Original Article

Comparatively analyzing the physical education curriculum in elementary education according to teacher opinions in Turkey and England*

YAPRAK KALEMOĞLU VAROL¹; FAİK İMAMOĞLU²

¹Department of Physical Education and Sport , Aksaray University, TURKEY

²Department of Physical Education and Sport , Gazi University, TURKEY

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Abstract:

The purpose of the research is to examine the teaching programs of physical education in the first term of the primary schools in Turkey and in England comparatively according to gender, education level and seniority variable in the four basic dimensions (purpose, content, teaching-learning process, measurement and evaluation) according to the view of the teachers. The research group was created from teachers who conduct physical education classes in the first term of primary schools in the cities of Ankara and London. A total number of 107 teachers took place in the study from Ankara, out of them 96(89.7%) were class teachers and 11 (10.3%) were physical education teachers, while from London 83(100 %) teachers took place in the research, all of them work as a class teacher due to the situation that the lessons in the first term of primary school are carried out only by class teachers. The data which was required for the research was gathered through the “Assessment Form for the Teaching Program of Physical Education” which was developed by the researcher. In the analyses, in addition to descriptive statistics, the t-test which belongs to the differences between the arithmetic average in independent samples and the analysis of one-way variance were used. In the conclusion, in terms of Turkey the teachers expressed generally positive opinions about the dimensions of the purpose of program ($\bar{x}=3,49$), content ($\bar{x}=3,53$), teaching-learning process ($\bar{x}=3,43$) while the views regarding to the dimension of measurement and elevation ($\bar{x}=3,30$) were found to be at medium level. In England, the teachers in general specified positive opinions about the dimensions of program’s purposes ($\bar{x}=3,90$), content ($\bar{x}=3,82$), teaching-learning process ($\bar{x}=3,81$), their views regarding the dimension of measurement and evaluation ($\bar{x}=3,39$) were found at medium level. In both of the countries, significant difference was not found on all of the aspects of the program according to the gender variable. According to the seniority variable significant difference was not found between the teachers’ views on all of the program’s aspects, in England significant difference was observed in the dimension of teaching –learning process and program’s content related to the seniority of the teachers. According to the variable of class size in terms of Turkey difference was found between the opinions of the teachers while in England difference was not found.

Key words: comparative physical education , physical education curriculum, elementary education, physical education lesson.

Introduction

Although differences can be observed according to countries, geographical conditions, culture and values, education serves the same common aims in all societies. Education which is an important and also comprehensive process aims to develop individuals not only from cognitive aspect but also as a whole by contributing from psychological, social and physical aspects too. In terms of education achieving all these purposes, the physical education classes which has a significant share in the general education is taught as a complement of general education in schools. In a research which was carried out in 126 countries by Hardman and Marshall; it was demonstrated that the physical education classes took place in the teaching plan as a compulsory subject in more than 92% of the countries. Achieving the aim of the physical education classes can be possible only with a teaching program which is responsive to the needs of the society and students. The experience of rapid changes and developments in all areas of the world forces the teaching programs to change within no time. As Güleriyüz (2001) stated it is very important for the developed programs to be in a nature to fulfil the requirements of the age, to get free from error by making pre-treatments and to make it reliable and valid.

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Because the education program is the axis or the focal point of the educational system by being in a sense the “road map and guide” in the realization of all courses in the educational system and by demonstrating the aspects of courses approach, content, purpose, application and measurement –evaluation in details.(Yavuz, 2005; Kavak, 2005).

No matter how sufficiently or carefully it was prepared a teaching program with its first prepared form cannot be expected to be in the desired quality. Program development in the contemporary education is not an activity which is limited by a single pass of the program’s “preparation, trial, evaluation correction” stage. The developed program after putting it to application or into effect needs to be brought to a more advanced level by passing it through the continuously repeated “application-evaluation-correction” stages (Büyükkaragöz 1997). The teachers who are the practitioners of the program may not be able to practice as it was designed for various reasons or some factors which were not considered during the design may block the implementation of the design as envisaged. For this reason it is required to collect information related to the implementation process of the program in order to be able to make judgements about the effectiveness of the program (Erden, 1995).

