

Participation In sports in African universities is essentially at two levels, that is, recreational and competitive. However, enrollment in sports at the universities is minimal due to structural, inter-personal, intra-personal and social-cultural constraints. As much as participation in sports has numerous benefits, there are schools of thought which presume that athletes are "academic dwarfs" or intellectually bankrupt. This paper outlines the nexus between sports participation and academics in universities in Africa. A theoretical overview which captures Greek Philosophy of "Meno Sano Incorporate Sano' (sound mind in a sound body), Deiwesyism, developmental theorists, piaget and other psychological dispositions, spend-gain theories are presented. This is buttressed by empirical studies from the west and Kenya, to underpin that participation in sports is not detrimental to academic success. The second part of the paper dissects the preparedness of universities in Africa in championing the cause for complementary role of sports and academic performance. Besides, challenges in sports management in African universities and the way forward are presented. It is recommended that universities in Africa provide the necessary sports facilities, equipment, supplies, human resource and environment for university students to participate in sports.