

## **A RESEARCH INTO THE PEDAGOGIC FORMATION, FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND COMPUTER RELATED KNOWLEDGE OF TRACK AND FIELD TRAINERS IN TURKEY**

**Hacı Ahmet PEKEL**

*Gazi University, School of Physical Education and Sports*

### **ABSTRACT**

Foreign language, computer programs and social network applications or web sites are widely used by many people nowadays for various aims. In the literature, the number of studies investigating over university departments of physical education or more specifically to say, taking sports students' and teachers' foreign language and social networking usage ability as a research area is highly limited. Besides, the data extracted from trainers in regarding to their skills in foreign language and computer usage is not common enough in this research area. This research was done for the track and field trainers in Turkey. The participants of the study were comprised of 97 men and 45 women. The data were collected by the researcher and analyzed by with SPSS (22.0 for Mac, IBM Corp, Armonk, NY, USA); descriptive statistics, cross tabulations and correlations were calculated. According to the result of the study most of the trainers didn't learn foreign language and some trainers don't use computers and social networks in their professional life at all. To improve the international relationship between the trainers around the world and to make a significant research, it appears that the trainers should also improve themselves to learn computer programs, foreign languages and they should also take pedagogic formation courses to convey their knowledge accordingly.

**Keywords:** Track and field, education, trainer, computer programs, foreign language, pedagogic formation

### **INTRODUCTION**

Recently, the world has been experiencing a kind of shift as a result of ongoing technological innovations, which is transformed into and better known nowadays as information technology (IT). Not only that this shift has transformed societies so far, but also led "informatics" revealing as a field on its own.

Social networking, (Computing) which had released mark an era during 90s in developed countries, has been also welcomed and fulfilled the expectations within a short time in Turkey as well by leading interpersonal communication and several computing programs around the country. Yet, it appears that the technology which has been improving day by day has revealed out more specialized people getting educated about this new computer programs.

In our country many important steps have been taken so far. As many investments done on sport and sportsmen could be one of the signs, on the other hand, the considerations of national sport facilitations and the transition of Youth and Sport General Directorate to the ministry level have accounted some of the important moves supporting the sport development in the country.

By looking through a trainer perspective, as the idea of limitation in sport does not exist, the profession of trainer is carrying an important role in this regard. In this important profession, it is a big time waste for a trainer to learn some of the notions by only experiencing in today's conditions. Yet, a trainer who has sufficient language ability can also have more potential to conduct a research online, not only to contact external world through camping, international competitions and educational activities. Moreover, a trainer who has learned some of the good beneficial computer programs well enough, is more likely to take logical steps by preparing a decent training program for an athlete and having any comments and analysis taken by the science experts in this regard.

Yet In this regard, when the improvement and the employment of a trainer are taken as a consideration, there reveals some inconsistencies. At the end of 1990s when General Directorate of Sport published the 'Trainer Education Regulations', in spite of the autonomy of all the sport federations, most of the time the regulations had been functioning in the same way. As some of the people call having the ability of computer programs, formation knowledge or a foreign language training only as 'personal improvement', if one analyses Turkey Athletic Federation 'Trainer Education Regulations', there is no information/criteria about the skills mentioned or related to any training program. ([www.taf.org.tr](http://www.taf.org.tr)). Moreover, even though there are some criteria related to the

trainers employed by the federations and the ministry in contract, still such skills and the abilities are not taken as a big consideration. The most important two criteria which are ‘having the second level trainer certificate and been employed three times in national team’ are simply leading people to become a trainer candidate in either a federation or the General Directorate Organization. On the other hand, university where is the second place of educating trainers, is playing a different role in the country. After four years of the under graduate study at the department of Trainer Education within Physical Education and Sports School and the Faculty of Sport Sciences, a trainer who achieves to receive a third level senior trainer certificate, has already taken computer and foreign language courses in at least two semester (56-84 course hours).

**Social Networks and Physical Education**

It is believed that web tools can be used by PE (Physical Education) teachers to develop their own performance and foster students’ learning processes, when physical education is considered (Balçkanlı, 2012) Mohnsen (2008) stated that social networks helps, students understand PE related concepts, introduces students motor skill techniques, provides simulation and practice experiences, supports self-paced learning and unlimited practice, provides immediate and constructive feedback, and accommodates various learning styles.