For this reason in this study it was aimed to examine the teaching program of the physical education in Turkey and in England comparatively by taking the opinions of the teachers who are in the practitioner’s position according to the variables of gender, class size and seniority. The comparative examination of the teachers’ opinion related to teaching program of the lesson along with a different country has a great importance in terms of the effectiveness of the physical education lessons and their practice. It is also important that the area of this comparison was made especially in the primary school level which is the first step of the education and which starts to shape the children towards becoming better individuals.

Turkish and English Teaching Programs in Physical Education

In England the first National Curriculum for Physical Education (NCPE) was published in 1992. After its publishing it got several criticism and deficiencies were found so it was corrected by being revised and was published as a draft in November of 1994, the program whose final version was made in January, 1995, was implemented with the starting date of August, 1995. NCPE by being revised again after 5 years finally entered into force in 2000 and has been made legally mandatory (Richter, 2007; Ashcroft and Palacio, 1995; Oliver, 2004; Donovan vd., 2006).

In Turkey the curriculum which was prepared during the Ottoman period in 1915 for the three circuits and six class elementary school in “Public Instruction on Makatib-i İbtidai” did not change in the first year of the Republic and the implementation of the program was continued until 1924 (Cicioğlu, 1985). In 1924 a new program was prepared under the name of “1924 Primary School Curriculum” by considering the understanding, needs and requirements of education and teaching of the newly established Republic of Turkey. Since 1924 until now many educational program were accepted and implemented. This program was followed respectively by the educational programs in 1926, 1936, 1948, 1968, 1987. Finally, from 2006 the New Elementary Physical Education Curriculum (1-8. Classes) was accepted and began to be implemented.

Method

The research was carried out by using the descriptive scanning model. The required data was obtained by the “Assessment Form of Teaching Program in Physical Education” which was developed by the researcher.

Participants

The research group was formed by a total of 190 teachers who conduct physical education classes in various primary schools in the provinces of Ankara and London and was selected through random sampling. The descriptive statistics of the research group are given in Table 1.

Table 1 The descriptive statistics of the research group

Variables		Turkey		England	
		n	%	n	%
Gender	Female	70	65.4	39	47
	Male	37	34.6	44	53
	1-5	3	2.8	12	14.5
Seniority (year)	6-10	8	7.5	20	24.1
	11-15	14	13.1	35	42.2
	16-20	25	23.4	16	19.3
	20+	57	53.3	-	-
	10-20	7	6.5	4	4.8
Class size (students)	21-30	47	43.9	56	67.5
	31-40	44	41.1	23	27.7
	41-50	9	8.4	-	-
	51+	-	-	-	-

Data Collection Tools

The personal information form and the “Assessment Form of Teaching Program in Physical Education” were used as the data collection tools.

Personal Information Form: In this form those substances were involved which were related to the gender, seniority, and education levels of the teachers who participated in the survey.

Assessment Form of Teaching Program in Physical Education: The data which was required for the research was collected by the “Assessment Form of Teaching Program in Physical Education” which was developed by the researcher. The scales was formed by four factors such as “purpose”, “content”, “learning-teaching process” and “measurement and evaluation” and by 43 items. The scale is a 5 Likert type scale which are rated from (1) I totally agree to (5) I do not agree.

All the items that are involved in the scale are positive expressions. The Cronbach’ alfa internal consistency coefficient of the scale were; .95 for the “purpose” sub- factor, .89 for the “content” sub-factor, .87 for the “teaching learning “ sub-factor, .92 for the “measurement and evaluation” sub-factor and .96 for the whole scale. The expressions related to the dimensions in the scale; the average between 1.00-1.80 represents the most negative thoughts, an average between 1.81-2.60 shows the negative thoughts, the points between 2.61-3.40 give an intermediate level of thoughts, points between 3.41-4.20 for positive thoughts and the points between 4.21-5.00 represents the most positive thoughts.

