

## THE VIEWS OF STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES OR AUTISM REGARDING THEIR SCHOOL EXPERIENCE AND THEIR PEERS IN INCLUSION

### KAYNAŞTIRMAYA YERLEŞTİRİLEN ZİHİN YETERSİZLİĞİ VEYA OTİSTİK ÖZELLİKLERİ OLAN ÖĞRENCİLERİN OKUL YAŞANTILARI VE AKRANLARIYLA İLİŞKİLERİNE İLİŞKİN GÖRÜŞLERİ

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#### Abstract

This study examines the views of students with autism and intellectual disabilities regarding their school experience and their peers. This research is a qualitative study. A semi structured interview technique was used which was developed by the researcher. The participants were 10 students with intellectual disabilities, 10 students with autism, attending the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> grades of a primary school. Results showed that academically, students with intellectual disabilities had difficulties especially on math and science and they need to be supported and students with autism have difficulties on problem solving, reading and idioms. The students with disabilities are usually alone and not being chosen as a partner in play groups and also labeled as “problem child” however they reported still like their school.

**Key Words:** *Inclusion, autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, peers, school experiences*

#### Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, kaynaştırma eğitimine devam eden zihinsel yetersiz ve otizmlili öğrencilerin okul yaşantıları, arkadaşlık ilişkileri ve öğretim sürecindeki sorunlarıyla ilgili görüşlerini belirlemektir. Bu çalışma nitel yaklaşım kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veriler araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanmış, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Katılımcılar dört, beş ve altıncı sınıfa devam eden 10 öğrenme güçlüğü, 10 otizm tanılı ilköğretim öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. Sonuçlar, öğrenme güçlüğü olan öğrencilerin özellikle matematik ve fen dersini zor bulduklarını ve desteğe gereksinim duyduklarını; otizmlili öğrencilerin ise, okuma, problem çözme, deyimlerde güçlük yaşadıklarını göstermiştir. Öğrenciler, yalnız kaldıklarını, oyunlarda yaşlıları tarafından tercih edilmediklerini ve “problem çocuk” olarak adlandırıldıklarını ama yine de okulu sevdiklerini belirtmişlerdir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Kaynaştırma, otizm spektrum bozuklukları, zihinsel yetersizlik, akranlar, okul deneyimi*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The children with special needs who are physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially different from normal children also have the right of enhancing their capacity to its maximum just like the typically children (Girli & Sencar, 2008). Inclusion is an educational consequence of the "equal educational opportunities for everyone" notion and "normalization" principle which emerged in Scandinavian countries in the 1970's and became common in Europe and the USA (Ozyurek, 1994). From this point of view, inclusion can be defined as "an individual's receiving education in the same class with typically peers which was customized for him/her and given to him with support services instead of being labeled as "visually impaired" or "hearing impaired" etc. and being put into separate classes (Salend, 1998; Sucuoğlu & Kargin, 2006).

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The basic aim of inclusion is trying to integrate children with disabilities with their peers and enhance their interaction. The studies done about integration showed that it improves children's language, positive attitudes, social skills (Gordon, Feldman & Chiriboga, 2005; Osler & Osler, 2002; Terpstra & Tamura, 2008) and increment in independent behaviors (Harrower & Dunlap, 2001). During the integration process, it is determined as peers maintain a positive role model for the individuals' lack of social skills and that is because these children with special needs improve their social skills lot more than the ones who are not included (Batu, S. 2000; Harrower & Dunlap, 2001; Girli & Atasoy, 2010; Stafford & Gren, 1996; Şahbaz, 2004). However, some studies also showed that, these children can also be emotionally and physically abused and be humiliated by their typically peers during inclusion (Schumpf, Crawford & Bodine, 2007; Nowicki & Sandieson, 2002; Girli & Atasoy, 2007). Çetin, Bilbay and Kaymak (2001) suggested that these humiliated children would isolate themselves more and have greater risk of being in a withdrawal process than the others.

In Turkey, Sucuoğlu (2004) reviewed the publications about inclusion conducted between the 1980-2005 in four groups as follows; a) the general information about the principles, results of inclusion process and the inclusion concept, b) the attitudes, opinions and information towards the inclusion and people with disabilities c) the characteristics of the inclusion students, d) the related studies. This review presented that the application of the inclusion process has problems in Turkey.

