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College administrator's stance on physical education as an elective

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Abstract

Since it was first introduced, physical education has consistently served an important function for the growth of students, particularly those still in their formative years. In addition, the issues of obesity and inactivity among children and adults have been addressed through the implementation of physical education. The goal of this study was to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the factors that influence trainees' non-selection of Physical Education as an elective in Ghana's Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region the views of administrators. From a perceptual standpoint, the research was intended to investigate why trainees might not like Physical Education. The phenomenological interpretative qualitative research methodology was chosen for this study, and the data was gathered from primary sources by means of a semi-structured interview schedule. The interviews were conducted at eight different colleges of education located in the Ashanti Region: Agogo Presbyterian, Agona SDA, Akrokerri, Offinso, Mampong Technical, St. Monica's, and St. Louis' Colleges of Education. Wesley College of Education was also included in the study. The investigation found that the colleges' curricula did not include Physical Education. Additionally, the study found that the colleges did not have any internal papers or procedures to guide the selection or mounting of courses; instead, these tasks were performed by outside institutions.

Keywords: Colleges of education, administrators, trainees, extracts, continuing students

Introduction

Getting a good education is crucial in today's society. As our collective body of knowledge expands and the worlds of business, politics, and technology all shift, so too does the importance of a good education. Education's purpose is to equip students with the information, abilities, values, and behavioural norms necessary for contributing members of society (Colakoglu, 2004) [3]. An individual's educational journey begins at birth and concludes at death. As a result of these interactions, individuals develop a diverse set of environmental attitudes, beliefs, and principles (Kangalgil & Donmez, 2003) [8]. Physical education classes have been required in schools since the early 1800s (Lumpkin, 2009) [9]. It has had a significant impact on the development of pupils, particularly those who are just beginning their academic careers. It has also been employed in the fight against childhood and adult obesity caused by sedentary lifestyles.

Therefore, the primary objective is to encourage people to develop physical competence, which means that they have the information, abilities, and motivation to engage in regular physical activity for its many health advantages (Society of Health, & Physical Educators [Shape, 2018) [12]. People can improve their fitness and social skills by participation in Physical Education classes. According to Aybek (2007) [2], the benefits to both individuals and society at large from participating in the sorts of activities that make up Physical Education cannot be overstated. Participation in physical education benefits not only the individuals involved, but also communities, organizations, and nations. Children develop emotionally, intellectually, and socially as they progress through school. People's behavior in public and private settings can be altered as a result of the conversations they have with one another (Sofa & Asola, 2016) [14]. Despite the value of Physical Education courses, fewer and fewer students are enrolling in them at all levels of education.

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Examples include a decline from 70.3% in 2017 to 60.4% in 2018 in the number of American high school pupils enrolled in Physical Education. (2018). According to UNESCO (1978) [15], P.E. should be viewed by students as a fundamental human right. Nonetheless, this is the case in only around half of Africa's countries (Hardman, 2008) [6].

According to Shen *et al.* (2012) [13], most schools in Africa do not administer standardized tests in Physical Education. According to Ocaik (2016) [10], if given the option between PE and other electives, most students will select something other than PE. According to the UNESCO Charter from 1978 [15], PE, along with other forms of schooling, is a fundamental human right. The government of Ghana has not invested much in the field of physical education (Ammah & Kwaw, 2005) [1]. This is especially true because most Ghanaian schools place an early emphasis on English language, math, and science proficiency (Sofu & Asola, 2016) [14]. According to Ammah and Kwaw (2005) [1], many cultures view physical education as a frivolous pursuit that holds less weight in shaping successful individuals for the future than more traditional academic courses.

To investigate why more students don't select PE as an elective, researchers rely primarily on the Social Cognitive Career Theory. This research contributes to that goal by exploring why second-year teacher education students from Ashanti Region colleges of education don't select Physical Education as an elective. We can maybe influence trainees' experiences in order to increase their interest in Physical Education if we can better understand the factors at play here. The purpose of the research is to inform policymakers as to the reasons why Physical Education is not a popular elective choice. A recent report card on the state of physical education in Ghana found that the country was failing (Ocansey *et al.*, 2015) [11]. Researchers in Ghana found that because of the challenges of providing quality PE, the subject is often neglected (Sofu & Asola, 2016) [14]. Hardman (2008) [6] says that the way Physical Education is run in schools. Finding out why fewer college students in Ghana, and the Ashanti Region in particular, are majoring in Physical Education is significant from an administrative standpoint.

Statement of the Problem

There are two thousand nine hundred and sixty-two students in their final year of training in the Ashanti Region, which is the primary subject of this investigation. Only one hundred and ten of these trainees, or 3.7% of all schools, provide students with opportunities to participate in physical activity (IoE, 2019). The Wesley College of Education in Kumasi is the only college of education in the Ashanti region that has, within the past ten years, made Physical Education available to students as an optional option (IoE, 2018). This presents a dilemma due to the fact that the majority of these trainees will eventually work in classrooms as teachers and will be required to instruct Physical Education as a topic. Because of this, the purpose of this research was to determine the reasons why students in Ashanti Region Colleges of Education do not select Physical Education as an elective topic after their first year, even though they have the opportunity to do so.