Statistical analysis

Statistical values such as frequency and percentage were used in the data analysis belonging to teachers’ personal and professional works in Turkey and in England. In both countries the frequency, percentage and the arithmetic average of each statement were given in order to reveal the degree of the participation where the answers of the teachers which were given for the expressions involved in the dimensions of the program concentrated. In terms of two grouped variables (gender) independent samples t –test was applied to determine whether there was significant difference between the teachers’ opinion, while in terms of three or more grouped variables (seniority, class size) the analysis of one-way variance (ANOVA) was applied in order to determine whether there was a significant difference between the teachers’ opinion. In the analysis of one-way variance the post-hoc Tukey HSD test was performed in order to find out among which groups the differences between the units are. The level of significance was taken as 0.05. The data of the research was analyzed by SPSS 15 software.

Results

The average of the teachers’ opinion in Turkey and in England which were related to the sub-dimensions of the Physical Education classes’ teaching programs was given in Table 2.

Table 2 The teachers’ opinion related to the sub-dimension of the program

Dimensions of the Program	Country	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd.
General and general purposes	TUR	107	3.49	,595
	ENG	83	3.90	,337
Content	TUR	107	3.53	,653
	ENG	83	3.82	,499
Teaching-Learning process	TUR	107	3.43	,670
	ENG	83	3.81	,325
Measurement and evaluation	TUR	107	3.30	,649
	ENG	83	3.39	,322

When analyzing Table 2 except the dimension of measurement and evaluation the teachers’ opinion related to the other dimensions of the program was found to be on positive level. The teachers’ opinion regarding the dimension of measurement and evaluation were found to be on middle level in both of the countries ($\bar{X}_{TUR}=3.30$, $\bar{X}_{ING}=3.39$).

Opinions of teachers according to gender variable

Firstly, homogeneity test was made in order to determine whether the teachers’ views about the program differed according to gender variable, the variances were found to be homogeneous. In line with this t-test which belongs to the arithmetic average was carried out in independent groups (Table 3).

Table 3 The teachers' views related to the sub-dimensions of the program according to the gender variable

Dimensions of the Program	Country	Gender	n	$\bar{X}$	Sd.	df	t	p
General and general purposes	TUR	Male	37	3,54	,552	105	,612	,542
		Female	70	3,46	,619			
	ENG	Male	44	3,92	,299	81	,751	,455
		Female	39	3,87	,378			
Content	TUR	Male	37	3,61	,607	105	,855	,395
		Female	70	3,49	,677			
	ENG	Male	44	3,82	,484	81	-,026	,979
		Female	39	3,82	,521			
Teaching-Learning process	TUR	Male	37	3,57	,628	105	1,612	,110
		Female	70	3,35	,683			
	ENG	Male	44	3,82	,315	81	,161	,873
		Female	39	3,80	,340			
Measurement and evaluation	TUR	Male	37	3,32	,630	105	,225	,823
		Female	70	3,29	,663			
	ENG	Male	44	2,93	,289	81	,616	,540
		Female	39	2,89	,357			

In both of the countries, significant difference were not observed between the answers given by the male and female teachers to all dimensions of the program ($p>0.5$)

Opinions of teachers according to the seniority variable

Firstly, homogeneity test was made in order to determine whether the teachers' views about the program differed according to the seniority variable, the variances were found to be homogeneous. In this direction analysis of one-way variance (ANOVA) was performed (Table 4.)

