



# An Investigation of Psychological Counselling and Guidance Department Students' Perceptions of Inclusive Education Related Competence

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## Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author EE designed the study. Authors CA and EE performed the statistical analysis. Author CA managed the analyses of the study. Author EE wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors EE and CA managed the literature searches and edited the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present research is investigating psychological counseling and guidance department students' perceptions of their inclusive education related competence. The work group of the present research consists of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduate students, who studied at Konya Necmettin Erbakan University Ahmet Keleşoğlu Faculty of Education in 2013-2014 academic years. The participants were 152 (92 female and 60 male) who participated in the research voluntarily. The mean age of the participants was 19.51 years (between 18-22 years old) with a standard deviation of 1.61 years. Data were collected via Information Form developed by the researchers and Inclusive Education Questionnaire developed by Aksüt, Battal and Yaldız (2005).

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Collected data were analyzed on SPSS 17.0 software. Descriptive analyses, t-test, ANOVA test, and Tukey test were utilized for data analysis. Inclusive Education Questionnaire consists of 4 sub-dimensions. There are significant differences across class grades and genders in terms of psychological counseling and guidance department students' competence of recognizing individuals who need special education in inclusive education, and competence of implementing methods and techniques used in inclusive education. There aren't significant differences across genders in terms of psychological counselling and guidance department students' knowing and implementing competence of inclusive education principles while there are significant differences across grades. There aren't significant differences across genders in terms of assessment and evaluation competence, while there are significant differences across grades. There are no significant differences across genders in terms of general competence, while there are significant differences across grades.

*Keywords: Inclusive education; counseling and guidance.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Universal Declaration of Human Rights article 26 includes the statement "Everybody has the right to education". People have individual characteristics and competences. Individuals can adapt to their environment and display the behaviors expected from them only through education. The first educational professional formed naturally in teaching-learning relations in teaching [1]. The profession of teaching is defined in National Education Fundamental Law no: 1789 article 43 as "Teaching is a specialized profession that conducts education and related administration tasks on behalf of the state" [2]. Teacher is who guides learning, and enables meaningful learning among students. Learning refers to the behavioral change resulting from learning experiences. The duty of teachers is organizing learning experiences making use of various teaching methods and techniques and evaluating whether terminal behaviors are adopted by students [3].

In order to be able to integrate individuals into society at the end of educational processes, these processes should be designed in the most effective way. And in order to achieve this, educational programs for individuals, who need special education, should be designed in a way that prepares them to social life and develops the skills they need in their daily lives [4].

An important factor for individuals, who have special needs, live independently in social life is the acquisition of the knowledge and skills they need through special education. This can be achieved through special education [5]. Special education refers to the studies conducted for individuals who differ from other individuals who

develop normally in physical, mental, emotional, social and academic aspects [6]. Inclusion, which was coined in 1970s in Scandinavian countries "to provide everybody with equal educational opportunities", then expanded to Europe and America, is an educational result of normalizing principle [7].

In Turkey, students with special needs have been placed in general education classes increasingly since 1983 under the name of inclusion. This application especially became widespread with Legislative Decree on Special Education no: 573 enacted in 1997. The most important factor that effects learning in inclusive education are considered to be the inclusion training provided to teachers. Teachers of inclusion classes meet the needs of the students in their classes, strengthen the communication between students, and enable the social admission of students to the school and the society [8]. Previous studies on the competence of teachers in inclusive education showed that low levels of competence related to inclusive education among teachers result in problems in the education of handicapped and other students who are included in the inclusive education.

### 1.1 The Importance of Guidance Counselor Teachers in Inclusive Education

According to Onur [9] among the regulating, developing, programming and consulting tasks of psychological guidance counselor teachers at school are; increasing motivation among students in performing their tasks, maximizing their efforts, raising awareness among classroom teachers about inclusion implementations and

