

**A qualitative inquiry of the value of physical education in primary schools: A call for PE****Yasemin SERBEST<sup>1</sup> , Metin KUŞ<sup>1</sup> , Turgut YILDIRIM<sup>1</sup> , Mehmet Kemal AYDIN<sup>1</sup> **<sup>1</sup>Hitit University, Faculty of Sport Sciences, Çorum, Türkiye**Araştırma Makalesi/Research Article****DOI: 10.70736/jrolss.497**

Gönderi Tarihi/ Received:

Kabul Tarihi/ Accepted:

Online Yayın Tarihi/ Published:

11.08.2024

16.01.2025

25.03.2025

**Abstract**

Physical education and game (PEaG) classes play a vital role in addressing the physiological and developmental needs of children while promoting healthy lifestyles. However, concerns have been raised about the quality of PE instruction in primary education due to the challenges faced by classroom teachers. To address this issue, this study explored the views of educators on the effectiveness of PEaG courses in primary education. A descriptive qualitative research design with purposive sampling strategies was employed. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted using a questionnaire containing three open-ended questions. Three overarching themes emerged from the data: (1) the challenges and conveniences faced by classroom teachers, (2) the educational value of PEaG, and (3) the urgent need for PEaG specialists. The findings revealed that classroom teachers can develop stronger relationships with students through PEaG classes. However, they often lack the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver effective PEaG instruction. As a result, the findings indicated that PEaG in primary education should be delivered by PEaG specialists rather than classroom teachers.

**Keywords:** Educators' views, physical education and game course, physical education teachers, primary education***İlköğretimde beden eğitiminin yeri ve önemi üzerine nitel bir araştırma: Beden eğitimi uzmanlarına olan ihtiyaç*****Öz**

*Beden Eğitimi ve Oyun (BEvO) dersleri, çocukların fizyolojik ve gelişimsel ihtiyaçlarını karşılamada yanı sıra sağlıklı yaşam tarzlarını da teşvik etmede önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Ancak, sınıf öğretmenlerinin karşılaştığı zorluklar nedeniyle ilköğretim düzeyindeki BEvO dersi öğretiminin kalite standartları konusunda endişeler ortaya çıkmaya başlamıştır. Bu sorunu ele almak için, araştırma ilköğretimdeki BEvO derslerinin etkililiğine ilişkin eğitimcilerin görüşlerini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Betimleyici nitel bir desene sahip olan çalışmada amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Yarı yapılandırılmış üç sorudan oluşan görüşme formu katılımcılara yüz yüze uygulanmıştır. Veri analizi sonucunda üç ana tema ortaya çıkmıştır: (1) sınıf öğretmenlerinin beden eğitimi ve oyun derslerini uygularken karşılaştığı zorluklar ve kolaylıklar, (2) beden eğitimi ve oyun derslerinin eğitsel değeri ve (3) beden eğitimi ve oyun dersi öğretmenine olan acil ihtiyaç. Bulgular, sınıf öğretmenlerinin beden eğitimi dersleri aracılığıyla öğrencilerle daha güçlü ilişkiler geliştirebileceklerini ortaya koymakla beraber kaliteli beden eğitimi ve oyun öğretimi vermek için gerekli bilgi ve becerilere sahip olmadıkları sonucuna ulaşmıştır. Sonuçta, ilköğretim düzeyindeki beden eğitimi ve oyun derslerinin sınıf öğretmenleri yerine BEvO dersi öğretmenleri tarafından verilmesi gerekliliğine vurgu yapılmıştır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Beden eğitimi ve oyun dersi, beden eğitimi öğretmenleri, eğitimcilerin görüşleri, ilköğretim**Sorumlu Yazar/ Corresponded Author:** Turgut YILDIRIM, E-posta/ e-mail: [turgutyildirim@hitit.edu.tr](mailto:turgutyildirim@hitit.edu.tr)

## INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a critical period for the development of basic motor skills. During this time, in addition to basic needs such as food, shelter, and love, play is also essential for child's development (Cihan & Tekçe, 2022; Arslan Kabasakal et al., 2024). Play can be defined as an activity that children engage in for the purpose of having fun and adapting to their social environment (Çar, 2022). Play has been a form of entertainment and learning for children since the beginning of humanity (Çar, 2022). It provides children with natural and active learning environments and helps them to develop a variety of skills, such as communication, self-regulation, and cooperation, both consciously and unconsciously (Ayan & Memiş, 2012). In recent years, there has been a paradigm shift in education towards a more holistic approach that focuses on the development of the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. As a result, educational institutions are now placing a greater emphasis on activities that promote the development of these areas. Physical Education (PE) and play, which have long been considered integrated components of educational programs, play a vital role in promoting not only psychomotor development, but also cognitive, affective, and social development (Serhatlıoğlu & Kalo, 2022).

Physical education worldwide encounters numerous challenges that hinder its effectiveness and accessibility. These include ongoing deficiencies in curriculum time allocation and implementation, coupled with a lack of strict enforcement of legislation regarding school PE provision. Significant inadequacies persist in the supply of facilities and equipment, alongside concerns about teacher availability and quality, characterized by insufficient numbers and a lack of adequately qualified PE teachers (Hardman, 2008). Additional challenges encompass insufficient resources, inadequate teacher training, cultural and social barriers, inconsistent policies and curricula, and the impacts of urbanization and increasingly sedentary lifestyles (ICCSPE, 2014).

