

## Attitudes of Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education

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### Abstract

The objective of the research is to analyze the attitudes of classroom teachers towards inclusion education in the consideration of certain variables. 500 teachers working in different primary schools in Gaziantep have joined in the study. A scale of attitudes towards inclusion, consisting of 40 questions and 5 sub-dimensions that was formed by researchers as a data instrument was applied in the present work. It's identified at the end-of research that the points attained by the teachers in the research from some sub-dimensions of the scale of attitudes towards inclusion reflect statistically meaningful difference according to gender, age group, length of service, marital status. As a result, it's to be remarked that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion give out difference according to some variables and certain sub-dimensions oriented to inclusion don't indicate difference depending on diverse variables. The outcome of this study reveals that not only the teachers' length of service, but also the duration that the teachers have dealt with inclusive education is related to their attitude towards inclusive education. However, there are also other research findings in the literature, which reveal that the teachers' length of service does not affect their ideas towards inclusive education. Following suggestions may be made in the light of these findings: Students involved in the inclusive education may be assigned to the classes of married teachers. It may be useful for classroom teachers, who are in the first five years of their professional career especially, not to be directly responsible for students of inclusive education.

**Keywords:** inclusive education, students with disabilities, disabled students, teachers' attitudes, teachers' perspectives

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## Sınıf Öğretmenlerinin Kaynaştırmaya Yönelik Tutumları

### Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı, sınıf öğretmenlerinin kaynaştırmaya yönelik tutumlarını bazı değişkenler ışığında incelemektir. Çünkü öğretmenlerin tutumları sayesinde kaynaştırma eğitiminde gerekli başarıya ulaşılabilir. Önemli olan tutumların olumlu ya da olumsuz hangi yönde olduğunun belirlenerek gerekli tedbirlerin alınmasıdır. Araştırmaya Gaziantep ili Şahinbey ve Şehitkâmil ilçelerindeki farklı ilköğretim okullarında görev yapan 500 öğretmen katılmıştır. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen, 40 sorudan ve 5 alt boyuttan oluşan “Kaynaştırmaya Yönelik Tutum Ölçeği” kullanılmıştır. Açıklayıcı faktör analizinin değerlendirilmesinde Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) katsayısına bakılmış ve katsayı 0,88 olarak bulunmuştur. Bu değer 0.60’dan yüksek olması dağılımın faktör analizi için uygun olduğunu göstermektedir. Araştırmanın sonunda, araştırmaya katılan öğretmenlerin kaynaştırmaya ilişkin tutum ölçeğinin bazı alt boyutlarından elde ettikleri puanların cinsiyetlerine, yaş gruplarına, mesleki kıdem düzeylerine, medeni durumlarına göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılık gösterdiği tespit edilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, kaynaştırmaya ilişkin öğretmen görüşlerinin bazı değişkenlere göre farklılık gösterdiği, kaynaştırmaya yönelik bazı alt boyutların ise çeşitli değişkenlere göre farklılık göstermediği söylenebilir. Bu araştırma, öğretmenlerin mesleki kıdemlerinin yanında kaynaştırma eğitiminin içerisinde bulunma süreleri ile ilişkili olduğu sonucunu ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Buna karşılık alanyazında öğretmenlerin mesleki deneyimlerinin kaynaştırma eğitimine ilişkin düşünceleri etkilemediğini gösteren araştırma bulguları da mevcuttur. Bu bulgular ışığında şu önerilerde bulunulabilir: Kaynaştırma öğrencilerinin daha çok evli öğretmenlerin buldukları sınıflarda eğitim görmesi sağlanabilir. Sınıf öğretmenlerinin mesleklerinin ilk yıllarında özellikle ilk beş yılında kaynaştırma öğrencisi okutmaması faydalı olabilir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** kaynaştırma eğitimi, engelli öğrenciler, öğretmen tutumları

## Introduction

Students with disabilities have educational rights as the same as the children of mainstream education. They need to be provided education that is individualized according to their developmental levels, disability levels, and their needs so that they can fulfill their roles in the society the best way possible (İmrak, 2009). Individualized education became more common in the 21st century with the developments in modern educational approaches leading to put an emphasis on the special education of students with disabilities (Kulaksızoğlu, 2011). However, the many different categories and types of disabilities render this task difficult. Thus, experts of the subject try to provide the appropriate educational settings, which would enable and facilitate the identification of the educational needs of the students with disabilities, meeting these identified needs, and uncovering their talents, skills and other latent powers (Özgür, 2008).

