

# Professional Marginalization and Isolation: A Study of Physical Education Teachers

Mustafa Kayihan Erbas

## ABSTRACT

In this study, it was aimed to determine the marginalization - isolation levels of physical education teachers and to examine these levels according to professional experience, gender and the school's teacher population. A total of 339 physical education teachers participated in this research which were 114 female (33.6%) and 225 male (66.4%), working in 8 different cities of Turkey. Screening model was used in this research. As a data collection tool, personal data form and Physical Education Marginalization and Isolation Scale (PEMAIS) were used. In the analysis of the data collected in the study, in addition to descriptive statistics, a t-test of arithmetic means was conducted in independent groups in order to compare the values of marginalization and isolation sub-dimensions according to gender, professional experience and the number of teachers in the school. As a result, it has been observed that professional experience is an important variable in terms of marginalization and isolation, and that female teachers can cope with such situations more effectively.

**Keywords:** Physical education teacher, professional marginalization, professional isolation.

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**Mustafa Kayihan Erbas\***

Aksaray University, Faculty of Sport  
Science, Turkey.

(e-mail: kayihan@aksaray.edu.tr)

*\*Corresponding Author*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Socialization: It has been seen that it is a process in which a person learns the necessary knowledge, skills and norms to be a member of the profession, and it is very important for the person to obtain job satisfaction in order to be productive in his/her profession. The occupational socialization theory that best explains this situation; It has been stated that there is a theoretical approach that explains how pre-service teachers learn to teach and why physical education teachers teach [1]. It has been determined that occupational socialization theory emerged as both a theoretical model for understanding the recruitment, training, and ongoing socialization of physical education teachers and a conceptual framework for the design and structure of physical education teacher training programs [2]. While Lawsons [3] explains the scope of professional socialization; He stated that it includes all kinds of socialization that initially influences people to enter the field of physical education and then is responsible for the perceptions and actions of teacher educators and teachers.

It has been stated that the socialization of physical education teachers is a life-long process, and this process starts with pre-service education and continues with teaching [4]. When people decide to become a physical education teacher, their knowledge, skills, personal characteristics, beliefs and experiences are effective in this decision. Therefore, professional socialization of physical education teachers should be taken into account in the period before entering teacher education programs. Because the physical

teacher candidate was interested in sports during his school years or spent time in the gym as an athlete. In these years, he encountered a physical education teacher or trainer as a role model [5].

It has been seen that the perspectives and attitudes of students' parents, administrators, and other teachers towards physical education lessons, due to various problems encountered, may cause physical education teachers to move away from the social context at school and to feel worthless and different [6]. In some studies, taking into account the theory of occupational socialization; It has been reported that physical education teachers feel isolated from other individuals [7] and that physical education has an extraordinary position in the educational environment [8], [9]. Accordingly, it has been stated that a teacher who feels isolated or excluded is in a position between leaving the profession and maintaining his/her social status as a teacher [6].

O'Sullivan [10], who is seen to approach this situation from a different perspective, stated that socialization problems, which are accompanied by legitimacy efforts, arise due to unrealistic expectations.

In one of the studies emphasizing this situation faced by physical education teachers; it has been observed that the socialization strategies of physical education teachers in the first year of their profession, the conflicts they experienced and the concessions they made were examined [11].

In a different study [1], it was stated that physical education teachers were exposed to some restrictions in their first years,

but despite these restrictions, they continued to teach with the experience they gained.

In order to determine these problems experienced by physical education teachers, it has been seen that some studies [9]-[12] have developed and adapted scale studies to determine the levels of marginalization and isolation, and in some studies to determine the levels of professional socialization. Besides considering these studies, studies in which due diligence studies were conducted were also found [13].

When the literature was examined, it was thought that there were not enough studies in this area. It has been stated that case studies are needed to criticize the socialization problems and socialization practices in physical education and to try to find solutions to the problems experienced in this regard [14], [15]. In addition, it was stated that research on this subject is very limited and future researchers should be encouraged to continue using occupational socialization theory as a framework to understand the careers and pedagogical decisions of physical education teachers [6]. In this direction, the aim of this study is to determine the levels of marginalization and isolation of physical education teachers and to examine these levels according to professional experience, gender, and teachers' population of school.

