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Kapsayıcı eğitim açısından okul dışı öğrenme etkinlikleriyle ilgili özel eğitim öğretmen adaylarının görüşleri

The views of special education teacher candidates about out-of-school learning activities in inclusive education practices

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ÖZ

Araştırmada özel eğitim öğretmen adaylarının, kapsayıcı eğitim bağlamında okul dışı öğrenme ortamları etkinliklerinin kullanımına dair görüşlerinin incelenmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Araştırma tek durumlu bütüncül desen çalışması olarak tasarlanmıştır. Katılımcılar belirlenirken amaçlı örneklem yöntemlerinden maksimum çeşitlilik kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu özel eğitim öğretmenliği lisans programı okul dışı öğrenme ortamları dersini seçen öğrencilerden oluşmaktadır. Veri toplama aracı olarak araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formları kullanılmıştır. Bununla birlikte ders planları veri toplama sürecinde veri çeşitliği sağlamak amacıyla kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde içerik analizinden yararlanılmıştır. Araştırmada elde edilen bulgular sosyal kabul, sosyal etkileşim ve mesleki deneyim açısından incelenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda öğretmen adaylarının okul dışı öğrenme etkinliklerinin uygulanmadan önceki beklentilerine dair öğretmen adaylarının görüşlerine göre “planlama, okul dışı öğrenme ortamları, sosyal kabul, sosyal etkileşim ve mesleki yeterlik” temaları ortaya çıkarken, uygulama sonrası incelenen verilere ait bulgularda ise “planlama, uygulama, değerlendirme ve paydaş iletişimi” temaları ortaya çıkmıştır. Bununla beraber araştırma sürecinin bütününe ve okul dışı öğrenme ortamları dersinin etkililiğine yönelik “sosyal kabul, sosyal etkileşim ve mesleki yeterlik” temalarının ortaya çıktığı belirlenmiştir. Bu kapsamda, özel eğitime ihtiyaç duyan bireylerin okul dışı öğrenme ortamı etkinlikleriyle toplum içerisine dahil olmalarını daha etkin kıldığı, yaşadıkları toplumun onları kabul etmeleri açısından farkındalık oluşturduğu ve aynı zamanda hizmet öncesinde öğretmen adaylarının mesleki yeterliklerine dair deneyim kazanarak katkı sağladığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: kapsayıcı eğitim, okul dışı öğrenme, öğretmen adayları, özel eğitim, tek durumlu bütüncül durum çalışması

ABSTRACT

The study aims to examine the perspectives of special education teacher candidates on the use of out-of-school learning activities within the scope of inclusive education. The research was designed as a holistic single case study. The study group was determined through maximum variation sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, and consisted of students enrolled in the “Out-of-School Learning Environments” course within the undergraduate program in Special Education Teaching. Semi-structured interview forms developed by the researcher were used as data collection tools, along with lesson plans to ensure data triangulation. Content analysis was employed to analyze the data. The findings were examined in terms of social acceptance, social interaction, and professional experience. Based on interviews conducted with teacher candidates regarding their expectations prior to the implementation of out-of-school learning activities, the themes of planning, out-of-school learning environments, social acceptance, social interaction, and professional competence emerged. After the implementation of the activities, the themes of planning, implementation, evaluation, and stakeholder communication were identified, while the overarching process revealed the recurring themes of social acceptance, social interaction, and professional competence concerning the effectiveness of the course. In this context, it was concluded that out-of-school learning activities enabled individuals with special needs to participate more actively in society, raised awareness among the community regarding their acceptance, and contributed to the professional competence of pre-service teachers by providing experiential learning opportunities prior to service.

Keywords: inclusive education, out-of-school learning, teacher candidate, special education, single case holistic study

INTRODUCTION

The inclusive education approach is a conceptual framework that places emphasis on understanding the barriers to education from a social perspective. The development of inclusive education can be attributed to educational methodologies that involve the comprehensive reformation of the entire educational system. Hence, the integration of more comprehensive societal or educational modifications facilitates the advancement of inclusive education. Inclusive education is predicated on the idea of social acceptance, hence facilitating the active engagement of diverse sociocultural groups within the broader fabric of society. Furthermore, the implementation of inclusive education has the potential to facilitate a comprehensive overhaul of the school system. Inclusive education has the potential to facilitate the societal advancement of excluded groups and individuals with disabilities (UNESCO, 2009).

Inclusive education encompasses the ability to recognize and address the varied needs of individuals across different age groups, namely children, adolescents, and adults, with the objective of enhancing their engagement in educational, cultural, and societal activities. Its ultimate goal is to eradicate instances of exclusion both within and beyond the realm of education. Additionally, it encompasses alterations to the content, methodologies, frameworks, and tactics in alignment with a comprehensive vision that may effectively engage diverse age cohorts. Similar to the notion of universal education, inclusive education is an educational methodology that guarantees equal educational opportunities for all pupils, irrespective of their unique attributes and disparities, with the aim of fostering a more just and fair society. In the course of history, inclusive education has predominantly focused on disadvantaged groups who have been unable to fully access educational opportunities. This group encompasses both children with exceptional educational needs and children with disabilities, as stated by UNESCO in 2001.

