

Physical Education Teacher Candidates' Beliefs Regarding Inclusive Physical Education

Dr. Hasan Sözen , Hayriye Gül Sözen

Ordu University, Turkey

Abstract

This study is based on Fives and Buehl's (2012) approach, "Beliefs Act as Filters, Frames, or Guides," which posits that teachers' beliefs are cognitive structures that shape their teaching practices. Conducted using a basic qualitative research design, this study examined physical education teacher candidates' beliefs regarding inclusive physical education. Research data were collected through a semi-structured interview with nine physical education teacher candidates enrolled in their fourth year at a university in Türkiye. The data were analyzed through guided thematic analysis across three dimensions: beliefs regarding students, inclusive education, and the teacher. The research findings indicate that teacher candidates hold positive beliefs regarding students with special needs' ability to actively participate in physical education classes and succeed when provided with appropriate support. Participants evaluated inclusive physical education within the framework of adaptations suitable for individual differences, peer support, social participation, and a student-centered approach. However, a significant portion of the teacher candidates stated that, despite possessing theoretical knowledge, they did not feel sufficiently prepared for practical application. Classroom management, safety, the ability to address diverse needs simultaneously, appropriate activity planning, and physical environment limitations emerged as key areas of concern. The findings indicate that physical education teacher candidates hold positive normative beliefs regarding inclusive education; however, these beliefs can become fragile due to a lack of practical experience, classroom management concerns, and limitations within the school environment. The study suggests that practical, inclusive education experiences need to be strengthened within physical education teacher training programs.

Keywords: Guided Thematic Analysis; Individual Adaptations; Practical Preparedness; School Environment Limitations; Student-Centered Instruction