



## Perceptions of special education academic staff: Who should be employed as special education teachers?

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify the perceptions of special education department staff about people employed as special education teachers. In this study, the effects of employment policies upon quality of special education and special education are discussed. In this regard, during the present study, the qualitative data were collected through semi - structured interviews held with academicians (n=25) of special education department in the spring of 2007-2008 academic year on the basis of the interview questions developed by the researcher. Participants pointed out that special education teacher should be the graduates of special education departments, classroom teachers should support special education teachers.

**Keywords:** Employment, special education teacher, assignment policies

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## INTRODUCTION

When the Latin alphabet was adopted during the first years of the Turkish Republic, among the many basic needs of the country, there emerged an increasing need for qualified teachers. In order to meet this need, teachers in all fields, especially class teachers, were educated at great speed. Moreover, to increase the quality of teacher education, field specialists were sent abroad to be educated (Baskan, 2001). On their return to Turkey, these specialists were employed in universities to train teachers. Article 43 of the Law 1739, the Basic Law concerning National Education, provides for the need for candidate teachers to receive tertiary education and to be prepared for the profession by being educated in general culture and receiving special field education and teacher training (<http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/88.html>). Under the cited Law, in 1974, institutes of education were established to provide two-year teacher education in order to educate primary school teachers. Later, in 1982, these institutes were made a part of the universities under the name “Higher Schools for Education”. By 1989, the Higher Schools for Education began to provide four-year education. During the 1992-1993 academic year, the education of primary school teachers was entrusted to the Faculties of Education (Baskan, 2001). However, from the establishment of the Turkish Republic until the present time, all the institutions opened and the arrangements made to educate primary and secondary school teachers have been unable to fill the gap in the need for teachers. As a result, different sources have been resorted to from time to time to provide teachers including: the use of reserve officers as teachers, substitute teachers, teacher training course, correspondence courses in teacher education, accelerated teacher training programs, teacher education through in-service training, and appointing the graduates of faculties other than the faculties of education to the profession (Akyüz, 2007). In the same way that graduates of other faculties have been appointed to the profession as class teachers and branch teachers, the lack of teachers in Special Education has been compensated for by the appointment of retired teachers, class teachers, or the graduates of the various departments of faculties of education.

An overview of Special Education teacher training in Turkey shows that the process first began in the 1950s with the opening of the Branch of Special Education within the Gazi Institute of Education. However, this program came to an end after giving two terms of graduates. Subsequent to the closure of this program, in 1953 the Ministry of National

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Education (MoNE) started a two-week long in-service education program in the Izmir School for the Deaf for the training of teachers who were to be involved in the selection and education of children with mental retardation, and guide teachers who were to provide guidance to the former group of teachers (Özer, 1995; cited in Yıkılmış, 1999). However in the period between 1955 and 1979, class and branch teachers were assigned to institutions for Special Education. In order to fill the gap in the field of Special Education, those having a minimum five-year experience of successful teaching, those having successfully completed the in-service education program related to the field of Special Education to which they were to be assigned, and those who had taught for a minimum of five years in schools for Special Education were assigned as Special Education teachers, and in the course of time they were provided with in-service education in order that they could make up for their lack of knowledge of the field (Yıkılmış, 1999). Between the years 1979 and 1982, the Department of Special Education of the Faculty of Education in Ankara University conducted a certificate program for Special Education; and between 1981 and 1986, under a co-operation program between the Academy of Economical Sciences in Eskişehir and the MoNE, a certificate program for the Education of Children with special needs, by which the teachers from different institutions for Special Education of the MoNE were provided with in-service education during summer months. The teachers continued the program over two successive summers and accumulated a total of 33 credits at the end of the program. Those teachers who practiced what they had learned and became successful were awarded a certificate at the end of the program. Moreover, the MoNE preferred primarily those teachers with a certificate of Special Education for assignment to institutions for Special Education. However, some teachers receiving the education gave up the program finding it very demanding, and only a few worked in the field after completing the program (Konrot, 1991). Starting from the mid-1980s, departments for Special Education were opened in various universities including: Anadolu University (1983); Gazi University (1986); Ankara University (1987) (Ataman, 2004); and the universities of Hacettepe, Abant İzzet Baysal, Marmara and Karadeniz Technical, Sakarya, 19 Mayıs, and Selçuk in subsequent years.

In 2002, 488 graduates of educational sciences became teachers of children with mental retardation after having undergone a six week theoretical and a four week applied education, i.e. a total of ten weeks of education, and they were assigned as Special Education teachers in

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different regions of the country (Nartgün, 2005). Up to 2009, approximately 4,500 people who were either retired teachers or graduates of departments of class teacher have received various in-service education programs and have been assigned to institutions for Special Education as Special Education teachers. As from 3 November 2008, such programs for the training of teachers were transferred to the universities under a protocol signed between the MoNE and the Board of Higher Education. Under the aforementioned protocol, which was drawn up with the collaboration of Gazi University and the MoNE, by 9 March 2009, 34 teachers of the blind and the deaf, 6 retired teachers and 147 teachers from other fields (from the fields of Class Education, Pre-school Education, Nursery Education, Child Development and Pre-school Education, and from the Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling, the Department of Child Development (those with a certificate of pedagogical formation), and the Department of Child Development and Education (those with a certificate of pedagogical formation), bachelors of science) are to be provided with in-service education to become teachers of children with mental retardation (<http://www.zihinselsertifika.gazi.edu.tr/guncel/default.aspx?id=1>). A similar certificate program was held in Selçuk University in April 2009. It was program for 50 people and a two term 35 credits. In this program there was a quota for two people who are retired. The quato for 48 people was distributed teachers of the blind and the deaf (who got 50 and more score in KPSS 10) and other fields (who got 65 and more score in KPSS 10 ).

As Nichols et al. (2008) state, in 1983 the limited number of Special Education teachers was considered a national risk in the United States. However, this continues to be a problem even after 25 years; and based on the latest data, it is seen that the number of qualified Special Education teachers teaching in different positions meets 86% of the need. Smith-Davis & Billingsley (1993, p. 205; cited in Boe, 2006) define the relationship between teacher demand and supply as a puzzle, which is based on the interaction between quality and quantity. Although qualified teachers are educated, they are not employed in public schools and they mostly work in the private sector. As a result, various methods are resorted to fill the vacant positions in the public sector. As mentioned earlier, the attempts to fill the gap generally seek to meet quantitative demand. Nevertheless, the problem of quality still exists. In the United States, attempts have been made to solve this problem in two ways: first, quantitative demand, that is, all the teacher positions are filled quantitatively; second,

qualitative demand, that is, the qualifications of teachers such as field specialization, teaching experience (Boe, 2006) are taken into consideration. However, despite all the above attempts, studies (Smith-Davis & Billingsley, 1993; McLeskey, Tyler, & Flippin, 2004; Boe & Cook, 2006, cited in Boe, 2006) show that there are still vacant positions for Special Education teachers and that this points to a gap with respect to such positions. Boe (2006) also underlines the chronic issue of the teacher gap in the field of Special Education.

