

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT GOALS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to determine the relationship between secondary school students' attitude towards physical education classes and their achievement goal orientations. The participants of the study consist of 212 secondary school students 129 (60.8%) of whom are boys and 83 (39.2%) are girls. It has been found out that the attitudes of students is significantly related to Outcome Orientation Without Effort sub-dimension ( $p<.05$ ). It has been found that students having negative attitudes towards physical education classes have higher scores of outcome orientation without effort than those exhibiting a positive attitude ( $p<.05$ ). Secondary school students' attitude towards physical education classes and their achievement goal orientation do not differ by gender.

**Keywords:** Motivational climate, attitudes, goal orientation, physical education.

### INTRODUCTION

Physical education classes are primarily responsible for the lack of participation in physical activity in the modern society (De la Cruz-Sánchez et al., 2011). Physical education class is an important and necessary means for students to participate in physical activities and to look healthier and better. Therefore, physical education classes are required to be further strengthened within school structure (Cale, 2000). Performing physical education classes effectively and regularly may help develop positive attitudes of students towards physical activity (Ntoumanis, 2002). Attitudes which include individuals' perceptions, opinions and judgments of a certain

behaviour and which are extremely important for the formation of an active lifestyle (Digelidis et al., 2003) have been a popular subject for research carried out in the field of sports and physical activity participated by the young and children in the last two decades (Sit and Lindner, 2005). The results obtained from these studies reveal that students' positive attitudes towards physical education classes play an important role in their active lives outside the school (Subramaniam and Silverman, 2007).

Among the main objectives of physical education classes is included developing necessary knowledge, attitude and skills of children and the young to perform physical activities in an active life style

and strengthening their motivation (Chatoupis and Emmanuel, 2003; Chen and Ennis 2004; Green, 2008). Motivation, analyzed in human psychology and behaviour, is considered as an extremely effective and complex construct for individuals to manage time for a particular task, determine their method, organize their energy and form their opinions and desires (Urdan and Schoenfelder, 2006). This complex construct has held its popularity in the studies on physical education classes (Warburton and Spray, 2008). Experts in this field state that in order to increase participation in physical education classes, in physical activities outside the school and in sports for free time and health, students' motivation should be developed positively (Robazza et al., 2006).

The contribution of attitudes is great in strengthening student motivation for exercise and developing behaviours positively (Hagger and Chatzisarantis, 2005). There are studies stating that student attitudes directly affect the possible relationship between their searches for support and achievement orientations (Tanaka et al., 2002). The primary objective of all educational processes, including physical education, is to increase learning motivation of students (Erpič, 2011). Motivation is considered to affect learning outcomes directly and to be the fundamental factor to realize successful learning (Butterworth and Weinstein, 1996; Chen,

2001). Thus motivation may be claimed to be a significant factor in the formation of behaviours and attitudes.

Pedagogues, besides pointing out the need to determine the factors affecting achievement, emphasize the necessity for expressing clearly the relationships of these factors with attitudes (Subramaniam and Silverman, 2007; Abu Bakar et al., 2010). In the studies focusing on the importance of the relationship between attitude and orientation for achievement motivation in the field of physical education, it is emphasized that student attitude is required to be developed in a positive direction (Subramaniam and Silverman, 2000; De la Cruz-Sánchez et al., 2011).

There are four important theories of achievement motivation among motivation theories. These theories are; the theory of need for achievement claiming that personal and situational factors are the determiners of behaviour, attribution theory focusing on how individuals explain achievements and failures, efficacy theory used to explain achievement behaviour especially in children, achievement goal theory in which an individual's motivation is determined by his achievement goals, perceived ability and achievement behaviour (Weinberg and Gould, 2003).

Achievement goal theory, which emphasizes that the most basic drive of an individual is to be competent and successful (Sit and Lindner, 2005), is a

social cognitive construct developed with the aim of assessing abilities and determining the direction of achievement perception (Nicholls, 1989). The aim of this social cognitive construct is (Nicholls, 1989) to determine students' learning orientation and density within a practice aimed at the goals set (Stornes et al., 2008). Achievement goal theory is designed over two different goal orientations being learning goal orientation and performance goal orientation (Ames and Archer, 1988; Dweck and Leggett 1988; Nicholls, 1984). Performance goal orientation explains the concerns of an individual to gain superiority with little effort over others and to avoid looking incompetent before others. Task goal theory, on the other hand, is concerned with increasing individuals' abilities through learning (Xiang et al., 2003; Ingles et al., 2009).