Inclusive education, commencing from the early stages of childhood education, entails the provision of instruction to students in a collective setting, while simultaneously catering to their unique attributes through appropriate support mechanisms. Out-of-school learning can be effectively employed across several educational levels, ranging from pre-kindergarten to college. Inclusive education programs prioritize the promotion of individualized and independent study, workshops, and mentoring (Cashion & Sullenger, 2000). In order to cultivate the learners' interests and augment their different cognitive talents, it is imperative to integrate projects, group work, and activities including parental participation into the educational process. The success or failure of inclusive education can be influenced by several factors, such as the appropriateness of learning outcomes for all students, the ability to apply a flexible and adaptable curriculum, the equitable distribution of educational resources, and the capacity of teachers to adapt to diverse learning environments (Schuelka, 2018). In addition to serving as a mediator in the transfer of theoretical knowledge to real-world application, inclusive education and extracurricular learning are regarded as vital for acknowledging the distinctions and resemblances within one's own societal context. Therefore, it is widely acknowledged that the integration of non-school learning settings into inclusive education and the subsequent adaptation of instructional practices are of paramount importance.

A multitude of arguments support the implementation of inclusive education. One of the primary factors to be taken into account is the educational aspects. The educational grounds encompass the necessity for an inclusive educational institution that facilitates the education of all pupils collectively while also accommodating individual diversity. Moreover, societal incentives exist. Inclusive schools have the potential to transform societal attitudes towards diversity and lay the groundwork for combating discrimination by providing education to all children in an integrated setting (Alzahrani, 2020). The second consideration pertains to matters of economics. According to UNESCO (2009), the cost of constructing and operating schools that cater to the educational needs of all children is comparatively lower than that of constructing and operating schools specifically created for children with certain characteristics. The expectation is that the inclusion of children requiring special education in mainstream schools will result in enhanced

educational opportunities for these individuals within their own societies. Inclusive schools are educational institutions that possess the capacity to recognize and address the wide-ranging requirements of their students. They employ suitable initiatives to enhance the standard of education, establish organizational structures, and engage in collaborative efforts pertaining to teaching methodologies, resource allocation, and community involvement (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024).

The establishment of meaningful connections and seamless transitions between early childhood education, primary education, and secondary education programs is of utmost importance in order to effectively address attrition rates and ensure the retention of students throughout different educational levels (UNESCO, 2009).

- Program modifications are necessary to promote adaptable methods of learning and evaluation.
- The program should integrate both formal and informal learning opportunities.
- The academic nature and rigorous curriculum of the programs are incongruent with the principles of inclusive education.
- The active involvement of many education stakeholders should be promoted in the process of program creation.

The examination of national and international literature reveals a wide range of studies conducted from various perspectives. These perspectives encompass individuals requiring special education as well as refugees (Dede, 1996; Sarıcı-Bulut et al., 2018; Schuelka, 2018; Gürdoğan-Bayır, 2019; Saloviita, 2020; Sarı, Nayir & Kahraman, 2020; Akbulut, Yılmaz, Karakoc, Erciyas & Akşin-Yavuz, 2021; Elmacı, 2022; Junaidi, Dewantoro, Shanti & Rahmita, 2022; Wray, Sharma & Subban, 2022). These studies underscore the need to enhance social acceptability and engagement within inclusive education and evaluate the sufficiency of existing practices and regulations. Nevertheless, existing research reveals a paucity of studies regarding the influence of out-of-school learning contexts on enhancing social cohesion and social acceptance. In this setting, research on the influence of out-of-school learning environments typically emphasizes theoretical frameworks rather than investigating practical applications. Furthermore, pre-service training programs have insufficiently focused on the understanding of special education teacher candidates about this matter and their viewpoints on such educational settings. This study aims to examine the utilization of out-of-school learning environments to enhance social cohesion, social acceptance, and interaction among individuals with special educational needs. The study also seeks to evaluate the viewpoints of special education teacher candidates regarding this theme, considering the training they received prior to their professional engagement. This study seeks to address a significant gap in the literature regarding inclusive education and to provide practical recommendations for practitioners and educational policies. This study contributes to the literature by offering a thorough review of creative strategies that can enhance social acceptance and harmony among individuals with unique educational needs. Furthermore, by offering a practical framework that assesses the influence of out-of-school learning contexts, we anticipate it will offer a novel perspective to research in educational sciences and special education.

