

Research Article

# Variables Associated with Low Female Participation in College of Education Sports in Central, Western and Western North Regions of Ghana

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the study was to examine factors associated with low female participation in colleges of education sports. The population of the study was made up of female colleges of education athletes from Central, Western and Western North Regions of Ghana. Purposive and simple random techniques were used to the colleges of education and the respondents for the study. All the all the six colleges of education were purposively sampled and sampling technique was used to select the one hundred and eighty (180) participants who participate in the College of Education Sports Association (CoESA) games and in the Central, Western and Western North Regions of Ghana were used for the study. The main instrument for the study was a self-structured questionnaire ( $r = 0.92$ ) containing items based on a five-point Likert scale was used for data collection. The data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages and Chi-square test to determine the relationship among the factors. The study revealed that there is the need for college authorities and female coaches in the colleges of education to take care of female athletes and make adequate provision for more modern sports facilities and equipment to sustain their interest in sports participation. The study recommended that, that the coaches should be mindful of their approach to prospective sportswomen. It is also recommended that, various colleges of education should make a concerted effort to organize programmes and seminars regularly to educate females in the colleges on the career benefits of sports participation and iron out their misconceptions.

**Keywords:** Hypertrophy, Maximal strength, Prime movers, Resistance training, Synergists

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## 1. Introduction

The importance of sports is diverse and broad, ranging from its role in individual economic value, health promotion and fitness, to peace building and community regeneration in post-conflict [1]. The UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport acknowledges that cultural diversity in physical education, physical activity and sport forms part of humanity's intangible heritage and that these include physical play, recreation, dance, organized, casual, competitive, traditional and indigenous sports and games. The charter recognizes that physical education, physical activity and sport can bring a variety of individual and societal benefits, such as health, social and economic development, youth empowerment,

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reconciliation and peace [1]. In recent times, the Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus (HIV) prevention programmers have begun to incorporate sports as intervention strategies [2]. Furthermore, HIV prevention messages are disseminated and life skills are taught during sports [3]. Sport is also considered as part of the local culture, linking young and old and creating opportunities for young people to realize a potential that is non-academic [4]. A study also opined that sport is a tool in promoting gender equity and social inclusion for girls and women [5]. Today, sport is a big business, a source of youth employment and enjoyment, often keeping them away from negative influences and activities [6].

Over the years, there has been division on public opinion about the participation of females in sports between those who either undervalue the public display of athleticism, and those who support it. Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the Frenchman who revitalized the Modern Olympic Games was adamantly opposed to female participating in the Olympic Games. The emergence of female in sports is largely a twentieth century era and women mostly became official competitors eligible for Olympic Games in 1912 at the Stockholm Olympic Games in Sweden [7].

Sports is an organised competitive activities that involve vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex and sophisticated skills by participants, motivated by personal enjoyment and external reward govern by specific rules and regulations [8]. In addition, sport has the potential to accomplish three important objectives which are physical health, psychosocial development and learning of motor skills [9]. Extant literature has shown that participation in sporting activities have positive effects on physical health, psychological enhancement, stress reactivity and mental well-being of both man and woman [10, 11].

It is very imperative that, the status of women in Ghana is low in the society and women have traditionally not been associated principally with citizenship, but with family life [12]. Traditional norms place a high premium on the numerous reproductive roles with productive functions and in addition, the woman is expected to combine her reproductive role with productive activities and this indicates that they are to provide care and service for the entire family, while men are considered bread winners and controllers of the home. This stereotype culture apparently makes women prone to low expectations, fear of success, lack of confidence, non-assertiveness, anti-authority holding, house keepers, inferior, and dependent [13].

At all levels, and in all roles, women are under-represented in the sports sector. Working in a sector where they are in the minority can give women the sense that they don't belong in the world of sport. In addition, there is an imbalance in the media coverage of women's sport as the focus is almost entirely on men's sports. According to Women's Sports Federation an average, only 4% of sports coverage in national and local print media is dedicated to women's sport. This is insignificant because the media plays a central role in informing our knowledge, opinions and attitudes about women and sport, which, in turn, influence participation levels. Sportswomen such as Kelly Holmes and Paula Radcliffe, have high media profiles, but in general, a lack of coverage of women's sports leads to a death of female role models to inspire sportswomen and create the next generation of healthy, active women [13].