providing necessary information about handicap groups so to develop their related equipment, making students understand the differences between them in the social interaction provided by the inclusion, providing assistance in the technical implementations in tolerating the possible behavioral problems by the handicapped students in the normal classes, setting a positive equation between handicapped and normal students, conducting orientation studies to prevent the occurrence of a basis for perception of discrimination, providing support for Individualized Education Program implementation by following the academic development and defining the proficiency levels of handicapped students through tests, preparing the normal classroom during inclusion implementations, organizing the environment in the classroom, taking necessary measures to prevent disorder for handicapped students in the normal classrooms, helping normal classroom teachers with acquiring necessary knowledge and skills for the field of special education, providing resources, raising awareness on the psychological dimension of the problem, contributing to the independence that handicapped students will gain through inclusion, normalizing the differences of handicapped students in inclusion implementations, enabling the admission of mental differences for a more democratic and holistic perspectives, maximizing the positive effects of handicapped students on normal students in terms of democracy and human rights, coordinating the arrangements for to maximum participation of handicapped students in the activities in the classroom and school in the framework of equal opportunities during the inclusion of handicapped students, programming the activities and implementations in increasing and sharing of social and emotional interaction resulting from the meeting of handicapped and normal students at a common ground and implementing the studies to be conducted to prevent the isolation of handicapped students in the classroom by conducting emotional integration activities in the classroom. In this context, the greatest responsibility during whole education life of inclusion students falls to psychological guidance counselor teachers.

### **1.2 Research Objective**

The purpose of the present research is investigating the inclusive education related competence of pre-service guidance counselor,

who studies psychological counseling and guidance department.

### **1.3 Sub Objectives**

1. Do pre-service guidance counselor teachers' competences of recognizing individuals who need special education vary by gender and grade?
2. Do pre-service guidance counselor teachers' competences of implementing methods and techniques used in inclusive education vary by gender and grade?
3. Do pre-service guidance counselor teachers' competences of knowing and implementing inclusive education principles vary by gender and grade?
4. Do pre-service guidance counselor teachers' competences of assessment and evaluation vary by gender and grade?
5. Do pre-service guidance counselor teachers' general competences of inclusive education vary by gender and grade?

## **2. METHODS**

This section presents information about the research model, universe and sample, instrument and data analysis techniques.

### **2.1 Research Model and Participants**

The present research is structured in accordance with descriptive survey model. The reason for adopting survey model is that "Survey model is a research approach that aims at describing a situation, which existed in the past, or still exists". The purpose of the present research, which utilizes general survey models, is to evaluate the variation levels of two or more variables together. Additionally, comparative relational descriptions are utilized in the analysis of the data to be obtained through data collection tools [10].

The universe of the present research consists of pre-service teachers who studies at 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades of Necmettin Erbakan University, Ahmet Keleşoğlu Faculty of Education, department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance in 2013-2014 academic year.

The sample of the present research was selected through purposive sampling method. Samples selected though this sampling method consists of individuals, from who researchers believe that

they can find the answers to the problem of their research [11]. "In purposive sampling method, the researchers define the units to be included in the sample based on their previous knowledge, experiences and observations, in accordance with the purpose of their research" [12]. The sample of the present research consists of students from four grades of the department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance at the faculty of education. The participants were 152 (92 female and 60 male) who participated in the research voluntarily. The mean age of the participants was 19.51 years (between 18-22 years old) with a standard deviation of 1.61 years.

## 2.2 Instrument

### 2.2.1 Inclusive education questionnaire

In order to collect data related to the pre-service teachers' perspectives of inclusive education, "Inclusive Education Questionnaire" developed by Aksüt, Battal and Yaldı [13] was utilized. The questionnaire was first implemented on 202 pre-service teachers who studied at 4th grade of Afyon Kocatepe University, Uşak Faculty of Education, Department of Classroom Teaching. The questionnaire is 5-point likert type scale. In this 5-point likert type scale, the items in the questionnaire are scores from 1 to 5 points (1- "Completely Disagree", 2-"Agree a little", 3-"Agree", 4-" Agree very much", 5-"Completely Agree"). "1" point refers to the lowest score to be obtained from the questionnaire and indicates the most negative attitude toward the item. "5" points from the questionnaire refer to the highest score to be obtained from the questionnaire and indicate the most positive attitude toward the item. High scores obtained from questionnaire show that individuals perceive themselves as competent in inclusive education, while low scores show that individuals perceive themselves as not competent enough. The highest score from the questionnaire is 140 and the lowest is 28. The scale consists of 28 items and four sub-dimensions. Of these 28 items, 3 are intended for measuring participating pre-service teachers' competence of recognizing the individuals who need special education, 12 items are intended for measuring detecting the competence of knowing and implementing methods and techniques used in inclusive education, 9 items are intended for measuring competence of knowing and implementing inclusive education principles, and 4 items are intended for measuring competence

of assessment and evaluation. Reliability (internal consistency) coefficients for subscales of the SS were calculated as .85, .80, and .65 respectively [4].

