

## Research Article

# Examination of studies conducted with psychological counselors on gifted students in Türkiye

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## Article Info

**Received:** 6 April 2024

**Accepted:** 26 June 2024

**Online:** 30 June 2024

## Keywords

Gifted student

Psychological counselor and guidance

Science and Art Center (SAC)

Systematic review

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the studies conducted with psychological counselors on gifted students in Türkiye. Since the studies on the identification and support of gifted students are based on a recent history, it is important to look at the studies conducted with psychological counselors in this field in general and to make suggestions by examining the topics studied. The research was conducted with document analysis method, one of the qualitative research methods. Articles and theses on psychological counselors and gifted students were examined. Purposive sampling was used in the research. The theses and dissertations were analyzed in Council of Higher Education Thesis Center database and articles were analyzed in The National Academic Network and Information Centre databases in Turkish. The terms "giftedness", "special talent", "psychological counselor", "guidance counselor" and "Science and Art Center"<sup>3</sup> were used in the research. As a result of the research, considering the inclusion criteria, 6 articles and 7 theses conducted between 2013 and 2023 were determined as the study group. The studies were examined within the framework of the year of publication, thesis type, research model, and the topics covered in the studies. The results of the study were discussed in the light of the literature and recommendations were made.

## To cite this article:

Sargin, N., & Demirelli, M.A. (2024). Examination of studies conducted with psychological counselors on gifted students in Türkiye. *Journal of Gifted Education and Creativity*, 11(2), 53-61. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12547460>

## Introduction

The word "guidance" literally means "guide" (Turkish Language Institution, 2020). Guidance has an important place in the individual's self-knowledge and understanding, in recognizing his/her competencies and deficiencies. psychological counseling is one of the guidance services (Erkan, 2014). Guidance and psychological counseling is seen as an integral part of education and necessary steps have been taken to ensure that students can benefit from this service in schools.

The American Counseling Association views counseling as a service area that empowers individuals and families to achieve mental health, health, education and career goals. Girgin (2014) stated that psychological counseling services are important for individuals to realize their current potential and realize themselves. Psychological counseling helps people to know and understand themselves and the problems they face solving problems, maintaining a state of balance in the social and individual sense and promoting one's development and is the service provided by professionals to support adaptation (Yeşilyaprak, 2009).

One of the working areas of psychological counselors is schools. The aims of school counseling services are to ensure

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3 Science and Art Centers are institutions that provide support education to gifted students in Türkiye.

that students are supported in the areas of educational, social, personal and career development (Güven, 2019). Counselors provide counseling services in different institutions and settings and may encounter difficulties when working with different clients. One of these institutions is private education institutions Counselors can choose intervention methods that are appropriate for their needs, as clients have different reactions to different events and situations they may experience (Eryilmaz & Bek, 2019). Individuals who differ from their peers in terms of individual and developmental characteristics and who need to be supported in this sense are considered within the scope of special education; Students who need to be supported in the field of special education should benefit from guidance and psychological counseling services. (Ministry of National Education, 2018). Since gifted students differ from their peers in cognitive, emotional, etc. areas, they are also considered within the scope of special education.

Although it is known that gifted individuals exist in every society, it is also known that some gifted individuals are not identified. It is an accepted fact that gifted students are an important asset for the society and the state in which they live (Levent, 2012).

It is thought that gifted individuals constitute 2% of the total population (Ataman, 2012). The fact that the rate of gifted individuals is very low compared to the total population may cause some difficulties in both identifying and supporting the development of gifted individuals (Bildiren & Kargı, 2019; Karadağ & Demirtaş, 2022).

While gifted students were sent abroad and supported in the early 1930s, it is observed that Anatolian and Science High Schools have started to be used in this sense since the beginning of the 1990s (Çitil, 2018). In 1995, the Ministry of National Education decided to open Science and Art Centers (SAC) and to support and develop gifted students in these schools (Keskin et al., 2013).

It is important that teachers who will work in SACs have competence in supporting gifted students (Chan, 2001; Çelikten, 2017; Gagne, 2010). Appointments to SACs are made by the Ministry of National Education, and teacher appointments are made by looking at the annex-1, annex-2 and annex-3 tables; the annex-1 table includes the staff-branch needs in SACs, the annex-2 table includes the certificates, participation certificates, project studies, etc. of the teachers who will apply, and the annex-3 table includes the oral exam evaluation criteria for the applications of the teachers (Ministry of National Education, 2023).

There are teachers working in different branches in SACs. One of these branches is the field of counseling. While working in SACs, guidance counselors are expected to conduct studies to support the social emotional development of gifted students as well as career development and guidance needs of gifted students (Güçyeter, 2018; Wood & Laycraft, 2000).

