

تصورات معلمي التربية الرياضية والطلبة لتضمين مبحث التربية الرياضية ضمن امتحان شهادة الدراسة الثانوية العامة في الأردن

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ملخص البحث. تهدف الدراسة إلى التعرف على تصورات معلمي التربية الرياضية وطلبة الصف العاشر الأساسي في إقليم شمال الأردن حول تضمين مادة التربية الرياضية في امتحان شهادة الدراسة الثانوية العامة. تم جمع البيانات اللازمة باستخدام المقابلات الشخصية واستبانة معدة لهذا الغرض. تم التوصل إلى عدد من النتائج في ضوء تحليل البيانات؛ أهمها: أن المعلمين يفضلون تضمين مادة التربية الرياضية في امتحان الثانوية العامة. وقد أورد المعلمون عددا من الأسباب التي تستوجب مثل هذا التضمين كتغيير اتجاهات المجتمع الأردني من آباء، ومعلمين ومديري المدارس، وتحفيز الطلبة على الممارسة الرياضية بالإضافة إلى ضرورة مواكبة المعلمين للتطور المهني، كما أظهرت النتائج أيضا أن هناك تفاوتاً في تصورات الطلبة حول تضمين مادة التربية الرياضية في المرحلة الأساسية، حيث أن عددا من الطلبة لديهم خبرات سلبية تجاه التربية الرياضية في المرحلة الأساسية الدنيا (الصفوف الثلاثة الأولى). وقد قدمت الدراسة عددا من التوصيات كان أهمها ضرورة مراعاة تضمين مادة التربية الرياضية في امتحان الشهادة الثانوية.

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- A review and audit of school facilities to ensure students have access to the necessary equipment and to meet the shortages in some of the school facilities. Co-operation between schools and public sport facilities such as sports centers in the same area would be needed.
- Educational sessions, workshops and ICT facilities for PE teachers to up- grade their knowledge should be available as a source of ongoing professional development.
- Professional preparation and in-service training of classroom teachers are key to redirecting school PE programs toward lifelong physical activity.
- Other research studies are needed in different parts of the country in order to investigate in greater depth teachers, students, decision makers and specialists in the addition of PE and link that to raising the status of PE at school.

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many schools do not make investment needed to hire certified physical education specialist.

The opinions of the English school students differ greatly from those of the Jordanian students possibly due to the status of PE in secondary schools and previous lack of opportunities. Jordanian students choose PE as a way of keeping fit whereas English students choose it for a much wider range of reasons, such as gaining qualifications which may then lead them into their career.

“Most of the students that choose GCSE PE tend to be good at sport and this is a way of continuing their education and getting qualified in something they deem to be their strengths”. The children that opt away from GCSE PE tend to be the children that are highly academic and as a result tend to pursue more of a scientific area and those students who are not very good at PE in the first place.

Conclusion

In the light of analysis and discussion of the PE teachers and students perceptions regarding the inclusion of PE subject to the General Secondary Education Certificate in Jordan, it is clear that:

- All of the PE teachers emphasized the need for the addition of PE subject to the General Secondary Education Certificate examination.
- All of the PE teachers welcomed the presence of theoretical and practical aspects of PE in the new curriculum.
- The teachers expected a positive change to the negative attitudes of other members of the staff and parents as the status of the subject increased.
- The teachers felt the inclusion of PE to the GCSE curriculum could motivate students to participate in both lessons and extra curricula activities.
- It appears that it was a mixture of pupils positive and negative preferences and perceptions that affected the decision to choose or choose not to undertake PE at the GSEC level

Recommendations

From the data collected from the study, we may draw the following recommendations:

- The need to offer one compulsory PE lesson per week for all pupils at secondary stage. Also, the Ministry of Education could offer opportunities for students who are interested and skilled at PE to choose it as an optional subject at GSEC level.
- The availability of PE at GSEC level in Jordanian schools will require from the curriculum committee and specialists in the field of PE to design a curriculum for PE which includes both theory and practice. The practical side could include a choice of two games such as football, volleyball, handball or basketball, and two individual activities such as table tennis, badminton or athletics, while the theoretical part could tackle knowledge of physiology and anatomy, rules of games, and a general overview of the international sport events.