## 2.3 Data Analysis

SPSS 17.0 was used for data analysis. Descriptive analyses, t-test, ANOVA test, and Tukey test were utilized for data analysis.

## 3. RESULTS

Distribution of competence of recognizing individuals who need special education of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance by gender and grade and their relation indicators are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1. Competence of recognizing individuals who need special education of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance (according to gender)**

	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t	p
Female	92	10.40	1.62	-2.53	.01*
Male	60	11.08	1.62		

According to the data presented in Table 1, mean value for female students is 10.40; and mean value for male students in 11.08. T test value for sub-test is -2.531, and p value is calculated as 0.01. At  $p < .01$  significance level, there is a significant difference across genders in terms of competence of recognizing individuals who need special education.

According to Table 2, f value for sub-test is 9.47 and p value is .00. At  $p < .01$  significance level, there are significant differences across class grades in terms of competence of recognizing individuals who need special education. According to Tukey test conducted to find out the sources of differences, there are significant relations between 1-2, 1-3 and 1-4 groups.

Distribution of competence of implementing methods and techniques used in inclusive education of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance by gender and grade and their relation indicators are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

**Table 2. Competence of recognizing individuals who need special education of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance (According to grade)**

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p	intergroup significance
Between groups	66.28	3				1-2,
Within groups	345.27	148	22.09	9.47	.00	1-3, 1-4

**Table 3. Competence of implementing methods and techniques used in inclusive education of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance (According to gender)**

	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t	p
Female	92	42.70	5.95		
Male	60	44.82	6.12	-2.12	.03

According to the data presented in Table 3, mean value for female students is 42.70; and mean value for male students in 44.82. T test value for sub-test is -2.12, and p value is calculated as .03. At  $p < .05$  significance level, there is a significant difference across genders in terms of competence of implementing methods and techniques used in inclusive education.

According to Table 4, f value for sub-test is 4.90 and p value is .00. At  $p < .01$  significance level, there are significant differences across class grades in terms of competence of implementing methods and techniques used in inclusive education. According to Tukey test conducted to find out the sources of differences, there are significant relations between 1-4, and 2-4 groups.

Distribution of competence of knowing and implementing inclusive education principles of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance by gender and grade and their relation indicators are presented in Tables 5 and 6.

**Table 4. Competence of implementing methods and techniques used in inclusive education of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance (According to grade)**

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Intergroup significance
Between groups	505.72	3				1-4,
Within groups	5088.12	148	168.57	4,90	,00	2-4

According to the data presented in Table 5, mean value for female students is 37.04; and mean value for male students in 36.56. T test value for sub-test is 0.82, and p value is calculated as .42. At  $p < .05$  significance level, there isn't a significant difference across genders in terms of competence of knowing and implementing inclusive education principles.

According to Table 6, f value for sub-test is 3.00 and p value is .03. At  $p < .05$  significance level, there are significant differences across class grades in terms of competence of knowing and implementing inclusive education principles. According to Tukey test conducted to find out the sources of differences, there are significant relations between 1-3 groups.

Distribution of competence of assessment and evaluation of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance by gender and grade and their relation indicators are presented in Tables 7 and 8.

According to the data presented in Table 7, mean value for female students is 15.27; and mean value for male students in 14.90. T test value for sub-test is 1.16, and p value is calculated as .24. At  $p < .05$  significance level, there isn't a significant difference across genders in terms of competence of assessment and evaluation.

According to ANOVA test results presented in Table 8, f value for sub-test is 3.21 and p value is .03. At  $p < .05$  significance level, there are significant differences across class grades in

terms of competence assessment and evaluation. According to Tukey test conducted to find out the sources of differences, there are significant relations between 2-3 groups.

Distribution of general competence of inclusive education of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance by gender and grade and their relation indicators are presented in Tables 9 and 10.

