



Determining the Readiness of Future Physical Education Teachers to Implement Adaptive Physical Education in Schools for Students with Hearing Impairments

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Abstract

Background. This article presents the results of a comprehensive study on how prepared future physical education teachers are to implement adaptive physical education for children with hearing impairments. The study's relevance stems from Ukraine's growing need for inclusive education, and the necessity to ensure that children with sensory disabilities have access to physical activity. Inclusive education means creating equal learning opportunities for all students, including those with hearing impairments. In this context, physical education supports both health and socialization.

Objectives. The study aimed to provide a theoretical justification, conduct an empirical investigation, assess the readiness of future physical education teachers to implement adaptive physical education in educational institutions that enroll students with hearing impairments, and develop practical recommendations to improve teachers' professional training. The article examines the structure of professional readiness of future physical education teachers. It presents the findings of an empirical study on readiness levels and analyzes the factors that influence their development.

Materials and Methods. The study involved 186 students of T.H. Shevchenko National University “Chernihiv Collegium.” The research examined the participants' knowledge of adaptive physical education, their skills in working with students with hearing impairments, and their motivational value and attitudes toward inclusive education. The objective of the study was to assess the level of professional readiness of students majoring in Physical Education to implement adaptive physical education in schools with inclusive forms of education for children with hearing impairments. Readiness was evaluated based on four key components: cognitive, motivational–value, operational–practical, and communicative–reflective.

Results. The findings indicate insufficient practical training and limited proficiency in sign language, although the majority of students demonstrated positive motivation toward inclusion. A training model that includes a theoretical course, practical modules, volunteer activities, internships, and support from an experienced mentor is proposed. Promising directions for improving educational programs were identified.

Conclusions. The readiness of future teachers to implement adaptive physical education in schools educating children with hearing impairments is a key factor in the successful implementation of inclusive education. The study contributes to the development of adaptive physical education and to the training of teaching professionals for work in inclusive educational environments.

Keywords: inclusive education, professional readiness, sign language, special pedagogy.

Introduction

The education system in Ukraine is currently developing in line with the principles of inclusion, which include creating conditions for the education of children with special educational needs in comprehensive schools. Among these

learners, students with hearing impairments constitute a particularly important group, as they require not only adapted pedagogical methods but also specific approaches to physical education (Nosko & Troianovska, 2025; Nosko et al., 2025). The relevance of this issue is reinforced by the fact that physical education serves not only developmental but also compensatory functions. It facilitates socialization and the acquisition of essential life competencies by students with sensory impairments.

Despite ongoing promotion of inclusive education policies in Ukraine, the existing teacher-training system does not consistently ensure that future physical education teachers are adequately prepared to work with diverse student groups, particularly those with hearing impairments. Students with hearing impairments often face barriers. These include communicative, sensory, and emotional challenges that limit participation in sports and extracurricular activities (Alhumaid, 2023; Dubey, 2024). To address these issues, teachers must master specialized instructional methods. They also need basic competence in sign language, an understanding of the psychophysiological traits of children with hearing impairments, and the ability to create an inclusive educational environment (Rekaa et al., 2018; Bruno, 2020).

Adaptive physical education should not be seen just as a modification of motor exercise programs. Instead, it is a holistic system that considers students' sensory profiles and prioritizes communication and social interaction needs (Azubuike et al., 2023; Orhan et al., 2024; Holland et al., 2022). Teachers' professional readiness to implement such a system is an integrative quality encompassing motivational, cognitive, practical, and reflective dimensions.

A growing body of research highlights the need to strengthen physical education teachers' training for inclusive educational contexts (Smith et al., 2021; David & Brown, 2022; Kovalenko, 2023; Celestino et al., 2024; Kim et al., 2021). Nevertheless, a central unresolved issue is the actual readiness of future teachers to work effectively with students with hearing impairments, and which factors most strongly influence these required competencies.

In this regard, the study advances the hypothesis that the current system of professional training for future physical education teachers in Ukraine does not adequately ensure the acquisition of competencies necessary for the effective implementation of adaptive physical education in schools enrolling students with hearing impairments.

