

Reality of Physical Education and Sports Lessons in Primary Education in Light of New Educational Reforms -A field study on a sample of teachers in Batna Province-

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Abstract:

The main objective of our study was to determine the reality of physical education and sports lessons in primary education in light of the new educational reforms, which included appointing specialist teachers in this field. We adopted a descriptive approach as it is well suited to the research topic.

The study sample comprised 84 male and female physical education and sports teachers working in primary schools in Batna Province during the 2024–25 academic year. They were randomly selected from the study population.

To achieve the aims of the study, we administered a questionnaire to the research sample. This contained 24 items distributed across three dimensions that served the objectives and hypotheses of the study. After statistical processing, the results were as follows:

1. Primary schools lack the resources and dedicated spaces required to deliver physical education and sports lessons effectively.
2. The lack of training and supervision negatively impacted the implementation of physical education and sports lessons.
3. School sports competitions were not organised in accordance with the schedule announced by the Ministry of National Education.

Keywords: physical education; sports lessons; primary education; new educational reforms.

1. Preliminary section

1.1. Introduction and problem statement

Primary education is one of the most important stages in a learner's development, since it enables balanced and integrated growth, and prepares learners to adapt to and contribute positively to society. Therefore, due care at this stage requires the concerted efforts of all stakeholders in the various fields concerned with studying and monitoring human development. One such field is physical education and sports.

Physical education lessons are crucial in shaping the younger generation. It contributes to the development of various aspects of students' personalities, teaches motor skills and fosters healthy and social habits. As the basic unit within the school physical education curriculum, it must also be given substantial importance in the school's educational process. (Abbas Al-Samari'i and Abdul Karim Al-Samari'i, 1991, p. 17).

For a long time, physical education and sports were treated as formal subjects within the curriculum, much like in middle and secondary education; however, unlike in those stages, they were not taught by specialist teachers. As a result, primary school teachers faced considerable challenges in fulfilling their educational and teaching duties due to the variety of tasks assigned to them. Teachers are required to teach many different subjects, which may differ from one another in terms of their form, content and nature. (Qadiri, 2011, p. 4).

In 2023, through a presidential decree, specialised physical education and sports teachers were appointed at primary level, recruited from university degree holders, unlike previous practice. This study therefore aimed to examine the reality of physical education and sports lessons in primary education in light of the new educational reforms. Accordingly, the following research questions were formulated:

- To what extent are sufficient and dedicated resources and spaces available for physical education and sports lessons in primary education institutions?
- Has the lack of training and supervision affected the implementation of physical education and sports lessons in primary schools?
- Were school sports competitions carried out in accordance with the timetable announced by the Ministry of National Education?

1.2 Research hypotheses

- Primary education institutions lack the resources and dedicated spaces required to conduct physical education and sports lessons effectively.
- A lack of training and supervision negatively impacts the implementation of physical education and sports lessons.
- School sports competitions are held in accordance with the timetable announced by the Ministry of National Education.

1.3 Objectives of the study

- To determine the availability of sports facilities, resources and spaces in primary education institutions.
- To identify the extent to which training and supervision affect the proper implementation of physical education and sports lessons in primary education.
- Examine the reality of organising school sports competitions in accordance with the timetable announced by the Ministry of National Education.

1.4 Previous and related studies

1.4.1 The Study of Qadiri Al-Hajj (2011): ‘The reality of sports practice in primary education and its impact on students’ psychosocial development’.

This study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of sports practice in primary schools through physical education lessons, in terms of:

- Human capacity;
- The resources and spaces allocated for it.

The researcher also attempted to identify the most significant challenges, obstacles and risks that teachers face when implementing physical education and sports lessons, and to propose suitable solutions.

The study adopted a descriptive approach. The research sample consisted of 625 primary school teachers in Setif Province, selected at random. The researcher used a questionnaire as the data collection tool.

The study concluded that what primary school teachers provide in physical education and sports lessons does not align with their students' developmental needs and requirements. The study also found that a lack of specialised training for teachers was one of the main barriers to improving the level of sports practice in primary education.

The researcher recommended that political authorities and education officials give sufficient importance to the practical teaching of physical education and sports in primary education and not limit themselves to theoretical texts and laws that are not implemented in practice. This contrasts with the situation at middle and secondary level, where sports facilities, educational resources and specialised supervision are almost universally available.