According to t test results presented in Table 9, mean value for female students is 105.41; and mean value for male students in 107.25. T test value for sub-test is -1.25, and p value is calculated as 0.21. At  $p < .05$  significance level, there isn't a significant difference across genders

in terms of competence of recognizing individuals who need special education.

**Table 5. Competence of knowing and implementing inclusive education principles of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance (According to gender)**

	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t	p
Female	92	37.04	3.78	.82	.42
Male	60	36.56	3.44		

According to ANOVA test results presented in Table 10, f value for sub-test is 4.15 and p value is 0.00. At  $p < .01$  significance level, there are

**Table 6. Competence of knowing and implementing inclusive education principles of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance (According to grade)**

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Intergroup significance
Between groups	115.15	3	38.38	3,00	,03	1-3
Within groups	1890.37	148				

**Table 7. Competence of assessment and evaluation of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance (According to gender)**

	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t	p
Female	92	15.27	1.93	1.16	.24
Male	60	14.90	1.91		

**Table 8. Competence of assessment and evaluation of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance (According to grade)**

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Intergroup significance
Between groups	34.11	3	11.37	3.21	.03	2-3
Within groups	524.52	148				

**Table 9. General competence of inclusive education of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance (According to gender)**

	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t	p
Female	92	105.41	9.11	-1.25	.21
Male	60	107.35	9.63		

**Table 10. General competence of inclusive education of pre-service teachers who study at the department of psychological counseling and guidance (According to grade)**

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Intergroup significance
Between groups	1022.38	3	340.79	4,15	,00	1-3, 1-4
Within groups	12147.82	148				

significant differences across class grades in terms of competence assessment and evaluation. According to tukey test conducted to find out the sources of differences, there are significant relations between 1-3 and 1-4 groups.

#### **4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Conclusions reached based on the findings presented in the previous section, and the discussion and suggestions developed accordingly are presented in this section.

The present research aimed at detecting pre-service teachers' competence related to inclusive education. In the light of the findings obtained with this purpose, the following conclusions related to the sub-problems of the present research are obtained: In terms of the competence of recognizing individuals who need special education, there are significant differences across genders and between 1-2, 1-3 and 1-4 grades. There significant differences across genders and 1-4 and 2-4 grades in terms of competence of implementing techniques. There is a significant difference between 1-3 grades, while there isn't a significant difference across genders in terms of competence of knowing and implementing inclusive education principles. There is a significant difference between 2-3 grades, while there isn't a significant difference across genders in terms of competence of assessment and evaluation. There is a significant difference between 1-3 and 1-4 grades, while there isn't a significant difference across genders in terms of general competence related to inclusive education.

According to the findings, there are significant differences between female and male pre-service teachers' competence of recognizing individuals who need special education and competence of implementing methods and techniques used in inclusive education. There aren't significant differences across genders in terms of competence of knowing and implementing inclusive education principles and competence of assessment and evaluation. There similar studies in the literature with findings in agreement with the findings of the present research. In their studies, Bek et al. [14]. Alver et al. [15]. Sarı and Bozgeyikli [16]. Şahbaz and Kalay [17]. found that gender variable doesn't have a significant effect on pre-service teachers' competence related to inclusive education. [14,15,16,17]. The related literature also involves some studies, the findings of which aren't in

agreement with the findings of the present research. Camadan [18] found that male pre-service teachers' competence related to inclusive education was higher than female students. On the other hand, Güven and Çelik [19]. reported that female pre-service teachers' competence related to inclusive education was higher [19].

According to the findings of the present research, there are significant differences between 1<sup>st</sup> grade pre-service teachers and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade pre-service teachers in terms of "Competence of Recognizing Individuals who Need Special Education" of pre-service teachers who studied at the department of psychological counselling and guidance. It is known that pre-service teacher who didn't get inclusive education course at psychological counseling and guidance undergraduate education have low levels of inclusive education related competence. Finding of the researchers conducted by Sarı and Bozgeyikli [16] and Mağden and Avcı [20] are also in agreement with this finding of the present research.

The following suggestions are presented for further applications and studies in accordance with the findings of the present research.

1. Undergraduate education offered for pre-service teachers should cover more special education related courses with higher credits.
2. Undergraduate education for pre-service teachers can include inclusive education related courses.
3. Teaching practice of pre-service teachers can be conducted at schools with inclusion students.

#### **COMPETING INTERESTS**

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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