

# A Study on the Actual Conditions and Strengthening of National Physical Education Curriculum

Deajung Lee<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jeonju Peonghwa Middle School; dleownd23@hanmail.net

**Abstract:** The problem between the national curriculum and the teacher-level class has been steadily attempted to narrow the gap between the two sides due to the problems of theory and practice, and physical education is no exception. The purpose of this study is to identify the actual condition of the physical education curriculum implementation for physical education teachers and use the findings to suggest a plan to solve the problems of curriculum theory and practice. **Methods:** To achieve this purpose, a questionnaire survey of 341 physical education teachers across the country was conducted through the Naver Office Form, which included four questions on the understanding level of the 2015 revised physical education curriculum, six questions on the implementation level of the 2015 revised physical education curriculum, and 6 questions on the actual condition of the curriculum implementation. **Conclusions:** Based on the results of the actual state of the physical education curriculum, three ways to strengthen the implementation of the physical education curriculum were proposed. First, the documents and system of physical education curriculum should be improved. Second, the curriculum governance that can lead the spontaneity of teachers should be strengthened. Third, the physical education curriculum of the teacher training college should be strengthened to enhance the professionalism of physical education teachers. Through this study, it is hoped that the physical education curriculum will be a stepping stone for physical education teachers to implement it properly in the field.

**Keywords:** physical education curriculum, the actual condition of implementation, reinforcement plan for implementation

## 1. Introduction

The national curriculum, which is developed to implement the national educational purpose and the ideal of a person, sets the direction of education. Therefore, the national curriculum is a guide to education for teachers who are the main subjects of education. However, the problems of the relationship between theory and practice in the national curriculum, which has been raised for a long time, make no progress despite various studies [1-4]. According to a study by [3], who examined the curriculum accountability and the actual conditions of implementation in 4 regional Offices of Education or District Offices of Education, as well as elementary, middle, and high schools, it is still insufficient to differentiate the curriculum based on regional characteristics at the Office of Education level, and it is not prepared for curriculum autonomy at the school level. This problem is no exception to physical education, and particularly it has become more prominent since the goal of physical education underwent a paradigm shift from 'sports skill learning' to 'physical activity value learning' [5]. In this regard, several studies were conducted to identify the practical problems of the physical education curriculum and to seek ways to improve them [6-10]. However, the gap between the physical education curriculum and the actual practice is still quite big. It has been a problem for decades, and it is not an educational task that can be easily overlooked. Accordingly, this study aims to find the plan to properly implement the underlying values and purposes of the physical education curriculum in schools. The national curriculum as a document is meaningful when it is fully put into practice. Considering the social cost and time, and researchers' efforts to develop a curriculum, as well as the educational accountability to realize the ideal of a person required by society, the problems of theory and practice in the curriculum that have been continued for decades are truly dire to us. Therefore, there is a need to figure out whether it is a problem of national curriculum development, a

structural problem that is conveyed to school teachers after curriculum development, or a lack of professionalism of school teachers, and then seek the ways to properly implement the educational objectives of the national curriculum in the field. Therefore, this study aimed to figure out the actual condition of the national curriculum implementation for physical education teachers and to use the findings to suggest a plan to solve the problems of curriculum theory and practice.

## 2. Research Methods

### 2.1. Research Processes

The processes of this study are divided into four steps. In Step 1, this study set up the basic direction of research, i.e. the survey method and analysis of national curriculum implementation, devised the plan to promote curriculum implementation and specified the plan. In Step 2, a survey of physical education teachers was conducted to investigate the implementation level of the physical education curriculum through the questionnaire on the actual condition of curriculum implementation developed through consultations with experts. In Step 3, the plan for promoting curriculum implementation was derived through literature research and questionnaire results, and a specific method for its application was examined. In Step 4, a summary of the results and suggestions were proposed.

### 2.2. Research Participants

To examine the actual conditions of the physical education curriculum, middle and high school physical education teachers across the country, except for new physical education teachers in 2020, were chosen as the subjects of this study. Specifically, a survey of 100 subjects each from metropolitan areas(Seoul, Gyeonggi, and Incheon), Gangwon-do, Chungcheong-do(including Daejeon and Sejong), Jeolla-do(including Gwangju), Gyeongsang-do(including Daegu, Ulsan, and Busan), and Jeju-do was conducted, and a total of 500 samples were extracted by stratified cluster random sampling. The questionnaire survey was performed for each region through Naver Office Form, and the data of 341 subjects were used for actual analysis.

