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Determining the Opinions of Preschool Teachers Regarding Inclusion*

Emine Sema Batu **
Anadolu University

Serhat Odluyurt ***
Anadolu University

Ezgi Alagözoglu ****
Anadolu University

Melih Çattık *****
Anadolu University

Şerife Şahin *****
Anadolu University

Abstract

The general purpose of this study was to determine the opinions of preschool teachers about inclusion. Participants were 45 preschool teachers from 8 preschools who had students with special educational needs in their classes during the study or had in the previous years and who were working in public preschools in Eskisehir, Turkey. They had 2-27 years of teaching experience. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teachers and the data were analyzed descriptively. The results of the study revealed that although the participants had positive opinions about inclusion, they still did not have enough knowledge about that. Besides, the inadequate knowledge the teachers had was related to the types and characteristics of disabilities of the children, inclusion, effective teaching methods, accommodations, and so forth. The findings of the study were discussed in terms of the present literature.

Keywords: Inclusion, preschool teachers, opinions of teachers, semi-structured interviews.

Önerilen Atıf Şekli

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****Corresponding Author:** Prof., E-mail: esbatu@anadolu.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0770-5145>

***Assoc.Prof., E-mail: syildiri@anadolu.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5861-0627>

****Res.Assist., E-mail: ezgialagözoglu@anadolu.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4013-0702>

*****Res.Assist., E-mail: mcattik@anadolu.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2682-377X>

*****Res.Assist., E-mail: serifesahin@anadolu.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5404-762X>

Numerous factors play essential roles in the lives of individuals with special educational needs (SEN) for them to be active members of the society. Early diagnosis, benefiting from early intervention, having an intensive education program, and being in inclusive education environments with normally developing peers as much as possible are some of those factors. Inclusion was defined as “A special education implementation which can be conducted in preschools, primary, secondary schools and general education together with normally developing peers by providing supporting educational services to individuals with SEN special needs.” in the Regulation governing Special Education Services in 2000 (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2000). Due to this definition, an increasing number of children with SEN is being placed in inclusive environments from preschool to general education in Turkey. Although the number of students with SEN is increasing, the lack of support services and knowledge of teachers working with them is still a concern in schools providing inclusive education to those children (Batu and Kırcaali-İftar, 2005; Lewis and Doorlag, 2011; Öztürk Özgönenel and Girli, 2016; Salend, 1998).

Literature related to preschool inclusion reveals that a number of preschool teachers have difficulties in some activities with children with SEN. Research also shows that children with SEN mostly try to take part in the activities, but they face with failure in some activities during the school day (Gök and Erbaş 2011; Karamanlı, 1998). Preschool inclusion is a new issue compared with primary school inclusion in Turkey. There is a number of descriptive studies regarding preschool inclusion. For example, Balaban, Yılmaz, and Yıldıztaş (2009) conducted a study in Bolu and Ankara provinces in Turkey. Authors conducted the “Attitudes towards Inclusion Scale” with 45 preschool teachers. The results of the study revealed that there was not a significant relationship with the problems they were having in their classes and their attitudes towards inclusion. Authors suggested providing information about children with SEN and inclusion and improving teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion in their study.

In another study, Odluyurt and Batu (2009) tried to determine the highest priority and secondary level priority preparatory skills which should be taught to children with SEN before they were placed in inclusive preschools that teachers thought that they were important for successful inclusion. After implementing a survey with 48 preschool teachers, a literature review was conducted by the researchers in order to find out the preparatory skills recommended in the literature. After the results of the survey and literature review had been combined, a list of preparatory skills was formed and defined. Those preparatory skills include: understanding and following the directions, taking part in group activities with peers, having self-help skills, displaying appropriate behaviors in the class and expressing oneself in the group as important skills for a successful inclusion implementation.

Gök and Erbaş (2011) conducted a study for examining the opinions and suggestions of 10 preschool teachers working in five preschools regarding inclusion. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with participants. Teachers mentioned that they needed to have more knowledge about children with SEN and inclusion implementations. They also noted that due to lack of information, they felt themselves insufficient during the activities they had done with children with SEN in the class.

Bozarslan and Batu (2014) conducted a similar study for examining the opinions of preschool teachers working in private preschools regarding inclusion. Semi-structured interviews were implemented with 26 teachers and the data were analyzed descriptively. Results of the study revealed that teachers reported that they had insufficient knowledge about children with SEN to provide effective teaching methods to those children in their classes. Participant teachers also made some recommendations about providing information about characteristics of children with SEN and inclusion to the teachers, school administrators, school staff, children without SEN, parents of children with and without SEN before and during inclusion implementations in preschools. Sünbül and Sargın (2002) also conducted a study with preschool teachers working in the kindergarten classes of primary schools in Konya, Turkey. The authors aimed to determine the attitudes of teachers regarding inclusion implementations and children with SEN in inclusion environments. Participant teachers were given the “Attitudes toward Inclusion Scale” and another survey which was developed by the researchers. Results of the study revealed that participants had positive attitudes towards inclusion implementations but their attitudes towards children with SEN was changing depending on the type of the disability of the children. Varlier and Vuran (2006)’s study’s

purpose was to describe the opinions of preschool teachers on the preschool education of children with SEN in inclusion classes. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Qualitative data were analyzed descriptively. Thirty female preschool teachers who were working for the Ministry of National Education participated in the study. All the participants were teachers who had students with SEN. According to the findings, all the teachers in the study think that children with SEN should have pre-school education. Most of the teachers indicated that preschool education should be provided as inclusion implementation to children with SEN. Furthermore, the teachers in this study expressed that they were not qualified on integration and the working conditions were insufficient. In another study, Akalın, Demir, Sucuoğlu, Bakkaloğlu, and İşcen-Karasu (2014) aimed to determine the needs of preschool teachers during inclusion implementations. In this two-phased study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 40 preschool teachers in the first phase. In the second phase, in-depth interviews were carried out with four of these participants. In the first phase, some of the participant teachers (28-55%) mentioned that they felt themselves sufficient about using effective teaching methods, classroom management and behavior management techniques whereas more than half of them (43-60%) reported that they felt themselves insufficient about individualizing the teaching procedure in the class, selecting appropriate teaching materials, assessing and evaluating children with SEN, behavior management, and classroom management. In the second phase of the study, participant teachers especially mentioned that they did not know much about children with SEN, they had difficulties during the teaching procedures with those children, they also had difficulties with their behavior problems. Teachers also mentioned that they needed to be specifically informed about those issues.