Physical Education and Games (PEaG) are essential for meeting physiological needs and contributing to the development of children. According to World Health Organization (WHO) statistics, the prevalence of obesity among children aged 5-19 years worldwide increased from 2.9% in 2000 to 6.8% in 2016 (WHO, 2022). In 2016, more than 340 million children and adolescents aged 5-19 years were overweight or obese. It is recommended physical activity (at least 60 minutes of regular, moderate, or high-intensity activity every day that is developmentally appropriate) and a balanced and healthy diet (carbohydrate, protein, and fat balance) to reduce and prevent overweight and obesity in childhood. In this context, it is aimed

to implement the Diet, Physical Activity (PA), and Global Health Strategy by mobilizing partners such as governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (WHO, 2022). This highlights the importance of PEaG courses in terms of promoting PA since PEaG courses provide individuals with PA experience at an early age (McLennan & Thompson, 2015). In this respect, PEaG is considered a prerequisite for the development of physical and motor skills, personal development, physical awareness, self-confidence, and social skills in many countries. PE teachers are expected to organize sports and physical activities, provide healthy life skills and physical exercise, and motivate students to participate in sports. To meet these expectations, PE teachers must receive continuing professional development (CPD).

The issue of who should deliver PE lessons in primary education, PE teachers or class teachers, is a controversial one with different practices in many European countries. In some countries, class teachers deliver PE lessons, in others PE teachers do, and in still others, both class teachers and PE teachers work together. As outlined in the *Regulation on Pre-School and Primary Education Institutions* (2014) issued by the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE, 2014), PEaG courses in grades 1 and 4 have conducted by Class Teachers (CT). Comparing this issue to European Union (EU) countries PE has seen as a prerequisite for the development of physical and motor skills, personal development, physical awareness, self-confidence, and social skills. Physical Education Teachers (PET) are expected not only to organize sports and PA, but also to provide healthy life skills, physical exercise, and motivate students towards sports. To meet this expectation, PETs must receive Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The issue of conducting PEaG courses in grades 1 and 4 should be the responsibility of PETs or CTs remains controversial with different practices. For instance, in Germany, Ireland, France, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Estonia and Finland only CTs whereas in Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, and Latvia PETs conduct PEaG courses (Eurydice, 2013; Hardman & Marshall, 2000; Hardman, 2005). According to Bozdemir et al. (2015), it has concluded that CTs have some professional inadequacies in terms of PE practices, PE pedagogical knowledge and educational value attributed to PEaG courses. Similarly, Çivrilkara et al. (2017), have revealed that CTs although they do not find it appropriate to use PEaG courses compensating for other lessons, still they have been compensating different lessons during the time allocated for PEaG courses. Another study regarding the PEaG courses have shown that CTs are not effective due to the necessary physical environment and especially the lack of suitable materials, and that they aim to complete the missing parts of other lessons during PEaG courses (Dağdelen & Kösterelioğlu, 2015). In this context, PETs have considered

to be effective in the implementation of the PEaG courses, in terms of proficiency, planning and lesson preparation, pedagogical knowledge, PE strategy, methods and techniques, material use, in class practices, classroom management, assessment and evaluation (Genç, 2021). During PEaG courses students have spent the majority of the time standing up, playing in door games, and CTs do not encourage PA. It has been concluded that the practices of the class teachers are insufficient in terms of the implementation of the PEaG courses and encouraging the students to PA (Yon & Saraç, 2022). In addition, it has suggested that the PEaG courses should be compulsory and conducted by PETs in all preschools considering the characteristics of the preschool age group, PE strategies and teaching methods (Cihan & Tekçe, 2022).

The greatest barriers affecting CTs to conduct successful PEaG courses are categorized as teacher related or institutional. The major adverse effects of these barriers are evident in reduced time spent conducting PEaG courses of questionable quality (Morgan & Hansen, 2008a). Moreover, PEaG courses: (1) offers children chances to enhance fitness and engage in activity to combat with obesity and sedentary behaviour, (2) fosters positive effects on learning and behavior within classroom settings, and (3) assists children in enhancing social skills while providing unique learning opportunities for some to achieve success (Morgan & Hansen, 2008b). Educators believed that PEaG was somewhat successful in achieving outcomes relating to PA, self-esteem, motor skills and fitness. Additionally, PEaG was effective as a vehicle for PA and positively impacted learning and behaviour in the classroom. However, the delivery of PEaG by class teachers has little educational value (Morgan & Hansen, 2008a). In line with this it was indicated that CTs were not adequately planning, implementing, assessing, reporting, or evaluating PEaG courses (Morgan & Hansen, 2007). In approximately half of the European Union countries, compulsory PE at the primary school level constitutes around 10% of the total instructional time. Teachers play a significant role in implementing the objectives of PEaG courses in schools. PETs are expected not only to organize and implement sports and physical activities but also to possess the necessary skills for healthy living, motivate young individuals for physical exercise, and engage them in various sports. Considering the increasing expectations from PEaG courses, the question of whether the responsibility lies with the CTs, or PETs has become an issue. At the primary school level, there are three solutions to this problem, depending on the school's conditions PEaG courses can be conducted by either the CTs, the PETs, or both (Eurydice, 2013).

In this context, Primary education is a period in which children have critical developmental stages and acquire basic skills. In addition, PEaG courses are very important for

children to develop as a whole in terms of social, emotional, mental and psychomotor skills in this period. Furthermore, PEaG courses have a very important role in meeting the physiological and developmental needs of children and in developing healthy living and nutritional skills. According to the regulations, PEaG courses are conducted by CTs in primary education. However, it is emphasized by the studies in the literature that class teachers are not equipped to conduct PEaG courses. For this reason, the quality of PEaG courses in primary schools has been questioned because of the difficulties that CTs experience when conducting this course. For the development of efficient PEaG courses, it is inevitable that PETs conduct PEaG courses in primary education. Additionally, it is crucial to enhance the quality of Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) programs and Continuing Professional Development (CPD), for pre-service teachers. The study aimed to investigate educators' perspectives regarding the effectiveness of PEaG courses in primary education. Specifically, the study aimed to address the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: Class teachers (CTs) experience both obstacles and benefits that significantly influence their implementation of Physical Education and Game (PEaG) courses in primary education.

Hypothesis 2: PEaG courses in primary education are effective in enhancing students' physical, social, and cognitive development.