Inclusive education stands out as a primary approach in educating students with disabilities. A relatively older approach, isolating students with disabilities leading to very homogenous classes for both students with disabilities and regular students, did not yield the best results. Thus, via inclusive education, students with disabilities are tried to be integrated with regular students having mainstream education as much as possible and they are provided special education individually or in smaller groups only when there is definitely a need (Özgür, 2011). This way, not only students with disabilities will get the best education possible while not getting isolated from other students; other students will also learn to come to admire the differences in the society, to respect the disabled and not to despise them (Türk, 2011). However, inclusive education may yield the expected results only if the teachers adopt a positive approach to the matter (Ünal, 2010). Thus, it is important to determine the teachers' attitudes about the issue, the reasons for their negative attitudes if any, and the possible solutions to the problem of negative attitudes. Therefore, answers to the following questions are sought for to determine teachers' attitudes and approaches concerning inclusive education based on certain variables:

1. Is there a significant different between the scores that the teachers obtained from the scale of attitudes towards inclusion based on teachers' gender difference?
2. Is there a significant different between the scores that the teachers obtained from the scale of attitudes towards inclusion based on the marital status of the teachers?
3. Is there a significant different between the scores that the teachers obtained from the scale of attitudes towards inclusion based on teachers' length of service?

## Method

### Universe-Sample

Universe of the study comprises 3516 classroom teachers, of whom 2264 are serving at Şahinbey District of Gaziantep Metropolitan area and 1252 are serving at Şehitkâmil District of Gaziantep Metropolitan area. Sample of the study comprises 500 classroom teachers selected from different primary schools via appropriate sampling. Following formula has been used to determine the size of the sample:

$$n = \frac{N \times t^2 \times p \times q}{d^2 \times (N - 1) + t^2 \times p \times q}$$

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Table 1. *Descriptive statistics about the participants*

n	Number of the samples	346
N	The size of the study universe (main body)	3516
p	Incidence of the event to be analyzed (probability of incidence)	0.5
q	Inverse incidence of the event to be analyzed (probability of inverse incidence) (1-p)	0.5
t	Confidence level	1.96
d	Acceptable error rate in sampling	0.05

$$n = \frac{N \times t^2 \times p \times q}{d^2 \times (N - 1) + t^2 \times p \times q} = \frac{3516 \times (1,96)^2 \times (0,5) \times (0,5)}{(0,05)^2 \times (3516 - 1) + (1,96)^2 \times (0,5) \times (0,5)} = 346$$

Sample size is calculated as 346. The number of participants that is 500 classroom teachers, included in this study is more than the calculated minimum sample size of 346 and is thus sufficient.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics about the participants*

Variables	Sub-variables	f	%
Gender	male	280	56,0
	female	220	44,0
Marital Status	married	423	84,6
	single	77	15,4
Age Groups	age 23-29	86	17,2
	age 30-36	202	40,4
	age 37-44	137	27,4
	age 45+	75	15,0
Length of Service	1-5 years	67	13,4
	6-10 years	142	28,4
	11-15 years	134	26,8
	16-20 years	99	19,8
	21+ years	58	11,6

### Data Collection Instrument

#### Scale of attitudes towards inclusion

A "Scale of Attitudes towards Inclusion" has been developed to collect the necessary data for this study. A pool of 40 questions has been prepared after a thorough literature study about the subject. 5-point Likert-type scale is decided to be used for the responses having response choices of, 'I totally disagree', 'I disagree', 'I am undecided', 'I agree', and 'I totally agree'. It is very well established in the literature that the connection between the scale to be developed and the variable to be measured using this scale has to be consistent. For this reason, commonly, expert opinions are sought for the provision of content validity during the pre-study phase (Yurdagül, 2005). Three different faculty members that work at universities' colleges of education are consulted with to determine the consistency of the scale developed by the authors of this study. Scale has been revised based on the opinions of these aforementioned experts and then pre-application stage for the scale was initiated. Pre-application of the scale comprising 40 questions was administered to 300 classroom teachers that work at the schools in both Şahinbey and Şehitkamil districts of the bigger Gaziantep

metropolitan area. Scale was reviewed and revised once more based on the results of the pre-application and the final version of the scale has been administered to 230 classroom teachers. The data obtained after the application was transferred to the SPSS program. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) coefficient was examined for the assessment of the exploratory factor analysis, and it was found as 0.88. The fact that this value is higher than 0.60 indicates that the distribution is suitable for factor analysis.