The fact that this gap cannot be filled by the graduates of Special Education teaching but by the extra-field teachers brings to mind the question of who a teacher of Special Education actually is. Miller and Porter (1999) answers this question by defining Special Education teachers as individuals who either directly or indirectly work with children needing Special Education, and who, in their relations with those needing Special Education, play a different role compared to other teachers with respect to their level of knowledge, skills and understanding. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009) of the United States defines a teacher of Special Education as “an individual who works with young people and children with some disabilities”. Although this definition varies from one country to another, even from one organization to another, an individual who will work in this field, that is, a teacher of Special Education, pursuing the goals of Special Education must undergo education and continue working in this field. However, when it comes to implementation, it is seen that some of the individuals employed in the field are not selected from among the graduates of Special Education teaching. It is also seen that these individuals have to tackle numerous problems.

One of the most important problems in this way is related to the job satisfaction of the appointed teachers. Job satisfaction is generally defined as the attitudes of employees emerging from the feelings, thoughts and actions related to their employment. Job satisfaction also affects the physical and mental health of individuals. The job satisfaction level of teachers is also affected by whether or not they teach the branches in which they were trained. Therefore, it is believed that good pre-service training and employment in branches suitable to their training will increase the job satisfaction of teachers. It is known that teachers appointed from outside the field suffer from a lack of field knowledge and professional knowledge in the first years of their career, and face various problems with

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counseling students because they have not gone through a serious training program in Special Education (Azar ve Henden, 2003).

The fact that they do not know how to approach children with special needs, they have a lack of understanding of individual education, and they are not seen as Special Education teachers by the graduates of Special Education teaching (Nartgün, 2005) are examples of such problems. However, while such and similar practical problems continue to be seen, extra-field teachers are appointed after a short-term in-service education by the academic staff in the field (Nartgün, 2002). The shortness of this training leads to its being insufficient (Çelik, 1998). A review of the literature studies (Ataman, 2004; Sarı, 2004; Cavkaytar, 2006; Konrot, 1991; Özdemir, 2004; Nartgün, 2002; Nartgün, 2005) shows that the issue of employment of Special Education teachers has not been the subject of many detailed studies in Turkey. This makes the current study highly significance. In line with this, the current study aims to present the views of the academic staff of the departments of Special Education on teachers employed in the field.

## METHOD

*Population and Sample:* The population of the current study was formed of the 96 staff members from the Special Education departments of ten universities in Turkey. These universities are Abant İzzet Baysal, Anadolu, Ankara, Erciyes, Gazi, Karadeniz Technical, Marmara, 19 Mayıs, Sakarya, and Selçuk Universities. Universities with only one research assistant or assistant professor in the Special Education department were not included in the study. Thus, the academic staff of five universities (n=80) were chosen by the researcher as the sample of the study. Interviews were held with 25 of these 80 academics selected via simple random sampling technique and on a voluntary basis. Table 1 shows the distribution of the universities and teaching members where the study was conducted.

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**Table 1.**

*Demographic information about the participants*

University	Number of participants	The distribution of academicians in terms of their affiliation		
		Affiliation	f	%
Ankara University	7	Professor	1	4.3
		Associate Professor	2	8.6
		Assistant Professor	-	-
		Doctor	-	-
		Lecturer	-	-
		Research Assistant Doctor	1	4.3
		Research Assistant	3	8.6
Abant İzzet Baysal University	8	Assistant Professor	4	50
		Doctor	1	12.5
		Research Assistant	3	37.5
Anadolu University	5	Professor	-	-
		Associate Professor	-	-
		Assistant Professor	2	40
		Doctor	-	-
		Lecturer	1	20
		Research Assistant Doctor	1	20
		Research Assistant	1	20
Gazi University	4	Professor	1	25
		Associate Professor	-	-
		Assistant Professor	-	-
		Doctor	-	-
		Lecturer	-	-
		Research Assistant Doctor	-	-
		Research Assistant	3	75
Selçuk University	1	Lecturer	1	100

Table 1 shows that seven of the academics involved in the study (n=25) were from Ankara University, eight from Abant İzzet Baysal University, five from Anadolu University, four from Gazi University, and one from Selçuk University.

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**Table 2.**

*Personal information about participants*

Participant Affiliation	f	%	Gender	f	%
Professor	2	8	Female	1	6
Associate Professor Assistant Professor	2	8		6	4
Doctor	6	24	Male	9	36
Lecturer	2	8		6	
Research Assistant Doctor	2				
Research Assistant	1	8			
	1				
	0	8			
		4			
		4			
		0			

64 % of the teaching members involved in the study (n=25) were female (n=16) and 36 % male (n=9). The distribution of the academic positions of the teaching members involved in the study is as follows: professor, 8% (n= 2); associate professor, 8 % (n= 2): assistant professor, 24 % (n= 6); doctor, 8 % (n= 2); lecturer, 8 (n= 2)%; research assistant doctor 4 % (n= 1); and research assistant, 40 % (n= 10).

*Data Collection Instrument and Analysis:* To collect qualitative data during this study, the researcher used the semi-structured interview method, a qualitative research method. The reason of the use of the interview method during this study was to collect data by interviewing the related academic staff as primary sources of information on the subject. To analyze the qualitative data collected, the researcher used the methods of content analysis and continuous comparison. As Merriam (1998) puts it, all qualitative data analysis is in fact content analysis. In this context, the responses to the semi-structured questions and the contents of responses were first analyzed to form significant groups and then they were transformed into a tabulated form, listing the responses to the items each by appropriate categories (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006).

