

## The extent to which the physical education curriculum considers central and decentralized planning "source of decision" in the design of the learning action in the primary stage.

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### Abstract

The object of the study aims to identify The extent to which the physical education and sports curriculum accommodates centralized and decentralized planning 'source of decision' in designing educational learning activities in the primary stage. For this purpose, we used the method descriptive in the survey pattern On a sample composed of 63 teachers chosen as purposive sampling. For data collection, we used a tool questionnaire. After collecting the results and having treated them statistically, we conclude that the physical education curriculum largely considers centralized and decentralized planning "source of decision" in the design of the learning action at the primary stage. On this basis, the study recommended the need to strengthen the practices of centralized and decentralized planning in the physical education curriculum.

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### 1. Introduction

Physical and sports education is regarded as one of the essential components contributing to a child's development during the early stages of life. Its objectives include the enhancement of motor skills, the improvement of both physical and mental health, and the promotion of values such as cooperation and respect. According to (Metwally, 2010), this subject is of significant importance at the primary level, as it plays a crucial role in establishing the foundational basis for the development of children's physical and motor behavior (Metwally, 2010, p 43). From this perspective, the design of the teaching-learning process in this area must be meticulously examined to ensure it aligns with the educational and social objectives of the broader educational system.

In this context, the development of the physical and sports education curriculum necessitates a careful equilibrium between various components, particularly the interplay between centralized and decentralized planning in defining decision-making authority within the classroom. Centralized planning is characterized by the establishment of objectives and content by educational authorities or higher-level planners. Conversely, (Al-Marzouqi, 2014) elucidates that decentralized planning emphasizes increasing the involvement of teachers and learners in decisions related to the educational process. This distinction between centralized and decentralized planning prompts inquiries into how this allocation of decision-making power influences the structuring of the teaching-learning process within educational curricula, particularly at the primary stage, which serves as the cornerstone for the holistic development of a child's personality (Al-Marzouqi, 2014, p 72).

Centralized planning may impose a unified educational framework that does not necessarily suit the specific needs of students in different environments, while decentralized planning offers greater flexibility in adapting education to local variables. Accordingly, the challenge lies in how to achieve a balance between centralized and decentralized planning in the design of physical and sports education curricula particularly at the primary stage. In this regard, (Farhat, 2019) argues that such a balance can contribute to the design of learning experiences that meet the diverse needs of children and take into account individual differences among students across physical, motor, psychological, and social dimensions (Farhat, 2019, p95).

Although centralized planning may help provide a standardized framework that is easier to implement on a broad scale, it may lack sufficient interaction with local specificities and individual contexts, which can negatively affect the educational system's ability to meet all students' needs. In contrast, (Salman, 2016) asserts that decentralized planning offers teachers greater opportunities to adapt to these individual differences by giving them more flexibility in decision-making that suits actual classroom conditions (Salman, 2016, p38). Given this distribution between the two models, it becomes essential to examine the impact of this approach on implementing educational activities in physical education such as exercise routines, movement games, and practical applications.

### **1.1. Literature Review**

Considering the significance of the decision-making source in the design of the teaching-learning process, numerous educational studies have explored the subject of centralized versus decentralized planning, as well as the implications of each on the effectiveness of the educational process, particularly concerning physical and sports education at the primary level. (Abu Zaid, 2002) notes that centralized planning is defined as 'a type of planning in which educational decisions are issued by a single central authority, often the ministry or a higher educational body, and are imposed on all educational institutions' (Abu Zaid, 2002, p 115). In contrast, (Alwan, 2010) states that decentralized planning "grants educational institutions relative freedom in decision-making in line with their needs and local specificities, which contributes to improving the quality of education and enhancing the role of teachers in educational decision-making" (Alwan, 2010, p 67). Numerous Arab and international studies have explored centralized and decentralized planning within the physical and sports education curriculum as it relates to the design of the teaching-learning process in the primary stage. These studies were conducted on various samples and across diverse educational environments, including:

-Study by (Chenkab Walid, Al-Arabi Mohamed 2023), entitled "The Effectiveness of a Proposed Educational Program in Learning Some Floor Exercise Skills in Gymnastics for Primary School Pupils". The study aimed to identify the effectiveness of a proposed educational program in teaching certain floor exercise skills in gymnastics to primary school pupils. The researchers used the experimental method and employed skill-based tests related to floor exercises. The study sample consisted of 30 pupils who were intentionally selected. The results of the study revealed a very high effectiveness of the proposed program in teaching the targeted skills.