Table 3. Descriptive information regarding the factors of the attitude scale consisting of five factors towards inclusion

Sub-Factor Distribution	Sequence Number of the Question in the First Scale	Sequence Number of the Question in the Last Scale	Factor's Load Value	Eigenvalue
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Factor: Time and Quality in Education</b>	18	1	.778	6.853
	9	2	.723	
	12	3	.426	
	35	4	.662	
	32	5	.763	
	24	6	.380	
	28	7	.679	
	3	8	.539	
	40	9	.483	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Factor: Attitude Towards Success</b>	36	10	.673	1.500
	39	11	.608	
	38	12	.440	
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Factor: Attitude Towards Protection</b>	37	13	.573	1.393
	20	14	.722	
	23	15	.708	
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Factor: Classroom Management</b>	1	16	.510	1.227
	4	17	.640	
	6	18	.510	
	8	19	.625	
	17	20	.447	
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Factor: Attitude Towards Speciality/Subject Taught</b>	21	21	.778	1.014
	22	22	.709	

Additionally, Bartlett's test value has been found as 1028.78 also pointing out to the significance of this test result. Significant test results implied that the scale can consist of the factors. Factor analysis was repeated after removing the items that have a factor load lower than 0.30 from the scale and a 5-dimensional scale was created as a result. The descriptive rate of the scale is 54,48%.

**Analysis of the Data**

SPSS 20.0 for Windows software was used in the analysis of the obtained. Descriptive statistics was utilized to determine the averages associated with the scale factors, whereas frequency analysis was utilized to determine the descriptive data of the participants. Independent samples t-test was used to compare the average scores of test participants on the

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basis of participants' gender and marital status, whereas One-WayAnova analysis was used to compare the average scores of test participants on the basis of age groups and length of service. LSD test was used as a post hoc to find out which groups have difference between them as a result of the variance analysis. The significance level was identified as  $p < 0.05$  for all performed analyses.

### Findings

Table 4. *Descriptive statistics regarding participants scores obtained from the scale factors*

Factors	N	At least	At most	X	Ss
Time and Quality in Education	500	9	45	28,30	7,124
Attitude towards success	500	3	15	10,90	2,381
Attitude towards protection	500	3	15	9,76	2,552
Classroom management	500	8	25	19,25	3,283
Attitude towards specialty/subject taught	500	2	10	7,81	1,685
Total Attitude Score	500	28	106	76,02	13,82

When the above table is analyzed, it is seen that the participants obtained medium level scores from the factors of time and quality in education, attitude towards success, attitude towards protection, attitude towards specialty, and from the total scale, whereas they obtained high level scores from the classroom management factor.

Findings regarding the sub-problem of "Is there a significant difference between the scores that the teachers obtained from the scale of attitudes towards inclusion based on teachers' gender difference?" are displayed in Table 4 up to Table 10.

Table 5. *Comparison of the participants' average scores they obtained from the time and quality in education factor, on the basis of gender*

Gender	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	p
Male	280	28,42	6,901	453,752	,413	.679
Female	220	28,15	7,411			

$p > 0,05$

When the above table is analyzed, it is seen that the participants' scores obtained from the time and quality in education factor are similar in terms of gender difference and that there is no statistically significant difference between them ( $p > 0,05$ ). This result may be due to both male and female teachers having similar backgrounds in terms of the socio-demographic and socioeconomic status of the schools that they had graduated from.