Table 4. Means and standard deviation on students' responses to the questionnaire items

Statement	Mean	St. deviation
To keep me fit	4.36	1.06
To enjoy myself during physical education sessions	4.30	0.82
Developing my body and general health	4.26	1.07
Increase our knowledge of sport and its rules	3.93	1.16
To increase your ability in certain sports	3.90	0.93
The desire to spend more time on PE by more sessions	3.73	1.39
To increase my ability in practicing PE games	3.70	1.23
Encouragement and support from parents	3.70	1.27
To discover the good players	3.69	1.33
Developing critical thinking through doing PE skills	3.69	1.27
Desire to participate in more activities	3.67	1.13
I have the ability to perform PE skills better than other school subjects	3.57	1.33
It seemed less academic	3.52	1.30
Changing parents and other teachers towards PE	3.34	1.23
Achieve high marks because I am good at sport	3.24	1.45
It was a subject I enjoyed compared to others	3.24	1.44
I think I do enough exercise myself, outside school	3.15	1.43
There were other subjects I do better than PE	3.14	1.19
Doing PE increased motivation to study	3.07	1.33
Wanted to do PE courses at university	2.89	1.33
There were other subjects that were more important	2.85	1.39
I do like some of the teachers	2.71	1.41
I wanted to be a PE teacher	2.41	1.13
I have never been able to take it seriously especially in the first four grades	2.30	1.16

*The items were rated on a scale of 1-5 points.

The lowest items were "I want to study it in the university" 2.89, "PE is less important than other school subjects" 2.85, "I do like some of the teachers" 2.71, "I want to be a PE teacher" 2.41 and "I have never been able to take it seriously especially in the first four grades" with a means of 2.30. The last item in the table illustrates that the interest and choices made by students in the last year of school is to some extent affected and colored by previous experience and in return affects the other items. For example, only a small minority of students wanted to be a PE teacher or study PE at university level, whereas if their early experiences of PE had been positive ones as, Harold, Kohl and Karen [26] assumed that there will be a positive experience in childhood or adolescence and the behavior then will track into adulthood. Additionally, 76% of children never see a classroom teacher for physical education, which causes concern that

Another teacher said that:

"80% of the sport facilities in secondary schools were available."

In the English schools, although some facilities for example, the swimming pool which is not on sight at every school use is made of community facilities in order to teach the subject at GCSE level, the same could be done in Jordan.

Also, 58% of the PE teachers who were interviewed indicated that the physical education budget of secondary schools is nearly adequate and could accommodate materials such as balls and other essentials as well as maintaining the equipment. One teacher said "PE budget is 30% of the school capitation." Another teacher said:

"The amounts of money being spent on PE at the secondary stage are increasing due to the large number of students per class (each student should pay 6.15 JD as school fees)".

In English schools, contributions to the PE budget sometimes come from sponsors of fund raising events and donation as well as from the usual source. The school in the case study had a budget of 4000 pounds per year.

The above quotation shows the availability of adequate facilities and finance which could establish a basic course in GSEC PE in most Jordanian schools.

Part two: Students perceptions

This section discusses the findings related to the second research question ""For what reasons would students in tenth grade choose or not choose PE subject as a GSEC in Jordan?" The data were collected by distributing a questionnaire investigating why students would select PE and why they would not. 302 students from schools in the north part of Jordan took part in the study. To answer the research question, means and standard deviations were used on the questionnaire items. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 4 illustrated the students views on PE, both positive and negative. The most frequently stated items in favor of PE are "to keep me fit" with a means of 4.36 ranked first, "to enjoy myself during PE sessions" with a means of 4.30 ranked second, "developing my body and general health" with a means of 4.26, "increase our knowledge and its rules" 3.93, "helps in practice of PE skills" 3.90 and "I want to spend more time on PE by more practical sessions" 3.73. The more frequently stated reasons shown in the table indicate concern among some students about their physical fitness and also enjoyment and interest in doing and learning a variety of sporting activities while taking advantage of the allocated time available. This result agreed with MacPhail [13] who found pupils who choose PE had done so for the interest and the enjoyment in PE subject.

From the above, it is clear that if PE was added to the curriculum, there would have to be a theoretical side to the course as well as practical although the weight of each part could be altered.

Professional development of teaching

67% of the PE teachers who were interviewed indicated that if PE was taken into account at GSEC level, it may motivate PE teachers to keep in touch with what is new in teaching physical education and the need to employ more newly graduated teachers. One teacher said:

"If PE is available at the GSEC level, it will lead the teachers to develop their knowledge by being up to date with the subject and its changes and developments."