Again, Sucuoğlu, Bakkaloğlu, Karasu, Demir and Akalın, (2014) conducted a study to develop the Inclusion Knowledge Test (IKT) for assessing preschool teachers' knowledge of inclusive practices and to examine its psychometric characteristics. To achieve this purpose, the researchers wrote short stories (vignettes) focusing on the various aspects of inclusive practices, such as assessing the development of children with disabilities, adapting a preschool curriculum, and interacting with families of children with disabilities. Having been evaluated by a panel group consisting of experts who worked in the special education field, all vignettes were reviewed, and necessary adjustment and changes were made. Then the data were collected from the IKT responses of 169 preschool teachers, and validity and reliability studies were carried out. According to the results of the analysis, the IKT consists of 24 items (vignettes) loaded on one factor, and the factor loads of all items were more than .40. Cronbach's Alpha is .917. The findings showed that the preschool teachers had a very limited knowledge of inclusive practices, and their IKT scores did not change according to their experience or whether or not they had children with disabilities in their classroom. However, there was a significant difference between the IKT scores of the teachers who had and did not have a special education course during their pre-service training.

Having reviewed the literature, it can be said that there are a number of studies examining the opinions of teachers about inclusion in preschools in Turkey. Since inclusion implementations are unique for each school due to the culture and the environment of the school, number of students with and without SEN and teachers in the school, it is thought that there is still a need to determine the opinions and needs of teachers working with children with SEN in preschools. With this purpose in mind, it was aimed to examine the opinions of preschool teachers working at state schools in Eskisehir, Turkey regarding inclusion and children with SEN in general. For that purpose, following research questions were examined in this study:

1. What are the opinions of preschool teachers regarding the problems of inclusion, their needs of knowledge regarding inclusion, their problems with children with SEN in their classes and the support services they get regarding the problems they mentioned?
2. What are the opinions of preschool teachers regarding the similarities and differences of children with and without SEN in their classes and schools?
3. What are the opinions of preschool teachers regarding the types of disabilities which are appropriate to be placed in inclusion and the essential preparatory skills to be taught to children with SEN?

4. What are the opinions of preschool teachers regarding the benefits of inclusion for children with and without SEN and the preparations they make for the children with SEN in their classes?

Method

Participants

The study was conducted with 45 preschool teachers who had students with SEN in their classes in the 2013-2014 school year or who had already students with SEN in the previous years. Participants were working at eight different state preschools. These schools were selected through snowball or chained sampling out of all preschools in Eskişehir (Patton, 1987; as cited by Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). The first school principal was determined by the information given by a parent of a student with SEN. Afterward, each school principal was asked about another school name implementing inclusion for children with SEN. They were all women, and all graduated from different universities' "Preschool Teacher Education Programs," and they had 2-27 years of teaching experience.

Design

The study was conducted descriptively in order to examine the opinions of preschool teachers regarding inclusion and children with SEN. Descriptive research is being used to evaluate the behaviors, opinions, demographic characteristics and conditions in an environment thoroughly (Gay, 1996). Semi-structured interviews were carried out with participant teachers. The interview is the technique where the interviewer and the interviewee focus on the area which the research is being conducted through the pre-prepared interview questions (Merriam, 2013).

Preparation and Implementation of Data Collection Tool

Questions were prepared related to the general purpose of the study by the research team. After completing the questions, the question form was given to three academicians who held at least graduate degree of special education. Only the order of the questions was corrected and changed due to the suggestions the academicians made, therefore the question form was ready for the pilot interviews.

Two pilot interviews were conducted by two of the researchers who did not have any experience in conducting interviews. While listening to the pilot interviews, the team members provided feedback to their colleagues and made some decisions about conducting the interviews. Depending on the pilot interviews, it was thought that all questions were understood by the preschool teachers and could be used in the study as they were prepared. The participants of the pilot interviews were not included in the participants of the study.

All authors went to the schools where participants worked and each author conducted an interview with a teacher at each school. Since five interviews were conducted at the same time in different places of the schools independent from each other, it did not take a long time to collect data. Finally, data were collected between March 2014 and May 2014 from eight different schools and 45 preschool teachers.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed descriptively. After completing the interviews, data were transcribed verbatim. Transcriptions were checked by two of the researchers. A draft Interview Coding Form was developed from 15 of the interviews which were selected randomly out of 45 interviews. Two different researchers marked the appropriate item for each question of those 15 interviews independently. For examining the consistency of the researchers on those Interview Coding Forms, markings of the researchers were compared, and some changes considered necessary were made by the research team. After the final version of the Interview Coding Form had been developed, two researchers marked all questions of all participants' interview forms independently. When they finished marking, inter-rater reliability was calculated with the formula of "agreements divided by agreements plus disagreements and multiplied by 100." Inter-rater reliability was calculated as 89%.

Results and Discussion

Results of the study were presented with the order of the research questions. Quotations were used in order to reflect the opinions of participant teachers in their own sentences.

The Opinions of Preschool Teachers regarding the Problems about Inclusion, their Needs of Knowledge about Inclusion, and their Problems

This title included results related to the opinions of teachers regarding the problems of inclusion, their needs of knowledge about inclusion, their problems with children with SEN in their classes, and the support services provided for them.