Hypothesis 3: PEaG courses implemented by physical education teachers (PETs) in primary education demonstrate higher effectiveness compared to those implemented by classroom teachers.

1. What are the obstacle benefits experienced by CTs while implementing a PEaG courses?

2. What are your views on the effectiveness of the PEaG courses in primary education?

3. What are your views on the PEaG courses being implemented by PETs in primary education?

## **METHOD**

This current qualitative descriptive study utilized qualitative content analysis to explore educators' perspectives regarding the efficacy of the PEaG course. Descriptive research was employed to offer clear depictions of educators' experiences and viewpoints, especially in domains where limited information exists concerning the subject of investigation (Sandelowski

2010). A qualitative descriptive design operates on the premise that the subjective essence of participants' encounters holds the utmost relevance, and that the diverse array of participant experiences directly shed light on the research inquiries (Bradshaw et al., 2017). Descriptive research aims to meticulously depict a phenomenon and its attributes, ensuring clarity and precision. Techniques for descriptive data analysis encompass the examination, depiction, and condensation of events or phenomena, drawing insights from data acquired via interviews or first-hand field observations (Damayanti et al., 2022). Qualitative descriptive research generates data that describe the "who, what and where" of events or experiences from a subjective perspective (Kim et al. 2017). From a philosophical perspective, this approach aligns with constructionism and critical theories that use interpretative and naturalistic inquiry methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Educators' viewpoints on the efficacy of the PEaG course in primary education were gathered through a questionnaire comprising three open-ended inquiries. The objective of this descriptive qualitative research was to provide a detailed portrayal of a phenomenon and its attributes. Consequently, the current study focuses more on comprehending "what" has occurred, rather than explore the complexities of "how" or "why" it transpired (Gall et al., 2007).

### **Research group**

Most qualitative research employ nonprobability sampling techniques, and descriptive qualitative studies commonly utilize purposive sampling strategies (Palinkas et al, 2015). Purposive sampling entails the deliberate selection of participants with relevant knowledge and experience pertinent to the subject under scrutiny (Ritchie et al., 2003). It is a method used in qualitative research to intentionally select individuals who possess specific characteristics, knowledge, experiences or other relevant criteria (Creswell, 2012; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Within the realm of qualitative research, data saturation is conventionally deemed a pivotal determinant for establishing sample size, a parameter contingent on both the research design and the extent of the target population (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Therefore, this study's sample comprises eleven educators working in public schools in Çorum in Central Anatolia in Türkiye. The educators participating in this study were given code numbers P1 to P11. As indicated in Table 1, the age of the participants varied between 35 and 52 years, with an average age of 44.4. Nine participants were male, while two were female. Regarding educational experience, the minimum observed was 12 years, the maximum was 31 years, and the average educational experience was 20.7 years. Five of the participants worked at an academic high school, three at a secondary school, and three at a primary school.

**Table 1. Characteristics of participants**

Participant Number	Age	Gender	Professional Tenure	School Type	Duty	Educational Status
P1	51	M	31	Primary School	Class Teacher	BD
P2	35	M	12	Primary School	Class Teacher	BD
P3	47	M	21	High School	PES Teacher	BD
P4	48	M	27	High School	Vice Principal	BD
P5	52	M	29	Secondary School	PES Teacher	BD
P6	47	M	21	High School	PES Teacher	BD
P7	44	M	17	High School	PES Teacher	BD
P8	36	M	14	Primary School	Vice Principal	MA
P9	47	M	24	High School	PES Teacher	PhD
P10	39	F	12	Secondary School	Vice Principal	BD
P11	43	F	20	Secondary School	PES Teacher	BD

#### **Data collection/processing method**

Eleven educators specializing in Physical Education and Sports (PES) were meticulously selected and invited to participate in this research. The principal data collection method was semi structured s questionnaires. Participant interviews held face-to-face during June 2023 to July 2023. The interview sessions last 20 to 30 minutes and were meticulously recorded for transcription purposes. The interview protocol had five demographic questions (age, gender, teaching experience, educational background, and role) in addition to three open-ended questions. These interview questions were formulated to get participants’ perceptions regarding the value of the PEaG course in primary education. The research was conducted in the ethical principles delineated in the Declaration of Helsinki. Each participant provided written consent form, signifying their voluntary participation. Participants are free to withdraw from the interview at any time. Additionally, before starting to conduct study, a letter of approval was granted by the Ethics Committee Review Board of the affiliated university (2023-05).

Qualitative descriptive research seeks to reveal fundamental aspects of phenomena, searching the “who, what and where” dimensions (Sandelowski, 2010). Face-to-face interviews are often considered the most appropriate strategy for this type of research. Therefore, the most commonly used data collection method is semi structured individual face-to-face interviews (Kim et al., 2017). For this study, information was gathered via in-person interviews employing a semi structured questionnaire which consists of three main questions along with probe questions. After drafting the questions, expert opinions were obtained, and a pilot test was conducted. Feedback from the pilot test participants was recorded in written form, which led the researchers to refine or modify the questions to align with the raised considerations (Creswell, 2015; Lune & Berg, 2017). The first question focuses on the challenges and

opportunities class teachers encounter while implementing PEaG course. The second question explores the effectiveness of PE in primary education. The third question seeks educators' perspectives on the PEaG course delivered by physical education and sports (PES) teachers.