The benefits of sports in everyday life are numerous and unequivocal and the health benefits are both physical (e.g., muscular strength, muscular endurance, weight management, cardio-vascular endurance, improvement in coordination and flexibility), and psychosocial (socially interactive, promoting self-esteem, enjoyment, anti-depressive, a sense of 'unwinding', and boost of immune system). Skills acquisition in sports can also be readily applied mostly in everyday life activities, such as dedication, application and team building [14]. Based on these all-important benefits of sports to people who engages in it, it is expected that female students of College of Education would take up this challenge, and get themselves involved in sporting activities, especially taking the sedentary nature of their academic work into consideration, so as to calm these and other

benefits. However, much has not been done in terms of research in the Ghanaian context on Variables Associated with Low Female Participation in College of Education Sports especially in Central, Western and Western North Regions. The colleges are Enchi College of Education (ENCHICO), Wiawso College of Education (WATICO), Holy Child College of Education (HOLICO), OLA College of Education, Komenda College of Education (KOMENCO) and Fosu College of Education (FOSCO). This study therefore seeks to investigate factors accounting for the low participation of females in sport in the Colleges of Education (Teacher Colleges) in Ghana. The study was sought to answer these research questions: (1) What is the level of ENCHICO, WATICO, HOLICO, KOMENCO and FOSCO female students' participation in physical activities? (2) What are the perceived constraints preventing female students of ENCHICO, WATICO, HOLICO, KOMENCO and FOSCO from participating in Physical Activities? (3) What is the association between the perceived constraints to physical activity and physical activity participation?

## 2. Literature Review

The investigation into the critical question of whether or not high school students' interest in athletics leads to non-cognitive traits that promote academic success starts with physical exercise [15, 16]. A variety of surveys have found that today's teen students are not socially active enough. This situation is thought to lead to higher rates of teenage obesity and can have other negative consequences. According to one report, also during their unstructured hours, "fewer than 2% of girls and 6% of boys" were physically involved on any given school day [17]. This figures were much smaller if the school system did not have enough facilities for physical exercise. Colleges must adopt a more ecological model of student behavior in order to provide a physical atmosphere that encourages, rather than discourages, regular physical exercise during the school day [17].

In general, most scholars believe that sustaining standards of physical education in schools is essential because it leads to students' fitness, which is usually described in physical terms alone. High blood pressure is more prevalent in students aged 8 to 17 today than it was ten years ago, according to studies, and "much of the rise was attributed to changes in the children's weight" [18]. Kids with high blood pressure are often more likely to die from stroke or heart disease as they get older [18]. These same children are much more likely to develop adult-type diabetes, which may have serious effects in adulthood. To counteract this trend, scholars advocate for preserving or even growing physical education curriculum in schools. Physical exercise time in school has been shown in studies to have a positive impact on children's welfare. One research tracked 10,000 children from kindergarten to first grade and discovered that "for kindergarten girls who were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight, adding one hour of physical education a week as they went into first grade lowered their 'body mass index,'" despite the fact that this result was not observed in boys [18].

According to attribution and self-efficacy theory, "children do well and are more likely to choose more difficult tasks because they feel they have the potential to complete a specific task" [19]. Motivation has been found to be an important factor in a young person's "maintaining interest in extracurricular events, such as athletics" [19]. When debating the ideal female body, the female athletes suggested that an athletic body is incongruent with society's ideal of a flawless body, finding out that the ideal female body is slimmer with little fat, such as a model or actress. When asked about their views of femininity, the same role-conflict emerged. Athletes argued that femininity was contrary to athleticism, implying that competing in athletics causes her to sacrifice her femininity. Participants' definitions of femininity included petite, girly, crisp, and gentle. Lifting weights and being aggressive, on the other hand, they thought defied feminine conduct. Most athletes felt that in order to be competitive, they had to give up being feminine, which they equated with being masculine. They also implied that being feminine was socially appropriate, but being athletic was not.

Female success in physical exercise has gone a long way in recent years, but many activities that earn significant media attention are still dominated by men. A study investigated the relationship between physical activity and personal, family, and school influences, as well as healthier behaviors. The results were consistent with other studies, indicating that males are more likely than females to engage in physical exercise. The study also revealed that physical exercise declines with age and that physically active youths considered themselves to be healthy and satisfied with their body image [20]. Along with the fact that physical activity attendance decreases as children pass into the primary-secondary school process, it is also recognized that the reduction is more pronounced for girls than boys well into puberty [21, 22]. Furthermore, it has been discovered that girls are slightly less successful than boys at all ages [23, 24]. According to the World Health Organization, there is a strong pattern of declining levels of exercise as girls age, as well as a growing discrepancy between girls' and boys' physical activity behaviors [25]. It is also well established that teenage females have the highest rates of inactivity among all student classes [26]. If an initiative will improve young women's engagement and attendance rates, it is critical to consider and comprehend the reasons that influence their decision to participate in physical education.