1.4.2 Study of Azouni Slimane (2016): 'The Importance of Physical Education and Sports Lessons in Primary Education and Their Impact on the Educational and Pedagogical Process'

In this study, the researcher provided a theoretical overview of the concept of physical education and sports, as well as their objectives. The study also explained how physical education and sports contribute to the school environment and outlined the objectives of teaching physical education in primary education.

1.4.3 Study of Bouabdellah Youssef and Medjidi Mohamed (2020): 'The Reality of Physical Education and Sports in Primary Education in Light of a Competency-Based Approach'

This theoretical study examined the implementation of competency-based pedagogy in physical education and sports at primary level. It also sought to identify the difficulties facing this subject in primary education.

Additionally, the study aimed to emphasise the importance of monitoring and supporting students during physical education and sports lessons.

Furthermore, the study aimed to determine whether primary schools possess the necessary sports facilities, educational resources and teaching equipment to implement the competency-based approach. The study also revealed the importance of having specialised personnel overseeing physical education and sports, particularly given the large number of physical education graduates who are unemployed and the fact that primary school teachers are not specialised in this subject.

2. Methodological procedures

2.1 Method used

We used the descriptive approach because it is appropriate to the nature of the study.

This method involves providing accurate descriptions of the phenomenon under study so that the researcher can address the problem. It is also the approach used by the researcher to study the problem, discover the truth and answer the questions raised by the research topic. The type and nature of the problem being studied determine which method is adopted from among the various available approaches. (Jaber and Ahmad, 1996, p. 101).

2.2 Exploratory study

Given that our study is entitled 'The reality of the physical education and sports lesson in primary education in light of the new educational reforms', we first distributed the questionnaire to a group of ten physical education and sports teachers. This was done to

identify potential difficulties for respondents, calculate the questionnaire's reliability, and determine its suitability as a tool for the main study.

We processed the results using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), applying Cronbach's alpha. The results indicated a reliability coefficient of: 0.818.

We then calculated the questionnaire's self-validity (face/internal validity) using the following equation:

Self-validity = reliability.

The results showed a value of: 0.904.

Therefore, the questionnaire demonstrates a high level of validity and reliability and can be relied upon in this study.

2.3 Study population

The study population consists of all physical education and sports teachers in primary schools in Batna Province, totalling 494 male and female teachers.

2.4 Study sample

A sample is a subset of the population that is selected according to specific rules to make it as representative as possible of the study population. (Alsamin, 2007, p. 160).

Our study sample consisted of 84 male and female teachers from primary schools in Batna Province. They were randomly selected from the study population.

2.5 Research instrument

In this study, we used a questionnaire to collect data. Questionnaires are a widely used tool in descriptive research and are one of the most important instruments for gathering survey data. It involves preparing a set of questions for respondents to answer. These questions are specific inquiries, and the questionnaire is essentially a list of questions designed to be given to a large group of people, who may constitute the study sample, in order to obtain facts and data related to existing social conditions (Boudaoud, 2010, p. 103). (Boudaoud, 2010, p. 103).

We used a questionnaire aimed at physical education and sports teachers in primary schools. We adapted and rephrased the questions to align with the study's objectives.

The final version of the questionnaire is as follows:

Axis One: the extent to which sports facilities, resources and spaces are available in primary education institutions. It included eight items (1–8).

Axis Two: The extent to which teachers receive training and the presence of subject-specific supervisors and inspectors. It includes eight items (9–16).

Axis Three: School sports and the extent to which teachers implement them, and whether this follows the protocol adopted by the Ministry. It includes eight items (17–24).

All questions were multiple-choice, with predefined answer options, and respondents selected the option they deemed appropriate.

2.6 Methods of Statistical Processing

The purpose of using statistical techniques is to obtain quantitative indicators to assist with analysis, interpretation, explanation and judgement. The most important techniques used in our study were:

- Cronbach's alpha: to determine the reliability (stability) of the questionnaire.
- Percentages (the 'three-step method'): after collecting all the questionnaires from the teachers, we performed data entry and classification. In this process, the number of responses for each option is calculated.

