sociopolitical struggles, and cultural experiences. An important aspect of Ghanaians’ cultural experiences is undoubtedly the struggle for fulfillment, social mobility and status, belonging, and respect in a male dominated culture that is gradually shedding some of its hegemonic customary practices (Baba, 2000). Sports are therefore a vital aspect of the fabric of Ghanaian culture because many aspects of sports spectatorship function as opportunities for identification, expressions, affirmations, and celebrations that are salient to culture.

Physical Education and Sport during the Pre-independence Period
Before 1900, physical education and sport were not widespread in the Gold Coast as Ghana was known then. Communities participated in some physical activities which were related to social pursuits, tradition and environmental needs. The people participated in activities such as farming, fishing, and physical preparatory activities for tribal wars and conquests. The major competitive physical activities included climbing of trees, wrestling, boxing with bare fists, throwing of missiles such as spears, pulling, rowing (in the form of regatta) and swimming. There were other activities of a recreational nature such as “tu-matu”, draught, “oware”, hide and seek, “checkers”, acrobatic and agility exercises, “ampe” (for females), and various indigenous drumming and dances (Baba et al, 1993). Several of these activities often took place as competitions on festival days, moon-lit nights or after a hard day’s work at the farm.

The arrival of Europeans in the colony and its colonization later by the English saw the introduction of foreign sport and games in schools that they established (often referred to as Castle Schools because they were located in fortified castles where the Whites lived). These newly introduced physical activities took precedence over the indigenous ones and were performed in the form of organized competitions by schools only (and later the public) at Empire Day Celebrations in commemoration of the birthday of the queen of England, Queen Victoria beginning in 1880.

Sport and games competitions were often organized for schools, mostly. Football and athletics were the first to be introduced and soon became the most popular competitive activities among the youth. The public’s involvement did not begin until the formation of the Excelsior Football Club in Cape Coast (1903) and Hearts of Oak Football Club in Accra (1911)
although smaller and less popular clubs had been formed in Sekondi, Cape Coast (the capital of the colony) and Winneba (named Windy Bay by the colonial masters). It was not until the castle schools were taken over by missionaries that physical education was introduced as a compulsory subject. Between 1882 and 1909, however, various educational acts were passed that included physical education in the general education curriculum.

The first physical education syllabus was introduced to schools in 1902. Governor Gordon Guggisberg who was appointed the governor of the Gold Coast in 1919 is credited for laying a solid foundation for the teaching of physical training. He introduced some educational reforms and established educational organs to supervise their implementation as a major priority of his administration. He further formulated a sixteen-point education policy that emphasized the importance of character training, physical education and sport training in the educational curriculum. Fundamental to the implementation of this policy, was the authorization for the construction of playing fields in all schools. The policy made physical education, sport and organized games core subjects of the educational curriculum and the governor gave personal attention to the formation of inter-schools sports competitions at the elementary and secondary school levels of education. This led to the establishment of a competition in 1926 (called the Aggrey Shield) involving Achimota School (from Accra), Presbyterian Training College (from Akropong), Mfantsipim and Adisadel College (both from Cape Coast).

Governor Gordon Guggisberg’s educational reforms remained in place until 1933 when they were replaced with new reforms and curriculum. A new syllabus that was introduced did not entirely remove the often militaristic approach in teaching of physical education and sport
reflected in the 1919 educational reforms. In fact, they rather emphasized rhythmic free
movement, good posture and suppleness without making provision for self expression and
individual skill learning. However, they provided opportunity, without expert guidance, for
teachers to be innovative in their approach to teaching physical education and sport (Baba et al,
1993). Without such expert guidance, teachers of physical education and sport lost focus
resulting in a decline in sport performances. A decade later, the Education Act of 1944 was
promulgated to arrest the decline. The new act made provision in the policy for the
introduction of three 35-minute physical education lessons per week in elementary schools and
two 40-minute lessons per week in secondary schools. Since specialist teachers for physical
education were not available, each classroom teacher was responsible for teaching these
subjects with or without any background training.

In 1950, a one-year program for training physical education teachers was mounted at
Achimota College and later transferred to the University College of Science and Technology,
Kumasi (now Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology). This program was
subsequently upgraded to a two-year program of training in 1959, after independence, when it
was moved to the Government Training College in Winneba. Before 1952, sports, in the Gold
Coast, was organized and supported “principally by interested and enthusiastic individuals”
(National Sports Policy, 1994, p.3). The first legal effort to promote, develop, and control sports
was made in 1952 with the enactment of the Gold Coast Amateur Sports Council Ordinance
(No. 14).

