

**Folk Dances From Our Cultural Heritage: Attitudes of Physical Education
and Sports Teacher Candidates**

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Abstract

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of physical education (PE) teacher candidates studying at Akdeniz University, Faculty of Sport Sciences towards folk dance course. A total of 300 (140 females and 160 males) students at Akdeniz University Faculty of Sport Sciences participated in this research. In particular, a total of 92 students except from the Department of Physical Education and Sports (PES) stated that they have received educational formation training. Folk Dance Lesson Attitude Scale for Prospective Physical Education Teachers developed by Turan (2015) and consisting of 13 items was used to measure the attitudes of PE teacher candidates towards the folk dance lesson. Descriptive statistics (frequency (f), percentage (%)), t-test and ANOVA were used. The statistical significance was set at $p < .05$. A statistically significant difference was found between the attitudes of the teacher candidates towards the folk dance course according to the gender variable favoring females. Considering the participants' previous experience of a folk dance course attendance, a statistically significant difference was determined between their attitudes towards the folk dance course favoring the students who had previous course experience. As a result of the examination of the difference between the attitudes of teacher candidates towards the folk dance lesson according to their departments, there was a statistically significant difference between the students in Department of PES and Department of Coaching Education. This difference was noted favoring the students in the Department of PES.

Keywords: Attitude, Physical Education Teacher, Folk Dances,

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**Kültürel Miraslarımızdan Halk Oyunları: Beden Eğitimi
ve Spor Öğretmeni Adaylarının Tutumları**

Öz

Bu çalışma, Akdeniz Üniversitesi Spor Bilimleri Fakültesinde öğrenim gören Beden Eğitimi Öğretmen Adaylarının, Halk Oyunları dersine karşı tutumlarının belirlenmesi amacı ile hazırlanmıştır. Araştırmaya, Akdeniz Üniversitesi Spor Bilimleri Fakültesinde öğrenim gören, 140 Kadın ve 160 Erkek öğrenci katılmıştır. Ayrıca Beden Eğitimi ve Spor bölümü dışında kalan katılımcıların 92'si formasyon eğitimi aldıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Veri toplama amacıyla Turan (2015) tarafından geliştirilen, tek faktör ve 13 maddeden oluşan Beden Eğitimi Öğretmen Adayları İçin Halk Oyunları Dersi Tutum Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen verilerin analizi için frekans (f), yüzde (%), T-Testi testi ve ANOVA testleri kullanılmış ve istatistiksel anlamlılık düzeyi $p < 0,05$ kabul edilmiştir. Araştırmaya katılan öğretmen adaylarının cinsiyet değişkenine göre halk oyunları dersine karşı tutumları arasında, kadın öğrenciler lehine istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık tespit edilmiştir. Araştırmaya katılan öğretmen adaylarının halk oyunları eğitimi deneyimi değişkenine göre halk oyunları dersine karşı tutumları arasında deneyimli öğrenciler lehine istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılık belirlenmiştir. Okudukları bölüme göre öğretmen adaylarının halk oyunları dersine karşı tutum düzeyleri arasında ki farkın incelenmesi sonucunda beden eğitimi ve spor bölümü ile antrenörlük eğitimi bölümünde okuyan öğrenciler arasında istatistiki olarak anlamlı farklılık olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Belirlenen fark beden eğitimi ve spor bölümünde okuyan öğrenciler lehinedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Tutum, Beden Eğitimi Öğretmeni, Halk Oyunları,