In this research, the analysis of trainers’ knowledge about computer programs and foreign language abilities are taken as focus with some suggestions.

**THE STUDY**

**Data Collection**

This research was carried out by using descriptive/survey method. To improve the reliability of the surveys, the method had tested before between two groups in two weeks interval. As people have participated into the survey as being volunteers, the method was carried out as personal practicing. In the first section of the survey, the personal information, in the second section, the most commonly used computer programs, at the third section; the levels of foreign language skills were questioned.

The research was conducted by total number of 159 surveys in which 17 of them was not accounted since some of the questioned were not answered or replied as carelessly. The total number of 142 trainers who participated into this survey were both having their 2014 license approved by Turkey Athletic Federation, as 45 of them were women, whereas, 97 of them were men.

**Data Analysis**

The survey results were computed all in a statistical package (SPSS 22.0 for Mac, IBM Corp, Armonk, NY, USA). Data is evaluated for frequencies in crosstabulations and descriptive statistics, and only in some cases correlations were looked.

**FINDINGS**

Table 1: Descriptives of the test subjects concerning their age, education, coaching level and coaching discipline

	Age						Education					Coaching Level					Discipline				
	18-21	22-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61- up	Primary school	Secondary school	University graduate	Masters degree	PhD	Assistant coach	Coach	Senior coach	Head coach	Technical director	Sprint & hurdles	Middle & long dist.	Throws	Jumps	Multiple
<b>n</b>	1	41	55	28	12	5	1	9	115	14	3	48	52	30	5	7	39	58	21	22	2
<b>%</b>	.7	28.9	38.7	19.7	8.5	3.5	.7	6.3	81	9.9	2.1	33.8	36.6	21.1	3.5	4.9	27.5	40.8	14.8	15.5	1.4

The majority of the respondents who participated in the study are composed of middle-aged trainers (38.7%), meanwhile with over 61 years and under 21 years of age group as the rest of the test subjects form the least (4.2%).

The majority of the respondents, who participated in the study, are university graduates (81.0%), meanwhile, there are 10 elementary and high school graduates with the percentage of 7.0%.

As analyzing the stage levels of trainers in this research, it could be seen that the largest percentage, 36.6%, is collected among the trainers being in the second stage level. The number of head coaches and technical director-level managers participating in the research group is quite small (8.5%)

The majority of the respondents who participated in the study are composed of medium-to-long-distance trainers (40.8%). The least number of trainers is formed in the category of multi-branch managers (1.4%) as the last twenty years there have achieved no any success among in international competitions.

Table 2: Data about income, coaching only or any additional job and foreign languages spoken by the trainers

Variables	Income TL					Coaching + secondary job							Foreign language			
	850 - 1150	1151 - 2000	2001 - 3750	3751 - 5000	5001 - up	Coaching is only job	PE Teacher	Civil servant	Sports management	Army servicemen	Self employed	Other	No foreign language	English	German	Other
<b>n</b>	25	26	70	13	8	61	46	3	6	2	21	3	67	71	2	2
<b>%</b>	17.6	18.3	49.3	9.2	5.6	43	32.4	2.1	4.2	1.4	14.8	2.1	47.1	50.1	6.3	1.4

While a quarter of the subjects participating in the study are having the minimum wage income, the percentage of the test subjects whose income fall below the poverty threshold, as defined in 2014 by the State Statistics Institute, is 35.9%. Approximately two-thirds of the subjects’ income is above the poverty threshold (64.1%). ([www.tuik.gov.tr](http://www.tuik.gov.tr)).

43% of the test subjects are athletic trainers, while other professional groups in the rest of the group are forming 57% of them. The largest group within these occupational groups is forming the highest percentage of 32.4% as Physical Education Teachers.

While half of the test subjects stated that they have the ability of using English language (%50,1), the number of the subjects who can declare that they can use other languages, is formed as 4 (%2,8).