A variety of inherent and extrinsic motivators influence whether or not people participate in athletics. There are three things to consider: self-esteem or definition, attraction to the practice, and encouragement from significant others [27]. Deaf children have a poor self-concept [28]. They do not establish a desirable self-perception as a result of their own assessment of their physical abilities. Participation in sports is influenced by Perceived Motor Competence (PMC). The decision is based on FMS mastery, social approval, and previous interaction performance [29]. As a product of communicating and engaging with significant ones, one's self-perception may be strong or low [30]. Significant others, according to Weiss (2004), include parents, teachers (for sports), and peers. Children's intrinsic inspiration for successful athletic activity stems from a positive self-perception [27]. Mastery of fundamental skills, as well as encouragement from significant others, are needed for intrinsic motivation.

The low involvement of female in sports is not generally due to lack of interest in sports but it is due to the long history of direct and indirect systematic forms of discrimination and stereotyping as well as many other problems that society has attached to women [13]. The Ghanaian woman, just like any other woman in other part of the world, still believes in physiological myths that surround the participation of women in sports. Until now, people still have the primitive ideology that physical exercise by women has a detrimental effect on their reproductive organs such as the ovaries and the bladder dropping, thus making it difficult to bear children. Other school of thought also believes that sports participation by women makes them unfeminine or 'mannish' or 'masculine'. A sport is seen as a male domain activity in the olden days. The power and politics used in sports, contributed to significant constraints to females' participation in sports. This is due to the fact that, men wield a great deal of power on the development and management of female sports. Men are also seen to be more aggressive, a trait necessary for the participation in sports. Additionally, socialization into sports for both sexes has given a wide gap that favors men [13].

It is a fact that there are still in existence barriers in women's participation in sports and this has brought National and International Conferences and researches to eradicate these barriers so as to push more females into sports and other fields of interest. Recently, it has been noticed of the interest about college sports in Ghana and how it has become more attractive with the introduction of the diploma program which has pump a lot of young and energetic female students traveling far and wide into the colleges, unlike previously. Despite the motivation given by coaches and administrators, the female who takes part in college sports in Ghana are still very few and the under-representation of

women in sports has important implication because of the crucial role sports play in our daily lives.

### 3. Materials and methods

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The target population for the study was all the sportswomen in the six colleges of education in the Central, Western and Western North regions comprising of 50 from KOMENCO, 40 from ENCHICO, 40 from FOSCO, 40 from HOLICO, 50 from OLA and 45 from WATICO (totaling 265). The purposive sampling method was used to select the participants. From a total number of 265, a sample size of 180 was selected for the study. This was made up of 30 respondents from each of the six colleges using the simple random technique. All participants selected were eligible for inclusion in the study. A self-structured questionnaire ( $r = 0.92$ ) containing items based on a five-point Likert scale was used for the data collection process. The data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages and Chi square test to determine the relationship among the factors. Chi-square test was used to test the differences in responses among the various colleges to determine whether there were any significance relationships between the selected variables believed to be the factors associated with the low female participation in college of education sports in the Central and Western regions of Ghana.

### 4. Results and Discussion

The purpose of this research was to determine the views of sportswomen on variables that were associated with low female participation in sports in the colleges of education in the Central and Western regions of Ghana.

**Table 1. Motivation given to sportswomen resulting in low participation in college sports**

Item		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	X <sup>2</sup>	S
1	Fq	80	70	20	6	4	180	29.12	000
	%	44.4	39.0	11.1	3.3	2.2	100		

$p > .05$

The X<sup>2</sup> value was 29.12 as expressed in Table 1 at significant level of .05. The calculated X value of 29.12 was greater than the critical X<sup>2</sup> value of 9.342. Hence the null-hypothesis which stated that there would be no significance association between the motivation given to sportswomen and their low participation in college sports was rejected.