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Introduction

In today's world, education plays an extremely major role in the development of individuals and thus the whole society. While education is so important in our lives, the teachers who provide this education should also be considered equally important and valuable considering their role as an important part of the education system. Teaching profession asks for many aspects besides the act of teaching only such as keeping himself/herself up-to-date with the latest developments and changes of our age, constantly improving himself/herself, being patient and hardworker. Physical education (PE) teachers, who are a part of this important profession, contribute to the holistic development of students comprising of psychomotor, cognitive and affective development through several physical activities and sports. PE is a powerful educational field that provides the growth and development of individuals. PE can be considered as an inclusive term addressing all of the movements for individual's physical and mental health and development. PE teachers not only improve the physical and mental health of students, but also train good athletes during the after-school and extra-curricular activities. In addition to all these, it is the culture of a country that both PE teachers and teachers from other disciplines aim to convey to their students. Culture is a set of values transferred from generation to generation and each individual generally protects these values of his/her own country throughout his/her life. Considering the compulsory education and the time spared at school, teachers play a huge role to transfer these values undoubtedly. Folk dances are one of those cultural values. The set of rhythmic movements made by people to describe their traditions, religion, feelings, thoughts, their daily life and the events they are influenced by, are called "Folk Dance". This is a cultural product that mankind has put forward by combining it with music (Eroglu, 1999). Folk dances reflect the cultural values of the society to which they belong, express sadness, joy and an event; performed in accompany with music, individually or in groups. What is seen on the stage is a set of rhythmic movements made by people to describe their traditions, religion, feelings, thoughts, their daily life and the events they are influenced by throughout the years. It is a cultural product that mankind has put forward by combining it with music. (Eroglu, 1999)

Folk dances have an important value for our culture. PE teachers play a key role considering the task of transferring this value to the next generations. Every PE teacher and teacher candidate should be able to teach folk dances, which is included in the PE curriculum in higher education.

Turkish folk dances are a term that is used incorrectly in a way. In fact, they are peasant dances and games (And, 1990). It has been advocated by the educators of every country to give importance to teaching of these peasant games, such that this education should be offered in all schools in general. The benefits from this teaching are varied. These are discussed and defended from different fields such as social, aesthetic, cultural and physical education. Culture comes first among all these (And,

1990). Considering the teaching of folk dances as a subject of "national education" contributes to the formation of a modern education system and to the understanding of "national feeling", which is one of the important features of folk dances, and the students' feelings and emotions such as friendship, love of art, responsibility, aesthetics, self-confidence. It will greatly enable them to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills in their future lives. In addition, if folk dances are considered to be a "sports treasure", it will be quite obvious how useful this type of education will be. Because in the structure of our folk dances, there are beautiful and impressive movements and figures that are difficult to perform, hard when necessary, soft when necessary, adorned with subtle nuances and curves (Çine, 1990).

The phenomenon of movement, which becomes artistic in games and sportive actions, gains value with qualitative adjectives and provisions such as beautiful, pleasant, rhythmic, fluent, elegant and soft (Orhun, 1988). The teaching of these figures and movements is in our conservatories today; "ballet exercises", "expression gymnastics", "training knowledge", "teaching technique of difficult movements", "rhythmic gymnastics", "stage techniques and practices" are performed in conjunction with preliminary lessons. It should not be forgotten that these practices generally constitute the basis of contemporary "dance" education systems (Çine, 1990). As for the phenomenon of rhythm in movement education and sports teaching, it exists in all cosmic, human and non-human events. The explanations of this phenomenon, which covers any area of existence, range from metaphysical interpretations to biomechanical explanations. Moreover, considering rhythm in sports movement, it is a motoric coordination and functionally covers all of the bodily, spiritual and mental processes (Orhun, 1988). The quality and quantity of human movement performance appear together in rhythm. The rhythm in human movements is the expression of the "I" as the expression of the body. In the rhythm of the movement, aesthetic values and elements such as the quality of the movement performed with ease, economy, organic integrity, structure, time and space dimensions, dynamism and fluency reflect themselves. All these aforementioned phenomena become more meaningful when they are accompanied by music (Orhun, 1988). The word game is the aesthetic of the human body accompanied by the tempo of music.

The word "dance" includes the body movements with aesthetic value accompanied by the tempo of music (Karakeçili, 1994). Dance has a cultural perspective that has evolved through time and place as a result of a creative process in which the human body is skillfully used (Kaepler, 1997). As a result, Turkish folk dances, which are performed in company with music and contain different movement forms and which have created these movement forms as a result of physical, spiritual and mental processes, can also be considered very useful aspects in the development of aesthetic values and judgments of children and youth within contemporary PE activities.