Table 3: The status of the test subjects concerning their formative education, in-service training and foreign language ability

	Taken any seminar/panel etc. in previous year		Taken any formation course		Know foreign language		Any certificate of foreign language	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	86	60.6	47	33	75	52.8	6	4.2
No	56	39.4	95	77	67	47.2	136	95.8

While more than one-third of the subjects stated that they did not attend any personal development seminars, panels, in-service training or so on during the past year, one-third of the test subjects stated they have taken formative education training which is playing a major role in interpersonal communication. The percentage of the test subjects who does not know any foreign language is almost forming the half of the total test subjects (%47,2), whereas the number of the subjects who can proof their foreign language ability is only 6 (%4,2).

Table 4: The levels of foreign language speaking and writing ability among the test subjects

Skill Level	Speaking		Writing	
	n	%	n	%
None	70	49,3	76	53.5
Poor	34	23,9	29	20.4
Average	32	22,5	30	21.1
Good	6	4,2	7	4.9

Among the test subjects to compare their levels of foreign language speaking and writing ability, almost half of them stated that they do not have the ability of speaking a foreign language, whereas, more than half of the stated they do not have the ability of writing (respectively %49,3 and %53,5). The ability of speaking and writing above the average among the test subjects are respectively followed as %4,2 and %4,9.

Two-thirds of the test subjects participating the research (%64,8) stated that they had their first foreign language education either in primary, middle, high school or universities, whereas, the percentage of %31 of the test subjects stated that they had in Turkey or abroad.

Tablo- 5: The crosstabulation of coaching level versus education level

			Education Level					Total
			Primary school	Secondary school	University	Masters degree	PhD	
Coaching Level	Assistant coach	Count	1	2	41	4	0	48
		% within Coaching	2.1%	4.2%	85.4%	8.3%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Education	100.0%	22.2%	35.7%	28.6%	0.0%	33.8%
	Coach	Count	0	5	42	4	1	52
		% within Coaching	0.0%	9.6%	80.8%	7.7%	1.9%	100.0%
		% within Education	0.0%	55.6%	36.5%	28.6%	33.3%	36.6%
	Senior coach	Count	0	2	26	1	1	30
		% within Coaching	0.0%	6.7%	86.7%	3.3%	3.3%	100.0%
		% within Education	0.0%	22.2%	22.6%	7.1%	33.3%	21.1%
	Head coach	Count	0	0	1	3	1	5
		% within Coaching	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		% within Education	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	21.4%	33.3%	3.5%
	Technical director	Count	0	0	5	2	0	7
		% within Coaching	0.0%	0.0%	71.4%	28.6%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Education	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	14.3%	0.0%	4.9%
	Total	Count	1	9	115	14	3	142
		% within Coaching	0.7%	6.3%	81.0%	9.9%	2.1%	100.0%
		% within Education	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

If the test subjects' stage training levels and their education status are compared, it could be seen that the majority of the whole stage trainers are university graduates (%81). While the test subjects who have 5<sup>th</sup> stage of training level, also known as the highest stage as a trainer level, have not got education lower than the university degree, on the other hand, over the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of training level, 4 trainers have completed their masters degree in the field.

Table 6: The data of the test subjects concerning their usage of computer programs

Program	Windows in Genaral		MS Word		MS Power Point		MS Excel		Multimedia Programs	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
No experience	6	4,2	23	16,2	21	14,8	24	16,9	40	28,2
Little experience	23	16,2	45	31,7	54	38,0	54	38,0	47	33,1
Good	66	46,5	53	37,3	48	33,8	43	30,3	40	28,2
Advanced	47	33,1	21	14,8	17	12,0	21	14,8	15	10,6

The majority of the test subjects participating the study stated that they have experienced in windows, office programs, power point and excel. While the percentage of the subjects who declared that they have experienced in windows software is %46,5, the percentage of the subjects stating they have experienced in office programs is %37,3, in power point software %33,8, in excel software %30,3. One-third of the test subjects stated that they have at least engaged in multimedia programs.

### DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

More than half of the test subjects participated into this survey are married, whereas, in two-thirds of the partners among them is working. This could show that the income of those trainers could be either close or above to the average national income when looking through the socio-economic perspective. As %90,1 percentage of the test subjects are having computer facility at home, more than half of the test subjects (%53,5) stated that they are

more often having laptop computers with them. Moreover, the majority of subjects stated they have instant mobile Internet connection facility. The point should be made here is that the trainers have the potential of following the recent developments in the world whenever they want.

