

Physical Education Course And Intercultural Education-Attitudes And Views Of Physical Education Teachers In Primary Education

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Abstract:

Background: The Greek school environment of primary education has evolved into a multicultural space, where the intense mobility of the population in recent years towards the country has been particularly intense. As a result of this social/geopolitical development, the modern Greek primary school is characterized by its multiculturalism. In particular, the course of Physical Education is an educational field that was affected by this change with the inclusion in the school environment of students with a multicultural profile. The main purpose of this research is to highlight the attitudes and opinions of physical education and general education teachers of primary education regarding issues of multiculturalism - cultural pluralism (CP) and cultural otherness (PO) - and the contribution of the Physical Education course in the development of the multicultural approach of students at modern Greek Primary School.

Materials and Methods: A sample of 781 teachers employed in Primary Education was approached to conduct the study. The method used was the quantitative analysis of data using a questionnaire ‘Pluralism and Diversity Attitude Assessment’ (PADAA), as a research tool. The analysis was performed with the IBM SPSSv21 Statistical Analysis package.

Results: With reference to the results teachers of elementary school compared to Physical Education teachers value more Cultural Pluralism, men appreciate, value Cultural Pluralism and implement to Cultural Pluralism to a higher degree than women, substitute teachers apply more Cultural Pluralism than full time teachers. In addition, teachers who have not received training in basic studies need to strengthen the value they attribute to Cultural Pluralism while teachers who have participated in training seminars in intercultural education apply better Cultural Pluralism.

Conclusion: The attitude of teachers towards multiculturalism is evolving and becoming more positive, as they seem to be indifferent to the origin of students and focused on their role. The teachers believe that the physical education course strengthens students' relationships, places a high value on cultural pluralism and strengthens the acceptance of cultural otherness.

Key Word: Multiculturalism; Primary Education; Physical Education; Teachers.

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I. Introduction

During the last decades, a rapid change in the demographic composition of many European countries including Greece has been observed, due to the large influx of immigrants¹. The phenomenon of immigration and the general movement of populations that is observed, changed consequently the demographic composition of schools and brought to the surface important problems that went unnoticed in the school environment, such as the lack of cooperation between students, xenophobia, racist attitudes, even violence². The educational work is now part of a social and cultural context that is changing, globalizing and putting to the test traditional structures, models and values, introducing new data³.

The school, main agent of socialization, through the adaptation of educational systems to the multicultural data of modern societies, is called upon to play an important role in creating conditions for the acceptance of cultural diversity. It is therefore called upon to deal with the problems of school and social

integration for children of different social and cultural groups who live in a multicultural environment for the functional coexistence and education of local and foreign students⁴.

Physical Education course is a learning environment that supports, respects and strengthens diversity- otherness, provides equal opportunities for learning and group problem solving and develops the personal and social responsibility of foreign students for their smoother integration into society⁵. In addition, Physical Education course represents a social and interactive course that promotes tolerance and fosters intercultural skills across groups⁶ and encourages social inclusion by connecting motor, emotional, cognitive and social skills⁷.

In a multicultural school environment, it is crucial for a Physical Education teacher to exhibit positive attitude toward student that vary, comprehend the concerns and needs of the students and offer an egalitarian, pluralistic and of high quality education^{8,9}.

II. Literature Review

Physical Education is a subject “designed to develop motor skills, knowledge, and behaviors for healthy, active living, physical fitness, sportsmanship, self-efficacy, and intelligence”¹⁰. The main element of Physical Education consists physical activity, which “through casual or organized participation, intend expressing or enhancing fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or achieving results in competition at all levels”¹¹.

Physical Education courses and Physical education teachers figure prominently in the concept of multicultural education^{9,12}. However, reviewing the existing literature, there are some research on multicultural education in Physical Education^{8,9,12,13}. Studies was found on investigation of teachers' attitudes towards cultural pedagogy and teaching and otherness^{14, 15}, on investigation of Physical Education teachers' attitudes towards cultural pedagogy and teaching and otherness^{16, 17,18,19}, on attitude scales developed for pluralism and diversity of Physical Education teachers¹², multipluralism on teaching Physical Education⁹, implementing Teachers’ Belief Scales to Physical Education Teachers⁸, on Physical Education teachers’ inability to transform intercultural theoretical knowledge into practice^{20,21}, developing strategies through which the lesson objectives will be achieved for students of independent ethnic backgrounds^{22,23, 24, 25}.