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-Study by (Majid bin Saeed Al-Bousafi, Dawood bin Mohammed bin Suleiman Al-Balushi, and Badriya bint Khalfan bin Issa Al-Hadabi 2022), entitled "The Effect of an Educational Program Using Children's Athletics Competitions within School Sports Curricula on the Development of Some Physical Fitness Components among Pupils Aged 8–10 Years". The study aimed to examine the effect of an educational program using children's athletics competitions within school sports curricula on developing certain physical fitness components in pupils aged 8–10 years. The researchers employed the experimental method and used physical fitness tests. The study sample consisted of 70 boys and girls selected intentionally. The results showed that using the children's athletics program within the school sports curriculum was characterized by excitement and engagement, which positively impacted the effectiveness of the class and pupils' performance.

-Study by (Boushiba Mostafa, 2021), entitled "The Role of Quasi-Sport Games in Developing Learning Motivation among Primary School Pupils from the Teachers' Perspective". The study aimed to explore the role of quasi-sport games in developing learning motivation among primary school pupils from the perspective of teachers. The researcher used the descriptive method and employed a learning motivation scale. The study sample consisted of 64 teachers selected randomly. The results indicated that quasi-sport games play a role in enhancing learning motivation among primary school pupils, according to the teachers' perspectives.

-Study by (Ouhcine Ibrahim, 2016), entitled "The Role of the Physical and Sports Education Class in Improving Motor Fluency among First-Year Primary Children Aged 6–7 Years". The study aimed to describe the role of the physical and sports education class in improving motor fluency among first-year primary school children aged 6–7 years. The researcher employed the comparative descriptive method and used the Bertsch Test. The study sample consisted of 63 children selected intentionally. The researcher concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test results of the sample regarding the motor fluency variable.

In light of the above, the following question is raised :

To what extent does the physical and sports education curriculum take into account centralized and decentralized planning (the source of decision-making) in designing the teaching-learning process at the primary level, from the perspective of subject teachers?

In light of this, a set of sub-questions is posed as follows:

-To what extent does the physical and sports education curriculum take into account centralized planning in designing the teaching-learning process at the primary level, from the perspective of subject teachers?

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To answer these questions, the researchers formulated the following hypotheses:

-The physical and sports education curriculum significantly takes into account both centralized and decentralized planning (the source of decision-making) in designing the teaching-learning process at the primary level, from the perspective of subject teachers.

-The physical and sports education curriculum significantly takes into account centralized planning in designing the teaching-learning process at the primary level, from the perspective of subject teachers.

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## 2. Method and Materials

**2.1. Approach** The researchers relied on their study on the descriptive approach in the survey pattern of the nature of the subject.

**2.2. Participants:** The study sample consisted of 63 physical education teachers in primary education, who were selected using a purposive sampling method.

### 2.3. Determination of variables:

**-Independent Variable:** It is represented the "source of decision" in centralized and decentralized planning.

**-Dependent Variable:** It is represented in the design of the educational learning action.

### 2.4. Study tool and scientific foundations:

- **Study tool:** A questionnaire was administered to physical education teachers at the primary education level. It was tailored and crafted in alignment with the objectives of our research to fulfill the overarching aim of the study, which is to assess the degree to which the physical education curriculum incorporates both centralized and decentralized planning (decision-making sources) in the formulation of the teaching-learning process at the primary level. The questionnaire consisted of 14 questions categorized according to a three-point Likert scale.

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**- Validity of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire was presented to ten competent arbitrators to consider the appropriateness of the questionnaire for what they were developed for, and the arbitrators agreed by more than 95%.

