# Investigation of Secondary School Students' Participation and Attitudes towards Physical Education and Sports Course

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#### Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to reveal the ideas of physical education teachers about students' participation in the course and to examine the attitudes of secondary school students towards physical education and sports course. Sequential transformational research model was used in the study. The qualitative part of the research group consisted of 60 physical education and sports teachers working in Baltkesir province and the quantitative part consisted of 462 secondary school students studying in Bandırma district. When the qualitative research results are analyzed, it is seen that "negative situations and thoughts" and "negative situations and thoughts" are divided into two categories. When the results of the quantitative research were examined, it was concluded that the attitudes towards physical education and sports course were statistically different in favor of female students according to the gender variable, in favor of students who like physical education and sports course according to the liking status, in favor of students with family members who do sports according to the variable of doing sports in the family, and according to the class category variable; there was no difference according to the variable of being a licensed athlete.

Keywords: Physical Education and Sports Course, Secondary School Students, Attitude.

## Introduction

Physical education and sports courses have influenced moral and social attitudes as well as providing physiological, psychological and emotional development in students (Akıncı et al., 2020). Physical activities that psychologically relax students, contribute to their cognitive development and provide psychomotor development are known as the fields of physical education and sports. In our society, interest, perception and positive attitudes towards physical education and sports have developed. Attitudes arise from the beliefs we have about people and situations. They shape our behavior at many points. They guide our participation in any activity, our decision-making behaviors to achieve or abandon the goals we set (Linda Rikard & Banville, 2006). Attitude is a psychological construct that cannot be directly observed but can be inferred from observable reactions. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) define attitude as a psychological tendency expressed by gradually evaluating a certain situation or object and evaluating it in favor or against.

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This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License For example, when the attitude developed towards an object or situation is considered positive, it has a positive effect on the behavior of individuals, and when a negative attitude is developed, it causes undesirable behaviors such as avoiding or distancing from the object or situation (Güllü et al., 2016).

It has been widely suggested that students' attitudes towards physical education can affect their future physical activity patterns and habits (Phillips et al., 2020; Silverman, 2017). Environmental conditions may cause differences in students' attitudes towards physical education and sports lessons. For this reason, many factors such as the family's view of physical education and sports, licensed sports, sports equipment and economic status can affect the attitude (Güllü et al., 2016).

While physical education provides many benefits by improving the physical, spiritual and mental aspects of the person through exercise, games and sports activities (Güllü et al., 2016), physical education teachers play a key role in promoting and modeling health-related behaviors, transforming students' attitudes and beliefs about learning, and improving intrinsic motivation and personal development (Castillo et al., 2020; Kuśnierz et al., 2020; Nasário et al., 2020; Sierra-Díaz et al., 2019).

Physical education and sports teachers are individuals who influence young people both positively and negatively in terms of socialization. Teachers help students increase their selfconfidence, help them exhibit positive attitudes, and contribute to having an active lifestyle. As a result of the observations made, it was observed that female students had difficulty in participating in physical education lessons, while male students generally did not have difficulty in participating in the lessons and this study was planned. It is aimed to examine the attitudes of the teachers who carry out the education and training activities of the physical education and sports course and their participation in sports in vocational high schools according to various variables.

#### Method

In this part of our research, information about the study model, study group, data collection and data analysis are given.

## Research Model

The sequential transformational design model was used in our research. In our research model, qualitative data play a more dominant role than quantitative data (Johnson et al., 2007). In order to explain the main problem of our study in detail, data were first collected and analyzed qualitatively in the form of interviews, and then data were collected and analyzed using the survey model, one of the quantitative data collection methods, in the light of the data obtained (Morse, 2005).

# The Participants

In our study, in the selection of the sample group for the physical education and sports course, the criterion sampling method, which is thought to help explain the main lines of the study and determined by the researchers, was used. In the qualitative part of our study, 60 physical education and sports teachers working in the province of Balıkesir in the 2022-2023 academic year, and in the quantitative part of the study, 462 secondary school students studying in Bandırma district in the 2022-2023 academic year constitute the research group.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Research Group

			Research Group									
Variable	Sub Variable	N	%									
Tagahara Candar	Male	23	38									
Teachers Gender	Female	37	62									
Total		60	100									
Students Gender	Male	166	35.9									
Students Gender	Female	296	64.1									
Enjoying Physical Education	Yes	427	92.4									
and Sports Lesson	No	35	7.6									
D : 1: 14:11:	Yes	78	16.9									
Being a Licensed Athlete	No	384	83.1									
Curanta Danatina in the Femile.	Yes	130	28.1									
Sports Practice in the Family	No	332	71.9									
	9	123	26.6									
Class Catanami	10	101	21.9									
Class Category	11	137	29.7									
	12	101	21.9									
Total		462	100									

#### **Data Collection Tools**

In our study, personal information form, openended questionnaire for qualitative data and Physical Education and Sports Attitude Scale for quantitative data were used.