During the formation of these matrices, only the opinions and ideas related to the scope of the present study were taken into account, and the unnecessary opinions and ideas were disregarded. The number of opinions and ideas repeated in the matrices was discovered, and

those repeated 6 times or more were considered as a general tendency. On the other hand, the unrepeated opinions and ideas were regarded as findings peculiar to each of the group members who participated in the interview. Since the interviewees were guaranteed that their names would not be revealed during the research at the beginning of the interviews, the participants were given letter codes (such as A, B, C) by the researcher instead of using their names. The participants' statements were presented with these codes in the findings part of the present study. The obtained findings were interpreted and the results were deduced on the basis of the theoretical background information.

In this study, the qualitative data were collected by means of interviews with the instructors (n=25) from Special Education department in the spring semester of the 2007-2008 academic year using a semi-structured interview instrument developed by the researcher. The instructors were expected to answer the following 8 questions in the semi-structured questionnaire.

1. What are the areas of employment for graduates of Special Education departments?
2. What is the employment rate of the graduates of Special Education departments?
3. Who do you think should be a Special Education teacher? Why?
4. What are your opinions about the MoNE appointment policies with respect to Special Education teachers? (Appointment of extra-field teachers; appointment by way of in-service education; field teachers)
5. What are your opinions about the appointment of individuals from different branches as Special Education teachers?
6. What are the positive and negative aspects of becoming a Special Education teacher through in-service education?
7. Do you think your graduates have sufficient knowledge of the field and sufficient practical knowledge? If not, in which areas they must improve themselves? What must be done for this?
8. What do you think about the appointment of Special Education teachers by means of the Public Personnel Selection Examination (PPSE)?

*Validity and Reliability:* As human behavior is dynamic, it is difficult to speak of validity in the social sciences. Therefore, rather being on than the validity and reliability of the study,

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the emphasis should be on the reliability and validity of the instrument employed, the suitability of the data analysis methods, and the level of relationship between the results obtained (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994). Merriam (1998) suggests six different strategies for ensuring internal validity. The methods of triangulation and peer-control were the strategies applied to ensure the internal validity of the qualitative data obtained in the current study. That is, different researchers were referred to for help in extracting the findings during the interviews, the observations of those researchers were compared, the literature related to the subject was examined, and the results obtained were compared.

In this study, as Miles and Huberman (1994) underline and Yıldırım and Şimşek (2006) state, the professionals of Special Education from different universities were consulted to ensure external validity. The stages of the study are dealt with in detail in the method section. In addition, since the process of the data collection and the data are provided clearly and in detail, an opportunity is created for other researchers to do an analysis. This in turn ensures the reliability of the study (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006: 274). Since it is not possible in qualitative studies to speak of reliability in traditional terms, attempts were made to make the study more reliable. For instance, detailed descriptions were made with regard to the methods of data collection and analysis. To increase internal reliability, another researcher was used along with the main researcher during the analysis of the data. The analysis results obtained by both researchers were compared and the findings which match were used in the study. Other studies conducted on the same subject were also compared with the results of the study at hand.

The developmental stages of the semi-structured scale of the researcher can be summarized as follows. First, the subject was discussed with the field professionals with a view to demonstrating the problems. An interview form was developed by combining the data obtained at the end of the discussion process and the data collected by examining the literature related with the subject area. Then the data were submitted to eight professional teaching members from Special Education and Educational Sciences to receive their comments, and after the interview form was further developed by reorganizing the data in line with these comments, it was applied to five postgraduate Special Education students. The data collected from the interviews with the postgraduate students of Special Education

was compared with the literature to verify it. Then the subject students were interviewed according to the plan produced. The data collected from the interviews was compared again with the literature.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The views of the Special Education students on the employment expectations are given below.

### **1. What are the areas of employment for graduates of Special Education departments?**

The possible employment areas of Special Education teacher candidates according to the responses of the participants are given below.

1. Special Rehabilitation Centers
2. Special Education Boarding Schools
3. Special Education Day Schools
4. Special Education Classes
5. Private Special Education Institutions
6. MoNE Special Education Schools
7. Guidance and Research Centers
8. Special Education Department of MoNE
9. Hospitals
10. Institutions belonging to Gülhane Military Medical Academy
11. Autistic Childrens' Schools
12. Substitute Teachers
13. Special Education Departments of Universities
14. Foundations (Public and Private Sector)

### **2. What is the employment rate of the graduates of Special Education departments?**

The participants stated that postgraduate employment of 80-90%, even of 100%, was seen among the students of Special Education. They added that since there were no policies of monitoring the graduates, the employment status of the graduates could only be learned from feedback by the graduates themselves.

About this subject participant Z says the following:

According to recent data about the employment of handicapped teachers, most of Special education graduates are assigned as special education teachers. However, the employment rate of deaf for the training of teachers, blind and visually impaired for the training of teachers and gifted teachers is not as high.

However, the participants said that the postgraduate employment was not with the MoNE alone, but mostly with private education institutions. They showed the reasons of the choice of the private sector instead of the MoNE among the graduates as the salary, the appointment policy of the MoNE and the results of the PPSE. It is seen that this is also supported by the literature related with salaries in particular (Atasagun, 2007; Brownell, Hirsch & Seo, 2004). Atasagun (2007) wrote that proper working environment and high salaries were the reasons behind the choice of private sector organizations among the graduates of Special Education departments. In a study conducted in Maryland in 2001, Brownell, Hirsch & Seo (2004) found that the State's increasing the salaries of teachers resulted in a higher number of applications for posts in Special Education teaching. Therefore, they suggest that the salaries of Special Education teachers should be increased.

### 3. Who do you think should be a teacher of Special Education? Why?

All the participants replied that they thought that Special Education teachers should be graduates of Special Education departments. Table 3 shows their reasons.

**Table 3.**

*Reasons for appointment of Special Education Teacher graduates*

Reasons:

- It is a profession that requires training as with all professions.
- It is necessary to graduate from a Special Education department to be assigned as a Special Education teacher as it is necessary to graduate from an Engineering faculty to become an engineer.
- Because the professional competencies of Special Education teachers are more adequate for this profession than teachers from other areas.
- Education programs are developed and organized in order to work in this area.
- Special Education teaching requires devotion, patience, and willingness. Many Special Education graduates will work voluntarily.
- Not everyone can do this job because the knowledge and skills necessary for this profession cannot be acquired in a short time. Expertise is required.

About this subject participant Z says the following:

“In my opinion, the graduates of special education departments should be special education teachers as even in article 1739 teaching is reported as a specialized area.”

