

PERCEPTIONS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS TEACHERS TOWARDS FOLK DANCE IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions about folk dance of a group of Physical Education and Sports teachers (males n=130; females n=37), working in primary and secondary schools in different cities in Turkey. Despite their positive perception of dance as a social activity, the teachers showed an impartial attitude towards dance as a sport. They considered, dance and sport as two different fields. The consensus among the Physical Education and Sports teacher participants was that dance teaching was not a duty they should fulfil at schools. The participants were not opposed to a separate dance course at schools. In terms of gender, the female Physical Education and Sports teachers had more positive attitudes towards dance than the male teachers. One of the interesting results of this study was the data obtained from the analysis according to the teachers' specialties. Subsequent to the teachers who specialised in folk dance, the teachers who had the most positive attitude towards folk dance were the teachers in the martial arts (wrestling, judo, boxing, taekwondo) group.

Keywords: Attitudes/Perceptions; Folk dance; Physical education; Sport; Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Turkish folk dance, as a dance form, can be considered a product of certain dynamics emerging within the country's history of being a nation-state (Öztürkmen, 1998). In an article entitled, "Turkish villagers and sport", published in 1940, Turkish folk dance was also regarded as one of the sports performed by villagers and the importance of trained teachers is emphasised. Regarding the village sport, village teachers are the key players. In general, these villagers do not know other sports but they know their own sports, such as wrestling, horse-riding, javelin game, and villager dances very well. National dances occupy a prominent place among village sports. There are various dances including Zeibek, Erzurum, Sivas, and Erzincan, which are extremely beneficial instruments for our villagers' joy, intelligence and personal existence, as well as for their personal development (Baba, 1993:60).

Since folk dance is regarded as a part of the social and cultural life of Turkish citizens, the establishment in 1975 of The State Folk Dances Group, is considered significant. This group, funded by The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, legitimised the status of folk dances 'at state

level through extreme *mise-en-scènes*' (Öztürkmen, 1998). In the 1970s and 1980s, folk dances were performed in primary schools, junior high schools, high schools, universities and private associations (Öztürkmen, 1998). The tradition of 'folk dance performances' has become one of the principal and popular forms of participation in productions in the Republic of Turkey. A large repertoire of Turkish folk dances is prevalent in schools and performed by associations (Öztürkmen, 1998).

Folk dance associations are institutions that create a 'social environment' by providing the opportunity to create new groups and to make friends with organisations from other towns for many young people without causing conflict within conservative family structures. Furthermore, these associations played an important role regarding gender socialisation. As a free-time/leisure activity, folk dance is an inseparable part of daily life. Today, inter-school folk dance contests and competitions are organised on a regular basis in towns and urban spaces, found regionally and nationally. There are a many folk dance associations¹. These are many non-governmental organisations that present folk dance teaching courses. Some of these famous associations are Motif Turkish Folk Dances Education Association, Fomget (Folklore, Music and Youth Association) and Hoytur Folk Dances Association. Furthermore, there are folk dance departments at various universities. For example, Istanbul Technical University, Ege University and Gaziantep University have Turkish Folk Dance departments in their conservatories. Currently, folk dances are generally within social study programmes and they are supported fully by school councils and teachers and are known and experienced by every folk dance trainer. Folk dance organisations are supported financially and socio-culturally by school administrations, teachers and parents. Without their support, it would be impossible for folk dance organisations, clubs and competitions to continue.

In Turkey today, folk dance is regarded as a prominent feature in the entertainment sector. Folk dances play an important role in seasonal, regional and traditional ceremonies and celebrations, such as birth celebrations², circumcision traditions, engagement and wedding ceremonies and farewells of soldiers³. Moreover, folk dance performances are a popular feature at celebrations

¹ According to the information that could be obtained from the official website of Turkish Folk Federation (<http://thof.gov.tr/tarihce>), there are 81 city representatives, registered and certified Folk Dance Clubs, 1332 judges, 58,000 certified dancers, 974 trainers and a sub-council including academics and highly valued/respected members within the body of Turkish Folk Dance Federation.

² In the feasts and celebrations held after the birth of the first child, niece and or grandchild, especially when these new born babies are male, the members of the family perform certain folk dances belonging to the region in which they live. In these dances, fathers and mothers dance together to celebrate their first babies. In these ceremonies, the folk dances that are performed consist of the body movements reflecting emotions, such as courage, beauty and heroism (Öngel, H.B. 2001. *Türk kültür tarihinde spor*. T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları /2564 [Öngel, H.B. 2001. *Sport in Turkish Culture History*. T.R. Ministry of Culture Publishing/2564].

