

Attitudes of Teachers Towards Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Physical Education

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The aim of the present study is to examine the attitudes of physical education teachers towards teaching disabled students.

Methods: A total of 612 physical education teachers working in the Ministry of National Education in Turkey participated in the research. "The Attitudes of Physical Education Teachers Towards Teaching Disabled Students Scale" (2020), developed by Beyazoğlu and Özbek, were applied to the teachers participating in the research. Since the data are normally distributed in the analysis of quantitative data, t-test and ANOVA tests from parametric tests were used.

Results: According to the results of the research, it is observed that Turkish physical education teachers have favorable attitudes towards teaching disabled students within the framework of planned behavioral theory. In addition, the measure of attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, behavior-oriented attitude and behavioral objective are important predictors of teachers' attitudes. Furthermore, each dimension is highly correlated with some variables.

Conclusion: The proficiency level of teachers' teaching experiences, whether they have taken special training courses in undergraduate education, physical education for the disabled in undergraduate education, preconceived notions such as whether to take sports courses, whether to take various courses, training, etc. (in-service training) during teaching, age and marital status are highly related to teachers' attitudes.

Keywords: Physical Education Teacher, Teaching, Disabled student, Attitudes

INTRODUCTION

The right to education of all children has been stated in many international agreements and texts and has been approved by both legally binding and non-binding means (11). Although children's right to education is respected in Turkey, physical education and sports are not included in the right to education for children in need of special training (Official Gazette, 2018). Most of the students with disabilities are directed to inclusive classes at primary and secondary school levels and they take physical education lessons in inclusive classrooms. The research on inclusive education for physical education teachers and students in Turkey is still very limited. The studies conducted abroad show that physical education teachers cannot provide appropriate physical education programming to students with disabilities (2). It is obvious from this that ensuring that all students are included and each person has an equal and personal opportunity for educational advancement remains a challenge in almost every country (11). Many factors influence the success of inclusive classes. One of the most important factors is the attitude of physical education teachers towards students with disabilities in their classes. The attitudes of physical education teachers affect all aspects of the assimilation of students with disabilities in their classrooms (18). Physical education teachers' favorable attitudes to inclusion are significant. When all these studies are evaluated together, we better understand the specific factors that affect physical education teachers' attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities. However, we need to learn about the attitudes of Turkish physical education teachers towards teaching students with disabilities. For this purpose, physical education teachers' attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities were examined in this study.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The research was carried out with the screening model in quantitative research methods. As a data collection tool, "The Scale of Attitudes of Physical Education Teachers towards Teaching Students With Disabilities" developed by Beyazoğlu and Özbek (2020), which was determined to be valid and credible, was used. 31,976 physical education and sports teachers working in secondary and high schools throughout Turkey constitute the research population. According to Ural and Kılıç (2006), the lower limit of the sample number to be taken from the population of 31,976 people was determined as at least 385 people for 0.05 tolerable errors. The data collection tool was applied to 612 people. The data collection tool, which was prepared using Google forms, was sent to the participants with a web link. Participants participated in the research voluntarily. The measurement tool included 12 personal information questions and a 22-item expression of attitude towards teaching students with disabilities. The personal information section includes questions such as age, education level, whether the teacher has disabled relative, whether the teacher had taken physical education and sports courses for the disabled before. The second section includes questions created according to the theory of planned behavior to measure the attitudes of the participants. Evaluation of the items in the scale was carried out with a 5-point Likert type scale. For the analysis of the data, firstly, the skewness and kurtosis values were examined and the normal distribution of the data was studied. It was seen that the skewness values were between -2 and +2 (9), the kurtosis values were between -7 and +7 (4), and it was accepted that the data showed normal distribution according to these values. Since the data were normally distributed, Pearson correlation test

was used for correlation, t-test for paired groups, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for more than two groups. Scheffe method was used to test the difference between groups.

RESULTS

Results include t-test and one-way ANOVA according to demographic characteristics and variables of physical education teachers. As a result of the t-test analysis of the views of physical education teachers on teaching students with disabilities according to the gender variable, the mean scores of the opinions on the total scale score ($t(612)=1.032$; $p>.05$) and subjective norm ($t(612)=.844$; $p>.05$), perceived behavioral control ($t(612)=.132$; $p>.05$), attitude towards behavior ($t(612)=.429$; $p>.05$), behavioral objective ($t(612)=.739$; $p>.05$) sub-dimensions were not statistically significant. In addition, as a result of the t-Test analysis according to the marital status variable of the teachers, the mean scores of the opinions on the total scale score ($t(612)=2.277$; $p<.05$) and the perceived behavioral control ($t(612)=3.342$; $p<.05$) sub-dimension were found to be statistically significant. Subjective norm ($t(612)=.335$; $p>.05$), attitude towards behavior ($t(612)=1.183$; $p>.05$), and behavioral goal ($t(612)=.328$; $p>.05$) sub-dimensions were not statistically significant. According to the variable of professional seniority related to the behavioral goal dimension [$F(612) = 5.37$ $p>.05$], a statistically significant difference was observed between the averages as a result of the one-way ANOVA on the scores of physical education teachers' attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities. For the behavioral objective sub-dimension, a statistically significant difference was observed between the Scheffe

Table 1.1. The t-Test results of physical education teachers' attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities according to the variable of taking physical education and sports courses for the disabled.

