

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION FOR EXPANDING LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE ROLES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS

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Abstract

The main focus of the paper was on the need to expand the curriculum in physical education to include new career options. The paper believes (hat the present one track - the leaching track option - is no longer appealing to a great majority of aspiring students. The paper attempted to identify certain non-teaching career options which are believed to allow [he graduate students greater flexibility for employment in the human service sectors. A total of two hundred and eighty two subjects responded to a validated questionnaire. Results identified seven non teaching program options which students selected, and indicated the students were prepared to experiment with **non-teaching** options in physical education.

Introduction

In the face of changing socio-economic life in Nigeria, the role of physical education and professional preparation program have come under scrutiny to determine their responsiveness to demands for relevance, effectiveness and adaptability. Since the inception of professional preparation curricula in physical education among colleges and universities in Nigeria, the orientation has predominantly been teacher certification for the school systems. In situations where graduate work is offered, orientation has also focussed on teacher preparation for higher education and research. This is understandable in view of the fact that in Nigeria, education provided the greatest single employer in the labour market. Unfortunately, during this period, little or no attention has been given to careers other than teaching. Physical education programs in Nigeria have continued to represent the accretions of our history more than rational concern for contemporary needs. The realities of the leaching career indicate that fewer and fewer positions are becoming available and unattractive.

Although our physical education graduates do not lack basic knowledge important in some selected careers, in most cases, the theoretical background so vital in the business world is lacking. There remains a preparation deficit of knowledge and experience for the specific requirements of the tasks inherent in these different careers.

However, reacting to alternative professional preparation in physical education (non leaching options), Mawson (1980) identified certain issues which must be considered before the programs are mounted. These are: (i) Potential students who are interested in preparing for these new programs in physical education;

(ii) Potential job markets for graduates of these new programs; (iii) Quality control and the legitimate domain of physical education among other academic disciplines.

Ukah (1989) identified five areas or challenges where physical education can contribute immensely by providing needed manpower. These include among others: improving the fitness of the society, meeting the growing need for leisure, meeting the great national sports awareness, as well as home care or rehabilitation. This has been supported by Redmond and Ruscio (1993), Gianneth (1995), (he Vision 2010 Sports Agenda (1999), and Ajidua (1999). The combined result of all these challenges will be to create a shortage in virtually all the allied healthcare/fitness professions in Nigeria.

As a result of these trends and the increasing need for fiscal accountability, there is therefore need for physical education professionals to take a closer look at non teaching options in physical education to meet the needs of expanding leadership, and service roles for national development. Specifically, this study was carried out to: (i) Determine students¹ interest in non teaching opportunities in physical education;

(ii) Determine students¹ interest in career opportunities. Expanding the curriculum does not change (he nature of what physical education is or could he, hut does change the emphasis of

our delivery system and the various publics which we can serve.

Basic assumptions would be that students have interest in non teaching vocations in physical education, and would show interest in related courses to achieve their goals. There will be a significant difference in the vocational interests and programs between degree and diploma students.

Methodology

This study employed the survey research design. The survey design is used according to Denga and Ali (1982) to obtain information about the present conditions, attitudes, opinions, beliefs and likes of samples from a population to examine its distribution. A total of two hundred and eighty two (282) students made up of 141 degree and 141 diploma students were used as sample. The students who are currently physical education majors were randomly selected from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In an effort to obtain direct information from them, a questionnaire was constructed by the researcher and validated by two experts in physical education. To test for reliability, a pilot study was carried out on thirty students (15 degree and 15 diploma) by administering the questionnaire on two occasions of one week interval. The scores obtained from (the two tests were correlated to obtain the reliability coefficient using Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient. Thus, a test re-test reliability value of 86 was obtained.

The questionnaire sought to obtain data related to students' attitudes and occupational interests as teaching positions become fewer and fewer and unattractive. First, it was necessary to determine the general perception of students regarding non teaching option of careers. Secondly, it sought to ascertain where students would want to work/be employed after graduation. Thirdly, students were asked if they had a choice of programs, which program would they choose, teaching physical education in the school system, or one of the listed non teaching options.

A modified three-point Likert scale was utilized in section B of the questionnaire, while sections C and D used percentage rating. To determine the criterion value for each item in section B, the weighted scales of responses in each item were summed up and divided by the number of responses to each item, where Agree is 3 points, Neutral is 2 points, disagree is 1 point.

The mean was therefore compared with the criterion value so as to enable interpretation of results. Thus, any statement that had a mean of 2.0 and above was interpreted to mean positive perception or attitude. On the other hand, it was considered negative if the grand mean was less than 2.0.

The student t-test was used in testing the null hypothesis for significant difference between the mean scores of sampled degree and diploma respondents. In order to reject or accept the null hypothesis, .05 Alpha level of significance was used.

Data from Sections C and D were treated and recorded on a checklist. Each response was tabulated on a frequency table and the percentages were calculated. Through this approach, the vocational interests of the students were thoroughly examined, analysed and organised. This provided the basis on which courses of similar content were grouped under common subject headings and presented in Table 3.

Results

Table I: Students Perception Of Non Teaching Options In PE (n=282)

Statements:	Mean	
	Degree	Diploma
1. Non teaching PE should be introduced in Colleges and Universities.	2.45	2.21
2. I like to do PE but do not like teaching it.	2.11	1.91
3. PE should change with time.	1.96	1.91
4. There should be new areas in health fitness for PE/.	2.17	2.08
5. Non teaching PE is sure way to enter business.	1.94	1.70
6. Non teaching programs in PE will improve enrolment of students in PE	2.00	2.01
7. Including non teaching programs in PE will enhance the image of the profession.	2.28	2.22
Overall means =	2.13	2.01

Table 1 above shows that both Degree and Diploma respondents indicated a positive

perception/attitude towards non teaching programs in physical education. The overall mean for degree is 2.13 (SD. 0.68) while that of diploma is 2.01 (SD. 0.68) above the criterion value of 2.00.