**Open-ended Questionnaire:** The research group was asked the questions "Why do you think female students have difficulty in participating in physical education and sports lessons" and "Why do you think male students do not have difficulty in participating in physical education and sports lessons". The data were collected over a period of 3 months and individually in an interview format.

Physical Education and Sports Attitude Scale: The 5-point Likert-type scale developed by <u>Güllü</u> and <u>Güçlü</u> (2009) consisted of 35 items (11 items negative - 24 items positive) and one sub-dimension. The reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as .94 by the researchers and .90 in this study.

**Ethics of Research:** Before starting our research, approval was obtained from Bandirma Onyedi Eylul University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with meeting number 2023-1 and decision date 16/01/2023.

#### **Analysis of Data**

In our study, content analysis method was used to analyze qualitative data. It was aimed to explain the research more clearly and clearly by categorizing the data obtained from the individuals participating in the research. The data obtained in the study were entered into an Excel database and categorized using basic statistical models. Empty or irrelevant comments were excluded from the data filled in by the researchers (6 participants). After the research was examined in detail, the incorrectly categorized data were reinterpreted by the field expert and psychology expert. The content analysis data were analyzed and it was determined to be within the 90% range.

The scales filled in voluntarily by the participants were used to analyze quantitative data. Since skewness & kurtosis ratios of the study were between Skewness(-.172) and Kurtosis(-.182), parametric measurements were utilized. T-test and Anova Test were used to compare the total values of the scales.

# **Findings**

At this stage of the research, explanations about quantitative and qualitative data are given.

Table 2 Why Female Students of the Research Group have Difficulty in Participating in Physical Education and Sports Classes

Category	Code	f	Research Group Explanations
	Peer Pressure	12	In general, they do not want to participate in the lesson because they think that they will look funny from the outside when they move, they do not want to participate because of the reactions of their friends when they cannot do the movements and they do not want to be the subject of ridicule at that time (PT46).
Negative	Physical Change	10	They do not participate because they look thinner than men due to physical activity-based studies, because of sudden body changes, and because they do not know their bodies well enough (PT43).
Situation and Thoughts	Lack of Self- Confidence	2	They do not dare to do some movements during the lesson and do not participate because they have self-confidence problems (PT39).
(f=60)	Social Pressure	20	Generally, in our society, female students are asked to be more docile. They do not participate in physical education classes because of the statements such as "you are a girl", be a lady, girls do not play football, girls are not very active (PT5).
	Don't be shy	15	Because they are psychologically shy during adolescence, they hesitate to perform a gesture and stop participating in it (PT3).
	Thinking You are Untalented	1	They think they are not skilled in any branch and therefore do not want to participate (PT1).

Table 2 shows the categories and codes of the research group's answers to the question of why female students have difficulty in participating in

physical education and sports lessons. It is seen that the only category of the research group, the category of negative situations and thoughts (f=60), is

included in the codes of social pressure (f=20), being (f=10), lack of self-confidence (f=2) and thinking shy (f=15), peer pressure (f=12), physical change that they are not talented (f=10).

Table 3 Why Male Students of the Research Group do not have Difficulty in Participating in Physical Education and Sports Classes

Category	Code	f	Research Group Explanations
Positive Situation	Being Energetic	25	Men want to participate because they are more energetic, because there are no restrictions on movement (PT5).  Men are more physically active and feel energized and want to participate to release that energy (PT32).  They participate because they feel more comfortable in this class compared to other classes and because they have more physical energy (PT41).
and Thoughts (f=60)	Self Proofing	35	They want to participate because they want to prove themselves to their friends, friends and family during adolescence (PT13).  They participate to promote themselves better, to feel a sense of achievement and to show that they are muscularly strong (PT38).  Male students want to participate because they like to compete physically, because they are more active in sports activities and because they have more opportunities to prove themselves physically (PT43).

Table 3 shows the categories and codes of the research group's answers to the question of why male students do not have difficulty in participating in physical education and sports lessons. It is seen

that the research group is included in the category of positive situations and thoughts (f=60), which is the only category; proving oneself (f=35) and being energetic (f=25) codes.

Table 4 Secondary School Students' Attitudes towards Physical Education and Sports Course According to Gender

	Gender	N	Χ̄	S	t	d	р
Physical	Male	166	3.29	.55	5 202	460	.000*
Education	Female	296	3.61	.66	-5.292		

When the gender variable data of the research group are analyzed in Table 4, it is seen that the mean scores of female students' attitudes towards physical education and sports course are higher than male students and there is a significant difference in the statistical results t(460)=-5.292, p.000.<005.