**Physical Education and Sport in the Post-independence Period**
Physical education and sport in Ghana has experienced a period of great expansion from the colonial era when there was little regard for a planned programme of activity except for the daily drill which was referred to as physical training (PT). This form of program was a replica of the carry-over effect of the then Gold Coast soldiers who had participated in fighting in the First World War as part of the imperial British Empire war machinery. A ritualistic and militaristic drill system of physical training and game activities was introduced into the school system under the control of these ex-servicemen which had the sole aim of instilling discipline in the youth.

After independence from British Colonial Rule in 1957, Gold Coast (now Ghana) embarked on a path of accelerated development with a key emphasis of searching for a national identity and international recognition in all spheres of endeavor within the broader context of “African identity” (Baba, 2000). Within five years of short-term accelerated development in sport, Ghana had become a beacon of sport development in Africa and many other colonies looked up to her to establish an African sport image. With proper planning, albeit without any long-term programming, schools and colleges in Ghana had undertaken extensive interscholastic programs guided by a policy of compulsory intramural sport programs for all school children. A majority of schools and colleges had established departments of physical education with programs for mass gymnastics and competitive sport (e.g. soccer, track and field, boxing, table tennis, and cricket) which featured in the Empire Day Games. These sport programmes were taught and managed by classroom teachers and military ex-servicemen.

None of these teachers had acquired the qualification to teach or manage sport programs in these institutions but they put their shoulders to the task and produced
phenomenal results under trying circumstances. The successful management of sports in schools by these teachers and military ex-servicemen probably gave rise to the traditional belief or myth that anyone could teach or manage sport irrespective of one’s academic background. Mere enthusiasm and material support from the central government was enough impetus to move the wheels of sport development forward. As time passed by, the momentum of development began to slow down and became noticeable to everyone that those at the helm of managing sport could not be exonerated from blame.

Gradually, higher standards of teacher education in the field of physical education were established and better trained teachers were produced. The trend in professional preparation required a much broader general education with some specialized training in physical education. Soon the physical education teachers became burdened with the task of coaching virtually all sports. To every Ghanaian, sport was linked directly to physical education without a clear line of demarcation between them. They represented two sides of the same coin.

As the program in physical education and sport continued to expand in schools and colleges in the country, interscholastic sport also continued to grow in popularity. This culminated in the formation of the Schools and Colleges Sports Association in 1961 by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports. The formation of this association represented the government’s affirmation of its commitment to harness the sporting activities of schools and colleges in the country into a bastion of sport development. Between 1961 and 1966 there was a quantum leap in the growth of sport especially in football, athletics, boxing, field hockey, table tennis and cricket that influenced professional preparation programs in colleges and universities. It was during this period that the Central Organization of Sports (COS) was
established that had wide powers to control sports and physical education in Ghana. “The socialist philosophy of Democratic Centralism for Mass Participation in sports” was adopted with wide ranging successes at the international level (National Sports Policy, 1994; p.5). The government’s physical education training program which had now settled at Winneba had metamorphosed into a four-year diploma program producing trained physical education teachers who were absorbed by the Ghana Teaching Service as the major employer. From this institution where the courses in physical education were offered, some selected students were provided scholarships to continue their studies in Britain and the Soviet Union. A few of them were selected to be trained as coaches and to return to work with the Central Organization of Sports (COS). These were the only two career options for physical education teachers and no substantial diversity of career opportunities were provided for them.

A gradual drift in focus was made after 1966 when the COS (now National Sports Authority) began to employ some of the physical education teachers as coaches and sports organizers. The Director of the COS had wide powers with presidential backing to develop sports in the country. He extended his powers to schools and colleges and managed their national sports programs with unrivaled and unbridled authority. He proposed and planned an audacious program for sports development in the country using schools and colleges as the nursery ground for talent identification and development which propelled the country’s sport to international recognition in such areas as soccer, athletics, boxing, table tennis, and cricket. He provided scholarships for physical education teachers to study abroad. This had an impact on the way physical education and sport were taught in schools and colleges and provided an impetus for physical education teachers to extend their area of expertise beyond their
professional training (Baba, 2010). With only physical education as their background most of these teachers became saddled with the task of managing public sport as well as schools, colleges and universities physical education and sport programs in the country even if they had no sufficient specialized professional training to competently do both.

The current situation in Ghana is a far departure from what took place a couple of decades after the country freed itself from colonial rule where significant gains were made as a result of an influx of support from the international community, especially from the Soviet Union, Britain and the USA. The period of the Cold War, for instance, witnessed a significant Soviet influence on the structure and organization of sport not only in Ghana but also throughout Africa. With several Soviet sports specialists working in many African countries, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) provided some financial and technical aid, sports equipment, and sports literature, as well as constructing several sports facilities ostensibly to facilitate rapid sport development on the continent.

