



Correlation relation between professional qualifications of physical education teachers and students' attitudes towards Physical Education classes

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Abstract

Purpose: This empirical study investigated the impact of the professional qualifications of Physical Education (PE) teachers on secondary school students' attitudes towards their PE classes. Education in general and teaching and learning in particular are multidimensional phenomena and thus it is essential to determine and define these dimensions to sustain quality in education. From the psychological perspective, along with various factors, teachers' personality and qualifications may affect students' learning process. In this respect, effective teachers can foster students' learning process and help develop positive attitudes towards a course.

Material: In order to fulfill the research aim, the data were elicited through a questionnaire from five hundred and ninety-two secondary school students from grades 9, 10 and 11 in North Cyprus to be analyzed quantitatively. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and Shapiro-Wilk Test were run to test normality. Seeing that the data set was not well-modeled by a normal distribution, a Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was run to measure the association between the variables.

Results: A very strong positive correlation was found between the professional qualifications of teachers and the participants' attitudes towards PE classes.

Conclusions: The results indicated that there was a significant relationship between the qualifications of the teachers and the students' attitudes towards PE classes. More specifically, it was found that the higher the perceptions of students of the professional qualifications of PE teachers, the more positive attitudes they developed towards PE classes.

Keywords: physical education, secondary school students, teachers' role in education, professional qualifications.

Introduction

There is a reciprocal relationship between attitudes and behaviours since attitudes affect behaviors as they indicate appreciation or dissatisfaction towards a course. Inceoglu [1] evaluates the attitude as a pre-disposition of a mental, emotional and behavioral response, and argues that an individual constructs his/her attitudes by organizing these pre-dispositions depending on experience, motivation and prior knowledge. According to Franzoi [2], attitude is an individual's evaluation of an object as positive or negative.

Attitude Theory which informs this study poses that attitudes encompass three components, namely single, dual and multi. The single component deals with emotions only, the dual one with cognitive aspects as well as emotions and the multi one with emotions, cognitive aspects and behaviours. In this study, the dual component model was adopted since influential researchers in the related field believe the dual component model best applies to this type of research [3, 4, 5]. From the dual-component view of attitude, emotion takes place as an emotional component such as pleasure in the lesson and liking the lesson. The second component which is the cognitive aspect is the perceived benefit of the course. Therefore, Oppenheim, Gonzales and Mohsin who define attitudes as dual-component evaluate the cognitive

component as well as the emotional component of attitude [6, 7, 8]. Donovan, Mercier and Phillips [9] state that such an emotion and cognitive attitude study is effective in determining both teacher and student attitudes towards physical education classes.

Dismore and Bailey [10] have the opinion that student attitudes toward PE precede their behaviors and guide their choices and decisions for actions. Due to the fact that students' attitudes towards a course may be affected positively and negatively by several variables, it is imperative to determine these variables first and then analyze the extent each variable affects student attitudes. Subramaniam and Silverman [3], for instance, acknowledge developing positive attitudes towards physical education as the primary aim of the course. In the field of Physical education, there is a plethora of studies focusing on the issue from the enjoyment perspective being effective in developing positive attitudes of students [11,12]. Needless to say, there are also studies analyzing the role of such demographic variables as gender, age, curriculum, involvement, motivation and PE teachers' confidence on students' attitudes towards the course. However, there is only a handful of studies testing the relation between student attitudes and teachers' qualifications as perceived by the students.

Research indicates the importance of the role of teachers in students' developing positive or negative attitudes towards PE classes [13,14]. It is observed that

the students who develop negative attitudes do not find their teachers helpful and competent in their attainment of the desired skills. Likewise, it is found that students who show positive attitudes evaluate their teachers more positively [13,14]. Moreover, some study results show that physical education teachers may have an effect on student attitudes [15-19]. Amongst the negative attitudes towards PE, students report ineffective PE teachers [20]. The variables affecting learning in physical education classes are found to be the communication skills of teachers [21] and how the teacher transfers the content [22]. As argued by Silverman and Subramaniam [23], teacher behaviors affect student attitudes positively or negatively. Research has indicated that students who are contended with their PE teachers develop more positive attitudes towards physical education classes [23].

Research on teacher qualifications in the physical education is limited. They are either on teachers' self-perceptions of their qualifications as in the study conducted by Elliot, Atencio, Campbell and Jess [24] and on professionalism as in Dowling's study [25]. Some other studies, on the other hand, evaluate the PE teacher education programmes [26] and deal with research based PE teacher education [27].

