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CHANGE IN SENTIMENTS, ATTITUDES AND CONCERNS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A PERSPECTIVE FROM OF PRESERVICE PRESCHOOL TEACHERS**Fatma Betül ŞENOL***Res. Asst. Dr., Afyon Kocatepe University, Turkey, fbetululu@aku.edu.tr
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ORCID: 0000-0003-1987-8393**Received: 28.12.2019**Accepted: 18.05.2020**Published: 07.06.2020***ABSTRACT**

Inclusive education is a global movement that mediates the prevention of the exclusion of children with special needs in order to support their participation in the general education system. It is thought that the sentiments, attitudes, and concerns of the prospective preschool teachers towards inclusive education are related to their knowledge level about inclusive education. Therefore, in this study, the aim is to examine the change in the sentiments, attitudes, and concerns of the prospective preschool teachers towards inclusive education after they receive a training about inclusive education. The research adopted one-group pretest-posttest model as the experimental design. The study group was comprised of 138 prospective preschool teachers who attend Inclusive Education Program (IEP). IEP was developed by researchers with the purpose of increasing the level of knowledge, sentiments, and attitudes of prospective preschool teachers in terms of inclusive education and of decreasing their concern levels. IEP is a 10-week program prepared by researchers by examining the relevant literature and taking expert opinions. As data collection tools, "Personal Information Form" and "Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns Related to Inclusive Education Scale" were used. As a result of study, the sentiment, attitude, and concern levels of the prospective preschool teachers towards inclusive education were determined at a moderate level. In line with this conclusion, an intervention plan was made to increase the sentiment and attitude levels of the prospective preschool teachers and to decrease their concern levels. Following the implemented inclusive education training, it was observed that the sentiment and attitude levels of the prospective preschool teachers towards inclusive education increased and their concern levels decreased.

Keywords: Inclusive education, sentiments, attitudes, concerns, preservice preschool teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Previous work suggests that the students with special needs were placed in particular schools and classrooms depending on their needs, and their relationships with the normally developing children were limited. However, approximately for the last thirty years, it has been emphasized that a reform that focuses on certain values such as social justice, respect to differences and equality should be made in the education of children with special needs. Therefore, the requirement to make necessary changes regarding the legislation on education has been emphasized at an international level and newly developing policies have started to encourage the children with special needs to take part in inclusive education (Hornby, 2014; Liasidou, 2015).

Inclusive education is a global movement that mediates the prevention of the exclusion of children with special needs in order to support their participation in the general education system (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). Inclusive education is a practice that brings children, families, teachers, and the society together in general education schools, and it includes the philosophy of acceptance, belongingness, and being a part of the society. In the inclusive education, all children, regardless of their characteristics, receive education appropriate for their development in general education classes (Salend, 2010). In this context, inclusive education is an important guide for the policies, procedures, and teaching strategies that make it easier for children with special needs to receive effective education (Hornby, 2014). The term inclusive education was defined in the United Nations Salamanca Statement as combating discriminatory societies, building tolerant (hospitable) societies, and making education available to all individuals (UNESCO, 1994). This statement emphasizes that children with special needs should benefit equally from all educational opportunities.

The term inclusion is described in different ways by researchers. Operti, Walker and Zhang, (2013) explained the ever-evolving structure of inclusion based on four basic principles; the perspective based on human rights, meeting the needs of children with special needs, responding to the opinions of marginalized groups, and transforming and adapting the education system. Similarly, Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) described 'inclusive education' within six types of thinking typology. The first is to present inclusive education in accordance with the special needs and special educational needs of children; second, the inclusion of children, who display negative behaviors and are excluded from school, through disciplinary exclusions; third, the inclusion of all disadvantaged groups (ethnic minorities, nomadic communities, etc.); fourth, the idea that all children should be integrated into general education schools and receive education. The fifth is to ensure that all individuals have access to education, as defined in the UNESCO's "Education for All" Global Monitoring Report. The sixth is the idea that inclusion has an educational and community-based structure and covers values such as equality and respect for differences (Ainscow et al., 2006). When the six ideas are examined, it is observed that the inclusive education focuses on all children regardless of the special needs they have, and participation of children in inclusive education is significant for a successful implementation of inclusion. Messiou (2017) stated that it is important to focus on all children, not just children with special needs, and educational principles that emphasize the adoption of various values.

