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Examination of Pre-Service Physical Education Teachers' Beliefs on Physical Education Profession

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Abstract

This research examines pre-service physical education teachers' (PPETs') beliefs on the physical education profession (BPEP). A convergent mixed-method research design was administered. The data was collected using the descriptive information form, PPET-BPEP, and open-ended questions. The study included 218 pre-service physical education teachers studying Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) and pedagogical formation certificate programs. Non-parametric tests were used for quantitative data and content analysis for qualitative data. While gender did not differ significantly between the programs, there was a significant difference in the "value of PE profession" subdomain. The professional beliefs of those whose first career choice was PE and sports teaching and those who wanted to become PE and sports teachers after graduation were found to be statistically significantly higher than those of others. Those whose first career choice is PE and sports teaching tend to this profession for reasons such as their athlete identity, dream job, role model effect, and the desire to make children love and teach sports. Those who want to be a PE and sports teacher after graduation stated that their reasons for choosing this profession are making children love sports, loving children and taking care of them, explaining the importance of the profession, and wanting to be involved in sports, as well as some of the features of the profession. The study results are essential as show that PPETs' high professional beliefs indicate that they can carry out their duties and responsibilities willingly and confidently when appointed.

Keywords: Pre-service teachers, Physical education and sports, Beliefs, Sense of calling, Value of physical education

Özet Beden Eğitimi Öğretmen Adaylarının Beden Eğitimi Mesleğine İlişkin İnançlarının İncelenmesi

Bu çalışma, beden eğitimi öğretmen adaylarının beden eğitimi ve spor (BES) öğretmenliği mesleğine ilişkin inançlarını incelemektedir. Çalışmada, eş zamanlı karma yöntemler araştırması deseni uygulanmıştır. Verilerin toplanmasında tanımlayıcı bilgi formu, Beden Eğitimi Öğretmenliği Mesleki İnanç Ölçeği ve açık uçlu sorular kullanılmıştır. Çalışmaya BES öğretmenliği ve pedagojik formasyon sertifika programında öğrenim gören 218 öğretmen adayı katılmıştır. Nicel veriler için parametrik olmayan testler, nitel veriler için ise içerik analizi kullanılmıştır. Programlar arasında cinsiyet değişkeni açısından anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmazken, beden eğitimine verilen değer alt boyutunda anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmuştur. İlk kariyer tercihi BES öğretmenliği olanların ve mezun olduktan sonra BES öğretmeni olmak isteyenlerin mesleki inançları diğer gruplardan istatistiksel olarak anlamlı şekilde yüksek bulunmuştur. İlk kariyer tercihi BES öğretmenliği olanlar sporcu kimliği, hayallerindeki meslek, rol model etkisi, çocuklara sporu sevdirme ve

öğretme isteği gibi nedenlerle bu mesleğe yönelmektedir. Mezun olduktan sonra BES öğretmeni olmak isteyenler tercih nedenlerini hayallerindeki meslek olması ile birlikte çocuklara sporu sevdirmek, çocukları sevmek ve onlarla ilgilenmek, mesleğin önemini anlatmak ve sporla iç içe olmak istemek ile mesleğin bazı özellikleri olarak belirtmişlerdir. Çalışma sonuçları; BES öğretmen adaylarının mesleki inançlarının yüksek olmasının atandıklarında görev ve sorumluluklarını istekle ve inançla gerçekleştirebileceklerini göstermesi bakımından önem arz etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen adayı, Beden eğitimi ve spor, İnanç, Çalışma arzusu, Beden eğitimine verilen değer

INTRODUCTION

Belief is a person's assessment of the correctness of a statement. The foundational elements of belief systems are one's background and experiences (37). Beliefs that form the basis of an individual's behaviour and perspective on life are attitudes that are highly accepted and ingrained in people's lives (5). People's beliefs and attitudes are closely related to one another (33). Professional beliefs are an individual's thoughts and evaluations about a profession (31). Aktag and Walter (4) emphasize that teachers' professional beliefs are among the most critical factors affecting their professional success. Teachers' professional beliefs can affect their academic and professional lives (45). Additionally, perspectives of the teaching profession and the motivations to choose it are strongly correlated (10). According to Ustuner et al. (46), those who have favourable opinions of the teaching profession are more likely to choose it for internal motives. In addition, teachers' beliefs in the profession significantly affect their permanence (16) and professional development (15).

