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An Examination of Student Selection Methods in Schools of Physical Education and Sports: Evidence from Bartın, Manisa, and Düzce

Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Yüksekokullarında Öğrenci Seçim Yöntemleri: Bartın, Manisa ve Düzce Örneği

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Abstract:

This study aims to examine the methods employed in special talent examinations used by higher education institutions providing sports education, to identify the criteria that differ across universities, and to determine which scores and coefficients are more decisive in the student placement process. The study focuses on the special talent examinations of Bartın University BESYO, Düzce University Faculty of Sport Sciences, and Celal Bayar University BESYO, analysing data from 2,101 candidates who participated in these examinations in 2014 and 2015. The findings reveal that the factors influencing placement scores vary across institutions. At Bartın University, the coordination test and the Higher Education Entrance Examination (YGS) score are the most decisive; at Düzce University, the career score and YGS score are predominant; while at Celal Bayar University, the branch score and YGS score stand out. However, a typical result across all three institutions is that the YGS score functions as a secondary yet critical determinant. The literature review demonstrates that special talent examinations are not only associated with athletic skills but also closely related to academic performance and psychological factors. Nevertheless, variations in criteria and coefficients among universities have raised standardisation issues. This research indicates that, besides achieving high YGS scores, candidates should prioritise institutions where their individual talents can be highlighted. Furthermore, the findings shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of the former system, offering a historical reference point for understanding the necessity of the Special Talent Examination System (ÖZYES), which ÖSYM has recently implemented. Since 2024, with the introduction of ÖZYES, the student selection process has become more centralised, standardised, and transparent, evolving into a more holistic framework that jointly considers academic achievement and athletic talent.

Keywords: PESA, FSS (Faculty of Sports Sciences), Special Aptitude Tests.

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, spor eğitimi veren yükseköğretim kurumlarında uygulanan özel yetenek sınavlarının yöntemlerini incelemek, üniversiteler arasında farklılık gösteren kriterleri ortaya koymak ve öğrenci yerleştirme sürecinde hangi puan ve katsayıların daha belirleyici olduğunu belirlemektir. Araştırmada Bartın Üniversitesi BESYO, Düzce Üniversitesi Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi ve Celal Bayar Üniversitesi BESYO özel yetenek sınavları ele alınmış; 2014 ve 2015 yıllarında bu üniversitelerin sınavlarına katılan toplam 2.101 adayın verileri analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, her üniversitede yerleştirme puanlarını etkileyen faktörlerin farklılaştığını göstermektedir. Bartın Üniversitesi'nde koordinasyon testi ve YGS puanı; Düzce Üniversitesi'nde kariyer puanı ve YGS puanı; Celal Bayar Üniversitesi'nde ise branş puanı ve YGS puanı öne çıkmaktadır. Ancak tüm üniversiteler için ortak sonuç, YGS puanının ikincil ama kritik bir belirleyici unsur olmasıdır. Literatür taraması, özel yetenek sınavlarının yalnızca sportif becerilerle değil, aynı zamanda akademik başarı ve psikolojik faktörlerle de ilişkili olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bununla birlikte, üniversiteler arasında kriter ve katsayı farklılıklarının standartlaşma sorunlarına yol açtığı görülmektedir. Araştırma sonuçları, adayların yüksek YGS puanı elde etmelerinin yanında bireysel yeteneklerini ön plana çıkarabilecekleri kurumları tercih etmelerinin önemini göstermektedir. Ayrıca, elde edilen bulgular eski sistemin güçlü ve zayıf yönlerini ortaya koymakta, günümüzde ÖSYM tarafından uygulamaya konulan Özel Yetenek Sınav Sistemi'nin (ÖZYES) neden gerekli olduğunu anlamak için tarihsel bir referans noktası sunmaktadır. 2024 yılı itibariyle ÖZYES ile birlikte öğrenci seçme süreci daha merkezi, standart ve şeffaf hale gelmiş; akademik başarı ile sportif yeteneği birlikte ele alan daha bütüncül bir yapıya evrilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: BESYO, SBF (Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi), Özel Yetenek Sınavları.

Note.: This article is derived from the thesis entitled *'An Examination of Student Selection Methods in Schools of Physical Education and Sports in Turkey (A Comparative Study of Bartın, Manisa, and Düzce)'*, prepared by Zekai Çakır under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Serdar Uslu, and successfully defended on 16 August 2016.

APA 7 Reference
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Introduction

In Turkey, special talent examinations have long been used to admit students to higher education institutions offering sports education. The purpose of these examinations is to assess candidates' academic achievements and consider their athletic skills, coordination abilities, and sporting background, thereby ensuring the selection of suitable students for the field. However, in practice, the fact that each university has set different criteria, coefficients, and threshold scores has created significant standardisation problems in the student selection process. This variation has complicated the evaluation of candidates across universities and has sometimes resulted in inequalities in placement outcomes.

In general, Faculties of Sports Sciences (SBF) and Schools of Physical Education and Sports (BESYO) in Turkey employ three basic criteria in student admissions:

1. The Higher Education Entrance Examination (YGS) score,
2. The Weighted High School Grade Point Average (AOBP/OBP),
3. Performance in the special talent examination (branch-specific test, coordination, athletic résumé, etc.).

However, the weight of these criteria in placement decisions varies considerably from one university to another. In some institutions, the YGS score is more decisive, while in others athletic performance is prioritised, and in some cases additional points are awarded for athletic background. Consequently, applying different criteria and coefficients directly influences student placement outcomes.