In general, the participants wished to see in a teacher of Special Education: first, being a graduate of Special Education; second, being really interested in the field; and third, holding postgraduate/doctorate degree in Special Education, for people from different subject areas showing interest in working with the handicapped and ensuring their integration with the society, not seeing the profession merely as a source of income, and being a good teacher. However, being a good teacher in the field of Special Education and being a good Special Education teacher are not the same. The most important aspect distinguishing a Special Education teacher from a class teacher is that the latter is educated in the management of regular and normal classes. Another noteworthy distinguishing aspect is that the children needing Special Education are treated differently from those who do not need it. About this subject participant A says the following:

“They should be people who have teaching knowledge and skills in special education. When the graduates of other areas are employed in special education, exchange programs and courses should be organized for their training.”

While participant Y says ;

“Even though in theory, special education teachers should be the graduates of Special education departments of universities, when the current applications are concerned, it is seen that special education teachers are trained via long- term in-service training and various certificate programs.”

Klicka (2003) suggests that a Special Education teacher must have three features. These are: (1) a teaching certificate; (2) a BA degree (3) having passed a teaching examination. Putting emphasis on the practices of teacher education and assignment in Turkey, Özdemir (2004) suggests that Special Education teachers who come from other fields lower the quality. Özdemir (2004) also thinks a higher number of students should be enrolled with the existing Special Education departments of universities and their quality should be increased, instead of opening new ones. Konrot (1991), however, states based on the certificate programs conducted in the 1981-1986 period that certificate programs provide temporary solutions and that educating qualified teachers in the field of education of the handicapped can only be achieved by means of permanent programs.

It can be said that the above arguments are also supported by the literature related to the subject area. In this literature, the emphasis is on the issue of assignment of only the graduates of Special Education to the positions of Special Education teaching. Different studies (Darling-Hammond, 1999, 2000; Felter, 1999; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002) cited by Boe (2006) established a positive relation between candidate teachers and the success of students and teaching certificates in the field of Special Education.

In addition, the participants pointed to another problem saying, "Everybody who sees themselves competent enough to be a teacher and who has the courage to do so can be a Special Education teacher. The key issue here should be to deal with the question of who should educate Special Education teachers, or how can a Special Education teacher be better educated."

McLeskey, Tyler and Flippin (2004) state that it is attempted to meet the need for Special Education in different ways and that although teachers are awarded a certificate of Special Education teaching in some of the states in the USA, in practice, they can have a poor understanding of Special Education teaching and children with special needs, which has negative impacts on practice. They also stress that it is important to review how the insufficient number of teachers, in particular of qualified teachers, affect children with special needs.

#### **4. What are your opinions about the MoNE appointment policies with respect to Special Education teachers? (Appointment of extra-field teachers; appointment by way of in-service education; field teachers)**

All the participants disagreed with this policy; however, they stated that there was nothing to do with respect to the appointment of the extra-field teachers by the MoNE, but that the rules set by the Board of Instruction and Education must be respected. A key requisite of Special Education is that the education of the children with special needs should be under the supervision of teaching staff, with theoretical knowledge supported by the practice. The participants also state that graduates of Special Education teaching must undergo pre-service and in-service education.

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They claim that with this policy the MoNE aims only to fill the gap, and that despite the need for Special Education teachers in the country, fewer quotas are allocated to teacher appointments and as a result extra-field teachers are awarded a certificate after a short-term program in order to fill the existing gap. They also underline that beside such contradictions, the effectiveness of certificate programs and the quality of education have now become arguable due to the fact that the teachers or professionals in such programs are not selected from among Special Education teachers and no assistance is sought from the professionals in the universities. Furthermore, they are concerned about the assignment of the extra-field teachers and of those received in-service education as Special Education teachers, a practice seen for a couple of years, and the potential of this to block the graduates of Special Education entering the profession in a few years time, resulting in turn in less numbers of professionals in the field. In relation to the aforementioned finding, Karataş (2004) opposes class teachers in the profession, and thinks seminars lack the required and sufficient courses, for instance, no reading and writing courses are given.

**Table 4.***Special Education teachers must have features in*

Categories	Example Expressions
A Special Education Teacher can not be trained via short-term in-service (INSET) training programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate programs are not sufficient enough for appointment as Special Education teacher.</li> <li>• Not everyone can do this profession with short-term training programs. Expertise is necessary and required.</li> <li>• The in-service courses planned and actualized do not meet the demands of the subject- area. Teachers should be open to changes and developments in Special Education and should have an interest in the area.</li> <li>• Even though various change graduate programs and courses are organized for the graduates from other subject areas, they have some difficulties in these programs related to the teaching competencies of the trainers, and the length of time of these programs.</li> </ul>
The current status of Special Education graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The graduates of Special Education departments have the necessary knowledge and skills about the field in order to work as a Special Education teacher</li> <li>• Classroom teachers, preschool teachers and subject teachers can be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills about Special Education to work at inclusion classes, not to be a Special Education teacher. Academically, they can attend the graduate courses provided at various universities. However, Special Education teachers should work together with Classroom teachers in order to support them in the classroom.</li> <li>• If they do not have an BA degree in Special Education, they have to attend to graduate courses and have to be specialized in Special Education.</li> </ul>
Professional Characteristics of Special Education Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who really want to be so should be Special Education teachers, because special educator requires patience and devotion. Being a Special Education teacher is to struggle with difficulties, to deal with the problems of people with special needs and not to be daunted by the difficulties.</li> <li>• A Special Education teacher should be patient, honest, strong minded, determined, consistent with his/her personality and should have the necessary knowledge and skills about Special Education.</li> <li>• Volunteers and willing individuals should be Special Education teachers.</li> <li>• They should have MA and Ph.D degrees in Special Education.</li> </ul>

The participants regard such practices entirely unfair from the aspect of the efforts made and on the part of the children with special needs and their families expectant of Special Education, and they believe that the sudden changes that come with short-term in-service education courses are both potentially harmful to the profession and degrading for those who

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need Special Education. Schofer and Duncan (1986) established that certification emerges as an “urgent” and “temporary” savior where the number of Special Education teachers is not enough to meet the demand; however, they add that such teachers cannot perform in the desired way in the profession.

### 5. What are your opinions about the appointment of individuals from different branches as Special Education teachers?

**Table 5.**

*Participants’ opinions about the appointment of graduates of other branches as Special Education teachers*

Categories	f	%
Not appropriate	24	100
Appropriate	-	-

Participant J states that such appointments can be made if the extra-field graduates gain knowledge and skills in a sufficient period of time with the help of professionals from universities. However, participants E and K disfavor this claiming that as it is not possible to fill the dentist gap by assigning to that position of physicians specialized in ear, nose and throat diseases, or as a barber apprentice cannot open a tailor's shop after an apprenticeship and master training, the extra-field teachers should not be assigned as Special Education teachers. They think this may lead to improper practices and harm the children with special needs and their families.