Subdimension	Group	N	Average	S	t	Sd	p
Behavioral objective	Yes	224	4.446	.724	4.339	610	.000*
	No	388	4.144	.868			
Attitude towards behavior	Yes	224	3.380	.906	4.540	610	.000*
	No	388	3.035	.905			
Perceived behavioral control	Yes	224	3.446	.741	8.320	610	.000*
	No	388	2.922	.754			
Subjective norm	Yes	224	3.810	.804	3.174	610	.000*
	No	388	3.597	.795			
Total scale score	Yes	224	3.653	.628	7.402	610	.000*
	No	388	3.263	.628			

$p<0.05$

Test Result scores of 1-5 years and 18 years or more of professional seniority. 1-5 years ($\bar{x} = 4.36$) participant score is higher than 18 years and above ($\bar{x} = 3.97$) participant score. As a result of the one-way ANOVA on the scores according to the attitude towards behavior [$F(612)=.93$ $p>.05$], perceived behavioral control [$F(612)=2.43$ $p>.05$], subjective norm [$F(612)=.59$ $p>.05$] sub-dimensions and the total scale score [$F(612)=2.12$ $p>.05$] according to the professional seniority variable, no statistically significant difference was observed between the averages. The t-test and ANOVA tables are provided below according to the variable of whether teachers

take courses/lessons and similar trainings within the scope of physical education and sports for the disabled (Table 1.1), the variable of whether they take special training courses (Table 1.2), the variable (Table 1.3) of whether people with disabilities receive training/courses etc. within the scope of physical education and sports.

Table 1.2. The t-Test results of physical education teachers' attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities according to the variable of whether or not they take special training courses.

Subdimension	Did you take physical education and sports lessons for the disabled during your undergraduate education?	N	Average	S	t	Sd	p
Subjective norm	Yes	381	3.709	.799	1.318	610	.188
	No	231	3.620	.812			
Perceived behavioral control	Yes	381	3.247	.785	5.450	610	.000*
	No	231	2.895	.751			
Attitude towards behavior	Yes	381	3.212	.934	1.758	610	.079
	No	231	3.077	.882			
Behavioral objective	Yes	381	4.315	.800	2.305	610	.021*
	No	231	4.155	.870			
Total scale score	Yes	381	3.491	.662	4.189	610	.000*
	No	231	3.265	.619			

$p<0.05$

Table 1.3. The t-test analysis of the opinions of physical education teachers on their attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities according to the variable of whether they have taken training in physical education and sports in the context of physical education and sports.

Subdimension	Did you take a special training course during your undergraduate education?	N	Average	S	t	Sd	p
Subjective norm	Yes	332	3.730	.805	1.821	610	.069
	No	280	3.611	.801			
Perceived behavioral control	Yes	332	3.292	.791	6.252	610	.000*
	No	280	2.903	.737			
Attitude towards behavior	Yes	332	3.262	.897	2.976	610	.003*
	No	280	3.042	.933			
Behavioral objective	Yes	332	4.347	.775	3.019	610	.003*
	No	280	4.145	.880			
Total scale score	Yes	332	3.530	.644	5.215	610	.000*
	No	280	3.258	.639			

$p<0.05$

DISCUSSION

These emerging teacher attitudes express the deficiencies in teachers' inclusion of students with disabilities and in responding to the demands of students and parents. It is seen that teachers are not satisfied with the inclusion of students with disabilities in physical education classes, and the reason for this is related to various variables. This study found that some demographic variables, teacher attitudes, and teaching behaviors were highly correlated. Among these, the quality of physical education teachers' teaching experience, age, in-service training taken, physical education and sports lessons for the disabled, and special training courses are predictors that affect teachers' teaching attitudes. The four dimensions created for this study are important in clarifying the behavior of teachers.

