

## Opinions of School Psychological Counselors on Giftedness and Gifted Students' Education

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study is to examine the opinions of school counselors on giftedness, the education of gifted students and the services provided for gifted students at schools. The phenomenological design, which is a qualitative research method, was used in this study. The in-depth interview technique was used to collect the data. The study was conducted with a total of 22 school psychological counselors, 10 female and 12 male, who worked in primary, secondary and high schools within the Marmara region in the spring term of 2015-2016 academic year. The data were subject to content analysis. According to the study results, school counselors stated that gifted children are very precious (gold mine, present, rainbow, musical art, diamond etc.) but their value is not sufficiently recognized and evaluated. School counselors emphasized that these students were subject to positive discrimination by their families and teachers; and that they were subject to negative discrimination by being excluded by their peers, through the lack of an education curriculum, Almost half of the school counselors underlined that gifted students did not apply to the counseling service and that those who applied, applied for reasons such as for socializing and professional guidance. School counselors underlined that families applied on how they can direct their children to the counseling service and how they can conduct a healthier communication. School counselors also stated that they usually cannot cooperate with families and teachers, that there are usually no supportive training rooms in the schools and that these students usually cannot benefit from these rooms when they are present.*

**KEYWORDS:** School Psychological Counselor; Gifted Child; Identification Process; Services Provided at School

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### Introduction

According to the modern perspective, the purpose of education is to raise creative individuals by providing the opportunity and means through which the individual can carry out and improve his skills that come from birth, rather than disciplining and taking the individual under control (Can, 1998; Kayaalp, 2018).

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The general aim of Turkish National Education is stated in the Basic Law of National Education Article 2. as;

To raise all citizens; as individuals who have a balanced and healthy personality and character, who are developed in terms of body, mind, moral, spirit, emotions, with free and scientific thinking abilities and a broad world view, who respect human rights, value personality and enterprise, are responsible towards society and are constructive, creative and productive; in line with their own interests and abilities to prepare them for life by helping them to acquire the required knowledge, skills, behavior and cooperative working habits, and to ensure they have a profession which will make them happy and contribute to the happiness of the society (MEB, 1973).

In order to fulfill this aim, psychological counseling and guidance services, as a complementary for educational services, have become an indispensable element of today's modern education. An important factor in operating and executing this service in schools are psychological counseling and guidance experts. These experts graduate from undergraduate Psychological Counseling and Guidance or Psychological Services in Education programs so as to offer psychological counseling and guidance services at schools (MEB, 2001). The purpose of psychological counseling and guidance services is to enable students to take utmost benefit from education according to their skills and talents and to enable them to evaluate and self-realize their hidden potentials which will occur after this (MEB, 2001). With respect to this purpose, counseling and guidance services are integrated and then offered to students. One group of students which should receive the service in an integrated manner is gifted children.

According to Silverman (2013), a gifted child is a child who is ahead of his peers in one or more developmental areas and who, as a result of this, requires a differentiated and individualized program. Psychological counselors have important duties and responsibilities for enabling gifted children to benefit from the means and opportunities to improve their skills and achieve self-realization (Carothers & Parfitt, 2017; Colangelo & Wood, 2015). These duties and responsibilities are; cooperating with form teachers, families and the counseling research center during the identification process; cooperating with necessary people and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) development unit in preparing the forms for evaluating individual development; to plan, execute and cooperate with necessary people and institutions concerning the trainings for the families of these students (MEB, 2006). School counselors should also plan the services they give by taking into consideration these children's' developmental characteristics and the differences with their peers concerning their psychological needs (Kratt, 2018; Yazici & Altun, 2016). According to Wood, Portman, Cigrand and Colangelo (2010), school counselors should identify these students fairly, they should cooperate with teachers and families and should take an active role in providing individual and group counseling services. In addition, school counselors are the experts that teachers will resort to first concerning the problematic behaviors displayed by gifted students and their adaptation problems. School counselors also have a duty to indirectly or directly interfere with problems. For this reason, their self-efficacy perceptions about the problem areas that gifted students can encounter are crucial along with the skills, knowledge and experiences they have (Aksoy & Diken, 2009; Aslan & Aydin, 2016; Tarman & Dev, 2018). School counselors having high self-efficacy perceptions in carrying out their responsibilities concerning psychological counseling and guidance provided to gifted students in the institution they work in will have a significant effect in ironing out the problematic behaviors displayed by these students (Gurbuz, 2012; Kayaalp, 2016). In order for school counselors to have high self-efficacy and to be able to offer a healthy service for these students, families and teachers; along with undergraduate education, they should receive courses which include the characteristics of gifted students, their training, programs applied worldwide, how to cooperate

with the families and how they can assist teachers. Including Science and Art Centers (BİLSEM) to the institutions where psychological counselors can attend to during undergraduate education to improve their skills in the applied courses will be beneficial in identifying these students (Yazici & Altun, 2016; Yigit & Tarman, 2016).

One of the biggest roles is assigned to teachers in identifying gifted students and assisting them. Previous studies have underlined that teachers lack sufficient knowledge on the gifted students' identification process (Maia-Pinto & Fleith, 2002), using instructional strategies (Siegle, Moore, Mann and Wilson, 2010) and their social-emotional characteristics (Gokdere and Ayvaci, 2004). Teachers who educate gifted students should initially have knowledge on the social-emotional development of these children, education programs prepared at different countries, their learning characteristics, educational opportunities that are provided and what kind of cooperation they can execute with the family (Renzulli, 1999; Van Tassel-Baska & Johnsen, 2007). Teachers should have embraced the fact that students with these characteristics should improve their interests, skills and capacities to maximum level without forgetting that they are still children (Sak, 2010). Especially the form teacher should be able to provide information to the families when required and offer the necessary guidance especially to the counseling service (Deniz & Ersoy, 2016; Gurbuz, 2012; Kerr, 2009; Porter, 2005). Even if teachers have not received a sufficient amount of education on gifted students, they should know what to do when they encounter a problem (Altintas & Ozdemir, 2013). For this reason, teachers should cooperate with school counselors so as to fill their educational gaps and to update their knowledge. Under the Duties and Responsibilities of Teachers title in the special education services regulation, this is stated as;

The psychological counseling and guidance service execution commission cooperates with the IEP development unit in providing supportive training services for students and in directing them to another school or institution based on their performance (MEB, 2006).