The purpose of this article is to provide a theoretical justification, conduct an empirical assessment, and evaluate the readiness of future physical education teachers to implement adaptive physical education in schools enrolling students with hearing impairments. In addition, the study aims to develop practical recommendations to improve teachers' professional preparation for inclusive practice.

Materials and Methods

Study Design

The present study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design with a mixed-methods approach integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies. This design was chosen to provide a comprehensive assessment of the professional readiness of future physical education teachers to implement adaptive physical education for students with hearing impairments.

The quantitative component enabled objective measurement of readiness across predefined structural components, while the qualitative component facilitated deeper exploration of students' subjective perceptions, attitudes, expectations, and anticipated challenges related to inclusive practice. The integration of both approaches enhanced the methodological robustness and validity of the findings.

Participants

The study involved 186 undergraduate and graduate students majoring in Physical Education, which meets statistical representativeness requirements. Sample size adequacy was confirmed through an a priori power analysis conducted using G*Power 3.1 software. Assuming a medium effect size ($f = 0.25$), a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, and statistical power of 0.80 for a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), the required minimum sample size was 159 participants. The final sample exceeded this threshold, allowing reliable detection of statistically significant differences and relationships among the studied variables.

Participants were recruited using purposive sampling from Ukrainian higher education institutions offering degree programs in physical education teacher training. Inclusion criteria comprised enrollment in the third or fourth year of study and completion of coursework in pedagogy, inclusive education, or adaptive physical education. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and all respondents provided informed consent prior to data collection.

The study protocol was approved by a local ethics committee and conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements. The sample demonstrated variability in gender and academic background, ensuring diversity in prior training and experience with inclusive education.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection followed a standardized and reproducible protocol implemented in classroom settings across all participating institutions.

At the first stage, participants completed a 32-item structured questionnaire assessing professional readiness across four components: cognitive, motivational-value, operational-practical, and communicative-reflective. The average completion time was 10–12 minutes, and the administration procedure was identical at all sites.

At the second stage, participants performed a practical task consisting of four structured exercises aimed at evaluating their ability to:

- adapt physical activities for students with hearing impairments;
- use visual instructional materials;
- apply basic elements of sign language;
- select appropriate inclusive communication strategies.

Performance was assessed using a unified rating scale to ensure inter-expert consistency.

The final stage involved semi-structured interviews with a subsample of 30 participants selected according to the principle of maximum variability. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, lasted 20–30 minutes, and were audio-recorded with participants' consent. All interviews were transcribed verbatim using a standardized interview guide. Consistency in sequencing, conditions, and procedures across institutions ensured full reproducibility of the data collection process.

Instruments

Professional readiness of future physical education teachers to work with students with hearing impairments was

assessed using a комплекс of complementary instruments, combining quantitative, practical, and qualitative methods.

Questionnaire

The primary quantitative instrument was a structured questionnaire comprising 32 statements designed to assess four components of professional readiness:

- Cognitive (knowledge of adaptive physical education and characteristics of teaching students with hearing impairments).
- Motivational–value (attitudes toward inclusive education and readiness for professional self-development).
- Operational–practical (ability to adapt exercises and organize inclusive classes).
- Communicative–reflective (self-assessment of communication skills, including the use of sign language elements).

Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”), enabling quantitative interpretation of the degree of expression of each component.

Content validity was established through expert evaluation involving specialists in adaptive physical education, special pedagogy, and inclusive education. Experts assessed item relevance, clarity, and structural adequacy. Minor revisions were made based on their recommendations.

Internal consistency reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.87$), indicating high reliability of the instrument.

Assessment of Sign Language and Practical Skills

Elements of sign language competence were evaluated within the operational–practical and communicative–reflective components and included:

- understanding basic signs commonly used in physical education classes;
- ability to convey simple instructions through gestures;
- use of visual–gestural support during motor activity organization;
- awareness of communication barriers and strategies to overcome them.