### **Data analysis**

In qualitative descriptive research, data analysis is a data-driven process that does not rely on a preexisting theoretical framework. The information underwent qualitative content analysis, a collection of methods employed to analyze textual data and reveal underlying themes (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The key characteristic of these techniques is the systematic process of coding, examining meaning, and providing a description of the social reality through the creation of themes (Gall et al., 1996). In this study, the process of descriptive qualitative data analysis included the classification of data, and the determination of major themes (Creswell, 2015; Lune & Berg, 2017). In this study, the data analysis process followed seven steps: (1) Transcribing and sorting the data: The data were first transcribed into a written format and then sorted into meaningful units, such as sentences, paragraphs, or themes. (2) Giving codes to the initial data obtained from interviews: The coded data were then examined to identify patterns and commonalities. (3) Adding comments/reflections etc. The coded data were then annotated with comments and reflections to provide additional insights into the data. (4) Trying to identify similar phrases, patterns, and themes: The coded data were then analyzed to identify similar phrases, patterns, and themes. (5) Taking these patterns, and themes to help focus the next wave of data collection: The identified themes were then used to focus the next wave of data collection, which helped to ensure that the data were relevant to the research questions. (6) Gradually elaborate a small set of generalizations that cover the consistencies you discern in the data: The identified themes were then used to develop a small set of generalizations that covered the consistencies in the data. (7) Linking these generalizations to a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories: The generalizations were then linked to a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories (Berg & Lune, 2015; Creswell, 2015). The data analysis process conducted manually by the researchers and involves transcribing and organizing data, assigning codes to interview findings, and incorporating comments/reflections. It also entails identifying recurring phrases, patterns, and themes, which guide subsequent data collection efforts. From these patterns and themes, one gradually develops a concise set of generalizations that reflect consistent findings. Finally, these generalizations are linked to established constructs or theories within formalized knowledge frameworks (Creswell, 2015; Lune & Berg, 2017).



Ensuring the trustworthiness of findings from a qualitative descriptive study is of paramount importance, as with any research design. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified four key criteria of trustworthiness, namely credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the researchers employed a detailed protocol for data collection, and all transcripts were returned to the participants for review and correction.

## FINDINGS

In this section of the study, there are three overarching themes based on the initial coding: (a) Hurdle and Impetus for Class Teachers; (b) Educational Value of PEaG, and (c) Urgent Need for PES Specialists.

### Theme 1: Hurdle or impetus for class teachers

When teachers were asked to share what obstacles and benefits, they had while teaching PEaG lessons in primary education. They had plenty of things in their minds that they spoke of. Teachers most commonly spoke of about three specific obstacle areas including: lack of PEaG competencies, failure to explore and direct skills, and lack of knowledge on anatomical features and three benefit areas including: having fun together and strengthening the bond between them, opportunity to get to know their students better, and opportunity to complete the subjects they lack in PEaG lessons.

**Table 2. Theme 1 Hurdle and impetus for CTs**

Theme 1	Sub-Theme	Codes	Participants	f
Hurdle and Impetus for CTs	Challenges	Lack of PEaG competencies	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P8	6
		Fail to explore and direct skills	P2, P7, P9	3
		Lack of knowledge on anatomical features	P4, P9, P11	3
	Opportunities	Insufficient sports activities	P1, P10	2
		Have fun together and strengthen relationship	P1, P9	2
		Get to know students well	P2, P8	2
		Complete the subjects they lack in	P3,P6,P7	3
Total			21	

The major obstacles that the teachers mentioned were; lack of knowledge of PEaG competencies, failure to explore and direct the skills of primary school students, lack of knowledge of the anatomical features and physical development of students in primary school. (P1) *“Class teachers are inadequate to reveal the talent and to perform sport activities. They do not have a rich educational game repertoire”*

(P2) *“Class teachers are not able to guide students in line with their abilities and they are insufficient in diversifying the games suitable for the level of the children”.*

(P3) *“Class teachers might encounter many problems in terms of physical, practice, giving importance to the lesson, and lack of professional competencies in physical education”*

(P4) *“There was a high probability of inaccurate or incomplete knowledge due to the lack of detailed information on physical education, muscle group structure, anatomical features etc.”*

(P5) *“Physical education activities, sports activities and games require physical disposition. If the sports instructors are not specialists in sport teaching, they cannot teach the correct movements. In addition, movement, game and sportive studies are a science, so everyone should do their own work. Class teachers cannot meet children’s energy expectations and excitement of rich play”.*

(P8) *“Class teacher may experience a lack of theoretical knowledge. He may have difficulty organizing the activities that he can do with the physical facilities of the school. After the lessons taught in the classroom environment, the physical education lesson may be perceived as a resting time, and they may have difficulty in motivating the lesson”.*

The major benefits that the teachers mentioned were; having fun together and strengthening the bond between them, the opportunity to get to know their students better, and the opportunity to complete the subjects they lack in PEaG lessons.

(P7) *“Class teachers usually complete the subjects they lack in physical education and game classes”.*

(P9) *“Class teachers can communicate more strongly with their students, have fun together and strengthen the bond between them. Since the students will move freely during the game, they can have the opportunity to get to know their students better. For example, who is more ambitious, who is more challenging, who is passive, who has a leader spirit, and who has self-confidence. Class teachers can use physical education and games to discipline students and to teach the classroom rules”.*

(P11) *“A teacher may experience a lack of theoretical knowledge”.*

As it can be inferred from the teacher’ views class teachers have many obstacles to applying PEaG lessons. Among these obstacles we can mention class teachers’ inadequacy in

conducting PEaG lessons, their inability to detect talent and their absence of professional competencies. For the benefits, we can simply mention having strong bonds and relationships with students and the chance to compensate for missing issues in other subjects.

**Theme 2: Educational value of PEaG**

The second theme focuses on issues that related to the educational value of PEaG lessons in primary education. In teacher responses, we conclude that there are three specific educational value areas: developing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills holistically, gaining life skills, and contributing to personality development. Teachers mentioned the educational value of PEaG lessons which are developing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills holistically, gaining life skills, and contributing to personality development.