Main problems of preschool inclusion. Teachers were asked what the main problems of preschool inclusion are. Their answers and the frequencies can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Main Problems of Preschool Inclusion

Opinions	f
Lack of knowledge and experience	19
Number of students in the class	15
Problems with the parents of children with SEN	13
Problems with children with SEN in the class	8
Lack of teacher aides	7
School administration and legal issues	5
Peer acceptance	4
Physical conditions	4

When teachers were asked what the main problems of preschool inclusion are, out of 45 participants, 19 teachers mentioned the lack of knowledge and experience, 15 teachers mentioned the number of students in the class, and 13 teachers talked about the problems with the parents of children with SEN. Among the teachers who mentioned lack of knowledge and experience, ÇGA said, "... we did not have sufficient education on every subject, therefore we can include the child into limited activities in the class." Second highest frequency was the number of students in the class. Talking about this issue, BP said, "... if we had 10 students in the class we could have two inclusion students, but unfortunately, it is not so at state schools." and ÇGA said, "... we have crowded groups in our classes and sometimes two inclusion students in that crowded class." When the literature is reviewed, it can be seen that number of students in the classes is a common problem both at preschool and primary school levels (Bilen, 2007; Metin and Çakmak Güleç, 1998; Sadioğlu, Bilgin, Batu and Oksal, 2013). Lack of knowledge has also been mentioned as a problem in some other research studies (Babaoğlu and Yılmaz, 2010; Batu, 2010; Huang and Diamond, 2009; Odom and Bailey, 2001; Sadioğlu et al., 2013; Sucuoğlu et al., 2014).

Problems related to children with SEN. Participant teachers were asked about the problems they had related to the children with SEN in their classes. Teachers had different answers. Answers of the participant teachers can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Problems Related to Children with SEN

Opinions	f
Problem behaviors	28
Being excluded by peers	12
Problems related to communication	7
Problems related tot self-help skills	6
Problems related to attending to the activities	4

Participant teachers were asked if they had problems related to children with SEN in their classes. Out of 45 participants, 37 teachers mentioned that they had problems with their children with SEN in the class. Those 37 teachers were asked about the types of problems they had related to the children with SEN in their classes. As can be seen in Table 2, 28 teachers talked about problem behaviors and 12 teachers mentioned students with SEN were being excluded by peers. ZY pointed that she had problems with behavior management with the child with SEN with the words “...the child with autism becomes aggressive sometimes, he may throw toys, hit the shadow teacher, peers or me...” AG also mentioned her problems by these words: “...when he first came he was very hyperactive and aggressive... always running in the class, hitting others, screaming, biting others.” When the literature was reviewed, it was found that teachers mostly reported problems related to themselves. Providing communication among children in the class, using effective classroom management strategies, planning daily routines were the problems they mentioned regarding problems of inclusion (Bruns and Mogharberran, 2009; Kemp, 2006; Küçükler, Acarlar and Kapçı, 2006; Varlier and Vuran, 2006). Besides, related to those issues, in Bozarslan and Batu’s (2014) study, teachers also mentioned the lack of sensibility in teachers and school staff, negative parent attitudes, and wrong referrals to inclusion as the major problems of preschool inclusion.

Opinions regarding the solutions of the problems mentioned. Teachers who told that they had problems with inclusion implementations in their classes were also asked about their opinions regarding the solutions they were using in order to solve these problems. Results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Solutions of Problems

Opinions	<i>f</i>
Personal solutions by the teacher	10
Talking with parents for cooperation	10
Informing peers	8
Taking support from other professionals	8
Making accommodations	6
Using behavior management techniques	2
Taking support from teacher techniques	2

As can be seen in Table 3, 10 teachers mentioned that they found personal solutions, 10 teachers were talking with parents for cooperation, and eight teachers told that they were informing peers about the process and the child with SEN. Among the teachers who told that they found personal solutions, ZY said, “I try to talk with the student with SEN with a calm voice, which is sometimes effective but sometimes not.” Whereas DE said, “I tried to be more patient with him. I tried to teach him the rules and follow the rules consistently with him in the class.” Ten teachers mentioned that they were talking with parents for cooperation. Among those teachers, EK said “His parents suggested me to shift his attention to different toys when he gets angry.” and SKB said, “He used to wet his pants which we overcame with the support of his parents. Whatever we do in the class lose its maintenance if it is not supported at home.” In the literature, it was revealed that warning the student orally, making accommodations during teaching, punishment-reinforcement, cooperating with parents are the solutions used for solving the problems in inclusion implementations (Sadioğlu, Batu and Bilgin, 2012; Vural and Yıkımsı, 2008).

Support services they got related to the students with SEN. Participants in the study were asked if they were provided any support services related to the students with SEN in their classes. Answers of the participants and the frequencies are listed in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Support Services Provided

Opinions	<i>f</i>
Teachers who get support services	31
Teachers who do not get support services	13

As can be seen in Table 4, out of 45 participants, 31 teachers mentioned that they were provided with support services whereas 13 teachers reported that they were not. Among the teachers who mentioned that they were provided with support services, ÇT reported the support service she gets by saying “*We take advice from our school counselor. Sometimes parents and me, sometimes me, parents and the child together.*” whereas SU said, “*Our school counselor supports us. She provides the support we need.*” Mentioning that they both indicated they got support from the school counselor in their school. Among the participants who mentioned that they did not have any support, CGA said, “*They provided no support at all. He just asked the personal information of the student and she was gone.*” Mentioning that the staff who was working at the Referral Center. Related literature suggests on-site education and counseling systems can be provided to teachers who are studying with children with SEN in inclusion classes (Crane-Mitchel and Hedge 2007; Özaydın and Çolak 2011).

The Opinions of Preschool Teachers regarding the Similarities and Differences of Children with and without SEN

This title included the results about the opinions of teachers related to the similarities and differences of children with and without SEN. Opinions were presented with their frequencies in the Tables below.