Massive joint training sessions with Soviet athletes were organized as well as invitations to observe or compete at the multisport Spartakiads in the USSR while several sports specialists were provided scholarships to study at the Institute of Physical Culture in Moscow. The often omnipresent Soviet propaganda machinery left no stone unturned to foster goodwill and to help develop, perpetuate and solidify positive attitudes toward the Soviet Union and its Marxist-Leninist philosophy. The Soviet anti-commercialism and formal amateurism policies deeply influenced the Ghanaian sport culture. Putting the communist propaganda aspect aside, the development of Ghana sports witnessed an unprecedented massive boost in both confidence and stature; that is, the Soviet effort yielded good developmental dividends for the
country. So much gratitude is owed to the Soviets for the level of sport development in Ghana especially between 1960 and 1966 irrespective of the self-serving intentions or misplaced political philosophy that molded them.

**The Status at present: Public policy etc.**

Physical education, in the Ghanaian context, is so closely associated with school sport that it is difficult, even for educators within the profession, to think of physical education and sport as being mutually exclusive. In fact, for the general public there isn't any difference between physical education and sport. As a layperson will ask, if there is a difference, why have physical education teachers accepted the designation as sports master/mistresses? From perspective of a profession, physical education and sport are not mutually inclusive at all. They are exclusively different professional fields with clear benefits to be derived from their exclusive goals. Thus, in order to understand what physical education teachers do and what sports coaches do in school settings, it is necessary to delineate the differences between physical education and sport.

As a whole, physical education teachers over-emphasize sports in schools for several reasons, including but not limited to, the influence of existing policies, administrative rules and regulations, and attitude. The result is that, the critical mass of children and youth receive limited time for engagement in physical activity. In many cases, physical education teachers use physical education periods to coach sports for interschool competitions- a misplacement of priority. Physical education teachers, like other teachers, must be held responsible for learning and achievement gains in students. Of course, this means that learning standards should be
defined for curriculum development and instruction. To what teaching and learning standards are teachers and learners accountable in physical education today? Teacher education institutions must endeavor to help both in-service and pre-service teachers to conceptualize and define learning standards by critically looking at the product of physical education. Who is the physically educated person? If institutions of higher learning embark upon the task of defining the product in physical education, preservice teachers in turn, will be able to work towards realization of physically educated students. At the moment, physical education teachers are not held accountable for their job performance because there are no standards defining what knowledge is worth for learning in physical education and who the physically educated student is.

As we have all witnessed in the past and up to the present time, majority of School Headteachers, Headmasters and Headmistresses, base the criteria for success of their physical education programs on wins from inter-schools sport festivals. Teacher quality has remained a function of winning interschool competitions- this is part of coaching sports accountability, not physical education. How long should we continue to define teaching and program success in physical education by wins at inter-school competitions? Considering the benefits to be derived from participation in physical education, physical activity and sport, it is appropriate and meaningful if physical education teachers are held accountable for learner involvement and attainment of acceptable levels of aerobic fitness, muscle strength and bone strength in children and youth in schools. Are students able to determine their resting heart rate and maximum heart rate during aerobic exercise? Are physical education teachers providing developmentally appropriate opportunities for children and adolescents so they can engage in
moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity for periods that add up to 60 minutes or more each day? If the answer is “Yes” to all, then it means a body of knowledge is available for teaching and learning. Content and learning standards can be defined and pursued in schools.

We must remember that sports has its place in schools but it cannot be pursued to the detriment of physical education. There are clear goals and benefits to be derived from participation in competitive-school sports. Therefore, it is important that schools defined such goals to give school sports a meaningful and purpose-driven face-lift- to make it a productive and worthy exercise for children and adolescents.

The nature of interscholastic sport in Ghana is greatly determined by the Ministry of Education. The number of sports offered by any school is determined by the school curriculum which is planned by the Ministry of Education. In all schools, the sport program is part of the physical education department and is entirely funded by its budget. The physical education teachers serve alternately as sport teachers and coaches in the schools, preferring to be called “sportsmasters” rather than physical education teachers. All the public universities also have appointed physical education teachers as coaches of their sport programs. These universities have also adopted the procedure of engaging some members of faculty as part-time or “honorary” coaches. It is important to note that program philosophies in Ghanaian public educational institutions do not vary and even the educational nature of physical education and sport has been ignobly de-emphasized (Baba, 2010). Previously sport programs at all educational levels (basic, secondary and tertiary) were entirely supported by public funds because educational institutions did not generate revenue from gate receipts or through sponsorship. Currently students at all levels are levied some fees for the management of sports
in the institutions. The government in Ghana is increasingly taking a more proactive role in the development of sport and recreation in the country. Recent times have witnessed an almost spasmodic increase in funding through grants and subsidies from the government to local sport federations, schools and colleges for sports development and specifically for funding international sports engagements. The lack of a steady flow of financial resource support from private sponsors, exacerbated by lack of qualified personnel, good facilities, adequate planning and management of sport talent, however, has left Ghanaian athletes usually inadequately prepared for the exigencies of international competitions.

