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## **SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN MALAYSIA**

**Arsaythamby Veloo**

*School of Education and Modern Languages, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Malaysia*  
[arsay@uum.edu.my](mailto:arsay@uum.edu.my)

**Hariharan N Krishnasamy**

*School of Languages, Civilisation and Philosophy, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Malaysia*  
[hn1084@uum.edu.my](mailto:hn1084@uum.edu.my)

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study is to explore the implementation of School-Based Assessment among Physical Education teachers in Malaysian secondary schools. This study was based on the qualitative method using semi-structured interviews. For the purpose of this research, 16 (8 male and 8 female) Physical Education teachers were selected from 4 secondary schools located in Perlis, a state situated along the northern border of Malaysia. These schools are national schools which follow the national curriculum endorsed by the Malaysia Ministry of Education. Furthermore, the schools adopt the co-educational system. Based on the findings, the teachers mentioned that the administrators were not positioning the Physical Education (PE) subject as one of the main subjects in the school curriculum. The teachers have complained that not all of them are specialist teachers whereby most PE teachers in Malaysian secondary schools are not*

*specialist teachers. Time allotment for a PE subject is two 40-minute lessons in a week. In the Malaysian education system, both teaching periods are shared by Physical Education and Health Education respectively. Furthermore, this subject is often debated because it seems to appear as a subject that needs to be taught in the curriculum without having a clear objective. Even though the objectives were already set by the Ministry, this subject remains unpopular because it is not included in the public examination. As a result, more measures need to be taken to ensure that the implementation of Physical Education subject can be of more benefit to the students.*

### **Keywords**

Physical Education Teachers, Secondary School, School-Based Assessment

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## **1. Introduction**

Physical Education (PE) is one of the most important subjects that have been introduced in the Malaysian educational syllabus. Physical Education activities have been recognized as the most influential aspect that affected the routine physical activities among youths (Sallis & Mc Kenzi, 1991). According to Erdal (2015), PE helps in enhancing students' overall abilities through physical, social, emotional and cognitive activities. Parallel to the aims of the National Educational Philosophy, PE has been incorporated as a subject in the curriculum to help students develop holistically in the physical, emotional, spiritual and the intellectual domains.

However, some of our students do not realize the importance of taking part in PE lessons, especially those who are studying in high school. Considering the important place PE has been given in the National Education system, Wan Azlan Wan Ismail and Tajul Arifin Muhamad (2015) conducted a research to examine the factors that hinder students' involvement in physical education activities in Malaysian high schools. One of the objectives of this study is to find out the level of hindering factors in the aspect of intrapersonal, interpersonal and the structure of activities in PE lessons among the high school students. This study concluded that all the three factors play a role in obstructing the students to participate in the PE lessons. The study also found that students really take notice of the school sports equipment and venue facilities. They need a proper venue, a great surrounding and well equipped facilities as the motivator factor for them to take part in PE activities.

According to Ruzlan and Arsaythamby (2017), before School Based Assessment was implemented, there was no systematic evaluation to assess PE activities. This is because not much importance was given to PE activities and assessment. Furthermore there was a lack of guidance for them to follow or adapt. A study by Wan Azlan Wan Ismail and Tajul Arifin Muhamad (2015) clearly shows that students also do have their own perspective and desire in what they want to achieve in the PE subject. Fulfilling or satisfying their needs may encourage them to participate actively in the PE lesson as their view of the subject may change.

Teachers' competencies are normally associated with how effective the teachers are in delivering the contents to the students. The idea of having an effective teacher is vital to the teaching and learning process as this will determine the quality of the delivered content hence promoting good practices in the education system. As mentioned by Christensen (1996), teachers who specifically teach physical education must have (a) content knowledge (b) basic pedagogy knowledge (c) pedagogy content knowledge (d) knowledge and curriculum (e) knowledge in learning context (f) knowledge of students and their characteristics and (g) knowledge in learning goals for effective learning. Additionally, such knowledge will engage students' interest and motivate them to participate in physical education activities. Such elements have been used as a benchmark to determine whether a lesson on physical education delivered by the teacher follows the guidelines and standards on how it should be delivered.

Stronge (2007) explained the general competence of teachers in six components; valuing students, respect for student personality and equality, social interaction, professional enthusiasm and motivation, job attitudes, and reflective interaction. Buyuknacar (2008) defined teachers' professional personality competencies as information which is expected to be known in their field which is specific to the individual's occupational group and features by which professional knowledge is evaluated. Similarly, competencies of physical education teachers are explained as required knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitude which are needed by physical education teachers to perform their duties and responsibilities (Unlu, Sunbul, & Aydos, 2008). Additionally, the instruments used in SBA to measure PE teachers' knowledge, abilities, performance, skills and competencies must be accurate and reliable (Koláčková, & Šikolová, 2017).