Assessment was conducted using a point-based rating scale during practical task performance, allowing differentiation between low, medium, and high levels of skill development.

When developing the questionnaire and practical assessment criteria, approaches used in internationally validated instruments for evaluating teachers' readiness for inclusion—particularly the CEFI-R (Evaluation of Teachers' Preparation for Inclusion)—as well as contemporary studies in adaptive physical education, were taken into account to ensure conceptual alignment with current international research practices.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated solely to characterize the sample.

Between-group differences were examined using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), with year of study and prior experience in inclusive educational settings treated as independent factors. Prior to conducting ANOVA, assumptions of normality (Shapiro–Wilk test) and homogeneity of variances (Levene's test) were assessed. In cases where homogeneity was violated, the Welch correction was applied.

Post hoc comparisons were conducted using Tukey's HSD or the Games–Howell test, depending on variance homogeneity results. Effect sizes were calculated to determine practical significance (partial eta squared, η^2_p , for ANOVA; r for correlational analyses), accompanied by 95% confidence intervals and interpreted according to established conventions.

Relationships among components of professional readiness were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient. Results are presented concisely, without duplication of numerical data already reported in tables.

The level of statistical significance for all analyses was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results

The study's results enabled a comprehensive assessment of the readiness of students majoring in Physical Education to implement adaptive physical education for students with hearing impairments. Both quantitative methods (questionnaire and practical testing) and qualitative methods (semi-structured interviews) were used, ensuring a multidimensional evaluation.

As shown in Table 1, the majority of students demonstrated an average level of readiness, whereas only a small proportion were highly prepared.

Table 1. Distribution of future physical education teachers by overall level of professional readiness ($n = 186$)

Level of readiness	% of students
High	17.2%
Medium	58.6%
Low	24.2%

The mean score across all questionnaire scales was 3.21 out of 5 ($SD = 0.74$), corresponding to an overall medium level of readiness.

Detailed indicators of the four components of professional readiness are presented in Table 2.

Thematic analysis of the 30 semi-structured interviews identified five recurring themes reflecting both challenges and motivational aspects of students' professional readiness:

1. Fear and uncertainty – “I am afraid of doing something wrong because I do not know how to behave properly with a student who is deaf.”
2. Insufficient university preparation – “We did not have any practical experience working with children with disabilities.”
3. High personal motivation – “I would like to learn sign language, but I do not know where this can be done.”
4. Desire for change – “It would be good if we had internships in inclusive schools.”
5. Uncertainty regarding success criteria – “I am not sure how to properly assess the progress of such students.”

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the components of professional readiness (mean $\pm$ SD)

Component	Mean score (out of 5)	Key findings
Cognitive readiness	3.48	63% answered correctly on knowledge of motor activity for children with hearing impairments
Motivational-value readiness	3.92	74% expressed willingness to work with students with special needs; 61% ready for additional training; only 28% felt fully prepared
Operational-practical readiness	2.89	66% had no experience adapting exercises; 11% confident in planning lessons; 37% confused adaptive PE with physical therapy
Communicative-reflexive readiness	3.02	83% did not know sign language; 57% reported emotional tension; 21% noted need for psychological training

Correlation analysis revealed significant relationships between the components of professional readiness:

- Positive correlation between cognitive and practical readiness ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$).
- Significant correlation between motivational and reflective readiness ($r = 0.47$, $p < 0.05$).
- The lowest correlation was found between theoretical knowledge and practical skills ($r = 0.33$), indicating a gap between knowledge acquisition and its practical application.

Overall, the study showed that only 1 in 10 students demonstrated a high level of readiness to implement adaptive physical education when working with students with hearing impairments. The prevailing level of readiness was average, characterized by strong motivation but weak practical skills. The most problematic areas of training were:

- Lack of sign language skills;
- Limited practical training;
- Lack of internships in an inclusive environment (see Fig. 1).