When the definitions related to the inclusive education are examined, certain explanations that emphasize different points of inclusive education come to fore. Although the focal points are different, explanations on inclusive education are in parallel with each other in certain points such as providing education for children with special needs together with normally developing children, allowing them to reach education, and emphasizing values such as equality and respect. It is worth pointing out that the focus of inclusive education applied in Turkey is similar to the explanations given.

Inclusive Education in Turkey

Inclusive education in Turkey is a practice that has been on the national agenda for almost thirty years. In international terms, Turkey accepted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children in 1989. The declaration emphasizes that all individuals equally enjoy the right to education, the requirements of the children with special needs concerning health, care and education should be met and individuals with special needs should be integrated into the society (UNICEF, 2004; United Nations, 1948). It can be mentioned that these agreements constitute the basis of the idea of inclusion of children with special needs in Turkey.

In national terms, starting with 1950s, children with special needs became the subject of education rather than being accepted as a subject of health. The services provided for the children with special needs were transferred to the Ministry of National Education from the Ministry of Health and Welfare. In 1955, the Psychological Service Center was established under the Ministry of National Education (Akçamete, 1998). When the legal regulations are examined, it is observed that the educational rights of the children with special needs are guaranteed under the equality, social, economic rights and education right in the Constitution of Republic of Turkey (1982).

In Turkey, the opportunity for the children with special needs to receive education through inclusive education was firstly stated in the Law on Children with Need of Special Education. The law mentions the necessity for children with special needs to receive education together with their normally developing peers and for the school administrations to do their part on this issue (The Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 1983). At this point, it is observed that the focal point is educating children with special needs together with normally developing children in the same class, and no additional application is mentioned about improving the potential of children with special needs. Certain decisions were taken in the Special Education Council convened in 1991 about making the inclusive education practices widespread and planning the education of children with special needs in line with their individual developments (Head Council of Education and Morality, 1999). This decision is important for children with special needs since it focuses on their individual development in general education classes and provides additional applications for them. The inclusive practices have been systematically applied with the Statutory Decree No. 573 issued in 1997. The decree emphasized that the education of children with special needs should be given in general education classes using appropriate methods and techniques by preparing individualized education plans. Furthermore, including the

concept of early education in the decree draws attention as an important development (Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 1997). In 2006, the Regulation on Special Education Services was issued, and the regulation was updated in 2018. The regulation emphasizes that children with special needs should receive education by being socialized with an individualized education plan prepared in line with their developments and that their preschool education is compulsory so that their education starts at an early age (Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 2018). In addition to this regulation, the Circular on Educational Practices Through Inclusion/Integration has been published on inclusive education. The circular emphasizes that the access of children with special needs to general education should be facilitated, they should benefit equally from general education, and they should be able to receive education in schools of all types and at all levels with individualized education plans prepared specifically for them (Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 2017).

Examining the development of the inclusive education in Turkey, it is observed that its scope and significance have been increasing. In Turkey, inclusive education is implemented on children with special needs in general education classes together with their normally developing peers by applying individualized education plans prepared for them, under appropriate methods and techniques. All children with special needs can benefit equally from inclusive practices at all levels of education (Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 2010).

Inclusive education in Turkey starts at an early age with compulsory preschool education. All activity plans within the daily education flows in the preschool education program include the “adaptation” part for children with special needs. In this part, the activities are planned to make the learning processes suitable for the child with special needs, to guide the child, and most importantly to increase his/her participation in the activity. In addition, in order to make the adaptation easier for teachers, an appendix listing the typical symptoms and developmental characteristics for each group of disabilities was prepared in the preschool curriculum for special education groups suitable for inclusive education. Along with the adaptations in the educational programs, preschool teachers also prepare an Individualized Education Plan for children with special needs. In this way, preschool teachers increase the participation of children with special needs in activities, facilitate their interaction with their normally developing peers, and maximize their current potential (Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 2013).