Differences of children with and without SEN. Participant teachers were asked about the differences of children with and without SEN in their classes and schools. Answers of the participants and the frequencies can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5

Differences of Children with and without SEN

Opinions	f
Differences in general development	10
Differences in social/language and communication skills	8
Differences in academic skills	6
Differences in behavior problems	4
Differences in fine motor skills	3
Differences in self-help skills	1

As can be seen in Table 5, 10 teachers mentioned differences in general development; eight teachers reported differences in social, language and communication skills, six teachers reported differences in academic skills. Among teachers who reported general developmental differences, BP said, “*There are general developmental differences, but it also depends on the type of disability of the child.*” pointing to the importance of the type of disability of the child with SEN. On the same issue, EU made a detailed description by saying “*...socially, cognitive, gross motor, eating skills, taking turns, shortly in all skills, there are differences...*” Among teachers who reported social, language and communication skills as the differences of children with and without SEN, AY told her students, “*...cannot speak, cannot express himself, which means he has receptive language skills but not expressive language skills.*” whereas DA said, “*...mainly he cannot communicate, he plays alone, he likes to play alone...*” In Bozarlan and Batu’s (2014) study, preschool teachers listed the differences of children with and without SEN as the need for providing instruction to the child with SEN individually, the problems the child with SEN has while expressing himself, lack of self-confidence in the child with SEN and having behavior problems with the child with SEN more frequently compared with the child without SEN. In order to overcome these negative differences, it is suggested that children with SEN are taught essential preparatory skills before inclusion placement (Kemp and Carter, 2000; 2006; Odluyurt and Batu; 2009; 2010).

Similarities of children with and without SEN. Participant teachers were also asked about their opinions regarding the similarities of children with and without SEN in their classes and schools. Answers and the frequencies are listed in Table 6.

Table 6

Similarities of Children with and without SEN

Opinions	<i>f</i>
All similar, there is no difference	20
There are some similarities in some developmental areas	5
I cannot recognize any similarities	1

Table 6 presents the results regarding the similarities of children with and without SEN regarding the opinions of participant teachers. As can be seen in the Table, out of 45 participants, 20 teachers mentioned that children with and without were all similar, five teachers mentioned that there were some similarities in some developmental areas, whereas only one teacher reported that she could not recognize any similarities between those two groups of children. Among teachers who thought that both groups were all similar, there was no difference. While expressing their opinions, AA said, “*At first, both of them are children, ...they like to play games, and they grow up with playing games.*” DA said, “*...looking physically, both of them are active children.*” Additionally, AG said, “*Physical appearance is the same, height, weight are similar. To tell the truth, movements, running, walking are also similar.*” In Bozarslan and Batu’s (2014) study preschool teachers reported the similarities between children with and without SEN as they were both children in general, playing games, eating were the main similarities and sharing was difficult for both groups of children.

The Opinions of Preschool Teachers regarding Types of Disabilities which are Appropriate to be Placed in Inclusion and the Essential Preparatory Skills to be Taught to Children with SEN

This title includes the opinions of preschool teachers regarding the types of disabilities to be included and the essential skills to be taught before inclusion placement.

Types of disabilities which are appropriate to be included. Participant teachers were asked about the types of disabilities which they thought were appropriate to be included. Teachers’ answers and the frequencies are listed in Table 7.

Table 7

Types of Disabilities which can be Included

Opinions	<i>f</i>
Mild and moderate developmental disabilities	13
All children	8
Speech and language disorders	6
Physical disabilities	3
Hearing impairment	2
Visual impairment	1

In Table 7 it can be seen that out of 45 participants, 13 teachers mentioned that children with mild and moderate developmental disabilities might be included, eight mentioned all children might be included whereas six teachers pointed that children with speech and language disorders might be included in preschool classes. Among the teachers who suggested children with mild and moderate developmental disabilities to be included, GSI said, “*...children with cognitive delays should be included, they accommodate easily in the group, but first we should be informed about those children.*” Having reviewed the literature, it can be said that the least preferred group to be included was the intellectual disability group (Batu and Uysal, 2006; Gök and Erbaş 2011). Moderate and severe developmental disability group was also reported as the least preferred disability group to be included in many studies (Bozarslan and Batu, 2014; Friend and Bursuck, 2006; Lewis and Doorlag, 2011; Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2004).

Essential preparatory skills to be taught to children with SEN before inclusion placement. Preschool teachers who participated in the study were asked about the essential preparatory skills. Teachers' opinions and frequencies can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8

Essential Preparatory Skills

Opinions	<i>f</i>
Self-help skills	35
Language and communication skills	10
Psychomotor skills	5
Attending to activities	4
Not having problem behaviors	4

As can be seen in Table 8, 35 teachers mentioned self-help skills, 10 teachers mentioned language and communication skills and five teachers mentioned psychomotor skills as the essential preparatory skill for inclusion. Among teachers who reported self-help skills as the essential preparatory skills, AA said, "...of course he should achieve the self-help skills, washing hands, eating by himself...", similarly, AG said, "I think self-help skills should be taught, or there should be a shadow teacher to help him with his self-help needs. We don't have shadow teachers or teacher aides in all classes to help those children." mentioning the importance of self-help skills in preschool classes. Bozarslan and Batu (2014) reported that communication skills are the most essential skills to be taught to preschool children with SEN. Besides communication skills, toilet skills, social skills, and self-help skills were reported to be other essential skills for inclusion in preschools. Batu and Uysal (2006) pointed that teaching social skills as preparatory skills to children with SEN provides an easier acceptance procedure among their peers in inclusion. Similarly, Odluyurt and Batu (2009) listed essential preparatory skills like following directions, attending to group activities with peers, acquiring self-help skills, presenting appropriate behaviors in the class, and expressing oneself depending on the opinions of teachers and the literature review.

When the implementations were examined, children with various types and levels of disabilities are being placed in inclusion classes. If successful implementations are expected to be realized in the classes, correct assessment and evaluation processes should be conducted and individualized teaching plans should be written and implemented with children with SEN in the classes (Batu, Çolak and Odluyurt, 2012; Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick and Scheer, 1999; Cushing, Clark, Carter and Kennedy, 2005; Freeman and Alkin, 2000).

