

Investigation of Secondary School Students 'Attitudes Towards Physical Education and Sports Course

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Abstract

This study was performed to observe the opinions and attitudes of the students studying at the second level of primary education towards physical education and sports lesson. The population of the research consists of students who study at the second level of primary education institutions, sample n (female) = 228] students. In the study; "Physical Education and Sports Attitude Scale" (PESTÖ) and "Demographic Information Form" has been used. For descriptive statistics, the percentage and frequency distributions, the arithmetic mean, standard deviation analyzes were applied, the differences between the two groups were analyzed with the T test, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for the differences between the groups. In the study, it was revealed that male students' attitudes to physical education and sports lessons were higher than female students for the gender. When the age variable was examined, it was seen that there was a significant difference between the ages of 10 and 15. When students' classes were analyzed, a significant difference was reached in 5th and 8th grade students.

Keywords: Middle School, Physical Education and Sports, Attitude

Introduction

Movement education and physical movements are needed in order to sustain a healthier and more qualified life. Children's physical inactivity has been categorized as a preventable risk factor for lifestyle-related diseases, and most of the known risk factors for chronic diseases are seen in young people (Strong, 2005). On the other hand, it has been suggested that physical inactivity experienced in youth was linked to various health risks in the following years (Twisk, 1997). The aim of physical education and sports (PES) course is to provide education of children through physical activities and to increase the movement capacity to the highest level possible (Çöndü, 2004). Within this scope, PES course is an active way of life, which helps students develop, learn, attitude and socialize through physical activities, while facilitating learning by adding fun to the skills in a motor and behavioral manner (Kangalgil et al., 2006). In this respect, physical education is an integral part of basic education.

If it is necessary to define physical education, it is an important method in raising an individual, who has adopted the basic principles of national education, honest, respectful to human rights and obeys the social rules (Yetim, 2005). Physical education, which is a training method, is to improve human performance as a goal and try to reach this goal in the physical activities that it prefers (Bucher, 1983). Although there are different definitions for education, according to Eflatun, the definition of "bringing the person to the highest level in spirit and body" is quite accurate (Yaka, 1991). The education system needs to be arranged in such a way that it handles the individual as a whole with its mental, spiritual and physical aspects. It is the psychomotor development that constitutes the basic point of view of physical education, contributing to the psychomotor development of the students and the development of coordination with body control, in other words, the coordination of the neuro-muscular system (Tamer, 1987). The purpose of motor skills is to teach the individual how to act effectively using his energy economically (Wuest & Bucher, 1999).

PES course should not only target students' psychomotor and physical development but also contribute to cognitive development. PES course should encourage students to ask questions, communicate, and use cognitive concepts (Graham et al., 1993). Academic success and well-being in terms of health and performance in physical education and sports are interrelated (Almond & McGeorge, 1998). The existence of too many links of PES course with mental performance and success has been supported by research (Dustman et al., 1994). It is seen that the view "healthy child learns better" is supported in schools (Symons et al., 1997). The four main topics of the PES course program, which plays a guiding role in classroom activities, are physical awareness, problem solving, solidarity and trust. These themes form a whole shape in relation to each other (Solomon, 1997).

Concept of Attitude

There are many factors that can affect student's learning in the school environment. We can create a learning environment that can encourage development by identifying and understanding how these factors affect student achievement and thereby maximizing learning outcomes. One of the characteristics that can directly affect the student's learning is attitude (Solomon, 2003). When teachers create a learning environment where students feel comfortable and confident in the classroom environment, students will increase their positive attitudes towards the subject (Mitchell, 1993). From this point of view, creating a positive learning environment in school for students affects both the student's attitude and the student's learning activity. The formation of positive attitudes towards physical activities in PES is even more important given the increase of physical inactivity among world youth (Biddle & Goudas, 1996).