Research in the literature has highlighted multiple dimensions of special talent examinations:

Academic achievement relations: Peker (2003) and Sevimli et al. (2010) found significant relationships between YGS scores and students' academic performance. However, special talent scores do not always strongly correlate with academic achievement.

Effect of athletic background and performance: Kalkavan et al. (2005) demonstrated that students with professional or amateur athletic backgrounds performed better in these examinations, underlining the importance of sports high schools.

Differences in exam practices: Kizir et al. (2014) reported significant variations in content, coefficients, and quotas across universities based on their review of exam guidelines.

Weight of the special talent score: Atar and Yılmaz (2011) noted that while the ÖSYM guidelines stipulate that special talent scores should account for 75% of the placement calculation, this proportion was closer to 35% in practice.

Psychological factors: Çağlayan et al. (2010) and Yıldız et al. (2015) emphasised that stress management and psychological resilience during the examination process directly affect candidate success.

Difference between in-field and out-of-field students: Ece (2007) and Ece & Bilgin (2007) revealed that students from sports-related backgrounds had an advantage in placement, whereas those from unrelated fields needed significantly higher YGS scores.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that special talent examinations are multidimensional processes encompassing athletic ability and academic and psychological factors. However, the lack of standard and standardised criteria across universities generates differences and debates in placement outcomes.

The diversity of criteria used in student selection for BESYO and the Faculties of Sports Sciences in Turkey poses challenges not only for candidates but also for the coherence and reliability of the system. Therefore, examining and comparing the different methods applied across universities is essential for understanding which criteria are more decisive and how they influence placement outcomes.

Aim and Hypotheses of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to examine the impact of criteria and coefficients employed in special talent examinations on student placement outcomes in higher education institutions offering sports education. The study focuses on Bartın University BESYO, Düzce University Faculty of Sports Sciences, and Celal Bayar University BESYO.

The following three hypotheses were tested:

1. In Bartın University BESYO, the criteria related to exceptional talent and athletic skills have no significant effect on YGS and AOBP scores.
2. In the Düzce University Faculty of Sports Sciences, the criteria related to exceptional talent and athletic skills have no significant effect on YGS and AOBP scores.
3. In Celal Bayar University BESYO, the criteria related to exceptional talent and athletic skills have no significant effect on YGS and AOBP scores.

Connection to the Current System

The findings of this study indicate that variations in implementation across universities were decisive in the placement process. However, with the introduction of the Special Talent Examination System (ÖZYES) by ÖSYM in the last two years, such diversity has been reduced, and the evaluation process has acquired a more standardised, centralised, and transparent structure. Thus, this research not only identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the former system but also provides historical insight into why ÖZYES was necessary and what kind of transformation it has brought about.

Accordingly, this study is considered a meaningful reference point for better understanding the significance of ÖZYES in its current application.

Research Model

This study is based on the "general survey" model. Survey models are descriptive in nature and aim to reach general conclusions about a population by analyzing large samples (Karasar, 2012; Büyüköztürk et al., 2017; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). The present research seeks to comparatively examine the impact of coefficients used in placement scores in special talent examinations, focusing on how these coefficients reflect on candidates from within and outside the field, and which coefficients hold greater significance in each university. Accordingly, the study carries a descriptive character.

General survey models are designed to generate overall judgments about a population by examining the entire population or selected samples. Within this framework, both singular and relational surveys may be conducted. Singular surveys describe variables in type or magnitude, whereas relational surveys examine the relationships between variables. Furthermore, survey models can also be employed to analyze temporal developments and changes. This study's variables affecting placement scores were approached from a descriptive perspective.

Population and Sample

The study sample consists of 2,101 candidates who participated in the special talent examinations of three universities' Schools of Physical Education and Sports (BESYO) in 2014 and 2015, for whom placement scores were calculated. The study population, on the other hand, comprises all candidate students who applied to special talent examinations of higher education institutions offering sports education in Türkiye.

It was assumed that the participants included in the sample represented the entire population. The universities examined within the scope of the research are Düzce University BESYO and Manisa Celal Bayar University BESYO in 2015, and Bartın University BESYO in 2014. The data were collected between 01.03.2016 and 20.03.2016.

Data Collection Tools and Procedure

The data used in the study were formally obtained in written form from the respective university directorates. The study employed candidates' Special Talent Examination Scores (ÖYSP), Weighted High School Grade Point Averages (AÖBP), and Higher Education Entrance Exam (YGS) scores.

The data were compiled from the official examination result lists published by the universities, transferred to a digital format, and analyzed using the SPSS statistical software package. Additionally, candidates' socio-demographic characteristics—such as age, gender, national team status, examination branch, preferences, YGS and AÖBP scores, and placement outcomes—were evaluated.

Data Analysis

SPSS statistical software was employed to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics were calculated, including frequency, mean, and standard deviation values. Inferential statistical techniques were also applied to account for the normal distribution of the data. In order to determine the effects of coefficients on placement scores, multiple regression analysis was conducted. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results

Sub-Problem 1: Is there a significant effect of the methods applied in the fields of exceptional talent and sporting skills, along with the Weighted High School Grade Point Average (AÖBP) and the Higher Education Entrance Exam (YGS) scores, on the placement scores used in the student admission criteria of Bartın University School of Physical Education and Sports (BESYO)?

The demographic distribution of students whose placement scores were calculated following the 2014 Special Talent Examinations of Bartın University is presented below.