Sarıcı-Bulut et al. (2018) assert that the collaboration between teachers and curriculum plays a pivotal role in determining the efficacy of inclusive education approaches. The emphasis should be placed on uncovering the potential of children with diverse developmental features, particularly in today's heterogenous classrooms, given the programs' adaptability and their alignment with instructional practices. Due to this rationale, it is widely acknowledged that the instructional methods emphasized in teacher training programs designed for individuals in need of special education play a pivotal role in facilitating the social integration of these pupils. In Turkish academic literature, inclusive education is occasionally regarded as equivalent to integrative education. Nevertheless, the concept of integrative education fails to capture the full scope of inclusive education. In the context of the educational curriculum, inclusive education

encompasses the integration of pupils with diverse characteristics. Formal and informal learning within the curriculum serve to facilitate inclusive education across all dimensions. Hence, extracurricular activities facilitate the engagement of students in society from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. Within this particular framework, educational settings that exist outside of traditional school environments, and are integrated into undergraduate programs, encompass not only official courses but also informal, unstructured, and spontaneous learning experiences that aim to reveal diverse individual attributes. Therefore, it is imperative for both formal and informal learning contexts to incorporate these activities in a well-structured and organized manner. The principal aim of extracurricular education is to facilitate the individual growth of pupils in a setting beyond the traditional school environment, taking into account their age, interests, and requirements (Yıldırım, 2020). According to Aktın (2020), out-of-school learning refers to a multifaceted process wherein children engage in program-based learning activities that take place in an organized, social, and physical environment beyond the confines of the traditional school setting. In this context, it is widely recognized that directing attention towards strategies that facilitate experiential learning beyond the confines of traditional educational institutions would be advantageous, especially when considering the educational needs of individuals with special needs.

The purpose of this study is to explore the utilization of extracurricular learning settings as a means of promoting social adaptation, social acceptance, and interaction among individuals with special needs. Additionally, we aim to evaluate the viewpoints of special education teacher candidates regarding this subject, taking into account the training they received prior to their professional service. To align with the overarching purpose, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the perspectives of special education teacher candidates on the impact of extracurricular activities on the social acceptance of children with special needs?
2. What are the perceived effects of out-of-school learning environments on social interaction of children with special needs, according to special education teacher candidates?
3. What are the perspectives on the influence of special education teacher candidates' engagement in extracurricular activities outside of classroom settings on their professional development?

METHOD

The study employed a case study design, which is a qualitative research method. A case study refers to a comprehensive analysis of one or more cases (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006), focusing on the exploration of a complicated, distinctive, and captivating phenomenon within its specific setting (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2016). This research employed a single-case holistic design, one of the case study approaches. A single-case holistic design refers to case study patterns in which only one unit of analysis is examined and unique situations are explored (Subaşı & Okumuş, 2017). In this study, the case is defined as the views of pre-service special education teachers regarding social acceptance, social interaction, and professional development, whereas the unit of analysis consists of the systematic examination of these views in relation to out-of-school learning environments. Within the given setting, the researchers employed a case study design to investigate the utilization of out-of-school learning environments by special education teacher candidates in the framework of inclusive education. The research centers on the incorporation of extracurricular learning activities in the framework of inclusive education. The focus of this study is to examine the viewpoints of special education teacher candidates about social acceptance, social interaction, and professional development in the context of out-of-school learning activities. The unit of analysis pertains to the perspectives of these candidates both prior to and following their engagement in such activities.

Sample

The research comprises a group of special education teacher candidates who chose to enroll in the "*Out-of-School Learning Environment*" course within the undergraduate program for Special Education Teaching. Teacher candidates were instructed to construct the procedure in accordance with the curriculum utilized in special education institutions, while also using external environments beyond the school. Throughout the course, teacher candidates acquired knowledge on the placement and function of out-of-school learning spaces, in addition to lesson planning and other subjects. The researchers employed maximum variation sampling, which is a purposeful sampling technique, to select the research participants. The primary objective of employing maximum variation sampling is to obtain a relatively small sample that effectively represents the entire population, while also capturing many features of the research subject (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). The study group comprises pre-service teachers, who were in their sophomore year in Special Education Teaching programme, who selected the course on out-of-school learning contexts. Participants included 15 male and 18 female teacher candidates, making a total of 33 participants. To ensure the confidentiality of the teacher candidates included in the study, a system of numerical codes (e.g., 1, 2, 3, etc.) was employed. The study was conducted after obtaining approval from Ataturk University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee (No: 2022/01).

Learning environment

The practice component of the course was carried out in both classroom and community-based contexts. Teacher candidates visited a partner special education school, where they observed classrooms serving students with diverse disabilities. The observed environment typically consisted of small groups of 6–10 students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities, supported by individualized instructional materials and assistive technologies. Classroom routines, interactional patterns, and teacher–student communication were noted to ensure a detailed understanding of the context. In addition to school-based observations, candidates engaged with out-of-school learning spaces such as museums, libraries, and social activity centers. These environments provided opportunities for students to connect academic learning with real-life experiences and to enhance their social participation.

Weekly activities and student responsibilities

During the semester, teacher candidates were responsible for planning and implementing weekly activities aligned with the individualized education programs (IEPs) of the students they observed. These included social skills workshops, cooperative games, communication-focused exercises, and community participation projects. Each week, teacher candidates submitted lesson plans, carried out selected activities under supervision, and reflected on their practices through written reports and group discussions. This process was not limited to a single placement; rather, it involved continuous engagement across different environments throughout the term. This iterative cycle enabled candidates to gradually strengthen their pedagogical competence, classroom management strategies, and professional awareness regarding inclusive practices. We sought to assess the applicability and effectiveness of out-of-school learning environments designed by teacher candidates according to their specific disciplines.