Along with this, school counselors should constantly keep in touch and cooperate with teachers about the problems that gifted students encounter (Aksoy & Diken, 2009).

Services that will be provided for the families constitute a significant proportion of the psychological counseling and guidance services that will be offered for gifted students. It is also evident that there are problems related to providing sufficient information and explanation to the families of these students (Akarsu, 2001; Ersoy & Deniz, 2016a; Morawska & Sanders, 2009; Ozbay, 2013; Yigit & Tatch, 2017). Half of the counselors at schools believe that one third of the experts in Counseling and Research Centers do not inform families sufficiently (Güven & Balat, 2006). Ministry of National Education Psychological Counseling and Guidance Services Regulation, Article 16 states that;

Measures are taken concerning supporting student development in the family dimension, recognizing, introducing and evaluating them as a whole, promoting parent and family contribution and participation in the services so as to ensure them to take part in the decision making process and raising their awareness on this issue (MEB, 2001).

The duties of school counselors for gifted students and their families in the special education services regulation are;

Planning and executing the family training services that are to be provided for the families of students with special needs and to cooperate with necessary parties, institutions and organizations (MEB, 2006).

Families of gifted students have the need to receive psychological counseling and guidance services due to various individual and social problems (Moon, Nelson & Piercy, 1993; Wood, 2010). In order for school counselors to offer gifted children and their families these services, they should have received undergraduate education on gifted students or have attended in-service training courses (Gurbuz, 2012; Tortop, 2015). There are various services that can be provided for families in schools where gifted students are educated as inclusive students or in institutions where only gifted students are educated (Damgaci & Aydin, 2018). The family should be considered as a whole when providing these services (Gurbuz, 2012; Yuksel, 2010). Families should be informed about what their child can and cannot do by the school counselor. This informing can be done through parent seminars. In addition, families of gifted children should be provided with individual counseling or group counseling services by school psychological counselors so that they can cope with the difficulties they encounter (Kirbiyik, 2011).

Because the characteristics of gifted students differ from their peers, families should cooperate with school counselors (Altun, 2015; Siegle, 2013) and teachers; also, families are responsible for offering experiences that support the needs of these children (MEB, 1997; Olszevski-Kubilius, 2002; Yilmaz, 2015). In order for psychological counseling and guidance services to operate in a healthy and productive way, it is crucial for school administrators, teachers, school staff, school counselors and the family to cooperate and act together (Hatunoğlu & Hatunoğlu, 2006; Michou, Mouratidis, Ersoy & Ugur, 2016).

When previous studies about gifted students are considered, there are studies on problem areas related to guidance services given at schools (Hatunoglu & Hatunoglu, 2006), opinions of guidance teachers on inclusion implementations (Guven & Balat, 2006), attitudes of PCG (psychological counseling and guidance) students towards inclusive education (Alver, Bozgeyikli & Isiklar, 2011), self-efficacy perceptions of guidance teachers on psychological counseling and guidance in special education (Aksoy & Diken, 2009), acquisition of psychological counseling skills for gifted individuals in undergraduate PCG programs (Yazici & Altun, 2016), teacher competence and features in educating gifted children (Daglioglu, 2010) and a general view on gifted students: teacher evaluation (Altintas & Ozdemir, 2013; Aydin & Aslan, 2016) etc. In addition, it is important to broaden these studies and conduct in-depth researches. In addition, becoming aware of school counselors' perspectives on gifted students and their education and taking these into consideration while shaping the curriculum is crucial for developmental guidance (Andrew, 2017; Yilmaz, 2015). For this reason, it is crucial to identify the perspectives of school counselors on gifted students and the education that is provided for them.

For this reason, the theoretical and practice results of this study is considered to contribute to school psychological counselors, school-town-city administrators, experts working under the ministry of national education central organizations, instructors working in universities, families, teachers and to the literature. With this respect the purpose of this study is to reveal school counselors' opinions on giftedness, their perspectives concerning gifted students, the training they received about gifted students and the services they provide for them. With respect to this general purpose, answers for the following questions were sought.

1. What are the metaphors of school psychological counselors on gifted children? What are their reasons for using these metaphors?
2. What are school counselor opinions on whether or not gifted students are subject to positive or negative discrimination?
3. What are the opinions of school counselors about the training they received about gifted children?

4. What are the opinions of school psychological counselors on the process of identifying gifted children?
5. What are the opinions of school psychological counselors on the services provided for gifted children at schools?

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

This study was carried out as a qualitative design. Qualitative studies are studies; where qualitative data collection techniques (in-depth interview) are used; a qualitative process, in which events and perceptions are dealt with in a natural setting through an integrative and realistic manner, is followed; and which strives to achieve comprehension and identification (Yildirim & Simsek, 2013). Because qualitative studies strive to interpret the reality of the research in the natural setting and explain the results in a multidimensional manner, they enrich educational researches (Yin, 2012). The purpose of this study is to determine the thoughts and opinions of school counselors who work in public schools under the Ministry of National Education on gifted children. With respect to this purpose, the phenomenology approach, one of the qualitative research designs, was used. The phenomenology approach is a method for examining and defining the existence of events. Individuals' experiences constitute the basis of this approach. According to Bas and Akturan (2008) the phenomenology approach deals with the subjective experiences of the participant and examines the meanings the individual attributes to events.