Starting the inclusive education at the preschool period, the children with special needs are socialized at an earlier phase, they can acquire and adopt certain knowledge and skills more easily. Naturally, preschool teachers, who are the main elements of the education system and are the first teachers of children, play a great role in the acquisition of such knowledge.

Training of the Preschool Teachers and Inclusion

The expectations from the preschool teachers have also started to change as a result of social changes, and efforts to adapt to the community expectations, and developments in science and technology. With the orientation towards more democratic and fair education environments, the need for preschool teachers has increased in the inclusion contexts. As a result of these changes, the emerging prevailing opinion was that the needs of children in the preschool period have become dense and more difficult (Forlin, 2010). Therefore, the idea that preschool teachers need to receive training to meet the educational needs of children with various special needs started to gain importance (Sharma, Forlin, Loreman & Earle, 2006). From this point on, UNESCO (1994) made an international recommendation that information on inclusive education should be a part of teacher training, that is, this training should be given in the pre-service period. Providing teachers with information about inclusive education in the pre-service period is important in terms of eliminating their concerns about inclusive education and preventing them from having a negative attitude (Sharma et al., 2006). Emphasizing the significance of building a positive attitude in teachers towards inclusive education, Murphy (1996), Hobbs and Westling (1998) stated that teachers will gain positive attitudes with opportunities such as education and application/experience during the pre-service period, and these positive attitudes will not change easily.

The positive behaviors and attitudes of teachers are modeled and imitated by children (Kaya & Tuna, 2008). Similarly, normally developing children approach the children with special needs by modeling their teachers' attitudes. In addition, children very easily adopt their preschool behaviors and attitudes in a neutral way (Metin, 1992). Therefore, to increase the acceptance of children with special needs by the society, it can be mentioned that especially the knowledge levels as well as the positive attitudes of the preschool teachers concerning the inclusive education should be increased; for this purpose, courses related to inclusive education should be included in the preschool teacher training programs. Forlin (2010) stated that teacher training is provided in many countries through a three/four-year undergraduate education and inclusive education is offered as professional education. Boe, Shin and Cook (2007) emphasized that inclusive education in traditional teacher training programs in some countries is offered as a part of a separate course, and a limited number of prospective teachers can benefit from these courses.

When the preschool teacher training programs in Turkey are examined, it is observed that the prospective teachers study at the faculty of education in universities that offer a four-year program. The teacher training program includes subject-matter knowledge courses covering the basic topics related to preschool education and vocational courses covering general educational sciences. Concerning the education of the children with special needs, the prospective teachers take a three-hour theoretical "Special Education" course per week in which they learn about the types and developmental characteristics of children with special needs in detail and the other three-hour theoretical and practical "Preschool Inclusion" courses per week involve the inclusion of children with special needs into general education classes, adaptation of teaching, and preparation of

individualized education plans. In addition, prospective teachers practice in kindergartens one day a week in the senior year, prepare daily training flows and activity plans, and put their knowledge into practice by writing the adaptation parts of the activity plans for children with special needs of any type (Council of Higher Education, 2018).

In addition, through the courses and practices experienced during the teacher training period, preschool teachers acquire knowledge about children with special needs and inclusive education. So, they do not feel concerned if there are children with special needs in their classrooms and they reach the level to guide the children with special needs to improve their potentials and to maximize the benefit they obtain from the general education services.

Attitudes, Concerns and Sentiments of Teachers Towards Inclusive Education

Attitude can be defined as the relationship between the intention and behaviors concerning a subject or a person (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1972), or a learned and evaluated response to a case (Bohner & Dickel, 2011). Individuals, in the face of certain situations, evaluate their knowledge and shape their attitudes in line with their beliefs. In order for the attitudes of the prospective teachers to be positive towards inclusive education, it is necessary to have a high level of knowledge. Thus, prospective teachers can shape positive attitudes (Chambers & Forlin, 2010).