Motivation causes people to make informed decision and choices according to needs. The satisfaction of these needs leads to the feeling of self-confidence and capability of being useful and making contributions and thereby boosting the morale of an individual. Motivation is very important in sports participation and cannot be entirely overlooked, especially in college of education sports. This is because participation is not compulsory, aside, academic pressures are high in the colleges and as such females need to be compensated for the sacrifices, they make sacrifices such as skipping lectures and outreach programs to participate in sporting activities. It should be emphasized here that, while the issues are not unique, the manner in which certain females present the issue is often more personal and holistic than that of their male counterparts and though there are unique contributions that sports can make to life, most students do not count it much as other motivators as they believe there should be more to that. Results indicated that, an overwhelming majority of the respondents (%) strongly agreed or agreed that a lot of women would have participated in sports if they were motivated enough. The result of

this study agreed with previous research that success and failure are related to motivation as well as the level of aspiration. It has been realized that incentives play a vital role in sports participation in the colleges. Even though intrinsic motivation is good, extrinsic motivation such as allowances, accommodation, and free user fees are very paramount to women [31]. The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute opined that, women are more likely to enjoy sports, if they think that relevant adults have realistic expectations, provide support and encouragement, for their efforts and refrain from negative evaluations of their performance [32].

Some female respondents however disagreed that they played sports because of the allowances and per diem given them. This finding was in agreement with other studies that females participated in sports for reasons of achievement/status/merits/recognition, team atmosphere, energy release, skill development, friendship, socialization, pleasure, and fun [10]. It could be realized from this that monetary reward is good but other incentives such as getting a place to lay down their heads and concentrate on their studies was more important to them.

Good residential accommodation was one of the reasons sportswomen played sports in the colleges of education. Other researchers opined that; extrinsic motivations are used extensively in sporting situations; most major sports have achievement performance incentives linked to some form of tangible reward system. A system whereby students who participate in sports were given good residential accommodation on campus was very vital to women students [31]. This might indeed be one reason why women played sports.

**Table 2. Misconception in sports and its effects on low female participation in college sports**

Item		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	X <sup>2</sup>	S
10	Fq	59	80	21	9	11	180	30.11	000
	%	32.8	44.4	11.7	5.0	6.1	100		

*p* > .05

The X<sup>2</sup> value was 30.11 as shown in Table 2 at significant level of .05. The calculated X<sup>2</sup> value of 30.11 was greater than the specified critical X<sup>2</sup> value of 9.342. The null-hypothesis which stated that there would be no significant association between values in sports and low female participation in college sports was rejected.

Findings from the study indicate that, majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that most of the females could not play sports because they feared that they will not bear children. This was in line with the report of an earlier study that vigorous physical activity would irreparably harm women's reproductive capabilities and prevent them from engaging in aggressive and highly competitive sports [33]. This implied that, Ghanaian society including elite females still hold on to this misconception which had been proven to be untrue. Contrary to this, Australian Bureau of Statistics identified that the complications of pregnancy and childbirth were fewer in female athletes than in non-athletes [34].

Majority of the respondents disagreed that females do not need to play sport to maintain their fitness levels. The fact is females are really aware of the importance and benefits of sports to an individual, but do not engage in it. A previous study reported that the level of awareness on the benefits of exercise to individuals' health is high, particularly, among elite, yet they do not get involved [35]. Most females in the colleges of education feel uncomfortable to see their names posted on the notice board as being referred or failed. This probable might be another reason for low female participation in sports; they do not think that keeping fit and healthy or being good at sport is very important.

Colleges of education females disagreed that, females did not play sports because it made them sick. In relation to this, a similar study reported that when people leave the sedentary world and enter the realm of vigorous exercise, they will experience some discomforts, mild aches and pains, slight breathing difficulty and a feeling of fatigue. But the truth of the statement is these discomforts are usually minor and temporary [36]. Most females seem to ignore this statement as one of the factors responsible for low female participation in college sports. It has been observed with keen interest that sports participation does not only improve the health of participants and prepare them fit for work ahead, but also builds a structure of flexible, compact muscle, improves muscle tone and thus helps maintain erect posture, promote blood circulation, aids weight control and forces the lungs to function efficiently and effectively.

Additionally, respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that females did not play sports because they were not physically fit. Enjoyment, one of the components of good living, is brought about only when one is healthy. No one, whether healthy, sick, disabled, young, and old, can safely avoid sports. Another study affirms that younger people who do not have satisfying and varied movement experiences during childhood may develop distortion of body image which influences their performance in physical activity [37].