Research Questions

1. How do the internal rules of the Colleges of Education about how electives can be combined affect the choice of Physical Education as an elective for continuing students?
2. How do the policies of the institutions that monitor the

choices of elective subjects affect the choice of Physical Education as an elective by continuing students in colleges of education?

Significance of the Study

The results will be a source of information to Colleges of Education on the reasons why trainees are not selecting the subject as an elective to find solutions to that. Also, the study will serve as additional literature and useful information for future researchers who intend to explore issues related to the selection of choices of subjects. Finally, it will be used as a resource for Physical Education students and tutors in schools and colleges around the country.

Research Design

Because it delivers experiences of a phenomenon and strives to come up with an in-depth explanation of the phenomenon, a phenomenological interpretative qualitative study design was employed for this study. This design was chosen because it gives experiences of a phenomenon. The statements that individuals made regarding their encounters and emotions were analysed by the researchers in order to determine the truth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) [5]. Although many research have been conducted on the topic of physical education, it appears that only a few quantitative studies have investigated the topic in terms of its status in colleges of education as a non-selection subject. The phenomenological research approach is going to be the focus of this particular study's efforts. This is significant because it will provide researchers with the opportunity to gain additional insight into the phenomenon that they are researching (Creswell, 2009) [4].

Study Area

The region that was examined was known as the Ashanti Region, and it contained eight institutions of public higher education. The participants in this study were members of management at the College who had worked there for more than four years at the time of the research. Their actual-life experiences were extremely valuable and necessary for gaining a deeper understanding of the topic that was being researched.

Sampling Procedures

Eight members of College Management were chosen at random to cut down on bias and get more accurate estimates. This is because those in charge of management choose the students for a program or tell the College to put on a course.

Data Collection Instruments

In order to learn more about the thing being studied, a semi-structured interview was planned to collect information for the study.

Interview Schedules

The interview guide was used to obtain information from administrative personnel regarding the reasons why trainees were not choosing Physical Education as an elective and studying it. The first thing that was looked into was the level of experience that each member of management had in their respective positions. The second component examines the position of the student within the program or field of study. The next question that was posed to the administrators of the College centered on the number of students who were enrolled in Physical Education in addition to those who were studying other elective topics. The third question generated

potential roadblocks from the perspective of management in order to explain for the non-selection of physical education as an option. The fourth inquiry inquired into the various approaches that management may take in order to encourage trainees to take Physical Education as one of their electives. The fifth and sixth questions both aimed to elicit thoughts on policies governing the manner in which the College combines different subject areas.

The administrators' offices served as the setting for the in-person interviews that were conducted. During the interviews with the administrative members, a total of twelve minutes was allotted. With the participants' approval, the interviews were transcribed into Microsoft Word after being recorded on a voice recorder. After the recordings were made, the data was organized according to the various topics.

Results and Discussion

How do the internal rules of the Colleges of Education about how electives can be combined affect the choice of Physical Education as an elective for continuing students?

From the responses gathered, it is evident that the selection of courses is not based on documented policies in the College, but is rather based on the electives a student pursues at the SHS level. This claim is captured in the following excerpts:

Although not explicitly, the course they took, the electives they chose, and the certifications they brought with them to the college are the primary considerations in the selection process (Administrator 1).

...We do not have any documents, but the majority of the time when we make selections, we base students' placements on the optional courses they took in high school and the options they choose for themselves (Administrator 2).

...If you want to meet the admission requirements for a science program, you can't choose a student who is interested in the liberal arts. The only people who arrive and attempt to do the technical work are those who lack a background in the technical aspects of the job. Students who lack a technical background have been chosen for this experience despite the fact that they can nonetheless be successful. However, if you don't have the necessary education or experience in fields such as science, agriculture, or the visual arts, we won't be able to choose you for such positions (Administrator 3).

...when a student chooses a course, the courses they took during their senior year of high school are stored in the portal, and we look at those before making a decision about which class to enroll them in. There are limited instances in which we transfer pupils to different academic departments. Despite this, we nonetheless take a look at their previous results as well as their credentials (Administrator 4).

The extracts suggest that most trainees are selected into Colleges of Education based on the elective courses they read at the Senior High School level. This could be based on foundational issues as some courses studied at the higher level seems to be a build-up from previous levels of education.