The knowledge and attitudes of prospective teachers for inclusive education is a key indicator of the quality of inclusive education. Teachers with adequate knowledge and positive attitudes can easily recognize and meet the needs of both the children with special needs and the normally developing ones (Mitchell & Hegde, 2007; Ryan & Gottfried, 2012). When teachers have a negative attitude, children with special needs cannot fully benefit from inclusive education (Simpson, Boer-Ott & Smith-Myles, 2003). This situation is especially important in the preschool period, which is the beginning of the educational life. Previous studies in the literature revealed that preschool teachers have positive ideas for inclusive education (Mitchell & Hegde, 2007); however, they do not have sufficient knowledge about how to apply inclusive education (Odom & Bailey, 2001), how to adapt the programs to a child with special needs, how to ensure the participation of children with special needs in activities (Hadadian & Hargrove, 2001). Moreover, they feel insufficient about inclusive education (Forlin, 2001).

For the quality of inclusive education, the sentiments and concerns of teachers are as important as their attitudes (Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009). In order to develop this, it is important to determine the sentiment and concern levels of prospective teachers during the pre-service education (Forlin, Earle, Loreman & Sharma, 2011); however, sentiments, attitudes, and concerns are not taken into account in the trainings given to prospective teachers (Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009). It is difficult to influence the sentiments and concerns about inclusive education when this subject is not included in the teacher training programs (Jordan, Schwartz & McGhie-Richmond, 2009). The sentiments, attitudes and concerns that are not taken into account during the

pre-service training affect the attitudes and concerns of the teachers on inclusive education significantly at the beginning of their professional life due to the failures on inclusive education practices (Agbenyega, 2007). Therefore, providing a training for the prospective teachers at the beginning of their professional life about their sentiments and concerns will help them shape their sentiments and concerns in a positive way (Changpinit, Greaves & Frydenberg, 2007; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Forlin et al., 2011).

When the literature is examined, it is observed that previous studies were conducted on the attitudes (Sucuoğlu, Bakkaloğlu, Karasu, Demir & Akalın, 2014; Sünbül & Sargın, 2002), opinions (Doğaroğlu & Dümenci, 2015; Özyayın & Çolak, 2011; Özdemir, 2010), as well as perceptions of self-sufficiency (Sarı, Çeliköz & Çeker, 2009) of the preschool and prospective teachers concerning inclusive education. In these studies, it was emphasized that in order to improve the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of the prospective preschool teachers about inclusive education, it is necessary to improve their knowledge level on inclusive education. However, despite a remarkable number of studies examining the impact of informing prospective preschool teachers about inclusive education, the number of studies on their attitudes is quite limited (Kayılı, Koçyiğit, Doğru & Çiftçi, 2010; Kılıç, 2011).

It is thought that the sentiments, attitudes, and concerns of the prospective preschool teachers towards inclusive education are related to their knowledge level about inclusive education. Therefore, in this study, the aim is to examine the change in the sentiments, attitudes, and concerns of the prospective preschool teachers towards inclusive education after they receive a training about inclusive education.

In this study, answers are sought for the following questions:

1. What are the sentiment, attitude, and concern levels of the prospective preschool teachers towards inclusive education?
2. Are there statistically significant differences between the inclusive education pretest-posttest scores of the prospective preschool teachers, who received inclusive education training?

METHOD

Research Model

In this study, one-group pretest-posttest model was used, which is among pre-experimental designs. In this model, the individuals in the study group are initially tested, an educational intervention is applied, and subsequently, they are tested again. In the model, the reason behind the high posttest results is accepted as a result of the training provided (Karasar, 2007; Marsden & Torgerson, 2012).

Participants

The study group of the research is comprised of 138 prospective preschool teachers who were attending the Afyon Kocatepe University, Faculty of Education, Department of Preschool Education in the 2018-2019 education year. Owing to the simplicity in reaching the population of the research, sampling was not applied, and the population of the research was accepted as the study group.

The points to be taken into consideration in the selection of the participants were: being a pre-school teacher candidate, continuing to the third grade, taking the Preschool Inclusive Education training, having not previously received education on inclusion and volunteering.

The mean age of the participants was 22.09 of the 134 participants, 116 were women (84,1%), 22 were men (15,9%), and none of them had a previous training experience about inclusive education.

Research Instruments

In the research, the Personal Information Form and Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education Revised (SACIE-R) Scale were used as the data collection tools.

Personal Information Form. It was developed by the researchers and comprised of questions concerning certain demographic data of the participants including their age, gender, or previous training experience on inclusive education.

Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education Revised (SACIE-R) Scale. The scale was developed by Forlin, Earle, Loreman and Sharma (2011) in order to determine the sentiments, attitudes, and concerns of the prospective teachers about inclusive education. It was adapted to Turkish by Bayar, Özaşkın and Bardak (2015). Comprised of 15 items, the scale is a four-point Likert scale which is ranked between "Strongly Disagree (1)" and "Strongly Agree (4)". The scale is comprised of three sub-dimensions as "Sentiments About Inclusive Education", "Attitudes About Inclusive Education", and "Concerns About Inclusive Education". Forlin et al. (2011) determined that the reliability coefficient was .75 for the whole scale and this coefficient varied between .71 and .78 for the sub-dimensions. Bayar et al. (2015) concluded that the reliability coefficient was .88 for the whole scale, and the coefficient varied between .85 and .88 for the sub-dimensions.

Inclusive Education Program (IEP)

IEP was developed with the purpose of increasing the level of knowledge, sentiments, and attitudes of prospective preschool teachers in terms of inclusive education and of decreasing their concern levels. IEP is a 10-week program prepared by researchers by examining the relevant literature and taking expert opinions. It was integrated into the Preschool Inclusive Education training and given to the participants. IEP was implemented once a week in a three-hour session. The content of the program is as follows: in the first week of

the program, certain information about the concepts of disability, deficiency, inadequacy, classification of children requiring special education, and the reasons for the emergence of inclusive education was presented; in the second week, the definition, purpose, principles, benefits, and support services of inclusive education were taught; in the third week, certain information about the models and the types of participation in inclusive education was given. During the fourth week, information was given about the preparation for inclusive education. The prospective teachers worked in groups to write activities concerning the preparation of the children with special needs, normally developing children, and the families for inclusive education. In the fifth week, discussions were made about what can be done to increase the interaction between the child with special needs and the normally developing child, and the prospective teachers worked in groups to prepare activities to increase the interaction. In the sixth week, the adaptation of teaching was discussed, and the prospective teachers were asked to adapt the classroom environment, the materials used, and the activities planned by working in groups. In the seventh week, information was given about the individualized education plan (INEP) and INEP was prepared with the prospective teachers. In the last three weeks, certain information was given about attitudes, sentiments, and concerns of teachers. With the aim of helping them feel less concerned, the impact of teacher attitudes on the success of inclusive education, the interaction between children, and the approaches of the parents were explained. Video footages of the kindergartens with inclusive education were examined during their play times and discussions were made with the prospective teachers about the implementation.

Data Collection

The data were collected during the spring semester of the 2018-2019 education year. Information was given to the prospective preschool teachers concerning the SACIE-R implementation. The SACIE-R was administered to the study group as a pretest between 4-6 March 2019. The IEP was implemented between 11 March – 17 May 2019 three hours a day, one day a week. SACIE-R was re-administered as a posttest between 20-22 May 2019.

Data Analysis

The scores of the prospective teachers from the SACIE-R and its sub-dimensions were calculated and presented as means and standard deviations. The scores obtained from the pretest and posttests were evaluated by Shapiro Wilk Test to determine whether they demonstrate a normal distribution. Paired t Test was used in the comparison of dependent variables with normal distribution, and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used in comparison of variables that did not demonstrate a normal distribution.

RESULTS

The findings obtained from the study, which aimed at determining the change in the attitudes, sentiments, and concerns of the prospective preschool teachers towards inclusive education, are presented below.

Table 1. Average Scores of the Prospective Preschool Teachers from the SACIE-R

SACIE-R	Test	Mean±Sd.
Sentiments	Pretest	2,87±0,44
Attitudes	Pretest	2,85±0,53
Concerns	Pretest	2,58±0,48
SACIE-R	Pretest	2,77±0,33