Data Collection Instruments

In order to collect comprehensive data, the researcher developed a semi-structured interview questionnaire. The expert opinion regarding the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument were provided by two specialists from the departments of Curriculum and Instruction and Special Education Teaching. 10 questions were prepared for the interview. After the specialists' feedback on the interview questions, two items were removed. The data gathered from the semi-structured interview form was collected and recorded in audio format during the focus group interview with 6-people-group.. Within the scope of the out-of-school

learning course, pre-service special education teachers were asked questions to elicit their perspectives on activities for students with special educational needs, particularly regarding social acceptance, social interaction, and professional development. In order to enhance the reliability and trustworthiness of the data, the analysis of the data acquired from the instrument was consistently supported by area specialists. Additionally, the results were supported by direct quotations from participants. The audio recordings of the researcher and each interviewee were transcribed individually and kept without any changes. The researcher examined lesson plans about out-of-school learning activities and observed the whole process for detailed data analysis in terms of activity planning, implementation and observations.

Data Analysis

The study used qualitative data analysis approaches to conduct a content analysis. Rather than focusing on general definitions, the analysis process was carried out step by step in relation to the data obtained. First, the audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim. Each transcript was reviewed several times to ensure accuracy and to gain familiarity with the content.

Second, the transcripts were read line by line, and meaningful expressions related to the research questions were identified and coded. These initial codes were noted in coding tables created by the researcher. Third, codes with similar meanings were compared and merged into broader categories, which were then organized into overarching themes.

The researcher and an expert in the field of education and training programs independently reviewed the research data forms and assigned interview codes based on relevant categories and themes. The coding, researcher, and expert opinions of each individual interviewed were compared in order to assess their consistency. During the coding and analysis process, no major disagreements emerged between the researchers; both reached highly consistent interpretations, which enhanced the credibility and dependability of the findings.

To establish validity and reliability, member-checking was conducted with selected participants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations, and an audit trail was maintained by documenting coding decisions. In line with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criteria, credibility was enhanced through triangulation across different data sources. Dependability was ensured by employing double coding, where two independent researchers analyzed the data. Inter-coder agreement was then calculated using the Miles and Huberman (1994) formula, yielding a coefficient of 0.88. This high level of consistency indicates that the coding process was dependable and trustworthy within the qualitative research context. The analysis was conducted manually without the use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software. Codes and categories were systematically organized using word processing and spreadsheet files, which facilitated transparent comparison and refinement of the data.

Finally, the themes identified were interpreted in relation to the research questions and discussed within the framework of existing literature. Direct quotations from participants were integrated under each theme to strengthen credibility and provide evidence for the interpretations.

Research Ethics

All the rules stated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed in the entire process, from the planning, implementation, and data collection to the data analysis. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, "Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Actions" have been carried out.

During the writing process of this study, scientific, ethical, and citation rules were followed; no falsification was made on the collected data, and this study was not sent to any other academic media for evaluation. Participants were informed about the study and signed an informed consent form.

Research ethics committee approval information

Name of the ethics committee: Atatürk University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee.

Date of the decision: 02. 12.2022

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RESULTS

The evaluation of extracurricular teacher activities in relation to inclusive education was conducted based on interviews with teacher candidates. Within this framework, three themes and six categories were reached at the end of the data analysis. Therefore, the themes of "social acceptance, social interaction, and professional competence" were identified. The themes identified in this study encompass adaptation, evaluation of individual communication abilities, personal attributes, academic advancement, and professional development. The detailed information regarding the themes is shown in Table 1.

On the other hand, according to the perspectives of the pre-service teachers, the merits of out-of-school learning activities lie in their consideration of learner needs during the planning process, their adaptability, and their ability to create tangible experiences, particularly for individuals requiring special education. Furthermore, it was asserted that individuals requiring special education face challenges in managing out-of-school learning activities. It was recommended that comprehensive plans be developed, taking into account the specific needs of each student based on their level of inadequacy. The study also identified the difficulties encountered in obtaining permission from school administrators and families as the primary weaknesses of these activities. The perspectives of the pre-service teachers acquired in this study are as follows:

"...out-of-school learning activities contributed to the practical application of the theory in terms of education..." S7

"More stimuli, that is, materials, can be presented for students to do a more productive activity. In addition, what is told can be made concrete as much as possible." S6

"While planning out-of-school learning activities, the inadequacy and expectations of individuals must be taken into account. It is very important that the same type of inadequacy and the same degree of inadequacy in the activities to be done..." S3

"...a useful training for students' awareness development. Getting permission from parents and official persons is one of the difficulties I have experienced." S5

Table 1*The Results About Out-Of-School Learning Environment Activies In Terms Of Inclusive Education*