**Table 3. Theme 2 Educational Value of PEaG**

Theme 2	Sub-Theme	Codes	Participants	f
Educational Value of PEaG	Life Skills	Decision making	P1, P2, P11	3
		Being responsible	P1, P3	1
		Self confidence,	P1, P3,P10	3
		Self regulation	P1,P2	2
		School adaptation	P1, P3	2
		Cooperation	P1,P2,P7	3
		Socialization	P1,P4	2
	Personality development	Integrated CAP (cognitive affective psychomotor) Skills	P3, P7,P8,P9	4
		Intrinsic motivation	P8, P10	2
		Psychological resilience	P9	1
		Leadership	P2,P8	2
		Keeping away bad habits	P1,P2,P3	3
		Body management	P3, P6, P7, P9	4
		Total		33

(P3) *“Children feel the need to engage in movement-based activities such as running, jumping, and climbing by nature. An important part of this need is met in physical education and game classes. Physical education and play are to improve the physical and mental health of the child and to make his will strong. Strengthening the will of the child, provides the development of self-confidence and the maturation of his personality. By activating the hidden talents and constructive aspects of the person, it makes spiritual and social development possible as well as physical development”.*

(P9) *“When we look at the age groups of students in primary education, we know that sportive skills such as muscle development, hand-eye coordination, quickness and agility and cognitive skills such as attention concentration develop greatly in these age periods. That is why physical education and game lessons are very effective in gaining*

*all these skills. Many skills such as speed, quickness, hand-eye-foot coordination, balance, endurance, and reaction, show the greatest development in primary school age. Students who have not acquired these skills in this period may have to struggle with inactivity and obesity in the future. When physical education and game lessons are taught by experts in the field, they will automatically be gained in terms of cognitive and mental development such as psychological resilience, problem solving, attention concentration, focus, decision-making skills, perception and even coping with stress, due to the nature of the game and sports. Teachers often cited improving the physical and mental health of the child, to make his will strong. Strengthening the will of the child provides the development of self-confidence and the maturation of his personality. By activating the hidden talents and constructive aspects of the person, it makes spiritual and social development possible as well as physical development”.*

(P7) *“Physical education and game lessons are found at the primary school level, where the child’s need for movement and play is the highest. With this course, new skills are acquired, and they learn to use the acquired skills fluently and correctly. In addition, the physical education and game lessons applied in primary education play an important role in the development of the students’ motor skills and abilities. Since they adopt a sedentary monotonous lifestyle that spends more time in virtual environments only in front of the mobile phone and computer, physical education and game lessons contribute to both eliminating these negativities and their socialization as they interact and communicate with other students through the game. It contributes positively to his physical, social, and spiritual development and has a positive reflection on his academic success. In addition, it helps the student discover his talent and directs him to a sports branch suitable for his talent, and he can be given the right direction in sports life”.* Teachers often stressed the importance of gaining life skills through physical education and game lessons.

(P10) *“Physical education and game lessons contributed to the development of life skills such as school adaptation, endearing school, socialization, friendship, cooperation, being responsible, self-confidence, conflict resolution, decision making, creative thinking, and intrinsic motivation”.*

P(11) *” It enhances attention and strategic decision-making ability”.*

As can be understood from the teachers' views the educational values of PEaG lessons lies in the holistic development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills, social and sportive skill acquisition, and psychological resilience.

**Theme 3: Urgent need for PES specialists**

Theme three focused on the urgent need for PES specialists. In teacher responses, we conclude that there are three specific urgent need areas: physical education requires expertise, contributes to gaining fundamental sports skills, and contributes to raising a healthier society. Teachers mentioned urgent needs including that physical education requires expertise, contributes to gaining fundamental sports skills, contributes to a healthier society.

**Table 4. Theme 3 need for PES specialists**

Theme 3	Sub-Theme	Codes	Participants	f
Need for PES Specialists	PES requires expertise	Critical period in child development	P3, P5,P7	3
		Exploring talents	P5, P7, P11	3
		Talents management	P4, P7,P10	3
		Anatomical support	P4, P5	2
	Sport skills & healthier society	Enjoyable Lesson	P1,P5,P8	2
		Acquisition of fundemantal skills	P1, P9, P11	3
		Awareness of health	P4, P5,P9	3
		Early detention of physical problems	P5,P9	2
Total				21

(P3) *“I think that physical education teachers should be involved in physical education and game classes because it is a field that requires expertise and in order not to miss critical periods in children’s development. Training by experts in the field will make it easier for children to take the basics of sports branches correctly and to direct them to sports branches in line with their abilities”.*

(P5) *“Children have become addicted to phones and tablets because they cannot throw out the energy, they need to throw away in their playing ages. Like every field, it starts from the core, that is, from the primary school in sports. Children with good basic sports skills are those who develop both physical and personality traits more robustly. Early detection of gifted children, early removal of posture and movement disorders, or early detection and correct diagnosis and treatment are sought. In addition, cooperation, leadership, adaptability, and decision-making skills develop. I believe that there should be a department called primary school physical education teacher in universities. This step is the beginning of everything.*

Teachers mostly stated that in many developed countries in the world and in all private schools in our country, physical education and sports teachers attend these physical education and sports from kindergarten. It must be so; a class teacher will never be able to teach this lesson as effectively and as entertainingly as a physical education and sports teacher. This field requires basic skills and special talent. It will contribute to raising a healthier generation and a healthier society by teaching more fun and more diverse lessons with teachers who are more equipped and skilled in learning outcomes, and by making young students get the habit of doing sports. It can be kept away from bad habits by gaining the habit of doing sports. Thus, a separate contribution is made to the country's economy. The first and most important step will be taken in the subject of (P9) *"Giving citizens of all ages the ability to do sports on their own", which is one of the main objectives of physical education classes"*.