These problems are; teachers impotence of the inclusion process, insufficient support system for inclusion, insufficient arrangements of the school setting, inappropriate selection of students to include, the maladaptation of the curriculum for inclusion, and the examination system (Kargin, Acarlar & Sucuoğlu, 2003; Sucuoğlu, 2004). It is seen that Sucuoğlu's (2004) study review of previous research and thesis done in 25 years regarding inclusion does not state any study about the views of students on inclusion. Therefore, it was thought to be important to conduct a study which investigates about autism spectrum disorders and intellectual disabilities students' views, information levels, attitudes on inclusion and to investigate to which extend do they fulfill their duties in regard to inclusion which was defined by the regulations. Although the studies on the attitudes of the parents and the teachers suggested positive results, it is clearly seen that especially parents are concerned about the inclusion process. Furthermore, many studies done about the improvement of academic, social skills of the inclusion studies proved that these disabled students had benefited from the process. And yet, these studies were done with the students with intellectual disabilities or hearing impairment. It is clearly seen that there are not sufficient number of studies especially done on children with autism. Some studies found students with disabilities are not preferred by their peers to conduct group works and they are regarded as problematic students in terms of adaptation and communication (Aktaş & Küçükler, 2002; Çolak, 2008; Girli & Atasoy, 2007; Girli, Kabasakal & Aysan, 2009; Kabasakal, Girli, Okun, Çelik & Vardarlı, 2008; Şahbaz, 2007; Vuran, 2005).

Recently, there has been an observable increment in the number of children diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This increment may be explained by the great progress in identifying the symptoms of autism (Connor, 2000). On the other hand, according to Gillberg (1998), this increment is a result of a real increment in the incidence of ASD. Therefore, the number of children with ASD has been rising within the inclusion process

(Connor, 2000), which creates an inevitable need for further studies about the problems of those youngsters during their inclusion process (Myles, 2003; Lane, 2004).

The current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – 4th Edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR; APA, 2000) suggests that there is no significant delay in language and cognitive development in the cases of Asperger's Syndrome (AS) and high functioning autism (HFA). However, the lack of social skills, which is one of the major characteristics of children with AS and HFA, appears as the main handicap for these children (Baker, 2003; Weiss & Harris, 2001). Therefore, the inclusion process appears to be problematic for these students, since the social skills are required in almost every step of the educational process; such as social play, group interactions, and cooperative work (Baker, 2003; Bauminger & Kasari, 2000; Bauminger & Shulman, 2003; Bauminger, Schulman & Agam, 2003; Koegel, Koegel, Frea & Fredeen, 2001; Schwartz, 2000). Since 1986, Grandin's Self-Reporting Technique has been beneficial for further understanding of different ways of social understanding, social interaction, and imagination of children and adolescents with AS and HFA. Papers and books written by people with high functioning autism or people with Asperger syndrome about themselves have enabled us understand autism better and increased information with regard to how they learn resulting in the preparation of more effective educational programs for them (Howlin, Baron-Cohen & Hadwin, 2003).

In Turkey, also students with autism in inclusion have been in increment. However, there is not enough number of studies done about the process. The techniques like self-report that is frequently being used in the West to reveal the disabled student's views about their peers and school experiences still haven't been used functionally here in Turkey. It is reported in only one study about children with autism in inclusion process which was done by Girli and Atasoy (2007).

The main purpose of this study was to determine the views of the students with autism and intellectual disabilities about their peer relations, school experiences and their problems within the school context. The other purpose of the study was to explain the similarities and differences between the problems of the students with intellectual disabilities, asperger syndrome and high functioning autism.

## **2. METHOD**

### **2.1. Research Design**

This research is a qualitative study. Qualitative research is the one in which data collection is done via qualitative data collection devices such as observation, interview and document analyses techniques and it is a qualitative process in which perceptions and events take place in their natural environment and in a comprehensive way (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2000). The data was collected through semi-structured interview technique.

### **2.2. Participants**

The participants were diagnosed by university hospitals according to DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000) criteria's between September 1999 and June 2000 as intellectual disabilities and autism. The participants were 10 students with intellectual disabilities, 10 students with

autism, attending the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> grades of a primary school and they were also students of a special education center (See table 1).