It should be noted that, of late, recreation is common in hospitals and non-hospital settings for treatment and rehabilitation of patients. Females who believe they are not fit can participate in sporting activities to modify the evolution of risk factors and protect against future disease and help establish a healthy life style as a sound mind lies in a healthy body.

Furthermore, to establish whether females were shying away from sports because they feared they would look masculine showed that, an overwhelming majority either strongly agreed or agreed with the assertion. This was in consonance with Victorian Woman in Sports that opponents of women's sports inferred that college women who participated in exercise would become unfeminine, muscular, and subject to uterine damage [38]. In contradiction, with other study participation in sporting activities does not masculinize women [39]. They continue by explaining that within a man or a woman, the secretion of testosterone, androgen and estrogen varies considerably accounting for marked variation in terms of muscularity and general morphology among males and females [39]. This means that there may be physiological variations and differences between female athletes and non-female athletes, especially, when there is prolonged physical training which may alter the physique, and other characteristics. It has been observed with keen interest that some females may have such characteristics before engaging in sports and physical activities. Females in the colleges of education would like to look feminine and this may be a reason for low participation of females in college of education sports.

College of education females in the Central and Western regions were asked whether being known by people and also knowing others was one reason they played sports. Majority of them affirmed that, it was one reason they played sports. Sports & Recreation Association in South Africa suggested that sports can make a difference in society by bringing people of different races together and also it could be used to reduce social problems such as crime, unwanted pregnancies, increased HIV awareness etc [40]. Females in colleges wanted to connect with others, especially to keep in touch with prominent people in order to grab opportunities that came their way such as good jobs, life partners, and new helpers, to mention but a few. They also wanted opportunities to make friends, develop skills, and even to travel far and wide. This was in line with a similar study that athletes participate to make friends and to know prominent people both within and outside their countries and abroad before and after they emerged victorious [41].

Most respondents strongly agreed or agreed to sports seen as being too competitive. This collaborated the findings of Senate Committee Inquiry into Women in Sports and

Recreation in Australia that many sports are unattractive to girls because they emphasize competition, whereas girls are often more interested in playing sports to have fun and make friends [42]. It seems females do not like the idea of coaches stressing on winning, which makes them somehow tensed up in a game. They want to play their normal game to win than to be pressured.

**Table 3. Coaches' attitude to females resulting in low female participation in college sports**

Item		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	X <sup>2</sup>	S
11	Fq	70	60	29	13	8	180	29.87	000
	%	39	33.3	16.1	7.2	4.4	100		

*p*>.05

In Table 3, at significant level of .05, the calculated X<sup>2</sup> value of 29.87 was greater than the specified tabulated X<sup>2</sup> value of 9.342 therefore the null-hypothesis which stated that there would be no significant association between coaches' attitude and female's low participation in college of education sports was rejected.

Responses by the females in Table 3 showed that coaches exhibited some kind of attitude that resulted in low female participation in college sports. This coach's attitude is in connection with Osborne opinion that the coach must consider factors including training methods, coaching philosophy, motivation tactics, communication style, and ability to relate on a personal level [43]. It is obvious that, one of the essential attitudes exhibited by a coach is empathic understanding of the female athletes. When this happens, the coach would be able to value their feelings and opinions, and accept their strength and weakness.

In a recommendation statement as to whether females were sensitive to coaches' comments, majority of the females said this could be one of the reasons for low female participation in sports. This agrees with the view of Australia Bureau of Statistics that, adverse comments from coaches provide one of the main reasons for girls becoming discouraged from engaging in sporting activities. They continued by saying that insensitive comments from coaches such as "foolish girl" could especially demoralized her [34]. It could be adduced from the respondents that females by nature felt intimidated and humiliated, when certain comments were made about them in the presence of other people.

Whether more female coaches would encourage sports participation of female students in the colleges of education, most of them were in agreement. An individual or group of individuals, whose behaviour in particular role provides a model for other persons for determining appropriate attitudes and actions, is very important to women. Females in the colleges of education would want to work with coaches who are female, because they felt they could encourage them more than the male coaches. This view is in relation with Osborne (2002) who reported that female basketball in America ranked female coaches as superior in coaching qualities, relating well to others and understanding athlete's feelings and emotions. According to him, women are able to put themselves in their fellow women shoes than men [43]. A previous study verified this by reporting that female players were able to discuss almost "anything" about sport, certain plays or tactics with the male coaches, but nothing outside practice or the game was allowed to be discussed, whereas athletes felt a variety of issues could be discussed with female coaches. Women actually feels secured when they are sharing their sentiments and grievances with their fellow women [44]. There may be certain issues and problems which are peculiar to females which could be discussed with females other than males. This

could be a reason why the female in Ghanaian colleges want to have female coaches to serve as role models to encourage more females to participate in sporting activities.