The participants think the class teachers should provide support to the profession after they have received in-service education in the field of Special Education. Because education is teamwork, a Special Education teacher should collaborate with a class teacher. Meanwhile in the present study the participant Y points out similar ideas about teachers of other branches should participate in in-service education.

“In all schools there are inclusive classes. Therefore, all teachers including subject teachers (e.g. mathematics, science, social studies teachers), and on classroom teachers should participate in-service education in order to handle and to solve their handicapped students’ problems.”

**Table 6.**

*Participants' opinions about the reasons why teachers of other subject-areas should not be appointed as Special Education teachers and their solutions*

Categories	Example Expressions
Reasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A subject teacher does not learn and implement effectively the teaching principles, methods and techniques of Special Education</li> <li>• Because they do not have enough Special Education training, they do not know how to deal with and solve the problems in practice they will have in the future. They can find their own solutions by trial and error.</li> <li>• I do not even accept the appointment of teachers from other branches as Special Education teachers. A person receiving a 4-week course can be a teacher. Can a teacher receiving a 4-week course be an engineer or a doctor?</li> </ul>
Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Necessary changes related to the programs should be made for teacher candidates to work in sub-areas of the area to meet the changes in the subject-areas.</li> <li>• Elementary and high school teachers can be assigned having participated in graduate courses.</li> <li>• University graduates from other areas can learn necessary knowledge and skills about Special Education through courses provided by academics in appropriate courses in appropriate times.</li> <li>• People having graduate degrees should work in the field.</li> <li>• They should be supported by INSET programs organized frequently.</li> <li>• Class teachers and Pre-school teachers could be Special Education teachers by means of two-year certificate programs.</li> </ul>

The studies conducted in Washington put emphasis on the need for the teamwork of class teachers and Special Education teachers in the education of the children with special needs. In this way, one side can compensate the other's weaknesses. For instance, pedagogical knowledge in Special Education is required to be able to educate the children with special needs (Chief State School Officers, 2001). Miller and Porter (1999) suggest that teachers should receive professional support and training during their entire career, because a teacher of Special Education is an individual who either directly or indirectly works with children. Moreover, such teachers should be equipped with all the standards that other teachers have, and in addition they should be capable of developing the skills of the children with special needs, understand them and know them. Cavkaytar (2006) underlines that it is important that the Special Education teachers are graduates of Special Education departments on the one hand, and that the class teachers can be made use of with respect to teaching lessons such as science, mathematics on the other.

## 6. What are the positive and negative aspects of becoming a teacher of Special Education through in-service education?

The participants listed the teaching of Special Education (D) and filling the existing teacher gap in any way (H, M) as the positive aspects of becoming a Special Education teacher by taking an in-service course. The negative aspects they listed are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7.**

*Participants' opinions about the positive and negative sides of being a Special Education teacher through INSET programs*

Categories	Example Expressions
Application Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A four-year training period can not be completed in 2-3 months. Moreover is not possible to train people in the field of Special Education in four weeks.</li> <li>• The current in-service training programs are inadequate in content. Nobody can get sufficient information and become a Special Education teacher through in-service training programs.</li> <li>• The reasons of the Ministry are not valid. The most important drawback is the teachers' limited knowledge and skills in teaching students who need Special Education. As a consequence, the programs objectives can not be attained.</li> <li>• I do not find it appropriate to train teachers from different branches in a short time.</li> </ul>
Education Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In practice, these teachers are not successful.</li> <li>• Sufficient knowledge and skills can not be taught through in-service training programs and teachers assigned in this way can not be productive.</li> <li>• They do not have enough knowledge and skills to meet the needs of children who need Special Education.</li> <li>• In fact, it is important to provide information to people about the area. However, there are more disadvantages than advantages. This situation leads to some undesired consequences from the view points of children, field workers, teachers, and families.</li> <li>• INSET programs should be monitored. Subject - specialists should give lessons. People should not participate in these courses as holidays. Participation should be compulsory and the end - product should be monitored</li> <li>• The time period is very poor. Teachers are not sufficient to provide these services and they should frequently participate in these INSET programs.</li> </ul>

Participant N pointed to another aching problem, that is, the state of the in-service education process, whereby the courses are taught by extra-field professionals or by individuals with improper levels of knowledge and skills. However, the task of teacher education is entrusted

to the Higher Education Board and hence to universities in Turkey. Participant N underlines that, although Turkish universities have many professional teaching members in the field, it is questionable to entrust such a serious task to ordinary people and allow them to guide people.

**7. Do you think your graduates have sufficient knowledge of the field and sufficient practical knowledge? If not, in which areas they must improve themselves? What must be done for this?**

All the participants except one think they educate their students with good knowledge of the field in all programs. They state, however, that students have insufficient practical experience. When it comes to implementation, they say that there is a four-day internship for the period of one year, and that before the internship the students can also make contact with the volunteers with special needs in the Special Education schools. However, they note that most of the students are not willing to attend out-of-the-class activities to read the related publications for their self-development. They think students must gain more experience in order to be able to have complete and correct knowledge, deal with a higher number of children with special needs, read more and improve themselves, and make more of an effort to work with students and make observations. They also state that the teaching members in the department should guide the students to improve themselves, and assign to them tasks under their supervision.

On the other hand, some participants say that the graduates lack knowledge of the field and practical knowledge, and the important factor leading to such a result is that although Special Education has numerous different dimensions, for example, autism, language developmental disorders, sensual and behavioral disorders, the undergraduate study focuses on only a single area (concept teaching, skills teaching, etc.). In addition, they think proper application of theoretical knowledge may cause problems, and to prevent such problems, a higher number of teaching staff should be assigned. Furthermore, they state that professionals must be educated for children with different Special Education needs, and hence beginning from the third year of undergraduate education, students should select the fields of specialization.

About this subject participant A says the following:

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“I think the field experience of our students is sufficient. However, I believe the time of their field experience is not appropriate as they this course in the second term of their third year. If they would start their experience, it would be more convenient.”

