

Excellence Affirmative of Identity through Sports and Games Participation among School Age Children

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Abstract

The study examined how participation in Sports and Games by school age children could be a contributing factors towards better sense of belonging and an aid in confirmation process of a better rating and excellent affirmation of individual that participates in sport. The study equally confirmed how young talents are discovered and admired as a result of their excellent performances. This indeed allows for valued judgment and social acceptance which in turn affirmed that the young ones that got themselves involved in Sport participation and are able to excel could ultimately be affirmed as belonging to the hall of fame in sports and games rating. The study concludes that excellent participation in Sports by the school aged children contributes to the development of socials and psychological profiles which are the necessary ingredient through which a child forms identity. Suffice to say that through Sports and Games participation, children attains excellent identity not only among his mates but across other status.

Keywords: *Excellent affirmation, Sports Identity, School Age Children, Social and psychological profiles.*

Introduction

It is widely known that sports development, build muscle and bones, improve reflexes, attention, focus and thinking, reduce the likelihood of obesity, reduce symptoms of stress and depression in both children and adult and adult. It also helps cognitive and academic development. Children who do sports get better grades (Bloomington, 1999). Similarly when children play sports, they are able to manage time better, and are able to improve their ability to think while their bodies are engaged, and make quick decisions, solve problems quickly and think strategically, they incorporate different kinds of information simultaneously – watch opponents, keep track of team mates, check environmental conditions and above all listen to coaching instructions. Adolescents who do sports have higher educational and occupational outcomes and are more likely to finish high schools and colleges successfully, Abubakar, 2013).

Children growing up without opportunity to participate in Sports and games are really disadvantaged. There is good evidence that participating in games and sporting activities is associated with both short and long term indicators of positive development. (Barber, Eccles& Stone, 2001; Eccles&Gootman, 2002; Larson, 2000; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). Sports and games participation among age children may also promote the development of social, physical, and intellectual skills, meaningful roles and empowerment, positive identity, constructive peer networks, and clear expectations and boundaries (Eccles& Barber 1999; Marsh &Kleitman, 2002, 2003; Perkins, Borden, & Villaruel, 2001). Likewise, children who participate in sports and games attend school more, and are civic minded, they get in less trouble and tend to be more successful in their work place.

Similarly, Sociological research has documented a link between children's sport and games participation and adult educational attainment, occupation, and income (Otto & Alwin, 1977). Participation in sports and games activities is also found to be positively related to achievement, educational aspirations, self-esteem, ability to overcome adversity, active participation in political process and volunteer activities, leadership qualities, and physical health, (Barber, Eccles 1997, Holland & Andre, 1987).

Identity Affirmation

Identity affirmation includes self categorization and is characterized as part of one's overreacting self-concept, it is a secure, confident and stable sense of self. The well known clinical psychologist, Carl Rogers, wrote about the "self concept" and of its importance for education and development in Children. He spoke of how this "Self concept" is affected, both consciously and subconsciously, by the myriad of messages that spark off a process of self comparison and self evaluation. It is the construction of identity over time, due to a combination of experience and action of the individual and includes gaining knowledge and understanding of other peer group. Development in all domain has implications on a child's identity. Research reveals identity development is related to psychological well-

being. Identity has been linked with positive self evaluation and self esteem (Holland & Andre, 1987.)

In view of these, there is need to advocate strongly for strategies that can help promote excellent affirmation for their identity. Apart from the popular benefits attached to children's participation in sports and games which are development of the gross and fine motor skills and fighting the worst obesity epidemic in history, giving children opportunity to participate in sports and have a catalogue of benefits to children's social, emotional and physical development.

Affirmation of Identity as Children participate in Sports and Games

When Children participate in Sport, there is tendencies for the provision of a developmental forum for initiative and engagement in challenging tasks that allow participants to express their talents, passion, and creativity (Csikzentmihalyi, 1991; Klieber, 1999; Larson, 2000). Organized sports and games activities help children and adolescents meet their need for social relatedness, potentiating a broad range of social developmental opportunities. It is equally the general condition of a person's mind, body and spirit usually meaning to be free from illness and pain. It is equally a source of joy for the school age participating sports and games (Abubakar 2013.)

Healthy relationships

The role of sports and games in the promotion of identity in children cannot be overstressed. It enables them to build a healthy relationship. A child can become too fearful of expressing its own identity for fear of upsetting others. Again, children do not build good relationships by hiding their real personalities. This can significantly affect the self esteem and motivation for learning and ability to form healthy relationships with others. For a person to enter into healthy relationship, it requires the ability to believe that he is loveable and that he is highly estimable. If a person's self esteem is significantly low then he either avoid entering into a relationship or friendship. Children's participation in sports and games will assist them in developing good personalities and boost their chances of excellent affirmation of their identity.