Table 6. *Comparison of the participants' average scores they obtained from the attitude towards success factor, on the basis of gender*

Gender	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	p
Male	280	10,78	2,374	469,328	-1,266	.206
Female	220	11,05	2,386			

$p > 0,05$

When the above table is analyzed, it is seen that the participants' scores obtained from the attitudes towards success factor are similar in terms of gender difference and that there is no statistically significant difference between them ( $p > 0,05$ ). This result may be due to the similar features of the education and training materials that are used at the schools where male and female teachers work. Additionally, the emergence of this result may be also due to the similar attitudes of both male and female teachers' students towards success.

Table 7. Comparison of the participants' average scores they obtained from the attitude towards protection factor, on the basis of gender

Gender	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	p
Male	280	9,75	2,332	498	-,134	.893
Female	220	9,78	2,812			

$p > 0,05$

When the above table is analyzed, it is seen that the participants' scores obtained from the attitudes towards protection factor are very close to one another in terms of gender difference and that there is no statistically significant difference between them ( $p > 0,05$ ).

Table 8. Comparison of the participants' average scores they obtained from the classroom management factor, on the basis of gender

Gender	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	p
Male	280	19,08	3,294	472,518	-1,379	.169
Female	220	19,48	3,261			

$p > 0,05$

When the above table is analyzed, it is seen that the female participants' scores obtained from the classroom management factor are slightly higher than the male participants' scores obtained from the classroom management factor; however, this difference was not enough to produce a statistically significant difference ( $p > 0,05$ ). This result may be due to both male and female teachers having received classroom management education at similar levels.

Table 9. Comparison of the participants' average scores they obtained from the attitude towards specialty factor, on the basis of gender

Gender	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	p
Male	280	7,60	1,680	472,764	-3,090	.002
Female	220	8,07	1,661			

$p < 0,05$

When the above table is analyzed, it is seen that the female participants' scores obtained from the attitudes towards specialty factor are significantly higher than the male participants' scores obtained from the attitudes towards specialty factor ( $p < 0,05$ ). This result may be due to male and female teachers possessing different level of qualifications in their specialties they have been serving.

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Table 10. Comparison of the participants' average total scores they obtained from the attitude scale consisting of 5-factors, on the basis of gender

Gender	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	p
Male	280	75,62	13,185			
Female	220	76,53	14,610	445,686	-,727	.468

p>0,05

Male and female participants' total scores obtained from the attitude scale were similar and no statistically significant difference was observed between them (p>0,05). This result may be due to both male and female teachers having similar levels of knowledge and skills associated with the inclusive education they had received both at the universities, where they received higher education, and at the schools, where they have been working.

Findings regarding the sub-problem of "Is there a significant difference between the scores that the teachers obtained from the scale of attitudes towards inclusion based on the marital status of the teachers?" are displayed in Table-11 up to Table-16.

Table 11. Comparison of the participants' average total scores they obtained from the time and quality in education factor, on the basis of marital status

Marital Status	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	p
Married	423	28,68	7,027			
Single	77	26,23	7,343	102,937	2,702	.008

p<0,05

Average scores that the married participants obtained from the time and quality in education factor were significantly high than the scores of the single participants (p<0,05). This result may be due to married teachers having more responsibilities in daily life compared to the single teachers leading to the married teachers having a higher level of attitude in terms of time management.

Table 12. Comparison of the participants' average total scores they obtained from the attitude towards success factor, on the basis of marital status

Marital Status	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	p
Married	423	10,95	2,377			
Single	77	10,62	2,395	105,086	1,095	.276

p>0,05

Table reveals that the married participants have higher averages of attitude towards success scores, however it is observed that the average scores of this factor have not been differentiated at a statistically significant level based on the marital status (p>0,05). This result may be due to the differentiation of the teachers' attitudes towards success in accordance with the academic levels of the students at the schools, where they work, rather than differentiation based on marital status.

Table 13. *Comparison of the participants' average total scores they obtained from the attitude towards protection factor, on the basis of marital status*

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Ss</b>	<b>Sd</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Married	423	9,89	2,526	103,869	2,564	.012
Single	77	9,06	2,597			

p<0,05

Table reveals that the married participants have higher averages of attitude towards protection scores and it is also observed that the average scores of this factor have been differentiated at a statistically significant level based on the marital status (p<0,05). This result may be due to married teachers having children of their own in general and thus, in this respect, this result of married teachers having higher scores of attitude towards protection than the single teachers can be considered as an anticipated result.