**Table 8.**

*According to the participants who graduated from Special Education departments and information about the application*

Categories	Examples Expressions
Subject knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moreover, in their programs some courses are not in the program even though they should take them as they are about their subject areas. Faculties have no influence on determining the course contents.</li> <li>• In theoretical courses, there should be applications of theoretical subjects covered during the programs.</li> <li>• They have basic knowledge and skills have to think. However, they should be trained during their teaching.</li> <li>• Field graduates are very competent in educating students with serious needs, but they need a little more training in dealing with students whose needs are less serious.</li> <li>• The training is sufficient however, this training can be perceived at different levels by teacher candidates and may be inadequate if not sufficiently understood.</li> <li>• They have enough subject knowledge, but courses on how to educate children with multiple needs could be added to the program.</li> </ul>
Practice knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In practice, there are obvious shortcomings. Graduates observe the unsuccessful examples and practices in their internships. There must be schools where good practices are presented to graduates.</li> <li>• There must be pilot schools and undergraduate students must be trained at these schools and they must practice at these schools.</li> <li>• Because of the inadequacy of practical applications, they have to be supported through visual materials (e.g. video), except from their practice teaching courses during their fourth year, they have to do practice before their fourth year; they have to do practice before their last year.</li> <li>• Our graduates have enough practical knowledge.</li> <li>• But in practice, as there are not enough numbers of schools students do not develop themselves thoroughly in terms of their knowledge about practices and this causes problems. In practice, seeing and visiting different schools, increasing their practice and observation times could be a solution.</li> </ul>

As Sari (2004) states, most school administrators are concerned about the education level of the teachers appointed to their schools, and hence their capability to deliver quality education.

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Some participants in Geiger's (2002) study said that Special Education teachers did not have sufficient level of curricular and pedagogical information. They stressed that this was a very normal situation, because Special Education teachers mostly have knowledge and skills specific to the field.

### 9. What do you think about the appointment of Special Education teachers by means of the Public Personnel Selection Examination (PPSE)?

Even those regarding the PPSE to be necessary find its content unsuitable. They think the content of the PPSE is related with courses not included in the curriculum for the education of children with special needs and this acts as an obstacle for the students (Table 9)

**Table 9.**

*Participants' opinions about Special Education teachers appointed according to the Public Personnel Selection Examination (PPSE) results*

Opinions	f	%
PPSE is necessary	11	52,38
PPSE is not necessary	10	47,62

Among the reasons for their disapproval of the PPSE that the participants also list is the fact that graduates who have a good practical knowledge are not appointed, their knowledge and skills are not measured, and that it is necessary to measure other features. They are also concerned about what will happen if students who do not have the necessary characteristics to become teachers are appointed. They think an interview-based examination could be administered.

About this subject participant A says the following:

I do not think the assignment of all teachers with the current KPSS is not appropriate as it does not measure the competency about the subject area. Even though teachers are required to be competent with in three areas as mentioned in the sources, KPSS measures the intellectual and pedagogic teacher training knowledge of teachers, not their subject area knowledge.

**Table 10.**

*Participants' reasons for their opinions on appointment of Special Education teachers by the PPSE*

Opinions	Reasons
PPSE is necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All teachers should be appointed through interviews apart from the PPSE and this will lead to better solutions.</li> <li>• In addition to these, teachers' must be considered as contracted personnel and their performances must be evaluated and this would be appropriate.</li> <li>• In the legal context, the assessment of Special Education teachers by MoNE with a PPSE prerequisite is quite normal. However, questions must be related to Special Education.</li> <li>• PPSE assesses only general knowledge.</li> <li>• The effects of teachers' knowledge about all areas, and reading about all subject areas and their individual developments will be reflected upon their own expertise.</li> <li>• As the number of graduates will increase in the future, it may be necessary for a selection to be made. Moreover, the PPSE should measure their subject area knowledge.</li> </ul>
Unnecessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their training does not prepare them for the PPSE. Since the PPSE content is not in the curriculum, students are forced to take private courses to learn about these areas.</li> <li>• The PPSE is unnecessary. Being a graduate of this department should be sufficient enough to be appointed.</li> <li>• There are already a lot of people graduated from the subject area willing to work for MoNE, and considering the lack of Special Education teachers, a different solution should be provided.</li> <li>• However, sometimes the exams are necessary to be fair.</li> <li>• The logic behind the PPSE is to eliminate people. Moreover, evaluating Special Education teachers is not the scope of the PPSE</li> <li>• Special Education graduates, those who have shown determination in this subject area, have all the necessary knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• There should be an internship training period. During this period, there should be coordination among teachers, supervisors and the candidate teachers. Each practice should be considered seriously and what is done during this period should be filed and they should be appointed as a teacher superior. This is not learned through administrative work. They should not be appointed to schools as there are not any teachers there.</li> </ul>

## RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The aim of the studies starting in Turkey in the 1950s to train Special Education teachers was to give opportunities to people in need of Special Education to take an active and efficient role in social life and education. These attempts were supported by undergraduate programs,

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certificates and in-service training. Undergraduate programs were set up in order to reach a large group of people with special needs, and as a result, Special Education departments have been opened in different universities. Where the graduates of Special Education program could not meet the demands, in-service training was given to Basic Education teachers or other teachers graduating from other programs. A law about appointment was passed, and from time to time, alterations have been made to this legislation.

The Change on the Ministry of Education Special Education Services Legislation was published in the official gazette numbered 23937 on 18/1/2000 and the 49th article was changed as follows:

“In the case that the demands for Special Education teachers are not met in Special Education institutions, schools and classes, teachers who have graduated from Basic Education programs and who have a masters’ or doctorate degree in Special Education, and teachers who have attended in- service training programs prepared by the Ministry of Education can be appointed to these schools and institutions by the governor to meet the demands for Special Education teacher ([http://eski.turkegitimsen.org.tr/doc/meb\\_Ozel\\_Egitim\\_Hizmetleri\\_Yonetmeliginde\\_Degisiklik\\_Yonetmeligi.doc](http://eski.turkegitimsen.org.tr/doc/meb_Ozel_Egitim_Hizmetleri_Yonetmeliginde_Degisiklik_Yonetmeligi.doc)).

According to this legislation, teachers who have graduated from Special Education programs can work in different institutions and foundations, such as MoNE private schools and special rehabilitation centers, and private education institutions. The results of the research show that almost all the graduates have been employed. However, the employment areas of these teachers seem to be Special Education institutions rather than MoNE. The main reason of this result seems to be the MoNE appointment politics, salaries and PPSE results.

All of the participants thought that Special Education teachers must be Special Education graduates. They gave their responses as follows: that it is a job that must be done after receiving the appropriate education, that the programs have been organized for employment in this area, and that it is a job which requires sacrifice, willingness, patience and expertise.