Another teacher said:

"More specialist PE teachers are required to teach the subject."

The English case study showed courses to teach and update skill were available all the time, although time and budget were limited. The head of PE department said:

"We have begun to have some city schools PE department, in-service training. In addition we have begun to hold some after school in-service sessions".

In this respect, DFEE [24, p. 3] defined professional development as "any activity that increases the skills, knowledge or understanding of teachers and their effectiveness in schools".

It is emphasized that continuing professional development should be considered as a life long process and as Day [25] argued it is more than the development of teachers' subject knowledge and teaching skills. It should embrace the personal, moral and political dimension of teaching as a professional activity.

The above indicates the need for the facilitation for professional development of teachers such as: availability of professional journals, courses and workshops and even websites where teachers may access the latest points and developments in their professions.

The availability of PE resources

58% of the PE teachers who were interviewed commented that many secondary schools have the adequate areas which would be required to teach PE at GSEC level. One PE teacher said:

"Most of the secondary schools that have been recently built are sponsored by projects, and the availability of areas needed to accommodate different PE activities were taken into consideration."

Other advantages of PE being classed as a subject of higher status would be: PE lessons occurring in the time table more frequently and an increase in the organization of activities within and outside the school. In comparison with this, the English schools, tend to offer three PE lessons per week, theoretical, practical and also the compulsory practical which can be used to improve pupils' performance needed for their overall result. Extra curricular activities after school or at lunch time are also offered. The head of PE department said:

"GCSE PE itself consists of one practical lesson and one theoretical lesson (1 hour each) to each student."

"The extracurricular activities offered are related to those on the GCSE curriculum."

The above quotation clarifies the importance of allocating more time to PE in order to improve student performances and raise the standards. This in turn would not only be advantageous to the school, but also to the country as a whole. It may also increase opportunities for affiliation with clubs and eventually an increase in national standards. The National Association of Head Teachers [23] found that 83% of secondary schools in England have links with sport clubs.

Curriculum content

All of the Jordanian PE teachers (100%) who were interviewed agreed that PE curriculum should consist of a balance between theory and practice. However, views varied as to what percentage of the course should be theory and how much is practice. One teacher said:

"60% of the curriculum should be taken up with practical skills as they were of a greater importance."

Whereas another teacher said:

"70% of the course should be theory to encourage all students not just those who are highly skilled in the physical aspects of PE"

The interviewees also discussed what the theoretical and practical sections of the course should include. For example, the theoretical part could include game rules, knowledge of physiology and anatomy, sports injuries, first aid, and the advantages of physical fitness. The practical section could include tuition in general physical fitness and opportunities to specialize in two team games (e.g. football and basketball) and two individual activities (e.g. athletics and gymnastics).

The GCSE courses taught in England are divided into two parts. The head of William Howard School at which the case study was done informed the researcher that 50% written examination and 50% course work and practical which include a selection of four activities chosen from at least two of the following activity areas: games, gymnastics, athletics, swimming, outdoor and adventure activities.

are more opportunities concerning PE within schools and therefore parents are more willing to allow their children to take the subject.

The quotations clearly show the need for attitude of the parties mentioned above to change and the need for PE to be regarded as a subject of importance not merely a compulsive recreational activity. These views are reflected by Hardman who says:

"The prevailing teachers associated with head teachers and other teachers were also evident in perceptions on attitudes of parents. They were believed to lack interest in physical education, view it as non-productive beyond school years and to be predisposed to favoring academic subjects with time spent on PE being seen to be a threat to academic achievement and/or examination performance" [18, p. 31].

Increasing motivation for students

The teachers interviewed discussed the advantages of student's participation in PE, for example, increase in physical fitness, introduction to a healthy lifestyle and perhaps an introduction to life long sport or a career in sport. One teacher commented:

"If students pursue PE at GSEC level as their own choice, they are more likely to have a higher level of motivation which may lead to a career in PE."

Despite these advantages, as shown in Table 1, we can see that 96% of PE teachers reported that students showed no motivation to participate in PE lessons as they did not gain marks for doing so. One teacher said:

"PE lessons are allocated 45 minutes per week on the school time table but the lessons do not take place."