### **Study Group**

The study group of this study consists of; a total of 22 school psychological counselors, 10 of whom are female and 12 male; and who work in public schools within the Marmara region under the Ministry of National Education during the spring term of 2015-2016 academic year. The study sample was selected based on voluntariness and according to criterion sampling and maximum variation sampling methods which are among the purposeful sampling methods used in qualitative studies (Yildirim & Simsek, 2013). The purpose in purposeful sampling is to prefer situations that are rich in information so as to carry out an in-depth study. In this sampling, the researcher uses his or her own judgement in selecting the individuals and prefers the most appropriate ones as the sample (Balci, 2013). The general view in the purposeful sampling method is to study all conditions that account for certain measures determined before. These measures can be a measure list prepared beforehand or can be prepared by the researcher (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Patton, 2015). This study is based on the volunteering participation of the participants who work as a psychological counselor in public schools. In maximum variation, the aim is to identify the conditions that lie within a problem and conduct the study based on these conditions (Buyukozturk, Cakmak, Akgun, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2014). For this reason, school counselors who work in various locations within the Marmara Region, who work in various school types (primary, secondary high school) and who have different professional experience levels were accepted as a convenient criterion for maximum variation.

Participants should be described in detail in qualitative researches (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the personal characteristics of the school psychological counselors that participated in the study are given on Table 1.

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Table 1

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*Personal Characteristics of The School Psychological Counselors that Participated in the Study*

Participant	Gender	Type of School Participant Works	Graduation Status	Age range	Settlement Where Participant Works	Professional Experience (Year)	Economic status	School size
P1	Female	Secondary School	Undergraduate Degree	29	Town Center	1-7	Middle	0-500
P2	Female	Secondary School	Undergraduate Degree	27	Town Center	1-7	Middle	500-1000
P3	Male	High School	Post-Graduate Degree	38	City Center	15-21	Middle	500-1000
P4	Male	High School	Undergraduate Degree	22	Town Center	1-7	Middle	0-500
P5	Female	Primary School	Post-Graduate Degree	34	City Center	8-14	Middle	2000-3000
P6	Male	Primary School	Undergraduate Degree	41	Town Center	15-21	Low	1000-1500
P7	Male	High School	Post-Graduate Degree	30	Town Center	1-7	Middle	1500-2000
P8	Male	High School	Undergraduate Degree	32	Town Center	8-14	Middle	1000-1500
P9	Female	Secondary School	Undergraduate Degree	25	Town Center	1-7	Middle	500-1000
P10	Male	High School	Undergraduate Degree	35	Town Center	8-14	Low	1000-1500
P11	Female	Primary School	Undergraduate Degree	31	Town Center	8-14	Middle	1500-2000
P12	Male	High School	Undergraduate Degree	33	Town Center	8-14	Low	1000-1500
P13	Female	Secondary School	Undergraduate Degree	25	Town Center	1-7	Middle	500-1000
P14	Female	Primary School	Undergraduate Degree	41	Town Center	15-21	Middle	0-500
P15	Female	Primary School	Undergraduate Degree	29	Town Center	1-7	Middle	1000-1500
P16	Female	Primary School	Undergraduate Degree	28	Town Center	1-7	Middle	2000-3000
P17	Male	Primary School	Undergraduate Degree	32	Town Center	8-14	Middle	0-500
P18	Male	Primary School	Undergraduate Degree	38	Town Center	8-14	Middle	1000-1500
P19	Male	Primary School	Doctorate Undergraduate	40	City Center	15-21	Middle	500-1000
P20	Male	High School	Undergraduate Degree	26	City Center	1-7	Middle	500-1000
P21	Female	Secondary School	Post-Graduate Degree	41	City Center	15-21	Middle	0-500
P22	Male	Secondary School	Undergraduate Degree	39	City Center	15-21	Middle	1000-1500

It is evident on Table 1. that 10 (45.45%) school psychological counselors that participated in the study are female and 12 (54.55%) are male. 8 (36.36%) school psychological counselors work in primary school, 6 (27.26%) in secondary school and 8 (36.36%) in high school; 17 (77.28%) have undergraduate degree and 5 (22.72%) have post-graduate degree. 3 (13.64%) of the school psychological counselors are aged between 21-25; 6 (27.27%) between 26-30; 6 (27.27%) between 31-35; 4 (18.18%) between 36-40 and 3 (13.64%) between 41-45 years old. 6 (27.27%) of the school psychological counselors work in schools in the city center and 16 (72.73%) work in schools that are in the town center. 9 (40.91%) of the school psychological counselors who participated in the study have 1-7 years, 7 (31.82%) have 8-14 years and 6 (27.27%) have 15-21 years professional experience. 3 (13.63%) school psychological counselors participating in the study perceive their economic status as low and 19 (86.37%) perceive it as at middle level. When school size is considered, 5 (22.72%) schools have 0-500,

6 (27.27%) have 500-1000, 7 (31.81%) have 1000-1500, 2 (9.10%) have 1500-2000 and 2 (9.10%) have 2000-3000 population.

## **Data Collection**

In this study, the interview technique, which is used most commonly in qualitative studies and which is the most commonly used data collection instrument in phenomenological researches—which constitutes the design of this study—was used (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Karakus, 2018; Yildirim & Simsek, 2013). One of the interview techniques is the semi structured interview form consisting of open-ended questions (Buyukozturk et al., 2014). The literature was reviewed before the questions were prepared. With respect to the study purpose, questions related to school counselors' opinions on gifted children, what kind of services they provide in the counseling service, informal or formal what kind of training they received and about the identification process, were prepared. In order to validate the written interview form prepared by the researchers, opinions of 2 researchers receiving doctorate education on educational sciences and 2 instructors working in the field of educational sciences were resorted to concerning the comprehension of the form and to what extent it embraces the subject; the interview form was created after necessary corrections were made. The interview questions that were prepared before beginning the study were asked to 2 school counselors by the researchers, and their opinions were gathered about the possible answers and which explanatory question/s can be asked concerning these answers. Thus, various corrections were made on the questions and the form obtained its final form. In the interview form, there were 8 questions related to the personal characteristics of the school counselors and 13 questions related to gifted individuals. The data were collected during the spring term of the 2015-2016 academic year. In order to conduct the study an e-mail was sent on 10 May 2016 to 30 school psychological counselors who volunteered and who were determined before. The 22 replies that were sent by 29 May 2016 were taken into consideration. There were no cancelled forms. The purpose of the interview was stated in the interview form because the questions were sent by e-mail. The school psychological counselors were noted that they can leave the study whenever they desired. Contact information of the participants was stated in the e-mails and they were given necessary explanations when they requested.