The Opinions of Preschool Teachers regarding the Benefits of Inclusion for Children with And without SEN and the Preparations They Make for the Children with SEN in Their Classes

This title includes the opinions of teachers regarding the benefits of inclusion to children with and without SEN and the preparations of teachers for the children with SEN in their classes. The frequencies of participants are presented in Tables below.

Benefits of inclusion to children with SEN. Participants in the study were asked about the benefits of inclusion to children with SEN. Teachers' answers and their frequencies can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9

Benefits of Inclusion to Children with SEN

Opinions	<i>f</i>
Gets better in social and adaptive skills	38
Improves in all developmental areas	11
Develops in communication area	10
Develops in self-confidence	6
No benefits at all	1

Out of 45 participants, 38 teachers mentioned that children with SEN would get better in social and adaptive skills, 11 teachers mentioned that they would improve in all developmental areas, and ten teachers mentioned that children with SEN would develop in communication area in inclusion. Among the teachers who thought that those children would get better in social and adaptive skills, GSII said, “*I think that they are getting socialized, they acquire social skills, and they develop physically.*” and AY said, “*...even though classmates are not his peers, he is expressing himself, he is trying to put himself forward among his classmates.*” Among the teachers who mentioned that the child with SEN would develop in all developmental areas YÇ said, “*I think that inclusion will have contributions seriously in all developmental areas. Children with SEN must be in inclusion classes.*” and TG said, “*...he can learn how to behave in social environments, he can learn things to be used in his daily life in the community.*” It can be said that inclusion provides not only cognitive performance development but also social and behavioral development to children with SEN. Children with SEN usually acquire skills like playing with peers, attending to others’ play, starting play with others, communication skills, social interaction skills, and attending to activities in inclusive environments. As a result of this, their acceptance possibility among their peers increases naturally. Peer acceptance turns to be a friendship and social interaction out of the class as well (Diamond and Hestenes, 1994; Niesyn, 2009; Rule, Fietchl and Innocenti, 1990; Salend, 1998; Salisbury and Vincent, 1990; Wiener and Tardif, 2004).

Benefits of inclusion to children without SEN. Participant teachers were asked about the benefits of inclusion to children without SEN. Answers of teachers and frequencies can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10

Benefits of Inclusion to Children without SEN

Opinions	f
Awareness and toleration	37
Compassion and assistance	15
Respect	5
Empathy	3
Acceptance	2
Responsibility	2
Self-confidence	1
Problem solving	1

As can be seen in Table 10, out of 45 participant teachers 37 teachers talked about awareness and toleration, 15 teachers mentioned compassion and assistance, and five teachers mentioned respect as the benefits of inclusion to children without SEN. Among teachers who mentioned awareness and toleration, ÇA said, “*They learn how to behave to those children with SEN whom they have never seen before.*”, KAÖ said, “*...knowing a different person, learning about his needs...*” Among teachers who mentioned compassion and assistance HÇ said, “*...those children start to direct children with SEN’s behaviors after some time.*”, FY said, “*Their feelings of compassion and assistance develop in time...*” In Bozarlan and Batu’s (2014) study, preschool teachers reported the benefits of inclusion to children without SEN as self-confidence development, learning to share, and taking responsibility.

Preparations teachers make for the children with SEN in their classes. Participant teachers were asked about the preparations they make for the children with SEN in their classes. Answers and frequencies are listed in Table 11.

Table 11

Preparations/Differences Teachers Make in the Class

Opinions	f
Making teaching accommodations	14
Not making any accommodations	13
Making physical accommodations	11
Informing other children in the class	9
Talking with other professionals	4
Informing parents of children without SEN	3

As can be seen in Table 11, 14 teachers told that they were making teaching accommodations, 13 teachers mentioned that they were not making any accommodations, and 11 teachers mentioned that they were making physical accommodations for the children with SEN in their classes. Among teachers who were making teaching accommodations, AY said, “After making some observations I prepared his IEP. I determined what he liked, how I should communicate with him. He prefers visual things, I mean I have to show the object or its visual version for him to make him do the things I want. I have to point things with my finger or give a signal for him to understand what I want him to do.” Among teachers who told that they were not making any accommodations, ZK said, “I had a child with SEN in the second semester, but I didn’t make any accommodations for him in the class.” and MA said, “To tell the truth, I didn’t do any preparations for him. Because I didn’t know about him exactly. He usually harmonized with us.” For implementing successful inclusion in preschools, teachers are expected to adapt the classroom environment regarding the needs of all children but especially the needs of children with SEN, to use effective teaching techniques and strategies, to individualize teaching, and to provide equal learning environments for all children in their classes (Akalin and Sucuoğlu 2015; Sucuoğlu et al., 2014; Noonan and McCormick, 1997; Vural and Yıkmış, 2008).

Conclusion

In summary, research reveals that the problems of inclusion vary: (a) lack of knowledge of teachers about individuals with SEN, characteristics of these individuals, types of disabilities, (b) lack of knowledge of teachers about inclusion, (c) crowded classrooms, (d) not having appropriate physical conditions at schools for individuals with SEN, (e) not having appropriate materials for teaching in the classrooms, (f) not providing special education support services, and (g) parents of children without SEN’s negative attitudes towards children with SEN, etc. (Batu, 2000; Diken, 1998; Kargin, Acarlar and Sucuoğlu, 2005; Nizamoğlu, 2006; Sucuoğlu et al., 2014; Uysal, 1995).

Results of the present study can be summarized in a few sentences. For example, lack of information and experience, problems with the parents of children with SEN, problems with students with SEN and lack of support staff were the primary problems being faced in the school implementing inclusion. Regarding these problems, most of the teachers mentioned that they were provided with support. Many of the teachers reported that they were supported by the school counselor, parents of children with SEN, and the special education teacher of the student with SEN consecutively. Participant teachers mentioned the differences of children with and without SEN as developmental differences, communication and social skills differences and behavioral differences. Whereas the similarities they mentioned were that they were all similar, there were no differences or similarities in some developmental areas. In the study, some participant teachers also reported that children with moderate developmental disabilities and some other teachers suggested all children with SEN should be included. Teachers also suggested that children with SEN to be included into preschool classes should be taught self-help skills, communication skills and some motor skills for being successful in inclusion classes.