Themes	Categories	Codes
Social Acceptance	Adaptation	Keeping up
		Adapting the environment
		Weak security risk environment
		Child's needs
		Learning areas
		Success outcomes
		Exclusion from society
		Lack of social adaptation
		Peer support
		The concept of social state
	Appreciation	Social adaptation behaviors
		Recognition of individuals
		Acceptance
		Being a part of society
		Inclusive education
		Social skills development
		Being seen as worthless
		Getting approval from individuals
		Positive and fun learning environment
Inadequacy sense of individuals		
Social interaction	Individual communication skills	Cooperation
		Keep in touch
		Communication problems
		Sign language
		Language and communication skills
	Personality development	Eye contact
		Introverted people
		Pressing
		Asocial nature
		Having a positive personality
		Socialization
		Out-of-school real life environment
Professional competence	Academic development	The need for interdisciplinary knowledge
		Having the knowledge and skills needed
		Benefiting from the research
		Addressing the needs for learning deficiencies
		Following the current developments related to the field
		Self-confidence
		Functionality of academic knowledge
	Professional attitude	Permanent learning
		Developing positive attitude towards the profession
		Self-development
		Learning by doing

Upon evaluating the perspectives of pre-service teachers towards out-of-school learning activities as a whole and the efficacy of the course, certain themes such as "social acceptance, social interaction, and professional competence" become apparent. The comprehensive presentation of the themes, categories, and codes pertaining to the views of the pre-service teachers in this particular domain may be found in Table 1. According to the views of the candidates pursuing a career in special education, they have observed that possessing theoretical knowledge regarding out-of-school learning activities holds significant value in facilitating the engagement of individuals requiring special education within social contexts. Furthermore, this knowledge aids in fostering effective communication with diverse individuals and notably contributes to the enhancement of students' self-assurance, favorable self-conception, and social ability. Different points of view have been expressed.

"I think this is one of the most important points. Because one of the most important things for socialization is such activities. It gives a more productive result both for the child and for the society." S6

"...Students socialize by being in the same environment with different people, different from the school environment. It was very good for them to go out of the routine and see different people. The friendly and sincere behavior of the people they met encouraged them." S5

Based on the assessment conducted by pre-service teachers, it is evident that individuals requiring special education are evaluated in terms of their social acceptance and social interaction. The theme of social acceptance encompasses the categories of "adaptation and appreciation," while the theme of social interaction encompasses the categories of "communication skills and personality development." According to the responses provided by the pre-service teachers, it was observed that individuals requiring special education tend to experience social isolation and exhibit limited ability in the domain of communication skills. The perspectives of the pre-service teachers gathered in this study are as follows:

"These individuals do not want to be involved in social groups because they are shy. These individuals, who have low language and communication skills, do not make an effort in this direction because they think that they will be alone with the fear of exclusion. It makes learning functional, permanent, meaningful and fun... these individuals can show positive developments in their education and gain a place in society without being excluded by their peers." S1

"...Because with these activities, students are included in the society and become a part of the society like individuals with normal development. This is extremely important for students." S3

"...these individuals who have difficulties in social adaptation will be isolated from the society and will be a defect instead of benefit to the society..." S4

"...planning these activities according to the inadequacies of the students in need of special education can provide academic and social development for the child... Along with the out-of-school learning lesson, they learn something about socializing, facilitating their participation in society by going to activities such as visiting activities, fairs, etc. with the students in need of out-of-school learning. we can benefit them." S5

"It is important for individuals who need special education to be supported in terms of social interaction. It is ensured that they are supported in every way..." S7

"...my expectations for students are that students should take into account their individual differences and gain daily life skills in the most appropriate way. In order to achieve this, it would be beneficial to integrate these environments with the needs of the students..." S9

"...in order to be able to train these individuals, first of all, I need to have sufficient equipment. Otherwise, I may encounter undesirable results. Because the main purpose of the profession is to integrate individuals with special needs into the society, to make them a part of the society and to make them as self-sufficient as possible..." S4

"...due to my first undergraduate degree, I have worked in the field of special education for a certain period of time. What I learned at that time instilled the belief that I could be successful in this field, and that's why I chose this department..." S3

In contrast, pre-service teachers expressed that extracurricular learning activities significantly enhanced their professional competencies. These activities provided opportunities to work outside the traditional classroom setting, cultivate their professional skills from diverse perspectives, analyze and implement curriculum content, and gain practical experience prior to entering the field. The perspectives of the pre-service teachers regarding this matter are as follows:

"... the practices I have seen in this course have taught me that there can be different professional perspectives. I have never seen before that there are colorful applications that can think so differently. In-class activities have been very beneficial for me as I know that there will be more gains where there is difference." S3

"The course of out-of-school learning environments allowed me to have knowledge about out-of-school learning environments and to experience what I can do about it before I start my career." S1

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Inclusivity and the Role of Out-of-School Learning Environments

Inclusive education is widely recognized as a multifaceted undertaking that embraces and accepts the diverse range of societal distinctions. This approach offers enormous potential for content creation, catering not only to the educational requirements of individuals with special needs but also to those of the broader population. This study investigated the potential of out-of-school learning environments for individuals requiring special education, as perceived by pre-service teachers. Specifically, it focused on the teacher candidates' use of different spaces before implementing activities in terms of social acceptance, interaction, and professional development. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies emphasizing that inclusive education must extend beyond the classroom and incorporate community-based and out-of-school learning environments (Batu, Kircaali-İftar & Uzun, 2004; Angelides & Hajisoteriou, 2013).