We used the following statistical procedures to determine the frequencies of responses for each question in the questionnaire:

- Chi-square test: This test enables us to compare the different results obtained from the questionnaire. Its formula depends on:

- Observed frequencies: the frequencies obtained after distributing and collecting the questionnaires.

- Expected frequencies: obtained by dividing the total frequencies by the number of answer options proposed.

Note: The statistical processing was carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25.

3. Analysis of results and discussion

3.1 Analysis of results

3.1.1 Analysis of the results of hypothesis one

The first hypothesis states that primary education institutions lack the resources and dedicated spaces required to conduct physical education and sports lessons.

This hypothesis was addressed in Axis One, which contains eight statements, as follows:

- There is a field or designated space for practising physical education and sports at the institution.
- The institution has sports equipment (balls, cones, etc.).
- In my opinion, the school needs a special playground for physical education and sports lessons.
- The educational tools and devices available at the school meet the needs of the children.
- The school yard is suitable for practising sports activities.
- The sports equipment available at the school is sufficient for physical education and sports lessons.
- The spaces where students carry out their sports activities comply with safety and security conditions.
- Statement 8: Due to a lack of available resources, I had to purchase equipment and materials using my own funds to ensure that lessons could take place properly.

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, we used the chi-square test (χ^2) as follows:

Table 1 presents the results of the chi-square value and the percentages of teachers' responses to the statements in Axis One.

Statement	Answer	Repetiti on	Percenta ge	χ^2	Degre es of reedom	Level ignificance	Sig	Statistical ignificance
The first sentence	Agree	27	32.15%	22.50	1	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	0	0%					
	Disagree	57	67.85%					
The second sentence	Agree	14	16.67%	14.65	1	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	0	0%					
	Disagree	70	83.33%					
The Third	Agree	60	71.45%	43.55	2	0.05	0.00	Significant

sentence	Neutral	4	4.75%					
	Disagree	20	23.8%					
The Fourth sentence	Agree	11	13.1%	36.05	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	15	17.85%					
	Disagree	58	69.05%					
the fifth sentence	Agree	16	19.05%	28.55	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	8	9.5%					
	Disagree	60	71.45%					
The sixth sentence	Agree	13	15.5%	31.25	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	5	5.95%					
	Disagree	66	78.55%					
The seventh sentence	Agree	9	10.7%	22.55	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	8	9.5%					
	Disagree	67	79.8%					
The eighth sentence	Agree	59	70.25%	38.20	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	3	3.55%					
	Disagree	22	26.2%					

As can be seen from Table 1, the value of Sig is lower than the level of significance for all statements, indicating that the test is statistically significant. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the majority of primary school Physical Education and Sports teachers believe that primary education institutions do not provide sufficient or appropriately allocated facilities and spaces for Physical Education and Sports classes.

3.1.2 Analysis of the Results of the Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis states that insufficient training and a lack of supervision negatively impact the progress of physical education and sports lessons.

This hypothesis was addressed in the second section, which included the following seven statements:

- Statement Nine: I received specific training to teach physical education and sports at primary level.
- Statement Ten: I believe that the training I received is sufficient and comprehensive.
- Statement Eleven: While I was working, the subject inspector conducted a visit and a special evaluation of my work.
- Statement Twelve: I have a good understanding of all the points included in the Physical Education and Sports curriculum at primary level.
- Statement Thirteen: I can formulate the objectives of educational units effectively.
- Statement Fourteen: Seminars and training days are organised periodically by the subject inspector.
- Statement Fifteen: I possess all the pedagogical documents related to the subject.
- Statement Sixteen: The school principal periodically requests these documents from me and holds me accountable for them.