As can be concluded from the teachers' views, there is an urgent need for PES specialists in primary education. The main urgent needs are that it is a field that requires expertise and fosters fundamental skills and a healthier society.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Physical Education and Games (PEaG) courses in primary education shed light on the challenges and advantages that teachers face in this context. The findings from teachers' accounts emphasize several key points regarding the hardships and conveniences they encounter while teaching PEaG courses. The obstacles identified, such as a lack of PEaG competencies, difficulties in exploring and directing skills, and insufficient knowledge of anatomical features and physical development, underline a significant need for teacher professional development and support in the realm of physical education. The teachers' descriptions of the challenges they face indicate a prevailing issue of inadequate training and competencies among class teachers in delivering effective PEaG courses. The reference to the absence of a robust repertoire of educational games and the inability to guide students based on their abilities highlights a gap in teacher preparation. Similarly, a study has shown that classroom teachers involved in the PEaG courses have expressed challenges in achieving desired outcomes due to inadequate physical environments and a notable lack of appropriate materials. These teachers have reported that they often allocate class time to compensate for unmet learning objectives from other subjects, thereby impacting the effectiveness of the PEaG curriculum (Çivrilkara et al., 2017). This observation calls for a comprehensive review of teacher training programs to incorporate specialized pedagogical approaches for physical

education. Integrating workshops, courses, and resources focused on PEaG teaching strategies, child development, and anatomy could better equip CTs to confidently engage students in PA. The comments made by teachers about their inability to detect and nurture students' talents in sports and PAs point to a missed opportunity for holistic development. Another study concurrently discovered findings regarding the lack of confidence and qualifications of CTs in delivering PEaG courses (Morgan & Bourke, 2008). Teachers play a crucial role in identifying and nurturing diverse talents among students. Addressing this obstacle requires not only enhancing teachers' observational skills but also providing them with the tools and guidance to support students' potential in various physical domains. The notion that physical education is a specialized field requiring expertise is noteworthy. While CTs excel in various academic subjects, the unique demands of PEaG courses necessitate specialized knowledge. This observation underscores the importance of considering dedicated physical education specialists or collaborating with external sports instructors to provide students with comprehensive and accurate guidance. This aligns with the discovery that PEaG courses served as an effective means for promoting PA and had a positive influence on classroom learning and behavior. However, the delivery of PEaG courses by CTs little educational value (Morgan & Hansen, 2008a). On the other hand, the benefits identified by teachers highlight the positive outcomes that can emerge from the challenges they face while teaching PEaG courses. The teachers' mention of having fun together and strengthening bonds with students through physical activities underscores the potential of PEaG courses to foster stronger teacher-student relationships (Morgan & Hansen, 2008b). Engaging in active play provides a unique opportunity for teachers to connect with their students on a more personal level, enhancing rapport and mutual understanding. The benefit of gaining insight into students' personalities, leadership qualities, and levels of self-confidence through physical activities is noteworthy. This deeper understanding can aid CTs in tailoring their teaching approaches to meet individual students' needs more effectively, contributing to a more holistic education experience.

PEaG courses play a significant role in the holistic development of primary school students. The educational value of PEaG lessons in terms of developing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills, acquiring life skills, and contributing to personality development. The insights provided by teachers underscore the multifaceted benefits of PEaG courses Through PEaG courses, students engage in a range of motor skills such as coordination, balance, and agility. These activities stimulate psychomotor development, enhancing physical fitness and motor skills (Gallahue & Ozmun, 2021). Moreover, PEaG courses offer opportunities for

cognitive development. As students participate in games, they are required to make quick decisions, strategize, and adapt to changing situations. This dynamic nature of games enhances cognitive skills such as attention, problem-solving, and decision-making (Sibley & Etnier, 2003). The affective domain is also addressed through PEaG courses. Regular PA has been linked to improved emotional well-being and self-esteem (Biddle & Asare, 2011). Engaging in PA within a supportive environment fosters positive affective development, contributing to self-confidence and emotional resilience. The teachers' insights regarding socialization and skill acquisition align with social learning theory. According to Bandura (1977), individuals learn through observation and imitation. PEaG courses provide a platform for students to interact with peers, cooperate, and compete in a structured setting. This interaction nurtures social skills such as communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution (Martinek & Hellison, 1997). Furthermore, the acquisition of sport-specific skills is critical during the primary school years. Research suggests that these skills are best developed during childhood, and a lack of skill acquisition during this period can lead to long-term consequences. PEaG courses, facilitated by experts, offer opportunities for students to master sport-related skills and increase their physical literacy. The teachers' emphasis on psychological resilience and personality development echoes the notion of "resilience through sport". Engaging in PEaG courses fosters a sense of mastery, which contributes to enhanced self-esteem and coping skills. Over-coming challenges and setbacks in PA can translate to resilience in other aspects of life.

Physical Education and Sports (PES) play a pivotal role in shaping the physical, mental, and social development of children. The voices of educators resound with a unanimous call for a greater emphasis on PES specialists in primary education. The urgent needs highlighted by teachers can be distilled into three core areas: the requirement for expertise, the cultivation of fundamental sports skills, and the contribution to building a healthier society. Teachers assert that PES is a domain that demands specialized knowledge and proficiency. Just as subject-specific teachers are essential for academic subjects, PES specialists are crucial for imparting comprehensive physical education. Educators emphasize that critical periods in children's development should not be overlooked. Concurrent results have been found in a study that proper guidance and training from experts are vital to ensure that children correctly acquire the foundational skills of various sports branches (DeCorby et al., 2005). The expertise of PES specialists facilitates the identification and correction of posture and movement disorders, thus contributing to the holistic growth of children. Modern lifestyles have led to a concerning trend of sedentary behaviour among children, often attributed to excessive screen time. Teachers



argue that PES classes, starting from primary school, serve as a potent remedy to counter this issue. By instilling fundamental sports skills early in life, children are better equipped to lead active, healthy lives. Beyond physical fitness, these skills foster character traits such as cooperation, leadership, adaptability, and decision-making. Similarly, PES specialists are seen as pivotal in nurturing these skills, helping children discover their talents, and guiding them towards suitable sports branches (Morgan & Hansen, 2008a). The call for PES specialists is also driven by the belief that a healthier society begins with the education system. Teachers underline the contrast between countries that prioritize PES specialists from kindergarten and the holistic benefits such an approach yield. PES specialists, through engaging and entertaining lessons, not only teach sports but also give a lifelong passion for PA. Similarly, students develop the habit of sports, and there is a tangible potential to reduce the burden of preventable health issues, thus positively impacting the economy and society at large (Morgan & Hansen, 2008b).