Aesthetic elements such as integrity, creativity, expression, expression, bodily perception, rhythm and harmony have been becoming increasingly important in sports activities. Particularly in movement education, which is still a hot-topic today, subjective values are preferred to objective and measurable values considering the accountability processes in education.

One of the 17 general aims determined in the book titled "Primary School Curriculums Physical Education Program 6-7-8" prepared by the Ministry of National Education of Turkey in 2018 is to acquire knowledge and skills about our folk dances and to be willing to practice them. Moreover, teaching folk dances are also strongly related to "be able to move accompanied by music with a rhythm", "acquiring good posture habits", "developing nerve, muscle and joint coordination", "acquiring the habit of working in cooperation and acting together", "taking duties and responsibilities", "adapting to leaders and being able to lead". In addition, considering its culture-related context, it can also be said that it is related to "comprehending the meaning and importance of national holidays and days and to be willing to participate in ceremonies".

And (1990) mentions this issue in his study as follows:

The social and entertaining aspects of learning peasant dances should not be underestimated. Since peasant dances are performed collectively and often with both men and women, students' social feelings such as participating in the community, cooperation and responsibility in the community, working with others, and understanding their place in the community would develop. Alongwith the fun and entertaining concerns of the peasant games, there is also a duty of physical education and health for PE teachers, which is as important as the other aspects. The positive effects of moving with music on the nervous, respiratory and muscular systems, easy control of the body, the discharge of excess power and internalized emotions through dance, health and physical education aspects are at points that cannot be underestimated.

In terms of gaining aesthetic sense and creativity, a certain communication, meaning and relationship should be established between the movements performed by children and young people in PE classes. They must be able to understand and explain every move they perform; they should be able to create new and different movements by establishing some connections between the movements and adding their own creative thoughts into it. In essence, the education system in practice should provide such an opportunity to the individual, and when necessary, the individual should be able to convey some messages to the audience by explaining/presenting different forms of life through movements. For instance, games, music, dance and pantomime, and all these phenomena are included in the concept of PE (Hasırcı and Yıldırım, 1991). In this regard, folk dance consists of body movements that reflect the customs, traditions and customs of various regions of a country, their

feelings, thoughts, beliefs and relations with nature. Thus, folk dance education in PE classes could be quite advantageous.

In order for the folk dance to fulfill this task, while the dances are being taught, the students should be informed about the place where the dance takes place, their clothes, costumes and customs. This kind of information helps the students to understand dances better and to get into the spirit and mood of each dance. Information on the climate and customs of the region where the dance takes place give meaning to dance more and enables students to play more intimately and successfully (And, 1990).

In order to transfer folk dances to the next generations properly, first of all, teachers working in this field are better to have knowledge and skills to ensure a holistic development.

Without mastering the motor structure (skeletal system, nervous system, movement system) in teaching of folk dances, how can we load this structure with the activity consisting of intense movements? As in all sports, a high level of coordination (physical preparation) cannot be achieved only with folk dances practices. This situation leads professionals to do extra and specific field practices to improve coordination skills.

In order for the activities and dances to be successfully performed, it is of great importance to develop basic motoric features such as balance, coordination, flexibility and rhythm. These features can only be provided by well-trained experts in the field. Professionals need to know how to plan the required practices such as designing training sessions addressing weaknesses individually, applying efficient rest and adequate warm-up and so on. In short, for the success of the professionals, it is necessary to acquire the theoretical knowledge of functional anatomy and exercise physiology, as well as the technical knowledge and skills necessary for training knowledge and movement training. Another condition for being successful in this field is to be a good training planner (Aydın, 1990).

Countries that were successful in folk dances gathered their studies in four areas as stated below (Aydın, 1990);

- 1- Music Education
- 2- Gymnastics (floor gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics)
- 3- Expression gymnastics (mime)
- 4- Game teaching

Thus, it is hoped that children will understand the elements of rhythm such as regular and irregular rhythms, accents and basic beats, and that they will be able to recognize and apply rhythmic

elements to a wide variety of play, dance and gymnastic movement skills (Kirchner & Fishburne, 1995). In our country, only game teaching has been focused on in the education of this field.