Beliefs are one of the valuable cognitive structures necessary for us to study and understand teachers' decisions and practices (8) and are the main determinants of teachers' actions toward students (34). Teachers' beliefs affect their teaching behaviours and practices and students' learning outcomes (9, 11, 41, 48). Fan et al. (18) proposed two-domains conceptual framework to explain professional belief: the sense of calling and the value of PE. To this conceptualization, a sense of calling is the belief that one is predisposed to choose a career in PE. Understanding this belief - what matters to teachers, what motivates them, and why they do - can be invaluable for creating policies and reforms that can truly make a difference (19). Teachers with a strong sense of calling are more devoted to their schools, more effective, and feel a sense of great personal achievement (22). The value of PE, another domain, is the belief in how proper and valuable PE lessons are for students (18). Despite the fact that research on the devaluation of the PE profession (25, 36), it is uncertain what effect this situation has on teacher candidates. Understanding the PPETs' sense of calling and the value of PE can help us better understand their career motivations (18). Indeed, understanding pre-service teachers' beliefs is essential to teacher education research (26). Teacher education should include strategies that help pre-service teachers explain their deeply ingrained beliefs and provide them with chances to reflect and reshape those beliefs (42). The self-efficacy beliefs towards the teaching profession (23, 40), perceived roles at school (32), intended program outcomes (3), and professional attitudes (1) have been investigated in several research in the field of PE and sports. There are, however, few researches on PE and sports teacher's beliefs about the PE profession (6, 15, 28, 44, 48). O'Sullivan (35) asserts that more attention should be paid to what pre-service teachers know, practice, and value regarding teaching.

According to Pajares (37), beliefs are formed early in life and are resistant to change. Therefore, knowing pre-service teachers' beliefs is crucial before they enter undergraduate education. Because these beliefs shape their later ideas (24). However, Pajares (37) also states that pre-service teachers' current thoughts can be changed through experiences. At this point, examining which system, institutions, and by whom the teacher candidates are trained becomes crucial. The teacher training system in Turkey changes frequently (43). In the Turkish education system, field-specific undergraduate education provides preparation for the teaching profession, including general culture, field education, and pedagogical formation courses. However, the need for teachers that arise from time to time in Turkey has been met with various teacher education certificate programs (2). One of these programs is the pedagogical formation education certificate program the Council of Higher Education allows. These programs ensure that professional staff other than those who graduated from the teaching program can also become teachers (14). Pedagogical formation is one of the controversial issues in the Turkish education system. Teacher education in a short time with pedagogical formation brings many concerns.

It is seen to be crucial to ascertain potential PE and sports teachers' beliefs on the PE profession given the impact of beliefs on professional careers. The first step in changing PPETs' ideas about their profession through discussion of different perspectives on PE as a profession should be to appropriately identify such beliefs (18). Consequently, this study's objective is to investigate the professional beliefs of PPETs' beliefs on the PE profession studying in Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) programs and pedagogical formation certificate programs.

METHOD

Research Design

A convergent mixed-method research design was administered in this research. In this design, the researcher collects both closed-ended/quantitative and open-ended/qualitative data, integrates the datasets, and uses datasets to get at conclusions (12).

Participants

Participants of the research are students studying at Mugla Sıtkı Kocman University Faculty of Sport Sciences PETE program and Education Faculty Pedagogical Formation Education program. A total of 218 preservice teachers, 81 (37.2%) female and 137 (62.8%) male, participated in the study. 117 (53.7%) of the participants are registered in PETE, and 101 (46,3%) of them are registered in the Pedagogical Formation Education program (Coaching Education - 40, Sport Management - 34, Recreation - 27). The mean age of the pre-service teachers was determined as 22.88±3.37.