All of the participants stated that they do not approve of the appointment politics of MoNE, but they also emphasized that there is nothing that can be done about it. On the other hand, this condition may affect the teachers working in this area, students with special needs and their parents as well as it may lead to employment problems for future graduates. In addition to this, there may be problems about the quality of the teachers working in this area in the future. They also think that this practice may harm the children with special needs and their parents.

The participants have stated that the positive side of being a Special Education teacher by attending in- service training programs is that the definition of Special Education is taught and that the present lack of teachers will be met. The disadvantageous side of this is that the length of in- service training program is not sufficient for the training of Special Education teachers; and since the candidate teachers do not have enough information about the children in need of Special Education, they do not know how to treat and educate these children.

The participants stated that the Special Education teachers they have educated may be qualified in the theoretical aspects of the profession, but may be incompetent in the practical aspects. In addition, the fact that the Special Education program is their minor area may lead to insufficient knowledge in some aspects. Moreover, some of the participants have stated that they do not approve of the content of the PPSE because it does not fit with the Special Education program.

While teacher training programs for qualified Special Education teachers, programs and politics on this area have an important role, it is also important to continue to educate oneself through on-going learning through life (Carlson, Lee & Schroll, 2004).

Generally, the participants have stated that the most appropriate candidates for Special Education teaching are graduates from Special Education teaching programs. In addition, they also think that the teachers who have graduated from Special Education teaching programs may have some inadequacies, but that they may be eradicated through in-service training programs. However, in this research none of the participants stated that it would be appropriate for the teachers who have graduated from Basic Education programs or other

programs to work in the field of Special Education. Research and remarks on this area show that there are similarities and differences between Special Education programs and Basic Education programs. According to the report of the Special Education sub-commission, (Chief State School Officers, Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium INTASC Special Education Sub-Committee, 2001), both Special Education and Basic Education teachers;

1. Can give education on general subjects such as Maths, English, Fine-Arts, Science, and Social Sciences. Special Education teachers have an extensive curriculum and content information on areas such as orientation and movement skills, transportation means, self-protection skills, employment skills, functional and independent existence skills, motor skills, social behavior skills, communicative skills, emotional and social development.
2. Both the teacher groups are competent in how to complete their students' information deficiency in an efficient way and how to teach better. This means they are competent in teaching and evaluation strategies. They create a positive teaching environment, they motivate their students and they cooperate with the students' parents and communicate with their students. However, Special Education teachers know how to behave and make arrangements in special situations by using widely accepted resources and supplementary technology to support the students' learning activities.
3. Both the teacher groups have personal information about their students' learning difficulties and needs, backgrounds, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Because Special Education teachers are specialized in special handicaps, they are better at meeting the disabled students' personal unique needs in the teaching process.
4. Both teacher groups have adequate information on Special Education politics and legal regulations. However, Special Education teachers work on the disabled students' needs to reach their educational goals and have more extensive information on how to teach to disabled students. They are in cooperation with the disabled student's family, they know the effects and limits of the teaching strategies, they know that each student and his/her family have unique situations and work according to these conditions and solve problems. When the student needs other services such as speech therapy or occupational therapy, they lead the student and his/her family.

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The findings of this research conclude that it is not appropriate to appoint teachers who have not graduated from Special Education programs as Special Education teachers. This is in parallel with the current literature. However, Special Education teachers need to work with Basic Education teachers in cooperation for educational and occupational competency (Bouck, 2007)

According to the results of the research, the following can be suggested:

1. Special Education teachers must be training in Special Education areas.
2. Special Education teachers must take in-service training in regular periods through their work life.
3. If classroom teachers take teacher training programs like these, their undergraduate programs should be rearranged and studies should be conducted in collateral fields.

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## Genişletilmiş Özet

*Giriş:* Cumhuriyetin kuruluşundan itibaren her alanda olduğu gibi özel eğitim alanında da öğretmen ihtiyacı farklı şekillerde karşılanmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu talebin özel eğitim öğretmenliğinin mezunlarından karşılanamaması ve farklı yollarla öğretmen talebinin karşılanması “özel eğitim öğretmeni kimdir?” Sorusunu gündeme getirmektedir. Miller ve Porter (1999) özel eğitim öğretmenini özel eğitime muhtaç çocuklarla doğrudan ya da dolaylı olarak çalışan kişiler, özel eğitime muhtaçlarla ilişkilerinde bilgi, beceri ve anlama düzeyinde diğer öğretmenlerden daha farklı bir rol üstlenebilenlerdir” diyerek cevaplamaktadırlar. Amerika’da İş İstatistikleri bürosunun (2009) özel eğitim öğretmeni tanımı “özel eğitim öğretmeni çeşitli engelleri olan gençlerle ve çocuklarla çalışan kişidir” şeklindedir. Bu tanım ülkeden ülkeye hatta kurumdan kuruma göre değişiklik göstermesine rağmen özel eğitimin amaçları doğrultusunda bu alanda çalışacak kişinin başka bir ifade ile özel eğitim öğretmenin bu alanda eğitim alması ve bu alanda çalışmayı sürdürmesi gerekmektedir. Ancak uygulamalara bakıldığında alanda istihdam edilenlerin bir bölümünün özel eğitim öğretmenliklerinden mezun olmadıkları görülmektedir. Farklı alanlardan mezun olup özel eğitim öğretmeni olarak istihdam edilen bu öğretmenlerin pek çok sorunla karşı karşıya kaldıkları da görülmektedir.

Bu nedenle bu çalışmanın amacı “Özel eğitim bölümü öğretim elemanlarının özel eğitim öğretmeni olarak istihdam edilenlere ilişkin görüşlerinin” belirlenmesidir. Araştırmacı tarafından çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda hazırlanan ve geliştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formunda yer alan aşağıdaki 8 soru özel eğitim bölümü öğretim elemanlarına sorulmuştur.