**Table 1:** The Characteristics of the Participants

n=20	Students	Sex	Age	Grade
students with autism n=10	A1	M	12	6
	A2	F	10	4
	A3	M	11	5
	A4	M	12	6
	A5	M	12	6
	A6	M	12	6
	A7	F	10	4
	A8	M	11	5
	A9	F	10	4
	A10	M	11	5
Students with intellectual disabilities n=10	ID1	F	10	4
	ID2	M	10	4
	ID3	M	11	5
	ID4	F	12	6
	ID5	F	10	4
	ID6	F	11	5
	ID7	M	11	5
	ID8	M	12	6
	ID9	M	12	6
	ID10	M	11	5

### 2.3. Research Instrument

In this study a semi structured interview form was used which was developed by the researcher and it consisted of 16 questions for students.

#### Interview Questions

- 1-Which activities do you like doing at school? Which courses do you like the most?
- 2-What is the worst thing about your school? What do you really dislike? Why? Which courses don't you like?
- 3-What is good about your school?
- 4-What sort of things do you find hard?
- 5-Do you write down your homework? Can you do all your homework? Who helps you with your homework?
- 6-What sort of things you do can cause some problems at the school?
- 7-Do you interact with your peers during break or lunch time?
- 8-Do you have any close friends at school? If so, why do you like them?

- 9-Is there anyone whom you do not get on well with? Why?
- 10- What helps you learn the best or motivates you to learn?
- 11-What needs to be changed at the school?
- 12-What needs to be changed about you?
- 13-What helps you most to be successful at school or get on well with your teacher and friends?
- 14-Do you attend to a special education center? What do you learn there?
- 15-What do you want to do when you leave school?
- 16-What else do you think about your future?

#### 2.4. Procedure

The interviews were done by the researches face to face in a private room at special education center. The sessions lasted in 50 min and were tape-recorded. The parents of all children were asked to give permission to their children to take the interview.

#### 2.5. Data Analysis

The data analyzed through deduction which is a qualitative analysis technique. The interviewees were coded by being numbered like A1...A10 and ID 1.....ID 10. During the data analysis, a) the views of students were recorded as they gave them and put into a computerized form in the order of the interviewer's questions first and then the interviewee's answers b) on the left side of the interview form there is descriptive index and on the right side of the interview form there is the interviewer's comments and c) at the bottom of the form comments were written c) the collected data were coded according to their subjects d) related and similar subjects were gathered under certain themes e) nine themes and sub themes were anonymously decided by the researchers.

### 3. FINDINGS

In this section, the collected data from the students with mental retardation and autism as themes and sub themes and the results of the study were given. The views of the students were categorized according to their frequencies.

#### *Theme 1: Which courses do the students like/dislike?*

*Students with autism:* Nine of the students (90%) indicated they liked the most social sciences, english, computer, music, math's, turkish and science lessons. They indicated that they liked all the lessons but sometimes they found it hard to handle some parts of the math and science courses. For example A7 said that "*the measurement problems are hard*". Only A4 (10%) said that "*I dislike science and religion courses*".

*Students with intellectual disabilities:* They all (100%) indicated that they like art, music, gym and computer the most. They also liked Turkish, social sciences, science and religion courses. For example; ID 2 indicated that "*I don't like chess lessons and I think chess is boring*". Especially, seven students (70%) indicated that they found the math and science lessons are very difficult and boring. ID 1 indicated that "*I don't understand Math, Turkish; I think both of them are very hard*".

*Theme 2: What sort of things do the children find hard/have difficulties and what sort of things they like to do/or not to do?*

*Students with autism:* All students (100%) indicated that they like the recess and four of them (40%) told that they like playing with their peers and three of them (30%) told that they like the courses most. For example, A2 told that “*I like playing in the garden, playing hopscotch*”. All the students (100%) indicated they dislike being humiliated, being cursed at and being bullied. For example, A1 told that “*I don’t like hitting friends, bullying and breaking their hearts and I think that these are bad behaviors*”. A5 indicated that “*I don’t like bullying friends and cursing them and I would be punished if I do so*”. Only five of the students (50%) told that they don’t like difficult exams.

