

Identifying Regional difference in facilities and Resources of teaching physical education in Oman

Dr/ Yousra AL-Sinani

Associate Professor

Curriculum and Instructions Physical Education

College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

Abstract:

To identify the regional differences in teaching physical education with regards of Thus to explore the dependent of teaching PE relay on availability of resources and facilities in teach different skills in PE. The study consider the importance of the playing area and student safety for teaching PE in three different geographical educational region in Oman.

The result showed the uneven availability of supporting capabilities for teaching school sports in Oman. That also seam finding with regards the resource; equipment, tools. The study recommend consider the regional difference in to account before planning PE facilities. Also recommendation of an storing facilities of PE resource in schools to ensure an good quality when used for teaching.

Keywords: school physical education, resources, facilities, teaching.

Background Oman offers education to both males and females equally and opportunities for schooling. Arabic, Islamic education, mathematics, science and English are t he primary subjects in providing the educational environment and caring for its learning skills ALSinani 2010. In the expansion that took place in the 1980s, music, physical education and artistic education were given as subjects of study rather than recreational activities. School facilities are also supported by the basic capabilities of the classroom environment. Physical education in terms of availability of capabilities is the least rated in terms of importa nce as a subject Alsinani 2014, 2017

Statement of the problem:

Regarding physical education, Nazmi (2000) says: “Physical education in education is important as a subject, not less than other subjects.” However, girls and boys in Oman love physical education, a science they love, and educational skills. Thus, this study is first in identifying regional difference in teaching physical education, on the availability of resources and facilities

Research Question:

- 1- what are identifying regional difference in teaching physical education regards Facilities and resources ?
- 2- what are identifying regional difference in teaching physical education regards available spaces and equipment (quality and condition)

Literature Review:

Ahmad, et al. (2020) Hardman 2008 highlight the important work undertaken to develop inclusive spaces for ethnic minorities. Ultimately, the study demonstrates the importance of cultural awareness, and the need for multicultural training initiatives across sports organizations to improve practice and policy.

The second interesting study is by Ives (2014) on the social construction of PE and school sport: transmission, transformation and realization. The author argues that whilst PESS (Physical Education and School Sport) was once marginalized within the school curriculum, increased political interest has emerged in it with the idea that sport can be used to address

wider social issues. Two major strategies - Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL 2003-2008) and Physical Education and Sport Strategy for Young People (PESSYP 2008-2013) and £2.4 billion of funding were employed to investigate the influences upon pedagogic practice in the field of PESS. This research study, also as Mihaela et al 2015 conducted from within a School Sport Partnership, draws on a range of ethnographic methods used with Partnership Development Managers, School Sport Coordinators, Primary Link Teachers and PE teachers across a sub-regional area of London. The data were analyzed via the grounded theory method, revealing severe limitations on pedagogic practice, and the realization of change in the field of PESS.

Previous studies have included a study of physical education in different gut experiences.

Method

This study examines the state of PE teaching in Omani schools, and by extension, the effectiveness of professional training for women PE teachers. Reliability in qualitative study is showing a match between what is recording and what is observed, in the reality Anderson 1989. In another word the "same classroom (Simpson and Tuson 1995:65). In this study it is not allow to video type the girls in the playground in Omani schools

Region 1: Facilities and resources:

The architectural structure of the school buildings across Oman is identical, even in remote villages. None of the schools had indoor spaces for PE education. Seven of the nine schools had marked playground areas outside but none was covered to give protection from the sun. Areas were concrete and flat but with holes and uneven surfaces. Two schools had no playground area and their school buildings simply merged with the mountain area, rocks and stones. Physical education happened in small paved areas between classrooms.

I was uncomfortable sitting and watching this lesson because I was afraid that the children would fall over when they got excited and would run outside of the physical education area into the rocks and stones. There were no real boundaries. The teacher gave no information on safety or boundaries within which the children should work.

(OR1C1S2)

Resources were scarce. Gymnastics and basketball dominated the curriculum in cycle two and general education schools but they had little equipment, for example only three balls per class, or four mats of poor quality, which brought inevitable consequences:

When the children started doing the activity of rolling with the three mattresses available, they started to complain to the teacher that they could feel the rocks through the mats. This showed the poor quality of the mats and the risk the children faced in this situation. (OR1GES2)

Cycle one lessons focused more on general movement education with the children moving freely on the outside areas and exploring basic movements such as running, jumping and using body parts. Teachers were sometimes very resourceful as in this example:

I thought the teacher (cycle one) was clever to find her own way to motivate and guide the children through the use of visual aids showing the shapes she wanted the young children to make with their bodies. (OR1C2S1)