Moving forward with these findings in mind, some suggestions can be addressed for future research studies and implementation. Conducting a survey can be suggested for collecting data from more teachers. An information package can be prepared with the titles of “children with SEN and their characteristics,” “preparing

IEPs,” “physical and teaching accommodations in inclusion environments,” and “assessment and evaluation of children with SEN in preschool environments” and the effectiveness of this package can be examined. Some implementation suggestions can be; providing pre-service and in-service courses to teachers/teacher candidates who will work with children with SEN, ways of making collaboration can be taught to special education teachers and preschool teachers who are working with children with SEN.

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Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Kaynaştırmaya İlişkin Görüşlerinin Belirlenmesi*

Emine Sema Batu ^{ID**}
Anadolu Üniversitesi

Serhat Odluyurt ^{ID***}
Anadolu Üniversitesi

Ezgi Alagozogl ^{ID****}
Anadolu University

Melih Çattık ^{ID*****}
Anadolu Üniversitesi

Şerife Şahin ^{ID*****}
Anadolu Üniversitesi

Öz

Kaynaştırma uygulamalarının ilk basamağı okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarıdır. Kaynaştırma son yıllarda okul öncesi eğitim kapsamında daha fazla önem kazanmakta ve daha fazla kullanılan terim olmaktadır. Kaynaştırma uygulamaları bazen sorunlarla bazen de sorularla gerçekleştirilmektedir. Alanyazındaki araştırma sonuçlarına göre okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin kaynaştırma uygulamaları sırasında pek çok sorunla karşılaştıkları söylenebilir. Bu bağlamda, bu araştırmanın genel amacı, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin okullarındaki kaynaştırma uygulamalarına ilişkin görüşlerinin belirlenmesidir. Çalışmanın katılımcıları, Eskişehir ilindeki devlet anaokullarında çalışan ve sınıflarında hâlihazırda ya da geçmiş yıllarda kaynaştırma öğrencisi olan 8 anaokulundan 45 okul öncesi öğretmenidir. Öğretmenlerin mesleki deneyimleri 2-27 yıl arasında değişmektedir. Katılımcılarla yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiş ve elde edilen veriler betimsel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları, katılımcıların kaynaştırma uygulamasına ilişkin olumlu görüşlere sahip olmalarına karşın kaynaştırma ile ilgili yeterli bilgiye sahip olmadıkları yönündedir. Katılımcı öğretmenler bilgi eksikliklerinin kaynaştırma, özel gereksinim türleri ve özellikleri, etkili öğretim yöntemleri, uyarlama yapma ve benzeri konularda olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Çalışmadan elde edilen bulgular alanyazında bulunan kaynaklarla karşılaştırılarak tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Kaynaştırma, okul öncesi öğretmeni, öğretmen görüşleri, yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler.

Önerilen Atıf Şekli

Batu, E. S., Odluyurt, S., Alagozogl, E., Çattık, M., & Şahin, S (2017). Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin kaynaştırmaya ilişkin görüşlerinin belirlenmesi. *Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi Özel Eğitim Dergisi*, 18(3), 401-420. doi: 10.21565/ozelegitimdergisi.123456

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***Sorumlu Yazar:* Prof. Dr., E-posta: esbatu@anadolu.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0770-5145>

***Doç. Dr., E-posta: syildiri@anadolu.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5861-0627>

****Arş. Gör., E-posta: ezgialagozogl@anadolu.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4013-0702>

*****Arş. Gör., E-posta: mcattik@anadolu.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2682-377X>

*****Arş. Gör., E-posta: serifesahin@anadolu.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5404-762X>

Özel gereksinimli (ÖG) bireylerin toplumun etkin birer üyesi olabilmeleri için pek çok unsur bu bireylerin hayatlarında görev almaktadır. Erken tanılama, erken müdahaleden yararlanma, yoğun bir erken eğitim programından yararlanma ve normal gelişim gösteren akranlarıyla birlikte kaynaştırma ortamlarından yararlanma bu unsurlar arasında sayılabilir. 2000 yılında yayınlanan Özel Eğitim Hizmetleri Yönetmeliği'nde (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2000) kaynaştırma yoluyla eğitim; "özel eğitime ihtiyacı olan bireylerin eğitimlerini, destek eğitim hizmetleri de sağlanarak yetersizliği olmayan akranları ile birlikte resmî ve özel; okul öncesi, ilköğretim, orta öğretim ve yaygın eğitim kurumlarında sürdürmeleri esasına dayanan özel eğitim uygulamalarıdır" şeklinde tanımlanmıştır. Yasalarda yer alan bu tanımdan da yola çıkarak her geçen yıl daha fazla sayıda ÖG öğrenci kaynaştırma ortamlarında eğitim almak üzere yerleştirilmektedir. Kaynaştırma ortamlarına yerleştirilen öğrenci sayısının günden güne artmasına karşın bu öğrencilere ya da öğretmenlerine sağlanan özel eğitim destek hizmetlerinin sağlanmasının ve kaynaştırma sınıflarında görevli olan öğretmenlerin konu ile ilgili bilgi yetersizliklerinin halen bir sorun olarak görüldüğü kaynaklarda ortaya konmaktadır (Batu ve Kırcaali-İftar, 2005; Lewis ve Doorlag, 2011; Öztürk Özgönenel ve Girli, 2016; Salend, 1998).