## **Data Analysis**

Content analysis was used in the study because the thoughts and opinions of school counselors concerning gifted children were aimed at being revealed based on their perceptions and expressions in an integrative and thorough manner. The purpose of content analysis is to shape the raw data so that they can be comprehended by the reader, and then to summarize and interpret them according to the themes given. In this analysis, direct references are made frequently so as to best reflect the opinions of the participants who were interviewed or observed (Yildirim & Simsek, 2013). During the data analysis process of the study, the forms that were sent through e-mail at the beginning of the study were arranged. The perspectives of the school counselors were aimed at being grasped by repetitively reading the interview forms. Answers given to the questions were read repeatedly and the frequency of the answers was examined. The interview count form was prepared by the researchers by numbering each line of the interview forms of the school counselors. The interview forms were examined by 2 experts to check the missing or incorrect points. The interview questions were examined separately after this examination. After all the answers, options for each question were listed.

As a result, an “Interview Coding Key” stating the options for each question item was prepared. The categories were identified after the coding key. The themes were determined after identifying the categories. At the final stage, the themes got their final forms based on various expert suggestions and these are given in the findings sections.

### **Validity and Reliability**

The researcher consulted to expert confirmation so as to increase the validity of the study. In order to achieve study validity, the researchers transferred the findings in an impartial manner and gave direct quotations from participant statements. After the coding process carried out by 2 researches, the codes that were fit were set as a basis for the themes. After the content analysis, the themes were narrow so as to exclude misrelated concepts and wide so as to include related concepts. The Reliability= $\frac{\text{Consensus}}{\text{Consensus} + \text{Dissensus}} \times 100$  formula was applied on the coding made by the 2 researchers. The agreement percentage between the researchers was calculated as 92%. Because 70% or above agreement percentage was found to be sufficient (Yildirim & Simsek, 2013) the study was accepted as reliable concerning data analysis.

### **Findings**

As a result of the analysis of study data, it was observed that many factors affected the opinions of school psychological counselors on gifted children. The main theme of the study was identified as “gifted children’s education” after examining the concepts that were repeated most in the interviews carried out with school counselors. The sub-themes were identified as “gifted child”, “identification process”, “need for education” and “services provided at school”.

#### ***First Sub-Theme: Gifted child***

Based on the interviews made with the counselors, opinions of the counselors related to their metaphors on how they define gifted children and the reasons why they use these metaphors and about whether or not these children are subject to positive or negative discrimination are given below.

Four counselors likened gifted children to a precious mine. They stated the reasons for why they use this metaphor as below:

*They are like a gold mine. Processing them is impossible unless they are discovered (P1).*

*They are like gold. You need to know well how to process them. (P9).*

*They are like a precious mine. They are not found everywhere and they are not much of a use but if they processed well and used at the correct time they may have major contributions to people’s lives. When they are present at the wrong place, they may cause disappointment due to inadequacy and failure (P7).*

*They are like diamond. They are rare and precious. They will scatter light across the world if they are processed. (P18).*

Two counselors likened gifted children to a rainbow. They stated the reasons for why they use this metaphor as below:

*They are like a rainbow. They may not always be recognized. They are colorful and amazing when they are recognized (P14).*



*They are like the rainbow. They are both colorful and they also wonder admiration (P20).*

Four counselors stated their metaphors on gifted children and their reasons for why they use this metaphor as below:

*Gifted children are like a piece of musical art, they will turn into a masterpiece once they are discovered and the right notes are played, but they will disappear when mistakes are made and they are not worked on (P16).*

*They are like a treasure house. You can find all kinds of jewelry inside (P6).*

*They are like fire. They will warm and show you the way if you guide them well. They will start burning themselves first if you don't recognize them. They disappear (P22).*

*They are like a present. The reason is because I believe that the student has not yet been discovered and that the extent of the potential he or she embraces cannot be predicted (P2).*

Statements of 3 counselors who underlined that gifted children are subject to positive discrimination are given below:

*Positive discrimination is being made by the parents. Because all his geese are swans. Their expectations from gifted children are at peak level (P6).*

*They are subject to positive discrimination. Because, it is assumed that the good is always better and that they will achieve anything (P12).*

*Yes, I believe that the diagnosed students grasp the attention of the parents and teachers more (P16).*

Statements of 5 counselors who underlined that gifted children are subject to negative discrimination are given below:

*It is a drawback that they don't have a program (P3).*

*Because there are not many opportunities in our country on this issue, their gifted skills either affect them negatively or they isolate the students (P11).*

*Negative discrimination takes place. Because it is clear that public institutions are not willing to put effort (P12).*

*They are separated but not embraced, they become even lonelier (P13).*

*They are subject to negative discrimination. The reason is because everyone develops a wrong and unnecessary approach (P17).*

Three counselors stated that they believed that gifted children are not subject to any kind of discrimination. Statements of 3 counselors who underlined that gifted children are subject to positive or negative discrimination based on the situation are given below:

*I believe they are subject to negative discrimination by their peers. But they are subject to positive discrimination by their teachers (P2).*

*Most common incidents are having adaptation problems to the environment and leaving the group. While positive discrimination takes place more in small settings like the family rather than from their peers; they are usually warned to slow themselves down or act together with the group in crowded settings like the classroom. Thus, the*

*same child can be subject to positive discrimination in some settings and negative discrimination in other settings (P7)*

*There is a positive perspective but it is harmful because there is lack of knowledge on how to approach and behave to these children. While it is considered positive that they are different from other children, they are subject to negative discrimination because their differences are not clearly understood (P8).*

It is evident in the above given statements that school counselors underlined that gifted children are very precious (gold mine, present, rainbow, musical art, diamond etc.) but this will not be turned into an opportunity if their value is not detected and revealed. Participants stated that these children are subject to positive discrimination by their parents and teachers. In addition, school counselors underlined that they believed that gifted children students are subject to negative discrimination by being excluded by their peers, through the lack of an education curriculum, because a sufficient amount of service is not provided and because their differences are not fully understood.