This illustrates the need for more attention to assess progress of pupils in PE lessons and the need to ensure the lessons themselves to be taken place. In support of this, the School Sport Forum [21] emphasized the importance of establishing guidelines for testing in physical education in order to give feedback to pupil and teacher, which acts as a powerful motivator towards a greater achievement in PE. Also, 75% of PE teachers pointed out the lack of extracurricular activities, such as competitions between classes in the same school and with other school teams, is mainly due to the majority of students at the tenth, first secondary class and students at GSEC level not acknowledging PE to be as important as other subjects. One PE teacher said:

"Students do not participate in inter and out of school activities, because they give more time to the other school subjects which will contribute to their overall mark at GSEC level."

The above quotation suggests that if PE contributed to the overall mark at GSEC level, there will be a greater level of participation in both PE and extra curricula activities. In this regard, Ohmci [22] found that in Wales there is a rapid expansion of GCSE courses which have a good affect on students. Also, teachers give more time to raise the students participation in PE by providing extra-curricular activities.

"Other subject teachers have a negative view towards PE teachers, they think PE is just games and not an academic subject."

The above quotation illustrates the gap that exists between PE teachers and other school subject teachers which undermines PE marginalizes the achievements of students and limits career growth of its teachers. Hardman noted similar negative attitudes amongst other subject teachers:

"Physical education is regarded as a lower status, peripheral subject, as non-constructive and vocationally non-productive, as non-academic lacking in educational value and merely as a compensatory recreational activity" [18, p. 31].

In this regard, UNESCO [19] emphasized the importance of according PE teachers a status comparable to that of teachers of other subjects, who are often seen as discharging an altogether commendable assignment; such reassessment is an important condition for the success of the program introduced.

Ninety-two percent of the PE teachers thought that if parents' view could be changed toward PE, in return their children would be more enthusiastic and see PE as something of importance. For example, one teacher said:

"There is great difficulty in getting permission from parents to allow their children to take part in extra curricula activities."

Another teacher commented that he had a very skillful high jump student who never competed in any organized competition as he could not get the permission of his family.

Participation of students is also affected by the Jordanian culture. In Jordan, parents are more restricting and do not encourage their children, particularly their daughters, to participate in PE programs especially after school. This may influence the choice of students. Naji [20] found that parents of female students in the Zarqa region encourage their daughters to concentrate on the subjects in which their mark will contribute to the students overall mark in the GSEC examinations at the expense of engaging in physical education activities.

The results correspond with the English experiences where a greater number of male students than female students choose to participate in GCSE PE. The head of the PE department at William Howard School said that:

"A larger proportion of boys (66%) participate than girls (33%)."

However, it should be noted that more girls participate in PE in English schools than in Jordanian schools. English parents appear to have less influence over their child's decision than Jordanian parents. This could be because in Jordan parents assume that there is nowhere to go from PE as it's an entirely practical subject, and should therefore encourage their children in more useful academic subjects. Whereas in England, there

reliability as the researcher returned them to the teachers to check if they were consistent with their perceptions. On this basis, all teachers reported that the transcript matched their views.

- A list of the topic areas covered by the data was constructed, and relevant data were placed under each topic. The number of participants who shared the same perceptions under each heading were calculated.

Findings and Discussions

Part one: Teachers' perceptions

This section discusses the findings related to the PE teachers' views about physical education being available at GSEC level in school in the north part of Jordan. The data showed that all of the PE teachers who were interviewed indicated they would approve of PE being available at GSEC level. The reasons behind these views are presented below in Table 3.

Table 3. Reasons given by teachers to approve PE being available at GSEC

Reasons given for approval of physical education being available at General Secondary Education Certificate	Frequency	Percentage
It would change the attitudes of head teachers, other teachers and parents	22	92%
The curriculum needs to involve theory and practice	23	96%
It would improve students motivation to participate in PE	23	96%
It would facilitate the organization of extra curricular activities	18	75%
It would facilitate the organization of teachers professional development	16	67%
<i>The facilities and budget are already available</i>	14	58%

Changing attitudes of head teachers, other teachers and parents

Many teachers agreed that the availability of GSEC PE would result in changing the attitudes of other teachers, head teachers and parents towards PE. This would be beneficial in many ways. Firstly, if the attitudes of head teachers were altered, it may result in more budget being allocated to the PE department for the purpose of more equipment and other things to facilitate students learning. One teacher said:

"If PE was available as a GSEC subject, the head teacher would be more supportive and co-operate toward providing equipment and other essentials."