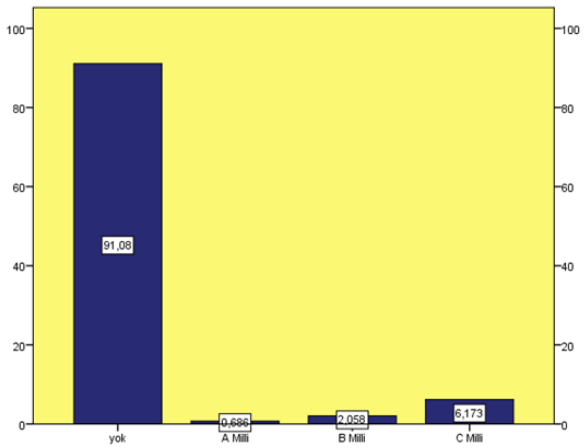

Figure 1. Participants' National Team Status

As a result of the analyses, it was found that among the 729 candidates who applied to the Bartın University Special Talent Examinations and had their placement scores calculated, 91.08% (n = 664) had no national-level achievement, whereas 6.2% (n = 45) held a C-level national ranking.

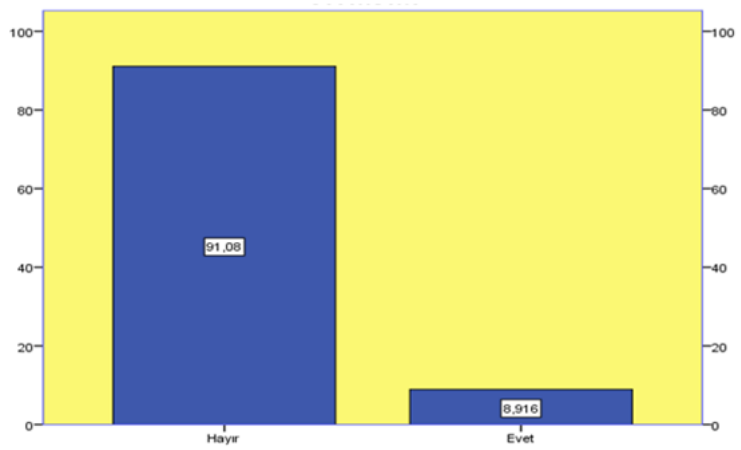

Figure 2. Participants' Enrollment Status in Higher Education During the Previous Year (prior to the examination year)

According to the statistical analyses regarding whether participants had been placed in a higher education institution in the previous year, it was determined that 91.08% (n = 664) had not been placed, whereas 8.92% (n = 65) had successfully secured placement.

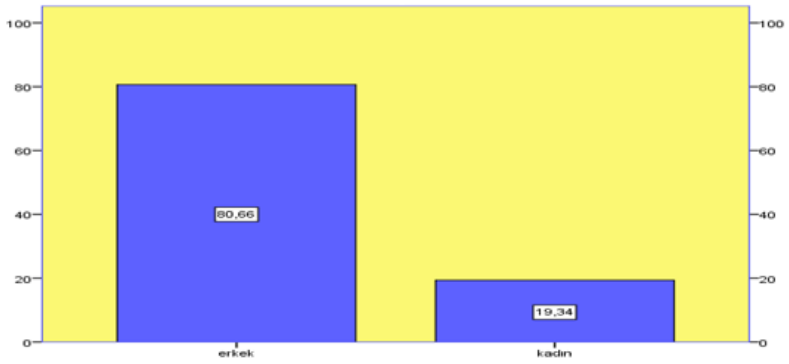

Figure 3. Distribution of Participants by Gender

Among those who participated in the special talent examinations, 80.66% (n = 588) were male candidates, whereas 19.34% (n = 141) were female candidates.

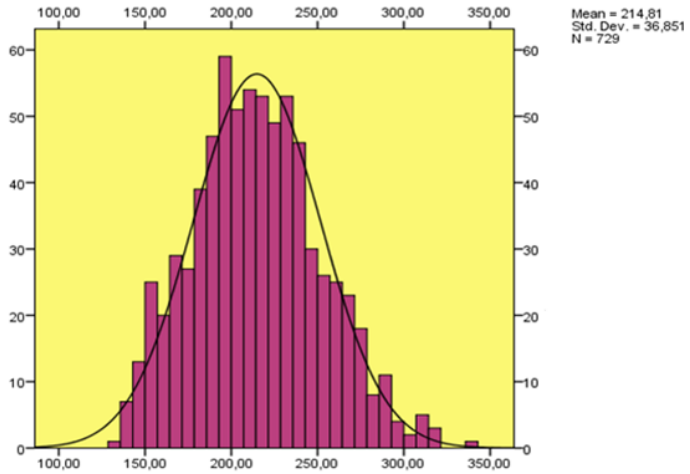

Figure 4. Distribution of Participants' Mean YGS Scores

The distribution of YGS (Higher Education Entrance Exam) scores of participants in the Bartın University Special Talent Examinations is presented in Figure 4. The participants' mean YGS score was 214.81 ± 36.851. It was further observed that the majority of participants' scores clustered within the 200–250 point range

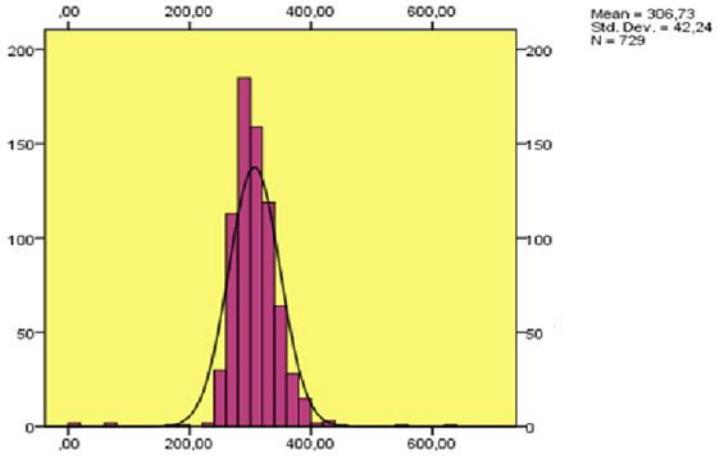

Figure 5. Distribution of Participants' Mean AOBP Scores

The distribution of Weighted High School Grade Point Averages (AOBP) of participants in the Bartın University Special Talent Examinations is presented in Figure 5. The participants' mean AOBP score was 306.73 ± 42.24. It was further observed that the majority of participants' scores were clustered within the 200–400 point range