³ In Turkey, military service is obligatory by law. Men who are at the age of 18 and over, are compelled to spend a year in the army and go through a military education. At the same time, they must fulfil the tasks given to them in their military regions assigned by the Government. Therefore, men who attend the army for this compulsory service, leave their families for a year. For this reason, families organise special farewell ceremonies for their sons and in these ceremonies, folk dances of their regions are performed by the family members and friends.

of national holidays, like May 19 Youth and Sports Day, and April 23 National Independence and Children's Day. It is reported that 2500-3000 folk dances are performed country-wide, but of all of these folk dances, only 700-750 are performed by people around the country (Çakır, 1982).

Dance and physical education

In several studies conducted in different countries, such as Hong Kong, Brazil, Australia and the USA, it was stated that in practice, dance is not taught as a separate course, but it is integrated in Physical Education and Sport courses (Overby, 1992; McCormack, 2001; Marcelino & Knijnik, 2006; Vertinsky *et al.*, 2007). DeBryn (1988) pointed out that 89% of the teaching of dance in primary schools is presented by Physical Education teachers. Unlike Physical Education and Sport, Dance is connected with a cultural and educational value systems, which encourages the participation of the students for educational purposes rather than competition (McCormack, 2001).

Byeon (2012) examined creative dance integrated into the Physical Education curriculum and suggested that creative dance entails the experience of expressive and rhythmic movements. Examining the goals of the Physical Education and Sport national curriculum in primary education and the behavioural objectives, Yoncalik (2006) observed that such expressions as rhythm and rhythmic are often used to modify movements and activities. Rose *et al.* (2002) mentioned that dance is an integral part of the secondary education curriculum. Stivaktaki *et al.* (2010) reports that secondary school students enjoy participating in a traditional Greek Dance programme as part of Physical Education classes and that it has a positive effect on their perception of their ability to dance. While requiring physical abilities and techniques, teaching dance also depends on the development of a series of artistic values and attitudes, which are not always achieved in sport. In one of his studies on pre-service Physical Education teachers in Australia, McCormack (2001) states that dance provides artistic, physical, cognitive and affective outcomes. Moreover, dance with its socialising feature of the art experience for both teacher and student, requires a cooperative effort and also contributes to the social and cultural expectations within a co-educational setting. These expectations are interconnected with personal values and attitudes (McCormack, 2001).

Regarding the difficulties that teachers experience while teaching dance, Cheesman (2011) stated that among these difficulties, the most striking ones are that some students have no past experience and readiness related to dance, that they do not think dance movements suit them and that participation in the dance classes is not voluntary for some students. In another study, Gard (2003) pointed out that male students in particular are opposed to participation in dance activities, as it is a totally new experience for them. Similarly, Risner (2007) reported that dance is labelled as a feminine activity and that the socio-culturally determined boy code has prevented dance from being an important part of educational curriculums and caused male students to avoid dance classes. This resistance is related to the male students' gender identities and their prejudice towards dancing. Yoncalik (2007), in his study of students studying Physical Education and Sport in Turkey, observed that students generally display positive attitudes towards dance. In addition to this, in the same study, it was observed that female students have a more positive attitude towards dance than the male students.

McCormack (2001) pointed out that dance teaching is one of the traditional areas of the pre-service training of Physical Education and Sport teachers. Furthermore, dance often evokes anxiety in Physical Education and Sport teachers in training and affects how they experience it as a whole. According to McCormack (2001), teachers feel anxious when they teach dancing based on their own school experiences and that transfers into their dance teaching during their career. Similarly, Snook (2012) pointed out that teachers often teach in the way they experienced it during their schooling years. She also mentioned that if teachers had no experience in dancing or were never taught dance as students, they prefer not to teach dance in their classes when they enter the profession (Snook, 2012).

In New Zealand, so called ordinary teachers assigned to classes, and not specialist teachers in primary schools, teach dance. These teachers expressed their lack of experience in dance teaching as the main reason why they were not confident to teach dance (Snook, 2012). MacLean (2007) examined factors that affected the confidence of 85 undergraduate physical education student teachers who teach dance in Scottish schools. These students put forward that having a dance background and a historical and cultural commitment to dance influenced their confidence, when it came to their interest in teaching dance.