Ghana sport is beset with numerous criticisms borne out of an inadequately resourced decentralized administrative system that looks up continuously for manna to fall from the government, and a centralized policy-making system that barely has the capacity to monitor policy implementation at the grassroots level. It is therefore left to the Ministry responsible for sports to create an environment in which the government and the sport controlling bodies pursue the mission of developing sport through the implementation of management systems that would promote the development of the youth, the proper management of sport associations, and the optimum use of financial and material resources. Operating with battered infrastructure under a volatile economy, Ghana sport needs a rejuvenation of its infrastructure and organizational structures to meet the exigencies of modern management practices. Its’ sporting strength must not continue to be borne only on the shoulders of soccer and track athletics alone if it must be one of the leaders looked upon by the whole continent to help Africa build and maintain a proud identity through sport.
Therefore, all the institutions responsible for managing sport in the country must cooperate with the Ministries responsible for education and sport as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to lay down the foundations of a concerted development strategy for sport based on complementary missions, convergence of objectives, harmonization and coordination of programs. Consequently, Baba (2009a) recommends that the government must continue to commit public resources to building and maintaining sport infrastructure because of sport’s perceived benefits to improving health and education, to creating jobs and preventing crime, and above all, enhancing sport’s intangible impact on social cohesion and Ghana’s image abroad.

Current policy on physical education and sport

It was the need to protect the values of Ghana sport that sporting regulations evolved within a stable legal environment, in order to meet the respective needs and specific circumstances of all sports. It was also essential, to maintain a sort of statutory balanced framework that allowed sport disciplines other than soccer (often referred to as the “lesser-known sports“), being able to meet the various challenges, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. The essential aspect of the sport policy of 1974 (SMC Decree 54) was to define the legal framework in which the relevant national sport federations or associations (working under the auspices of their international federations) and their members and stakeholders operate. These national sport governing bodies needed to operate under an environment of legal certainty so that they could organize, regulate and promote their respective sports safely with the legal security they needed without undue interference and influence from the government, politicians and local bureaucrats.
By virtue of a statutory obligation placed on the Ministry of Youth and Sports, sport has become the only subject of policy attention. Inevitably, since recreation is not a core policy obligation but only a reference of some sort and degree, there is, for instance, no provision in the policy for the protection and provision of open space and sport and recreation facilities for schools and residential communities. Recreation is widely referenced as part of a vision which recognizes it as making an important contribution to realizing the aspirations for an enhanced quality of life and improved health of the population. However, there is no particular policy focus now on physical education and recreation as part of the wider provision of school and community infrastructure and its contribution to enhancing quality of life in schools and public residential areas.

The Ministry of Education also has no policy on school sports, although national competitions for basic and senior high schools are held bi-annually almost as a convention on the Ministry’s calendar. So, new schools, communities and settlements are established without consideration for the provision of space for sport, recreation and physical activities. This obvious inconsistency in policy strategic approaches has created a significant cause for concern by the Ghanaian public on whose behalf the policy was made. Therefore, since public bureaucracies do not enjoy complete autonomy, national sport organizations are under constant pressure from the citizens, interest groups, politicians and elected officials when making decisions. In this respect they must exercise discretion in order to be responsive to these external influences and always have to thread the path of least resistance and blame-avoidance.
The government has begun the process of reviewing the national policy on sports, recreation and physical activity with the intent to addressing the lapses in the current policy. The new focus is to address also the health and recreational aspects of sport to meet a discerning citizenry. It will be unfair now to appraise the robustness of the new national sport policy initiative being offered to replace the previous ones (SMC Decree 54 of 1974 and its accompanying Legislative Instrument 1188 of 1976). This can only properly be judged through development control practice and implementation and the decentralized focus built into the policy.

The proposed new national sports policy and its supporting legislative instrument need to be studied together to help decode the precise extent of how physical education, sport and recreation is being considered by the state. It will be ideal if both documents are framed together as a single strong policy framework rather than the current format where they are separate isolated entities. It should be noted that the current national sport policy has not established a baseline for incorporating physical education, recreation and sport into a single vision that also includes the protection of existing facilities and provision of new ones as part of the national development approach, neither does the new proposed policy.