***Second Sub-Theme: The need for education***

Table 2 displays the trainings that school psychological counselors received on gifted children during bachelor’s-master’s education, trainings they received after bachelor’s-master’s education (seminar, conference, certificate program, workshop etc.) and what these trainings are along with whether or not they have any needs concerning gifted children’s education.

Table 2  
*The training that school psychological counselors received on gifted students and their needs concerning education*

<b>Education</b>	<b>Opinion</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Received no training during	undergraduate/post-graduate education	16	72.73
	Is receiving private training	2	9.09
	Received a course	4	18.18
Received no training after	undergraduate/post-graduate education	15	68.19
	Attended project meetings	2	9.09
	Conference-Seminar	5	22.72
The need for education	Needs no training or assistance	4	18.18
	A general in-service training	5	22.72
	Activities like workshops	3	13.64
	Enriched activities	4	18.18
	Training on the diagnostic process	6	27.28

It is evident on Table 2 that 16 counselors stated that they did not receive any training on the gifted during undergraduate/post-graduate education, 2 counselors stated that there was a section on the gifted in the content of the special education course, 4 counselors stated that they received the course titled “Gifted Children’s Education”. Psychological counselors who received a course stated that they benefited from the course content in becoming aware of the students and guiding them. In addition, 15 counselors stated that they did not receive any training on the gifted after their undergraduate/post-graduate education, 2 counselors stated that they attended the project meetings concerning gifted students, 5 counselors stated that they attended a conference or a seminar on gifted students. With regards to whether or not counselors require training on gifted children’s education; 5 counselors underlined that they require a general in-service education, 3 counselors underlined they need applications like workshops, 6

counselors stated they require training on the identification process, 4 counselors stated that they need training which include enriched activities. 4 school counselors stated that they did not require any training or support.

It is evident in the above given statements that school counselors did not receive a sufficient amount of training and assistance on gifted children during and after bachelor's-master's education. Psychological counselors who received even little training underlined that they benefited from this training. School counselors also stated that they need training concerning these children.

***Third Theme: The identification process***

The opinions of school psychological counselors on how the identification process of gifted students is carried out are summarized on Table 3.

Table 3

*The opinions of school psychological counselors on how the identification process of gifted students is carried out*

Identification process	Opinion	f	%
How is it done?	The counseling and research center does it	11	50.00
	CRC, Is aware that identification can be done through various tests	5	22.72
	CRC, Is in charge of various tests	3	13.64
	CRC, Took courses on identification at university	1	4.55
	CRC, Has knowledge on selecting students for BILSEM	2	9.09

It is evident on Table 3 that with respect to their knowledge on the gifted children's identification process; 11 counselors stated that they are aware that the counseling and research center performs identification. 5 school counselors stated that the CRC carries out the identification process and that identification is also done through various tests, 3 counselors underlined that the CRC performs identification and that were in charge of conducting various tests (TYT, TKT) on identification, 1 school counselor stated that the CRC performs identification and that he or she took courses in university on identification. 2 school counselors stated that the CRC performs identification and that the Science and Art Centers also have knowledge on the identification process. The statements of 4 school counselors on this issue are given below:

*The counseling service is applied to mainly by the form teacher or branch teachers or through the opinions of the parents about their child being gifted. Based on the interviews made with the child, teacher opinions and interviews made with the parents, if there is a possibility that the child is gifted, then the educational evaluation form is filled in by the form and branch teacher and the student is directed to the CRC. The parent is informed about the process and necessary information is given to them. The child is directed to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health unit in a random public hospital. By taking into consideration hospital reports and the educational evaluation form, the CRC conducts an appropriate intelligence test on the child and sends the education identification report to the school (P2).*

*A pre-interview is carried out with students who are found different and are directed to the CRC. They are also informed about the BILSEM process (P14).*

*If the child who grasps the attention of the form teacher has certain characteristics and features, then we direct the student to the CRC (P15).*

*Identification is also done through the CRC (P17).*

The opinions of school counselors on whether or not the identification process of gifted students is carried out in a sound manner are summarized on Table 4.

Table 4  
*Opinions of school counselors on whether or not the identification process of gifted students is carried out in a sound manner*

<b>Identification process</b>	<b>Opinion</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
It is not sound.	The tests and implementers are not sufficient	7	31.82
	Because more than one test is not conducted	5	22.72
	Because the tests are not up-to-date	3	13.64
It is sound	The tests and interviews are sufficient	4	18.18
I don't have an opinion	I have no opinion	3	13.64

Seven school counselors stated that they believe the identification process is not sound because the tests and implementers are insufficient, 5 counselors stated because more than one test is not conducted, 3 counselors stated that because the tests are not up-to-date. 4 counselors stated that the identification process is sound because they believed that the test and interviews are sufficient. 3 counselors stated that they have no opinion on this topic. The opinions of various school counselors on this subject are given below.

*It is not sufficient and sound. Intellectually gifted or gifted children cannot be identified through multiple choice test exams or IQ tests. It can be revealed through family, school and expert opinions, observation and identifications (P7).*

*I believe that the tests are not sound because they are not up-to-date. It will be more sound if decision making skills during instant events are evaluated (P5).*

*I witnessed the tests that have been used for years strolling hand-in-hand. That's why it is not sound. I also don't find it right that the people who are thought to be different start getting affected in time from the tests that are conducted (P14).*

*We are directed to the CRC for the second identification. A student of mine wasn't accepted to the CRC for the second evaluation just because of getting 1 score low. But we directed this student later on with the educational evaluation form and this student was identified as gifted. Too many students are tried to be identified at the same time. I believe it has disadvantages rather than advantages. I observed that time and workforce, the negative influence on students and the practices (supportive training) carried out on students who are identified are not very advantageous (P16).*

*I don't believe it is sound. The reason is that I find the identification process performance tests and various screenings insufficient (P17).*

*I think it is sound. The test and evaluations measure the significant differences within the peer group (P18).*

*Somewhat, old measurement scales are used, different results can occur after different measurements, and it is a test conducted without taking the students' current mood into consideration (P20).*

Opinions of school counselors on where they direct students who they believe to be gifted to are given on Table 5.