MacDonald *et al.* (2001), in their study on university student teachers in Physical Education and Sport departments, found that these teacher candidates did not have enough information about creative dance. In the same study, MacDonald *et al.* (2001) observed that when information was provided to them by means of workshops, their willingness and attitudes towards dance and its inclusion in the teaching programme of Physical Education, developed in a positive way. Likewise, Snook and Buck (2014) found that the lack of experience in teaching dance caused teachers to feel less confident to teach dance in their classes. They claimed that self-confidence of teachers when teaching dance can be developed by bringing dance experts in to support and develop the dance curriculum in their schools.

Dance and Physical Education in Turkey

In Turkey, the earliest Physical Education programmes at university level date back to 1941. The courses at that time included gymnastics, sports, games, folk dances and medical gymnastics courses and were offered for three years (six semesters), that is equivalent to 204 hours. Of the course programme, 47% was devoted to content knowledge; 20% to teaching training courses; and 33% to general knowledge courses (Bilge, 1988). With reference to the National Education Basic Law No. 1739, under the Ministry of Youth and Sports, several Youth and Sports Academies were established, namely 19 May the Youth and Sports Academy established in the 1974-1975 school year in Ankara; the Manisa Youth and Sports Academy in 1974-1975 school year established in Manisa and the Anadolu Hisari Youth and Sports Academy in 1975-1976 school year in Istanbul. Education and training courses at Youth and Sports Academies were composed of eight semesters that is undertaken over four years (Karaküçük, 1989).

According to the Education and Training Guide Book, which was in effect until 1981, the first five semesters in academies contained basic education, while the last three semesters included specialisation training. The departments in which students were to be trained in their last three semesters included the Department of Health Sciences, Department of Basic Education and

Training, Social and Administrative Sciences, Department of Sport Services, Department of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, and the Department of Turkish Folk Culture and Folk Dances (Karaküçük, 1989). In 2000, the Folk Dance Course was one of the courses that a Physical Education teacher would be required to teach in exchange for a monthly income. Furthermore, Folk Dance was included in the entrance examination for Physical Education and Sport departments at various universities. Folk dances were taught as an elective course and it was also regarded as an area for graduation specialisation. Since 2010, it has become a compulsory course in the new Physical Education teacher education programme redesigned by the Higher Education Council.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Academic studies that examine the perceptions of teachers and students of current dance activities in Turkey are limited. Such studies are deemed necessary in the teaching and learning environment, where there is a recurrent demand for professional development and appropriate resources for teachers to enable them to teach dance in the best way possible at schools. In Turkish schools, dance is mostly taught by classroom teachers in primary schools and Physical Education and Sport teachers in secondary schools, who did not specialise in dance teaching.

Related research revealed that it is important to detect the difficulties teachers have in teaching dance and that university departments have to provide resources to help them teach dance in an effective way. Accessibility to relevant resources would enable teachers to deliver high quality teaching (Connell, 2009). Although the perceptions of physical education and sport teachers relating to the teaching of dance at schools have been studied in many countries, no study on this issue has been undertaken in Turkey. For this reason, this study is important in terms of establishing an approach to dance teaching by Turkish physical education and sport teachers that would also make it possible to compare their experiences on this issue with those of their colleagues in other countries. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the nature of the perceptions of the Physical Education teachers in primary and secondary schools in different towns and cities in Turkey with regard to the teaching of folk dances at schools.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach was undertaken to gather data for this research enquiry. In Turkey, it is quite expensive and difficult to conduct a qualitative study to establish the beliefs of physical education teachers towards folk dance. Having to conduct interviews with a rather large group of participants would be very time consuming. Therefore, utilising an adapted questionnaire and designing a quantitative survey was considered to be a more practical and reasonable way to examine the primary research question, which is to determine how the physical education and sport teachers in primary and secondary schools in different towns and cities in Turkey perceive folk dance teaching and whether there are any significant difference in their perceptions towards folk dance teaching according to their gender, age, seniority and graduation speciality.

The independent variables of this study included age, gender, seniority and graduation speciality. The dependent variable encompassed the attitudes of physical education teachers

towards folk dance. The statistical analysis of the data was focused on the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Demographics of study

The participants of this study (n=167) were secondary level physical education teachers (130 males; 37 females) who attended the Physical Education Teachers' Professional Development Seminars held by T.R. Ministry of National Education in Silifke, Mersin (Kapızlı) and Çayeli, Rize. It was a useful opportunity to find participants coming from the different parts of the country and who were working at different schools in Turkey, who had gathered for an in-service training programme. The physical education teachers who attended this programme were willing to volunteer to participate in this study. This occasion served as a time-saving and appropriate opportunity to gather information.