Table 14. *Comparison of the participants' average total scores they obtained from the classroom management factor, on the basis of marital status*

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Ss</b>	<b>Sd</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Married	423	19,27	3,291	106,275	,249	.804
Single	77	19,17	3,254			

p>0,05

Table reveals that the married participants and the single participants have had similar scores of classroom management factor and that the average scores of this factor have not been differentiated at a statistically significant level based on the marital status (p>0,05). This result may be more due to the physical characteristics of the classroom and the attitudes of the students towards the class rather than to the marital status of the teachers affecting the classroom management factor.

Table 15. *Comparison of the participants' average total scores they obtained from the attitude towards specialty/subject taught factor, on the basis of marital status*

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Ss</b>	<b>Sd</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Married	423	7,80	1,686	105,251	-,204	.839
Single	77	7,84	1,694			

p>0,05

Average attitude towards specialty/subject taught scores of both the married and single teachers are almost similar and the average scores of this factor have not been differentiated at a statistically significant level based on the marital status (p>0,05). This result may be due to similar competency levels of the married and single teachers in the subjects they taught.

Total attitude levels of the married participants are significantly higher than those of single participants (p<0,05). This result may be due to the fact that married teachers have children of their own in general and that they undertake more responsibilities.

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Table 16. Comparison of the participants' average total scores they obtained from the attitude scale, on the basis of marital status

Marital Status	N	X	Ss	Sd	t	p
Married	423	76,58	13,772			
Single	77	72,94	13,784	105,503	2,137	.033

p<0,05

Findings related to the sub-problem of "Is there a significant different between the scores that the classroom teachers obtained from the scale of attitudes towards inclusion based on teachers' length of service?" are revealed in Tables 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22.

Table 17. Comparison of the participants' average total scores they obtained from the time and quality in education factor, on the basis of length of service

Length of Service	N	X	Ss	Sd	F	p	Difference
1-5 years (1)	67	25,45	7,592				
6-10 years (2)	142	29,70	6,520				1-2,
11-15 years (3)	134	28,25	7,185	4	4,419	.002	1-3,
16-20 years (4)	99	28,73	6,439				1-4,
21≤ years (5)	58	27,55	8,083				

p<0,05

Table reveals that there is statistically significant difference between the participants' average scores obtained from the time and quality in education factor based on the length of service (p<0,05). This significant difference is due the significantly lower average scores of the classroom teachers that have a length of service between 1 and 5 years compared to the average scores of the classroom teachers those have lengths of service between 6 and 10, 11 and 15, and 16 and 20 years (p<0,05).

Table 18. Comparison of the participants' average total scores they obtained from the attitude towards success factor, on the basis of length of service

Length of Service	N	X	Ss	Sd	F	p	Difference
1-5 years (1)	67	10,45	2,433				
6-10 years (2)	142	11,24	2,186				1-2,
11-15 years (3)	134	11,02	2,379	4	2,624	.034	2-5,
16-20 years (4)	99	10,94	2,539				3-5,
21≤ years (5)	58	10,22	2,370				

p<0,05

It was found that there is statistically significant difference between the participants' average scores obtained from the attitude towards success factor based on the lengths of service (p<0,05). The reason for the observed significant difference is the lower average scores of the classroom teachers those have lengths of service between 1 and 5 years compared to the classroom teachers those have lengths of service between 6 and 10 years as well as the significantly lower average scores of the classroom teachers those have lengths of service between 21+ years compared to the classroom teachers those have lengths of service

between 6 and 10 years and 11 and 15 years ( $p>0,05$ ). This result may be due to longer lengths of services linearly affecting the burn-out level in teachers.

Table 19. *Comparison of the participants' average total scores they obtained from the attitude towards protection factor, on the basis of length of service*

Length of Service	N	X	Ss	Sd	F	p	Difference
1-5 years (1)	67	10,45	2,433				
6-10 years (2)	142	11,24	2,186				
11-15 years (3)	134	11,02	2,379	4	2,624	.034	1-2, 2-5,
16-20 years (4)	99	10,94	2,539				3-5,
21≤ years (5)	58	10,22	2,370				

$p<0,05$

It was observed that there is statistically significant difference between the participants' average scores obtained from the attitude towards protection factor based on the lengths of service ( $p<0,05$ ). The reason for the observed significant difference is the lower average scores of the classroom teachers those have lengths of service between 1 and 5 years compared to the classroom teachers those have lengths of service between 6 and 10 years and between 11 and 15 years ( $p<0,05$ ).