If the place of folk dances in physical education is examined:

After completing the Physical Education and Game course in the first four grades in primary education, students are expected to recognize and practice traditional dances and dances of our culture and other cultures, and to do simple rhythmic dance steps under the title of Our Cultural Values and Savings. Physical activity cards such as "I Know Our Culture" (MOR folk dance 1-3 cards) prepared by Turkish Ministry of Education can be used to achieve this aim.

After completing the PE course during secondary school, students are expected to apply appropriate steps to given rhythm and music Movement Skills unit; and also to recognize the folk dances of his/her immediate surroundings” as a requirement of Our Cultural Savings and Values unit.

In modern educational evaluations regarding the contribution of dance to the cognitive, emotional and psycho-kinetic goals of PE, it has been determined that traditional dances may be helpful to pupils to develop their collaborative, communicative, creative and friendship abilities. Thus, traditional dances help them to gain skills, knowledge and positive experience (Stivaktaki, Mountakis & Bournelli (2010). Folk dances are included in the curriculum determined by the national education in this way. As it is seen, folk dances are considered necessary for many achievements of students.

In this study, the aim was to investigate the attitudes towards Folk Dances course among both the students at the Department of PES and the students at the other departments of the faculty whom are also candidates to become a PE teacher after completing the required educational formation training.

Method

Participants and Data Collection

The participants of this study consist of 300 students (140 female (46.7%) and 160 male (53.3%)) Akdeniz University Faculty of Sport Sciences’s students. In particular, 25.3% of the participants are from the Department of PES, 32.7% from the Department of Sports Management, 25.3% from the Department of Coaching Education and 16.7% from the Department of Recreation. In addition, 26.7% of the participants were freshmen, 26.7% were sophomores, 22.7% were juniors and 24% were seniors. In addition, a total of 92 students except for the department of PES stated that they received educational formation training.

As a data collection instrument, Attitude Scale for Physical Education Teacher Candidates, which was developed by Turan (2015) and consists of 13 items was used.

This study was approved by the local ethics committee (approval number: 276/2022), and the procedures were conducted according to the principles expressed in the Declaration of Helsinki. All participants gave their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Data Analysis

The participants of this study consist of 300 students (140 female (46.7%) and 160 male (53.3%)) Akdeniz University Faculty of Sport Sciences's students. In particular, 25.3% of the participants are from the Department of PES, 32.7% from the Department of Sports Management, 25.3% from the Department of Coaching Education and 16.7% from the Department of Recreation. In addition, 26.7% of the participants were freshmen, 26.7% were sophomores, 22.7% were juniors and 24% were seniors. In addition, a total of 92 students except for the department of PES stated that they received educational formation training.

As a data collection instrument, Attitude Scale for Physical Education Teacher Candidates, which was developed by Turan (2015) and consists of 13 items was used.

This study was approved by the local ethics committee (approval number: 13/2022), and the procedures were conducted according to the principles expressed in the Declaration of Helsinki. All participants gave their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Findings

Table 1 presents the participants' attitude levels towards folk dance course according to gender variable.

Table 1

Investigation of Attitude Levels towards Folk Dances Course According to Gender Variable

Gender	N	\bar{x}	Sd	T	p
Woman	140	48,86	7,61	2,794	,006*
Man	160	46,12	9,15		

*p<0.05

In Table 1, independent groups t-test analysis method was applied in order to examine differences between the attitudes of the teacher candidates towards the folk dances lesson according to the gender variable and female (48.86) and male (46.12) students differed significantly favoring female students ($t=2.794$, $p=.006$).

Table 2

Investigation of Attitude Levels towards Folk Dances Lesson According to the Variable of Experience of Previous Folk Dances Course Participation

Attending Folk Dances Course	N	\bar{X}	Sd	T	p
Yes	145	50,14	6,77	5,628	,000*
No	155	44,83	9,26		

$p<0,05^*$

In Table 2, independent groups t-test analysis method was applied to examine differences between attitudes of teacher candidates towards the folk dances lesson according to the variable of participating in the folk dance course previously and experienced (50.14) and inexperienced (44.83) students in terms of attending a course differed significantly favoring the students who did have ($t=5.628$, $p=.000$).