Table 5 Secondary School Students' Attitudes towards Physical Education and Sports Course According to Being a Licensed Athlete

	Licence	N	χ̄	S	t	d	p
Physical	Yes	78	3.59	.59	1 460	460	.143
Education	No	384	3.47	.65	1.468	460	

In Table 5, when the data of the research group on the variable of being a licensed athlete are examined, it is seen that there is no difference in the mean scores of the attitudes towards physical education and sports course in t(460)= 1.468, p.143.>0.05 statistical results.

Table 6 Secondary School Students' Attitudes towards Physical Education and Sports Course According to their Liking for Physical Education Course

	<b>Enjoying the Lesson</b>	N	x	S	t	d	p
Physical	Yes	427	3.53	.64	4.527	460	.000*
Education	No	35	3.03	.50		400	.000

In Table 6, when the data of the research group on the variable of liking physical education and sports course are examined, t(460)=4.527, p.000.<0.05 statistical results show that the mean scores of the attitudes towards physical education and sports

course of the students who like physical education and sports course are higher and significantly differentiated compared to the students who do not like physical education and sports course.

Table 7 Secondary School Students' Attitudes towards Physical Education and Sports Course According to the Status of Individuals Who do Sports in the Family

	Family Sport	N	χ̄	S	t	d	p
Physical	Yes	427	3.53	.64	4.527	460	.000*
Education	No	35	3.03	.50	4.327	400	.000

In Table 7, when the data of the research group on the variable of the sporting status of the individuals in the family are examined, t(460)=4.527, p.000.<0.05 statistical results show that the mean scores of the

attitudes towards physical education and sports course of the students whose family members do sports are higher and significantly differentiated compared to the students who do not do sports.

Table 8 Secondary School Students' Attitudes towards Physical Education and Sports Course According to Class Status

	Class Category	N	Χ̄	S	Squares Total	Mean Squares	F (458/3)	р	Difference
	9. Class	123	3.56	.73	7.309	2.436	6.131		9-12 10/11-12
Physical	10. Class	101	3.68	.59	182.005	.397		.000*	
Education	11. Class	137	3.42	.55	189.314				
	12. Class	101	3.33	.64				]	

When the data of the research group's class category variable in Table 8 are examined, it is seen that the mean scores of the attitudes towards physical education and sports course of the 9th grade students are higher than the 12th grade students and the 10th grade students are higher than the 11th grade and 12th grade students and they differ significantly in the statistical results of f(458/3)=6.131, p.000.<0.05.

#### Discussion

Our research was conducted to examine the attitudes of the teachers who carry out the education and training activities of the physical education and sports course and the students who take physical education and sports courses in vocational high schools according to various variables together with their participation in physical education and sports.

When the data in the qualitative part of our research were examined, when the thoughts about why female students have difficulties in participating in physical education and sports lessons were examined, it was determined that they may have exhibited behaviors such as social pressure, being

shy, peer pressure, physical change, lack of selfconfidence and thinking that they are incompetent under the category of negative situations and thoughts. In Satina and Hullgren's (2001) study on physical education and sports lessons of female students, it was stated that there were sociological pressures thought to be caused by the difference in physical changes and gender roles in the same direction as our study. Serra et al. (2019) stated in their gender-based physical education study that there has been a decrease in the participation rates of female students in recent years. Eime et al. (2013) emphasized in their study on adolescent women's participation in sports and physical activity that while the participation of girls is more intense at the primary school level, it gradually decreases in high school, and the best solution to this is to organize school clubs and recreational physical activities. Aybek et al. (2011) found that girls' negative interaction with their peers also causes them to exhibit a negative way of thinking about the course. Van Wersch et al. (1992) also concluded that the rate of participation in physical education and sports decreases with

age in female students after the age of 14, while their participation was higher at the beginning. The marginalization of female students in society, jokes about gender inequality, traditionalist attitudes of teachers and gender discrimination negatively affect participation in physical education (Fitzpatrick & McGlashan, 2016). In the light of all this information, it has been determined in the literature reviews that girls are less likely to participate in physical education and sports as well as physical activity compared to boys (Belcher et al., 2010; Biddle et al., 2019; Gordon-Larsen et al., 1999; Taniguchi & Shupe, 2014). Whitehead and Biddle (2008), in their study on adolescent girls' perceptions of physical activity, found that increasing girls' participation in physical education activities can be achieved through communication with parents, organizing peer counseling programs, and planning activities that prioritize the participation of adolescent girls with their friends.