As attitudes directly affect student behaviour (Rikard and Banville, 2006), it is important to examine the motivational processes influencing their attitude and behaviour towards physical activities (Vierling et al., 2007). The aim of this study is to determine the relationship between secondary school students' attitude towards physical education classes and their achievement goal orientations.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### PARTICIPANTS

212 secondary school students, 129 (60.8%) boys and 83 girls (39.2%)

participated in the study selected by the convenience sampling method. 42 (19.8%) students are at the fifth grade, 32 (15.1%) students are at the sixth grade, 63 (29.7%) at the seventh grade and 75 (35.4%) at the eighth grade. The average age of the students was found to be  $13.26 \pm 1.45$ .

### MEASURES

**Attitude scale of physical education and sport:** Attitude scale of physical education and sport developed by Demirhan and Altay (2001) includes one single dimension and 24 items 12 of which are positive and 12 negative. The Coefficient of internal consistency of the scale is .93. The correlation coefficient for the scale is .83. Each item in the scale is answered over a five-point likert scale ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree". In the interpretation of the findings obtained following data analysis, arithmetic means between 1.00 and 3.00 represents negative attitude while means between 3.01 and 5.00 reveal positive attitude.

**Learning and performance orientations in physical education classes' questionnaire:** The questionnaire developed by Papaioannou (1994) and adapted into Turkish by Kiremitci (in press) consists of five sub-dimensions namely Teacher-Initiated Learning Orientation, Students' Competitive Orientation, Students' Worries About Mistakes, Outcome Orientation Without Effort, and Students' Learning

Orientation. The 27 items in the scale are answered over a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree”. In the adaptation study carried out by Kiremitci (in press), coefficients of internal consistency belonging to the sub-dimensions of the scale range between .78 and .89. Fit indexes obtained as a result of the CFA were calculated as  $\chi^2 = 691.83$ ;  $df = 314$  ( $\chi^2/df = 2.20$ ) and  $RMSEA = .064$ ,  $SRMR = .054$ ,  $NNFI = .91$ ,  $CFI = .92$ ,  $IFI = .92$  and  $GFI = .85$ .

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

In accordance with the aims of the study, scores regarding students’ attitudes towards physical education classes were calculated in the first place and students with positive and negative attitudes were determined. Pearson correlation test was used in order to identify the possible relationship between students’ attitudes towards physical education classes and goal orientations sub dimensions. Students’ goal orientations towards physical education classes were analyzed by using t-test according to attitude differences. All statistical analyses carried out within the scope of the study were done with SPSS 13.0 package program and the degree of significance was determined as .05.

## RESULTS

Assessing the mean scores of students on the physical education and sports attitude scale, overall attitude towards physical

education classes has been found to be positive ( $4.08 \pm .69$ ). 180 (84.9%, mean =  $4.30 \pm .48$ ) of the participants exhibited a positive attitude while 32 (15.1%, mean =  $2.81 \pm .11$ ) of them had a negative attitude (Table 1).

**Table 1. Means scores and standard deviations for students on attitudes toward physical education**

|                          | N   | %    | Mean | Sd. |
|--------------------------|-----|------|------|-----|
| <b>Positive attitude</b> | 180 | 84.9 | 4.30 | .48 |
| <b>Negative attitude</b> | 32  | 15.1 | 2.81 | .11 |
| <b>General attitude</b>  | 212 | 100  | 4.08 | .69 |

It has been concluded that the sub dimensions forming students’ goal orientations in physical education classes have significant relationships among themselves ( $p < .01$ ) while the variable of attitude has a significant relationship only with the Outcome Orientation Without Effort sub dimension ( $p < .05$ ) ( Table 2).

**Table 2. Correlations between goal orientations and attitudes toward physical education on secondary school students**

|             | TILO   | SWAM   | SCO    | OOWE   | ATPE   |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <b>SLO</b>  | .728** | .396** | .651** | .276** | .081   |
| <b>TILO</b> |        | .353** | .597** | .300** | .049   |
| <b>SWAM</b> |        |        | .343** | .457** | -.006  |
| <b>SCO</b>  |        |        |        | .278** | .117   |
| <b>OOWE</b> |        |        |        |        | -.141* |

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Students’ Learning Orientation = SLO, Teacher-Initiated Learning Orientation = TILO, Students’ Worries About Mistakes = SWAM, Students’ Competitive Orientation = SCO, Outcome Orientation Without Effort = OOWE, Attitudes toward physical education = ATPE

It has been found that the groups formed according to the direction of students' attitudes towards physical education classes have significant differences only

with the Outcome Orientation Without Effort sub dimension ( $p<.05$ ) among the sub dimensions comprising goal orientations in physical education classes. Students having a negative attitude towards physical education classes have been found to have higher scores in completing a task without effort than those having positive attitudes (Table 3).