When the pretest results of the prospective preschool teachers are examined, it is observed that the general attitude levels for inclusive education are slightly above the neutral point (SACIE-R=2.77±0.33). This demonstrates that the prospective teachers are not at extreme points in attitudes towards inclusive education. When the sub-dimensions are examined, it is observed that the concern (Concern=2.58±0.48) score of prospective preschool teachers for inclusive education is at the lowest level. Since the items were scaled adversely for the concern level, it is observed that the concern levels are high. Additionally, it is observed that the sentiment score (Sentiment=2.87±0.44) for inclusive education is at the highest level compared to the other sub-dimensions. When these results are examined, it can be said that the sentiments, attitudes, and concerns of prospective preschool teachers towards inclusive education are moderate. In order to raise the levels of sentiments and attitudes of prospective preschool teachers towards inclusive education, the Inclusive Education Program, which was prepared to reduce concern levels, was presented to the participants and the pretest posttest scores were compared:

Table 2. Average Scores of the Prospective Preschool Teachers from the SACIE-R and the Comparison of Their Pretest-Posttest Results

SACIE-R	Test	Mean±Sd.	z	p
Sentiments	Pretest	2,87±0,44	2,209	0,027*
	Posttest	2,97±0,44		
Attitudes	Pretest	2,85±0,53	2,252	0,024*
	Posttest	2,99±0,53		
Concerns	Pretest	2,58±0,48	3,509	<0,001*
	Posttest	2,75±0,51		
			<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
SACIE-R	Pretest	2,77±0,33	4,624	<0,001*
	Posttest	2,90±0,34		

p<0.05

According to the results of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks and Independent Samples t test, it was determined that there were statistically significant differences between the pretest and posttest average results in favor of the posttest results concerning the whole SACIE-R scale (z =4.624, p<.05), and the sub-dimensions of "Sentiments" (z=2,209, p<.05), "Attitudes" (z=2,252, p<.05), and "Concerns" (z=3,509, p<.05). These findings show that IEP is an effective program in increasing the sentiment and attitude levels and reducing concern levels of prospective preschool teachers.

DISCUSSION

The sentiment, attitude, and concern levels of teachers are an important element for the successful implementation of inclusive education (Sharma, Forlin & Loreman, 2008). It is reported that teachers with high levels of positive attitudes towards inclusive education are more willing and successful in adapting their education plans for children with special needs and in preparing individualized education plans for inclusive education and have higher levels of confidence in providing education to children with special needs (Forlin, 2008). Besides the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education, sentiment and concern levels of teachers are also important in the efficient implementation of inclusive education (Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009).

In this context, in this study, the sentiment, attitude, and concern levels of prospective preschool teachers were examined, and it was determined that their levels were slightly over the neutral level. It was determined that the findings of previous studies in the literature support the findings of our study. For instance, the attitudes of both the teachers and prospective teachers towards inclusive education were determined to be at the neutral level or slightly above this level and their concern levels were high (Changpinit et al., 2007; Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel & Malinen, 2012; Yada & Savolainen, 2017) or very high (Ueno & Nakamura, 2011). The participants were determined to be in a sense of insufficiency (Forlin, 2001). It was reported that these results were influenced by the development levels of the countries in the sense that the attitudes of the teachers towards the inclusive education were low in undeveloped/developing countries, while they were high in developed countries (Alghazo & Gaad, 2004; Malinen & Savolainen, 2008; Savolainen et al., 2012).

Considering all the findings, it can be said that it is necessary to make interventions in order to increase the sentiment, attitude, and concern levels of teachers and prospective teachers towards inclusive education. Providing the teachers with insufficient information about inclusive education influences the ability of teachers to study with students of different characteristics negatively (Daniel & King, 1997; Hammond & Ingalls, 2003). Therefore, it is suggested that more trainings about inclusive education should be provided to the teachers (Odom, 2000; Rheams & Bain, 2005; Webb, 2004). Berry (2011) reported that teachers mentioned that their previous teaching trainings were insufficient in preparing themselves for the contexts of inclusive education. As the conclusion of a study examining the attitudes of teachers and prospective teachers towards inclusive education conducted by Gökdere (2012), it was concluded that the attitudes of the prospective teachers were higher. It is also reported that this conclusion was a result of the fact that the prospective teachers received the "special education" course and revealed the significance of the education. In line with these pieces of information, it is considered that providing courses and organizing activities such as trainings and seminars for the teachers about inclusive education during their teacher training will enhance their attitude, sentiment, and concern levels about inclusive education before reaching a negative level.