Mere references to physical education, recreation and health promotion without policy direction and strategies to the realization of these objectives, continues to propagate the culture of unawareness of sport policy planning in which these are still considered as part of sport strategy rather than as separate domains with their own focus and unique implementation strategies and tactics. Any planned sport policy should support the promotion
of health and well-being by making provision for the development of physical structures or facilities that encourage and promote participation of the youth in physical activity.

Sports, arts, heritage and culture play a major role in the outlook of any nation, because they contribute positively and significantly to health promotion and crime reduction. It is believed that any nation with a strong sporting and cultural offer has the potential to contribute in making that country a desirable place to live and do business. Therefore, the Ministry responsible for sports needs to assist decentralized local authorities and collaborate with the Ministries of Education, Local Government and Health for the purpose of encouraging increased and sustainable participation in physical education, sport, recreation and cultural activities by the youth of the country. They should endeavor to promote sport, physical education and recreation in the widest sense to enable every student and citizen to participate in physical activity, whether as participants or spectators. Consequently, the National Sports Authority (NSA) should endeavor to encourage the provision of a wide range of opportunities for physical education, recreation and sport, so that people can choose activities that suit them best.

The Ministries of Education, Defense, and Interior even without any concrete policy guidelines continue to support and fund the development of all physical activities in their respective areas of authority because of their positive contribution to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the country, their contribution to the quality of life, promotion of healthy lifestyles and provision of opportunities for social interaction.

The monitoring of policy implementation has rarely been made explicit previously or in current new policy document, so decentralized organizations do not have control over
proposed sport, recreation and green space facilities which are eventually lost or displaced to other uses. There is a need to institute a residential/community development policy that recognizes and emphasizes the need for open spaces for sport and recreational purposes for schools and communities, without which the strategic objectives of the sports policy will meet implementation difficulties.

With these deficiencies in public policy regarding sport and physical activity, decentralized public organizations as well as educational institutions are facing difficulties in providing high quality social, educational, leisure and sports facilities, parks and gardens for competition, leisure and recreation. If past sport policies had focused on having a meaningful impact on the lives of the people then they should have required new residential communities and all educational institutions to establish gardens, parks and playgrounds as part of the master-plan for the development of those communities or institutions.

Local government authorities (metropolitan, municipal and district councils/assemblies) have not been tasked to ensure that new community facilities, including health, education, social, sports and leisure, parks and gardens, arts and cultural facilities, are developed as an integral part of proposals for the establishment of schools and major new residential development in accordance with a statutory sport policy. The provision or demarcation of open spaces for the development of sport and recreational facilities has been left in the hands of the Lands Department. Without power to control the sale of land by landowners and protect lands earmarked for playing fields and parks for recreational purposes by this department, state protected lands have been encroached upon with impunity leaving even the local government authorities powerless to demolish structures put up by individuals and companies that have the
backing of powerful politicians and their cronies. Authorities are therefore in a dilemma stemming from the contradiction between necessity to exercise discretion and the motivation to resist that in order to avoid potential blame from these powerful individuals. The institutional structures which could allow social interests to be protected have simply not been established allowing government officials and local bureaucrats to exploit the situation to advance their political ambitions and develop privileged relationships with favored groups and individuals.

Finally, neither the Ministry of Education nor the Ministry of Youth and Sports have ever built a comprehensive database nor developed any tools to assist policy planners and others to secure a better understanding of the provision of, and needs for, physical education, sport and recreation opportunities. These types of resources are always invaluable in helping to build the evidence base that strengthens policy development and implementation. In planning a development document there is always a need to identify issues and alternative options which are consistent with national policy, generally conform to regional planning policy and acceptable to metropolitan, municipal and district authorities.

**Organization and management in PE schools and After-School Sports**

In Ghana, the Regional and Municipal/District Physical Education Organizers are responsible for the organization and supervision of school physical education at the regional and municipal/district levels respectively. However, physical education specialist teachers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of educational policies at the school level. Therefore, an understanding of how they implement their curricula, and their interpretations
of them would be valuable to Ghanaian policy makers, administrators, and teacher educators (Sofo et al., 2010).