Data collection tool (Yoncalik Scale)

The scale developed by Yoncalik (2007) was applied with some adaptations. Modifications were made to some items of the scale and four new items were added. These were considered necessary in the light of the general and specific objectives of the physical education course in primary and secondary education. The original scale was geared to dance in general, thus referring to various dance forms. This study concerned itself with perceptions of 'folk dance' and 'teaching folk dance at schools'. Therefore, the term dance was changed to folk dance. Issues related to the teaching of dance at schools were added to the scale. Any issues considered irrelevant were omitted. The Likert Scale was used. Statements could, therefore, be categorised as *strongly agree* (5), *agree* (4), *neutral* (3), *disagree* (2) and *strongly disagree* (1). In the case where statements were worded negatively, the points allotted were used in reverse.

A questionnaire comprising three parts was presented. The first part covered demographic information, the second part provided the items of the attitude scale and the third part was an open-ended section where the teachers could write anything they wished to mention. The questionnaire took approximately two minutes to complete. The final content of the items included for the adapted scale is shown in Table 2.

Statistical analysis

Initially, the Shapiro-Wilk Test was applied to analyse whether the data was distributed normally. The results of the analysis revealed there was not a normal distribution. Due to this finding, nonparametric tests were chosen to analyse the data. The statistical procedures applied included: frequency, percentages, means and standard deviations as suggested by Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis H tests.

For the purpose of meaningful interpretation of the data, an exploratory factor analysis was applied to explain the possible relationships among the variables in the scale designed, and to determine what and how various factors were represented. However, before applying the exploratory factor analysis, the Cronbach's Alfa coefficient of the scale was calculated to obtain more accurate results. This was applied at the end of the exploratory factor analysis. At this stage, it was found that there were no items with a total item correlation that was below 0.30 and a minus value.

The results of the exploratory factor analysis applied to the 12 items culminated in a three-factor structure. The common factor variance was calculated as 57%. According to the results obtained, there was only one item in one of the factors. To understand the factors obtained and to ensure conceptual meaningfulness, the axis rotation procedure was utilised and the orthogonal (Varimax) rotation was applied. This rotation resulted in two factors. Seven (7) of the items loaded on Factor 1 and five (5) of the items loaded on Factor 2. When the items in the factors were examined, Factor 1 could be labelled as the cognitive dimension and Factor 2 as the affective dimension. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale consisting of 12 items and two dimensions was 0.81. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of the seven items in the cognitive dimension was 0.81 and the five items in the affective dimension was 0.82.

FINDINGS

Characteristics of the sample

When the gender distribution was examined, it was observed that the 77.8% of the participants were male and the 22.2 % were female. The youngest participant was 25 and the oldest 44 years old. The participants were divided into groups according to their ages because age distribution was varied. There were 47 participants who were in the age range of 25-30 years and 87 participants 31-35 years. There were 32 participants who were over 36 years of age. Only one participant did not indicate how old he/she was.

When examining seniority of the participants regarding teaching experience, the largest group (12.6%) consisted of teachers who had been teaching for three years, and those (12.6%) who had been teaching for nine years. Of all the participants, the teachers who had 16 years of service constituted only 1.2%, this being the lowest percentage. The seniority of the teachers varied. For the statistical analysis, the teachers were divided into three groups according to seniority, namely 1-5 years (n=43; 25.7%), 6-9 years (n=72; 43.1%) and 10 years and more (n=51; 0.6%). There was only one teacher (0.6%) who did not state his/her seniority.

Table 1. SPECIALITY OF TEACHERS

Speciality	n	%
Team Sport (Volleyball, Handball, Football, Basketball)	65	38.92
Individual Sport (Athletics, Ski, Swimming, Artistic Gymnastics)	24	14.37
Martial Arts (Taekwondo, Wrestling, Judo, Boxing)	19	11.37
Net Sport (Table Tennis, Tennis, Badminton)	21	12.57
Folk Dance	4	2.39
No speciality	34	20.35

The six categories of the specialties were grouped as follows: Team sport (volleyball, handball, football, basketball); Individual sport (athletics, swimming, skiing, artistic gymnastics); Martial arts (boxing, wrestling, taekwondo, judo); Net sport (badminton, tennis, table tennis); Folk dance (folk dances); and No specialties. The distribution of the participants' graduation grouped specialties is shown in Table 1.