It is possible to define the concept of attitude as an emotional level that tends to show reactive behavior that may occur positively or negatively about an idea, generation or human”(Alparslan, 2008). Attitude is seen as the pre-orientation of an emotional and operant response that the individual brings to a systematic state by looking at the knowledge and experience about himself or an event, object or social issue around him (İnceoğlu, 2000). The attitude, which means “ready to move” when looking at its origins in Latin, is “a situation that has any value judgment in a psychological process, or an ongoing readiness that determines the reaction of the person as a positive or negative emotion” (Yağcı, 2012).

Attitude-forming elements

Attitudes have three different parts. There are three main complementary elements: mental, behavioral and emotional (Kavas, 2013). The attitude of the individual about an object, situation or person in a mental, behavioral and emotional sense emphasizes the attitude of individuals. In this respect, in order to create an attitude, a harmonious and organizational connection between the three mentioned items has to continue in coordination (İnceoğlu, 2010).

Cognitive element

The cognitive element of attitudes consists of information and beliefs related to the stimuli of the attitude. These are the information related to the concept of attitude in the child's life. This information occurs either when a person lives directly with an attitude object or can learn from different sources. As can be understood from this definition, attitudes are formed by the subject whose existence is known and accepted. There is no attitude with a subject whose existence is unknown. It is known that the information about the attitude object is real and the attitudes related to it are so permanent. The attitude changes when the information related to the attitude object changes (Baysal, 1981). It consists of the knowledge that creates the attitude, and the mental element is the knowledge of the person's experiences mostly related to the stimuli around him (İnceoğlu, 2010). The cognitive element appears in the literature as a mental element. However, there are various definitions of the cognitive element.

Emotional element

The emotional element is simpler than the cognitive element. It shows itself as a positive or negative reaction. In this way, in cases where the emotional element is dominant, it is more difficult to change that attitude, especially the attitude towards the events or issues related to the person's ego is more intense (İnceoğlu, 2000). To put it more clearly, the affective element comes from the feelings that include positive or negative evaluations depending on the person's attitude object (Taylor et al., 2003). The affective element consists of positive and negative aspects that can vary from person to person and cannot be explained by facts (Tavsancil, 2002). The affective element of attitude is easier than the cognitive element. It manifests itself as a good or bad reaction. However, it is more difficult to change an attitude whose affective element is dominant; the subject or attitude that is especially related to the ego of the person is more intense (İnceoğlu, 2000). However, whether a person feels positive or negative emotions for an attitude is a result of their accumulation in life. If a person has positive or negative feelings with a stimulant, it means they have had previous experience with these stimulants and have approved and refused them. Whenever one remembers these stimuli, he is in a positive and negative situation. Therefore, their reactions about that attitude will be positive or negative (İnceoğlu, 2010).

As a result, positive attitudes towards physical activity in PES can play an important role in maintaining an active lifestyle outside the school. Children who are active in PES class are more likely to become active adults in their future lives. Even for some students, PES lesson can act as a

tool to influence the attitudes of children and young people towards physical activity, as it is the only place where they can reach physical activity and PES lessons have the potential to reach most students.

Material and Method

Research Design

In this research, cross-sectional approach and relational screening model were applied as general screening model.

Research Sample

The sample part of the study consists of 424 [n (male) = 196, n (female) = 228] elementary school students who have been selected in Ankara in 2018-2019 academic year by random sampling method.

Research Instruments and Procedures

In the study, a questionnaire consisting of two parts was used to collect data. In the first part of the questionnaire, there is a “Demographic Information Form” which contains different variables to determine the personal and general information of the students. In the second part of the questionnaire, “Physical Education and Sports Attitude Scale” in which student attitudes were measured, was used to determine the opinions and attitudes of the participants about the PES course.

Data Analysis

SPSS 24.0 program was used for analysis in the research. The results of the personal information, scale and inventory and factor scores, frequencies and percentage values of the participants were analyzed. Normal distribution conditions, curves, skewness and kurtosis coefficients were examined for the scores obtained.

Findings

In this section, findings obtained from analysis of research data are presented in tables.