Table 3

Investigation of Attitude Levels towards Folk Dances Lesson According to Department

Departament	N	\bar{X}	Sd	F	p	Tukey HSD
1.Physical Education and Sports	76	49,23	6,68	3,989	,008*	1>2
2.Coaching Education	98	45,80	9,69			
3.Sport Management	76	46,19	9,13			
4.Recreation	50	49,58	6,96			

$p<0.05^*$

One-Way-ANOVA analysis was conducted to examine the differences between the attitudes of teacher candidates towards folk dance lesson according to the department variable. Tukey HSD multiple comparison test was performed to determine between which groups there were significant differences. When the results were examined, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the department of PES (49.23) and the department of coaching education (45.80) favoring the students at the department of PES ($F(3,269)=3,989$, $p=.008$).

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the Attitudes of PE teacher candidates studying at Akdeniz University Faculty of Sport Sciences towards Folk Dances course. In order to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the attitudes of the teacher candidates participating in the research towards the folk dance course according to the gender variable, as a result of the independent groups t-test analysis, a statistically significant difference was found between females and males. Female students has more positive attitudes.

The findings of our study is in line with the previous research on this topic. For instance, Yoncalık (2007), in her study on PES students, determined that female students' attitudes towards dance were more positive than male students. Female students determined that they saw dance as a more enjoyable area than male students.

As a result of the independent groups t-test analysis, in order to examine differences between the attitudes of the pre-service teachers who participated in the research towards the folk dance course according to the variable of participating in the folk dance course, a statistically significant difference was found between the students who took the course and the students whom did not take the course, favoring the students who took the course. A difference has been noted. It is thought that this difference is caused by the previous experience of students regarding folk dance course participation and it is possible that the individuals who attended the course before were in a more positive mood towards folk dances. Altun & Atasoy (2019), in their study with 46 students, reported that 23 students in the experimental group who took Folk Dance course had a negative attitude towards Folk Dances before attending the lesson, but their negative attitudes have changed to positive after completing the course.

As a result of the One-Way-ANOVA analysis to examine the difference between the attitudes of teacher candidates towards folk dances course according to department variable. Tukey HSD multiple comparison test was conducted to determine between which groups the significant differences were, and it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the department of PES and the department of coaching education favoring students at department of PES. It is thought that this difference is due to the fact that the teacher candidates at the department of PES take folk dance course as a compulsory course and have knowledge about how they can use the knowledge they have acquired during their undergraduate education in the practice areas of the teaching profession.

UNESCO has noticeably changed the context of “cultural heritage” in recent years with some of the tools it has developed. . Cultural heritage is not only collections, objects and monuments but

also contains living expressions inherited from our ancestors or traditions and passed on to our descendants, such as, social practices, performing arts, festive events, rituals, oral traditions, practices and knowledge related to universe and thenature , or traditional production skills and knowledge.

Folk dances reflect the cultural values of a society to which it belongs; express an event, joy, sadness; have a religious origin; are performed in company with music, individually or in groups. Moreover, preservation of folk dances is of great importance to transfer them to future generations (Kico et al., 2018). Education can be a key element for the achievement of human development, national interests and objectives (Animasaun, & Abegunrin, 2017). Folk dances may play a key role to achieve those objectives with conveying and transferring the value for our culture. Every PE teacher and teacher candidate should be able to teach Folk Dances in Movement Skills, which is included in the physical education curriculum (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2018a; 2018b).

The use of the concept of "PES Teacher Candidates" is very important as it is not only the department of PE but also the students studying in other departments, with the educational formation training they have received or will receive in order to become PES teacher. PES teacher candidates have a positive attitude towards folk dances. Thus transfer of cultural heritage to future generations through folk dances, which are an important part of our culture, and the use of an activity that includes movements will benefit the development of physical, cognitive and affective characteristics in PE lessons and may enable students develop holistically.

Ethic Committee Approval

Ethic Committee: Akdeniz Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulu

Approval number: 276

Author Contributions

Both authors contributed equally at all stages of the research.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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