Table 1. Demographic inf	formation of the pa	articipants					
n.	Grade Level					Total	
Program	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade	Graduated	N	%
PETE	30	19	22	46	-	117	53.7
Coaching Education	-	-	-	16	24	40	18.3
Sport Management	-	-	-	14	20	34	15.6
Recreation	-	_	_	13	14	27	12.4

Data Collection Tools

To collect data for the study, descriptive information form, Pre-service Physical Education Teacher's Beliefs about the PE Profession, and open-ended questions were used.

Descriptive Information Form: This form was used to collect information on the participants' gender, age, program, and grade level.

Pre-Service Physical Education Teachers' Beliefs about the Physical Education Profession (PPET-BPEP): It was developed by Fan et al. (18) and adapted to Turkish by Ugras and Dindar (45). As a result of EFA, it was found that the scale had a two-domain structure ("sense of calling" and "value of physical education profession"), and the total variance explained by the scale was 81.59%. The scale is scored with a 7-point Likert. The values (χ^2 /sd (3.37), GFI (0.91), CFI (0.96), AGFI (0.90), NFI (0.95), IFI (0.96), RMSEA (0.07)) were determined by the CFA analysis to be within acceptable limits. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was determined to be 0.96 in the "sense of calling" and 0.97 in the "value of PE profession "domain.

Open-ended questions: Two questions were asked to gain an in-depth understanding of the PE profession's sense of calling and value. Question 1: "Was your first choice as a profession to be a PE and sports teacher? If yes, why? If not, what was your previous career choice?" Question 2: "Do you want to be a PE and sports teacher when you graduate? If yes, why? If not, what profession do you intend to do? Why?

Research Ethics

Ethics committee approval was obtained from Mugla Sitki Kocman University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee on 22.03.2023 with protocol number 230030 and decision number 42.

Data Collection

Research data were collected through an online form in the spring semester of the 2022-2023 academic year after the approval of the ethics committee. The aim of the research and the data collecting tools were explained to the participants.

Analysis of Data

The SPSS 22.0 program was used to evaluate the quantitative data, while content analysis was used to assess the qualitative data. The data were checked for normal distribution using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. It was decided to use the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test for pairwise comparisons because the data were not normally distributed. The statistical significance value was determined as p<0.05. The content analysis identified themes for the responses to the open-ended questions, and the themes' respective responses were illustrated with examples.

RESULTS

In this section of the study, the results obtained from the data analysis were presented in tables, and explanations were made regarding the tables.

Table 2. Normal distribution test results					
Carlo	Kolmogorov-Smirnov				
Scale	Statistic	df	Sig.		
Sense of Calling	.149				
Value about PE Profession	.272	218	.000		
Total Scale	.152				

It was found that the data weren't normally distributed based on the results of the tests, (p<0,05). It was chosen to utilize non-parametric tests in the study because of this.

Table 3. Descriptive data on	PPETs' beliefs about the PE profes	sion		
Scale	Program	N	M	SD
Sense of Calling	PETE	117	5.49	1.45
	Pedagogical Formation	101	5.48	1.46
Value about PE Profession	PETE	117	6.41	.91
	Pedagogical Formation	101	6.66	.54
T-1-1-C1-	PETE	117	5.99	1.01
Total Scale	Pedagogical Formation	101	6.12	.79

Table 3's findings show that both programs' PPETs' beliefs on the PE profession are favourable, both in terms of the scale's sub-domains and overall scale.

Scale	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum Ranks	U	р
Comment Calling	Female	81	105.36	8534.50	F212 F	.454
Sense of Calling	Male	137	111.95	15336.50	5213.5	
Value about DE Desfacion	Female	81	111.62	9041.50	5376.5	.691
Value about PE Profession	Male	137	108.24	14829.50	53/6.5	
Total Scale	Female	81	107.69	8722.50	F401 F	740
	Male	137	110.57	15148.50	5401.5	.743

The results of the U test for the PPETs' beliefs on the PE profession by gender are displayed in Table 4. The result showed that there was no statistically significant difference in gender (p>0.05).