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, we used the chi-square test as follows:

Stateme	Answer	Repetitio	Percentag	χ^2	Degree	Level	Sig	Statistical
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nt		n	e		s of Freedom	Significanc e		Significanc e
The sentence Nine	Agree	67	79.75%	19.65	1	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	0	0%					
	Disagree	17	20.25%					
The sentence Ten	Agree	7	8.3%	33.20	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	4	4.75%					
	Disagree	73	86.95%					
The sentence Eleven	Agree	9	10.7%	28.90	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	1	1.2%					
	Disagree	74	88.1%					
The sentence Twelve	Agree	47	55.95%	37.15	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	17	20.2%					
	Disagree	20	23.85%					
The sentence Thirteen	Agree	33	39.3%	26.95	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	7	8.3%					
	Disagree	44	52.4%					
The sentence Fourteen	Agree	6	7.15%	11.05	1	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	0	0%					
	Disagree	78	70%					
The sentence Fifteen	Agree	67	79.75%	34.30	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	13	15.45%					
	Disagree	4	4.8%					
The sentence Sixteen	Agree	25	29.75%	21.40	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	8	9.5%					
	Disagree	51	60.75%					

As can be seen from Table 2, the value of Sig is lower than the level of significance for all statements, indicating that the test is statistically significant. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the majority of primary school Physical Education and Sports teachers believe that insufficient training and a lack of supervision negatively impact the teaching of Physical Education and Sports classes at primary level.

3.1.3 Analysis of the Results of the Third Hypothesis

The third hypothesis states that school sports competitions are conducted according to the timetable announced by the Ministry of National Education.

This hypothesis was addressed in the third section, which included the following eight statements:

- Statement Seventeen: I am aware of the timetable allocated to school sports.
- Statement Eighteen: I am informed about all new developments issued by the Ministry concerning school sports.
- Statement Nineteen: A seminar was organised by the head of the administrative inspectorate, which the director of the institution and I attended.
- Statement Twenty: There is a school association chaired by the school director, of which I am a member.
- Statement Twenty-One: I organised inter-class competitions to select the school's representative teams.
- Statement Twenty-Two: I formed two girls' teams and two boys' teams for different group sports.
- Statement Twenty-Three: I participated in the municipal-level competitions with the teams representing the school.
- Statement Twenty-Four: Teams representing the province were formed for the national finals in various sports.

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, we used the chi-square (χ^2) test as follows:

Table 3 presents the chi-square value and the percentages of teachers' responses to the statements in the third section.

Statement	Answer	Repetition	Percentage	χ^2	Degree of Freedom	Level Significance	Sig	Statistical Significance
Statement Seventeen	Agree	69	82.15%	21.15	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	6	7.15%					
	Disagree	9	10.7%					
Statement Eighteen	Agree	50	59.5%	36.55	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	12	14.3%					
	Disagree	22	26.2%					
Statement Nineteen	Agree	74	88.1%	12.80	1	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	0	0%					
	Disagree	10	11.9%					
Statement twenty	Agree	7	8.3%	27.95	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	23	27.4%					
	Disagree	54	64.3%					

Statement twenty-one	Agree	11	13.1%	13.00	1	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	0	0%					
	Disagree	69	86.9%					
Statement twenty-two	Agree	27	32.15%	22.50	1	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	0	0%					
	Disagree	57	67.85%					
Statement twenty-three	Agree	14		16.80	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	2						
	Disagree	68						
Statement twenty-four	Agree	7		27.35	2	0.05	0.00	Significant
	Neutral	49						
	Disagree	28						

As can be seen from Table 3, the value of Sig is lower than the level of significance for all statements, indicating that the test is statistically significant. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the majority of primary school Physical Education and Sports teachers confirm that school sports competitions were not conducted according to the timetable announced by the Ministry of National Education.

3.2 Discussion of the results

3.2.1 Discussion of the Results of the First Hypothesis

“Primary education institutions do not have the necessary facilities and spaces for Physical Education and Sports classes.”

Based on the results in Table 1, it is clear that the majority of physical education and sports teachers in primary schools believe that primary education institutions do not provide sufficient facilities and spaces dedicated to physical education and sports classes. The researchers attribute this to the fact that physical education is a relatively new subject in primary education. Furthermore, many primary schools were previously equipped at a time when this subject was not taught at this level of education. Consequently, the inadequate provision of tools, facilities and installations intended specifically for physical activity is considered one of the reasons for the limited success of physical education and sports classes in primary education.

In their study on the reality of physical education and sports at primary level under the competency-based approach, the researchers note that both Bouabdellah Youssef and Majidi Mohamed identified the lack of sports facilities, equipment, and pedagogical materials intended for this purpose as one of the main difficulties facing the teaching and practice of physical education and sports at primary level, particularly with regard to the use of different methods and teaching strategies. They estimated that only 40% of educational institutions contain sports grounds, and most of these do not comply with the required safety standards and measurements for practising sport. (Bouabdellah & Majidi, 2020, p. 35).