From this point of view, in order to increase the sentiment and attitude levels of the prospective preschool teachers and to decrease their concern levels to a minimum, the Inclusive Education Program was administered

to the prospective preschool teachers. At the end of the training, it was observed that the sentiments and attitudes of the prospective preschool teachers changed in a positive way and their concern levels decreased. Examining previous studies in this subject, it was observed that providing trainings about inclusive education for school staff (Downing & Peckham-Hardin, 2007; Freeman et al., 2006; Horner, Sugai, Todd & Lewis-Palmer, 2005), for teachers and prospective teachers were influential in enhancing the attitudes (Bek, Gülveren, & Başer, 2009; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Gözün & Yıkılmış, 2004; Orel, Zerey & Töret, 2004; Shade & Stewart, 2001) and decreasing the concern levels (Forlin & Chambers, 2011).

In case of providing insufficient information to the prospective teachers about children with special needs and inclusive education, certain problems such as feeling concerned and anxious when meeting with a child with special needs, or having negative feelings and attitudes (Bruns & Mogharreban, 2007; Mitchell & Hegde, 2007; Sadler, 2005), and rejecting to have a child with special needs in the classroom can be observed (Odom, McConnell & Chandler, 1994).

Actually, it can be considered that these problems emerge since the teachers do not know much about inclusive education, children with special needs, and the implementations on this issue. Lack of knowledge causes low perceived self-efficacy and leads to an increase in the levels of anxiety and concern (Şenol & Can Yaşar, 2019). All of these cause teachers to display negative attitudes. In order to resolve this problem that is likely to arise, it can be mentioned that it is important to provide a well-planned and systematically prepared training program about inclusive education for prospective teachers. It is considered that this study will contribute to the experts studying in the field as an example of an important implementation that enhances the sentiment, attitude, and concern levels of prospective preschool teachers towards inclusive education.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to examine the sentiment, attitude, and concern levels of prospective preschool teachers, who received inclusive education training, towards inclusive education. The sentiment, attitude, and concern levels of the prospective preschool teachers towards inclusive education were determined at a moderate level. In line with this conclusion, an intervention plan was made to increase the sentiment and attitude levels of the prospective preschool teachers and to decrease their concern levels. In the literature, it is emphasized that the reason why the sentiment, attitude, and concern levels of the prospective teachers towards the inclusive education were not at the desired level was due to lack of knowledge and experience about the inclusive implementations. In this context, following the implemented inclusive education training, it was observed that the sentiment and attitude levels of the prospective preschool teachers towards inclusive education increased and their concern levels decreased.

As the conclusion, the significance of education on enhancing the sentiment, attitude, and concern levels was once again revealed. It is evaluated that providing the prospective preschool teachers with an inclusive education training will ensure a more qualified and successful implementation of inclusive education.

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Our study has some limitations. Initially, the study was limited to the prospective preschool teachers since they are the first teachers that children meet in the education system. In order to generalize the study results, teachers and prospective teachers from different branches can also be involved. The sentiment, attitude, and concern levels of teachers and prospective teachers from different branches towards inclusive education can also be compared.

The study results are limited to the scores obtained from the Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns About Inclusive Education Scale Revised. In order to reach more in-depth results, interviews can be conducted with prospective preschool teachers in this subject, and the results of these interviews can be evaluated together with the results of the scale.

The implemented education program is limited to the Inclusive Education Program that was explained by the researchers in the method section. When the content of the program was examined, it was observed that the opportunity was not given to the prospective preschool teachers to perform practice with the children with special needs in an inclusive education context. The reason behind the fact that prospective preschool teachers did not reach the highest scores after the inclusive education training is attributed to the fact that they did not have the opportunity to interact with children with special needs. Therefore, the inclusive education programs of further studies should also include practice and interaction opportunities with the children with special needs in the kindergartens applying inclusive education.

In this study, no control group was used. It is evaluated that using a control group will provide the opportunity to compare the results of the experimental group with those of the control group and this will increase the validity of the evidence. Therefore, it is suggested to use a control group in further studies

ETHICAL TEXT

In this article, journal writing rules, publishing principles, research and publishing ethics rules, journal ethics rules are followed. Responsibility belongs to the authors for any violations related to the article.

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