Courses are mounted by external organisations

It is also believed that external institutions have a role to play in the mounting of courses at the College of Education level. As a consequence, the views of an administrator in one of the Colleges of Education expressed views on the issue. And this are captured in the following excerpts:

As a secretary to the college, I am not aware of any policy but the College does not mount courses. Courses are mounted by the mother organisation that is the Institute of Education, UCC. So, we play according to the rules. That is what the

institute has mounted and that is what we also allow students to select (As a secretary for the institution, I am not aware of any specific policy, but it is my understanding that the college does not provide any classes. Since the Institute of Education at UCC serves as the "mother organization" in charge of organising classes, we must adhere to the protocols that have been established. This is the option that has been provided by the institute, and it is also one that the students have the option of selecting (Administrator 5).

The excerpt drew attention to the significance of external organizations, such as the Institute of Education (located at the University of Cape Coast), in the process of curriculum development and delivery at various colleges of education. This suggests that insiders, such as Administrators, do not have any impact on the order in which courses are presented. It was also deduced from the administrators that trainees were placed in their elective area they were based on admission, even though there are no policy guidelines for elective subject choice combinations in the college. This is due to the fact that such decisions are made by the mother organisations.

How do the policies of the institutions that monitor the choices of elective subjects affect the choice of Physical Education as an elective by continuing students in colleges of education?

The data gathered for this study indicated that some participants knew of a policy while others had no idea. As such, this section is divided into two; known and no known policy.

Known policy

The following are excerpts regarding the views of administrators in Colleges of Education, in Ashanti Region:

Oh yes, I'll say right from the national council for tertiary education, the accreditation board with the universities presents the policy guidelines as to how people should be selected. Oh yeah, I will say straight from the national council for tertiary education. Even for this year, the University of Cape Coast has provided rules for how students should be chosen for the various course selections (Administrator 6).

Yes, there is a policy that directs the institute's operations, but we also assist with the selection and enrollment of students in elective courses offered by the institute of education (Administrator 7).

External organisations such as the National Council for Tertiary Education, the National Accreditation Board, the Institute of Education (IoE), and the University of Cape Coast are important players in the process of selecting and mounting courses inside the Colleges of Education. By implication, policy documents are distributed to educational colleges in order to direct the selection of courses that are conducive to efficient teaching and learning.

No Known Policy

Some Administrators had no idea regarding a policy document which guides the Colleges of Education in terms of mounting of courses in the Colleges of Education. And this is captured in the following excerpts:

I can honestly say that I have never met somebody like that. However, the majority of the time, they come and tell us that this year's admission will do this or will do that when the principal goes to the professional board meeting. But more specifically, a document that can be used to make the choices, I haven't seen any in my office for some time now (Administrator 8).

As I have stated, the UCC does not provide us with any precise policy... (Administrator 1).

From the extracts, it is possible to deduce that there is not a well defined policy regarding the subject of known policy that regulates the mounting and selection of courses. This is something that can be seen clearly. The excerpts included in this sub-section suggest both the existence and the non-existence of policy documents from external organizations such as the Institute of Education (University of Cape Coast) and others concerning the selection and mounting of courses in the selected Colleges of Education in the Ashanti region. At essence, there is a need for a well defined policy that would govern the mounting of courses in the Colleges, which will, in turn, engender the sustainability of the Physical Education program (Kahiga, *et al*, 2015)^[7]. In addition to that, this would go a long way toward training staff members with regard to the policies that constitute physical education.

Summary

Because it enabled participants to provide an in-depth account of their experiences and feelings regarding the phenomenon to the researcher, the phenomenological interpretative qualitative research design was selected as the method of investigation for this study. The purpose of this study was to investigate, from the perspective of college administrators, the reasons why continuing students, who had previously completed Foundations of Physical Education as a required subject or course in the first year, opted not to choose it as an elective when moving on to the second year of their education at colleges of education in the Ashanti Region. In order to collect data from eight administrators at the eight Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region (Agogo Presbyterian, Agona SDA, Akrokerri, Offinso, Mampong Technical, St. Monica's, and St. Louis Colleges of Education), a semi-structured interview schedule was used. The eight Colleges of Education included Wesley College of Education.

Key Findings

It was found out that the participants had no knowledge whatsoever of an internally written or published policy surrounding the selection of courses in the numerous universities that they attended. According to the findings of the study, the selection of courses offered by colleges of education is based on the curriculum that students complete in their senior year of high school. The research uncovered the participation of third-party organisations like the Institute of Education in the development of programs that are offered by educational colleges, such as the Colleges of Education (University of Cape Coast). In addition, the research found that there were no policy documents from outside organizations like the Institute of Education (University of Cape Coast) on the selection and mounting of courses in the chosen Colleges of Education in the Ashanti area of Ghana.

Recommendations

This study presented a number of recommendations to school authorities, stakeholders, and policymakers to concentrate on success factors to make students pursue Physical Education and to make the course more effective overall. These recommendations were brought to the forefront as a result of this study. To better assist trainees in making informed decisions, the College of Education's student handbook ought to include a well-defined guideline for the choosing of elective subjects. The numerous colleges of education should each have their own set of standardized criteria, which should

be easily available to assist in the establishment and selection of optional courses offered by the colleges.

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