Table1. Percentage and Frequency Distributions Regarding Demographic Characteristics of Students Participating in the Research

Gender	n	%
Woman	228	53,8
Male	196	46,2
Total	424	100
Father's Educational Status	n	%
Primary school	62	14,6
Middle School	126	29,7
High school	145	34,2
University	91	21,5
Total	424	100
Mother's educational status	n	%
Primary school	107	25,3
Middle School	117	27,6
High school	147	34,7

According to the Table 1, 53.8% of the participants in the study were female, 46.2% were male students. Considering the classes in which the participants are members, it was seen that 23.8% of them attended 5th class, 20% of them were 6th grade, 29.2% of them were 7th grade, 26% of them were in 9th class. 14.6% of the fathers of the students were primary school, 29.7% were secondary school, 34.2% were high school, 21.5% were university graduates. 25.3% of the students' mothers were primary school, 27.6% were secondary school, 34.7% were high school and 12.4% were university graduates.

Table 2. The Effect of the Age of Students Participating in the Research on Attitudes towards PES Course

Age	n	X± Ss	F	p
10 Years1	16	71,50±8,30	0,637	0,672
11 Years2	106	69,42±8,11		
12 Years3	88	69,30±7,34		
13 Years4	99	68,49±7,97		
14 Years5	105	69,12±7,65		
15 Years6	10	66,70±7,60		

When we look at the statistical studies about whether there is a significant difference between the ages of the students participating in the study and the attitude scores of the PES course, it was seen that there was a significant difference at the level of $p < 0.05$ between the ages of 10 and 15.

Table 3. The Effect of Gender on Students' Attitudes towards PES Course

	N	X± Ss	t	p
Women	228	67,64±7,80	-3,171	0,002*
Men	196	70,02±7,59		

When Table 3 is analyzed, a significant difference was found in gender at the level of $p < 0.05$ between the attitude scores of the male and female participants regarding the PES course. It was observed that male students had higher scores in the attitude scores of the PES course than female students.

Table 4. The Effect of Student Classes on Attitudes towards PES Course

Class	n	X± Ss	F	p	Tukey HSD
5 th 1	101	69,80±8,05	0,941	0,042	1-4*
6 th 2	85	68,96±7,99			
7 th 3	124	68,87±7,59			
8 th 4	114	66,17±6,61			

There was a significant difference between 5th grade and 8th grade students who participated in the study ($p < 0.05$).

Table5. The Effect of Economic Status of Students on Attitudes towards PES Course

Economic Status	n	X± Ss	F	p	Tukey HSD
Low ¹	34	70,02± 7,67			
Middle ²	288	68,94±7,66	1,672	0,172	
High ³	102	67,76±8,13			

There was no significant difference between the economic status of the families of the students participating in the study and their attitude points regarding the PES course ($p = 0.172$).

Table6. The Effect of Father's Educational Status of Students on Attitudes towards PES Course

Educational Status	N	X± Ss	F	p	Tukey HSD
Primary school ¹	62	70,35±6,58			
Middle School ²	126	68,96±6,92	3,376	0,018*	1-4*
High school ³	145	69,19±8,31			
University ⁴	91	66,62±8,33			

A significant difference was found at the level of $p < 0.05$ between the father's educational status of the participants and their attitudes towards PES course ($p = 0.018$). When the Tukey HSD results are analyzed, it was seen that the differentiation was between primary school and university education levels.

Discussion and Findings

This study was carried out to determine the opinions and attitudes of PES students of secondary education. When looking at the effect of the age factor in determining the attitudes of the student participants about the PES course, a statistically significant difference was found between the ages of 10 and 15 ($p < 0.05$). Considering these results, we can say that as the age increases in secondary school students, their attitudes towards PES course increase. Moreover, there are similar findings in the literature supporting the results of this study (Rice, 1988; Ryan et al., 2003). Some studies investigating students' attitudes according to their ages have reported that attitudes towards PES lesson decreased as a result of class level (Biddle & Mutrie, 2001; Butcher & Hall, 1983; Portman, 1995, Gürbüz, 2011). As a result of the age variable, the results of research on student attitudes towards PES course produced mixed findings. Mixed findings in this area can be attributed to different measurement methods used in determining student attitudes and a lack of adequately informed participants.