Perceptions of the teachers

The means and the standard deviations obtained from the analysis of for each of the 12 items are shown in Table 2. Some of the items in the scale contain negative expressions. If the mean values of these negative items are low, it is an indication that the teachers had negative perceptions about these items.

Table 2. MEAN AND MEAN RANK FOR ITEMS OF FACTORS FOR GENDER

Factors and items		Mean	Gender	Mean Rank
Factor 1 (Cognitive dimension)				
Item 1	Folk dancing is beneficial for physical development	4.27	Male	92.16
			Female	81.68
Item 3	Rhythmic movement ability is important for success in sports	4.49	Male	99.82
			Female	79.50
Item 4	There should be a separate folk dance course at schools	3.97	Male	75.70
			Female	86.36
Item 5	Folk dances are not sports activities	2.08	Male	84.19
			Female	83.30
Item 6	Folk dances are beneficial for social development	4.62	Male	86.94
			Female	82.55
Item 8	Folk dances are entertaining activities in which sports meet rhythm	4.28	Male	83.26
			Female	83.57
Item 10	Folk dancing is a fitness activity	2.84	Male	77.20
			Female	85.93
Factor 2 (Affective Dimension)				
Item 2	Every kind of folk dance is boring	1.70	Male	87.68
			Female	82.95
Item 7	I don't enjoy watching folk dances	1.61	Male	91.24
			Female	81.94
Item 9	I don't want to take a folk dance course	1.76	Male	78.01
			Female	85.70
Item 11	At schools, teaching folk dances is a duty of physical education teacher	1.91	Male	103.19
			Female	78.54
Item 12	Folk dances are not something that is entertaining	1.54	Male	83.31
			Female	84.20

Table 2 contains the answers given among teachers participating in the study. The item that had the highest mean (mean=4.62) was "Folk Dances are useful for social development". This was followed by 'Rhythmic movement ability is important for sports success' (mean=4.45). The teachers firstly considered folk dance to be significant for social development and secondly they found the ability to move in a rhythmical way was an important factor in having success in sport. The lowest mean was observed for the item 'At schools, teaching the folk dances is the duty of the physical education teachers'. The participants disagreed with the idea that the folk dances should be taught by them at schools. Some teachers remained neutral (mean=2.84)

to the item 'Folk dances are fitness activities'. Generally, the physical education teachers seemed to have a positive attitude towards folk dance.

Table 3. COMPARISONS ACCORDING TO GENDER AND AGE, SENIORITY, GRADUATION SPECIALITY

GENDER ^a											
Factor 1						Factor 2					
Gender	n	Mean Rank	Cumulative Rank	U	p	Gender	n	Mean Rank	Cumulative Rank	U	p
Female	37	94.00	3478.0	2035.0	0.151	Female	37	83.39	3085.5	2382.5	0.930
Male	130	81.15	10550.0			Male	130	84.17	10942.5		
AGE ^b											
Factor 1						Factor 2					
Age	n	Mean Rank	S	X ²	p	Age	n	Mean Rank	S	X ²	p
25-30	47	81.03	2	0.972	0.615	25-30	47	89.82	2	1.157	0.561
31-35	87	86.84				31-35	87	80.91			
36+	32	78.03				36+	32	81.25			
SENIORITY ^b											
Factor 1						Factor 2					
Seniority	n	Mean Rank	S	X ²	p	Seniority	n	Mean Rank	S	X ²	p
1-5	43	89.49	2	1.550	0.461	1-5	43	84.24	2	0.643	0.725
6-9	72	84.30				6-9	72	80.38			
10+	51	77.32				10+	51	87.28			
GRADUATION SPECIALITY ^b											
Factor 1						Factor 2					
Special.	n	Mean Rank	S	X ²	p	Special.	n	Mean Rank	S	X ²	p
Team Sports	65	92.68	5	7.374	0.194	Team Sports	65	73.21	5	6.351	0.274
Martial Arts	19	69.70				Martial Arts	19	96.50			
Indiv. Sports	24	87.10				Indiv. Sports	24	84.86			
Net Sports	21	94.80				Net Sports	21	74.65			
Folk Dancing	4	65.00				Folk Dancing	4	99.67			
No Specialty	34	90.02				No Specialty	34	79.13			

*p<0.05

^a Mann Whitney U-Test

^b Kruskal Wallis H-Test

S=Degrees of freedom

Special=Speciality

The Mann-Whitney U-test results of the scale points towards the fact that the physical education teachers scored higher for their attitude towards folk dances. These figures are shown in Table 3. There was no significant difference between the attitude of the male and female

teachers towards folk dances ($p < 0.05$) for Factor 1 and Factor 2. When the mean rank was examined in Factor 1 (Cognitive dimension), it was evident that the female teachers had more positive attitudes towards folk dance than the male teachers. The mean rank in Factor 2 (Affective Dimension) suggests that the attitudes of both the female and the male teachers were similar.