*Students with intellectual disabilities:* The students indicated that they liked obeying rules at school and helping others. All of the students (100%) told that they liked playing games and computer courses. ID 6 told that “*none has a right to interrupt the other*”. Eight of the students (80%) told that telling lies and bullying are very bad behaviors. For example, ID3 told about that “*someone scribbled on my friend’s notebook and then blamed me of this and the teacher got angry with me, telling lies is a very bad attitude, it is not fair*”.

*Theme 3: The capability of doing homework and who helps them with it*

*Students with autism:* All of the students (100%) told that they did their homework. Two of them (20%) told that they sometimes could not write them down, so can not do all their homework. Six students (60%) told that their mothers helped them and two of them (20%) told that both parents helped them and the rest of the students told that their siblings helped them with their homework. For example, A 5 indicated that “*I wrote the pencil is too slow for my mother helps me with my homework*”.

*Students with intellectual disabilities:* Four students (40%) indicated that they did their homework. Six of them (60%) told that they sometimes could not write them down, so could not do all their homework. They told that they especially couldn’t do math very well. ID 9 indicated that “*I can’t do my math, and my mother or my elder sister helps me with my homework*”.

*Theme 4: What do you do in break or lunch time?*

*Students with autism:* Six students (60%) told that they had snacks; two of them (20%) told that they sat in the classroom; two of them told that they played in the garden. Two students (20%) indicated that they went to the canteen and buy sandwiches. For example, A 10 indicated that “*I fear for the school garden too crowded and I sat in the classroom in break time*”.

*Students with intellectual disabilities:* All of them (100%) told that they all bring their snacks and eat during the recess. Seven of them (70%) told that they played in the garden and three of them (30%) told that they sometimes sat in the classroom. For example, ID 10 told that “*I like my friend Tarkan, we play together and we share our snacks*”.

*Theme 5: Do you have any close friends at school? Do you like/dislike them? Why?*

*Students with autism:* Four students (40%) told that they had one close friend; three of them told (30%) that they had two; one student (10%) told that he had three and one student (10%) told that he had five close friends. One of the students (10%) told that he has no close friends.

They answered to the question of “why do you like them” by saying; A 2 told that “*he protects me*” A 6 told that “*she hugs me and we play*”. All of them (100%) indicated that they had friends they disliked and they gave reasons such as, “*he hits me, he bullies me, and he humiliates me*”.

*Students with intellectual disabilities:* Five of the students (50%) told that they had one close friend; four students (40%) told that they had three; one student (10%) told that he had two close friends. They answered to the why do you like them question as, “*we play together, he doesn't upset me, he likes me etc*”. ID 9 indicated that “*we play computer games together and we hang on that why I like him very much*”.

*Theme 6: What helps you learn the best or motivates you to learn?*

*Students with autism:* Four students (40%) told that they preferred computers; two of them (20%) told that they liked doing group works, two of them (20%) told that studying with their mothers makes them learn better. One student (10%) told that he could learn by making a project and one student (10%) told that he learned better if his teacher explained. A 5 indicated that “*if the courses are given via the internet, it will be better for me*”.

*Students with intellectual disabilities:* Three of them (30%) told that they learned better if they studied with computers, three of them (30%) learned better with group works and experimenting, two of them (20%) told they learned better if their teachers explain the subject and two of them (20%) told that if they studied at home. For example, ID 7 told that “*we had done a group work, our teacher told us the rules and it was very good*”.

*Theme 7: What needs to be changed about the school?*

*Students with autism:* Three of the students (30%) indicated that the painting of the schools' wall must be changed, and the desks must be renewed. Four of the students (40%) wanted there must be rules but one child told that the rule of get “get in to a line” must not exist. Two of the students (20%) wanted that there mustn't be any exams and two of them (20%) wanted to have instruction. For example, A3 told that “*I like computers; I'd like quizzes and homework's using for computers*”.

*Students with intellectual disabilities:* Four of the students (40%) indicated that they want the curtains to be changed, and classrooms be cleaner. Five of them (50%) wanted the exams would be easier and one of them (10%) wanted a sport club.

*Theme 8: what kinds of changes about you will make you feel better?*

*Students with autism:* Six students (60%) indicated that they had to work harder, and four children (40%) told that if they did not fight then their teachers would love them more. For example, A 4 indicated that “*if I had become smarter then it would have been better*”.