The aim of this research is to examine the attitudes, views of primary school teachers, physical education teachers and multi-schoolteachers, in relation to the concepts of intercultural education and cultural diversity in their application to the teaching of multicultural education in multicultural groups of students. It was aimed in this study that to compare physical education teacher candidates with Primary school teacher candidates in terms of theirs views on the 4 scales of the questionnaire and to examine their views, in terms of gender, educational level, basic training studies and training seminars.

III. Material And Methods

The data collection tool used in the present study was the Pluralism and Diversity Attitude Assessment (P.A.D.A.A). questionnaire¹² (translated and modified in Greek), which assess Physical Education teachers’ attitudes toward issues related to cultural diversity and cultural pluralism. The questionnaire consisted of 19 items representing 4 subscales: Appreciate Cultural Pluralism, Value Cultural Pluralism, Apply Cultural Pluralism and Feel uncomfortable with Cultural Diversity. Participants were asked to respond to each statement on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The sample of the present research were primary school teachers, physical education teachers, teachers who serve in multidisciplinary primary schools and intercultural schools. Primary school teachers of the research were also in charge of teaching the Physical Education course or use physical, motor activities in the teaching of their subjects. Furthermore, Primary school teachers of the research served in primary schools that there is a sufficient number of foreign and returnee students.

A total sample of 781 teachers (46.5% female) were included in the study. Of the 781 participants, all were teaching at primary school (91.7% Physical Education teachers and 8.3% Primary school Teachers). The participants were from different places, from rural areas of Greece (28.0%), from semi – urban areas (13.2%) and from urban areas (58.8%). In terms of years of teaching experience, 3.2% had between 0 – 5 years of teaching experience, 6.8% had between 6 – 10 years of teaching experience, 22.0% had between 11 – 15 years of teaching experience, 47.4% had between 16 – 25 years of teaching experience and 20.6% had more than of 25 years of teaching experience. Also 698 work full-time while 82 are substitutes (Table no1).

Table no1: Distribution of the sample by gender, employment, years of service, place and specialty

		N	%
Gender	Male	418	53.5%
	Female	363	46.5%
	Total	781	100.0%
Employment	Full-time	698	89.4%
	Substitute	83	10.6%

	Total	781	100.0%
Teaching experience	0-5 years	25	3.2%
	6-10 years	53	6.8%
	11-15 years	172	22.0%
	16-25 years	370	47.4%
	More than 25 years	161	20.6%
	Total	781	100.0%
Place	Urban	459	58.8%
	Semi-urban	103	13.2%
	Rural	219	28.0%
	Total	781	100.0%
Specialty	Physical Education Teacher	716	91.7%
	Primary school Teacher	65	8.3%
	Total	781	100.0%

According to the data from the frequency table below (Table no2), it can be seen that the majority of the participating teachers, 522 (66.8%) hold only a bachelor’s degree, followed by 210 (26.9%) who have received a master's degree, 37 (4.7%) hold a doctorate while 12 (1.5%) have obtained an additional second degree.

Table no2: Distribution of teachers’ education

	N	%
Bachelor’s degree	522	66.8%
Second degree	12	1.5%
Master’s degree	210	26.9%
PhD	37	4.7%
Total	781	100%

Of the total of 781 respondents, 159 (20.4%) answered positively to the question concerning training in basic studies, while the remaining 622 (79.6%) answered negatively. Moreover, 344 (44.0%) responded positively to the question on participation in training seminars and 437 (56.0%) responded negatively (Table no3).

Table no3: Distribution of teachers’ training

		N	%
Basic studies training	Yes	159	20.4%
	No	622	79.6%
	Total	781	100.0%
Participation in educational seminars	Yes	344	44.0%
	No	437	56.0%
	Total	781	100.0%

The processing of the descriptive and inductive statistic of the data was done with the help of the statistical package IBM SPSSv21 and for 95% confidence intervals ($p_{value} = 0.05$). The regularity check was done with Kolmogorov – Smirnov test and followed normal distribution. Descriptive statistics (number, percentage, mean and standard deviation) of the difference between the dependent and independent variables in order to determine the arithmetic mean of the differences between independent groups t-test, one- way analysis of variance techniques were utilized.
 $P_{value} = 0.854 > 0.005$