Table 4 The teachers' views related to the sub-dimensions of the program according to the seniority variable

Dimensions of the Program	Country	Seniority (year)	n	$\bar{X}$	Sd.	df	f	p	Tukey HSD
General and general purposes	TUR	1-5	3	3,77	,531	4	2,315	,062	
		6-10	8	3,59	,490				
		11-15	14	3,53	,538				
		16-20	25	3,74	,518				
		21 ⁺	57	3,34	,626				
	ENG	1-5	12	3,78	,449	3	2,290	,085	
		6-10	20	3,81	,343				
		11-15	35	4,01	,283				
		16-20	16	3,85	,304				
		21 ⁺	-	-	-				
Content	TUR	1-5	3	3,53	,611	4	,778	,542	
		6-10	8	3,80	,453				
		11-15	14	3,62	,501				
		16-20	25	3,61	,704				
		21 ⁺	57	3,44	,688				
	ENG	1-5	12	3,73	,554	3	3,100	,031*	16-20<11-15
		6-10	20	3,80	,506				
		11-15	35	3,98	,494				
		16-20	16	3,56	,336				
		21 ⁺	-	-	-				
Teaching-Learning process	TUR	1-5	3	3,55	,666	4	,544	,703	
		6-10	8	3,61	,544				
		11-15	14	3,38	,762				
		16-20	25	3,55	,673				
		21 ⁺	57	3,36	,670				
	ENG	1-5	12	3,81	,421	3	3,407	,022*	16-20<6-10
		6-10	20	3,96	,239				
		11-15	35	3,81	,322				
		16-20	16	3,63	,274				
		21 ⁺	-	-	-				

Measurement and evaluation	TUR	1-5	3	3,05	,291	4	1,573	,187
		6-10	8	3,30	,481			
		11-15	14	3,10	,559			
		16-20	25	3,56	,712			
		21 ⁺	57	3,25	,655			
	ENG	1-5	12	3,44	,282	3	2,294	,084
		6-10	20	3,37	,335			
		11-15	35	3,30	,303			
		16-20	16	3,57	,475			
		21 ⁺	-	-	-			

In Turkey significant difference was not shown in teachers' views on the sub-dimension of the program according to the seniority variable ($p>.05$).

In England the teachers' views related to the content dimension of the program according to the teachers' seniority changed in a meaningful way. According to this, significant difference was found in favour of those who have 11-15 years experience ($p<.05$). The teachers' opinion related to the teaching –learning process varies significantly depending on the service years they worked as a teacher ($p<.05$). According to this we may say that the opinion of teachers with 6-10 years of experience on this dimension is more positive. There were not found any significant differences between the teachers' views related to the general purpose and measurement and evaluation dimensions of the program ($p>.05$).

Opinions of teachers according to the class size variable

Firstly, homogeneity test was made in order to determine whether the teachers' views about the program differed according to the class size variable, the variances were found to be homogeneous. In this direction analysis of one-way variance (ANOVA) was performed (Table 5.)

Table 5 The teachers' views related to the sub-dimensions of the program according to the class size

Dimensions of the Program	Country	Class size (student)	n	$\bar{X}$	Sd.	df	f	p	Tukey HSD
General and general purposes	TUR	10-20	7	3,88	,514	3	3,394	,021*	41-50<21-30
		21-30	47	3,92	,541				
		31-40	44	3,47	,556				
		41-50	9	3,37	,607				
		51 ⁺	-	-	-				
	ENG	10-20	4	3,75	,318	2	,417	,661	
		21-30	56	3,91	,360				
		31-40	23	3,91	,286				
		41-50	-	-	-				
		51 ⁺	-	-	-				
Content	TUR	10-20	7	3,94	,525	3	5,740	,001*	41-50<21-30
		21-30	47	4,04	,581				
		31-40	44	3,62	,617				
		41-50	9	3,29	,625				
		51 ⁺	-	-	-				
	ENG	10-20	4	3,30	,115	2	2,675	,075	
		21-30	56	3,82	,538				
		31-40	23	3,91	,380				
		41-50	-	-	-				
		51 ⁺	-	-	-				
Teaching-Learning process	TUR	10-20	7	3,80	,600	3	3,234	,025*	41-50<21-30
		21-30	47	3,82	,606				
		31-40	44	3,48	,621				
		41-50	9	3,25	,688				
		51 ⁺	-	-	-				
	ENG	10-20	4	3,66	,240	2	1,858	,163	
		21-30	56	3,78	,337				
		31-40	23	3,91	,292				
		41-50	-	-	-				
		51 ⁺	-	-	-				
Measurement and evaluation	TUR	10-20	7	3,67	,408	3	,995	,398	
		21-30	47	3,42	,700	103			
		31-40	44	3,28	,645	106			