**Organization and Management of Physical Education and Sport**

The current proposed new national sports policy seeks to harmonize areas of intervention for a concerted development strategy for sports activity, so that there can be a harmonious relationship between the various actors of sports in the country. Obviously Ghanaians have identified the power of sport in unifying the people of this country and to national development through sport participation, capacity building and the promotion of our national values and ethics. The new sports policy enjoins policy players and implementers to address the numerous challenges facing the country such as economic and social development, culture, education, health, youth, peace, gender equality, persons with disability, anti-doping, values and ethics, the media, infrastructure, finance and sponsorship, national and international sport organizations among others, as proposed by the African Union.

The African Union supported the formulation of a Sport Policy Framework for member states, and proposed strategies and activities for National Action Plans on Sport Development based on four main themes: enhancing participation, building capacity, increasing interaction between people and promoting sport excellence. It recommended to African countries to “defend African dignity, and to win back a sporting practice that has been undermined by disorganization, cheating, corruption, embezzlement, conflicts of interests, violence, racism, intolerance, doping, and a lack of respect for the code of ethics based on African values and the Universal Olympic values” (African Union, 2008; p. 9) which continue to harm and tarnish the prestige and image of many African countries.
Sport Administration Structure

Administratively, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has the statutory responsibility for the development and promotion of sport in the country at all levels. This responsibility is hampered by its inability to strategize and impose its authority on governmental subsidiaries that have autonomy over how they operate their sectors such as the Ministries of Education, Interior, Local Government, Defense, Lands and Mineral Resources and Finance. The Sports Ministry is supported in its policy implementation effort by the Ghana Olympic Committee (GOC) as an independent organization recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) with the principal task of supervising the participation of national teams in the Olympic, All Africa and Commonwealth Games and other approved sporting events by the IOC.

The National Sports Authority (NSA), a major subsidiary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, controls the general line of development of sports and physical activity as well as being assigned the role of supervising the implementation of government policy on sport at the grassroots level. Its role also includes the coordination of financial resources and government grants to national sport federations, construction of sport facilities and the supervision of sport departments at the metropolitan, municipal and district levels. Although all national sport federations are independent organs operating under their respective international federations, the NSA has oversight responsibility and supervision for the proper functioning and implementation of their respective policies within the confines of the national or government sport agenda.

Two other subsidiary departments of the Ministry are the National Sports College (NSC) and the National Youth Council (NYC). The former is tasked to promote research in physical
activity and provide educational and training opportunities for all technical sport personnel in the country. The NYC is responsible for coordinating and controlling the activities of all youth development programs in the country that receive government funding. Any identifiable decline in sport performance is usually directly or otherwise linked to the inability of these three organs of the Ministry to deliver services that subsequently affect the performance success of national teams and athletes in international competitions. The most symptomatic indicator of any decline in Ghana’s sport performances at the international level has always been the loss of the capacity by these three organs to measure performance and to self-regulate or self-correct as well as their inability to attract qualified, dedicated, and business-focused personnel to management positions (Baba, 2009a). A study by Baba (2000) identified some major obstacles encountered in the implementation of sport policy in Ghana as well as the policy strategies that are needed to improve on the management and delivery of sport in the country.

Other major subsidiaries for managing sport at the institutional level are the National Schools and Colleges Sports Federation, the Ghana Universities Sports Association (GUSA), the Ghana Polytechnics Sports Association (GHAPSA), the Colleges of Education Sports Association (CESA), and the Security Services Sports Association (SESSA). The National Schools and Colleges Sports Association is responsible for supervising and organizing separate bi-annual national sport competitions for the 10 regional basic schools and senior high schools as decentralized policy units. The supervising body is the Ghana Education Service which has set up a secretariat in this respect at its national headquarters in Accra to coordinate these sport competitions as
well as supervise the teaching of physical education at the elementary and secondary school levels.

All public universities are affiliated to GUSA which is tasked with organizing annual sport competitions with the view to selecting athletes for the West Africa University Games (WAUG), Federation of Africa University Sports (FASU) and the International Federation of University Sports (FISU). All public polytechnic institutions are also affiliated to GHAPSA which organizes national competitions for its members as well as help select and prepare athletes for the West Africa Polytechnic Games. CESA is a newly established organization responsible for organizing and supervising national competitions for all Colleges of Education (formerly called the Teacher Training Colleges). These four governing bodies are either directly under the supervision and/or policy direction of the Ministry of Education. SESSA, however, is an association belonging to the security service organizations in the country comprising: Armed Forces (Ministry of Defense), Police Service, Fire Service, Prison Service, Immigration Service (Ministry of Interior) and Customs, Excise & Prevention Service (Ministry of Finance & Economic Planning). These security service institutions receive funding from their respective Ministries that have oversight responsibility for their sport organizations.