Table 5. U-Test results of 1	PPETs' beliefs about the P	E profes	ssion to prograi	n		
Scale	Program	N	Mean Rank	Sum Ranks	U	p
Sense of Calling	PETE	117	109.44	12804.00	F001 0	.987
	Pedagogical Formation	101	109.57	11067.00	5901.0	
Value about PE Profession	PETE	117	101.80	11910.50	F007 F	.044*
	Pedagogical Formation	101	118.42	11960.50	5007.5	
Total Scale	PETE	117	106.79	12494.00	5591.0	.493

	Pedagogical Formation	101	112.64	11377.00	
*p<0.05					

Results of the U test, comparing PPETs' beliefs on the PE profession according to the program, are given in Table 4. The data revealed that, while there was no statistically significant difference between the sense of calling sub-domain and the total scale, the value of the PE profession sub-domain showed a statistically significant difference in favor of those who studying in the pedagogical formation certificate program (p<0.05).

Table 6. U-test results of PPETs' beliefs about the PE profession to first profession preferences

Scale	Preference	n	Mean Rank	Sum Ranks	U	p
6 (6 1)	PE teaching	140	132.39	18535.00	2255.00	000*
Sense of Calling	Other	78	68.41	5336.00	2255.00	.000*
Value about PE Profession	PE teaching	140	112.60	15764.00	F026 00	.312
	Other	78	103.94	8107.00	5026.00	
Total Scale	PE teaching	140	129.71	18159.00	2621.00	000*
	Other	78	73.23	5712.00	2631.00	.000*
*p<0.05						

The results in Table 6 compare the PPETs' beliefs on the PE profession according to their first profession preferences. Accordingly, it was determined that the PPETs' whose first career choice was PE and sports teaching got statistically higher scores than the others in the sense of calling sub-domain and total scale (p<0.05).

The results in Table 6 are also related to the answers to the first open-ended question asked in the study. The reasons why the PPETs' answered yes to the PE and sports teaching profession are as follows: (a) having an athlete identity, (b) dream job, (c) role model effect, and (d) desire to make children love and teach sports.

- (a) Having an athlete identity: P42: "Yes, because my athletic identity attracted me in this direction." P129: "Yes. As someone who has devoted my years to sports, I think PE and sports teaching is suitable for me." P193: "Being involved in sports since I was a child has influenced my choice of this profession."
- (b) Dream job: P208: "Yes, I want to do my job. Because that's my dream since I was a kid." P3: "If I teach PE and sports, I will be happy in my job; this is my dream job." P31: "Yes, because it was my dream to be a teacher."
- (c) Role model effect: P168: "Yes. Because my high school PE and sports teacher influenced me to become a PE and sports teacher." P61: Yes. I took my PE and sports teacher as a model; thanks to him, my love for this profession has increased, and I want to teach good things to my students." P75: "Yes, I wanted to do this profession, thanks to my coach and teachers."
- d) Desire to make children love and teach sports: P149: "Yes, because I like to communicate with children and motivate them physically and mentally." P181: "Yes, I wanted to bring the sport into children's life due to the sporting impossibilities where I live." P207: Yes, because I want to care for children, contribute to their physical and mental health, and raise awareness.

PPETs' whose first professional preference is not PE and sports teaching stated that their first choice of profession was: athlete, coach, academician, policeman, military service, stewardess, architect, psychologist, lawyer, veterinarian, and shipmaster.