Kruskal Wallis H-test analysed the physical education teachers' attitudes towards folk dance according to *age* (Table 3). In the first and the second factor, there were no significant differences among the age groups ($X^2=0.972$, $p=0.615$; $X^2=1.157$, $p=0.561$). When examined generally, it was clear that in Factor 1 the teachers 31-35 years of age and in Factor 2, the teachers 25-30 years old, had higher mean rank scores than the other age groups.

For both factors, there was no significant difference among *seniority* groups in their attitude towards folk dance ($X^2=1.550$, $p=0.461$; $X^2=0.643$, $p=0.725$). When examined generally, it is understood that although there was no significant difference, the teachers whose seniority ranged from 1 to 5 years in the first factor, and the teachers who had 10 or more years of experience seniority in the second factor, had a higher mean rank than the other teachers (Table 3).

There were no significant differences in the teachers' attitudes toward folk dance according to their *specialities* in the first factor ($X^2=7.374$, $p=0.194$; $X^2=6.351$, $p=0.274$). In spite of this finding, the teachers whose specialties were in net sport, team sport and individual sport, as well as the teachers who had no specialties had higher mean rank scores than those who had martial arts and folk dance as specialties, the lowest mean rank scores were attained. When Factor 2 (Affective Dimension) was examined in terms of specialties, there were no significant differences, however, based on the scores, the teachers with martial arts and folk dance as specialties, had higher mean rank scores than the other teachers did.

DISCUSSION

In this study, the data was collected by applying an adapted version of Yoncalik's (2007) Scale, which was initially designed for students in a Physical Education and Sport Department. The scale represents two main factors, namely the affective dimension and the cognitive dimension. On examining all the responses, it was evident that the physical education teachers had contradictory perceptions regarding folk dance. The teachers were aware of the benefits of dancing for physical development and the importance of the rhythmic ability for success in sport. They expressed very positive feelings towards dancing and watching dance as a means for socialisation.

In an article about opinions and ideas of teachers with respect to the role of dance in the secondary school Physical Education Curriculum, Lorenzi (2010) stated that one of the teachers considered dance education as an excellent complement to the traditional physical education programme at the secondary level. Another teacher regarded Physical Education as the art and science of human movement. Despite this positive perception of dance as a social activity, the physical education and sport teachers in the current study showed an impartial attitude towards dance as a sport. They considered dance and sport as two different fields. The consensus of the

physical education and sport teachers, who participated in the current study, was that dance teaching is not a duty they should fulfil at schools.

In Turkey, physical education and sport teacher training departments of the universities require prospective teachers to take an entrance examination in their speciality. The students' experience and background in their speciality and whether they had gained any accreditations in the sport competitions in Turkey, Europe and the World, is taken into consideration.

As an active academic with 17 years of teaching experience, Yoncalik, the first author of this paper, has taught actively in classrooms and has worked as a member of evaluation committees in Physical Education and Sport Teaching Departments since the onset of an academic career. Based on personal observations all these years, it is clear that there were many candidate students who took this examination in specialities, such as football, basketball, volleyball and wrestling. However, there were usually very few students who took the screening examination in dance. The students who were interested in dance preferred registering in related departments in the Faculty of Fine Arts rather than Physical Education and Sport for secondary school teacher training. Physical Education and Sport Teaching departments offer the rhythm education and dance courses during only one semester for two hours per week. This does not allow sufficient time for the students to attain the necessary competence in teaching dance during their university education. For this reason, participants probably might not consider themselves skilled and competent dance teachers. This could have contributed to their thinking that dance is not something for them as physical education teachers, who have to teach at schools.

Akyıldız and Açıkkada (2011) regard classical ballet dancers as performing athletes on the stage and emphasised the importance of sport science training principles to enhance dance performance. Kutay (2003) mentioned that an investigation is in progress concerning the inclusion of Latin American dancing as an Olympic sport as this dance form is seen to be 50% sport and 50% dance. The development of dance activities in a country is closely related to the attitudes of individuals and society towards dance, depending on the social dynamics (Kutay, 2003).