When the data in the qualitative part of our research were examined, when the thoughts about why male students do not have difficulty in participating in physical education and sports lessons were examined, it was determined that they may have exhibited an action style such as proving themselves and being energetic under the category of positive situations and thoughts. Male students' competitiveness and muscular body structure positively affect their participation in physical education and sports lessons (Walton-Fisette et al., 2017). The fact that male students participate more than female students can be considered because they agree with the idea that they are more successful in physical education (Larsson et al., 2009). The fact that male students are more dominant emerges from the inequality in terms of competitiveness and power (Dowling, 2013). Tergerson and King (2002), in their research on the benefits of physical activity in boys and girls, stated that male students participate in physical education activities in order to show their muscular structures, to strengthen their bodies and to put themselves in the foreground. When the main reasons for male students to participate in physical activity are examined; it can be thought that they want to see themselves in more intense physical education and sports activities, they want to look strong by doing weight exercises, and they show more interest in competitive sports (Thomas et al., 2019).

In our study, when the attitudes of secondary school students towards physical education and sports course according to gender variable were examined, it was seen that female students had higher attitude scores than male students. In the study on students' attitudes towards physical education by Zekioğlu et al. (2020), which is in the same direction with our study, it was stated that the mean attitude scores of female students were higher than male students. Kusnierz et al. (2020) emphasized that physical education increased academic motivation and learning in female students and increased intrinsic motivation in male students according to gender variable in their research on Ukrainian and Polish students' academic relationships towards physical education. Koçak and Humeric (2006), in their study on the examination of primary school students' attitudes towards physical education and sports, concluded that female students had higher attitude scores than male students. Atan and İmamoğlu (2016) in their research on secondary school students' attitudes towards physical education and Subramaniam and Silverman (2000) in their research on student development of physical education, concluded that there was no difference in the attitude scores of female students and male students.

In our research, when the attitudes of secondary school students towards physical education and sports course according to the variable of liking physical education and sports course are examined, it is seen that students who like physical education and sports have higher attitude scores than students who do not like physical education and sports. The words like and attitude have meanings in the same direction with each other. For this reason, it can be thought that the attitude scores of students who like physical education and sports lessons are also higher. On the basis of the fact that the participation in physical education and sports course is higher than other courses, students' liking this course, feeling comfortable and discharging themselves, as a result, their attitudes are also high (Shropshire et al., 1997).

In our research, it was determined that there was no difference when the attitudes of secondary school students towards physical education and sports course were examined according to the variable of being a licensed athlete. In general, it can be thought that the students' positive attitudes towards physical education and sports course, their participation in sportive activities outside of school and spending extra time caused no difference in their attitudes towards physical education and sports.

In our study, when the attitudes of secondary school students towards physical education and sports course were examined according to the variable of doing sports in the family, it was seen that the attitude scores of the students whose families do sports are higher than the students whose families do not do sports. Wright et al. (2003), in their study on physical activity and young people, concluded that individuals do physical activity with their families in their childhood and thus they recognize the branches in physical education and improve themselves. It can be thought that having a sports person in the family contributes positively to children's attitudes towards physical education and sports.

In our research, when the attitudes of secondary school students towards physical education and sports course according to the class category variable are examined, it is seen that 9th grade students have higher attitude scores than 12th grade students and 10th grade students have higher attitudes towards physical education and sports course than 11th grade and 12th grade students. Philips et al. (2020) concluded in their research on secondary school students' attitudes towards physical education and sports that as the grade level increases, their attitudes towards physical education and sports decrease, curriculum conditions cause this decrease, repetitive, boring and competitive activities also have an effect, and social situations such as sweating contribute to this decrease. Eraslan (2015) concluded that the attitude scores of 5th grade students were higher than those of other grades in his research examining the attitudes of middle school students towards physical education course.

## Conclusion

When the qualitative data of our research were examined, it was concluded that teachers conveyed positive and negative thoughts about participation in physical education and sports lessons, and when the quantitative data were examined, it was concluded

that there was a statistical difference in the attitudes towards physical education and sports lessons in favor of female students according to the gender variable, in favor of students who like physical education and sports lessons according to the liking status, in favor of students with family members who do sports according to the variable of doing sports in the family, and according to the class category variable; there was no difference according to the variable of being a licensed athlete.

#### **Suggestions**

In our research, a qualitative method was used for teachers and a quantitative method was used for students. A larger data base can be created by applying qualitative research method to students. The attitudes and perceptions of the family towards physical education and sports can be determined and compared with the attitudes and perceptions of the students. The scope of the study can be further expanded and a pilot province can be selected from each region and data can be collected in these places and an inference can be made.

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