Promotion and maintenance of culture in children

Sport plays an important role in identity promotion and maintenance of culture in children. Research demonstrated the persuasive connections between children affirmation of identity on one hand and sport and games as a variable. It has been confirmed that when children participate in sport and games activities they choose and tend to reflect core aspects of their self beliefs. It equally provides an opportunity for children to be personally expressive and to communicate to both themselves and others that "this is who I am" or "this is what I believe or what I am meant to do." Sport and games setting provide the opportunity to enhance identification with the values and goals of the school or the community they belong (BarberMarsh, 1992.)

Change from bad attitude and development of good character

Research confirmed that the basketball club has been active in the promotion of Jewish identity amongst the junior players. The parents, and the broader community, were concerned about the ongoing existence of the Jewish diaspora in Melbourne. They saw their children's attitudes as being dangerously decadent, and hoped that sport participation might turn their daughters away from "sex and drugs". Sports and games help character development. According to Abubakar, (2013), children who do sports learn to define goals, determine the steps necessary to achieve them, derive pleasure from accomplishment and deal with the let down of defeat, pursue excellence by setting increasingly higher standards, persevere in the face of disappointment refocus and work hard, cope with frustration, learn to profit from challenge, encounter and ultimately enact moral values that helps resolve the conflict between the norms of fair play and the desire to win.

Miniature social systems

Sports and games participation by school age children also help social developments. Children who participate in sports and games develop leadership and team building skills, enhance their knowledge of peers, have the opportunity to experience interacting with children of other backgrounds and cultures. These traits combined together allows for better affirmation of participation Identity. (Ruth, Brooks, Murray and Foster, 1998.)

Participation in team sports

Participation in sports and games by young ones enables them to team up with other peers. Team sports teach ethics that go well beyond scoring, batting, shooting and winning. For example it checks ego. A child can be extremely egocentric which will have to stay in check on a team sport. When a child sees that everyone gets to play, they hopefully start to think about the group as a whole, and not just themselves (Eccles and Gootman, 2001). They learn to be happy for other player's success because they see how it benefits the team. So also, positive mentoring is achieved in children through participation in team sports. A dedicated, thoughtful and skilled coach can have an amazing impact on children. In fact, sometimes a child responds better to an objective coach than he will to his own parent (Mahoney, 2000). When children have early positive experience with coaches, they continue to seek out and learn from mentors who can help them with school, jobs and other interests. Just as children must practice spelling, mathematics and any other skill, they also need to learn that being part of a sport team requires practice, patience and persistence (the three P's of team sports) (Barber and Eccles, 1997). Showing up to practice when you'd rather be home with peers, waiting your turn on the sidelines, or doing the same drill over and over again, the three P's of team sports translate into important life lessons which can have significant influence on their affirmation of identity.

Basically, as children participate in team sports and games, an important truth is revealed while opportunity presents itself to teach value and norms that helps build a confidence that promote sense of belonging and acceptances. Larson, 2000.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is a unique connection between sports and games and positive development in children. Children who do sports have higher self-esteem, Self concept have less anxiety and depression and are less likely to engage in risky behaviors, such as sex and drugs, as adults, they feel better about their physical and social selves. There are enhanced outcomes following sports and games activity participation. Children are able to mix freely with people of diverse culture. Children excellent performance assist in allowing people to match them with positive grading that allows the children to be identified and affirmed excellently. Following the above conclusions, recommendations towards the constant achievement of the excellent affirmation of identity through sports and games participation are provided for all the stakeholders;

- Parents should introduce their children to a sport appropriate for age, interest and expectations as they grow because the interests of the child, the attitude of family members, and the demands of the sport all interact to affect the child's experience.
- Establish realistic goals that child can live up to because children work harder if they are aware that success is possible. For all children we must emphasize the fun aspect of sports.
- For the young child, we should not focus on rules and keeping score of the competition. Participation in should get the child to use the body for moving; running, kicking, throwing and catching. The equipment should be easy to handle (i.e beanbag or smaller size ball).
- Focus on developing skills as well as developing a love of the sport. Children of this age enjoy games with no rules they are only concerned about how they are judged by others.
- Teamwork that would helps them practice cooperation, mutual understanding, and logical thinking should be encouraged so that can learn about taking turns with their teammates, sharing, respecting their peers and respecting simple rules.
- Government and individuals should make facilities and equipment for sports and games available in our school especially at the early stage of our children sports and game.
- More sports and game professionals should be trained, retrained and also given incentives, as this would make sport participation by the school aged more interesting and welcoming.

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