Table 2: Vocational Interest And Preferences (in order of significance)

	F	%
1. Teaching physical education	84	29.79
2. Sport Direct	73	25.89
3. Sport organising secretary	30	10.64
4. Industrial recreation	28	9.93
5. Sport coach	25	8.87
6. Health/illness director	12	4.25
7. Community recreation manager	10	3.55
8. Adapted PE/rehabilitation director	10	3.55
9. Sport psychologist	5	1.77
10. Spoil/advertising/publication officer	2	0.71
11. Sport trainer/physiologist	1	0.35
12. Physical therapist	1	0.35
13. Sporting goods manager	1	0.35
14. If you had a choice of programs, which would you choose (a) Teaching Physical Education (b) any of the order option?	96	34.04
	186	65.96

Data on Table 2 shows the students vocational interests, arranged in order of significances. Teaching Physical Education remains top on the list of interests. This is followed by careers in sports, recreation and fitness.

Table 3: Course/Program Interests Of Students (n-282)

Programs	F	%
1. PE for the school system	84	29.79
2. Sports Management studies	108	38.30
3. Recreation and Leisure studies	38	13.48
4. Health fitness/wellness	25	8.87
5. Coaching sport	13	4.60
6. Rehabilitation services	n	3.90
7. Commercial TE (sport goods sales etc.)	3	1.06

Table 3 above indicates courses of interest based on item 1-13 of the questionnaire. The table shows that given a choice one hundred and ninety eight (70.20%) students would prefer a non teaching course, while eight four (29.79%) would prefer teaching physical education for (he school system. Item 14 validates the selection in the first section 1-13 of the questionnaire.

Table 4: A t-test for no Significance Difference in Vocational Interests of Degree and Diploma students.

Students	N	X	SD	Cal. t-value	Critical t-test	df
Degree	141	2.06	2.04	0.4100	1.960	280
Diploma	141	1.96	2.04			.05

The calculated t-value is 0.4100 at degree of freedom (df) 280. Since the calculated t-value of 0.4100 is less than table t-value of 1.960. At .05 level of significance, we concluded that there is no significance difference in vocational interests of degree and diploma of the University students selected.

Table 5: A t-test no Significance difference in Perception of Degree and Diploma Students regarding Teaching Programs.

Students	N	X	SD	Cal. t-value	Critical t-value	df	P
Degree	141	2.13	.6857	1.4652	1.960	280	.05
Diploma	141	2.01	.6857				

– 1.960 P< .05]

Since the calculated t-value of 1.4652 is less than the table value of 1.960, we calculated that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of degree and diploma students of the university of Nigeria Nsukka regarding non teaching programs in physical education curriculum.

Discussion

The results of the findings of the study supported the assumptions:

1. While the responses to the questionnaire represent a small sample, there is evidence that students are beginning to develop interests in non-careers. (See Table 1)
2. There is little doubt that most beginning physical education students wish to teach physical education. But the realities of the teaching profession point out the fact that even now in Nigeria fewer and fewer positions are available each year.
3. There is need for professionals in physical education to investigate expanding their curricular offerings to accommodate most of the students who want to use physical education to enter the world of business, and therefore do not want to teach. This is seen in such course selection as health fitness/wellness program which prepares students for professional positions as fitness specialists in the clinical, medical corporate or instructional environment. This is supported by Redmond and Ruseio (1993) who observed that new ways to deliver health fitness are emerging and they are creating more diverse career tracks for health care specialists who will no longer focus on hospitals. They concluded by saying that the shift to home care will increase the need for more professionals in health related areas to aid patients during recovery at home.

Implications For Professional Preparation In Physical Education

In a knowledge based society as ours, education is a critical enterprise at the heart of any success. The improvement and redesign of education itself may be the most vital task that Nigerian education and planners will face as we get into the 21st century. This is because changes will come whether we like it or not. The best approach then is to prepare for the changes. If we professionals in physical education and sports believe that physical activity, motor behaviour, play and sports are important for all persons, then we have responsibility to share and deliver our services to a multitude of publics. Since students have shown interests in non teaching careers, physical education professionals must investigate new leadership roles and employment opportunities for physical

education students. The eventual curricular offerings should reflect a broad based academic track which allow students greater flexibility for employment upon graduation and provide the society with leaders characterised by qualities of leadership, intellectual breadth, and a sound understanding of the educative process.

Conclusion

For years now, we have considered physical education for teaching as the foundation of our program. While teaching is still the career choice of most of our students, the field of physical education includes an increasing array of occupational specifications, focussing upon the study of human movement phenomenon in serving others. As the National Policy on Education (1981) pointed out, education is many things to Nigeria. The pressure of Nigerians today on the need for universal qualitative and diversified education as being essential to our national welfare and individual survival serves to indicate the need for new directions and codes in physical education as a paramount objective to be considered. New programs or options must be considered not to maintain staff position but because of a genuine belief that physical education has something to offer to more than students who

want to teach. It does imply that a person who studied physical education can do more than teach it. There is little question many jobs are/will be available in health-fitness, sports related occupations, and recreation, there will be potential students interested in these career options.

The potential for this future agenda in physical education to create succeeding generations of such careers appears vast from the perspective of the present. By the next decades, the implications for innovative, interdisciplinary research and its applications in the fields of physical, health education and recreation may be limited only by the imagination. By then, teacher certification will be identified as an alternative career in physical education rather than the only option (Studer, 1987). Here lies the challenges in professional preparation for leadership roles and services in physical education.

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