Table 20. *Comparison of the participants' average total scores they obtained from the classroom management factor, on the basis of length of service*

Length of Service	N	X	Ss	Sd	F	p	Difference
1-5 years (1)	67	18,87	3,143				
6-10 years (2)	142	19,77	3,334				
11-15 years (3)	134	19,32	3,079	4	3,433	.009	2-5, 3-5,
16-20 years (4)	99	19,43	3,375				4-5
21≤ years (5)	58	17,98	3,338				

$p<0,05$

Table reveals that there is statistically significant difference between the participants' average scores obtained from the classroom management factor based on the lengths of service ( $p<0,05$ ). The reason for the statistically significant difference is due to the significantly lower average scores of the classroom teachers those have lengths of service more than 21+ years compared to the average scores of the teachers those have lengths of services between 6 and 10, 11 and 15 and 16 and 20 years ( $p<0,05$ ). This result may be due to longer lengths of services linearly affecting the burn-out level in teachers.

Table 21. *Comparison of the participants' average total scores they obtained from the attitude towards specialty/subject taught factor, on the basis of length of service*

Length of Service	N	X	Ss	Sd	F	p
1-5 years (1)	67	7,75	1,744			
6-10 years (2)	142	7,90	1,800			
11-15 years (3)	134	7,80	1,565	4	,779	.539
16-20 years (4)	99	7,92	1,800			
21≤ years (5)	58	7,48	1,380			

$p>0,05$

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There are small differences between the participants' average scores obtained from the attitude towards speciality/subject taught factor, however these differences are not statistically significant ( $p > 0,05$ ). This result may be due to the similar skills and abilities of the teachers in their subject areas regardless of their lengths of services.

Table 22. *Comparison of the participants' average total scores they obtained from the attitude scale, on the basis of length of service*

<b>Length of Service</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Ss</b>	<b>Sd</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>Difference</b>
1-5 years (1)	67	71,52	14,763				
6-10 years (2)	142	78,70	12,554				1-2,
11-15 years (3)	134	76,39	13,352	4	4,105	.003	1-3,
16-20 years (4)	99	76,66	14,361				1-4
21≤ years (5)	58	72,72	14,363				

$p < 0,05$

There are differences between the participants' total attitude scores in terms of length of service and these differences are statistically significant ( $p < 0,05$ ). This statistically significant difference is caused by the significantly lower average scores of the classroom teachers those have lengths of services between 1 and 5 years compared to the teachers those have lengths of services between 6 and 10, 11 and 15, and 16 and 20 years. This result may be due to teachers those have less lengths of service also having less professional experience and due to teachers having the highest lengths of services also having high burn-out levels.

**Results and Discussion**

In this section, research findings related to the thoughts of the classroom teachers about inclusive education that are categorized in five sub-dimensions, time and quality in education, attitude towards success, attitude towards protection, classroom management and attitude towards speciality/subject taught, and investigated based on four variables of gender, marital status, age groups and length of service are discussed in the light of the similar studies in the literature.

The biggest responsibility with regards to inclusive education lies with the classroom teachers, thus a successful inclusive education is related to the attitudes of the teachers in this respect (Demir & Açar, 2010; Demir & Açar, 2011). An unsuccessful inclusive education will also limit the development of students receiving special education services.

In our study, participants' average scores from the sub-dimensions of the attitude towards inclusion scale, which are time and quality in education, attitude towards success, attitude towards protection, and classroom management factors and total attitude scale did not reveal any statistically significant difference on the basis of gender difference. On the other hand, in one of the sub-dimensions, that is the attitude towards specialty/subject taught dimension, female teachers were found to have higher average scores than the male teachers resulting in a high enough difference that is statistically significant. This result is coherent with the similar studies in the literature, some of which revealed that the female teachers attitudes in relation to the special education and inclusive education programs are higher than those of male teachers (Forlin et al., 2009), whereas others revealed that the gender difference did not have any effect on the attitudes of classroom teachers towards special and

inclusive education (Demir & Açar, 2010; Parasuram, 2006; Şahbaz & Kalay, 2010; Yıldız & Pınar, 2012; Ünal, 2010).