Physical education lessons improve students' leadership skills and self-confidence, increase love and respect for the environment, help in obeying school and class rules, and provide a balanced diet (Camlica, 2008). Physical education lessons were seen as an enjoyable

and fun lesson by secondary school and high school students (Tannehil & Zakrajsek, 1993). Furthermore, in a research conducted by Gullu (2007), attitudes of primary and secondary school students toward physical education classes were found to be positive.

To make students like the lessons, the teacher should be effective in delivering the lessons (Eken, 2008). The lessons transcend subject boundaries. There was a positive relationship between success of the students who participated in science and mathematics courses and teacher competence (Monk, 1994). Darling-Hammond (1999) obtained similar results about the relationship between teacher quality and student success in his research. In a study by Robinson (2007), in which education quality of different lessons were evaluated according to views of teachers and students, it was found that teachers have a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching. The physical education teacher adds quality to physical education lessons. Professional competence of physical education teachers is very important to increase quality standards in physical education lessons (Atencio, Jess, & Dewar, 2012).

According to Sacli, Bulca, Demirhan, and Kangalgil's (2009) on personal qualifications of physical education teachers, these teachers should be open to criticism, understand students, have a broad perspective and be patient. Furthermore, they should be self-confident, have the ability to improvise, and be creative and compassionate. There is some overlap with components necessary for quality PE lessons as mentioned by Pill (2004). This include teachers, students, program, leadership, learning for life, community, learning pedagogy, research and assessment.

Besides the qualities mentioned, teachers' level of self-efficacy is very important. Self-efficacy is related to the confidence level a teacher has while delivering the lesson. According to Tschannen-Moran, Hoy and Hoy (1998), self-efficacy refers to teachers' belief in their ability to conduct a series of actions to complete a learning task in a specific context. In other words, it refers to teachers' belief in their ability to teach in a learning situation. In contrast to achievement based on assessments, self-efficacy plays an important role in shaping students' attitudes towards school, subjects that have been taught as well as teachers' attitude. The greater the self-efficacy in teaching, the more students get interested and they will think that what they have learnt is something essential which is like the PE subject. Those students can have a positive impact on the teacher (Woolfolk, Rosoff & Hoy, 1990). Teachers' confidence in teaching is important, especially for Physical Education teachers. Not all of them are optimists. Some of them do not get enough exposure in teaching this subject. As a result, the teaching and

learning session in the class becomes boring, less attractive and less interesting. According to Gibson and Dembo (1984), self-efficacy is related to behaviour of teacher in class, and an open mind towards new ideas and lessons. In addition, self-efficacy also influences students' achievement, attitude and effective growth. Woolfok, Rosoff and Hoy (1990) indicate that different levels of experience can be a barrier to self-efficacy for the teacher. But, it can be developed or increased through teacher readiness to get new experiences via training/courses. This implies that teachers' experiences will increase their level of professionalism and confidence.

Physical fitness is an important aspect in the physical education lesson. Pupils need PE lessons in school to develop agility. The planning and the readiness of PE teachers in teaching pupils is very important. It can help pupils to achieve their goals. Well-planned lesson content and the implementation of an appropriate PE curriculum is important so that the students understand the lessons (Sun, 2012).

Furthermore, experienced PE teachers are able to apply the concept of anatomy, physiology, biomechanical, psychology and human movement. The studies showed that most PE teachers in the schools focus on PE teaching only for the pupils who are not involved in exams compared to pupils who are in examination classes. Unfortunately the pupils who will sit for exams have no chance to learn PE lessons because during PE classes, they have to sit for preparatory tests. As a result, the PE teacher must prepare the lesson plan very well and the teacher must be ready to teach the lesson to develop pupil's understanding towards the lesson taught.

## **2. Methodology**

This study used random sampling to select 4 secondary schools from the state of Perlis, a state situated along the northern border of Malaysia. These schools are national schools which use the same national curriculum endorsed by the Malaysian Ministry of Education. For the purpose of this research, 16 (8 male & 8 female) Physical Education teachers were selected from four secondary schools. These teachers were interviewed for 30 minutes where semi-structured interviews questions were used. All interviews were recorded and transcribed among the researchers where the details were categorised into themes for the purpose of discussion. The interviews were carried out in staff rooms and counseling rooms.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

#### 3.1 Perception of PE Teachers towards the Physical Education Subject

Based on the recordings, they are transcribed and classified into themes for the purpose of discussion. The themes are separated into different categories namely teachers and students respectively. The following are the themes which have been classified from the teachers' transcription: a) issues related to school administration; b) issues with teachers who are teaching the subject; c) issues with time allotment, d) issues on equipment and e) issues on evaluation.