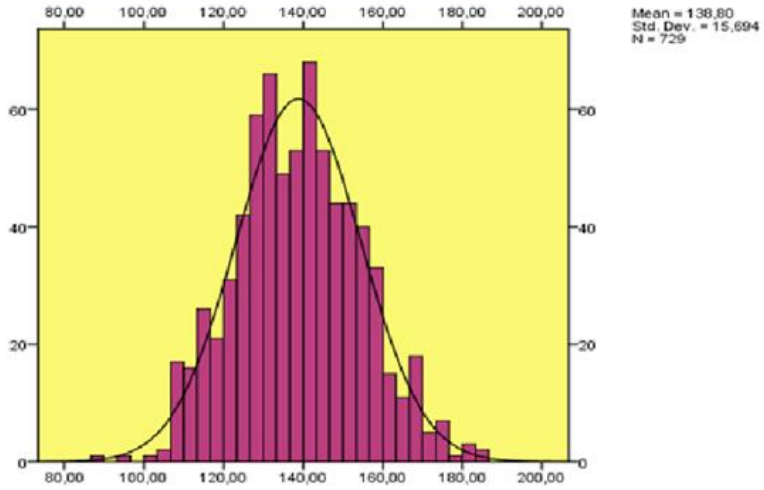

Figure 6. Distribution of Participants' Mean Placement Scores

The distribution of placement scores of participants in the Bartın University Special Talent Examinations is presented in Figure 6. The participants' mean placement score was 138.80 ± 15.694. It was further observed that most scores were clustered within the 120–160 point range.

Participants were placed into their preferred departments per their choices and the available institutional quotas. However, not every candidate whose placement score was calculated could be admitted to a program; final placements were carried out strictly according to the quota limitations.

Table 4. Results of the Standard Multiple Regression Analysis on Placement Scores

				t	Sig.			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	r	R
(Constant)	26,253	2,140		12,269	,000			
YGS	,193	,005	,454	35,265	,000	,475	,795	,437
AOBP	,077	,005	,207	16,622	,000	,220	,526	,206
National Team	-,114	,261	-,006	-,437	,662	-,144	-,016	-,005
Previous year Enrollment	-12,021	,691	-,218	-17,400	,000	-,227	-,544	-,215
Coordination Score	,339	,007	,625	50,003	,000	,650	,881	,619
Branch Score	,543	,015	,439	35,359	,000	,391	,796	,438

a. Dependent Variable: Placement Score *b. $p < 0.05$*

The results of the regression analysis examining the prediction of placement scores based on YGS, AOBP, national team membership status, previous enrollment in a higher education institution, coordination score, and branch score are presented in Table 4.

When the zero-order and partial correlations between the predictor variables and the dependent variable were analyzed, a strong positive correlation was found between YGS and placement scores (r = .795). However, after controlling for the other variables, the correlation between these two variables was calculated as r = .437. Another strong association was observed between coordination scores and placement scores (r = .881). Even after controlling for the other predictors, the correlation remained high and statistically significant (r = .619).

The variables YGS, AOBP, national team membership status, previous enrollment in a higher education institution, coordination score, and branch score together showed a strong and statistically

significant association with placement scores ($R = .943$, $R^2 = .889$, $p < .01$). Collectively, these six predictors accounted for approximately 89% of the total variance in placement scores.

According to the standardised regression coefficients (β), the relative order of importance of the predictors on placement scores was as follows: Coordination Score, Entrance Exam (YGS), Branch Score, Previous Enrollment, and GPA Contribution (AOBP). The t-test results indicated that only national team membership did not significantly affect placement scores, whereas the other five predictors significantly contributed.

Based on these analyses, the placement scores of Bartın University's School of Physical Education and Sports Special Talent Examinations were examined, and the answer to the first sub-problem was obtained. Accordingly, it was found that the methods applied in the special talent and sport-specific skill domains, along with AOBP and YGS scores, significantly influenced student placement scores in the Bartın University PES programs.

Hypothesis 1 was rejected.

It was determined that the most important criterion for admission to Bartın University PES was the Coordination Score, followed by the YGS score. No substantial difference was observed between the YGS and Branch Scores. Thus, success in gaining admission to Bartın PES does not primarily depend on exceptionally high YGS scores but rather on achieving strong results in the Coordination Test. In other words, among candidates with comparable YGS scores, those who obtained higher Coordination Scores gained a considerable advantage in their overall placement outcomes.

Findings and Interpretations Regarding the Second Sub-Problem

Sub-Problem 2: Do the methods applied in the special talent and sport-specific skill domains, together with AOBP and YGS scores, have an effect on students' placement scores in the admission criteria of Düzce University, Faculty of Sport Sciences?

The demographic distribution of students whose Placement Scores were calculated as a result of the 2014 Special Talent Examinations at Düzce University is presented below.