Physical education in England is regarded as a valuable necessary subject respected and budgeted for in an adequate way. In this regard, Barros [17] found that head teachers perceptions have a great influence on the implementation of PE activities such as providing PE with sufficient budget to buy facilities and equipment and offering incentives for high skillful students in PE. The gap between PE staff and teachers of other subjects would lessen if the school was successful in inter and intra school competition as it would be seen as advantageous for the whole school. One of the PE teachers said that:

Thirdly: A case study

This instrument was designed to highlight the English system of PE at the GSEC level. It was chosen, as GCSE PE in English schools is considered a subject of importance and has a high status within the curriculum. Case studies tend to be selective, focusing on one or two issues that are fundamental in understanding the system being examined [16]. While the problems of making generalizations from case studies are acknowledged, it was considered that the study of a single school would provide insights about the English system which could form a basis for some tentative comparisons with the Jordanian system.

Procedures of the data collection and analysis

The following procedures were employed to collect and analyze data related to the questionnaire of the study:

- 322 male and female students in tenth grade were chosen randomly from randomly selected schools in First Irbid, Bani Kananh and Mufraq regions.
- The researcher visited the schools twice for the distribution and collection of the questionnaire. He explained to the respondents that he was available for any further inquiries or assistance.
- 302 questionnaires were collected as the response rate was (94%).
- Numerical values, rating from 1 to 5, were assigned to five potential responses for each item (strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, undecided = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1), negative responses were taken into account as well as positive items.
- The data were analyzed using SPSS computer package, as means and standard deviations were computed.

With respect to collecting and analyzing data derived from the semi-structured interview, the following procedures were conducted:

- The researcher made contact with various schools which had been randomly chosen in order to obtain permission.
- The researcher arranged the interview appointments on the basis of the teachers' convenience.
- The researcher introduced himself to the respondent, then introduced the aims of the study and the purpose of the interview. He told the respondents that their responses would be confidential and stressed that the material would only be used for research purposes.
- The researcher requested permission from the respondents to record the interview on tape.
- The interview questions were directed to the respondents, as they were given an opportunity to talk about each question so that as much information as possible could be attained without restrictions.
- A tape recorder was employed, and each recorded interview was immediately transcribed for the purpose of the study. Transcripts were examined for

type questions. Response options ranged from 1 to 5 (strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, undecided = 3, disagree = 2, strongly disagree = 1).

In order to guarantee the validity of the questionnaire, it was checked by a group of six judges (four members of PE specialists and two PE supervisors). On the advice of the panel of judges, the items of the questionnaire were reduced to 24 items. To avoid ambiguity, the questionnaire was further validated by another panel of judges who decided that it was capable of collecting the kind of data being sought by the researcher.

To check the reliability of the questionnaire, a random sample of 27 students who were excluded to be from the subjects of the study. Cronbach alpha was used to establish the overall reliability of the questionnaire which was found to be 0.82.

Secondly: Semi-structured interview

This instrument was designed to identify PE teachers' perceptions on the addition of PE at GCSE level in Jordan, the advantages of PE if it was available and the availability of school facilities and equipment. It is seen to be crucial in qualitative research because it gives the researcher freedom to probe more deeply and to extend the responses of the respondents [15].

According to this technique, the researcher designed a set of questions in a specific schedule. It consisted of two parts:

- 1) General information: this was designed to obtain background information about the respondents, for example, teaching experience and gender.
- 2) Interview questions: this part consists of various questions aimed at achieving the aims of the study. The following specific questions were directed to the subjects of the study:
 - Do the PE teachers agree that PE should be available at GSEC level? if so, how could it be implemented in Jordanian schools?
 - What would be the advantages to the schools and students if it was made available?
 - Do secondary schools have sufficient playground areas and PE facilities to accommodate the availability of PE at the Jordanian GCSE level?

In order to ensure the content validity of the interview questions, the researcher resolved to:

- Specify what they were trying to appraise;
- Prepare the interview questions carefully;
- Validate the questions by expert opinion;
- Carry out the interview in the most suitable and convenient circumstances for the respondents; and
- Remain neutral in their opinions and attitudes when they conducted the interview.

The Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study were:

- The study is confined to the PE teachers views in Irbid, Bani Kananah, and Mufraq regions.
- The study is restricted to the students views in tenth grade in Irbid, Bani Kananah, and Mufraq schools.
- The teachers' views are restricted to semi-structured interviews which were used as one of the qualitative research techniques.
- The students views were confined to a questionnaire used as one of the quantitative research methods.