## II. METHODS

Screening model was used in this study. Screening model is a research model in which the views of the participants on a subject or their characteristics such as interests, skills, abilities and attitudes are determined [17].

### A. Research Group

Research group: It consists of a total of 339 physical education teachers, 114 of whom are women (33.6%) and 225 of them (66.4%) are men, working in 8 different cities of Turkey. 158 (46.6%) of the participants have less than 10 years of experience and 181 (53.4%) have more than 10 years of physical education teaching experience. Besides, it was determined that 126 physical education teachers (37.2%) work in school which has below 20 teacher population and 213 physical education teachers (62.8%) worked in the same environment with more than 20 teachers ( $M_{age} = 37.132 \pm 9.236$ ).

### B. Data Collection Tools

Personal Data Form: In this form, there are headings that ask for the person's age, gender, professional experience, and the number of teachers in the school he/she works at. In addition, there is a section explaining why this study was carried out.

Physical Education Marginalization and Isolation Scale (PEMAIS): PEMAIS was used, originally developed by Gaudreault, Richards, and Woods [12] and adapted into Turkish by Şenel *et al.* [9]. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated by taking the Cronbach's alpha value. Both EFA and CFA results showed that the scale had a two-factor structure as in the original. According to the EFA results, it was determined that the two sub-dimensions of the scale explained approximately 51% of the total variance. Factor loads are between 0.63 and 0.72.

The CFA results showed that the data for the two-factor theoretical model had an acceptable fit. As a result of CFA, it was determined that all parameter estimates were statistically significant. As a result, it was stated that the Turkish version of the scale is a valid and reliable scale that can measure the feelings of marginalization and isolation felt by Turkish physical education and sports teachers in the school environment. The scale is a 7-point Likert-type scale consisting of 10 items (1. Strongly disagree – 7. Strongly agree). There are two sub-dimensions in the scale: marginalization (items 1-5) and isolation (items 6-10). In addition, items 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 are items that should be scored in reverse.

Internal consistency coefficients for this study were recalculated and Cronbach's alpha value for marginalization sub-dimension was found as .71 and for isolation sub-dimension as .78.

### C. Analysis of Data

For the analysis of the data, firstly, Skewness and Kurtosis values were checked to determine whether the data showed a normal distribution. As a result of the test, it was seen that the data showed a normal distribution.

In the analysis of the data collected in the study, in addition to descriptive statistics, a t-test of arithmetic means was conducted in independent groups in order to compare the values of marginalization and isolation sub-dimensions according to gender, professional experience and the teacher population of schools.

## III. FINDINGS

TABLE I: MARGINALIZATION AND ISOLATION LEVELS

Variables (n = 339)	$\bar{X}$	Sd
Marginalization	24.436	3.360
Isolation	22.935	3.390

When Table I is examined; it has been seen that the levels of marginalization and isolation of physical education teachers are at a moderate level.

TABLE II: COMPARISON OF THE LEVELS OF MARGINALIZATION ACCORDING TO PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE, GENDER AND THE TEACHER POPULATION OF SCHOOLS

Variables	n	$\bar{X}$	Sd	df	t	p
Gender	F	114	23.96	3.471	-1.846	0.076
	M	225	24.67	3.285		
Professional experience	1-10	158	25.01	3.638	3.017	0.003**
	11 & over	181	23.92	3.016		
Teacher population	1-20	126	24.45	3.369	0.066	0.947
	21 & over	213	24.42	3.172		

p < 0.01\*\*; p < 0.05\*.

When Table II is examined; no significant difference was found in the marginalization levels of physical education teachers in terms of gender and the teacher population of schools. However, when examined in terms of professional experience variable; it has been observed that the marginalization levels of physical education teachers with less than 10 years of experience are higher than those of teachers with more than 10 years of experience.

TABLE III: COMPARISON OF THE LEVELS OF ISOLATION ACCORDING TO PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE, GENDER AND THE TEACHER POPULATION OF SCHOOLS

Variables	n	$\bar{X}$	Sd	df	t	p
Gender	F	114	21.79	2.765	-4.519	0.000**
	M	225	23.51	3.534		
Professional experience	1-10	158	23.58	3.605	3.333	0.001**
	11 & over	181	22.37	3.091		
Teacher population	1-20	126	22.62	3.346	-1.288	0.199
	21 & over	213	23.11	3.410		

p < 0.01\*\*; p < 0.05\*.