The experiences shared by class teachers regarding the hurdles and conveniences of teaching PEaG courses in primary education highlight the need for comprehensive reform in teacher training and support. Addressing the identified obstacles through specialized training, collaborative efforts with physical education specialists, and targeted resources can contribute to a more effective and enriching physical education experience for primary school students. Moreover, the benefits of fostering strong teacher-student relationships, gaining insights into students' holistic development, and bridging gaps in other subjects emphasize the multifaceted advantages of integrating physical education into the primary curriculum. Primary physical education stands as a crucial element within the curriculum, presenting distinct challenges for those engaged in its instruction (Adamčák et al., 2023). Similarly, Dobell et al. (2021) underscored the presence of significant multifaceted barriers confronting educators as they try to facilitate adequate PA among children, among which is a lack of confidence to teach PE (Lynch, 2015).

As a result, the pearls of PEaG courses for CTs are that they have the chance to get to know students better by establishing communication with them. However, they have many pitfalls for instance they are not well equipped to meet the needs of the students and they do not have competencies to reveal abilities. Moreover, the PEaG courses give students the opportunity to develop as a whole in primary education, and it also improves their social and sport skills.

## Recommendations

CTs face significant challenges in implementing PEaG due to their lack of theoretical knowledge and practical skills. This highlights the urgent need for in service training, as well as enhanced Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) programs and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities. Policymakers and educators must recognize the critical role of physical education in fostering life skills and shaping the personality development of students. To build a healthier and more active society, it is essential to prioritize physical education in primary schools and ensure that qualified professionals take the lead in its implementation. The insights provided by the teachers' perspectives in this study offer valuable implications for both education policymakers and practitioners.

## REFERENCES

- Adamčák, S., Marko, M., & Bartík, P. (2023). Teachers' preferences of teaching primary physical education: curriculum preferences. *Pedagogy of Physical Culture and Sports*, 27(1), 63-70. <https://doi.org/10.15561/26649837.2023.0108>
- Arslan Kabasakal, S., Gökşin, Ş. Ö., Keskin, B., & Güvendi, B. (2024). Does basketball training increase balance scores in children . *Pedagogy of Physical Culture and Sports*, 28(1), 63–71.
- Ayan, S., & Memiş, U. A. (2012). Erken çocukluk döneminde oyun. *Selçuk Üniversitesi Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilim Dergisi*, 14(2), 143-149.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. USA: Prentice Hall.
- Biddle, S. J., & Asare, M. (2011). Physical activity and mental health in children and adolescents: a review of reviews. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 45(11), 886-895. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2011-090185>
- Bozdemir, R., Çimen, Z., Kaya, M., & Demir, O. (2015). Sınıf öğretmenlerinin beden eğitimi ve spor dersinde karşılaştıkları problemler (Tokat İli Örneği). *Uluslararası Türk Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi*, 2015 (5), 221-234. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/goputeb/issue/34517/384589>
- Bradshaw, C., Atkinson, S., & Doody, O. (2017). Employing a qualitative description approach in health care research. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, 24(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2333393617742282>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). Conceptual and design thinking for thematic analysis. *Qualitative Psychology*, 9(1), 3. <https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000196>
- Çar, B. (2022). Sınıf öğretmenlerinin beden eğitimi dersi ve oyun kavramı ile ilgili algılamalarının incelenmesi. *Spormetre Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, 20(3), 105-117. <https://doi.org/10.33689/spormetre.1091870>
- Cihan, B. B., & Tekçe, H. K. (2022). Okulöncesi öğrenim gören öğrenci velilerinin beden eğitimi ve oyun dersine yönelik düşüncelerini keşfetmek. *Akdeniz Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, 5(1), 132-150. <https://doi.org/10.38021/asbid.1086931>
- Çivril-Kara, R., Küçük Kılıç, S., & Öncü, E. (2017). Sınıf öğretmenlerinin oyun ve fiziki etkinlikler dersi hakkındaki görüşleri. *Eğitim ve İnsani Bilimler Dergisi: Teori ve Uygulama*, 8(15), 18-46.
- Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. USA: Pearson.