The competencies that teachers who will apply to SACs with the Appendix-2 form should have are also important in the context of guidance counselors. The ability of counselors to use student, parent, administration and teacher factors effectively and efficiently for students while working with gifted students is necessary for the development of students who benefit from the institution (Birolet al., 2023).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The aim of this study is to systematically examine the studies conducted with psychological counselors on gifted students in Türkiye. In this context, it is important to evaluate the psychological counseling and guidance activities in science and art centers from the perspective of psychological counselors and to address the perspectives of psychological counselors on SACs and gifted students.

Along with the general purpose of the study, the following sub-objectives were addressed:

- How are the studies conducted with psychological counselors on gifted students in Türkiye distributed according to the type of research?
- How are the studies conducted with psychological counselors on gifted students in Türkiye distributed between the years 2013-2023?
- Which research methods were used in the studies conducted with psychological counselors on gifted students in Türkiye?
- What are the sample sizes in the studies conducted with psychological counselors on gifted students in

Türkiye?

- Which measurement tools were used in the studies conducted with psychological counselors on gifted students in Türkiye?
- What is the distribution of the keywords used in the studies conducted with psychological counselors on gifted students?

## Method

### Research Design

The study was conducted with document analysis method, one of the qualitative research types. Document analysis method is a method based on the examination of written materials about the situations or phenomena to be investigated (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018). In this context, the studies to be included in the study were determined by scanning the Council of Higher Education Thesis Center and The National Academic Network and Information Centre databases by considering various inclusion criteria.

### Documents

A structured literature review was conducted to identify the studies to be examined within the scope of the study. The articles and theses examined within the scope of the research were examined from The National Academic Network and Information Centre and Council of Higher Education Thesis Center databases. The studies included in the research were searched in Turkish to cover the period between October-2023 and November-2023. The search terms "SAC", "giftedness", "giftedness", "special ability", "psychological counselor" and "guidance counselor" were used to access the studies. As a result of the literature review, a total of 378 studies were reached and 6 research articles and 7 postgraduate theses were included in the study.

### Analysis

While analyzing the studies, inclusion and exclusion criteria were determined for articles and theses. Articles and theses were evaluated by content analysis. In addition, the studies were evaluated according to their types, years, sample sizes, keywords used in the studies and explained in the findings section.

## Findings

In this section, the results of the analysis of the studies included in the research in line with the purpose and sub-purposes will be presented

### Research type

The types of studies conducted with school counselors in Türkiye are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Distribution of studies on on the work carried out with psychological counselors on gifted and talented students according to research type

Type of Study	f	%
Graduate Thesis	7	53,84
Research Article	6	46,16

When Table 1 is examined, it is observed that 53.84% of the studies conducted with psychological counselors on gifted students in Türkiye are graduate theses and 46.16% are research articles.

### Distribution of studies by year

**Table 1.** Distribution of studies on the work carried out with psychological counselors on gifted and talented students by years

By years	Article studies	Master's theses	Doctoral theses	f	%
2013				0	0
2014				0	0
2015			1	1	%7,6
2016	1	1		2	%15,3
2017				0	0
2018	1			1	%7,6
2019		1		1	%7,6
2020	2			2	%15,3
2021				0	0
2022		2		2	%15,3
2023	2	2		4	%30,7
<b>Total</b>	6	6	1	13	

When Table 2 is examined, it is observed that almost half of the studies conducted with psychological counselors on gifted students were conducted in 2022-2023. In addition, one of the postgraduate studies was a doctorate, and the remaining six studies were at the master's level. It is observed that no studies were carried out in 2013-2014-2017 and 2020.

### Research methods used in studies

**Table 3.** Research methods used in the studies

Research methodology	Article	Master Thesis	PhD thesis	f	%
Qualitative/Fact Science	2	3		5	%38,4
Qualitative/Case Study	2			2	%15,3
Quantitative/ General Survey (descriptive)	1	2		3	%23
Qualitative/Document Analysis	1			1	%7,6
Mixed Method		1	1	2	%15,3
<b>Total</b>	6	6	1	13	

When Table 3 is examined, it is observed that more than half of the studies are qualitative studies and the most preferred design among qualitative studies is phenomenology. It is seen that the proportion of quantitative studies is less than a quarter of the studies and there are two mixed design studies.