*Students with intellectual disabilities:* These students told that they must work hard. Three of the students (30%) told that listening to the teacher and staying calm every time and not fighting with friends will make them feel better. For example, ID 3 indicated that “*if I play with my friends and if I work hard it will be better for me*”. Seven of them (70%) wanted the exams would be easier.

#### *Theme 9: What will he do in the future?*

*Students with autism:* Two girl students (20%) indicated that they wanted to be teachers. Three boy students (30%) wanted to be soldiers and two boy students (20%) wanted to be policemen, one student (10%) wanted to be a salesman and one student (10%) wanted to be a cook and one student (10%) wanted to be a welder. For example, A 9 indicated that “*I want to be policemen like my uncle*”. Six students (60%) wanted to get married and took care of their children and four of the students (40%) indicated that they wanted to work.

*Students with intellectual disabilities:* Girl students (40%) wanted to be teachers commonly, two students (20%) wanted to be policemen, one student (10%) wanted to be a soldier and one student (10%) wanted to be a taxi driver. Boys usually wanted to be soldiers and girls usually talked about getting married and having babies. For example, ID 1 indicated that “*I want to be music teacher at my school*”.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The main purpose of this study was to determine the views of the students about their peer relations, school experiences and their problems within the school context. The students participated in study are also attending the 4th, 5th and 6th grades. Therefore it was observed that they partially adapted to the school environment and had friends. The students had learned to obey the rules at school, and they were capable of listening to the teacher and they were not bullying friends. It can be said that they are aware of their disabilities and what is expected from them.

It is also seen that students with intellectual disabilities had difficulties academically especially on math and science and they need to be supported. Students with autism have difficulties on hard exams and problem solving, reading and comprehension, idioms but they are successful at route operations and courses. All of the students reported that they had problems of being isolated, were not being preferred during the play time, and were being humiliated. According to their self reports, these problems increase during recess and the lunch time compared to their favorite courses, such as computer lessons. In addition, it is found that parents help their children with tasks such as mathematic comprehension, and question answering, whereas those students are successful in tasks on route memory like memorizing a poem, telling a story or stating a text.

These results are almost the same as Farmer and et. al. (1996) study results. They also suggested that students with disabilities are being rejected and labeled as not popular kids by the normal peers. In some studies, typically peers of the students also expressed that “the students with disabilities are being rejected and they have been exposed to unjust situations by their peers” (Connor, 2000; Çolak, 2008; Gordon et al., 2005; Reid & Button, 1995; Girli et al., 2007; Girli, Kabasakal, & Aysan, 2009). Kabasakal and et.al. (2008) also suggested that students with disabilities are being isolated, humiliated and emotionally abused by their peers and are usually alone and not chosen as a partner in play groups and they are also labeled as “problem children”.

The results are similar to the findings of studies done on social acceptance and school experiences of students with disabilities. In this study, students also said they were outcasted especially during playing games and they felt lonely but they still liked school (Connor, 2000;

Çolak, 2008; Farmer et.al., 1996; Girli et al. 2007; Kabasakal et.al., 2007; Lane, 2004; Reid & Button, 1995; Şahbaz, 2007; Wong, 2006; Vuran, 2005). Despite having same problems in school it can be seen that students have inclusion been affected positively in this process. Even if their social interaction is less its seen that they are trying to be in social relationships and their social behaviours are improving. Koegel and et al., (2001), Gordon and et al. (2005) and Wong (2006) indicate that friendship provided by the school environment has positive effects on students with disabilities, social, emotional and moral developmental processes. To make the students with autism socialized, more work has to be done by teachers (Atwood, 2008; Jordan, 2008). Therefore, it is suggested that social skills training should be included in the education process in order to improve students with disabilities, social skills and make them accepted socially by their peers (Aktaş & Küçüker, 2002; Çolak, 2008; Girli & Atasoy, 2010; Gordon et.al., 2005; Kemple, 2004; Nowicki & Sandieson, 2002; Schwartz, 2000).

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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

### *Problem Durumu*

Kaynaştırma, özel gereksinimli öğrencilerin genel eğitim sınıfları içerisinde eğitimlerini ve buna paralel olarak akranlarıyla, sosyal ve eğitimsel açıdan birlikteliklerini amaçlayan bir eğitim modelidir (Sucuoğlu & Kargın, 2006). Ülkemizde kaynaştırma uygulamasıyla ilgili olarak, öğretmenlerin yeterli bilgi ve beceriye sahip olmamaları, destek hizmetlerin olmaması, okullarda gereken düzenlemelerin yapılmamış olması, kaynaştırmaya uygun öğrencilerin seçilememesi, sınıf programını uyarlama, sınav sistemi, sınıf yönetiminde yaşanan sorunlar belirtilmektedir (ör. Çolak, 2008; Sucuoğlu, 2004; Kabasakal and et.al., 2008) .