For this study, it is seen that the young physical education teachers have more positive attitudes than the older physical education teachers in including the students with disabilities in their classes in terms of the physical education teachers' attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities. In this regard, it is thought that the fact that young teachers are educators trained with curriculum contents that adapt to the new world is effective. As a result of the literature review, it was found to be similar to the research carried out by DePauw et al. (2000). Depauw et al. found that older physical education teachers had a more negative view of including than younger pre-service teachers. Rizzo and Wright (1988) found in their study that there was no significant difference between age and attitude. In their study, Schmid-Gotz et al. (1994) found that young teachers' compliance with inclusive classes was more positive than older teachers. Furthermore, Rizzo and Kirkendall (1995) found a significant negative correlation between age and teacher attitudes in their study. Older teachers had a positive attitude towards teaching students with behavioral disorders. It was found that teachers' gender differences were not effective in terms of teachers' including students with disabilities in physical education lessons. This finding is consistent with some studies in the literature (16,15). There are studies to the contrary. Research studies have revealed gender differences in terms of teaching attitudes to children with disabilities (15,5). As a result of these studies, it is observed that female teachers have a more positive attitude towards teaching children with disabilities (5,15). These findings are not consistent with our findings. However, Downs and Williams (1994); Schmidt-Gotz et al., (1994) found that women had a more positive attitude than men in educating students with disabilities (10). In our study, it was found that teachers with less professional experience (1-5 years) in the behavioral goal dimension of the attitude scale exhibit more positive attitudes than teachers with more experience (18 years and above). Behavioral goal has been described as a strong predictor of performing the future behavior (1). Thus, in our study, it can be interpreted that the behavior of teachers who have positive attitudes to include students with disabilities in their classes will continue. The reason for this finding can be cited as an example of the recent lessons, courses, and similar trainings that teachers with less professional seniority experience have taken. When we consider the literature (6). the results of their Teachers with fewer years of experience seem to have more positive attitudes towards teaching children with disabilities. Unlike these findings, Block and Rizzo's study in 1995 reveals a strong relationship between teachers' attitudes towards teaching students with severe disabilities who had studied in adapted physical training courses and had quality teaching experiences. The attitudes of teachers who took physical education and sports courses for the disabled during their undergraduate education towards teaching students with disabilities are positive. In addition, their attitudes towards teaching were found to be positive in terms of behavioral goal and perceived behavioral control dimensions, according to their pre-graduate education status. Perceived behavioral control and behavioral purpose are the most important predictors of attitude (1). Teachers can have

positive attitudes towards including children with disabilities in physical education classes if they gain comprehensive knowledge in their undergraduate programs. Considering the literature, studies outside of Latin America have found that undergraduate teacher preparation, including the number of courses taken, is an important factor on teachers' attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities (5,15). Universities should offer effective lessons and experiences in undergraduate education in order to ensure that students with disabilities are included more effectively and significantly in physical education classes (8). According to the variable of whether or not to take special training courses, the teachers showed a positive attitude in all dimensions except the subjective norm dimension in their views on the attitudes of physical education teachers towards teaching students with disabilities. Teachers could not establish the relationship between individuals, institutions and organizations with the variable of whether or not to take special training courses in undergraduate education. In the literature, a significant relationship was found between undergraduate preparation, which provides academic preparation and practical experiences that can increase students' perceived teaching proficiency, and teachers' more positive attitudes towards individuals with disabilities (2,18,13,3,7). In addition, in the research conducted on teaching students with severe disabilities, it is shown that the positive attitudes of teachers are related to the special training course received (2). In addition, in their views on the attitudes of physical education teachers towards teaching students with disabilities, they stated that teachers who received in-service training in all dimensions of the attitude scale, according to the variable of whether they took courses / lessons and similar training within the scope of physical education and sports for the disabled during their teaching life. Receiving in-service training and support by teachers before including students with disabilities in physical education classes will positively affect teacher attitudes (3). Studies have found that teacher preparation, including the number of lessons taken, is an important factor on teachers' attitudes towards teaching individuals with disabilities (15,12). Moreover, in a study, it was found that the participation of physical education teachers in adapted physical activity courses had a positive effect on teachers' attitudes towards including individuals with disabilities in their lessons (10).

CONCLUSION

It is a fact that is observed more and more all over the world that teachers include students with disabilities in the courses. Therefore, it is necessary to have competent and confident teachers to implement successful programs that ensure that all students receive equal and adequate opportunities for development and learning in a safe and stimulating environment. It is time to develop a comprehensive education system so that teachers are better prepared to study with children with disabilities. The results of this study, within the framework of planned behavior theory, the measure of attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, attitude toward behavior and behavioral goal are important predictors of teachers' attitudes. Additionally, behavioral purpose dimension is

highly correlated according to region of residence variable, professional seniority year, and perceived behavioral control dimension and total scale score are highly correlated according to marital status variable. Considering the age variable, behavioral goal dimension, perceived behavioral control dimension and total scale score were found to be highly correlated. Perceived behavioral control dimension, behavioral goal dimension and total scale score are highly correlated according to the variable of whether or not to take physical education and sports classes for the disabled. A high correlation was found between perceived behavioral control, attitude toward behavior, behavioral goal and total scale score according to the variable of whether or not to take special training courses. For the disabled it is highly correlated with all dimensions according to taking courses, lessons and similar training within the scope of physical education.

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