**-Internal consistency validity:** We calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient between the degree of each of the axis statements and the total degree of the axis as follows:

**Table 1: shows the internal consistency of the statements of the first axis**

Statements	Correlation coefficient
The curriculum is based on centralized instructions from the ministry	0.854
The learning objectives are predetermined in the curriculum	0.939
The content is standardized across all schools without modification	0.723
Activities for each academic term are determined centrally	0.852
Assessment follows unified centralized standards	0.927
The teacher is required to follow an official guide for lesson implementation	0.701
Adjusting lesson timing according to the institution is not permitted	0.866

It is clear from Table (1) that all paragraphs are statistically significant, that is, there is a moral correlation from which the paragraphs of the first axis are considered truthful and internally consistent.

**Table 2: Shows the internal consistency of the statements of the second axis.**

Statements	Correlation coefficient
The curriculum allows for adapting activities according to students' specific needs	0.973
It gives the teacher the freedom to choose appropriate teaching aids	0.803
Educational objectives can be adjusted to align with the classroom environment	0.776
The curriculum encourages individual initiative in conducting lessons	0.858
It allows the teacher to organize instructional time according to the realities of the school	0.761
The curriculum enables the design of new activities that match students' abilities	0.904
The planning process takes into account individual differences among students	0.811

It is clear from Table (2) that all the paragraphs are statistically significant, meaning that there is a significant correlation through which the paragraphs of the second axis are considered valid and internally consistent.

**-Validity of the structural consistency of the questionnaire:** We calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient between the score of each axis and the total score of the questionnaire, and the following table shows this:

**Table 3: shows the validity of the structural consistency of the questionnaire axes**

Questionnaire Dimensions		correlation	Result
The first axis	Correlation coefficient	0.944	There is a correlation
	Statistical significance	0.01	
The second axis	Correlation coefficient	0.872	There is a correlation
	Statistical significance	0.05	

From Table (3) Pearson's correlation coefficients (0.944, 0.872) are greater than the value of Table "r " at significance level 0.01 and 0.05.

**The stability of the study tool: The stability of the questionnaire:** The stability of the study questionnaire was verified, through the Cronbach alpha coefficient, as shown in the table for the following:

**Table 4: shows Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire axes**

Dimension	The number of phrases	Cronbach's Alpha Laboratories
The first axis	07	0.791
The second axis	07	0.836
Total Dimensions	14	0.813

From Table (4) it was found that the resolution has a high degree of stability, where the stability coefficient was 0.813 thousand Kornbach.

**2.5. Statistical Analysis:** arithmetic mean – standard deviation – Pearson correlation coefficient – Cronbach's alpha coefficient - percentages - Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26.

### 3. Results

**First: Presentation and analysis of the results of the questionnaire addressed to the professors as a whole.**

**Table 5: shows the test adopted in the study**

Cell length	The corresponding relative weight	Degree of availability
From 1 to 1.66	From 33.33 to 55.32	Small
From 1.67 to 2.33	Greater than 55.32 to 77.65	Medium
From 2.33 to 3	Greater than 77.65 to 100	High

**Table 6: Represents the results of the questionnaire addressed to the professors as a whole**

Fields	Mean	Relative Weight	Rank	Degree of Agreement
The extent to which the physical education curriculum considers centralized planning in designing the teaching-learning process in the primary stage from the perspective of subject teachers	2.54	84.65	1	High
The extent to which the physical education curriculum considers decentralized planning in designing the teaching-learning process in the primary stage from the perspective of subject teachers	2.36	78.65	2	High
Total	2.45	81.65	-	High

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Table discussions: From the results shown in Table (6) we find that:

- The domain concerning the extent to which the physical education curriculum considers centralized planning in designing the teaching-learning process at the primary level ranked first according to the teachers, with a mean score of 2.54, a relative weight of 84.65%, and a high degree of agreement.
- The domain concerning the extent to which the physical education curriculum considers decentralized planning in designing the teaching-learning process at the primary level ranked second according to the teachers, with a mean score of 2.36, a relative weight of 78.65%, and a high degree of agreement.