**Table 3. Comparison of positive and negative attitudes of secondary school students on goal orientation in physical education classes**

|      | Aspect of Attitude | N   | Mean | Sd. | t      |
|------|--------------------|-----|------|-----|--------|
| SLO  | Negative Attitude  | 32  | 3.87 | .81 | -.165  |
|      | Positive Attitude  | 180 | 3.90 | .80 |        |
| TILO | Negative Attitude  | 32  | 3.93 | .83 | .402   |
|      | Positive Attitude  | 180 | 3.86 | .82 |        |
| SWAM | Negative Attitude  | 32  | 3.58 | .98 | .743   |
|      | Positive Attitude  | 180 | 3.46 | .80 |        |
| SCO  | Negative Attitude  | 32  | 3.74 | .80 | -.118  |
|      | Positive Attitude  | 180 | 3.83 | .87 |        |
| OOWE | Negative Attitude  | 32  | 3.37 | .97 | 2.218* |
|      | Positive Attitude  | 180 | 2.98 | .89 |        |

\* $p<.05$

In the scores which students obtained from the sub dimensions of attitude and goal

orientation towards physical education classes, no significant difference has been found between genders (Table 4).

**Table 4. Comparison of gender differences of secondary school students on goal orientations and attitudes toward physical education classes**

|      | Gender | N   | Mean | Sd. | t     |
|------|--------|-----|------|-----|-------|
| SLO  | Female | 83  | 3.90 | .79 | .116  |
|      | Male   | 129 | 3.88 | .81 |       |
| TILO | Female | 83  | 3.86 | .85 | -.207 |
|      | Male   | 129 | 3.89 | .82 |       |
| SWAM | Female | 83  | 3.49 | .82 | .172  |
|      | Male   | 129 | 3.47 | .84 |       |
| SCO  | Female | 83  | 3.83 | .78 | .143  |
|      | Male   | 129 | 3.81 | .90 |       |
| OOWE | Female | 83  | 3.05 | .84 | .127  |
|      | Male   | 129 | 3.03 | .96 |       |
| ATPE | Female | 83  | 4.09 | .73 | .296  |
|      | Male   | 129 | 4.06 | .67 |       |

## DISCUSSION

The fact that secondary school students have highly positive attitudes towards physical education classes supports the results obtained in the studies carried out by researchers such as Subramaniam and Silverman (2007), Toriola (2010), Dismore and Bailey (2010) and Zeng et al. (2011). Considering the relationship between students' attitudes towards physical education classes and goal orientation sub- dimensions, it has been found that there is a significant relationship between attitude and Outcome Orientation Without Effort ( $p<.05$ ). Moreover, in the analysis done regarding goal orientation sub dimensions among student groups exhibiting positive and negative attitudes, a significant difference has been identified

in the Outcome Orientation Without Effort sub dimension. Also, students with negative attitudes have been found to have higher scores in the Outcome Orientation Without Effort sub dimension than those exhibiting positive attitudes. In his study Papaioannou (1994) states that in order for students to succeed in physical education classes, positive attitudes towards the class and high efforts are required together. In addition, Solmon (2003) asserts that students having positive attitudes towards physical education classes are more willing at participation in the class and putting effort, students with negative attitudes, on the other hand, do not comply with the instructions given by the teacher and do not try to solve the problems that come up. Therefore, motivations of students with negative attitudes may be increased and they may be supported to have more fun in the class and put more effort. In his study, Ntoumanis (2002) states that students develop negative attitudes when they do not enjoy a class. In their studies, Koca and Hein (2003) and De la Cruz-Sánchez et al., (2011) claim that there is a relationship between positive attitudes towards a class and students' motivation and willingness to put effort.