Design and Implementation of Out-of-School Learning Activities

It is crucial to underscore the importance of careful deliberation in the development of out-of-school learning environments. This entails the need to adjust the environment in which these activities take place, implement safety measures, tailor the design to suit the characteristics of the learners, and ensure that the activities align with the desired learning outcomes. Based on the perspectives of pre-service teachers, it is apparent that they possess practical knowledge pertaining to the execution of their instructional endeavors and have certain anticipations regarding their social integration. This perspective aligns with international and national recommendations that stress individualized planning in special education (Kargin, Acarlar & Sucuoğlu, 2003; Gök & Erbaş, 2011). Moreover, the emphasis on adapting activities to learners' needs is not unique to this study but has been a central theme in inclusive pedagogy for decades, particularly within constructivist and social learning paradigms (Vygotsky, 1978; UNESCO, 2020).

Social Acceptance, Interaction, and Stakeholder Engagement

Teacher candidates emphasized that out-of-school learning activities contribute to social acceptability and interaction, helping individuals feel esteemed, adapt socially, develop communication skills, and foster personality growth. Following the implementation of activities, they asserted that adaptability and practicality are vital in responding to diverse needs. Comparable outcomes were observed in Angelides and Hajisoteriou's (2013) research, which

highlighted the role of social learning communities in fostering collaboration among families, educators, and institutions. Furthermore, the integration of families and stakeholders into learning aligns with contemporary curricula in teacher education, where courses on cooperative learning, family involvement, and community engagement are already embedded (Konuk & Gntař, 2019). However, it should also be acknowledged that some studies argue these principles, while recognized, are not always effectively translated into practice due to limited resources, inadequate teacher preparation, or systemic challenges (Akbulut et al., 2021). This dual perspective demonstrates both the promise and limitations of out-of-school learning environments.

Contribution to Professional Development of Pre-Service Teachers

Another crucial outcome of out-of-school learning activities is the exposure of students to real-life experiences, fostering long-lasting learning through hands-on approaches. This adaptability promotes inclusivity by addressing the unique needs of diverse impairment groups. From the standpoint of pre-service teachers, these activities offered practical hands-on experience prior to embarking on their professional careers. They enhanced awareness of instructional strategies, personal limitations, and opportunities beyond the classroom. This is consistent with the literature that stresses the importance of practice-based training in teacher education, which enables teacher candidates to cultivate 21st-century skills such as adaptability, creativity, and collaboration (Dahan et al., 2017; Bourke & O'Neill, 2021). In the Turkish context, this aligns with national policy documents, including the "Ulusal Otizm Eylem Planı (2016–2019)," which emphasizes family involvement, inclusive out-of-school programs, and the development of social skills for individuals with special needs. By situating the findings within such frameworks, the study highlights both its practical relevance and its contribution to ongoing policy discussions.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the understanding of how out-of-school learning environments are perceived by pre-service special education teachers. The findings underscore the importance of designing adaptable, learner-centered, and socially integrative activities. While these insights echo long-standing debates in inclusive education, the study's value lies in contextualizing them within the perspectives of Turkish pre-service teachers, thereby providing localized evidence that complements international literature.

In conclusion, out-of-school learning environments have the potential to:

- Enhance social acceptance and stakeholder collaboration,
- Support the professional development of pre-service teachers, and

Contribute to inclusive practices consistent with both international research and national education policies.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to its case and to the data collected through the research instruments. As the participants were only pre-service special education teachers from one faculty, the findings cannot be generalized to all teacher education contexts. Moreover, the study relied on self-reported perceptions, which may be influenced by personal biases.

To address these limitations, future studies could expand the sample to include pre-service teachers from different universities, departments, and cultural contexts. Additionally, incorporating classroom observations and longitudinal follow-ups could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how out-of-school learning environments impact teacher candidates' professional development.

For future research, it is also recommended to: (a) conduct comparative studies between in-school and out-of-school learning practices, (b) investigate the long-term effects of such

practices on teacher competencies, and (c) examine the perspectives of other stakeholders, including families, administrators, and students with special educational needs. These directions could strengthen the evidence base and provide deeper insights for both theory and practice.

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The author states no conflict of interest.

Statement of Publication Ethics

All the rules stated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed in the entire process, from the planning, implementation, and data collection to the data analysis. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, "Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Actions" have been carried out.

During the writing process of this study, scientific, ethical, and citation rules were followed; no falsification was made on the collected data, and this study was not sent to any other academic media for evaluation.

