

Reforming Physical Education Teacher Preparation in Kuwaiti Higher Education



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Introduction/Abstract

Some have argued that little change has been undertaken to the physical education curriculum in Kuwait, specifically as it relates to lack of quality instruction, limited promotion of physical activity and rising obesity levels. Currently Kuwait is showing interest in developing a 'Physical Education and Sport College' that is independent from public authorities. Opportunities therefore exist to innovate within the curriculum offered to physical education student teachers where new instructional models could be considered and ultimately implemented in schools with children and young people. This research seeks to adopt the Sport Education Model (Siedentop, 1994) as a framework for activity learning and training. This model has been developed in many countries, but has yet to be established both within Kuwaiti higher education and the Middle East in general. These current developments in Kuwait offer the opportunity to explore new combinations of activities adopting a Sport Education framework. Hence in this study the Sport Education structures will integrate with the teaching and learning of First Aid concepts and also adopt Karate (already a content area in Kuwaiti high schools) as a sport medium. This three-way integration is intended to help students make informed decisions in certain situations e.g. Daily social life. This curricular combination (conceptual and practical material) has yet to attract interest from Sport Education researchers within the sport pedagogy field.

The Education System in Kuwait

Kuwait is an Arab Gulf State where the dream is to provide ample free education for all children, regardless of gender, social class or special needs. The program comprises kindergarten, primary, intermediate and secondary schooling, followed by tertiary education which is free too. Following a period of pre-school orientation, gender separated primary schooling begins at age 5, and lasts for 5 years.

In the year 1965, following the constitution that made education a fundamental right of a citizen, education was made compulsory for children aged between 6 and 14. Since the early 21st century, the Ministry of Education has sought to prepare a general, long-term education strategy, focusing on educational teaching for the years up to 2025. This effort aims to align teaching methodologies with the current needs of an increasingly globalised world. The World Bank is conducting an analytical study to explore the various policy options needed to implement this new strategy.

Education	School/level	Grade from	Grade to	Age from	Age to	years
Primary		1	5	6	11	5
Middle	Intermediate school	6	10	12	16	4
Secondary	secondary	11	12	17	19	3
tertiary	university					

Higher Education in Kuwait

There are four state-supported higher education institutions in Kuwait.

1. Kuwait University.
2. The College of Basic Education in PAAET .
3. Higher Institute for Theatre Arts.
4. Higher Institute of Music Arts .

The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training was established in 1982 to fill the need for a vocational and technical training institution. PAAET has two missions: PAAET is responsible for providing and developing the skills of the national labour force to meet the demands of a developing nation, and it provides training to students to have careers beyond the oil industry. The College of Basic Education in PAAET, with an enrolment of 7,132, enjoyed an increase of 26 percent from the previous year.



Physical Education in Public Authority for Applied Education and Training

Many research, articles and newspapers have pointed to the poor quality PE in the school curriculum in Kuwait. From my experience it seems that there is a lack of will to change the situation (Alnajada, 2014). This might be attributed to the wish among shareholders to maintain a 'status quo' which blocks the way of any future development references. Kuwaiti schools have always suffered from the lacks of developments. In terms of curriculum, learning and teaching in PE. Pre-service PE teachers typically graduate with insufficient experience in teaching skills knowledge of alternative curriculum. Moreover, these issues lead to attractive curriculum that affect the quality of pupils learning in PE(Mohamed. 2012).

Some here referred to the Kuwait PE curriculum as (outdated) curriculum and old texts books are used to prepare teachers for placement experiences. Urgent reform is necessary to curriculum from primary schools right through to university level (Raza, 2015)

Ridah (2012), the head of the Department of Physical Education and Sport in the College of Education in the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training in Kuwait City, Kuwait, has stated that the curriculum for Physical Education (PE) in Kuwaiti schools must be changed to improve the health of the population and the level of sporting achievement. In addition, he comments that the curriculum in universities is not providing teachers with sufficient training to deliver PE to students (Ridah, 2012).