The internet as a technological innovation has changed our lives in unimaginable ways (Forkosh-Barush & Hershkowitz, 2010) In another research showed that social network environments introduces facilities for personal statements, creating interest groups, ensuring cooperation and sharing information (Arguero & Romero-Frias, 2013). In researches related to Physical Education and Training, which is carrying out the same methods like trainer education, the suggestions presented over could be found very interesting as well. As far as physical education is concerned, it is believed that web tools can be used by PE (Physical Education) teachers to develop their own performances and to foster students' learning processes. Several studies looked at issues such as office applications (Güclü, 2010; Silverman, 1997; Yaman; 2007) multimedia software and its impact on motor skills (Mohnsen, 2008), instructional video analysis software to improve pupils' understandings on underlying concepts and techniques (Ladda et al., 2004), effects of web technologies on students' satisfaction (Vernadakis et al., 2012), and web developers as physical educators (Papastergiou, 2010). In a similar fashion, multimedia educational software, in Mohnsen's research (2008), constituted an important tool which;

- helped students understand PE-related concepts,
- introduced students to motor skill techniques,
- provided simulations and practice experiences,
- supported self-paced learning and unlimited practice,
- provided immediate and constructive feedback, and
- accommodated various learning styles.

The condition for accessing instant knowledge could be achieved by only using the most common languages around the world. A trainer, who can easily access to updated knowledge about training plans or technical-supports, should know the language of the researches firstly or get some support for the translation. The pages online which provide support for translating languages are most of the time not sufficient enough especially over scientific works, therefore, the trainers should know at least one reliable foreign language.

More than two-thirds of the participants (%38,7) are formed by test subjects whose age is 31 – 40 (Table 1). While the majority of the participants are university graduates (%81,0), the number of test subjects who achieved either masters or Ph.D. degrees is 17 (%12)(Table 1). When incomes of the trainers are put on analysis, %17,6 percentage of the participants' income could be seen as being minimum wage, the percentage of the test subjects whose income fall below the poverty threshold, 2000 TL, as defined in 2014 by the State Statistics Institute, is 35.9% (www.tuik.gov.tr). The percentage of the trainers whose income falls below the poverty threshold, as defined by TUIK 3.750 TL, is %85,2. Trainer, as being one of the professions can value in both material and spiritual ways. Even though at most of the professions the income could be fixed, the trainers can gain bonuses from national successes and club competitions so that the trainers' income could value more according to such extra earnings.

While half of the test subjects are being full time trainer, over the half has been engaging in other branches. The largest group within these occupational groups is forming the highest percentage of 32.4% as Physical Education Teachers. In order to become an elite sportsman, besides their profession of orienting talented student to the sports, from their training plans to the practices, the perspective of professionalism is one of the fundamental necessities in this occupation. Hence, according to the physical education instructors number one branch they have should be trainer-ship.

As analyzing the coaching levels in this research, it could be seen that the largest percentage, 36.6%, is collected among the trainers being in the second stage level. The number of head coaches and technical director-level managers participating in the research group is quite small (8.5%)(Table 1). Trainers, after the second stage training level, which is considered as the lowest stage and one of the conditions where the federations and Sports General Directorate are hiring, getting enough perks so they do not see good enough reasons to go to upper coaching levels. Yet, 61 trainers (%42,7) who have achieved to receive their trainer stage award, during past 5 years, stated that they have not joined any trainer-ship courses to improve their stage level afterwards. The point here is that some of the trainers who thought they have sufficient knowledge in the field, did not consider moving their in-service trainings to the upper level.

The majority of the respondents who participated in the study are composed of middle-long distance trainers (40.8%). The least number of trainers is formed in the category of multi-branch managers (1.4%) as in the last

twenty years Turkish athletics have not achieved any success during international competitions. The reason for this higher percentage of middle-long distance trainers than other groups is that this trainers group is also responsible from the athletic branch trainings like cross and mountain running which are mostly taking place during winter (Table 1).

While more than one-thirds of the subjects stated that they did not attend any personal development seminars, panels, in-service training or so on during past year, one-third of the test subjects stated they have taken formative education training which is playing a major role in interpersonal communication (Table 2). %97,8 percentage of tested subjects who have taken pedagogic formation took it as part of the curriculum while studying PE Teacher Training course at the university (Table 2). As the sports trainings are mostly accompanied and addressed by children and youngsters, there occur many doubts about the trainers who do not ever consider having this informative education.