Öğretmenlerin, okul yöneticilerinin, ailelerin kaynaştırmaya ilişkin görüşlerini, tutumlarını inceleyen çalışmalar ve engelli olmayan çocukların kaynaştırma öğrencisine yönelik tutumlarını inceleyen çalışmalarda da genellikle kaynaştırma uygulaması hakkında olumlu görüşler olmasına rağmen ailelerin endişeli oldukları gözlemlenmektedir (Batu, 2000; Kargın, Acarlar, Sucuoğlu, 2003; Sucuoğlu; Sucuoğlu, 2004). Kaynaştırmaya yerleştirilen öğrencilerinin akademik becerileri, sosyal becerileri, problem davranışları gibi özelliklerini araştıran çalışmalarda ise engel türüne göre bu alanlarda farklı düzeyde başarı elde edilmesine rağmen bu süreçten olumlu yönde kazanımlarının olduğu görülmektedir (Aktaş & Küçüker, 2002; Şahbaz, 2004; Vuran, 2005). Bu çalışmaların çoğunun kaynaştırmaya yerleştirilen zihin ve işitme yetersizliği olan öğrencilerle ilgili olduğu; ülkemizde kaynaştırma sürecinde son yıllarda sayıları artmaya başlayan otizm tanılı çocuklarla ilgili çalışmaların ise az sayıda olduğu gözlemlenmektedir (Kabasakal, Girli ve ark., 2008).

Batıda son yıllarda örneklerine rastladığımız, kaynaştırma öğrencilerinin okul yaşantıları ve akranlarıyla ilişkilerini inceleyen self-report çalışmaların (Connor, 2000) henüz ülkemizde yaygın olarak kullanılmadığı gözlemlenmiş ve ilgili alan yazın taramasında yalnızca bir çalışmaya (Girli & Atasoy, 2007) ulaşılabilmektedir. Kaynaştırma deneyimi yaşayan öğrencilerin bu sürece ilişkin görüşlerinin belirlenmesinin, kaynaştırma uygulamasının niteliğinin artırılmasında ve kaynaştırma öğrencilerinin sosyal kabulünün sağlanmasında oldukça önemli ipuçları sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

### *Araştırmanın Amacı*

Bu çalışmanın amacı, kaynaştırma eğitimine devam eden zihin engelli ve otizimli öğrencilerin okul yaşantıları, arkadaşlık ilişkileri ve öğretim sürecindeki sorunlarıyla ilgili görüşlerini belirlemektir. Diğer bir amacı ise, otizimli ve zihinsel yetersiz öğrencilerin kaynaştırma sürecinde yaşadıklarının ve sorunların farklılaşp, farklılaşmadığını incelemektir.

### *Araştırmanın Yöntemi*

Kaynaştırma sürecindeki öğrencilerin okul yaşantıları ve arkadaşlık ilişkileri hakkında görüşlerini belirlemek için nitel araştırma yaklaşımı kullanılmıştır. Araştırma grubu, İzmir ilinde 4, 5, 6 ncı sınıflara devam eden 10 zihin yetersizliği olan ve 10 otizimli, toplam 20 kaynaştırma sürecindeki öğrenciden oluşmaktadır.

Veriler, araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanmış olan yarı yapılandırılmış 16 sorudan oluşan görüşme formu ile toplanmıştır. Her görüşme yaklaşık 50 dakikada sürmüş ve cevaplar teybe kaydedilmiştir. Verilerin analiz işlemi, verilerin dökümü, analiz öncesi hazırlıklar ve verilerin tümevarım yoluyla analizi basamakları olarak gerçekleştirilmiştir.