Table 7. U test results of PPETs' beliefs about the PE profession concerning the desire to be a PE teacher Scale Desire Mean Rank Sum Ranks U N p PE teacher 159 127.71 20305.50 .000* Sense of Calling 1795.50 Other 59 60.43 3565.50 159 110.72 17605.00 PE teacher

Value about PE Profession 4496.00 .625 59 6266.00 Other 106.20 159 125.55 19962.50 PE teacher **Total Scale** 2138.50 .000* 59 3908.50 Other 66.25 *p<0.05

The results in Table 7 compare PPETs' beliefs about the PE profession with regard to the desire to be a PE teacher. According to the results, the thoughts about the PE profession who want to be PE and sports teachers after graduation were statistically higher in the sense of calling sub-domain and in the full scale (p<0.05).

Answers to the second open-ended question asked in the research are connected to the findings in Table 7. Those who answered yes indicated the following as reasons: (a) want to endear sport to children, (b) love and want to take care of children, (c) dream job, (d) want to explain the importance of the profession, (e) want to be involved in sports, (f) some features of the profession.

- (a) Want to endear sport to children: P99: "I want to endear sports to large masses by transferring the education and knowledge I have acquired." P93: "Yes, I want to make children love sports; this is the biggest reason." P66: "Yes. I want to make my students love sports and explain its importance."
- (b) Dream job: P182: "Yes, because I want to realize my dream. I want to realize what I put in my mind." P29: "Yes, because that was my dream, and to say that I succeeded and became a teacher." P47: "Yes, I will because I want to live my dream job."
- (c) Love and want to take care of children: P50: "Yes, I want to touch the lives of children to guide them and make a contribution to them." P117: "Yes, I love children, and it feels good to contribute to them." P74: "Yes, I can touch some children's lives."
- (d) To explain the profession's importance: P32: "Yes, I want to be a PE and sports teacher because I want to teach sports and how important sports are." P129: "Yes, I want. I know that teaching is a critical responsibility to instil sports in people at a young age and to ensure that they do not break away from sports in their later life, and I want to be a PE and sports teacher because I want to teach this to my students with love." P54: "Yes, because for health, success, etc., all roads pass through movement, that is, PE. It is important to create a youth and society that cares about sports."
- (e) Want to be involved in sports: P145: "Yes, because I want to be constantly involved in sports and improve myself in this field." P6: "Yes, because I have been involved in sports all my life." P203: "Yes, because I have been involved in sports since I was little."
- (f) Some features of the profession: P5: "Yes. In terms of working hours, I find teachers' working time more efficient." P187: "I think and want to become a teacher since the teaching profession will be guaranteed and the title will add prestige." P178: "Yes, because I will have a guaranteed salary, and besides that, I can do extra work."

It was determined that the PPETs' who did not want to be PE and sports teachers after graduation had thoughts such as running their gym, being a coach, progressing in their sports career, becoming an academician, policeman, or soldier, and dealing with trade. In this research, the reasons PPETs' do not want to be a teacher; are difficulty in assignments, low salary, not feeling like belonging to this profession, and thinking that the profession is not given enough importance.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the pre-service PE and sports teachers' beliefs on the PE profession. The first findings from the quantitative data revealed that PPETs' studying in both programs have positive professional opinions about PE. This result is consistent with many research findings (6, 28, 45).

Regarding the gender variable, there was no statistically significant difference between the PPETs' beliefs on the PE profession (p>0.05). Many studies support this finding (6, 17, 20, 28). However, study results also report a difference between occupational belief levels regarding gender variables (27, 49). It is known that professional beliefs are affected by professional development, educational process, and professional experience (38). Therefore, this difference in the findings may be due to the professional education, expertise, and development characteristics of the participant group included in the research.

It was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the groups in the value of the PE profession sub-domain and the total scale when the professional beliefs were evaluated concerning the programs. This difference was shown to be in favor of the PPETs' studying in the pedagogical formation

certificate program (p<0.05). In fact, PPETs' educated in relation to the teaching profession in a teacher education program are expected to have deeper insights into the PE profession than those enrolled in a pedagogical formation certificate program. However, the result obtained in this study showed the opposite. There is no research finding in the literature examining the PPETs' beliefs studying in the PE and sports teaching program and the pedagogical formation certificate program. However, the participants in the PE and sports teaching program are from different grade levels, but those in the pedagogical formation certificate program are graduates or seniors, which may account for the differences between the groups. Cermik et al. (13) reported that external influences decreased while internal and altruistic factors increased during graduation. Also, it is known that PPETs' beliefs about PE teaching are affected by the teaching experience process (26). This may cause the thoughts of senior and graduate candidates to be more positive.