Table 1. Information on the study subjects

Division	Content	Frequency	%	Division	Content	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	303	88.9%	School type	Public	281	82.4%
	Female	38	11.1%		Private	60	17.6%
Education career	≤5 years	102	29.9%	Working area	Metropolitan areas	87	25.5%
	6~15years	201	58.9%		Gangwon-do	45	13.2%
	≥16years	38	11.2%		Chungcheong-do	53	15.5%
					Jeolla-do	89	26.1%
					Gyeongsang-do	46	13.5%
					Jeju-do	21	6.2%

### 2.3. Research Tools

The questionnaire used in this study was developed through the literature analysis which was conducted by a group of experts(1 professor of Sport Pedagogy, 2 doctors of Sport Pedagogy). And the first revision and supplementation were conducted on the questionnaire of 3 secondary physical education teachers and 3 physical education experts.

### 2.4. Data Processing

The data for analyzing the actual conditions of physical education curriculum implementation was collected by a questionnaire survey through Naver Office Form, and a questionnaire URL (uniform resource locator) was sent to the recommended physical education teachers by region. The

collected data was analyzed for frequency analysis and percent analysis using the SPSS 25.0 statistical program.

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1. Analysis of the Actual Conditions of Physical Education Curriculum Implementation

The 2015 revised physical education curriculum consists of character, objectives, content system and achievement standards, and teaching • learning and evaluation. Based on this, the understanding level of the 2015 revised physical education curriculum was examined. However, the questions were presented without a listed explanation about the content of each area. For example, the character of the physical education curriculum includes the nature and role of the physical education curriculum, the competencies of the physical education curriculum(health management competence, physical training competence, competition performance competence, physical expression competence), and the areas of the physical education curriculum(health, challenge, competition, expression, safety). The objectives of the physical education curriculum are to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes to voluntarily carve out a future life and live as a desirable member of society by acquiring the core competencies necessary for a lively and healthy life through physical activities. The content system and achievement standards include not only the content system consisting of areas, core concepts, generalized knowledge, content elements, and functions but also the achievement standards of the 5 areas of the physical education curriculum. Teaching & learning and evaluation include the direction and operation of teaching and learning, as well as the direction, planning, and the use of results about the content and evaluation of activities. To accurately grasp the understanding level of the curriculum document that includes various contents in one area, specific and numerous questions are required. However, it may decrease the concentration of the survey subjects, thereby reducing the reliability of the questionnaire itself. Therefore, this study examined the understanding and implementation level of physical education curriculum documents, and the cause in one clear question for each area.

##### 3.1.1 The Understanding Level of the 2015 Revised Physical Education Curriculum Document

In conclusion, more than 50% of physical education teachers showed a low level of understanding in the areas of physical education objectives, content system, achievement standards, and teaching & learning, and evaluation, except the area of physical education character. In particular, 63.1% of physical education teachers in the areas of the content system and achievement standard showed a low level of understanding as shown in <Table 2>.

**Table 2.** Analysis of the understanding level of the 2015 revised physical education curriculum

Question	Answer	I don't know	It's hard to explain	I can explain a little	I can explain roughly	I can explain exactly
Can you explain the physical education character of the 2015 revised physical education curriculum?		26	57	78	164	16
		7.6%	16.7%	22.9%	48.1%	4.7%
Can you explain the physical education objectives for the 2015 revised physical education curriculum?		25	74	86	144	12
		7.3%	21.7%	25.2%	42.3%	3.5%
Can you explain the content system and achievement standards of the 2015 revised physical education curriculum?		26	87	102	106	20
		7.6%	25.5%	30.0%	31.1%	5.8%

Can you explain the teaching & learning and evaluation direction of the 2015 revised physical education Curriculum?	26	90	82	115	28
	7.6%	26.4%	24.1%	33.7%	8.2%

### 3.1.2. The Implementation Level of the 2015 Revised Physical Education Curriculum

As a result, more than 50% of physical education teachers showed a low level of understanding in the content areas and evaluation of health, challenge, expression, and safety, excluding the competition area. Especially, 73.5% of the physical education teachers showed a low level of implementation in the expression area. <Table 3> shows the implementation level in the 2015 revised physical education curriculum.