**Table 4. Peer influence and its impacts on low participation of females in college sports**

Item		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	X <sup>2</sup>	S
17	Fq	73	59	32	11	5	180	24.90	000
	%	40.5	32.8	17.8	6.1	2.8	100		

*p*>.05

The X<sup>2</sup> value was 24.90 as shown in Table 4 at significant level of .05. The calculated X<sup>2</sup> value of 24.90 was greater than the critical X<sup>2</sup> value of 9.342 hence the null-hypothesis which stated that there would be no significant relationship between peer influence and low female participation in university sports was rejected.

Results of the analysis revealed that, most of the respondents had stated that peer influence had a lot of impact in participation in sports in the colleges of education. Majority strongly agreed or agreed that most females did not engage in sports because their friends did not. Cox et al. (2005) agreed by saying American ladies who did not play sports said that their peers were inactive and those who played said they had peers who were actively participating in sports. The influence of non-playing sports peers for instance can range from reinforcing young athletes' sports involvement by trivializing it, or presenting alternative activities in attractive light. Other researchers observed that a lot of females were more likely than male counterparts to require a friend to accompany them when pursuing sports and that peer relationship in sport, might result in either positive or negative effect and other construct, that represent sport motivation.

The suggestive statement that females would have joined the college sports if their friends were not part, indicated that most of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. This meant that most females might have played, in spite of taunts and insults and negative advice given to them by their friends. This finding however, went contrary with Australian Bureau of Statistics which reported that a female 'sexuality may be questioned by her peers, if she plays sports, particularly if she is good at it, or if she does not conform to stereotype expected of her [34]. It has been observed that some females by nature are endowed with sports skills and would like to play sports no matter the outside influence. Some of them may have been introduced to sports at an early age and as such, it has become part and parcel of them to play always.

**Table 5. Skill levels of females and its impact on low female participation in college sports**

Item		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	X <sup>2</sup>	S
16	Fq	21	87	11	52	9	180	27.87	000
	%	11.7	48.3	6.1	28.9	5.0	100		

*p*>.05

The findings in Table 5 show that the X<sup>2</sup> value was 27.87 at significant level of .05. The calculated X<sup>2</sup> value of 27.87 was greater than the critical X<sup>2</sup> value of 9.488 therefore the null-hypothesis which stated that there would be no significant relationship between the skill level of females and their low participation in college of education sports was rejected.

The analysis of the results showed that most women in the colleges do not have the necessary skills to participate in college sports. It was not a common practice for a female student who was not very skilled to practice on the field. Most females who were not highly skilled did not want to play sports at all.

Most female students dropped out of activity engagement due to lack of skill and competency during Primary, Junior and Senior High Schools. The findings of the study also agree with a similar scientific study that, the lack of opportunities in school for daily physical education with continuing decline in physical activity within the home setting was leading to development in sedentary lifestyle pattern that would continue into adulthood and throughout life. Basically, lack of the teaching of physical education at the Primary and Junior High Schools has adverse effect on the development of skills and techniques needed to participate in sporting activities [43].

Before the female entered the colleges, they might have acquired skills from their prospective schools and the only task of the coach would be to polish them a little. Response to a statement that, females did not have sound foundation in sports in their previous schools, indicated that majority of the responses were in affirmative. This was justified by the studies by another study that many black schools had minimal, if any, physical education facilities and teachers were very few in primary schools, thus physical education was virtually non-existent [48]. In the same vein, other researchers in the same field reported that in most Africans societies, especially in the rural communities, the primary and post primary physical education curricula were tailored in such a way that young males benefited from sports engagement more than their female counterparts [49].