Okul öncesi sınıflardaki öğretmenlerin kaynaştırma uygulamasına ilişkin görüşlerinin alındığı bazı çalışmalarda katılımcı öğretmenlerin ÖG öğrenciyi sınıftaki etkinliklere katmada bazı sorunlar yaşadıklarını dile getirdikleri raporlaştırılmıştır. Ayrıca ÖG öğrencilerin etkinliklere katılmaya çalıştıkları ancak çoğunlukla başarısız oldukları da çalışmaların bulguları arasında yer almaktadır (Gök ve Erbaş, 2011; Karamanlı, 1998). Okul öncesi dönemde kaynaştırma uygulamaları ilkokul ve orta öğretimde yapılan kaynaştırma uygulamalarına göre daha yeni bir uygulama olmasına karşın, bu konuyla ilgili durum saptamaya yönelik gerçekleştirilmiş az sayıda betimsel çalışma bulunmaktadır. Örneğin, Balaban, Yılmaz ve Yıldıztaş'ın (2009) gerçekleştirdiği çalışmaya 45 okul öncesi öğretmeni katılarak Kaynaştırmaya İlişkin Tutumlar Ölçeği'ni doldurmuşlardır. Çalışma sonuçlarına göre öğretmenlerin kaynaştırma uygulamasına ilişkin tutumları ile sınıflarında yaşadıkları sorunlar arasında belirgin bir ilişki bulunmamaktadır. Başka bir çalışmada Gök ve Erbaş (2011) 10 okul öncesi öğretmeniyle yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirerek kaynaştırma uygulamasına ilişkin görüş ve önerilerini belirlemişlerdir. Araştırmacılar, katılımcı öğretmenlerin, ÖG bireyler ve kaynaştırma uygulamasına ilişkin daha fazla bilgi sahibi olmak istediklerini raporlaştırmışlardır. Ayrıca katılımcı öğretmenler, bilgi eksiklikleri nedeniyle kendilerini sınıfta yetersiz hissettiklerini dile getirmişlerdir. Bozarslan ve Batu (2014) ise özel anaokullarında çalışan okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin kaynaştırma uygulamasına ilişkin görüşlerini belirlemek üzere benzer bir çalışma gerçekleştirmişlerdir. Çalışmada 26 okul öncesi sınıf öğretmeniyle yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiş ve elde edilen veriler betimsel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Bu çalışmada da öğretmenler kaynaştırma uygulamaları, etkili öğretim yöntemleri ve ÖG bireyler ile ilgili olarak bilgilerinin yetersiz olduğunu dile getirmişlerdir. Ayrıca katılımcı öğretmenler, bilgilendirmenin sadece kendilerine değil, okulda çalışan idareci, temizlik personeli, yardımcı öğretmenler gibi tüm çalışanlara yapılması gerektiğini de önermişlerdir.

Yukarıda da örneklendirildiği gibi, okul öncesi dönemde kaynaştırma uygulamalarına ilişkin görüş belirleme ile ilgili yapılmış çalışmalar bulunmaktadır. Ancak ÖG öğrencilerinin her birinin biricik olma özelliğinin ve her bir okulun kendi iç dinamiğinin, kültürel özelliklerinin o okulda gerçekleştirilen kaynaştırma uygulamalarını biricik olmasını sağladığı düşünülmektedir. Bu durumlar göz önünde bulundurularak planlanan bu çalışmada Eskişehir ilinde bulunan ve sınıfında ÖG öğrenci bulunmuş ya da halihazırda bulunan okul öncesi sınıf öğretmenlerinin kaynaştırma uygulamasına ilişkin görüşlerinin belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu genel amaçla ilgili olarak şu araştırma sorularına yanıt aranmıştır:

- 1.Okul öncesi sınıf öğretmenlerinin kaynaştırma uygulamasının sorunlarına, kaynaştırma uygulamasıyla ilgili olarak gereksinim duydukları bilgi türlerine, sınıflarındaki ÖG öğrenciyle ilgili yaşadıkları sorunlara ve belirttikleri sorunlarla ilgili olarak alabildikleri destek hizmetlere ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?
- 2.Okul öncesi sınıf öğretmenlerinin, sınıflarındaki ÖG öğrenciler ve normal gelişim gösteren öğrenciler arasındaki benzerlikler ve farklılıklara ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?

3.Okul öncesi sınıf öğretmenlerinin kaynaştırma uygulaması için uygun olduğunu düşündükleri yetersizlik türlerine ilişkin ve kaynaştırma uygulamasına yerleştirilmesi planlanan ÖG öğrencinin sahip olması gereken becerilerin neler olduğuna ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?

4.Okul öncesi sınıf öğretmenlerinin, kaynaştırma uygulamasının ÖG olan ve olmayan öğrencilere yararlarının neler olduğuna ilişkin ve ÖG öğrenci için sınıfta yaptıkları hazırlıklara ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?

Yöntem

Çalışma 2013-2014 öğretim yılında sınıfında halihazırda ÖG öğrenci bulunan ya da daha önceden bulunmuş olan 45 okul öncesi sınıf öğretmeniyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmada yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmek üzere sorular hazırlanmış ve her katılımcıya tüm sorular sorulmuştur. Sorulara ilişkin üç uzmandan görüş alınmış ve soruların soruluş sırasına ilişkin önerilerden yola çıkılarak son hali verilen sorularla iki pilot görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Pilot görüşmeler görüşme yapma ile ilgili deneyimi olmayan araştırmacılar tarafından gerçekleştirilmiştir. Pilot görüşmeler yapıldıktan sonra tüm ekip birlikte pilot görüşmeleri dinleyerek görüşmecilere dönüt vermişler ve görüşmelerin yapılışı ile ilgili tüm ekibin uyması için bazı ilkeler belirlemiştir. Pilot görüşmeler ayrıca, soruların anlaşılabilirliği ile ilgili olarak da değerlendirme sağlamıştır. Yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmelerden elde edilen veriler betimsel olarak analiz edilmiş ve frekans hesaplaması ile bulgu olarak ifade edilmiştir.

Bulgular ve Tartışma

Çalışmanın bulguları araştırma soruları ile ilişkilendirilerek aktarılmıştır. Bulguları güçlendirmek ve inandırıcılığın artırılması için katılımcıların sözleri ilgili yerlerde alıntılar olarak kullanılmıştır.