The Cronbach reliability test showed that there is internal consistency in the questionnaire both in the individual questions of the stakeholders and in its entirety, as shown in Table no4. The internal consistency of the scale-forming substances Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was calculated as 0.720 for the total scale. The internal consistency of the first sub- scale “I appreciate Cultural Pluralism” was 0.813, the internal consistency of the second sub- scale “I value Cultural Pluralism” was 0.844, the internal consistency of the third sub- scale “I apply Cultural Pluralism” was 0.791 and the internal consistency coefficient of the fourth sub-scale “I feel uncomfortable to Cultural Diversity” was 0.720. From the results we observe that high consistency appears in all subscales of the questionnaire, as the Cronbach's index value is greater than 0.7.

Table no4: Cronbach Reliability Test for P.A.D.A.A. for the Whole sample (F=781 100%)

		Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
I appreciate Cultural Pluralism	1-5	0.813	5
I value Cultural Pluralism	6-10	0.844	5

I apply Cultural Pluralism	11-15	0.791	5
I feel uncomfortable with Cultural Diversity	16-19	0.720	4
Total	1-19	0.751	19

Factor analysis of key components for the correlations of the correlations of the 19 variable questions of the questionnaire was performed (Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) index = 0.864 > 0.007). Table no5 presents the results of the "Rotated Component Matrix" of the Teachers' Questionnaire and presents the four (4) Scales and the corresponding questions included in each of them according to the loadings they show. It is useful to clarify that a lower acceptable loading limit of 0.300 is specified and loadings below this are rejected.

Table no5: Confirmatory factor Analysis (F= 457 100%) Rotated Component Matrix

I appreciate Cultural Pluralism		I value Cultural Pluralism		I apply Cultural Pluralism		I feel uncomfortable with Cultural Diversity	
Questions	Factor 1	Questions	Factor 2	Questions	Factor 3	Questions	Factor 4
6	0.797	1	0.705	11	0.678	5	,727
7	0.511	2	0.854	12	0	16	
8	0.709	3	0.884	13	,744	17	,762
9	0.788	4	0.858	14	,717	18	,822
10	0.766	5	0.511	15	,611	19	,855
11	0.482	7	0.511		,750		,785
12	0.455				,714		,770
14					,504		,605
15					,383		,631
17					,407		,383

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

IV. Results

Descriptive Statistics Results

For the "I appreciate Cultural Pluralism" factor interpreted by questions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 17, the incidence frequencies were: In the question "6. Every cultural minority (every different cultural group) has something positive to contribute to Greek society" 325 (41.6%) respondents answered that they agree and 4 (0.5%) participants answered that they strongly disagree.

In the question "7. Students should feel proud of their cultural heritage", out of the total of 781 respondents, 554 (70.9%) answered that they strongly agree and only 3 (0.4%) that they strongly disagree.

In the question "8. All students should be taught and learn about the cultural differences of each people" 292 (37.4%) of the respondents answered that they agree and 7 (0.9%) that they strongly disagree.

In the question "9. I enjoy being among people different (in terms of religion, culture, nationality, etc.) from me" 298 (38.2%) answered that they agree and 9 (1.2%) that they strongly disagree.

In the question "10. Cultural diversity is a valuable resource and should be preserved" 298 (38.2%) responded that they agree while 4 (0.5%) responded that they strongly disagree.

In the question "11. Activities in physical education class should be representative of a range of cultures" 258 (33.0%) responded that they agree and 21 (2.7%) that they strongly disagree.

In the question "12. Physical education teachers should design activities that meet diverse needs" 276 (35.3%) answered that they agree and 19 (2.4%) that they strongly disagree.

In the question "14. The perspectives of a wide range of ethnic groups should be considered in the curriculum" 245(31.4%) responded that they almost agree and 26 (3.3%) that they strongly disagree.

In the question "15. Teachers have a responsibility to teach about the ways in which sport has influenced them" 311(39.8%) responded that they agree and only 8(1.0%) responded that they strongly disagree.

In the question "17. Cultural diversity is a negative force in the development of Greek society" 301 (38.5%) people answered that they disagree and 5 (0.6%) that they strongly agree.