In Ghana, the cultural influence on female participation is so great that parents themselves discourage their females from playing sports even at an early age. In relation to this, a similar study reported that the overemphasis on protecting females from achievement and success experiences and the underemphasized on developing physical skills fitted nicely into socialization pattern of preparing women for their adult role of being passive helpmates of men, standing on the sidelines of history cheering men on to their achievement and success [39]. Contrary to this, most female students who played sports in the colleges of education sports had skill levels compare to their male counterparts. This might be due to the support they had from parent and previous schools. This was in consonance with the conclusion of a previous study that for a female to be involved and continue active participation in sports, she must be located in a social environment highly supportive of her activities.

**Table 6. Administrative policies and their effects on low female participation in college of education sports**

Item		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	X <sup>2</sup>	S
16	Fq	101	51	10	12	6	180	32.03	000
	%	56.1	28.3	5.6	6.7	3.3	100		

*p*>.05

As seen in Table 6, the X<sup>2</sup> value was at .05 significance level. The calculated X<sup>2</sup> value of 32.03 was greater than the specified tabulated X<sup>2</sup> value of 9.342 and so the null-hypothesis which stated that there would be no significant relationship between administrative policies and low female participation in sports was rejected.

Every parent has the wish that her ward comes out with flying colours and become respective safe teacher. To most of the females, it is not in their calendar of work to come out and play sports. Some parents even go to the extent of advising their wards not to worry themselves with other activities that would obstruct their academic performance.

It was therefore the wish of every female athlete that their participation would be rewarded by the institutional authorities. The findings showed that, time purposely set for sports by the administration were often used purposely for lectures by most lecturers and students. This was in line with studies done by Coakley (2001) that many coaches may schedule practices and games that do not interfere with coursework, however, students may miss participation in games due to time of study, tests, or presentations. For instance, until now, there is no specific date for some colleges to engage sports and other co-curricular activities in the weekdays. It has been realized that even during weekends lecturers still meet students for either quizzes or lectures. In most cases, time set for Inter-Halls is the same time that some lecturers fix their quizzes and lectures and this disrupts the sporting program.

Majority of respondents affirmed that the college administration was helpless, if time meant for sports was used for other things. These findings went contrary to the findings of Coakley that in big Colleges in America, even faculty members who are not sports-‘friendly’, especially the athletics department, sometimes, are pressured to give special considerations to student athletes [8]. It seems the administration in the various universities did not attach any importance to any policy made about sports in terms of lectures and sporting activities. The females in the colleges of education would not settle for referral or dismissal, and so this might be one of the root causes of low female participation in college of education sports.

Participants maintained that they lost a lot of lecture periods because they played sports, whilst their colleagues attend lectures. Student would want the administration to take firm decisions on such problems concerning their participation and conflicts with lecture periods which go on to affect them. In all the colleges, none of them had instituted any policy on the addition of a 0.5 GPA and scholarship scheme to sportsmen and women who sacrifice for the respective colleges. It seemed that when you missed lecture, you did it at your own disadvantage. This was in relation with an earlier study that if faculty members were to administer academic support service for students’ athletes, things would be better and more females could be encouraged to engage in sporting activities. Students would not sacrifice their academic work for sports which may have consequences for their future. They are not ready to compromise their future [51].

There was a suggestion that a lot of females were not playing sports because of the intensive nature of the academic work. The introduction of semester programme which replaced the old system of academic work had been vigorous, and students who may have possibly participated in sports were more often constrained by time [51]. Other study collaborated this by saying that females who did not participate in sports cited time constraint, especially transition from high school to colleges as the main reason for their non-participation [9].

A majority of the college of education female students would have played sports, if there were times set aside for sports participation. Students would not go out and play while others went out for lectures or sat down to study. Coakley (2001) collaborated this view that the attractiveness of being an athlete in a big-time programme is often enough to distract students from academic work [8]. This presupposes that if times set aside for all students both athletes and non-athletes, the athletes would not suffer and would be glad to participate.

Many studies have shown positive influence of sports participation on academic performance of female students. A research conducted by Shalala indicated that benefit of physical activity and sports for girls extend beyond physical health to improved academic achievement, self-confidence, and better mental health [52]. Most female students strongly agreed or agreed that although the academic calendar was intensive, those who went out to play sports for the colleges would have time for it without suffering from academic work. This is in line with the findings of Women’s Sports Foundation and other researchers that there is a positive relationship between sports participation and

academic achievement as measured by grade-point average, standardized test scores, lowered risk for dropping out, and greater likelihood of attending and staying at school. Females who participate in sports despite academic pressures have realized the health benefit in relation to work as the adage ‘a healthy mind resides in a healthy body’, echoes in their minds. Sports have all the benefits to make a wholesome person in the society, physical, social, mental, and emotional benefits [15, 53].