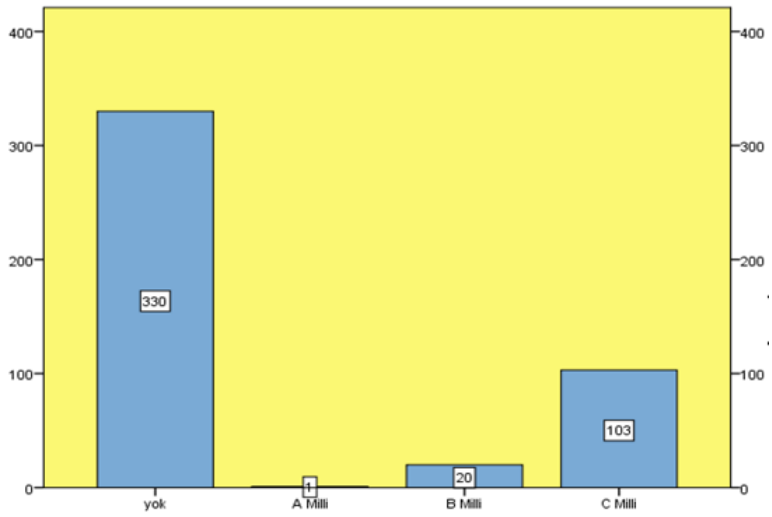

Figure 7. Participants' National Team Status

As a result of the analyses, it was determined that among the 454 candidates whose placement scores were calculated after applying to the Bartın University Special Talent Examinations, 72.7% (n =

330) did not hold any national ranking, whereas 22.7% (n = 103) were identified as having achieved a C-level national status.

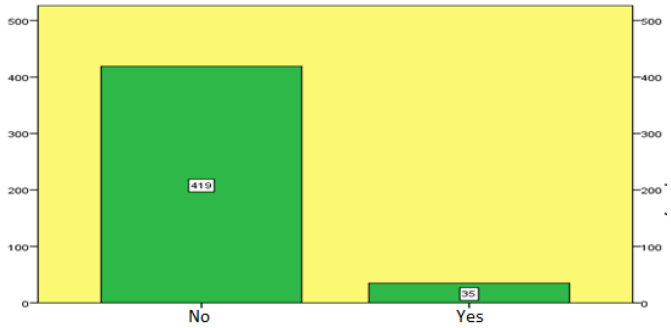

Figure 8. Participants' Previous Year Enrollment in a Higher Education Institution (2013)

Based on the statistical analyses regarding whether the participants had enrolled in a higher education institution in the previous year (prior to the 2014 examination), it was found that 92.3% (n = 419) had not been enrolled, whereas 7.7% (n = 35) had been enrolled.

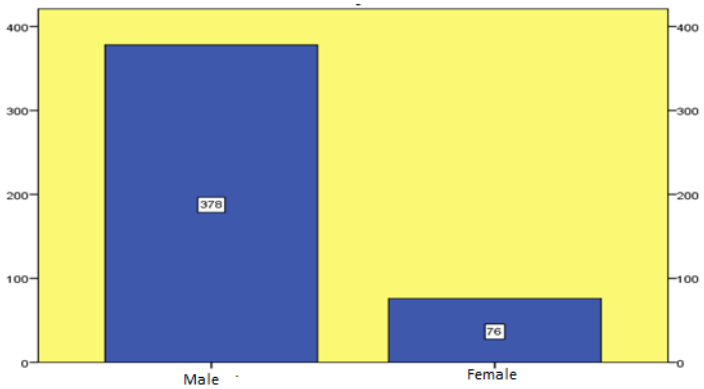

Figure 9. Distribution of Participants by Gender

Among the candidates who took part in the special talent examinations, 83.3% (n = 378) were male, whereas 16.7% (n = 76) were female

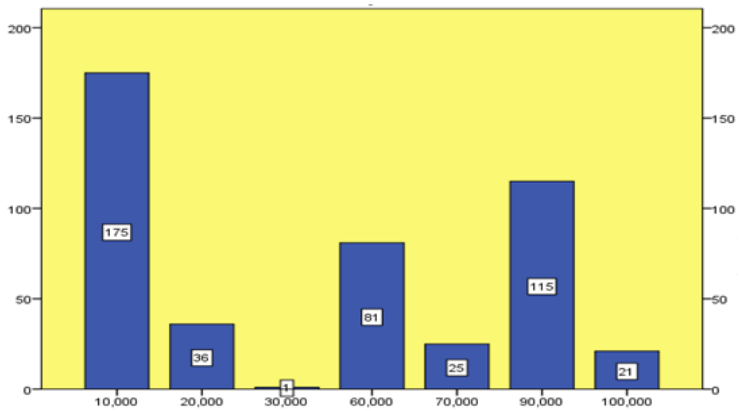

Figure 10. Participants' Scores by Career Status

Of the candidates who took part in the special talent examination, 38.5% (n = 175) obtained 10 points, while 4.6% (n = 21) achieved 100 points.

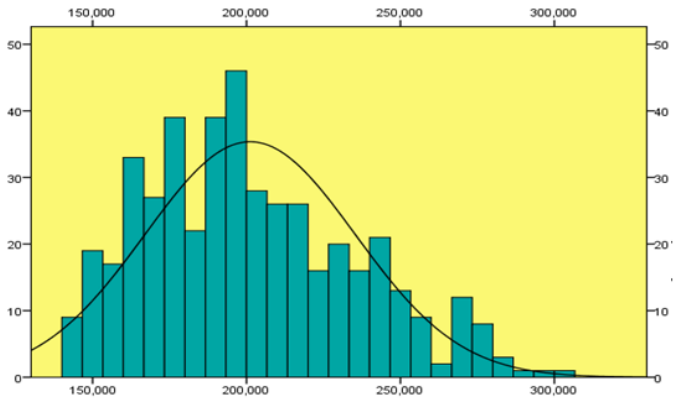

Figure 11. Distribution of Participants' YGS Scores

The distribution of YGS scores of the candidates who participated in the Düzce University Special Talent Examinations is presented in Figure 11. The participants' mean YGS score was 201.15 ± 34.143. It was further observed that the majority of the scores clustered within the 150–200 point range.