**Second: Presentation and analysis of the results of the questionnaire addressed to professors by field:**

**1.The extent to which the physical education curriculum considers centralized planning in designing the teaching-learning process at the primary level from the perspective of physical education teachers.**

**Table 7: Shows the results related to the first domain**

Statements	Standard Deviation	Mean	Relative Weight (%)	Rank	Degree of Agreement
The curriculum is based on centralized instructions from the ministry	0.97	2.30	76.65	7	Medium
The learning objectives are predetermined in the curriculum	1.12	2.40	79.99	6	High
The content is standardized across all schools without modification	0.73	2.69	89.65	2	High
Activities for each academic term are determined centrally	0.92	2.78	92.65	1	High
Assessment follows unified centralized standards	1.19	2.55	84.99	4	High
The teacher is required to follow an official guide for lesson implementation	0.81	2.61	86.99	3	High
Adjusting lesson timing according to the institution is not permitted	0.99	2.47	82.32	5	High
Total	0.96	2.54	84.65	-	High

Table discussions: From the results shown in Table (7) we find that:

- The statement (Activities for each academic term are determined centrally) ranked first with a mean of 2.78, a relative weight of 92.65%, and a high degree of agreement.
- The statement (The content is standardized across all schools without modification) ranked second with a mean of 2.69, a relative weight of 89.65%, and a high degree of agreement.

- The statement (The teacher is required to follow an official guide for lesson implementation) ranked third with a mean of 2.61, a relative weight of 86.99%, and a high degree of agreement.
- The statement (Assessment follows unified centralized standards) ranked fourth with a mean of 2.55, a relative weight of 84.99%, and a high degree of agreement.
- The statement (Adjusting lesson timing according to the institution is not permitted) ranked fifth with a mean of 2.47, a relative weight of 82.32%, and a high degree of agreement.
- The statement (The learning objectives are predetermined in the curriculum) ranked sixth with a mean of 2.40, a relative weight of 79.99%, and a high degree of agreement.
- The statement (The curriculum is based on centralized instructions from the ministry) ranked seventh with a mean of 2.30, a relative weight of 76.65%, and a medium degree of agreement.

**2. The extent to which the physical education curriculum considers decentralized planning in designing the teaching-learning process at the primary level from the perspective of physical education teachers.**

**Table 8: Shows the results related to the second domain**

Statements	Standard Deviation	Mean	Relative Weight (%)	Rank	Degree of Agreement
The curriculum allows for adapting activities according to students' specific needs	1.14	2.22	73.99	6	Medium
It gives the teacher the freedom to choose appropriate teaching aids	1.00	2.36	78.65	3	High
Educational objectives can be adjusted to align with the classroom environment	0.71	2.14	71.32	7	Medium
The curriculum encourages individual initiative in conducting lessons	0.95	2.33	77.65	4	Medium
It allows the teacher to organize instructional time according to the realities of the school	1.25	2.55	84.99	2	High
The curriculum enables the design of new activities that match students' abilities	0.98	2.60	86.65	1	High
The planning process takes into account individual differences among students	0.76	2.32	77.32	5	Medium
Total	0.97	2.36	78.65	-	High

Table discussions: From the results shown in Table (8) we find that:

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- The statement (The curriculum enables the design of new activities that match students' abilities) ranked first with a mean of 2.60, a relative weight of 86.65%, and a high degree of agreement.
- The statement (It allows the teacher to organize instructional time according to the realities of the school) ranked second with a mean of 2.55, a relative weight of 84.99%, and a high degree of agreement.
- The statement (It gives the teacher the freedom to choose appropriate teaching aids) ranked third with a mean of 2.36, a relative weight of 78.65%, and a high degree of agreement.
- The statement (The curriculum encourages individual initiative in conducting lessons) ranked fourth with a mean of 2.33, a relative weight of 77.65%, and a medium degree of agreement.
- The statement (The planning process takes into account individual differences among students) ranked fifth with a mean of 2.32, a relative weight of 77.32%, and a medium degree of agreement.
- The statement (The curriculum allows for adapting activities according to students' specific needs) ranked sixth with a mean of 2.22, a relative weight of 73.99%, and a medium degree of agreement.
- The statement (Educational objectives can be adjusted to align with the classroom environment) ranked seventh with a mean of 2.14, a relative weight of 71.32%, and a medium degree of agreement.