Siljamäki *et al.* (2010) identified three qualitatively different ways of understanding the nature and pedagogy of transnational dances. Among the teachers participating in their study, flamenco teachers claimed that dance is an art form. For African Dance and Belly Dance teachers, dance is a culture open to all people and simultaneously to art and Physical Education. Furthermore, a belly dance teacher claimed that dance is a part of well-being (Siljamäki *et al.*, 2010). In the study of Rustad (2012), some students were questioned to reveal if dance is a sport. "There seemed to be a mismatch between the student teachers' taken-for-granted perceptions regarding sport and physical education, and their experiences of dance and dancing in the teaching experiment" (Rustad, 2012:27).

Based on the data collected in 306 different colleges and universities where dance education was presented, Mehrhof and Ermlar (1992) reported that 16% of the participants consider dance education as an extremely necessary part of teacher education in Physical Education and Sport; 58% of believed that dance education should be a part of the Physical Education programme; and the remaining 21% considered that dance education does not have an important place in

Sport Education at all. In a study on the teachers' attitudes towards dance and Physical Education, Kleinubing and Saraiva (2009) found that dance is neglected in the Physical Education course content. Likewise, Napper-Owen *et al.* (1999) found that only 4% of the physical education teachers included dance in their classes. Chunxiao and Shihui (2011) observed a similar amount of 4.8% in a study conducted in primary schools in Hong Kong. These findings illustrate that dance is rarely among the first 10 activities that the physical education teachers teach in their classes.

Pereira and Hunger (2009) reported that the students who graduate from Physical Education and Sport departments in Brazil had little experience of dance in school and extramurally. They stated that dance is almost never taught in Physical Education and Sport classes because the physical education and sport teachers did not feel equipped to teach any kind of dance activities. Physical education teachers claimed that it would be beneficial to include a Folk Dance course in physical education teacher education programmes. In fact, there was agreement between belief and fact that this course became a compulsory course in the new Physical Education Teacher Education Programme launched by the Higher Education Council in Turkey in 2006 (Bulca *et al.*, 2012). Avsar (2003) conducted research among senior students of the Physical Education Teacher Education Programme to assess their sense of their competence to teach prescribed courses at schools under the Ministry of National Education with reference to their undergraduate education. They found that physical education teacher candidates do not consider themselves proficient to teach courses, like folk dance, group study techniques and sport psychology offered at schools. They were indecisive when it came to their ability to teach the first aid courses.

Although dance has been part of the Physical Education curriculum for more than 70 years in Norway, it does not necessarily mean that physical education teachers teach dance. A small part of the data gathered directly support the notion that physical education teachers are reluctant to teach dance. However, the majority of the data analysed indicated that student teachers have a range of different experiences, including positive attitudes about the relevance of teaching dance as part of Physical Education (Rustad, 2012).

Since dance is a physical activity performed to music, a suitable space, facilities and comfortable clothes would be required. The Physical Education and Sport classes are seen as most suitable to include dance content at schools, where no separate dance classes are offered. At such schools, it is reasonable to integrate dance activities into Physical Education and Sport classes.

Although dance should be taught as a separate class by the qualified dance teachers in Turkey, state schools do not offer separate dance courses in their curriculum. Including dance in the Physical Education and Sport course is a convenient way in which the physical education and sport teachers can gain some competence, especially those that wish to be more qualified in dance. Despite these current realities in state schools in Turkey, the participants in the current study were not opposed to a separate dance course at schools. It was interesting to note that the physical education teachers, for example, who specialised in football, were more interested in judo, handball and volleyball than in dance, yet they argued that they did not wish to have separate volleyball or judo courses at schools. From this point of view, it can be concluded that the physical education teachers did not consider themselves responsible to teach dance if dance

was not their specialty. However, they did not consider specialties, like judo and handball in the same way when it was not their speciality area.

Dance differentiates itself from sport in that it is a non-competitive activity and does not actively promote rivalry. Both girls and boys can dance together without trying to surpass the performance of opponents or partners. Dils (2007:570) stated that “dance is an art that requires literacy and appreciation from dancers and watchers to understand messages and meanings shifting from doers to observers through audio-visual and kinesthetic components, such as body movements, music and videos”. On the other hand, both team and individual sport tend towards promoting competition. Team or individual players try to win the game and work hard to be better than their rivals. From this point of view, physical education and sport teachers may consider other sport similar to their specialty when they include competition. They can motivate their students to work harder and be better than their rivals in all the sport specialties, but when it comes to dance this would not apply. It is possible that such reasoning could have influenced the kind of responses from the sport teachers.