The percentage of the test subjects who does not know any foreign language is almost forming the half of the total test subjects (%47,2), whereas the number of the subjects who can prove their foreign language ability is only 6 (%4,2)(Table 2). The participants who stated that they have the ability for any second foreign language usage are formed by one-tenths of the total test subjects (%9,9).

Among the test subjects to compare their levels of foreign language speaking and writing ability, almost half of them stated that they do not have the ability of speaking a foreign language, whereas, more than half of stated they do not have the ability of writing (respectively %49,3 and %53,5). The ability of speaking and writing above the average among the test subjects are respectively followed as %4,2 and %4,9 (Table 4). This analysis prove that some of the trainers who also attends in the national team, most of the time must have difficulty in communicating with others during international competitions.

On the other hand, a trainer who does not have sufficient foreign language ability to follow the recent updated articles, scientific works or reports, ultimately, either will become needy in extra help for translations or get excluded by that knowledge.

Two-thirds of the test subjects participating the research (%64,8) stated that they had their first foreign language either in primary schools (Ministry Of Education) or universities (The Institution of Higher Education), whereas, the percentage of %31 of the test subjects stated that they had courses either in Turkey or abroad. The percentage of the test subjects, who stated that they learned a foreign language on their own, is %4,2.

The majority of the test subjects participating in the study stated that they have experienced in windows, office programs, power point and excel. While the percentage of the subjects who declared that they have experienced in windows software is %46,5, the percentage of the subjects stating they have experienced in office programs is %37,3, in MS power point %33,8, in MS excel %30,3. One-third of the test subjects stated that they have at least engaged in multimedia programs (Table 6). No doubt, such office programs increasing productivity in professions are turning into an important support tool for the profession of trainer-ship as well in terms of planning or determining the training schedule. In most of the study it is also revealed that such ability on computer software has been playing an important role and presenting many advantages in professions that can give a significant support to job holders. According to Balcıkanlı's research (2012) social networks offer great opportunities for students and teacher to interact with each other in a social manner, it allows students to reach the calss content and materials posted very easily online; it encourages students to share their assignmant and project with each other; it offers a platform where students and teacher can discuss the relevant topics and give feedback to each other's work; it enables students to focus on the class materials outside the classroom, which is closely linked to independent learning and it increases students' motivation to do more research about the topics in question. Another research indicated most of the students who are attending the school of physical education and sports think that social network sites can be used by phsical education and sports students for educational purposes effectively. These sites can provide a good comminication basis for achieving their educational aims (Yaman M.& Yaman Ç., 2014).

If the test subjects' coaching levels and their participation of any seminar, panel or in-service training are considered, the majority of senior trainers, %76,7, stated they attended at least one in-service training during the past year. The second stage level trainers are achieving the most participation into in-service training (%43,0).The first level trainer, who can not provide training alone they should work with a high level trainer. Second and higher levels don't need this; even a high level trainer can train an athlete in any category or branch. One of the terms of being a "second level trainer" means the trainer should have attended at least 2 seminars.

Consequently, the trainers who want all rights and authority on their hands and to train the athlete in this way should have been attended a couple of seminars to apply the second level trainership.

If the test subjects' coaching levels and their education status are compared, it could be seen that the majority of the trainers are university graduates (%81) (Table 5). If the coaching levels and financial income of the subjects are compared, it could be seen that the highest percentage, %49,3, between 2001 – 3750 TL is composed by senior trainers. When the coaching levels are getting higher because of a trainer gets more experienced, it ultimately causes in multiple extra incomes (for ex. Club income, success, awards and bonuses).

### SUGGESTION

During the 5 levels trainer-ship given by Sports General Directorate Education Training Department, especially after 1<sup>st</sup> stage of the assistantship, a kind of computer usage ability and foreign language skills should be compulsory in every stage. In this regard, the courses related to foreign language and computer software given by online to some universities could be taken as a focus. For instance, such draft bills like 'the person who achieved 1<sup>st</sup> stage of trainer assistantship, in order to move upper 2<sup>nd</sup> stage, needs to take foreign language and computing courses during at least one study semester or a reliable proof document which is approved by OSYM, showing the points at least 30 out of 100 could be requested as well.

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