According to another finding, it was determined that the professional belief levels of the PPETs' who decided PE and sports teaching as their first professional preference and wanted to be a PE teacher after graduation were higher than the other candidates in the sense of calling sub-domain and in the full scale. In addition, it was shown that PPETs', whose first choice of profession is PE, tended to the teaching profession for reasons such as having an athlete identity, dream job, role model effect, and a desire to make children love and teach sports. PPETs' who want to be a PE and sports teacher after graduation, on the other hand, explain the reasons for their preference were to make children love sports, dream job, love and want to care for children, explain the importance of the profession, want to be involved in sports and as some of the characteristics of the profession. In the previous studies, it was determined that the teaching profession was chosen for reasons such as "dream job," "love working with children," "being useful to society," "being intertwined with sports," and "the effect of PE and sports teacher" (6), "work with children" and "benefit to society" (21), "love children," "establish positive relationships with children," "opportunity to instill values in children" and "love of profession" (49) "family effect," "teacher effect," "peer effect" and "teaching experience" (39). Kiremitci et al. (29) found that PPETs' professional beliefs were affected mainly by internal factors, and their field motivations were developed. Bergmark et al. (10) found that teacher candidates have many internal, external, and altruistic reasons that affect their career choice. One of the professional preferences of PPETs' is to see the teaching profession as their ideal profession (30). Bavli (7) stated that PPETs' mostly want to work in a sports-related field. Zounhia et al., (50) determined that the factors affecting the career choice of PPETs' are intrinsic (e.g., I stay fit while teaching PE and sports) and altruistic (e.g., I like working with children). The findings are similar to the studies in the literature in connection with choosing the teaching profession.

On the other hand, it is seen that some of the PPETs' do not want to be PE and sports teachers; instead, they want to do other professions for some reason. These reasons are; difficulty in assignments, low salary, feeling that they do not belong to the profession, and thinking that the profession is not given enough importance. In Aslan's study (6), the factors that negatively affect belief in the profession are unsatisfactory salary, counting on the spot, negative perception of the profession in society, working conditions, inadequate field education, making no headway, disappointment caused by the program, and difficulty in appointment as a teacher. Zach (49) stated that novice teachers have decided to leave the profession owing to the low salary. The teaching profession is the main factor in education. The factors that cause negative thoughts toward a profession are the problems of the individual, the society, and the states that direct the community with their economic and educational policies (6). For this reason, for PPETs' to practice their profession when they graduate and to have a high commitment to the profession, the education of PPETs' should be given due importance.

CONCLUSION

As a result, it was determined that the prospective teachers' beliefs about the teaching profession were positive. In contrast, the level of professional confidence did not cause a difference in gender, grade, and program variables; it caused a distinction in favor of formation in respect of the program.

This research contributed to the literature by examining the beliefs of PPETs' studying in different programs with both quantitative and qualitative data. It is thought that the data obtained from the research contribute by expanding the literature on PE and sports teacher professional belief studies. However, the study also has some limitations.

The first is that the research was conducted with students studying at one university in Turkey. Including PPETs' looking at different universities in future studies is recommended. In addition, cross-sectional data were used to determine the situation in professional beliefs. In future studies, the PPETs' views can be resolved before they enter the undergraduate program. Their professional ideas can be examined regularly throughout their undergraduate education, and thus any changes can be monitored. Professional beliefs are not static; they can be affected by many factors. Therefore, meetings, seminars, and educational activities can be organized to increase the professional thoughts of teacher candidates, and the reasons for common beliefs can be investigated for teacher candidates with standard professional views.

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