Okul Öncesi Sınıf Öğretmenlerinin Kaynaştırma Uygulamasının Sorunlarına, Kaynaştırma Uygulamasıyla İlgili Olarak Gereksinim Duydukları Bilgi Türlerine, Sınıflarındaki Özel Gereksinimli Öğrenciyle İlgili Yaşadıkları Sorunlara ve Belirttikleri Sorunlarla İlgili Olarak Alabildikleri Destek Hizmetlere İlişkin Görüşleri

Çalışmaya katılan öğretmenler en belirgin sorunlarının bilgi eksikliği ve kalabalık sınıflar olduğunu dile getirmişlerdir. ÖG öğrencileri ile ilgili olarak yaşadıkları sorunlardan davranış sorunlarını ve davranış yönetimini öncelikli olarak belirten katılımcılar bu sorunların çözümüne yönelik kendilerinin yollar bulduklarını ya da ÖG çocukların aileleriyle işbirliği yaptıklarını dile getirmişlerdir. Kaynaklar incelendiğinde, çalışmanın bulgularının alanyazındaki kaynaklarla benzerlik gösterdiği görülmektedir (Bruns ve Mogharberran, 2009; Kemp, 2006; Sadioğlu, Batu ve Bilgin, 2012; Varlıer ve Vuran, 2006; Vural ve Yıkmış, 2008).

Okul Öncesi Sınıf Öğretmenlerinin, Sınıflarındaki Özel Gereksinimli Öğrenciler ve Normal Gelişim Gösteren Öğrenciler Arasındaki Benzerlikler ve Farklılıklara İlişkin Görüşleri

Çalışmanın katılımcıları olan okul öncesi sınıf öğretmenlerinin, ÖG olan ve olmayan çocuklar arasındaki farklılık olarak ilk sırada genel gelişimlerinin farkını, ardından dil ve iletişimde, akademik becerilerdeki farklılıklarını dile getirdikleri görülmüştür. Benzerlik olarak ise, çoğunluk her şeylerinin benzer olduğunu dile getirirken çok az öğretmen de bazı gelişim alanlarında benzerlikler olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir.

Okul Öncesi Sınıf Öğretmenlerinin Kaynaştırma Uygulaması İçin Uygun Olduğunu Düşündükleri Yetersizlik Türlerine İlişkin ve Kaynaştırma Uygulamasına Yerleştirilmesi Planlanan Özel Gereksinimli Öğrencinin Sahip Olması Gereken Becerilerin Neler Olduğuna İlişkin Görüşleri

Katılımcı öğretmenler ayrıca, kaynaştırma uygulaması için hafif ve orta düzeyde yetersizlikleri olan öğrencilerin en fazla uygun olduğunu ya da tüm çocukların uygun olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Bu konuda alanyazında farklı görüşler belirtildiği görülmektedir. Örneğin bazı kaynaklarda kaynaştırma uygulamaları için en az tercih edilen grubun zihinsel yetersizliği olan çocuklar olduğu ortaya konmaktadır (Batu ve Uysal, 2006; Gök

ve Erbaş, 2011). Başka kaynaklarda ise, orta ve ağır derecede gelişimsel yetersizliği olan çocukların en az tercih edilen grup olduğu raporlaştırılmıştır (Bozarslan ve Batu, 2014; Lewis ve Doorlag, 2011).

Okul Öncesi Sınıf Öğretmenlerinin, Kaynaştırma Uygulamasının Özel Gereksinimli Olan ve Olmayan Öğrencilere Yararlarının Neler Olduğuna İlişkin ve Özel Gereksinimli Öğrenci İçin Sınıfta Yaptıkları Hazırlıklara İlişkin Görüşleri

Çalışmanın katılımcı grubunu oluşturan öğretmenler, ÖG öğrencilerin kaynaştırma uygulamasından sağlayacağı yararlar söz konusunda en fazla sosyal ve uyumsal beceriler olduğunu dile getirmişlerdir. Normal gelişim gösteren çocukların kaynaştırma uygulamasından sağlayacağı yararlar arasında da farkındalık ve tolerans gelişimi, yardım ve saygının olduğunu sıralamışlardır. Katılımcı öğretmenler sınıflarındaki ÖG öğrenciler için gerçekleştirdikleri hazırlıklar arasında öğretimsel uyarlamalar yapma, hiç uyarlama yapmama ya da fiziksel uyarlamalar yapmanın olduğunu dile getirmişlerdir. Kaynaştırma uygulamalarını başarıyla gerçekleştirebilmek için öğretmenlerin sınıf ortamını tüm çocukların gereksinimlerini karşılayacak şekilde uyarlamaları, etkili öğretim stratejilerini kullanmaları, öğretimi bireyselleştirmeleri ve sınıflarındaki tüm çocuklar için eşit öğrenme fırsatları yaratmaları beklenmektedir (Akalin ve Sucuoğlu, 2015; Sucuoğlu ve diğ., 2014; Noonan ve McCormick, 1997; Vural ve Yıkılmış, 2008).

Sonuç

Sonuç olarak gerçekleştirilen bu çalışmanın bulguları çoğu noktada alanyazındaki bilgilerle benzerlik göstermektedir. Okul öncesi sınıf öğretmenlerinin başarılı bir kaynaştırma uygulaması gerçekleştirmek için gereksinim duydukları en belirgin ihtiyacın bilgi donanımı olduğu görülmektedir. Elde edilen bulgulardan yola çıkılarak okul öncesi öğretmenlerine, ÖG bireyler ve özellikleri, kaynaştırma uygulamalarının ilkeleri, bireyselleştirilmiş eğitim programları hazırlama, uyarlamalar yapma gibi konuları içeren bilgilendirme paketleri hazırlanarak öğretmenlerin kaynaştırma uygulamalarındaki değişikliklerin gözlemlenmesi önerilebilir.