**Table 7. Facilities and equipment use resulting in low participation in college of education sports**

Item		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	X <sup>2</sup>	S
16	Fq	48	61	20	43	8	180	23.45	000
	%	26.7	33.9	11.1	23.9	4.4	100		

*p* > .05

From Table 7 above, the X<sup>2</sup> value was 23.45 at .05 significance level. The calculated X<sup>2</sup> value of 23.45 was greater than the critical or tabulated X<sup>2</sup> value of 9.342 hence the null-hypothesis which stated there would be no significance association between the facilities and equipment and female low participation in college sports was rejected.

Sports development cannot be possible without the consideration of equipment and facilities as it plays vital role. The findings in Table 7 show that majority of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that facilities and equipment on college campuses as compare to the population of students did not encourage females to go out and use them. This agreed to the study of Onifade that for the success of any physical education and sports programmes, there must be the availability of both qualitative and qualitative facilities and equipment [54]. This also corroborated with the finding of Butler that logistics such as equipment and facilities have important place in recreational centers. He added that they contribute to physical development, stimulate creativity, and provide opportunities for other activities to take place [55]. It has been observed that facilities on the campuses are not adequate to accommodate the number of users. It has been observed with keen interest that none of the six colleges of education in the Central and Western can boast of a complete sports complex and apart from this, facilities for other sports are not sufficient, some colleges go beyond the campus to organize sports competitions.

To establish whether proximity of facilities and equipment to student’s residence would encourage more females to participate in college of education sports, the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the assertion. This implies that females would want sports facilities and equipment cut across their halls of residence to attract them to come out and engage in sporting activities. Another study pointed out that image falls as distance grows between users’ home and the facilities and rises with those who live near the facilities [56]. A similar study corroborate this in their findings that place of residence has great effect on the type of opportunity that is readily available, proximity, to services and facilities can influence young people’s engagement in sporting activities. It is very obvious that females by nature want to be pampered a little. They are known to be hardworking, as far as domestic chores are concerned, but attach less important to other things including sports in their lives. They are very aware of the benefits of participating in sports, but feel lazy to get up and play, let alone using their money for transportation fare to the sports centers or walking long distances [57].

Equipment found in the sports officers/centers did not commensurate with the student’s population in the colleges of education. They were released only when there was a major competition or preparation towards Inter-Halls competition. This is in agreement with the findings of Women Sports Foundation that females cannot play sports if they cannot get access to the necessary facilities and equipment. Females in the colleges did not even want to come out when they saw that men were already occupying the field

or courts [13]. It was the consensus of the respondents that inadequate facilities and equipment accounted for low female participation.

It could be added from respondents' responses that women could compete with men for facilities. This findings however, went contrary to the view of Australian Bureau of Statistics that boy dominate space in school playground and various sporting arena and tell girls that they cannot play. Lack of adequate facilities and equipment to attract females to do sports was a problem in the colleges. Where there were two or three fields, they were for football, thus facilities and access to more sporting activities should be of importance [34].

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings in this study, the following conclusions were drawn

1. Facilities and equipment which are sited far away from halls of residence will continue to bring about low females' participation in sports in the colleges of education.
2. On skill level, it was revealed that so far as skill level of female students remains low, participation of women in sports in the college of education will also remain low.
3. Even though administrative policies exist but they are not implemented, participation of females in sports in the colleges will still remain low.

### Recommendations

4. The college of education administrations should constantly implement and enforce policies concerning sports since lack of implementation, partial implementation and implementation with no appreciable effect, have telling effects on sports.
5. Adequate financial incentives such as scholarship awards, and residential accommodations should be made available to potential sportswomen.
6. The college of education administrations are encouraged to employ at least one female coach to serve as a source of inspiration and role model to females.
7. It is recommended that the coaches should be mindful of their approach to prospective female sportswomen. Neutral behaviour that is fair and firm should be one of his/her principles. They should make deliberate efforts to encourage female athletes to engage in sporting activities.
8. The P.E and Sports section of the various colleges should make a concerted effort to organize programmes and seminars regularly to educate females in the college on the career benefits of sports participation and iron out the misconceptions.
9. There is the need for the college authorities to make provision for more modern sports facilities and equipment.

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