For the factor of "I value Cultural Pluralism" interpreted by questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7, the occurrence frequencies and the corresponding percentages were:

In the question "1. Every student can have equal opportunity to learn and succeed in physical education" out of the total sample 570 (73%) responded that they strongly agree and 2 (0.3%) responded that they strongly disagree.

In the question "2. Students should be taught to respect those who are different (in terms of nation, race, color and culture) from them" 696 (89.1%) respondents answered that they strongly agree, and 3 respondents (0.4%) answered that they strongly disagree.

In the question “3. Physical education teachers should help their students to develop respect for themselves and others” 715 (91.5%) people answered that they strongly agree and only 2 (0.3%) answered that they strongly disagree.

In the question “4. In physical education it does not matter whether a student is rich or poor, everyone should have the same opportunities to succeed” 725 (92.8%) people answered that they strongly agree and only 1 (0.1%) answered that they strongly disagree.

In the question “5. Students will have to abandon their cultural beliefs and practices to integrate” 331 (42.4%) of the participants answered that they disagree and 323 (41.4%) answered that they strongly disagree.

Incidence frequencies of question 7 are described on factor “I appreciate Cultural Diversity”.

For the factor of “I apply Cultural Pluralism” interpreted by questions 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15, the occurrence frequencies and the corresponding percentages were:

In the question “13. The people of a minority should adopt the values and ways of life of the dominant culture, civilization” 255 (32.7%) of the total 781 participants answered that they almost agree and 6 (0.8%) that they strongly disagree.

Incidence frequencies of questions 11, 12, 14 and 15 are described on factor “I appreciate Cultural Diversity”.

For the factor of “I feel uncomfortable with Cultural Diversity” interpreted by questions 5, 16, 17, 18 and 19, the occurrence frequencies and the corresponding percentages were:

In the question “16. I feel uncomfortable among students whose national, cultural heritage is different from mine’ 408 (52.2%) of the total respondents answered that they strongly disagree and only 10 (1.3%) that they strongly agree.

In the question “17. Cultural diversity is a negative force in the development of Greek society” 301 (38.5%) people answered that they disagree and 5 (0.6%) that they strongly agree.

In the question “18. There is nothing that education systems can do for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds” 434 (55.6%) respondents answered that they strongly disagree, and 11 (1.4%) respondents answered that they strongly agree.

In the question “19. Students from minority backgrounds are difficult to practice” 535 (68.5%) respondents answered that they strongly disagree, and 7 (0.9%) respondents answered that they strongly agree.

Incidence frequencies of question 5 are described on factor “I value Cultural Diversity”.

The totals of 781 (100%) teachers were: the mean 50.1, the standard deviation 7.9, the minimum 25 and the maximum 105 (Table no6).

Table no6: Indices of Central Tendency and Dispersion of Scores in the sample responses (F=781 100%)

	N	Min	Mean	SD	Max
Total	781	25.0	50.1	7.9	105.0

Results of Inductive Statistics

There is a statistically significant difference between the teachers' specialty and the variable “I value Cultural Diversity” (Sig<0.05). The highest mean value is obtained by Primary School teachers (7.5±2.8) compared to Physical Education teachers (6.4±2.2) (Table no7).

Table no7: Correlation results between teacher specialty and appreciation of Cultural Diversity

Specialty		N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
I appreciate Cultural Pluralism	Physical Education Teacher	716	6.4	2.2	-3.796	779	0.000
	Primary School Teacher	65	7.5	2.8			

There is a statistically significant difference between the gender of the sample and the variables “I value Cultural Pluralism” (Sig=0.004<0.05), “I value Cultural Diversity” (Sig=0.011<0.05), “I apply Cultural Pluralism ” (Sig=0.046<0.05) and "Total" (Sig=0.010<0.05). The males in the sample are those who in each case garnered the highest mean value (Table no8).

Table no8: Correlation results between teachers' gender and subscales

Gender		N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
I appreciate Cultural Pluralism	Male	418	6.7	2.7	2.879	779	0.004
	Female	363	6.2	1.6			

I value Cultural Pluralism	Male	418	9.9	3.9	2.561	779	0.011
	Female	363	9.2	3.6			
I apply Cultural Pluralism	Male	418	13.4	4.8	2.003	779	0.046
	Female	363	12.7	4.0			
Total scale	Male	418	50.7	8.7	2.579	779	0.010
	Female	363	49.3	6.9			

There is a statistically significant correlation with negative direction between the level of study of the sample and the assessment of Cultural Pluralism (Sig=0.006<0.05). This demonstrates that the higher the level of education of the sample, the more the estimate of Cultural Diversity decreases (Table no9).