1. Özel eğitim bölümünden mezun olan öğrenciler için istihdam alanları nelerdir?
2. Özel eğitim bölümünden mezun olan öğrencilerin istihdam oranları nelerdir?
3. Sizce kimler özel eğitim öğretmeni olmalıdır? Neden?
4. MEB’ nın özel eğitim öğretmeni atama konusunda izlediği politikalara ilişkin görüşleriniz nelerdir? (-Alan dışı öğretmen atama; - Hizmet içi eğitim yoluyla atama; - Alan öğretmeni)
5. Özel eğitim öğretmeni olarak başka branşlardan mezun olanlarında atanması konusunda ki görüşleriniz nelerdir?
6. Hizmetiçi eğitim kursları ile özel eğitim öğretmeni olmanın sizce olumlu ve sakıncalı yanları nelerdir?
7. Sizce mezunlarınız yeterli derecede alan ve uygulama bilgisine sahipler mi? Eğer değilse eksiklikler nelerdir? Bu eksiklikleri gidermek için neler yapılmalıdır?
8. Özel eğitim öğretmenlerinin de Kamu Personeli Seçme Sınavı (KPSS) ile atanması konusunda düşünceleriniz nelerdir?

*Yöntem:* Toplam 10 üniversitede (Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi, Anadolu Üniversitesi, Ankara Üniversitesi, Erciyes Üniversitesi, Gazi Üniversitesi, Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi, Marmara Üniversitesi, 19 Mayıs Üniversitesi, Sakarya Üniversitesi ve Selçuk Üniversitesi) özel eğitim bölümü aktif olarak bulunmaktadır. Üniversitelerin bazılarında sadece bölüm başkanı olarak birer öğretim üyesinin bulunması ya da sadece öğretim görevlisi ve araştırma görevlisi kadrosu dolu olan üniversiteler çalışmanın dışında bırakılmıştır. Bu araştırmanın doctor, 8 % (n= 2); lecturer, 8 (n= 2)%; research assistant doctor 4 % (n= 1); and research assistant, 40 % (n= 10).

genel evrenini Üniversitelerde görev yapan özel eğitim bölümü öğretim elemanları (n=96) oluşturmaktadır. Bu araştırma sırasında araştırma ile ilgili nitel veriler araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış bir görüşme aracı kullanılarak 2007–2008 öğretim yılı bahar döneminde Üniversitelerin Özel Eğitim Bölümünde görev yapan öğretim elemanları (n=25) ile yapılan görüşmelerle toplanmıştır. Araştırmaya katılan öğretim üyelerinin (n= 25) %64'ü (n=16) bayan öğretim üyeleri, % 36'sı (n=8) erkek öğretim üyeleri oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmaya katılan öğretim üyelerinin % 8'i profesör doktor, % 8'i doçent doktor, % 24'ü yardımcı doçent doktor, % 8'i öğretim görevlisi doktor, % 8'i öğretim görevlisi, % 43'ü doktor araştırma görevlisi, % 40'ı araştırma görevlisidir.

*Sonuçlar ve Öneriler:* Bu araştırmadan elde edilen sonuçlardan bazıları şunlardır:

Katılımcıların hepsi kimler özel eğitim öğretmeni olmalıdır sorusuna özel eğitim mezunları özel eğitim öğretmeni olmalıdır diye cevaplamışlardır. Bunun nedenlerini de söyle sıralamışlardır: bir eğitim sonucunda yapılacak bir meslek olması, eğitim programları bu alanda çalışmak üzere düzenlenmiş olması, yapılan işin özveri, istek ve sabır gerektirmesi, uzmanlık gerektirmesi gibi.

Katılımcıların tamamı MEB'nin atama politikalarını uygun bulmadıklarını belirtmiş ancak yapılacak bir şeyin olmadığını da vurgulamışlardır. Diğer yandan bu durumun alanda çalışanları, öğrencileri ve aileleri etkileyeceği gibi yeni mezun olacaklarında istihdam sıkıntısı çekeceğini düşündürmektedir. Ayrıca bir süre sonra alanda çalışanların niteliği ile ilgili sıkıntılarda yaşanabilir diye düşünülmektedir. Bu uygulamanın özel gereksinimli çocuk ve ailelerin zarar görmesine neden olabileceğini düşünmektedirler.

Katılımcılar hizmet içi eğitim kursları ile özel eğitim öğretmeni olmanın olumlu yanlarından biri olarak özel eğitimin tanımının öğretilmesi, diğeri ise mevcut öğretmen açığının bir şekilde kapatması şeklinde görüş bildirmişlerdir. Sakıncalı yanları ise hizmet içi eğitimlerin sürelerinin özel eğitim öğretmeni olarak yetişmeleri için yeterli olmaması, özel eğitime muhtaç çocukları tanımadıkları için nasıl davranacaklarını, nasıl eğitim vereceklerini bilememeleri söylenebilir.

Katılımcılar yetiştirdikleri özel eğitim öğretmenlerinin teorik olarak yeterli olduğunu ancak uygulamada eksikliklerinin olabileceğini ifade etmişlerdir. Bunun yanında özel eğitim alanında alt dallarının da olması alan bilgilerinin bazı noktalarda eksik olmasına neden olduğunu da vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca katılımcılar KPSS sınavının içeriğinin programla uyumlu olmaması nedeniyle uygun bulmuyorlar.

Genel olarak bakıldığında katılımcılar özel eğitim öğretmenliğine en uygun adayların yine özel eğitim bölümlerinden mezun olanların olduğu sonucuna ulaşmaktadırlar. Ayrıca bu bölümlerden de mezun olanların eksikliklerinin olabileceğini ama bu eksikliklerin hizmet içi eğitimlerle karşılanabileceği düşünülmektedir. Ancak bu çalışma da katılımcıların hiç bir şekilde sınıf öğretmenlerinin ya da başka alanlardan mezun olanların bu alanda öğretmenlik yapmasını uygun bulmadıkları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Bu araştırmanın sonuçları ışığında ve literatür dikkate alındığında özel eğitim bölümlerinden mezun olmayanların özel eğitim öğretmeni olarak atanması uygun gözükmemektedir. Ancak sınıf öğretmenleri ile koordineli çalışması da öğretimsel ve mesleki tecrübeler açısından gereklidir (Bouck, 2007).

Sezgin Nartgün, Ş. (2010). Perceptions of special education academic staff: Who should be employed as special education teachers? *International Journal of Human Sciences* [Online]. 7:1. Available: <http://www.insanbilimleri.com/en>

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Bu bulgular ışığında aşağıdaki öneriler geliştirilebilir:

1. Özel eğitim öğretmenleri mutlaka alandan yetiştirilmelidir.
2. Özel eğitim öğretmenleri hizmetleri süresince belli aralıklarla hizmet içi eğitime tabi tutulmalıdır.
3. Sınıf öğretmenlerine böyle formasyon yüklenecekse lisans eğitim programları yeniden düzenlenerek yan alan çalışmaları yapılmalıdır.