##### 3.1.1 Issues related to School Administration

The first outlined theme from the comments is the issue with the school administration. Teachers have responded by saying that the administrators are not putting the Physical Education subject as the main concern in the school curriculum. This is because more weightage is given to subjects which are called 'examination subjects'. Since PE does fall under this category, the school administrators have taken an initiative where the PE subject is only made available on paper in the timetable.

*"I feel that the administrators are biased because they are in favour of subjects which have more weight in the examination" (T3)*

However, the teaching and learning (T&L) process of the subject has never taken place in the actual classroom. Furthermore, the subject does not seem to get the importance it deserves where the school administrators do not have an interest at all in discussing what are the issues and concerns with regard to the subject (Zainun Ishak, 1995).

*"...the Principal does not want to discuss any issues and concerns with regard to the subject because he feels that PE subject is not important at all hence does not contribute anything to the School Average Grade (GPS)" (T4)*

This has demotivated the teachers especially those who are really motivated in teaching the PE subject. Moreover the school administrators only view PE as a subject that does not contribute to the School Accumulative Grade in the term given by the Ministry of Education (MoE, 1999). This is because PE is not included as a compulsory pass subject in the public examination. Thus, this has caused the subject to become less popular among the school administrators (Wan Yasima, 1998).

##### 3.1.2 Issues with Teachers who are teaching the subject

The second issue is about the selection of teachers who are teaching the subject. Any subjects in school must be taught by specialists because they have received sufficient training

and at the same time equipped with pedagogical content knowledge in enabling them to get hold of their content delivery.

*“I am not the specialist teacher so I have problems in teaching the subject because I still need more training and need to be exposed to the correct way of teaching PE” (T5)*

The teachers have complained that not all of them are the specialist teachers whereby most PE teachers in Malaysia secondary schools are in the non and semi specialist teachers. This is supported with the feedback given by the PE teachers where they are unsure at times especially what are they supposed to do when it comes to certain circumstances, for example, how to deal with problematic students at the field or what to do when there is insufficient equipment at school to carry out the PE activities (Wan Yasima, 1998).

*“In my school we do not have the proper equipment and it is difficult for me to teach the students during PE lesson” (T1, T2, T5)*

The teachers admit that they do not have sufficient training for the PE content since not all of the teachers in the PE panel are the specialists. Some secondary schools have imbalance number and gender for the teachers, for example, two female and one male teacher as the specialist in the PE panel. This has made the distribution of teaching period to become harder because the letter of order has stated that only male teachers will attend male students and vice versa (Curriculum Development Centre, 1999). Due to such conditions, the panel has appealed to the school administrators to loan other subject teachers to teach the PE subject. This has caused uproar by other subject teachers because they have not received any training or being interested to teach the subject (Zainun Ishak, 1995).

*“Other school teachers neither male nor female are expected to fill the shoes of the insufficient PE teachers in order to ensure students will benefit from the lesson” (T4)*

Another feedback from the teacher is that some of the PE teachers are teaching other subjects whereby they are teaching other critical subjects like Malay Language, English, History, Science and Mathematics. This has caused a dilemma to them because they have to use the PE teaching periods to teach the mentioned critical subjects due to the syllabus constraint. Furthermore they are aware that they are supposed to teach PE but yet after receiving monumental pressure from the school administrators, they are obliged to continue teaching the critical subjects during the PE teaching periods. Moreover, the mentioned teachers also receive more teaching hours for the critical subjects than the PE subject itself. In addition such action has

changed the teachers' identities from being PE teachers to being teachers who are teaching the critical subjects. Basically this is not a good outcome as the mentioned teachers have to withdraw their 'PE teacher identity' and adopting a new one to suit the desire of the school administrators.

*"...teachers who are in teaching the PE subjects are also teaching other subjects like BM, English, History and many more. Generally it is more on the examination subjects"(T4)*

### **3.1.3 Issues with Time Allotment**

Time allotment for a PE subject is two 40 minutes lesson in a week. In the Malaysia education system, both teaching periods are shared by Physical Education and Health Education respectively. This has made them to have 40 minutes each for a lesson. However, for the purpose of this assignment the focus will be on the Physical Education aspect. In one of the feedback given by the respondents, it was mentioned that teachers who are non and semi specialist tend to use the 40 minutes period just to let the students to play football. This is because they do not know what they should do in terms of the syllabus of the PE subject. Therefore they have taken the initiative just to let the students to play football. In another situation when it comes to the examination period especially PT3, the lower form teachers who are teaching the Malay Language, English, History, Geography, Science and Mathematics will ask for permission to use the PE periods to complete their syllabus as well as completing the students' school projects especially History and Geography. Therefore, the PE teachers have to forgo their PE classes for the mentioned purposes. However, in the real world teachers who are teaching the PE subject is also the one who is teaching one of the mentioned examination subjects (Wan Yasima, 1998). As a result, they do not have to ask for anybody's permission since they already get in charge of the PE subject of the class.