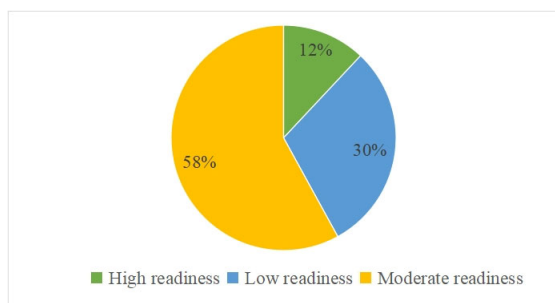


Fig. 1. Level of readiness of future physical education teachers to implement adaptive physical education

Both quantitative and qualitative results confirm the urgent need to modernize university curricula in order to strengthen the practical and communicative components of teacher training.

Discussion

The aim of the study was to determine the level and structure of professional readiness of future physical education teachers to implement adaptive physical education when working with students with hearing impairments. The results indicate a predominance of average readiness, which is consistent with the findings of recent studies in the field of inclusive physical education, which show that future teachers

have a positive attitude towards inclusion but lack practical training (Savolainen et al., 2020; Jung et al., 2022; Braksiek, 2022). Similar trends are also observed in the works of Ukrainian scientists, who emphasize the fragmentation of professional training and the predominance of theoretical components over practical ones (Kravchenko, 2022).

Analysis of the structure of professional readiness revealed an imbalance between high scores for the motivational-value component and lower indicators of the operational-practical and communicative-reflective components. This structure is consistent with international studies in adaptive physical education, which indicate limited development of practical and communicative skills among future physical education teachers (Loreman, 2014; Block, 2016; Antala et al., 2024). Particular attention should be paid to the low level of proficiency in sign language elements, which confirms the findings of Rekaa et al. (2018) and Rojo-Ramos et al. (2023) regarding the insufficient integration of communication training into educational programmes.

The established correlations between individual components of readiness indicate its integrative nature. Positive interdependencies among cognitive, motivational, and practical components indicate that the formation of individual knowledge and attitudes does not ensure professional readiness without systematic practical training, consistent with the conclusions of Kim et al. (2021) and Savolainen et al. (2020).

Critical reflection on the results obtained requires consideration of several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design does not allow conclusions about the dynamics of professional readiness over time; longitudinal studies are needed to assess the impact of the curriculum or specialized interventions.

Secondly, although the sample size was statistically sufficient, the participants were drawn from a single university, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Differences in curricular structures and practical training models were not systematically controlled.

Thirdly, the use of self-assessment methods for motivational and communicative-reflective components creates a risk of social desirability bias. This effect is partially mitigated by the inclusion of practical assessments, but further research should include classroom observation or external expert assessment.

Finally, the assessment of sign language competence focused on functional pedagogical use rather than full linguistic proficiency, which limits direct comparison with studies that measure comprehensive language proficiency.

The contribution of this study to the international scientific literature lies in its empirical analysis of the readiness of future physical education teachers to work with students with

hearing impairments in the context of Eastern Europe—a region that remains underrepresented in research on adaptive physical education (Qi & Ha, 2012; Tarantino & Makopoulou, 2023; Cabahug, et al. 2025). The results complement existing international approaches, emphasizing the importance of communicative competence and practice-oriented learning for the effective implementation of inclusive physical education.

The results demonstrate that high motivation does not guarantee pedagogical competence in inclusive physical education, emphasizing the importance of structured learning and practical training (Beyazoğlu, 2021; Mawena & Sorkpor, 2024; Utami, 2025).

Thus, the study provides both contextually specific conclusions and conceptual implications for the development of adaptive physical education within inclusive educational environments.

Conclusions

The aim of the study was to assess the level of professional readiness of students majoring in Physical Education to implement adaptive physical education in inclusive schools for children with hearing impairments. Readiness was analyzed according to four components: cognitive, motivational value, operational-practical, and communicative-reflective.

The results obtained indicate that the overall level of readiness is average (3.21 out of 5). The highest indicators were found in the motivational and value component, which demonstrates a positive attitude and student interest in inclusive education. The lowest values were recorded in the operational and practical component, which indicates insufficiently developed skills in adapting physical exercises, using sign language, and organizing inclusive classes.