	41-50	9	3,24	,669				
	51 ⁺	-	-	-				
	10-20	4	3,07	,184				
	21-30	56	3,38	,307	2			
ENG	31-40	23	3,45	,453	80	2,102	,129	
	41-50	-	-	-	82			
	51 ⁺	-	-	-				

According to Table 5 in England significant difference was not found between the teachers' views related to all the aspects of the program according to the class size ($p>.05$). In Turkey, the opinions of the teachers which is related to the general purpose, content and teaching-learning process of the program vary significantly depending on the size of the class they are teaching ($p<.05$). According to this, it was observed that the opinions of those teachers who have a class size between 21-30 students about the general aims, content and teaching-learning process of the program comparing to those teachers having a class with 41-50 students are more positive. A significant difference was not observed between the teachers' opinion regarding to the dimension of measurement and evaluation ($p>.05$)

Discussion & conclusions

The teachers' opinions in Turkey and in England related to general aims, content and teaching -learning process dimensions of the teaching program were found to be at positive level. These obtained findings regarding to the program in general and its general aims show parallelism with many other studies (Şirin, Yıldız, Mülazımoğlu & Erdoğan, 2008; Akdoğan, 2009; Erdoğan & Öcalan, 2010; Dalkıran, Gündüz & Çiçek, 2011) but they also do not overlap with the results of many studies (Şirinkan & Gündoğdu, 2011; Kerkez & Gözen, 2007; Başaran, Solmaz & Okumuş, 2007; Çiçek, Kirazcı & Koçak, 1998). The differences between the findings of the study can occur due to the use of different measurement tools. In addition to this the different characteristics of these samples are considered to be due to the cause of the differences in the findings. The teachers' opinions in Turkey and in England related to the measurement and evaluation dimension of the teaching program were realized at mid-level, and the lowest average was observed for this dimension. These findings are parallel with several studies (Yaşar, Gülteki, Türkkan, Yıldız & Girmen, 2005; Dalkıran, Gündüz & Çiçek, 2011; Şirin, Yıldız, Mülazımoğlu & Erdoğan, 2008; Yılmaz, 2007). In a study that was conducted by Yasar and his friends (2005) it was specified that there are educational requirements for the teachers related to the measurement and evaluation size of the program, for being able to use the measurement and evaluation tools they need to be trained. Dalkıran and friends (2011) determined that the opinion regarded the measurement and evaluation size was accepted by academic staff at I partially agree level. In a research which was made by Şirin and friends (2008) it was stated that the applicability of physical education teachers in the term of measurement and evaluation of the program is very low. The physical education teachers who are working in primary education received education in the university according to the approach of behavioural training and their teachings were also shaped according to this training. Therefore, it was stated that it is not easy to leave the habits accumulated over the years and the treatment and evaluation methods by questioning their own educational philosophy. Yılmaz (2007) stated it as the cause that occurred due to the inadequacy of school hours, insufficiency in-service training, the crowded class size, and the problems in the measurement and evaluation process. Also Gülüm and Bilir (2011) determined that the physical education teachers coming from the behavioural education system could not assimilate to the physical education curriculum which was prepared by constructivist approach.

In both of the countries significant difference was not observed between the responses of the teachers given to the program in general and to its general purposes according to the gender. The findings of the study carried out by Arslan and Altay (2008) also support this. According to this, there was no significant difference in the opinions of the class teachers who are practicing the curriculum of the physical education class, intended to the physical education program and to the teaching practices depending on the gender.