Table 5

*Opinions of school counselors on where they direct students who they believe to be gifted*

<b>Identification process</b>	<b>Opinion</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Where do they direct to?	Only to the CRC	8	36.36
	To the CRC and Psychiatry	3	13.64
	To the CRC and BİLSEM	5	22.72
	To the CRC and information about private institutions/foundations	4	18.18
	No student applications	2	9.10

About where they direct the students who they believe to be gifted; 8 school counselors stated that they direct them only to the Counseling and Research Center, 3 counselors stated to both the Counseling and Research Center and also to Psychiatry, 5 counselors stated to both the Counseling and Research Center and also to Science and Art Center, 4 counselors stated they direct them to the Counseling and Research Center and informed the students about private institutions. 2 school counselors stated that no such students applied or were directed to them. 3 counselors stated that these students should receive a different education after being identified, thus, the number of separate schools should be increased; 2 counselors underlined that the curriculum that will be conducted in these schools should be created.

It is evident in the above given statements that the school counselors don't have a detailed knowledge on the identification process, most of the counselors stated that the identification process is performed only by the counseling and research center and some counselors stated that they have knowledge on the tests conducted during the identification process. The majority of the participants stated that the identification process is not sound. In additions school counselors usually direct students who they believe to be gifted to the counseling and research center along with the hospital and some direct the students to BİLSEM.

#### ***Fourth Theme: Services provided at school***

The reasons why the students, who are identified as gifted or are thought to be gifted, and their parents apply to the counseling service and school counselors' opinions on the cooperation done with the family and teachers and on the supportive training room are given below.

Opinions of school counselors about the applications of the students who are identified as gifted or are thought to be gifted to the school counseling service are summarized on Table 6.

Table 6

*Opinions of school counselors about the application of the students identified/thought to be gifted to the counseling service*

<b>Services provided at school</b>	<b>Opinion</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Applications to the counseling service	No applications were made	11	50.00
	For direction	4	18.18
	On personal, social, communication and educational issues	5	22.72
	Teachers direct them due to maladjustment	2	9.10

Based on the interviews carried out with school counselors, about the applications of the students who are identified as gifted or are thought to be gifted to the school counseling service; 11 counselors stated that no applications were made and added that among those who applied

for guidance, 2 were directed to the counseling and research center and 2 were directed to BİLSEM. In addition, 5 counselors stated that gifted students applied to the counseling service on personal, social, communication and educational issues and 2 counselors stated that their teachers directed them due to maladjustment. Opinions of various counselors about the applications of gifted students to the counseling service are given below.

*They usually come due to the difficulties they encounter in friendship relations. We carry out practices to increase their social skills. (P2).*

*Yes. For their needs on personal, social and educational issues (P16).*

*They apply concerning their professional choices (P10).*

*Sometimes there are subjects that they want to search on, on issues like relationship and communication that arise due to different perspectives (P14).*

*Family and form teacher interviews are carried out. The TKT 7-11 implementation is conducted in primary school and those who are found convenient are directed to the CRC (P18).*

*They don't come with their own will. Their teachers direct them because they cause trouble in the classroom (P22).*

Opinions of school counselors about the applications of the families of students who are identified as gifted or are thought to be gifted to the school counseling service are summarized on Table 7.

Table 7

*Opinions of school counselors about the application of the families of students identified/thought to be gifted to the counseling service*

<i>Services provided at school</i>	<i>Opinion</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
	No applications were made	8	36.36
Applications to the counseling service	For direction and support	6	27.28
	Adjustment and communication	5	22.72
	For their course grades to be better	3	13.64

About the applications of the families of students who are identified as gifted or are thought to be gifted to the school counseling service; 8 counselors stated that no applications were made, 4 counselors stated that they applied about where they can be directed to and where they can get support from, 2 counselors stated that they applied about the adjustment and communication problems of the students. Opinions of various counselors about the applications of the families of gifted students to the counseling service are given below:

*They apply, they ask where they can receive support from, what they should do and tell us that they are very curious. We advise them activities that are in line with their interests and talents (P15).*

*They applied about the change in the behaviors of two students. They don't feel they belong to the classroom, it is like perceiving oneself different and superior (P16).*

*We discuss with teachers and families and the TKT 7-11 implementation is conducted on students who are found necessary (P18).*

*For direction to BILSEM (P19).*

*They apply to get information on direction and issues they consider as behavior problems (P20).*

*How course grades can be better (P22).*

Opinions of school psychological counselors on the cooperation they do with the families of gifted students are summarized on Table 8.

Table 8  
*Opinions of school psychological counselors on the cooperation they do with the families of gifted students*

<i>Services provided at school</i>	<i>Opinion</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Cooperation with the family	There is no gifted student at school	4	18.18
	No cooperation	4	18.18
	Direction	5	22.72
	Issues on socialization, lack of concentration etc.	4	18.18
	Same reasons with the other students	2	9.10
	Cooperation is difficult because expectations are high	2	9.10
	Studying habits	1	4.54

About the cooperation done with gifted children's families; 4 school counselors stated that they don't have students who fit this definition in their school, 4 counselors stated that they haven't made any cooperation. 5 school counselors stated they make cooperation about direction, 4 counselors stated they cooperate on issues such as socialization and lack of concentration etc. 2 counselors stated for the same reasons with the families of other students, 1 counselor stated that for the student to gain a studying habit and 2 counselors stated that cooperation is difficult because the expectations of the families are high. Opinions of various school counselors on cooperation with families are given below:

*I directed parents to places where they can find BILSEM workshops before. I advise various activity books and development sets (P1).*

*Yes, what can be done for the student to socialize more? We cooperate on this subject. (2).*

*For the student to gain a studying habit (5).*

*Yes, to observe the education and development of the children (P6).*

*Yes, we do, informing, directing and developing (P11).*

*We cooperate in directing to the CRC (P12).*

*We do. Informing on special education centers and institutions (P13).*

*Yes. The reasons with all the student interviews (P14).*

*Yes. I give detailed information to the family. We follow the change as well as the identification process (P16).*

*We carry out Supportive Training Room implementations. Parents and teachers are informed about the educational choices (P18).*

*Attention problems, emotional problems etc. (P19).*

*It is difficult. Expectations are high. They behave like a boss (P22).*

Opinions of school psychological counselors on the cooperation with the teachers of gifted students are summarized on Table 9.