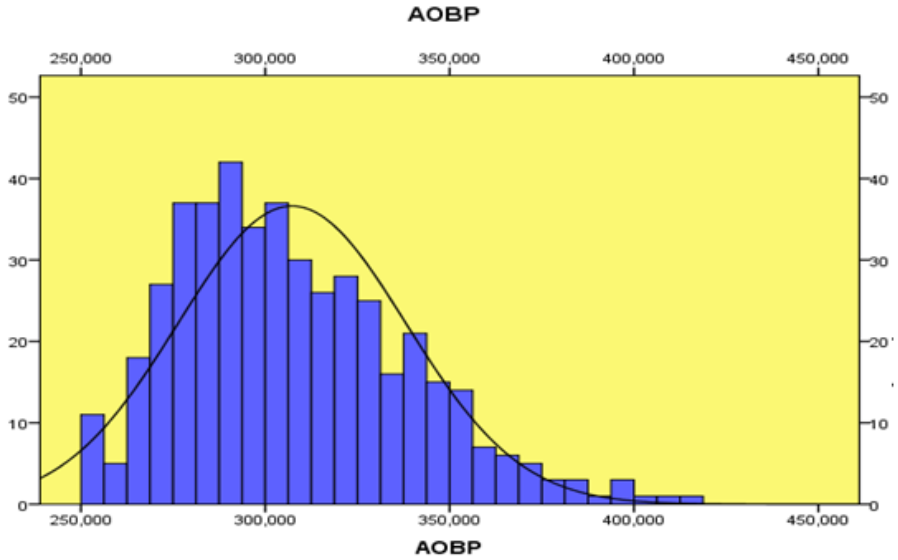

Figure 12. Distribution of Participants' AOBP Scores

The distribution of AOBP scores of the candidates who participated in the Düzce University Special Talent Examinations is presented in Figure 12. The participants' mean AOBP score was 307.23 ± 30.905. It was further observed that most scores clustered within the 250–300 point range.

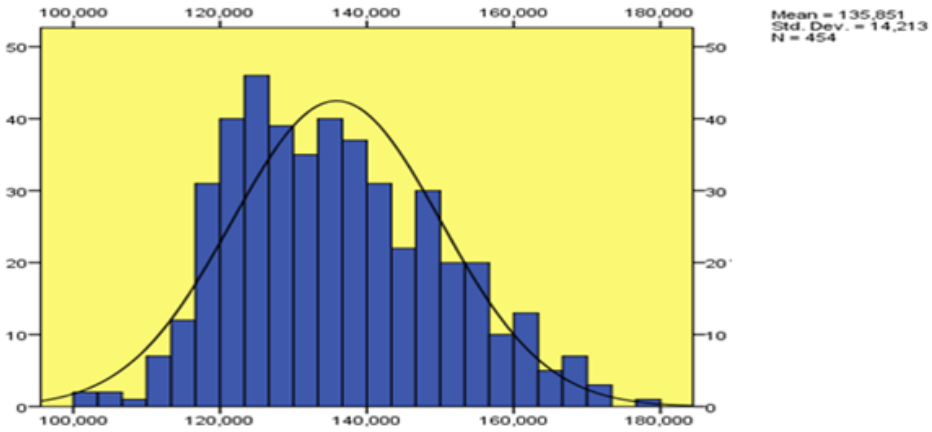

Figure 13. Mean Distribution of Participants' Placement Scores

The distribution of placement scores of the candidates who participated in the Düzce University Special Talent Examinations is presented in Figure 13. The participants' mean placement score was 135.85 ± 14.213. It was further observed that the majority of the scores clustered within the 120–140 point range.

Table 5. Results of the Standard Multiple Regression Analysis on Placement Scores

Model				T	Sig.			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	r	R
(Constant)	50,068	2,410		20,776	,000			
Career	,474	,009	1,177	54,995	,000	,260	,933	,765
Coordination	,032	,007	,080	4,882	,000	-,008	,225	,068
Previous Year Enrollment	-17,141	,752	-,322	-22,785	,000	-,256	-,733	-,317
National Team	-11,346	,262	,219	-43,288	,000	-,267	-,899	-,602
AOBP	,104	,007	,226	15,904	,000	,296	,601	,221
YGS	,203	,007	,487	30,671	,000	,383	,823	,426

a. Dependent Variable: Placement Score b. $p < .05$

The regression analysis results predicting placement scores based on YGS, AOBP, national team membership status, previous enrollment in a higher education institution, coordination score, and career score are presented in Table 5.

When examining the zero-order and partial correlations between the predictor and dependent variables, a strong positive relationship was found between YGS and placement scores (r = .823). However, after controlling for the other variables, the correlation between the two was calculated as r = .426. The strongest relationship was observed between career and placement scores (r = .933); even after controlling for the other variables, the correlation between these two variables remained high and statistically significant (r = .765).

Together, YGS, AOBP, national team membership, previous enrollment, coordination score, and career score showed a strong and significant association with placement scores (R = .956, R^2 = .914, p < .01). Collectively, these six predictors accounted for approximately 91% of the total variance in placement scores.