Although, these organizations seem to have some form of autonomy or semi-autonomy in their management structure, they all adhere to the same principal objectives such as:

1. Fostering the development of healthy lifestyles.
2. Integrating sports into national cultures.
3. Maximizing the economic potential of sports and creating career opportunities for sportsmen and women.
4. Facilitating and guiding the development of sporting infrastructure according to the needs and resources of member institutions.

5. Assisting in the formulation of strategies and programs for the development and effective management of sports in member institutions.

6. Ensuring that physical education and sports become an integral part of the organizational culture of all member institutions.

7. Encouraging and promoting active participation by stakeholders in sport and recreation activities.

8. Fostering the spirit of fair play, mutual respect, ethical and moral principles among stakeholders and member institutions.

One major problem facing sport managers in Ghana is that increasing urbanization is gradually forcing a large number of people to live in new settings and to abandon their traditional leisure activities, which included drinking, traditional dancing, and carousing. These activities have been replaced by increasingly commercialized spectator sports which attract the interest of much of the population. Soccer and boxing have been the most dominant commercial sport activities which have saturated the interest of the urban folks in the country especially. However, with the proliferation of cable and satellite television, modern telephony and information technology, most sport consumers have adopted a “couch-potato” approach to sport consumption leaving local sports clubs to organize their competitions in nearly empty stadia.

A recent report by the National Communication Authority shows that the increased level of sophistication of Ghanaians as discerning information technology consumers has led to a mass consumption of mobile telephones with over 19 million subscriptions, from a population of 24 million people, to the five mobile telephone companies in the country. European soccer competitions have become the main menu for sport consumption rather than the dessert while
local competitions rarely make it to consumers’ televisions. The electronic media outlets seem to think that they are doing local sport development efforts a favor by saturating the airwaves and print media with several foreign sport programs and news. In fact, they are contributory agents to the decline in local sport consumption. An old Mexican proverb observes that: “The seagull thinks it is an act of kindness to give the fish a lift in the air.”

Physical education activities and programs were based on the British Board of Education syllabus of Physical Exercises of 1904. Each educational unit, therefore, was made responsible for its own program considering the availability of funds and supply of equipment. Parents were made to pay sports fees, and the money collected was used in paying for the cost of travelling, feeding and purchase of trophies for inter-school competitions. Most schools devoted their physical education periods to preparation towards annual inter-school programs.

In 1944, an Educational Act was passed in Britain. One of the provisions of this act was the inclusion of physical education in the school curriculum.

**Indigenous sports and their contributions to development / Relationship with commonwealth and Olympic movement**

*Indigenous sports and their contributions to development*

According to Wanderi (2006), games and sports are important cultural elements, and therefore called for the reinstatement of African games in schools. Indigenous games and sports have the potential for the cognitive, physical, social and emotional development of the citizenry.

Traditional games and play are a type of indigenous way of knowing. Indigenous games can be used to enhance culturally sensitive learning activities in classroom environments.
Many indigenous games and sports involve strategies that are cognitively tasking. The game of ampe, for example, involves math concepts such as numbers and probability. Based on observation, a player develops the ability to predict the opponent’s subsequent moves. The teaching of indigenous games in schools is warranted, because as Nabie and Sofo (2009) observed Ghanaian primary mathematics teachers who experienced indigenous games as students were more likely to teach indigenous games in the classrooms than those who did not.

Many Ghanaian indigenous games and sports are effective for physical fitness and perceptual-motor development when done appropriately. Ampe develops cardio-respiratory endurance, while indigenous wrestling and tug-of-war develop both upper and lower body muscular strength (Kutame and Ocansey, 2007). It was for this reason that traditional African societies used games to prepare young men for warfare and work related skills in order to sustain the community (Kenyatta, 1992).

According to Nyota and Mapara (2008), indigenous games teach children social skills such as sharing and conflict resolution. They however, lamented that Western-oriented games rather than African indigenous games were predominantly used in Zimbabwean preschools. Nabie and Sofo (2009) reported similar findings in Ghana, where primary school teachers utilized more Western-oriented than indigenous games in their mathematics classrooms. The indigenous game kurye kurye for instance, seeks to inculcate in children and the youth, the spirit of teamwork. It also seeks to teach other social skills such as respect and trust.

Indigenous games and sports can facilitate the emotional development of children and the youth, due to their group-oriented nature. They help instill self-confidence and self-esteem
in the young (Sroufe 1996; Tangney & Fisher 1995). Kurye kurye for example, balances competition with cooperation, thus creating a non-threatening and conducive environment for participants to feel a sense of belonging. Moreover, these games serve as important means of recreation for children and the youth (Wanderi, 2001, cited in Wanderi, 2006), helping them release some stress.