When looking at the effect of gender factor in determining the attitudes towards the PES course among the participant students, a significant difference was obtained at the level of ($p < 0.05$). It was observed that attitudes towards PES lessons were higher in male students than in female students. As expected, male students gave more eager and more positive results towards PES. In the study conducted by Smoll and Schutz (1980), attitudes of male students towards PES course were generally more positive than the female students. It was concluded that male students expressed that they liked the PES lesson due to the superiority they feel in the activities (Tannehill, 1994). In the study conducted by Trenor et al. (1998: 43), it was concluded that male students in PES lessons felt more powerful, stronger and talented than female students. The fact that female students think that they are not more capable than boys when doing physical activities may have affected their attitude levels negatively. In addition, male students can be interpreted that they are more prone to movement education than female students and that they may have had higher scores on PES lessons because of their self-confidence. In similar studies, Stelzer et al. (2004); Koca and Demirhan (2004), Taşgin and Tekin (2009), Akandere et al. (2009), Pultur and Yazıcı (2011) found PES lesson attitude scores higher in male students than in female students.

In a study by Wersch (1992), different results were found. According to the findings, it was stated that female participants between the ages of 11 and 13 were more interested in the PES class than male participants, but after the age of 14, this interest changed in favor of male students. It is a period of pause and development in terms of physiological development, especially in the transition of female and male students to adolescence. The physical development of female students aged 11-13 is faster and more evident than the physical development of male students. It is known that the changes in the physical structure of girls and boys are different and may be reflected in their behavior and attitudes. It can be said that this situation can shape the attitudes towards PES lessons in different ratios for girls and boys.

When determining attitudes about PES course among students participating in the research, a significant difference was found at the level of grade 5 and 8 ($p < 0.05$). There are studies in the literature that support similar results. When Altay and Özdemir (2006), and Sivrikaya and Kılçık (2017) looked at the mean scores of the PES course attitude, a significant difference was observed in the grade levels. Alpaslan (2008) stated that there was a significant difference between the students

in the 9th and 11th grades and those in the 10th and 11th grades in terms of the average attitude scores towards PES course. This difference is that, with the increase of the classrooms, the attitude points of the PES lesson decrease. The findings in these studies overlap with the findings we obtained in our study. There are studies in the literature where different results were obtained. Gürbüz (2011) reported that the attitude values of the PES course were positive for students who were studying in the 7th grade of primary education, and the attitude scores of the PES course were negative for the students who were studying in the 6th and 8th grades. When the responses of the students who participated in the study were examined, it was seen that there was no significant difference in their attitude towards the PES course with their class level distributions.

In addition, when the family monthly income level of the student was analyzed, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference in PES course attitude scores. In the studies conducted by Gürbüz (2011), Akman et al. (2012), Yanık and Çamlıyer (2015), and Birtwistle and Brodie (1991), it was stated that there was no significant difference in the participants' economic status levels and attitude points of the PES course. It was also found that the monthly income of the students' families as their economic status did not have a positive or negative effect on PES course attitude values. Although it was assumed that students would have a positive attitude towards sports and PES lessons, it was seen that this expected difference was not a significant. According to the results that is opposite of the findings of the research, (Filiz (2018); Ekici and Hevedanlı (2010); Öztürk (2000); and Devocioğlu and Sarıkaya (2006), it was revealed that the participant students played an effective role in the orientation of sports according to the income status of their families.

While analyzing the attitudes towards PES course in the students, it was found that the educational status of their mothers did not make a significant difference, while the educational status of their fathers made a significant difference in students' attitude scores. Findings show that there was a significant difference between primary school and university education. In studies with similar results, Tural (2011); Öztürk (2000); Gürbüz (2011) found that the level of father's education among secondary school students revealed a significant difference on the attitude scores of the PES course. Koçak and Hürmeriç (2004, 2006), on the other hand, found that father's education status did not make a statistically significant difference at the value of $p < 0.05$ according to the PES course attitude scores.

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