Despite all of this, it is clear that the participants expressed their willingness to attend a course related to folk dance. After induction training in the basics of effective instruction, Hall *et al.* (2011) observed that all the pre-service teachers demonstrated less effective task presentation skills when teaching dance. Rolfe (2001) also reported that teacher candidates feel incompetent when it comes to dance teaching. Rolfe and Chedzoy (1997) suggested that teacher candidates take compulsory dance courses but only a few of them can afford to be taught by qualified and experienced dance teachers. Based on the data obtained in this study, the physical education teachers were aware of the benefits that can be gained from participating in dance activities, but they avoid teaching dance because they feel incompetent. However, they are willing to make use of any opportunities offered to improve their dance teaching skill.

Risner (2009), in one of his panels, mentioned that dance classes can be taught in a way that students are provided the opportunity to learn from one another by learning about their bodies and breaking their prejudices and challenging themselves to be a better self, which may be regarded as the most important benefit of dance education. Stinson (2015) examined the report released by the National Dance Education in the USA on the value of dance education and highlighted the issues mentioned in this report, one of which is that there is a growing number of proofs showing the positive impact of dance on student learning at schools and added that student attendance, student motivation and teacher satisfaction rise in the schools where a dance training programme is applied or dance teaching is included in the school curriculum. If physical education and sport teachers may find a way to deal with their lack of experience and competence in teaching dance, it is clear that they will become more motivated to teach dance in their classes and thus give their students great opportunities to benefit from these classes.

The results obtained from the analysis in terms of gender show that the female physical education and sport teachers had more positive attitudes towards dance than the male teachers. Similarly, there was a significant difference between female and male teachers in their attitude towards folk dance being a separate course at schools. They viewed the teaching of folk dance as the duty of physical education teachers.

In the overall analysis of the attitude of teachers towards dance when it is related to their age, no significant difference was observed. Similarly, seniority in teaching experience did not produce significant differences. An interesting result of this study concerns the analysis of the teachers' grouped specialties. Considering the teachers who specialised in folk dance, those teachers who had the most positive attitude towards folk dance were the group who specialised in martial arts (wrestling, judo, boxing, taekwondo). This was followed by the teachers in the individual sport group. The teachers in the team sport group expressed the least interest in folk dance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The perceptions of the Physical Education and Sport teachers in Turkey about dance were similar to their colleagues in different countries. This study was the first to research the place of folk dance in the Physical Education and Sport Curriculum of the primary and secondary schools and the perceptions of physical education and sport teachers towards teaching folk dance at schools in Turkey. The results obtained from this study could pave the way for future studies in this field. In this study, the present situation in other countries and in Turkey were compared for the first time in the national literature and should motivate academics to embark upon further research in this field.

In light of this investigation, it is evident that more comprehensive studies should be conducted to verify these results so that more generalisable and accurate findings could be obtained through nationwide studies with larger groups. The topic of this study should be examined with a broader perspective from a range of international case studies. This would make cross-cultural comparisons more possible. Another important recommendation is that a comprehensive qualitative study on this issue may enable researchers to find out why certain and aforementioned attitudes and perceptions exist among Physical Education and Sport teachers towards dance teaching and, thus, offer more practical solutions about the difficulties that teachers experience while teaching dance.

IMPLICATIONS

In this study, the results clearly showed that, although the Physical Education and Sport teachers have positive attitudes towards folk dance and were willing to attend in-service training programmes about teaching folk dances, most of them were of the conviction that folk dance was not among the content they should teach in the physical education and sport classes at schools. The reason why they reason this way was that they felt incompetent to teach folk dance, if they did not specialise in teaching folk dances. To overcome this, folk dance should be given a more important place in the undergraduate major programmes for Physical Education and Sport Teacher Education.

The teacher candidates should be instructed how they can teach folk dances at different levels and to different age groups at schools. In addition, Physical Education and Sport Teaching Major Programmes at universities should include more comprehensive folk dance classes so that teacher candidates can become competent to teach several folk dances. It would also ensure that candidates learn the necessary skills required to teach folk dance effectively to their

pupils/learners at schools in their future career. If these major programmes are equipped with such folk dance courses, prospective physical education teachers may feel more equipped and proficient in teaching folk dance and they might consider folk dance as one of the tasks they would want to teach in their classes at schools.

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