In addition, Qaderi (2011, p. 163) reported in his study that 97% of teachers acknowledged that the school did not provide a field specifically prepared for sports activities. (Kaderi, 2011, p. 163).

3.2.2 Discussion of the Results of the Second Hypothesis

‘Insufficient training and the absence of supervision negatively impact the delivery of Physical Education and Sports lessons.’

Based on the results in Table 2, it is evident that the majority of physical education and sports teachers in primary schools believe that insufficient training and a lack of supervision negatively impact the delivery of physical education and sports lessons at primary level.

The researchers attribute the absence of supervision to the lack of subject inspectors specialising in physical education and sports at this level of education. As previously mentioned, this subject is relatively new at primary level. Furthermore, most inspectors responsible for monitoring teaching practices in this context are inspectors responsible for the intermediate level. Even when inspectors specialising in physical education and sports exist at primary level, there are very few of them and they do not have enough time to monitor all teachers across numerous schools.

Similarly, the researchers attribute insufficient training to the limited time between teachers’ appointments and the start of the school year. Consequently, teachers do not receive adequate training to ensure they have a good grasp of all the subject’s outcomes and curriculum. According to the teachers, this has had a negative impact on the proper delivery of Physical Education and Sports lessons at primary level.

This is also confirmed by Harshaoui Youssef, who states that educational supervision is a highly important, comprehensive process because it serves multiple aspects of the educational system. It is an epistemic process—namely, the core process of disseminating knowledge and teaching students physical and health-related movement skills. Additionally, it has an administrative aspect, as it encompasses many of the administrative procedures involved in preparing educational documents and the associated administrative steps of the educational process. It also has a social dimension related to the role of the teacher in education, contributing to the proper upbringing of children. (Harchaoui, 2011, p. 60).

Furthermore, according to Bokhoush Hamida et al., educational supervision is considered a link between the teacher and the curricula. The supervisor monitors the teacher’s work and their success in implementing the requirements of the curriculum. They also help teachers to achieve these objectives through guidance and collaboration. (Bokhoush et al., 2020, p. 10).

3.2.3 Discussion of the Results of the Third Hypothesis

‘Competitions related to school sports were conducted according to the timetable announced by the Ministry of National Education.’

As can be seen from Table 3, most physical education and sports teachers in primary schools confirm that competitions related to school sports were not conducted according to the timetable announced by the Ministry of National Education.

The researchers attribute this to the fact that school sports, especially team sports, are relatively new at primary level, which is a new development for primary school directors since they are primarily responsible for school sports in their initial stage. Furthermore, the absence of school associations at primary level also affected this situation because having an

association chaired by the director is essential for the proper functioning of school sports competitions.

The researchers also consider a lack of facilities and equipment to be a main reason behind the failure of school sports. For example, how can a teacher organise inter-class competitions to select talented students in a sport such as handball when the school does not have a handball court or goals?

Finally, the researchers believe that the situation of physical education and sports teachers in primary education — as contract teachers who are not in permanent positions — dampened their motivation and reduced their ability to contribute to this area.

4. Conclusions

- Most primary schools suffer from a shortage of sports equipment and facilities, as well as dedicated spaces for sports activities.
- Insufficient training and supervision have a negative impact on the delivery of Physical Education and Sports lessons at primary level.
- Competitions related to school sports were not conducted according to the timetable announced by the Ministry of National Education.

Recommendations:

- Integrate contract Physical Education and Sports teachers at primary level into permanent positions.
- Provide primary education institutions with the necessary sports equipment and facilities for practising sports activities.
- Ensure that institutions under the remit of the Ministry of National Education provide comprehensive health and safety measures, particularly in the current climate.
- Increase the amount of time allocated to physical education and sports lessons in the weekly timetable for the second and third stages of primary education.
- Ensure that the training of physical education and sports teachers at primary level is mandatory, well-designed and intensive.
- Ensure the availability of specialised supervisors and inspectors for physical education and sports at primary level.

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