Table 9  
*Opinions of school psychological counselors on the cooperation with the teachers of gifted students*

<i>Services provided at school</i>	<i>Opinion</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
	There is no gifted student at school	4	18.18
	No cooperation	6	27.28
Cooperation with the teachers	Direction	5	22.72
	Communication problems with the peers in the classroom	3	13.64
	About what can be done in the supportive training room	3	13.64
	Cooperation is tried but it is difficult to achieve	1	9.10

About the cooperation done with gifted children's teachers; 4 school counselors stated that they don't have students who fit this definition in their school, 6 counselors stated that they haven't made any cooperation with the teachers. 5 counselors stated that cooperated for guidance and 3 counselors stated they cooperated about communication problems with peers. 3 school counselors stated they cooperate about what can be done in the supportive training rooms, 1 counselor stated he or she tries to cooperate with the teachers but had difficulties in doing so. Opinions of various school counselors on this subject are given below:

*It was done before, they were given advice about benefitting from supportive training rooms along with project tasks and research homework (P1).*

*Yes, cooperation is done on issues related to what kind of methods and practices can be applied for the students to overcome the communication difficulties they encounter with their peers (P2).*

*Yes, in informing, raising awareness and in giving the individual developmental support (P11).*

*Yes. They are given information about what they should do within the classroom and how they should behave (P12).*

*Yes. About the program and activities in the supportive training room (P14).*

*Enriched practices oriented for interests other than the courses and about what can be done in supportive training rooms (P15).*

*Yes, especially about following after identification, the uniqueness of needs and about what can be done (P16).*

*Yes. We cooperate on Directing, Identification and I subjects (P18).*

*Yes, for direction (P19).*



*For direction to practices (P20).*

*It is difficult. For them, a gifted child is one who can answer all questions and who makes no mistakes in the TEOG exam. (P22).*

School counselor opinions on the supportive training room are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10  
*Opinions of school psychological counselors on the cooperation with the teachers of gifted students*

<i>Services provided at school</i>	<i>Opinion</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Supportive training room	There is no supportive training room	13	59.10
	There is a supportive training room but gifted students can't benefit from it	5	22.72
	They benefit from it 4-8 hours a week	4	18.18

About whether or not there is a supportive training room in schools and if there is, to what extent they are allocated for gifted children's use; 13 counselors stated that there is no supportive training room in their school, 5 counselors stated that there is a supportive training room in their school but gifted students can't benefit from it, 4 counselors stated that gifted students benefitted from the supportive training room 4-8 hours a week.

It is evident from school counselors' statements that, almost half of the counselors underlined that gifted students did not apply to the counseling service and that those who applied, applied for reasons such as for socializing and professional guidance. Families apply on how they can direct their children to the counseling service and how they can conduct a healthier communication. School counselors stated that they usually cannot cooperate with families and teachers and added that there are usually no supportive training rooms in the schools and that these students usually cannot benefit from these rooms when they are present.

#### Discussion and Conclusion

The increase in the living standards and the aesthetic development of the civilization is based on the presence of gifted individuals. The contribution of gifted individuals on civilization is rather obvious and closed for discussion. Thus, due to the contributions they will make on the future of mankind and with respect to their personal rights, it is necessary to offer a good education for gifted students (Tannenbaum, 1986). In the study that family, teacher and counselor opinions on gifted children's education was evaluated, Ignat (2011) emphasized that school counselors are the 3. most important party after the form teacher and parents. For this reason it is crucial to study the opinions of school counselors on gifted children's education.

In the interviews carried out with school counselors, the main theme of the study was identified as "gifted children's education" after examining the concepts that were repeated the most. The sub-themes were identified as "gifted child", "identification process", "need for education" and "services provided at school".

In the first sub-theme Gifted Child; school counselor metaphors on what gifted children are likened to and their opinions on whether or not these children are subject to positive or negative discrimination are given. According to the data analysis results, school counselors stated that gifted children are very precious (gold mine, present, rainbow, musical art, diamond etc.) but emphasized that you can't offer opportunities and evaluate values that are not revealed. School counselors also emphasized that these students are subject to positive discrimination by their families and teachers; and that they are subject to negative discrimination by being excluded by their peers, through the lack of an education curriculum, because a sufficient amount of service is not provided and because their differences are not fully understood. According to Sak (2010),

one of the purposes of the counseling program carried out by teachers and counselors in schools is to demolish situations that affect gifted students negatively and to promote them to fight against these negative situations. In addition, to provide convenient conditions so that these students can be happy and productive. When these positive conditions are provided, the gifted individual's self-confidence, working discipline, self-perception and achievement will be affected positively. However, when giftedness is used as a label then the development of all these features will progress contrarily. In addition, gifted children need psychological counseling for the problems they encounter due to their differences, their pursuit for meaning, for their problems to be understood and to be given the chance to express their problems. Along with fulfilling these needs of gifted children, during the psychological counseling process, counselors can also assist these children about the factors that affect their happiness and achievement (Kerr, 1991; Silverman, 2012). In addition, school counselors inform the society so that gifted children won't be affected by negative situations, they won't have social-emotional problems and will establish healthy relationships and should support creating settings which gifted individuals also require. School counselors and teachers also have the responsibility to educate students on showing empathy and respect to all the other students. Discrimination and rejection problems among peers will be prevented when teachers and counselors provide a convenient setting where each student can express himself within the classroom and during social activities. School counselors can cooperate with teachers and families on these issues and can assist teachers in preparing group activities (Ambrose, 2012; Cross, 2012; Moon, Kelly & Feldhusen, 1997).