In Turkey and in England significant difference was not observed between the answers given to the gender variable relating to the content of the program. This finding showed parallelism with the result of the study conducted by Bozkurt (2005). In the study it was reported that the gender do not have significant impact on the attitudes of the class teachers towards the physical education class and to the teaching program. However, these findings which were obtained do not coincide with the work done by Akdoğan (2009). In this study, significant difference was observed between the opinions of the P.E. teachers related to the content size of the new teaching program in the primary schools' physical education classes and the gender in favour of the male teachers. The differences between our research findings and the results of other studies are considered to occur due to the structure of the macrocosm from where the sample was selected, the number of sampling and the different structure of the data collection tools.

In both of the countries the teachers' view on the program in general and on the general aims according to the seniority did not differ significantly. In a study which was carried out by Şirin and Bozkurt (2005) it was

observed that the teachers seniority did not have any effect on the attitudes towards the P.E. classes. However, these findings which were obtained do not coincide with the work done by Arslan and Altay (2008). In this study, a more positive result emerged about the opinions of the teachers having over 20 years of service related to the P.E. classes and to the teaching process.

In Turkey the teachers' opinion related to the dimension of the program's content according to the seniority variable did not show a significant difference. This finding is in line with the results of the study carried out by Akdoğan (2009). However in England the teachers' opinion regarding the content of the program according to the seniority changed in a meaningful way. Accordingly, it was observed that the teachers with 11-15 years of experience have more positive opinion than teachers with 16-20 years of experience.

In Turkey there was no significant difference in the statement of the teachers which was related to the teaching –learning process according to seniority. The opinion of teachers in England regarding this dimension depending on the service time varies in a meaningful way. According to this, it was observed that the opinion of the teachers having 6-10 years of experience is more positive than those having 16-20 years of experience. In both countries significant difference was not found among the teacher's answers regarding the measurement and evaluation size of the program according to the seniority.

The teachers' opinions in Turkey about the program in general, and the general purposes, content and teaching –learning process of the program depending on the class size vary in a meaningful way. According to this, it was seen that the perception of teachers having a class of 21-30 person about the program in general, and general aims, content and teaching learning process of the program is more positive than the teachers having a class that consists of 41-50 persons. This finding of the research is a generally expected result. Because the regulation made within the educational system, particularly in the class sizes directly affects the quality of the education. As Erdem (1998) has stated that in crowded classrooms the students' attention is more easily disintegrated, it is difficult to maintain the order so the lecture method had to be used in large extent. This may make teacher quickly tired and can be the reason for the decrease in motivation. While in classes having less students (Celebi,2002) teacher can more easily follow the student's progress by allocating more time to each students, can manage the class more effective and this can give the ability to facilitate effective learning. Especially crowded classrooms can cause problem at the point to separate more time for student-centered activities based on active learning and may cause distress at the implementation of the program. In the study made by Pehlivan and friends (2005) the crowded classes were found to be one of the factors that prevent the physical education classes to be executed in the desired manner.

In England, significant difference was not observed among the teachers' opinion on all aspects of the program depending on the class size variable. It is an expected result if we take into consideration that more than half of the teachers who were involved in the research in England were working with a class less than 30 people. In a study carried out by Ferguson (1991) a significant relationship was found between the class size and the student achievement. According to this, it was concluded that when the number of students per teacher exceeds 18, the student achievement will be decreased. Especially for the first term of primary education the recommended average class size is 20-25 people due to children moving a lot and due to learning the basic skills recently (Erdem, 1998). In countries that emphasise on the individual differences in education, have a student-centered education approach and teaching program that was prepared by this approach it is very important to achieve the purposes in the number of students in the classrooms.

As a result, in Turkey the teaching program of physical education which is based on the constructivist approach has begun to be implemented since 2006. However, the teachers who were educated by behavioural approach may have difficulties in activities prepared in accordance with constructivist approach, it was determined that they especially experienced difficulties related to measurement and evaluation activities. Therefore, the existing teachers receiving regular in-services training and the new teachers being equipped with knowledge and skills to realize the constructivist teaching-learning process have a great importance in terms of achieving the aims of the program.

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