#### *Araştırmanın Bulguları:*

Çocukların sorulara verdikleri cevaplar dokuz tema etrafında toplanmıştır. Öğrenme yetersizliği olan öğrenciler en çok müzik, resim, beden eğitimi ve bilgisayar dersini sevdiklerini, en zor buldukları derlerlerin ise matematik ve fen olduğunu belirtken; Otizmliler öğrenciler sanat, beden eğitimi ve bilgisayar derslerinin yanı sıra sosyal, matematik, türkçe ve fen derslerini de sevdiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Öğrencilerin hepsi ev ödevlerini yapmaya çalıştığını ve annelerinden yardım aldıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Otizmliler öğrenciler bilgisayarla daha iyi öğrenebileceklerini belirtirken, öğrenme yetersizliği olan öğrenciler grup çalışmasını tercih ettiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Her iki gruptaki öğrencilerde sınavlardan hoşlanmadıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Daha iyi bir okul nasıl olmalı sorusuna ise, otizmliler duvarları daha renkli olmasını, zihinsel yetersiz öğrenciler ise daha temiz olmasını istediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Her iki grupta okulda sınav olmamasını istemiştir.

Her iki tanı grubundaki öğrencilerin hemen hemen hepsinin sadece bir yakın arkadaşı bulunmakta, teneffüste onunla birlikte bahçeye çıkmakta veya sınıfta kalmaktadır. Hepsi çoğu zaman yalnız kaldıklarını, dışlanma veya kötü davranışlara maruz kaldıkları anlamına gelen ifadelerle arkadaşlık ilişkilerini anlatmışlardır. Çocuklar özellikle sınıf dışında bahçede kötü sözler veya davranışlarla karşılaştıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bu sonuçlar benzer çalışma sonuçlarıyla örtüşmektedir (Bauminger & Kasari, 2000; Bauminger & Shulman, 2003; Bauminger, Schulman & Agam, 2003; Girli & Atasoy, 2007; Kabasakal and et.al. 2008). Daha çok çalışırlarsa ve uslu olurlarsa öğretmenlerinin onları daha çok seveceğini düşündüklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Gelecekte, okul bittikten sonra, meslek olarak, kızlar öğretmen olmayı, erkekler ise polis veya asker olmayı istediklerini belirtmişlerdir.

#### *Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri*

Sonuçlar, kaynaştırma yerleştirilen öğrencilerin sosyal kabullerine ve okul deneyimlerine ilişkin çalışma bulgularıyla benzeşmektedir. Bu çalışmalarda da kaynaştırma eğitimindeki öğrencilerin özellikle oyunlarda dışlandıklarını ve kendilerini yalnız hissettiklerini ama okulu sevdiklerini belirlenmiştir (Çolak, 2008; Kabasakal & et al. 2008; Lane, 2004). Bu nedenle, öğretmenlerin, kaynaştırmaya yerleştirilen öğrencilerin sosyal becerilerini geliştirmek ve akranları tarafından sosyal kabulünü sağlamak, arkadaşlık ilişkilerini geliştirmelerine destek olmak amacıyla eğitim programında sosyal beceri çalışmalarına daha çok yer vermeleri önerilmektedir (Atwood, 2008; Girli & Atasoy, 2010; Jordan, 2008; Sucuoğlu & Kargın, 2006; Terpstra & Tamura, 2008). Bu çalışma sonuçlarına ve daha önce yapılmış çalışmaların (Çolak, 2008; Gordon et.al., 2005; Kemple, 2004; Nowicki & Sandieson, 2002; Schwartz, 2000; Sucuoğlu & Kargın, 2006) bulgularına dayalı olarak; öğretmenlerin, öğrencilerin akademik başarılarını arttırmak için, işbirlikli öğretim yöntemlerine ağırlık vermeleri, bilgisayar kullanımını arttırmaları, kaynaştırmaya yerleştirilen öğrencilerin özelliklerine uygun öğretimsel düzenlemeleri yapmaları önerilebilir. Bu çalışma

otizmlili ve zihinsel yetersizlikleri olan üçüncü, dördüncü ve beşinci sınıf düzeyindeki öğrencilerin görüşleriyle sınırlıdır, bu nedenle sonuçlar bu sınırlıklar dikkate alarak yorumlanmalıdır. İleride yapılacak çalışmalarla, kaynaştırma sürecinde farklı sınıf düzeyinde ve farklı tanı gruplarındaki öğrencilerin sorunlarına ilişkin görüşlerinin araştırılmasının yararlı olacağı düşünülmektedir.