Purpose of the study: The aim of this large scale empirical investigation was twofold: it aimed first to address and fill the above-mentioned gap in the relevant literature, and secondly to test the hypothesis that the more positive perceptions students hold of PE teachers' qualifications, the more positive attitudes students may develop towards PE classes.

Material and Methods

Participants: Secondary school students (N= 592; 301 females and 291 males) from ten schools resembling each district in North Cyprus served as participants for this study.

Research Design: This study was designed employing a cross-sectional survey method and a correlational

research design was adopted in this quantitative study.

Data Collection: The data for this study were elicited from 9th, 10th and 11th grade students in North Cyprus. The sample was drawn from a population of 5500 secondary students in the spring semester in 2019. Five hundred and ninety-two students were sampled from ten schools located in all rural and urban districts, namely Nicosia, Kyrenia, Famagusta, Trikomo, Omorfo and Lefka.

The instrument to collect data was adapted from that of Gullu and Guclu [28]. The attitudinal questionnaire was based on a two-component view of attitude. In order to increase the reliability of the adapted questionnaire, the internal consistency among the items included in the questionnaire was tested with Cronbach Alpha Coefficiency reliability analysis. The internal consistency of the scale was found to be 0.97 ($\alpha = 0.97$).

Statistical Analysis: SPSS 20 (SPSS Inc., Chicago IL) was performed to conduct all statistical analysis throughout the study. The distributions of the variables in the questionnaire were tested by Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and Shapiro-Wilk Test, and it was observed that the variables did not show a normal distribution. For this reason, the strength of the association between the two variables was measured with a nonparametric test which is Spearman's rank correlation coefficient.

Results

A Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was run to determine the relationship between the means of 592 participants' perceptions of teachers' qualifications and attitudes towards PE classes. As illustrated in Table 1, a very strong positive correlation was found between participants' perceptions of teachers' qualifications and attitudes towards PE classes ($r_s = .92$, $n=592$, $p < .001$).

The significant Spearman correlation coefficient value of 0.923 confirms the very strong positive correlation between the two variables. Spearman's correlation coefficient indicated the correlation was significant at the 0.01 level. Hence, the results suggested that the higher the

Table 1. Correlation of the mean scores of attitudes towards physical education and professional qualifications of teachers

Statistical values			Mean of Professional Qualifications of Teachers	Mean of Attitudes Towards PE
Spearman's rho	Mean of Professional Qualifications of Teachers	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.923**
		Sig. (2 – tailed)		.000
	Mean of Attitudes Towards PE	N	592	
		Correlation Coefficient	.923**	1
		Sig. (2 – tailed)	.000	
		N	592	592

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

mean of teachers' qualifications were, the more positive attitudes secondary students held towards PE classes.

Discussion

The hypothesis that the more positive perceptions students hold of PE teachers' qualifications, the more positive attitudes students may develop towards PE classes was rationally warranted by the findings of this empirical investigation. The results manifested that when students had positive perceptions of the professional qualifications of their PE teachers, they had more positive attitudes towards their PE classes. Thus, this study highlighted the role of teachers on students' attitudes towards PE classes. This finding of the study corroborated that of Silverman and Subramaniam [23] that students who were contended with their PE teachers developed more positive attitudes towards physical education classes. This result also went in line with that of Subramaniam and Silverman [13, 14] that the role of the PE teacher was a determinative component in students' developing positive or negative attitudes towards their PE classes. This finding also concurred with Yaylacı's [20] finding that students reported ineffective PE teachers as one of the reasons for developing negative attitudes towards PE. The result of the current study also verified those of Figley, Chung and Phillips, Hicks, Balyan et al. and Jaureguy [15-19] that PE teachers may have had an effect on students' attitudes towards PE classes.

That the participants of this study developed positive attitudes towards PE classes could be acknowledged by the fact that they were contended with the qualifications of their PE teachers. This finding went in line with Gushart, Kelly ve Rink's [21] finding that PE teachers' communication skills affected students' learning process. Moreover, this finding concurred with Rink's [22] finding that teaching skills and the delivery of instruction affected students' learning.

Conclusion

Participants' perceptions of PE teachers' qualifications affect their attitudes towards PE classes. The obtained result of this empirical investigation supports the hypothesis that the more positive perceptions students hold of PE teachers' qualifications, the more positive attitudes students may develop towards PE classes. In the light of this result, it is posed that the role of the qualifications of PE teachers should be the focus of future research on students' attitudes towards PE classes. This calls a need for more research to endorse the result of this study.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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