Participants were informed about the study and signed an informed consent form.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZ

Giriş

Eğitim, bireysel ve toplumsal gelişimi destekleyen temel bir haktır. Geçtiğimiz yıllar boyunca, küresel çabalar, eğitimin fırsat eşitliğini sağlamanın bir yolu olarak kullanılmasını teşvik etmiştir. 1990 yılında başlatılan "Herkes için Eğitim" girişimi, kapsayıcı eğitimin farklı öğrenme ihtiyaçlarını karşılamada temel bir strateji olduğunu vurgulamıştır (UNESCO, 2001). 1994 yılında resmi olarak tanınan kapsayıcı eğitim, her öğrencinin benzersiz özelliklerini, ilgi alanlarını ve becerilerini kabul eder. Kapsayıcı eğitim, eğitimsel engelleri kaldırmayı ve tüm bireyleri öğrenme sürecine entegre etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. UNESCO'ya (2009) göre kapsayıcı eğitim, içeriği, metodolojileri ve öğrenme ortamlarını uyarlayarak sosyal kabulü artırarak eşitliği teşvik etmektedir. Tarihsel olarak, engelli öğrencilere ve özel gereksinim ihtiyacı olan ayrıcalıklı gruplara odaklanmışlardır. Kapsayıcı eğitim ekonomik, eğitimsel ve sosyal faydaları desteklerken aynı zamanda ayrılmış eğitim modelleriyle karşılaştırıldığında uygun maliyetli olduğu ve öğrenme fırsatlarını artırdığı belirtilmiştir (UNESCO, 2009). İlgili literatür incelendiğinde araştırmaların öncelikle teorik çerçevelere odaklandığı görülmektedir. Bununla beraber okul dışı öğrenme ortamlarının sosyal uyum üzerindeki etkisine ilişkin çalışmaların sınırlı olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda bu çalışmada, okul dışı öğrenmenin özel eğitime ihtiyaç duyan öğrenciler için sosyal kabulün ve etkileşimin nasıl desteklendiği araştırılmıştır. Ayrıca özel eğitim öğretmen adaylarının okul dışı öğrenmeye ilişkin bakış açıları da incelenmiştir. Çalışma, örgün eğitim ortamlarının dışında katılımı geliştiren pratik stratejileri değerlendirerek literatürdeki boşlukları doldurmayı amaçlamıştır. Yapılandırılmış okul dışı öğrenmeyi entegre ederek kapsayıcı eğitim, farklı öğrenciler için anlamlı fırsatlar sağlayabilmekte ve geleceğin eğitimcilerinin mesleki gelişimini teşvik edebilmektedir. Araştırmadan elde edilen bulguların, özel gereksinimli bireylerin sosyal entegrasyonunu geliştirmeye yönelik eğitim politikalarına ve uygulamalarına katkı sağlaması beklenilmektedir.

Yöntem

Bu nitel araştırmada, özel eğitim öğretmen adaylarının kaynaştırma eğitimi kapsamında okul dışı öğrenme ortamlarını kullanımlarını araştırmak amacıyla durum çalışması deseni kullanılmıştır. Durum çalışmaları, karmaşık olayların gerçek yaşam bağlamlarında derinlemesine incelenmesine olanak sağlar (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006; Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2016). Araştırmada, öğretmen adaylarının okul dışı öğrenme etkinliklerine katılmadan önce ve sonra sosyal kabul, sosyal etkileşim ve mesleki gelişime ilişkin bakış açılarını incelenmiştir. Katılımcılar arasında "Okul Dışı Öğrenme Ortamı" dersine kayıtlı 33 özel eğitim öğretmen adayı (15 erkek, 18 kadın) yer almıştır. Çeşitliliğin sağlanması amacıyla maksimum çeşitlilik örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Katılımcılar özel eğitim öğretim programlarına uygun ders planları geliştirerek, planlarını okul dışı öğrenme ortamlarında uygulamışlardır. Katılımcıların gizliliği kodlar atanarak sağlanmıştır. Araştırma uygulamasının gerçekleştirilmesi için Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Etik Kurulu'ndan (Protokol No: 2022/01) etik onay izni alınmıştır. Veriler yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Görüşmelerde odak grup görüşmesi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Verilerin geçerliği ve güvenilirliğini desteklemek amacıyla odak grup görüşmeleri ses kaydına alınmış ve bulgular doğrudan alıntılarla desteklenmiştir. Verilerin analizinde içerik analizi kullanılmıştır. Bu doğrultuda veriler sistematik olarak kodlanmış ve ortaya çıkan temalar ve kodlar hem araştırmacı hem de bir uzman tarafından güvenilirlik açısından gözden geçirilmiştir. Araştırma verilerinin tutarlılığını belirlemek için Miles ve Huberman (1994) formülü (0,88) kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada "Yüksek Öğretim Kurumları Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Yönergesi"ne uyulmuştur ve araştırmanın planlanması, verilerin toplanması ve analizi aşamalarında etik ilkeler takip edilmiştir.