#### **4. Discussion**

**Discussion of the Results Related to the First Hypothesis (The physical education curriculum greatly considers centralized planning in designing the teaching-learning process at the primary level from the perspective of subject teachers):** According to the findings presented in Table (7), it has been determined that the physical education curriculum places significant emphasis on centralized planning in the design of the teaching-learning process at the primary level, as perceived by physical education teachers. This emphasis can be attributed to the unique characteristics of the primary school age group, which necessitate careful organization of physical and sporting activities. Centralized planning serves to guide these activities to ensure the development of students' fundamental motor skills and to foster their physical and psychological growth in a gradual and balanced manner. The researchers attributes this observation to the fact that such planning bolsters educational values and enhances the interaction between teachers and students in accordance with the diverse

needs of children. Furthermore, centralized planning allows for the precise determination of educational objectives and the continuous monitoring of students' progress, which contributes to improving the outcomes of the educational process. Good planning is the foundation of successful teaching, as it provides the necessary basis for organizing and directing educational activities in a way that ensures the achievement of pedagogical goals efficiently and effectively. These findings are consistent with the studies of (Shengab Walid and Al-Arabi Mohamed 2023) and (Majid bin Saeed Al-Bousafi, Dawood bin Mohammed bin Suleiman Al-Balushi, and Badriya bint Khalfan bin Issa Al-Hadabi 2022), all of which concluded that the physical education curriculum at the primary level greatly considers centralized planning in designing the teaching-learning process. This indicates the presence of clear and centralized guidance in structuring and organizing educational activities.

**Discussion of the Results Related to the Second Hypothesis (The physical education curriculum greatly considers decentralized planning in designing the teaching-learning process at the primary level from the perspective of subject teachers):** Based on the results presented in Table (8), it was found that the physical education curriculum considers decentralized planning to a moderate degree in the design of the teaching-learning process at the primary level, according to the perspective of physical education teachers. This result is attributed to the nature of the subject, which requires flexible interaction between the teacher and students. Decentralized planning allows teachers to respond quickly to students' diverse needs, adjusting activities based on their abilities and individual levels. It also promotes students' capacity to make independent decisions regarding physical activities, which supports the development of self-directed skills and enhances self-confidence. The researchers attributes these findings to the fact that decentralized planning helps activate students' role in the educational process, improves the level of interaction among them, and guides them toward achieving educational objectives in a flexible and inclusive manner. Moreover, it encourages independence, genuine participation, and ongoing collaboration. These findings are consistent with the studies of (Boushiba Mostafa 2021) and (Ouhssine Ibrahim 2016), both of which concluded that the physical education curriculum at the primary level largely considers decentralized planning in designing the teaching-learning process. This reflects an attention to the specificities of the local

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context and flexibility in implementing educational content based on learners' needs and the school environment.

### **5. Conclusion**

The study aimed to identify the extent to which the physical education curriculum considers central and decentralized planning "decision source" in designing the educational learning action at the elementary level. To achieve this, the researcher employed a questionnaire form containing two axes, each measuring one aspect of the educational process planning, namely central and decentralized planning. The study was conducted on a sample of 63 teachers, and the data were statistically analyzed using SPSS 26. The study reached several results, the most important of which are:

- The physical education curriculum in some primary schools places greater importance on central planning.
- Some schools rely on decentralized planning, which gives physical education teachers greater freedom in making decisions about sports activities and adapting them according to students' needs.
- There are differences in the implementation of decentralized planning among schools and teachers, with some teachers showing flexibility in making educational decisions based on students' responses, while others followed a more traditional approach that relied heavily on central planning.
- The physical education curriculum primarily focuses on ensuring a balance of physical activities that align with predetermined educational goals; accordingly, the researchers recommends the following:
  - Strengthening decentralized planning practices in the physical education and sports curriculum.
  - Providing advanced and comprehensive training for primary school teachers on how to effectively integrate decentralized planning with centralized planning.
  - Providing resources and educational materials that contribute to enhancing decentralized planning and support activities that rely on the active participation of students.

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