When Table III is examined; no significant difference was found in the levels of isolation in terms of the teacher population of schools. However, when examined in terms of gender and professional experience; it was seen that male teachers had higher levels of isolation than females, and physical education teachers with less than 10 years of experience had higher levels of isolation than teachers with more than 10 years of experience.

TABLE IV: THE CORRELATION OF MARGINALIZATION AND ISOLATION LEVELS WITH VARIABLES

Variables	(G)	(PE)	(TP)	(M)	(I)
Gender	1	-0.027	-0.031	0.100	0.239**
Profession Experience	-0.027	1	0.150**	-0.162**	-0.179**
Teacher Population	-0.031	0.150**	1	-0.004	0.070
Marginalization	0.100	-0.162**	-0.004	1	0.569**
Isolation	0.239**	-0.179**	0.070	0.569**	1

p < 0.01\*\*.

When Table IV is examined; a low negative correlation was found between professional experience and marginalization and isolation. In addition, a moderate positive correlation was found between the gender variable and isolation.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In this study, marginalization and isolation levels of physical education teachers were examined in terms of different variables. When Table 1 is examined; it has been seen that the levels of marginalization and isolation of physical education teachers are at a moderate level.

Some studies [8] support this result. Considering that physical education teachers come from a special talent field and give an extraordinary impression compared to other teachers, this result was thought to be an expected result.

When Table II is examined; no significant difference was found in the marginalization levels of physical education teachers in terms of gender and the teacher population of schools. However, when examined in terms of professional experience variable; it has been observed that the marginalization levels of physical education teachers with less than 10 years of experience are higher than those of teachers with more than 10 years of experience.

While some studies [13] found a significant difference according to the gender factor, also some studies were found with similar results according to this study. In addition, no similar study has been found to compare according to the teacher population of schools. As a result of these findings, it

is thought that the concept of marginalization is perceived the same for both genders but differs in the isolation stage.

Finding significant differences in terms of professional experience is supported by some studies [1]. Professional experience: considering the accumulation of knowledge that a person has gained in the teaching profession, it can be thought that experienced teachers acquire the skills to cope with the problem of marginalization after a certain period of time and their levels tend to show a downward trend.

When Table III is examined; no significant difference was found in the levels of isolation in terms of the teacher population of schools. However, when examined in terms of gender and professional experience; it was found that male teachers had higher levels of isolation than females and in addition, it was seen that the level of isolation of physical education teachers with less than 10 years of experience was higher than those of teachers with more than 10 years of experience.

No similar study has been found to compare the results obtained from the levels of isolation according to the teacher population of schools. However, there are similar studies supporting the results obtained in terms of gender and professional experience variables [1], [8], [13]. It can be thought those female teachers' communication skills and having a more social personality have an impact on this result. In addition, it is thought that teachers with high professional experience isolate themselves less in line with the experience and knowledge they have gained.

When Table IV is examined; a low negative correlation was found between professional experience and marginalization and isolation. In addition, a moderate positive relationship was found between the gender variables and isolation.

There are some studies supporting the negative relationship between the increase in the number of years spent by physical education teachers in the profession and the variable of isolation and marginalization [15], [16]. Teachers who have more than 10 years in the teaching profession have a different approach to many events, they can struggle with the marginalization problem more easily and their rate of involvement in the isolation process can decrease.

As a result, it can be said that professional experience is an important variable in terms of marginalization and isolation, and that female teachers can cope with such situations more effectively. In this direction, it can be said that teachers with less than 10 years of service need to be supported by more experienced teachers and they need support services especially in line with the marginalization and isolation problems male teachers face.

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**Mustafa Kayihan Erbas** was born on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1978 in Kutahya, Turkey. He graduated from Physical Education Teacher Education Programme of Dumlupınar University in 2002. He received his master degree on Physical Education & Sport from Dumlupınar University in 2005. He received his Ph. Doctoral degree on Physical Education Teacher Education from Gazi University in 2012. He has 11 years teaching experience (2002-2013) as a physical education teacher in National

Education. He has begun as a academician in Aksaray University, Faculty of Sport Science in 2013. He is still working as a Assoc.Prof. at the same faculty.

Assoc.Prof. Erbas, member of Sport Science Society since 2013. Generally; his research fields are physical education teacher education, sport pedagogy and motor development.