In Kuwait, it is common that PE decisions are made content related to module teaching based on employee influence and favourability and not on informed professional judgement. This phenomenon is not only in education in the Middle East, and many studies have indicated its effect in society (Alnajada, 2014) (e.g.).

PAAET and the First Aid model

The rate of injury in Kuwaiti schools in PE is high and has included death (Abutafrah *et al.*, 2013). It has been reported that 3.5% of boys and 1% of girls between the ages of 5 and 15 years have reported injuries in schools (Rashed, 2012). It is unlikely that students will develop into enthusiastic sportspeople if injury is commonplace in school PE classes. Researchers believe that when physical education teachers are underqualified in first aid, injury rates amongst pupils are higher (Rashed, 2012). Therefore, if female PE teachers in Kuwait are provided with insufficient first aid education, as part of the teacher preparation they are not likely to reduce this risk of injury and or to provide first aid to those pupils who sustained injury during PE classes and during break times.

Furthermore, first aid education can be appropriately delivered in small learning groups, which are known as teams whilst immersed in the structural and pedagogical features of SE. Siedentop *et al.* (2004) state that the small group learning is important in the development of literate and enthusiastic sportspeople. Indeed, martial arts and first aid education can support a number of goals of SE including developing teamwork, supporting and helping others..



Sport Education in Physical education

The Sport Education (SE) model for PE programs can be implemented to support a broad range of learning outcomes in PE. The SE model is "a curriculum and instruction model developed to allow students in PE programs to have authentic, enjoyable learning experiences in sport, dance, and exercise activities" (Siedentop, Hastie and van der Mars, 2004) and has been successfully implemented nationally and internationally. There are two distinct features of the curricular philosophy of SE; 1) Coverage of content to a greater depth and 2) expansion of content goals (Siedentop, Hastie and van der Mars, 2004). Students participate as members of teams in seasons that are longer than the usual physical education unit. They take an active role in their own sport experience by serving in varied and realistic roles that we see in authentic sport settings such as captains, coaches, trainers, statisticians, officials, publicists, and members of a sports council. These roles support both the instructional and organizational features of lessons as students work cooperatively in their teams.. SE emphasizes that an enthusiastic sportsperson wants to maintain an active involvement, as well as give back to sport and activity perhaps by studying to become a PE teacher (Siedentop, Hastie and van der Mars, 2004).

Sport Education "includes the development of sport skills, an understanding of rules, strategies and tactics of various sport and an appreciation of codes of behavior" (Achper, 2008: 3). Sport Education has been successfully implemented in a wide range of settings (Deenihan *et al.*, 2011; Hastie, 2011). However, an extensive examination of the literature leads to two potential gaps. First, there is no published research on SE in the Middle-Eastern context. Second, no research has yet looked at the possibility of using SE within non-contact martial art activities. This will be the focus of this research. The research will involve myself as the a teacher, designing and teaching a season of SE within a Martial arts to a group of students, which also integrating some of the conceptual first aid of material into the seasons .



My Research Vision

The reason of my PhD study in Sport Education at Southampton University is because of its respected reputation in my country, Kuwait. After my MSc I became aware of the Sport Education model (Siedentop,1994) and the work of Dr. Kinchin at Southampton. I am determined to provide quality higher education to Kuwaiti students majoring in physical education, and because of my desire to pursue new ideas, based on my professional and personal experiences that have prepared me for the challenges of the PhD program. Moreover, the research meets my career objectives and personal interests. Until recently I was a player in the Kuwaiti national Karate team. Therefore, I want to explore other ways to teach this content. A further interest is in First Aid, which I also taught in schools. I am of the view that girls (and boys) need to know more about self-defence in addition to some basic movement and how to act in instances of emergency, which offers benefit to in their life outside school. The challenge for my research is to establish an integrative approach that would introduce young people to the above content set within an alternative instructional model (Sport Education).

My research is about designing a comprehensive SE teaching curriculum with a set of lessons that integrate the martial arts with First Aid content that set with structure and pedagogical factors of Sport Education.



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