The findings related to the second variable that is the marital status revealed that the participants' average scores obtained from two of the five sub-dimensions that are time and quality in education and attitude towards protection and from the total attitude scale were found to be significantly different in terms of marital status. In these aforementioned sub-dimensions and the total attitude scale, average scores of married teachers were found to be higher than those of single teachers. As a reason, it may be speculated that the fact that the responsibilities of the married teachers associated with their family and social lives are more than those of single teachers may affect the attitudes of married teachers with respect to inclusive education. This result is different than the finding of Seçer's study, in which he/she found that there was no statistically significant difference between the teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education based on the marital status (Seçer et al., 2010).

The findings related to the fourth variable that is the length of service revealed that the differences between the participants' average scores obtained from the sub-dimensions of time and quality in education, attitude towards protection, attitude towards success and classroom management factors and total attitude scale were statistically significant with the exception of attitude towards specialty/subject taught. As a reason, teachers that are in the beginning and at the end of their working lives had lower average scores compared to other teachers. The reason for the low scores of the teachers, who are in the beginning of their professional lives and who have served only between 1 and 5 years might as well be their inexperience with regards to the inclusive education, which is supported by other studies that can be found in the literature indicating that the attitude level towards inclusive education increases by increasing age (De Boer et al., 2010; Forlin et al., 2009; Hastings et al., 2013). Further, the reason for the low scores of the teachers, who are at the end of their professional lives and who have served 21+ years might as well be their burn-out rates, which is also supported by similar studies in the literature. Furthermore, it was observed in another study that the rate of positive responses given to certain questions asked at the end of the study to the participants of the study such as "do you think that you sufficiently care for the students those are included in the inclusive education?, do you think that students included in the inclusive education are a part of your class?, do you know how to help with the problems of the students included in the inclusive education?, do you think whether the guidance and counseling services are sufficient for the the students included in the inclusive educationat your school?" increased with increasing lengths of services (Demir & Açar, 2010). The results of the said study indicates that it is not just the length of service that affects the teachers' attitude levels towards inclusive education, but also the duration that the teachers were exposed to inclusive education and had to deal with inclusive education throughout their professional careers. On the other hand, there are also some studies, which did not reveal any relation between the teachers' attitude levels towards inclusive education and their lengths of service (Dupoux et al., 2005; Ünal, 2010) and others, which revealed that teachers' behavioral approach levels towards inclusive education decrease by increasing age, while their emotional and cognitive approach levels increase by increasing length of service (İmrak, 2009). Last not but not least, other studies revealed that the teachers with the lowest length of service had the highest attitude levels towards inclusive education and that the attitude levels towards inclusive education decrease by increasing length of service (Özdemir and Ahmetoğlu, 2012; Parasuram, 2006).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, female teachers' attitude levels towards inclusive education in terms of specialty/subject taught were found to be higher than those of male teachers, which may imply that female teachers are more idealistic in their professions and they love their job more. Married teachers' attitude levels towards inclusive education in terms of time and quality in education and attitude towards protection were found to be higher than those of single teachers, which may be due to married teachers undertaking more responsibilities in life than the single teachers. Lastly, attitude levels towards inclusive education of the teachers that have the shortest length of service and that are in the youngest age group and the teachers that have the longest length of service and that are in the oldest age group are both lower than those of other age groups and lengths of services, which may be due to lack of experience for the former and the high teacher burn-out rate for the latter.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of our study, following recommendations are deemed appropriate:

- Students included in the inclusive education may be taught more by the married teachers.
- It may be better for the students included in the inclusive education not to be taught by teachers, those are in the first five years of their career.
- New teachers may be mentored by the experienced teachers, which may also help the new teachers to learn about the experienced teachers' ideas about inclusive education.
- New studies investigating the perspectives of teachers in terms of other variables such as whether teachers had inclusive education or the level of education that the teachers are teaching may be conducted in order to define teachers' perspectives in a broader sense.
- New studies with larger sample groups can be conducted for more reliable and valid results.

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