Bulgular

Araştırmada özel eğitim öğretmeni adaylarının kaynaştırma eğitimi çerçevesinde okul dışı öğrenme etkinliklerine yönelik bakış açıları değerlendirilmiştir. Üç ana tema ortaya çıkmıştır: Sosyal kabul, sosyal etkileşim ve mesleki yeterlilik. Sosyal kabul altında katılımcılar uyum, akran desteği ve kapsayıcı eğitim gibi faktörlere vurgu yaparken, sosyal dışlanma ve uyum becerileri eksikliği gibi zorluklara da dikkat çekmişlerdir. Sosyal etkileşim, gerçek yaşam deneyimlerinin ve sosyalleşme fırsatlarının önemini vurgulayarak iletişim becerileri ve kişilik gelişimi ile bağlantı kurulmuştur. Mesleki yeterlilik, akademik ve mesleki gelişimi içerirken; katılımcılar disiplinlerarası bilginin, uygulamalı deneyimin ve kişisel gelişimin önemini kabul etmiştir. Öğretmen adayları okul dışı öğrenme etkinliklerinin somut öğrenme deneyimleri sağladığını ve özel gereksinimli öğrencilerin sosyal ortamlara etkili bir şekilde katılmalarını sağladığını vurgulamışlardır. Ancak velilerden ve yöneticilerden izin alınması, etkinliklerin öğrencilerin bireysel ihtiyaçlarına göre uyarlanması gibi zorluklar da dile getirilmiştir. Öğrencilerin yeteneklerine göre hazırlanmış iyi yapılandırılmış planların bu etkinliklerin etkinliğini artırabileceği öne sürülmüştür. Katılımcılar, bu etkinliklerin teori ve pratik arasında köprü kurmaya yardımcı olduğunu, öğretme becerilerini ve mesleki hazırlıklarını güçlendirdiğini ifade etmişlerdir. Katılımcıların birçoğu, çeşitli eğitim ortamlarına maruz kalmanın kapsayıcı öğrenme stratejilerini tasarlama ve uygulama konusundaki güvenlerini arttırdığını belirtmiştir. Ayrıca özel gereksinimli öğrencilerin başlangıçtaki tereddütlerine rağmen bu deneyimler sayesinde yavaş yavaş sosyal becerileri ve iletişim becerilerini geliştirdiklerini gözlemlemişlerdir. Sonuç olarak, okul dışı öğrenme ortamları sosyal katılımı, etkileşimi ve mesleki büyümeyi teşvik ederek hem öğrenci gelişimine hem de öğretmen hazırlığına katkıda bulunduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Katılımcılar, bu deneyimleri tüm öğrenciler için optimize etmek amacıyla daha fazla kurumsal desteğe ihtiyaç duyduklarını da vurgulamışlardır.

Tartışma ve Sonuç

Kapsayıcı eğitim, toplumsal çeşitliliği kucaklayan ve hem özel eğitim gerektiren bireylerin hem de daha geniş nüfusun öğrenme ihtiyaçlarını karşılayan kapsamlı bir yaklaşımdır. Bu çalışma, okul dışı öğrenme ortamlarının kapsayıcı eğitimdeki rolünü araştırıyor ve hizmet öncesi özel eğitim öğretmenlerinin bu alanları sosyal kabul, etkileşim ve mesleki gelişim için nasıl algıladıklarına ve kullandıklarına odaklanmaktadır. Öğretmen adayları, uyarlanabilirliği, güvenlik önlemlerini ve öğrenme çıktılarıyla uyumu vurgulayarak dikkatle tasarlanmış okul dışı öğrenme ortamlarının önemini vurgulamaktadırlar. Bu tür ortamların saygınlığı, sosyal uyumu ve iletişim becerilerini teşvik ederek sosyal kabulü artırdığına ve aynı zamanda kendi mesleki gelişimlerine de katkıda bulduklarına inanmaktadırlar. Ancak faaliyetlerin bireysel ihtiyaçlara göre özelleştirilmesi ve paydaş desteğinin alınması gibi zorluklara da dikkat çekmektedirler. Okul dışı ortamlarda deneysel öğrenme, öğrencilere gerçek yaşam deneyimleri sağlayarak, uzun süreli kalıcılığı desteklemektedir. Bu faaliyetler sosyal uyumu teşvik ederek özel gereksinimli bireylerin topluma etkili bir şekilde katılmasını sağlamaktadır. İlgili araştırmalarda (Akbulut et al., 2021; Batu et al., 2004; Gök & Erbaş, 2011), kapsayıcı öğrenme ortamlarının farklı eğitim ihtiyaçlarının karşılanmasında önemli bir rol oynadığı öne sürülmektedir. Araştırmada öğretmen adayları paydaşların işbirliğinin önemini vurgulayarak, aktif katılımın sağlanması için aileler, yöneticiler ve kurumlar arasında olumlu ve iletişimsel bir yaklaşımın gerekliliğini vurgulamışlardır. Ayrıca, okul dışı öğrenme etkinliklerinin öğretmen yetiştirme programlarına entegre edilmesi, öğretmen adaylarının mesleki öz farkındalığını teşvik ederek, hizmete başlamadan önce teorik ve pratik boşlukları tespit etmelerine yardımcı olduğu görülmüştür. Bu etkinlikler 21. yüzyıl öğretim yeterlilikleriyle uyumlu olup eğitimcileri esnek, öğrenci merkezli ve işbirlikli öğretim stratejilerini benimsemeye teşvik etmektedir (Dahan vd., 2017; Konuk & GÜNTAŞ, 2019). Sonuç olarak, okul dışı öğrenme ortamlarının kapsayıcı eğitim için etkili bir platform sağladığı, teori ve pratik arasında köprü kurduğu, sosyal entegrasyonu teşvik ettiği ve geleceğin eğitimcilerinin mesleki gelişimini arttırdığı söylenebilir.