The children were very respectful to the teacher in this region and followed instructions immediately without argument or questioning. The teachers were strict and direct in their

approach. The children, especially in cycle one, enjoyed their lessons and were sad when they were over:

When the bell rang for the end of the lesson the children went ‘Oooohhhh’ they did not want the lesson to finish. They were very excited because they were having competitions with each other to see who could make the shapes the teacher held up first. (OR1C2S1)

Region 2: Facilities and resources:

Regarding the spaces used for PE, one of the nine schools we visited had an indoor space, four had concrete outside areas with only slight protection from the sun through partial suspended cloth shading. One of these suspended the cloth on large metal pillars which presented a serious risk to children’s safety as they moved around the space, as indicated in field notes:

The half-an-hour lesson took place on an outdoor concrete area, shaded fully with cloth, which was old with some holes. Metal pillars were used to hold the fabric and were positioned close to each other seriously hampering children’s safe movement around the area. (OR2C1S2)

The other four schools had no designated physical space for PE and were badly covered with moving sand. Any space became a PE space. The ground was soft and sandy making it difficult to move, run or do any kind of activity. The sand was very hot to walk on and the children’s feet sank into it as they moved. The difficulties were captured as follows:

The teacher pointed out the concrete playing area, with no shade, a distance from the school building that was supposedly for physical education lessons. She dug in the sand with her foot to show me the surface but the moving sand had covered the space, and that was the daily reality of life in AL-Dhahirah. (OR2C2S1)

In the four schools with no marked outdoor area, PE lessons normally happened in classrooms, or, where possible, under the shade of a tree. In classrooms, children were asked to move their tables and chairs to the edge of the space but the cleared space was too small as indicated here:

There was not enough space for the thirty-five senior students to move. Attempts to run around the outside became quite amusing and virtually impossible. The teacher tried stretching, running and fitness exercises to little purpose or benefit, with the girls simply ‘marking’ rather than being able to perform the proper exercises. The lesson lasted half an hour, the young people just did as they were told, there was not much visible enjoyment in their faces or movements. Perhaps, because I was there, they just had to do physical education when otherwise it might have been canceled. (OR2GES2)

In addition to poor facilities, the region was also deprived of equipment and resources. Six of the nine lessons had no equipment at all. One volleyball lesson at senior level had two balls, but not proper volleyballs. The school with the indoor space had a range of equipment including hoops, cones, balls and sticks. One cycle one lesson took place with balls and cones of different sizes and colors.

The opportunities at the school with the sponsored indoor, air-conditioned space demonstrated one way forward in terms of raising the status and ethos of the subject. Alongside the actual

space came better resourcing and two good teachers. Due to its dual-purpose nature, the school played an important role within its community.

Region 3: Facilities and resources:

All nine schools had multiple concrete outdoor PE/playground spaces that were marked out and equipped for the three main games of basketball, volleyball and handball. Some were shaded with aluminum structures or green cloth; others were strategically placed behind the school to capture the shade from the school buildings. Some areas were in direct sunlight with no protection. The surfaces were good. Frequently, the following observation note could be made:

This school has three playgrounds for different games: basketball, handball and volleyball.
(OR3C2S3)

Beside the playground, all nine schools had a 'marching yard', an open covered space for early morning assembling of all staff and children for the purpose of school news, salutations to Oman and gentle on-the-spot exercise.

One lesson observed was conducted in an indoor space because of the heat outside. The teacher tried to work in an empty classroom but unfortunately the ceiling was low, the lights and fans were a hazard but there was air conditioning. Although this seemed like a good idea, the reality was not very comfortable as illustrated in this journal extract:

The girls had an unsatisfactory lesson. They were all anxious because of the early accident (girls in bare feet slipped) and spent the rest of the lesson being very cautious about how they moved on the marble floor. They were crowded (39) and when put into groups had to be very careful when passing to each other because of the fans (in the ceiling). They were worried about this and the potential damage that could be caused. They were also complaining about the atmosphere which became humid and unpleasantly filled with the smell of body odour, despite the air conditioning.

(OR3GES3)

Four of the nine schools had two PE teachers and the timetabling of classes and spaces was never problematic. More resources were available than in the other two regions. Appropriate balls were available for different games for the older children and the younger children had boxes of plastic equipment like ropes, cones, balls and hoops.

There are two big boxes full of colorful plastic equipment and different types of cones. Also enough balls are available for one between two.

(OR3C1S2)

Some schools had gymnastic equipment such as four mats and a box and a small number of benches. Such resources enabled the children to have more interesting PE lessons, with variety and different challenges, for example:

In this class of 36 the girls have enough equipment to have one ball between three, I didn't see this in the mountain or desert areas. The benefits of having enough equipment meant each girl had lots of chances to practice, to work with the ball. Such activity also enabled the teacher to move around observing and giving feedback to help individual children to make progress.