According to the standardised regression coefficients (β), the relative order of importance of the predictors on placement scores was as follows: Career Score, YGS, Branch Score, Previous Enrollment, National Team Membership, and AOBP. The t-test results indicated that coordination scores significantly affected placement scores, although their impact was not as substantial as that of the other variables.

As a result of these analyses, the placement scores of the Special Talent Examinations conducted by the Faculty of Sport Sciences at Düzce University were examined, and the second sub-problem was addressed. Accordingly, it was determined that the methods applied in the exceptional talent and sport-specific skill domains and AOBP and YGS scores significantly influenced student placement outcomes in the Faculty of Sport Sciences at Düzce University.

Hypothesis 2 was rejected.

It was concluded that the most important criterion for admission to Düzce University's Faculty of Sport Sciences was the Career Score, followed by the YGS score. A substantial difference was observed between YGS and Career Scores. Thus, success in gaining admission to the Faculty was not primarily determined by exceptionally high YGS scores but rather by the influence of the Career Score. In other words, among candidates with comparable YGS scores, those with higher Career Scores achieved a considerable advantage in their placement outcomes.

Findings and Interpretations Regarding the Third Sub-Problem

Sub-Problem 3: Do the methods applied in the special talent and sport-specific skill domains, together with AOBP and YGS scores, have an effect on students' placement scores in the admission criteria of Celal Bayar University, School of Physical Education and Sports?

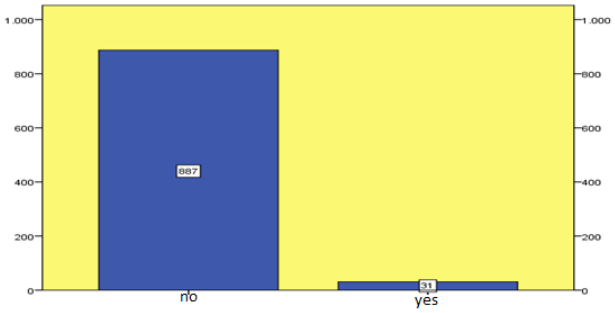

Figure 14. Distribution of Participants' National Team Status

The analyses revealed that among the 918 candidates whose placement scores were calculated after applying to the Celal Bayar University Special Talent Examinations, 96.6% (n = 887) did not hold any national ranking, whereas 3.4% (n = 31) were identified as having a national ranking.

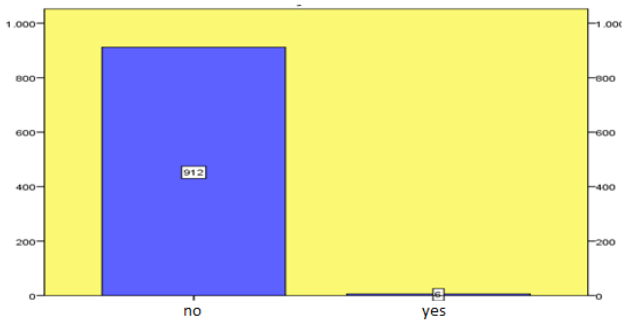

Figure 15. Previous Year Enrollment Status

Based on the statistical analyses regarding participants' enrollment in a higher education institution in the previous year, it was found that 99.3% (n = 912) had not been enrolled, whereas 0.7% (n = 6) had been enrolled

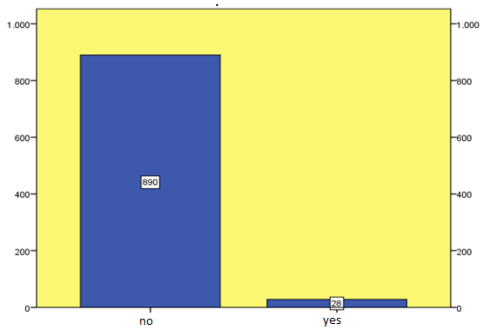

Figure 16. Distribution of Participants by Field of Graduation (Sports vs. Non-Sports)

According to the statistical analyses regarding whether the participants graduated from a sports-related field, 96.9% (n = 890) were from non-sports fields, whereas 3.1% (n = 28) had graduated from a sports field.

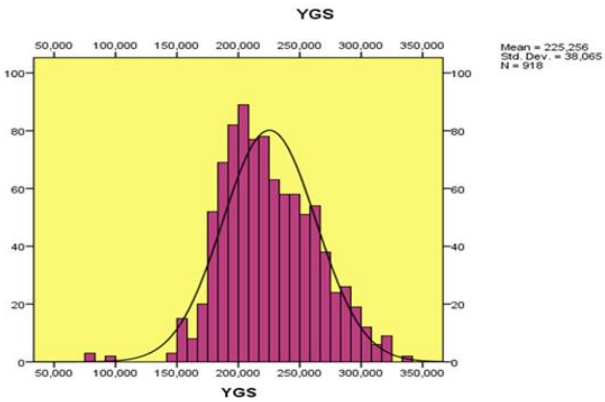

Figure 17. Mean Distribution of YGS Scores

The distribution of YGS scores of the candidates who participated in the Celal Bayar University Special Talent Examinations is presented in Figure 17. The participants' mean YGS score was 225.25 ± 38.065. It was further observed that the majority of the scores were clustered within the 200–250 point range.