**Table 3.** Analysis of the implementation level of the 2015 revised physical education curriculum

Question	Answer				
	Not at all	Insufficient	Normal	Good	Very good
To what extent do you think you achieved the core concepts, content system, and achievement standards of the health area in the 2019 PE class?	8 2.3%	49 14.4%	140 41.1%	132 38.7%	12 3.5%
To what extent do you think you achieved the core concepts, content system, and achievement standards of the challenge area in the 2019 PE class?	9 2.6%	41 12%	144 42.2%	127 37.2%	20 6%
To what extent do you think you achieved the core concepts, content system, and achievement standards of the competition area in the 2019 PE class?	8 2.3%	30 8.8%	127 37.2%	156 45.7%	20 6%
To what extent do you think you achieved the core concepts, content system, and achievement standards of the expression area in the 2019 PE class?	25 7.3%	94 27.5%	132 38.7%	70 20.5%	20 6%
To what extent do you think you have achieved the core concepts, content system, and achievement standards of the safety area in the 2019 PE class?	8 2.3%	58 17.0%	135 39.7%	115 33.7%	25 7.3%
Based on the 2015 revised physical education curriculum for the 2019 school year, did you conduct physical education evaluation by securing the curriculum connection and the balance of evaluation content, and the validity and reliability of evaluation methods, and by establishing the achievement standards that consider core competencies and individual differences?	12 3.5%	49 14.4%	136 39.9%	132 38.7%	12 3.5%

### 3.2. The Causes of Difficulties in Implementing the Physical Education Curriculum Perceived by Physical Education Teachers

According to the result of a question about the causes of difficulties in implementing the physical education curriculum perceived by physical education teachers, physical education teachers who answered 'Realistic constraints' such as time, space, tools, and school environment showed the highest rate with 45.7%, followed by 39.8% 'Abstraction of the curriculum', 36.% 'Lack of self-interest', 27.6% 'Lack of learning about the application of the curriculum at college, and 20.5% 'Lack of training at the national level', as shown in <Table 4>.

**Table 4.** Analysis of the causes of difficulties in implementing the physical education curriculum

Question	Answer	Curriculum abstraction	Lack of interest	Lack of training at the national level	Lack of learning related to the curriculum application	Realistic constraints
Why do you think it is difficult to implement the content and objectives of the revised physical education curriculum in physical education classes?(multiple choice)		136	123	70	94	156
		39.8	36.1	20.5	27.6	45.7

### 3.3. The Plans to Strengthen the Field Implementation of the Physical Education Curriculum

The plan to strengthen the field implementation of the physical education curriculum was presented at the PE curriculum document level, the curriculum governance level, and the physical education curriculum level of teachers colleges.

First, at the level of PE curriculum documents, this study suggested that it needs to select valuable 'powerful knowledge' as the curriculum content and improve the content system of the physical education curriculum.

Second, at the curriculum governance level, it suggested the plan at the Ministry of Education, the Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation, the Office of Education, and the school level. It also proposed that the Ministry of Education and KICE should develop reference materials for physical education and provide opportunities for physical education teachers to voluntarily improve their professionalism when the physical education curriculum is revised. Also, the Office of Education should strengthen training to properly implement the physical education curriculum in the field, and a culture of cooperation should be fostered at the school level to enhance professionalism.

Third, at the level of teachers' colleges, it suggested that the physical education curriculum should be strengthened in three directions with a focus on 'pedagogical content'. First, it needs to emphasize the importance of a field-oriented course, among 'pedagogical content' courses, as a mandatory subject, establish 'a teaching and evaluation course in the physical education curriculum' in the first or second semester of the fourth grade, and increase the number of 'pedagogical content' professors.

## 4. Suggestions

Based on these results, the suggestions for follow-up studies are as follows. First, research on physical education teachers should be conducted in terms of the physical education curriculum implementation. 36.1% of PE teachers who participated in this study perceived their lack of interest as a cause of difficulties in implementing the physical education curriculum. However, this study sought ways to improve the field implementation of the physical education curriculum at the level of curriculum documents, curriculum governance, and the PE curriculum of teachers colleges, excluding physical education teachers-related factors. Therefore, studies should be conducted on the main players, such as PE teachers' characteristics, professionalism, and interest in the curriculum,

which can promote the physical education curriculum implementation. Second, research on the improvement of educational practice should be conducted to strengthen the field implementation of the physical education curriculum. Singapore, which is a role model for many countries' policymakers and educators in the field of education, divides education practice into four stages: 2-week school experience(just before the first semester of second grade), 4-week educational assistance(just before the first semester of third grade), 5-week training practice 1(just before the first semester of fourth grade), and 10-week training practice 2(just before the second semester of fourth grade) to increase the professionalism of teachers [11]. Therefore, research should be conducted to improve 4 weeks of educational practice in Korea to strengthen the implementation of the physical education curriculum.

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## Author



Daejung Lee  
PhD in education  
JeonJu PyeongHwa Middle School (P.E.) Teacher