Procedures of the Study

The population and sample of the study

The population of the study consisted of 128 PE teachers (66 male and 62 female) who have full responsibility for delivering the PE curriculum to students in secondary school in three educational regions (First Irbid, Bani Kananah and Mufraq). The population of the students consisted of (4936) male and female students. A random sample of 24 PE teachers were chosen for interview, and 322 students were selected to complete the questionnaire of the study. In addition, the case study sample, which was randomly selected, consisted of the head of the PE department in William Howard School England as a representative of 6 teachers who taught PE at GCSE level.

Research design

The quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to investigate the views of PE teachers and students at the tenth grade in Jordanian schools on whether or not they preferred PE to be available at GSEC level. On this basis, the following instruments were used:

Firstly: A questionnaire

This instrument was designed to find out the views of tenth grade students on the availability of PE at GSEC level in Jordanian schools, and was constructed according to the following steps:

- 1) A comprehensive review of the literature and previous studies concerning the importance of PE in secondary school level timetable such as Assessment and Qualifications Alliance [5], Al-Nhar [11] and Macphail [13].
- 2) The researcher carried out an initial survey, by asking 56 (30 female and 26 male) students the following question: "Would you like to choose physical education in the General Secondary Certificate Examination? Yes (why), no (why)".

Based on the above steps, the researcher designed items of the questionnaire in the first stages of the design. The questionnaire consisted of 28-item, five-choice, Likert-

programs that incorporate these academic conceptions of the subject. She proposed two levels of programming within this framework: a) the lifestyle program, which will provide sustained activity for all juniors and seniors and would be embedded in a rich knowledge base, and b) the career program, which would allow students who are interested in PE to specialize and receive a more advanced program to prepare them for a career in the field of PE.

Macphail [13] surveyed the views of "pupils' subject choice - higher grade physical education". The research technique used was a questionnaire. The results showed that pupils that had chosen physical education did so through the interest and enjoyment of the subject gained through earlier experiences of school physical education.

The reasons given by the teacher for pupils choosing PE were to fill up their timetable, to have a break from other subjects. The need for the student to take an additional subject in the examination was not frequently stated. Cooper [14] found that the four most frequently given reasons from pupils for choosing physical education were: a) they liked the subject, b) they felt it contributed to physical fitness, c) they liked sport in general, and d) they hoped it may facilitate a career in PE.

Problem of the Study

In the light of the previous review of literature, it is very clear that there is a lack of research in Jordan which has been connected with the establishment of physical education as an examination subject in the General Certificate Secondary Examination. Based on the above, this study was designed to investigate the views of PE teachers and the students at the tenth grade in Jordanian schools on whether or not they preferred PE to be available at GSEC level. Thus, the study aims to:

- Identify the PE teachers' views on the availability of PE at GSEC level in the north part of Jordan.
- Identify the reasons for students selecting or not selecting PE in GSEC level.
- Collect data about the English system of teaching PE at GCSE level as evidence for developing PE at the secondary stage in Jordanian schools.

To achieve the above aims, the study raised the following questions:

- 1) What are the PE teachers' views on PE being available at GSEC level in schools in the north part of Jordan?
- 2) How is GCSE PE accommodated and taught at GCSE level in English schools?
- 3) Would students in the tenth grade choose GSEC PE if it was available and what are their reasons for this choice?

Students may continue at universities, although enrolling in one or another field depends exclusively on the above subject results of Tawjeehi exams. Students do not have the opportunity to select PE as a subject in the GSEC. This leads students to be encouraged by parents and society in general to concentrate on the examination subjects rather than doing PE.

Abdullah [7] emphasized the importance of physical education programs included as school subjects which meet the students' needs and interests. The success in PE may give confidence and assurance in the academic realm if the confidence is treated in a supportive and encouraging way. In Jordan, the General Secondary Education certificate is considered to be the most important stage in determining the student's future in terms of vocational prospects. It can be argued that the school programs which the students can follow should be mainly determined by the students' interests and ambitions. Thus, students should have the opportunities to select what they need to learn and matching with their interest. The place of PE in this process raises questions about the role of PE teachers in assisting and promoting the choices students make. PE teachers who are fully responsible for teaching the PE program should have a clear vision on the status of that program through contact with the school administrators and parents and this should be reflected in the PE program and the advice and guidance offered to students when they are selecting their options or subjects to follow in the GSEC. Thus, the views of teachers and students are seen as a priority.