### Sample size of studies

**Table 4.** Analysis of studies according to sample size

Sample Size	Article	Thesis	f	%
0-10	3	2	5	%38,4
11-100	2	2	4	%30,7
101-300		3	3	%23

When Table 4 is analyzed, it is observed that more than half of the sample sizes of the studies are 100 and below. It is seen that less than a quarter of the studies are in the range of 101-300.

### Measurement tools used

**Table 5.** Tools used in the studies

Tools used	Thesis studies	Article studies	f
Personal Information Form	6	5	11
Semi-structured form	5	4	9
Counselors' Level of Knowledge Scale on Giftedness (Altun, 2015)	2		2
Counselors' Special Education Self-Efficacy Scale (Aksoy & Diken, 2009)	1		1
Vocational Guidance Services Evaluation Questionnaire (15 questions for guidance counselors)	1		1
Research evaluation form 1 1		1	1
Open-ended questionnaire form		1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>26</b>

When Table 5 is examined, it is observed that both qualitative and quantitative data tools were used in the studies. It is seen that personal information form and semi-structured forms were mostly used in the studies and 3 scales, 2 questionnaires and 1 research evaluation form were used.

### Topics Covered in the Studies

**Table 6.** Topics covered in the studies

Subjects studied	Article	Thesis	f
Career and Vocational Guidance for the Gifted and Talented		3	3
Psychological Counseling Needs of Gifted Students		1	1
Psychological Counselors' Perceptions of Special Education Self-Efficacy	1	4	5
Content Adequacy of PCG Undergraduate Programs Related to Students with Special Abilities	1		1
Functionality of Science and Art Centers		1	1
Student Selection for Science and Art Centers	1		1
Evaluation of the Tests Used to Select Students for Science and Art Centers	1		1
Behavioral Problems and Solutions for Students in Science and Art Centers	1		1
Adequacy of Guidance Services Provided in Science and Art Centers	1	1	2

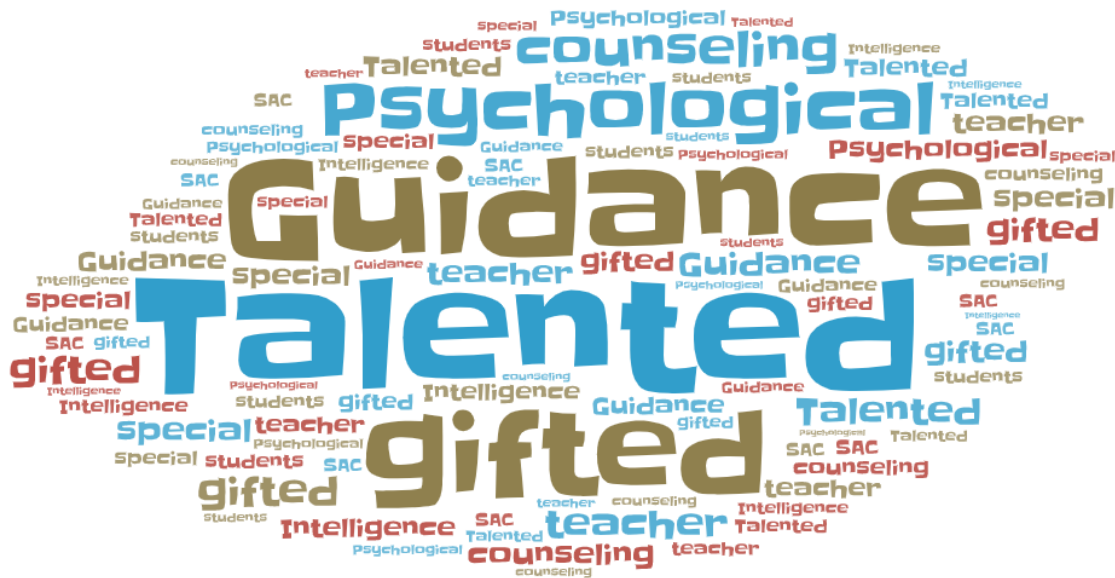
When Table 6 is examined, it is observed that counselors' perceptions of special education self-efficacy and career and vocational guidance offered to students in science and art centers are the most frequently covered topics. In addition, the adequacy of the guidance services provided in SACs, the functionality of SACs, the adequacy of Psychological Counseling and Guidance undergraduate programs in terms of content on special education, the tests used in the process of student selection to SACs, behavioral problems of students in SACs and solution suggestions, and the psychological counseling needs of gifted students have been addressed by the researchers.