In the second sub-theme Education; what the trainings that school psychological counselors received on gifted children during and after undergraduate/post-graduate education (seminar, conference, certificate program, workshop etc.) and the trainings that they may require while trying to offer a better education to these children are given. According to the analyses, the majority of the counselors stated that they didn't receive sufficient training and support about gifted children during and after undergraduate/post-graduate education; counselors who received a bit of training stated that they benefitted from this education. Psychological counselors also stated that these students require education again after undergraduate/post-graduate education. According to Yazici and Altun (2016), the quality of the education that will be offered to gifted students depends on the personal, professional and education guidance services that begin during pre-school and continue until the end of higher education. When the education provided for gifted students and teachers who work with these students are considered, it is evident that practice and implementations in our country in this field are not sufficient. This insufficiency is also evident in undergraduate programs that school psychological counselors acquire their fundamental professional competences. For this reason, Wittmer (2000) emphasized that courses, which will furnish students with the necessary knowledge and skills related to psychological counseling and guidance services provided to gifted students, should be included in undergraduate and post-graduate psychological counseling and guidance programs. It is well-known that the trainings that are given increase self-efficacy levels of counselors (Al-Darmaki, 2004; Urbani, Smith, Maddux, Smaby, Torres-Rivera & Crews, 2002) and teachers (Veysel & Diken, 2009). In Yilmaz's (2010) study which examined the curriculum in the department of psychological counseling and guidance, it was observed that there was no obligatory course the gifted individuals' education, that these courses were given in some universities as an elective course, that special education courses on gifted students were elective or only given in many universities during one term and that only in a few universities these courses were given in two terms and were included among elective courses. Also, lessons in the trainings that will be offered can be diversified by including the counseling service provided for gifted students and their families (Ogurlu & Sevim, 2017; Yazici & Altun, 2016).

The third sub-theme Identification process involves the opinions of school counselors about the identification process, on whether or not the identification process is sound and on the direction that is made in identifying gifted students. According to the analyses, school counselors stated that they did not have sufficient amount of knowledge about the identification process and the majority of the participants stated that the identification process is not sound. School counselors usually direct students who they believe to be gifted to a counseling and research center. In addition, there are counselors who direct to the hospital, to BİLSEM and to private institutions/foundations. School counselors stated that they don't have sufficient knowledge on special education and special education teachers don't have knowledge on the counseling service program (Güven & Balat, 2006). Special education subjects are limited in undergraduate programs in our country that school psychological counselors study. There is no curriculum which includes subjects such as inclusion and educational identification. The tests used in identification are not taught in the majority of university programs. For this reason, the readiness levels of school counselors for their duties concerning gifted students can be low. In addition, Kirbiyik (2011) stated that because education programs are mainly focused on identifying and directing, the identification process will be more meaningful and sound when the practices during the educational period are carried out with the manner of supporting the individual's multidimensional development. Identifying, determining, directing, understanding and interfering with the problems unique to giftedness are among the daily practices in psychological counseling and guidance services given in education (Robertson, Pfeiffer & Taylor, 2011). However, the most important responsibility is attached to teachers in identifying the gifted student. For this reason teachers need to innovate and improve themselves so as to be able to direct gifted students and their families to appropriate units (Altıntaş & Özdemir, 2013).

In the fourth theme Services Provided at School; the reasons why the students, who are identified as gifted or are thought to be gifted, and their parents apply to the counseling service and school counselors' opinions on the cooperation done with the family and teachers and on the supportive training room are given. According to the analyses, almost half of the school counselors underlined that gifted students did not apply to the counseling service and that those who applied, applied for reasons such as for socializing and professional guidance. School counselors underlined that families applied on how they can direct their children to the counseling service and how they can conduct a healthier communication. School counselors also stated that they usually cannot cooperate with families and teachers, that there are usually no supportive training rooms in the schools and that these students usually cannot benefit from these rooms when they are present. Davis & Rimm (2004) underlined that the differences of gifted students are not limited with only the mental area and that social-emotional and personal characteristics are also observed. The problems that gifted students frequently require guidance are listed as; adaptation pressure encountered in social relationships, acceptance and exclusion, failing to control anger, excessive competition, asynchronous development and academic issues such as repeating homework and weak studying habits. Due to these characteristics gifted children have problems from various areas. That's why they require a differentiated PCG service (Ersoy & Deniz, 2016b; Moon, 2003; Üre, 2002; Valiandes & Tarman, 2011). Kuz (2000) stated that school counselors are the closest assistants of teachers who have a student with special needs in their classroom. In order for the counseling services, which should be conducted as a teamwork, to operate in a healthy and productive way, it is crucial for school administrators, teachers, school staff and the family to cooperate with the counselor and act together (Hatunoglu & Hatunoglu, 2006). Above all, the knowledge and professional skills of school counselors should be improved in identifying gifted students and becoming aware of their needs. The significant need of the gifted for psychological counseling and guidance assistance and the psychological counseling and guidance need of the school staff are

considered important. In addition, guiding the family is expected from school counselors (Moon, Kelly & Feldhusen, 1997). According to a study conducted by Guven & Balat (2006), school psychological counselors do not provide the sufficient amount of information and explanation to families. The reason for this is stated as because school counselors don't have sufficient knowledge on special education and because they cannot spare time due to their working hours.

#### Suggestions;

1. According to the study results, gifted students are subject to negative discrimination by their peers. School counselors and teachers can cooperate in informing peers so that these children will not be negatively affected by their peers and not encounter social and emotional problems.
2. According to the study results, school counselors did not receive sufficient training on gifted children during and after undergraduate education. Electives courses related to gifted students can be included in the undergraduate PCG curriculum. In addition, counselors who are on duty can be provided with in-service training on gifted children's education by formatters during seminar weeks.
3. For the identification process to be carried out in a more sound manner, what the duties of school counselors are can be explained during the in-service training.
4. What kinds of opportunities (public-private) are offered to gifted students as supportive education can be explained to the teachers and families by school counselors.
5. According to the study results, gifted students don't usually apply to the school counseling service. School counselors can inform gifted children, their families and their teachers about what kind of services can be provided for them.

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*Manuscript received December 03, 2018*  
*Final revision received December 21, 2018*  
*Accepted December 27, 2018*