Table no9: Correlation results between teachers' educational level and appreciation

Education level		I appreciate Cultural Pluralism
	Correlation Coefficient	-.098**
	Sig.	0.006
	N	781

There is a statistically significant difference between the training in basic studies and the variables “I value Cultural Pluralism” (Sig=0.038<0.05) and “I apply Cultural Diversity” (Sig=0.007<0.05). The highest mean value was obtained by those who have not received training in basic studies (1.5±0.5) (Table no10).

Table no10: Results of correlation between teachers’ basic studies training and individual variables

Basic studies training		N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
I value Cultural Pluralism	Yes	159	9.0	4.0	-2.078	779.000	0.038
	No	622	9.7	3.7			
I apply Cultural Pluralism	Yes	159	12.2	4.5	-2.708	779.000	0.007
	No	622	13.3	4.4			

There is a statistically significant difference between participation in training seminars and the variable “I apply Cultural Pluralism” (Sig=0.006<0.05). The population of teachers who have not participated in training seminars has the highest mean value (Table no11).

Table no11: Correlation results of teacher training seminars and individual variables

Participation in educational seminars		N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
I apply Cultural Pluralism	Yes	344	12.6	4.3	-2.743	779.000	0.006
	No	437	13.5	4.5			

V. Discussion

In modern societies, where multiculturalism is flourishing, school should provide realistic scenarios to support social inclusion for all, especially through Physical Education that enrich interaction with body movements and shared goals²⁶. It is of imperative need school to prepare future citizens for peaceful co-existence in an increasingly diverse and changing society²⁷

The findings of the research showed that teachers are the ones who value Cultural Pluralism more compared to physical education teachers. Other studies showed no significant differences between different faculties²⁸. The results of the current study support the findings of previous research in that Physical Education teachers and Primary school teachers value cultural diversity^{16, 19}.

Regarding gender, it was observed that men appreciate and implement Cultural Pluralism whereas women value Cultural Pluralism in higher degree. However, these results contradict previous research showing that female teachers had more favorable attitudes towards all students. Studies showed that females had a better understanding of cultural diversity towards culturally, ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse students^{17,29}. However, while both males and females considered that diversity was important and should be valued in the classroom, both groups were not comfortable with Cultural Diversity and how to implement culturally responsive pedagogy methods.

Basic training studies is an independent variable causing significant differences in 2 dependent variables: “Value Cultural Pluralism” and “Apply Cultural Pluralism”. In particular, those teachers who have not received

training in basic studies give more "Value" to Cultural Pluralism as well as "Implement" it to a greater extent than those who have received it. At the same time, teachers who have not participated in training seminars "Implement Cultural Pluralism" to a greater extent than their colleagues who have participated. However, the results of our research seem to contradict previous research, which documented prejudices and stereotypes of teachers towards students with cultural diversity³⁰. Others studies report that many Physical Education teachers do not feel confident about dealing with multicultural classes and may often receive inappropriate training^{21,26,31,32}.

Regarding their students, teachers strongly agree on equal opportunities for learning and success in physical education among students. They also fully agree in the belief that they should be taught to respect diversity (in terms of nation, race, color and culture). Also, teachers strongly value social pluralism in relation to respect and economic status and believe that physical education gives a very high value to PE. Children need physical education because it has intellectual and psychological benefits, mainly through improving self-discipline, judgment, goal setting, self-esteem, self-confidence, strengthening cooperation and promoting healthy lifestyles. Hence, it is necessary that all children can participate in these classes, despite their differences.

VI. Conclusion

Physical Education and sports speak a language without words^{34,35}. Physical Education classes conduce firmly to the inclusion of vulnerable populations³⁶ and respect of cultural diversity³⁷. This study attempted to provide an insight of Physical Education teachers' and Primary school teachers' views on Cultural Pluralism and the implementation of intercultural Education in Physical Education classes. The vast majority of participants perceived Physical Education classes as important settings for implementing intercultural education and promoting the inclusion of culturally, ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse students.

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