## The Most Used Keywords in Research

**Table 7.** Keywords used in research

Words	f
Talented	13
Guidance	12
Gifted	10
Psychological	10
Counseling	8
Teacher	6
Special	5
Intelligence	4
Students	3
SAC	3

When Table 7 is examined, it is observed that the most commonly used keywords in the articles and these selected as a sample within the scope of this research are talented ( $f=13$ ), guidance ( $f=12$ ), gifted ( $f=10$ ), psychological ( $f=10$ ), counseling ( $f=8$ ). The keywords used are shown in Figure 1 with a word cloud visualization.



**Figure 1.** Cloud of the most used words in studies

The word cloud visualization of the words analyzed within the scope of the research is shown in Figure 1. Since the keywords shown in the figure for gifted students studying at SAC show the conceptual pool where the studies on gifted students in the field of psychological counseling and guidance are concentrated, the keywords explained in the studies to be conducted in the field can give an idea for the studies to be conducted.

## Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, the studies conducted with psychological counselors on gifted students were examined. With the increase in the number of SACs, the number of psychological counselors working in SACs has also increased. It is known that the development of gifted individuals in personal-social, career and professional fields is important for the individual, state and society. Psychological counselors can sometimes play an indirect and sometimes a direct role in supporting the personal and social development of gifted students in SACs along with their career and professional development (Güçyeter, 2018; Yeşilyaprak, 2003). Therefore, in this study, it is important to evaluate the studies conducted with psychological counselors

on gifted individuals from various perspectives.

When the studies conducted are considered; It is observed that qualitative research is predominantly preferred and study groups are generally small groups in terms of the number of members. While larger sample groups are observed in quantitative research, the sample size is smaller in qualitative research (Baltacı, 2018). It can be said that qualitative research methods are preferred because evaluation studies with opinions are generally conducted and therefore studies are conducted with small groups.

School counselors generally do not find the vocational guidance activities implemented in SACs sufficient and believe that the programs should be improved (Ünlü Baştuğ, 2019; Şen, 2022; Demir, 2022; Fırat, 2023; Altun & Yazıcı, 2020). Yazıcı and Altun (2016) examined Psychological Counseling and Guidance undergraduate programs and observed that there were no compulsory courses on gifted students in the course content and there were few elective courses.

In the studies examined within the scope of the study, school counselors state that they do not receive sufficient training on gifted students and special education both at undergraduate level and in their working life (Fırat, 2023; Yazıcı & Altun, 2016; Altun, 2015; Güçyeter, 2018). Mavi (2017), in his research on the special education competencies of school counselors, observed that school counselors generally preferred the "undecided" option to the survey questions. Studies on psychological counselors related to gifted students have mainly focused on the competencies of psychological counselors in career counseling and special education (Şen, 2022; Demir, 2022; Fırat, 2023; Yazıcı & Altun, 2016; Güçyeter, 2018; Altun & Yazıcı, 2020). In the studies conducted, the perceptions of school counselors towards their profession were generally high, but their self-efficacy perceptions towards working with gifted students were found to be at medium and low levels (Fırat, 2023; Altun, 2015; Güçyeter, 2018).

The most preferred intervention methods for the psychological counseling needs of gifted students and career counseling intervention studies are individual and group psychological counseling and guidance studies (Ağaya, Akçayır, & Çitil, 2023; Güneş, 2023; Altun & Yazıcı, 2020). Studies conducted with psychological counselors in the context of the functionality of SACs are quite limited. In this sense, the most recent study was conducted by Bulut (2016). Since 2019, no study has been conducted on the intelligence test (ASİS) currently used in the process of student recruitment to SACs. The number of studies conducted with psychological counselors on topics such as tests used in selecting students for SACs, behavioral problems of SACs students and the solutions offered, and teacher recruitment processes for SACs is very limited between 2013-2023.

### Recommendations

The research is a Türkiye-specific study. In this context, studies on psychological counselors and gifted students around the world can be examined. It is observed that the studies conducted are mainly qualitative studies. The number of quantitative studies in this field can also be increased. In the studies conducted, it was observed that the number of people in the sample groups was small. The number of studies with larger sample groups can be increased. In the studies examined, psychological counselors in Türkiye find vocational guidance activities in science and art centers inadequate. In this context, descriptive studies can be conducted with students and parents on the effectiveness of vocational guidance activities implemented in science and art centers. Since it is observed by psychological counselors that the course contents related to gifted students in psychological counseling and guidance undergraduate programs are inadequate, enriching the contents related to gifted students in the course contents of psychological counseling and guidance undergraduate programs can be realized. Since psychological counselors' perceptions of professional self-efficacy are high, but their self-efficacy in working with gifted students is low, skills training can be organized for psychological counselors working in science and art centers in the Ministry of National Education to improve their psychological counseling processes with gifted students.

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