(OR3C2S3)

Teachers accepted students' comments or jokes which I had not seen in other regions. Teachers demonstrated freely and gave feedback to the students. The teachers seemed to be enthusiastic and energetic, passionate and interested in PE, showing a genuine love of the subject.

Discussion:

Region 1:

Muscat as a city more modernized than the other regions had schools that were better equipped with at least shaded outdoor areas. There was more equipment and an overall feeling of a more positive place for the subject in the schools. Most teachers in the other regions were depressed, doing their job to the best of their ability, given the poor conditions in which their subject was expected to exist. There was no sense of wanting to challenge their situations by requesting better facilities and equipment, just a feeling of resignation that this is 'how it is'. The exception was the young teacher, recently out of SQU training, in the desert area, who asked why she had been placed in such a situation when she only wanted to do a good job for PE.

Gender issues arose as expected. The feminization of the workforce ensured all teachers were female. Cycle one was the only stage at which girls worked in classes with boys but they worked in parallel, ensuring all teams, and partnering were in same-sex groupings as expected by teachers and children .

Region 2:

Cultural influences, rather than Islamic, are evidenced in this region through an example involving one PE teacher in dispute with her father. The PE uniform was appropriate Islamic ally in that head, arms and legs were covered but the teacher's father thought it was inappropriate and did not allow her to wear it. He insisted she wore the abaya and checked her clothing every morning. The school manager refused to speak to the father because she was a woman; the inspector did speak to him but refused to go to the court for further clarification.

In seven of the nine observed classes, students were in PE kit, that is they removed outer tunics to perform with blouses, trousers, scarves; some wore trainers and some normal school shoes. In the other two schools, children simply participated in their normal school uniforms.

Region 3:

Field research in the desert region was very depressing and frustrating for me as a tutor at SQU and researcher. It highlighted the gap between the SQU experience and the reality of PE in some of the schools, facing many difficult challenges, in Oman. Firstly, as a Muslim woman, and a parent, it surprised me that there seemed little awareness of the need to adapt to the special needs of young people during Ramadan. Secondly, the effects of the extreme climate appear to receive little recognition in terms of the potential risk and harm to young people. Thirdly, the lack of facilities and resources in terms of suitable spaces in which to conduct PE lessons is problematic. Students need to be prepared for such situations during their training, as suggested by another lecturer: "It would be better to give the students a real example of physical education in schools outside of Muscat where facilities and equipment are a problem. On a larger scale, there have to be new thinking on ways to realize the potential of Oman's commitment to education and PE as a right of all children.

Conclusion

Relationships between the teachers and students were relaxed, open, and comfortable. The children were constantly asking questions in their lessons and the teachers were encouraging this and constructively using the learning opportunities this brought.

References:

- Al-Sinani, Y. (2014). A Necessity in Today's Time: Physical Education in Oman. *International Journal of Learning Management Systems*, 2(1), pp.21-32
- Al Sinani, Y. (2017) The Establishment and Development of the Initial Physical Education Teachers 'Training Program for Women in Oman. *Sport in the Middle East: Power, Politics, Ideology and Religion*. (pp85 – 110). DOI: 10.4324/9781315087726-6
- Al-Sinani, Y. & Benn, T. (2010). The Sultanate of Oman and the Position of Girls and Women in Physical Education and Sport. In Benn, T., Pfister, G., & Jawad, H. (Eds.). *Muslim Women in Sport* (pp. 125-136). London, LDN: Routledge.
- Anderson, L. and Burn, R. (1989) *Research in Classrooms: The Study of Teachers, Teaching and Instruction*. Oxford: Pergamon
- Hardman, K. (2008). Physical education in schools: A global perspective. *Kinesiology*, 40(1), 5–28.
(alphabetical order)
- Ives, H. (2014) *The social construction of physical education and school sport: transmission, transformation and realization*. Published PhD dissertation submitted to the University of Bedfordshire
- Mihaela, I. Iulian, A. (2015) Original article Differences and Similarities in Curriculum and Assessment in Physical Education in Eastern European States *Science, Movement and Health*, Vol. XV, Issue 115 (1): 41-46
- Sharman, C. and Cross, W and Vennis, D (2000) *Observing Children. A Practical Guide*. (2nd ed): updated and expanded. London: Continuum.
- Siljamäki, M. Anttila, E. (2021) Developing Future Physical Education Teachers' Intercultural Competence: The Potential of Intertwinement of Transformative, Embodied, and Critical Approaches. *Front. Sports Act. Living*, 02 December 2021.
- Simpson, M. and Tuson, J. (1995) *Using Observations in Small-Scale Research. A Beginner's Guide*. Glasgow: Sage.