- Dağdelen, O., & Kösterelioğlu, İ. (2015). İlkokullardaki oyun ve fiziki etkinlikler dersinin öğretmen görüşlerine göre değerlendirilmesi. *Adıyaman Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* (19), 97-128. <https://doi.org/10.14520/adyusbd.35272>
- Damayanti, IAKW., Suardani, M., & Sagitarini, L. L. (2022). *The local culinary potential to support tourism in Peraan Village Bali*. In International Conference on Applied Science and Technology on Social Science, 315-321. Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220301.052>
- DeCorby, K., Halas, J., Dixon, S., Wintrup, L., & Janzen, H. (2005). Classroom teachers and the challenges of delivering quality physical education. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 98(4), 208-221. <https://doi.org/10.3200/JOER.98.4.208-221>
- Dobell, A., Pringle, A., Faghy, M. A., & Roscoe, C. M. (2021). Educators perspectives on the value of physical education, physical activity and fundamental movement skills for early years foundation stage children in England. *Children*, 8(5), 338. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children8050338>
- Eurydice (2013). *Physical education and sports in schools in Europe. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the EU.
- Fusch, P. I., & Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *Walden Faculty and Staff Publications*, 20, 1408–1416. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2281>
- Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J. P. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction*. UK: Longman Publishing.
- Gallahue, D. L., & Ozmun, J. C. (2021). *Understanding Motor Development: Infants, Children, Adolescents, Adults*. New Jersey, NY: Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- Genç, M. (2021). *Sınıf öğretmenleri ve beden eğitimi öğretmenlerinin beden eğitimi ve oyun dersi yeterliliklerinin incelenmesi* [Yüksek Lisans Tezi. Kocaeli Üniversitesi].
- Hardman, K. and Marshall, J.J. (2000). *World-wide survey of the state and status of school physical education, Final Report*. Manchester, University of Manchester.
- Hardman, K. (2005). *Global vision of the situations, trends and issues of sport and physical education in schools*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Sport and Physical Education. Bangkok, Thailand, 30 October-2 November.
- Hardman, K. (2008). Physical education in Schools: A global perspective. *Kinesiology* 40(1), 5-28.
- ICCPS (2014). UNESCO. World-wide survey of school physical education report. [www.iccsspe.org](http://www.iccsspe.org)
- Kim, H., Sefcik, J. S., & Bradway, C. (2017). Characteristics of qualitative descriptive studies: A systematic review. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 40(1), 23-42. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.21768>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. UK: Sage.
- Lune, H., & Berg, B. L. (2017). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. USA: Pearson Education.
- Lynch, T. (2015). Health and physical education (HPE): Implementation in primary schools. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 70, 88-100. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2015.02.003>
- Martinek, T. J., & Hellison, D. R. (1997). Fostering resiliency in underserved youth through physical activity. *Quest*, 49(1), 34-49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.1997.10484222>
- McLennan, N., & Thompson, J. (2015). *Quality physical education (QPE): Guidelines for policy makers*. Unesco Publishing.
- MoNE (2014). Okul Öncesi Eğitim ve İlköğretim Kurumları Yönetmeliği. <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuat?MevzuatNo=19942&MevzuatTur=7&MevzuatTertip=5> Erişim Tarihi:11/05/2023
- Morgan, P., & Bourke, S. (2008). Non-specialist teachers' confidence to teach PE: the nature and influence of personal school experiences in PE. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 13(1), 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17408980701345550>

- Morgan, P., & Hansen, V. (2007). Recommendations to improve primary school physical education: Classroom teachers' perspective. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 101(2), 99-108. <https://doi.org/10.3200/JOER.101.2.99-112>
- Morgan, P. J., & Hansen, V. (2008a). Classroom teachers' perceptions of the impact of barriers to teaching physical education on the quality of physical education programs. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 79(4), 506-516. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02701367.2008.10599517>
- Morgan, P. J., & Hansen, V. (2008b). Physical education in primary schools: Classroom teachers' perceptions of benefits and outcomes. *Health Education Journal*, 67(3), 196-207. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0017896908094637>
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42(5), 533-544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R. (2003). *Qualitative research practice* (757). UK: Sage.
- Sandelowski, M. (2010). What's in a name? Qualitative description revisited. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 33(1), 77-84. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.20362>
- Serhatlıoğlu, B., & Kalo, F. (2022). İlkokul öğrencilerinin beden eğitimi ve oyun dersine ilişkin görüşleri. *Turkish Journal of Educational Studies*, 9 (2), 133-157. <https://doi.org/10.33907/turkjes.899332>
- Sibley, B. A., & Etnier, J. L. (2003). The relationship between physical activity and cognition in children: A meta-analysis. *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 15(3), 243-256.
- World Health Organization. (2022). *World health statistics*. <https://www.who.int/data/gho/publications/world-health-statistics>. Erişim Tarihi:11/05/2023
- Yon, K., & Saraç, L. (2022). Sınıf öğretmenlerinin 4. Sınıf beden eğitimi ve oyun dersindeki fiziksel aktivite uygulamaları. *Eğitim ve Bilim Dergisi*, 47(211). <http://dx.doi.org/10.15390/EB.2022.11438>

<b>KATKI ORANI</b> <b>CONTRIBUTION RATE</b>	<b>AÇIKLAMA</b> <b>EXPLANATION</b>	<b>KATKIDA BULUNANLAR</b> <b>CONTRIBUTORS</b>
Fikir ve Kavramsal Örgü <i>Idea or Notion</i>	Araştırma hipotezini veya fikrini oluşturmak <i>Form the research hypothesis or idea</i>	Yasemin SERBEST Turgut YILDIRIM
Tasarım <i>Design</i>	Yöntem ve araştırma desenini tasarlamak <i>To design the method and research design.</i>	Metin KUŞ Mehmet Kemal AYDIN
Literatür Tarama <i>Literature Review</i>	Çalışma için gerekli literatürü taramak <i>Review the literature required for the study</i>	Yasemin SERBEST Turgut YILDIRIM
Veri Toplama ve İşleme <i>Data Collecting and Processing</i>	Verileri toplamak, düzenlemek ve raporlaştırmak <i>Collecting, organizing and reporting data</i>	Metin KUŞ Mehmet Kemal AYDIN
Tartışma ve Yorum <i>Discussion and Commentary</i>	Elde edilen bulguların değerlendirilmesi <i>Evaluation of the obtained finding</i>	Yasemin SERBEST Turgut YILDIRIM
<b>Destek ve Teşekkür Beyanı/ Statement of Support and Acknowledgment</b>		
Bu çalışmanın yazım sürecinde katkı ve/veya destek alınmamıştır. <i>No contribution and/or support was received during the writing process of this study.</i>		
<b>Çatışma Beyanı/ Statement of Conflict</b>		
Araştırmacıların araştırma ile ilgili diğer kişi ve kurumlarla herhangi bir kişisel ve finansal çıkar çatışması yoktur. <i>Researchers do not have any personal or financial conflicts of interest with other people and institutions related to the research.</i>		
<b>Etik Kurul Beyanı/ Statement of Ethics Committee</b>		
Bu araştırma, Hitit Üniversitesi Etik Kurulunun 08.05.2023 tarihli 2023-125 sayılı kararı ile yürütülmüştür. <i>This study was conducted with the decision of Hitit University Ethics Committee dated 08.05.2023 and numbered 2023-125.</i>		



This study is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).