*" I received more number of teaching periods to teach other subjects than my own (PE subjects) nowadays because of lack number of teachers teaching BM"(T5)*

### **3.1.4 Issues on PE equipment**

This aspect has triggered an outcry from the teachers since not all schools are well-equipped with functioning sports equipment. This has become one of the major factors why teachers cannot carry out the PE lesson accordingly. For example, PE teachers have the difficulties in showing the students of what does it mean by baseline in a badminton court because there is no proper court in the school. This has affected the teaching and learning sessions for both students and teachers. Sports equipment is an important aspect in teaching the



PE because this will generate the students' interests in learning the subject (Wan Azlan & Tajul Ariffin, 2015).

*“ I only bring my students to play football on any available space because our school field is limited”(T3)*

### **3.1.5 Assessment on PE**

The last issue is related to evaluation. The interviewed respondents have identified that they are unsure with the evaluation of the subject because they do not read the syllabus. In contrast, if they read the syllabus they do not know how to carry out activities according to the syllabus effectively. Some of them said they do not receive clear information of the purpose of the evaluation and how they should carry it out especially the SEGAK test. Even though they are called for the courses but it is still hard for them to get the information since PE is not their major in teaching. Furthermore, some respondents do not bother about it and go unprepared especially when it comes to the evaluation (Zainal Abidin & Shafezan Hamidi, 2010). In fact when it comes to the monthly examinations, they sometimes prepare the questions for documentation purposes.

*“I do not know about the evaluation and no idea about it”(T2)*

### **3.2 Perception of PE Students towards the Physical Education subject**

As for the students, there are a few themes which were drawn from the transcription and being classified as follows: a) issue on equipment; b) issue on the quality of teacher (teacher competencies); c) issue on the use of teaching material; and d) issue on evaluation. From a general view, the perceptions from the respondents are almost similar to each other because the rule of thumb in teaching describes that what is taught by the teacher will have an effect on the students. The analysis will be divided into a thorough analysis of the themes outlined from the teacher's comments and the ones from the students' comments.

#### **3.2.1 Issue with Administration**

The researchers have suggested that the school administrators should be more flexible and look at the Physical Education subject as a subject which can benefit the students even though it is not an examination subject. Basically all subjects must be treated equally because each of them contributes to the students' self-development. The focus must not be only on the examination subjects otherwise it is unfair to the subjects like PE which is not being included in the public examination. The administrators should not ask the teachers to be superficial in the implementation of the PE subject because it contributes to students' physical and mental

development (Marzita, 2002). The researchers also suggested that a kind of penalty be given to the school administrators who are not obliged to the circular which says that each subject must be given equal importance under all circumstances.

### **3.2.2 Issue with Teachers who are teaching the subject**

The school administrators should have written to the respective District Education Office to mention about the shortage of PE teachers and explain the current situation clearly. Then the District Education Office will forward it directly to the Ministry instead of the State Education Office (MOE, 1999). This is to shorten the time in processing the problem because if there are too many bureaucratic hurdles at different strata, the problems cannot be solved and hamper the process of getting the right teachers to teach the subject. When other teachers need to stand in and teach the subject, the purpose of having the PE subject cannot be fulfilled as planned. This is because the students will receive less knowledge due to the constraints experienced by the teachers. Furthermore the school administrators need to find ways to avoid other critical and examination subject teachers from teaching the subject. Moreover the school administrators need to support their subordinates by asking the none and semi specialist teachers to go for professional development courses for the PE subject if there is no other way to get the specialist teachers in the school (Marzita, 2002). Such action should have helped the teachers to understand more about the content and help them to understand better about the needs of the subject.

### **3.2.3 Issue with Time Allotment**

The school administrators should be critical in this issue and should not give more time for teachers teaching PE to teach the examination subjects. This is because the teachers should focus more on his or her niche area in order to boost the quality of the teaching. If more time is given to teach other subjects, this will affect them a lot, hence giving problems to the teachers to priorities their responsibilities.

### **3.2.4 Issue with Evaluation**

As for the evaluation, the teachers should update themselves with current information. The teachers also need to be proactive to the extent that they should do some research on their own rather than waiting to be invited for a course. Since there is a budget cut for all the government sectors starting from this year, teachers should be more creative in getting the information from various sources and share it with others.

## **4. Conclusion**

This research has provided an analysis of the perception of teachers towards the Physical Education subject. This is supported with the feedback given by the teachers where it helps us to go through the issues in depth. Furthermore this subject is also controversial because it seems to appear as a subject which needs to be taught in the curriculum without having a clear objective. Even though these objectives were already set by the Ministry, this subject remains unpopular because it is not included in the public examinations. As a result, more measures need to be taken to ensure the implementation of Physical Education subject can harness more benefits to the students. Therefore, the options which influence teacher effectiveness need to be reviewed in future to improve the quality of the teachers.

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