The distribution by level confirmed the general trend: 17.2% of students showed a high level of readiness, 58.6% showed an average level, and 24.2% showed a low level. This result indicates a significant gap between students' motivation and their actual professional competence, especially in special education and the practical application of inclusive technologies.

Therefore, the results obtained demonstrate that the current teacher training system does not fully ensure the development of the competencies necessary for the effective implementation of adaptive physical education in schools serving hearing-impaired students. The conclusions are consistent with the research objectives and justify the need to modernize training programmes, with a particular focus on practice-oriented learning, sign language acquisition, and enhanced interdisciplinary training.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

AI Transparency Statement

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the collection, analysis, or interpretation of study data. AI-assisted software (ChatGPT, OpenAI, USA) was employed only for language editing and grammar refinement during manuscript preparation. All scientific content, study design, statistical analysis, and interpretation were performed solely by the authors.

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Визначення готовності майбутніх учителів фізичної культури до впровадження адаптивного фізичного виховання в школах для учнів з порушеннями слуху

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Авторський вклад: А – дизайн дослідження; В – збір даних; С – статаналіз; D – підготовка рукопису; Е – збір коштів

Реферат. Стаття: 7 с., 2 табл., 1 рис., 30 джерел.

Обґрунтування. У статті подано результати комплексного дослідження рівня готовності майбутніх учителів фізичної культури до впровадження адаптивного фізичного виховання для дітей з порушеннями слуху. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростанням потреби України в інклюзивній освіті та необхідністю забезпечення доступу дітей із

сенсорними порушеннями до фізичної активності. Інклюзивна освіта передбачає створення рівних освітніх можливостей для всіх учнів, зокрема для осіб з порушеннями слуху. У цьому контексті фізичне виховання сприяє як збереженню та зміцненню здоров'я, так і соціалізації.

Мета. Метою дослідження було теоретично обґрунтувати проблему, провести емпіричне дослідження, оцінити рівень готовності майбутніх учителів фізичної культури до впровадження адаптивного фізичного виховання в закладах освіти, де навчаються учні з порушеннями слуху, а також розробити практичні рекомендації щодо вдосконалення їхньої професійної підготовки. У статті розкрито структуру професійної готовності майбутніх учителів фізичної культури, подано результати емпіричного дослідження рівнів готовності та проаналізовано чинники, що впливають на їх формування.

Матеріали і методи. У дослідженні взяли участь 186 студентів Національного університету «Чернігівський колегіум» імені Т. Г. Шевченка. Вивчалися знання учасників з адаптивного фізичного виховання, їхні вміння працювати з учнями з порушеннями слуху, а також мотиваційно-ціннісні установки та ставлення до інклюзивної освіти. Метою було оцінити рівень професійної готовності студентів спеціальності «Фізична культура» до впровадження адаптивного фізичного виховання в школах з інклюзивними формами навчання для дітей з порушеннями слуху. Оцінювання здійснювалося за чотирма основними компонентами: когнітивним, мотиваційно-ціннісним, операційно-практичним та комунікативно-рефлексивним.

Результати. Отримані результати свідчать про недостатній рівень практичної підготовки та обмежене володіння жестовою мовою, водночас більшість студентів продемонстрували позитивну мотивацію до інклюзії. Запропоновано модель підготовки, що передбачає теоретичний курс, практичні модулі, волонтерську діяльність, педагогічну практику та супровід досвідченого наставника. Визначено перспективні напрями вдосконалення освітніх програм.

Висновки. Готовність майбутніх учителів до впровадження адаптивного фізичного виховання в школах, де навчаються діти з порушеннями слуху, є ключовим чинником успішної реалізації інклюзивної освіти. Дослідження робить внесок у розвиток адаптивного фізичного виховання та у підготовку педагогічних кадрів для роботи в інклюзивному освітньому середовищі.

Ключові слова: інклюзивна освіта, професійна готовність, жестова мова, спеціальна педагогіка.

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