The finding that students' attitudes towards physical education classes do not differ between girls and boys supports the results of the studies of Gürbüz and Özkan'ın (2012), Kamtsios (2010) and Subramaniam and Silverman

(2007). This conclusion is not; however, parallel with the findings of Silverman and Subramaniam (1999), Chung and Phillips (2002), Şişko and Demirhan (2002), Hünük and Demirhan (2003), Koca and Demirhan (2004), Koca and Aşçı (2004; 2006), Taşgın and Tekin (2009) and Yoncalık (2011). This reveals that the effect of the variable of gender on attitude has not yet been clearly identified.

Using the same scale in the present study Flores et al. (2008) examined students' goal orientations towards physical education classes in terms of gender differences and found significant differences in the sub dimensions of Students' Worries About Mistakes, Students' Competitive Orientation and Outcome Orientation Without Effort which form a student's performance orientation. This significant gender difference identified in performance orientation may be due to the practice-based structure of physical education classes and individual differences of students. The results obtained from the present study regarding the fact that goal orientation does not vary by gender support the findings of studies carried out using different measurements tools in the literature (White et al., 1998; Xiang and Lee, 2002).

Examining the relationship that is possible to occur between attitude and goal orientations it can be said that students with negative attitudes

focus on the outcome without putting effort. In contrast, positive attitudes towards physical education classes may be considered to motivate students to increase their effort during the class and increase their enjoyment of the class. In their study Bryan and Solmon (2012) concluded that students' positive attitudes towards physical education classes would improve if they were provided with a task oriented class environment and their attitude and motivation for the class would increase if they were given opportunities to use their creativity.

In conclusion, it is necessary to organize physical education classes which put the students in the centre, increase their creativity and participation, and are learning and task oriented. This would improve students' positive attitudes towards the class and increase their efforts and enjoyment of the class.

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## ORTAÖĞRETİM ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN BEDEN EĞİTİMİ DERSLERİNE YÖNELİK BAŞARI HEDEFLERİ VE TUTUMLARI ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ

**Özet:** Bu çalışmanın amacı, ortaokul öğrencilerinin beden eğitimi derslerine yönelik tutumları ile başarı hedef yönelimlerinin arasındaki ilişkinin belirlenmesidir. Bu çalışmada yer alan ikincil amaç doğrultusunda, öğrencilerin beden eğitimi derslerine yönelik tutum ve hedef yönelimleri, cinsiyet değişkenine göre analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmaya İzmir ili sınırları içerisinde orta öğretimin kurumlarında öğrenim gören 212 (erkek = 129 [%60.8]; kız= 83 [%39.2]) öğrenci katılım göstermiştir. Öğrencilerin yaş ortalamaları  $13.26 \pm 1.45$  olarak tespit edilmiştir. Öğrencilerin 180'i (%84.9) beden eğitimi derslerine yönelik olumlu tutum gösterirken, 32'i (%15.1) olumsuz tutum sergilemektedir. Bu sonuç genel olarak öğrencilerin beden eğitime yönelik olumlu tutum (ort.= 4.08) sahibi olduğunu göstermektedir. Öğrencilerin beden eğitimi derslerine yönelik tutum ve başarı hedef yönelimleri ilişkilendirildiğinde, öğrenci tutumları ve **çabalamadan sonuç yönelimi alt boyutunun anlamlı düzeyde ilişkili olduğu görülmektedir ( $p < .05$ ).** **Bununla birlikte, olumlu ve olumsuz tutum gösteren öğrencilerin, hedef yönelimleri alt boyutlarından almış oldukları puanlar karşılaştırılması sonucunda, çabalamadan sonuç yönelimi alt boyutunda oluşan farkın anlamlı olduğu belirlenmiştir ( $p < .05$ ).** Ayrıca, cinsiyet değişkenine göre öğrencilerin beden eğitimi derslerine yönelik tutum ve hedef yönelimleri incelendiğinde, kız ve erkek öğrenciler arasındaki farkın anlamlı olmadığı tespit edilmiştir ( $p > .05$ ). Elde edilen bu sonuçlar, öğrencilerin merkeze çekildiği, yaratıcılarını ve katılımlarını arttırmaya yönelik, görev yönelimli derslerin uygulanmaya konmasının, öğrencilerin derse yönelik tutumlarını, derste göstermiş oldukları çabayı ve dersten aldıkları zevki olumlu yönde etkileyeceği düşüncesini doğrulamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Motivasyonel iklim, tutum, hedef yönelimi, beden eğitim