This attitude displayed by students could be common around the world. In this context, Siedentop says:

"In too many places physical education exists precariously as a marginal subject in secondary education"
[8, p. 69]

It is widely agreed that improvements to the existing physical education programs at a the secondary stage should be made more relevant and attractive to students in order to give physical education a greater status within the educational system. The tailoring of the physical education curriculum and programs to meet the student needs can do much to help the achievement of the aims of physical education within the educational system, but it can also aid the perspectives which are presented to society in general.

According to the educational literature [9, 10], the neglect of PE as a compulsory subject decreases the activity level of the students. Research findings continue to indicate that adolescents activity level decreases with age. In Jordan, Al-Nhar [11] found that head teachers and teachers of other school subjects valued PE less than other academic subjects. PE is taught 45 minutes per week and it is not available as a GSEC option. This may cause a lack of interest within the Jordanian society and amongst students in school. Female students in tenth grade rank PE as the lowest rank among school subjects and male students ranked it second to the lowest. These views contradict the educational perspectives. Vickers [12] argued for an increased emphasis on an academic knowledge base in PE and the provision of a framework for secondary

Physical education can be defined as "the formal inculcation of knowledge and values through physical activity and/or experiences" [4, p. 537]. This definition emphasizes that physical education is a process of holistic development which includes theoretical knowledge and is more than a subject that concentrates purely on practical skills.

Views on the aims and the role of PE in secondary schools differ from country to country. For example, in English schools, PE as a subject was accepted as a vital part of the education for all pupils. It is given a relatively high status in school and curriculum, and individuals are able to pursue studies in this subject as part of award bearing courses. The National Curriculum sets out the minimum amount of subjects that all schools have to teach, but many schools will also offer examination courses, extra-curricular activities, proficiency testing and various other awards [5]. The GCSE subjects in the English school are as follows:

Table 1. The general secondary education certificate subjects in English schools

Compulsory subjects		
English language and literature		
Mathematics		
Science – either as -		
A double award examination (equal to two GCSE'S) that covers biology, chemistry and physics	Or	Separate examination subjects; in biology, chemistry and physics
Optional subjects: Pupils are able to choose at least one subject		
<i>Creative arts:</i>	<i>Languages:</i>	Social
Art and Design	French	Business,
Design Technology	German	Economics
Drama		History
Music		Geography
Physical Education		

Table 1 shows the subjects in English schools that are compulsory and the subjects that pupils can choose to follow. This latter group includes PE. In other areas of the world such as the Jordanian education system, PE has a low status where students only have one 45-minute PE lesson a week and PE is not available as a subject at GSEC level. The subjects included in the Jordanian curriculum are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The general secondary education certificate programs in Jordan as proposed by the Ministry of Education [6]

Subjects	Scientific	Literary
General cultural	Islamic study	Islamic study
	Arabic language (normal standard)	Arabic language
	English language	English language
	Social and national education	Scientific culture
Specialization requirements		
Compulsory	Mathematics	Arabic language
Optional: pupils choose two subject from	Chemistry	English language
	Physics	Islamic science
	Biology	Geography
	Earth and environmental sciences	History

Physical Education Teachers and Students Perceptions regarding the Inclusion of Physical Education Subject in the General Certificate of Secondary Education in Jordan

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to determine the views of teachers and students on establishing physical education in general secondary certificate examination. Two main areas were investigated: the views of PE teachers, and the students' perceptions of selecting or not selecting PE as an examination subject. Information was obtained from an English school on the logistics of implementing GCSE PE and compared with data gathered from Jordanian schools. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used. The study indicated that PE would be preferred as a GCSE option by Jordanian PE teachers. The main reasons for this were changing the attitudes of Jordanian society, motivate students in pursuing healthy lifestyle as well as providing some professional development for the teachers themselves. The study also showed that if students had negative experiences of PE in the first three grades, they will likely continue to have a negative perception of it through out their school career.

Background of the Study

Physical education (PE) is considered to be an important part in the general education process. UNESCO [1] asserted that every education system must give physical education an appropriate place to strike a balance and strengthen the links with learning in the classroom. This definition does not consider PE as a footnote or an addition to academic programs or something to occupy the pupil's leisure time. It emphasizes that physical education has to have a fixed place in the school timetable and it is seen as one of the only subjects which offers the opportunity for students to improve their physical fitness, develop physical and social skills, and gain a knowledge which is not included in other areas of the curriculum [2, 3].