**Relationship with Olympic Games**

In order for Ghana to develop indigenous games, the country’s policy makers, scholars and educational researchers must overcome the colonial mentality (Said, 1994) that privileges Western-oriented games over indigenous games (Dei, 2004). That is why the annual National Ampe Competition organized by the Women's Sports Association of Ghana (WOSPAG) in collaboration with the National Sports Council (NSC), and the launch and annual celebration of indigenous games in South Africa (Nkopodi & Mosimege, 2009) are worthy of emulation. However, to develop indigenous games to the international level, there is the need to systematically organize and teach them in the schools. Even though the teaching of physical education is non-existent in many schools, Sofo et al. (2010) noted that some schools organize annual competitions in ampe, an indigenous game.

One major problem facing the internationalization of indigenous games is the lack of uniform rules across the African continent and in the diaspora (The Oware Society, 2009). There is the need for Ghanaian educational scholars and researchers to collaborate with others in Africa and those in the diaspora to set up rules for common indigenous games. The use of technology in the promotion of the games is also warranted. For example, Sapient Software
(1995) created a computer program that makes it possible to play the board game Oware in a virtual environment.

Implications: Social, Economic, Cultural and Ethnic

Trying hard to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as tools for national development and growth has been the bane of many countries, including Ghana. However, sports can help nations meet the MDGs as sports as a platform, could be used to communicate their important messages and to teach people about developmental issues, whilst its attributes such as teamwork and fair-play could also be inculcated to speed up the attainment of these goals by nations. Indeed, sports could do all these in the following areas:

**Economic Development** – sports, as pointed out earlier, help economies of nations through job creations, goods and services, manufacturing, direct employment and in-flows through performers' earnings at games / fights, appearance fees, bonuses, transfer fees and gifts as well as consequent taxation on these earnings;

**Social Development** – sports facilitates social development by teaching core values and life skills: bringing people together; and improving social cohesion; whilst providing various platforms for taking on social problems as drug abuse, crime, gender equity, and child labor. Sports also promote volunteerism as volunteers are needed for various events. Through recruitment, volunteers learn new skills and as volunteerism improves, so does community participation and social well-being improve.

**Summary and way forward**
Drawing from the International Standards of PE and Sport, Ghana needs to develop national standards for physical education and sport as well as develop standards for continuing professional development and professional preparation of physical education teachers and sport coaches (Ocansey, 2009 & 2011).

All the sectors involved in the industry must understand the unique role of physical education and sport in school curricula and endeavor to support physical education teachers and coaches distinctively so they can foster meaningful gains in student achievement. Physical education teachers and sports coaches must be held accountable within the framework of set standards in physical education and sports. There is bright future for physical education sports in Ghana if stakeholders will change their prejudices about physical education and sports. Below are few points noteworthy;

Physical education teachers are just like other teachers in schools. Therefore, they should not be responsible for the construction of their own physical classrooms for teaching. There is no justification to expect physical education teachers to mark fields for sports because physics teachers for example, do not build their own physical laboratory for teaching biology or physics in the school. A school of thought argues that part of the responsibilities of the physical education teacher (sportsmaster and sportsmistress) include the construction and marking of fields. They have missed the fundamental value of physical education. They have also misconstrued the ultimate goal of the physically educated student.

Colleges and universities responsible for training physical education teachers must endeavor to develop programs that equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions to enable them to focus on developing regular physical activity habits.
in students. This way, the critical mass of the citizenry will be physically active in the future. The benefits are enormous ranging from living healthy lifestyle and developing proficiency in specialized sports disciplines.

Physical education and sports are not the same when goals and student achievement are considered. An ultimate goal of physical education is that the critical mass of students will be able to participate regularly in physical activity upon completion of a course of study in physical education. This is worthy knowledge to be pursued and assessed in physical education. There are other goals too. Sports competitive experiences are an extension of the overall physical activity curriculum provided by school for students. Participation in competitive sports is a value-added experience for few students who show promise for elite performance. The goal is to foster teamwork, cooperation and competition in various sports disciplines. If both universities and schools pursue this, view meaningfully, our sports culture will thrive and survive with excellence (Ocansey 2011).

There is a genuine need to establish functional sports programs in schools. Heads of schools and universities can play a very important role by recognizing the goals for competitive sports and creating a department to plan and administer competitive sports experiences in the fullest sense. Institutions can offer selected sports experiences depending on available resources and funds. Heads of institutions should consider recruiting coaches or tap talents from within the school faculty and staff to coach provided they have the pre-requisite knowledge and skills.

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DOI 10.1007/s11159-007-9060-1.