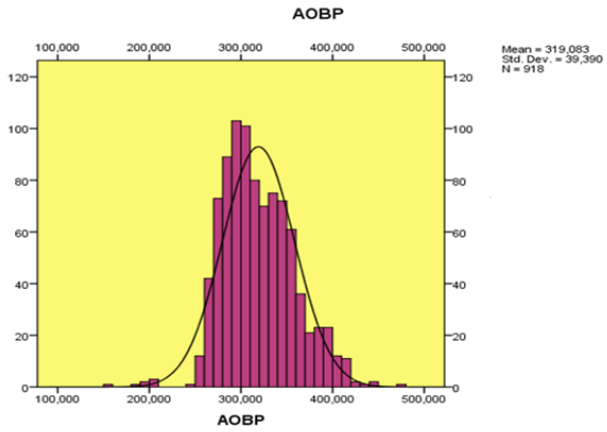

Figure 18. Mean Distribution of AOBP Scores

The distribution of AOBP scores of the candidates who participated in the Celal Bayar University Special Talent Examinations is presented in Figure 18. The participants' mean AOBP score was 319.08 ± 39.39. It was further observed that the majority of the scores clustered within the 300–350 point range.

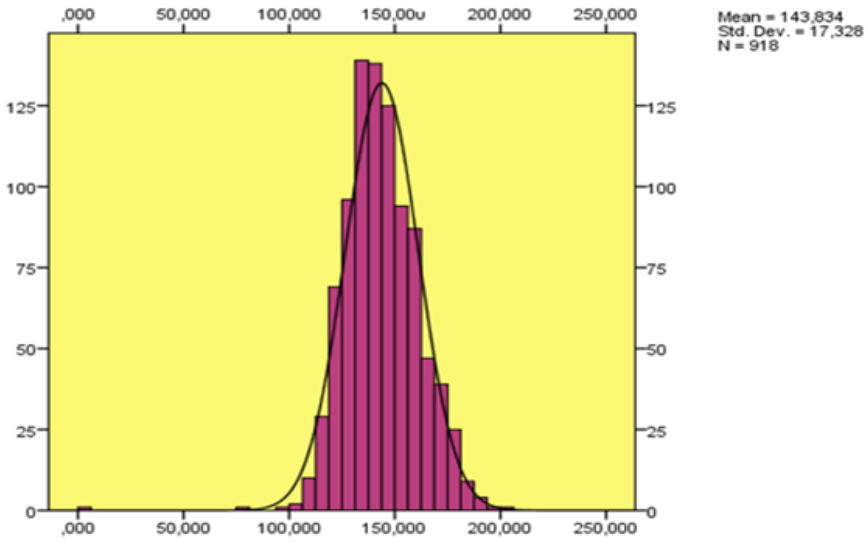

Figure 19. Mean Distribution of Placement Scores

The distribution of placement scores of the candidates who participated in the Celal Bayar University Special Talent Examinations is presented in Figure 19. The participants' mean placement score was 143.83 ± 17.33. It was further observed that the majority of the scores clustered within the 120–150 point range.

Table 6. Results of the Standard Multiple Regression Analysis on Placement Score

Model				t	Sig.			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	r	R
(Constant)	15,359	3,638		4,222	,000			
YGS	,172	,009	,377	18,705	,000	,388	,527	,369
AOBP	,138	,009	,314	15,650	,000	,420	,460	,309
National Team	-9,492	1,922	-,099	-4,938	,000	-,229	-,161	-,097
Previous Year Enrollment	-16,496	4,259	-,077	-3,873	,000	-,013	-,127	-,076
Coordination Score	1,622	2,007	,016	,808	,419	-,069	,027	,016
Branch Score	,776	,027	,577	28,608	,000	,597	,688	,564

The regression analysis results predicting placement scores based on YGS, AOBP, national team membership status, previous enrollment in a higher education institution, field of graduation (sports-related or not), and branch score are presented in Table 6.

When the zero-order and partial correlations between the predictor and dependent variables were examined, a strong positive correlation was found between YGS and placement scores (r = .527). However, after controlling for the other variables, the correlation between the two was calculated as r = .369. The strongest relationship was observed between branch and placement scores (r = .688); even after controlling for the other predictors, this correlation remained high and statistically significant (r = .564).

Taken together, YGS, AOBP, national team membership, previous enrollment, field of graduation, and branch scores showed a strong and significant association with placement scores (R = .803, R^2 = .645, $p < .01$). Collectively, these six predictors explained approximately 64% of the total variance in placement scores.

According to the standardised regression coefficients (β), the relative order of importance of the predictors on placement scores was as follows: Branch Score, YGS, AOBP, National Team Membership, and Previous Enrollment. The t-test results indicated that the field of graduation (sports-related or not) did not significantly affect placement scores.

As a result of these analyses, the placement scores of the Celal Bayar University School of Physical Education and Sports Special Talent Examinations were examined, and the third sub-problem was addressed. Accordingly, it was determined that the methods applied in the exceptional talent and sport-specific skill domains, together with AOBP and YGS scores, significantly influenced student placement outcomes in the School of Physical Education and Sports at Celal Bayar University.

Hypothesis 3 was rejected.

It was concluded that the most important criterion for admission to Celal Bayar University's School of Physical Education and Sports was the Branch Score, followed by the YGS score. No substantial difference was found between YGS and Branch Scores. Thus, gaining admission to the School was not primarily dependent on exceptionally high YGS scores, but rather on the influence of Branch Scores. In other words, among candidates with similar YGS scores, those who achieved higher Branch Scores obtained a considerable advantage in their overall placement results.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to identify the differences among the special talent examinations conducted by higher education institutions that provide sports education and to determine which scores and coefficients are most influential in the admission process. In doing so, the study also seeks to clarify which types of scores are prioritized by specific universities. For this purpose, three higher education institutions offering sports education were examined.

The analyses revealed three distinct results regarding the factors influencing placement in the three universities studied. At Bartın University, the placement score is primarily affected by the coordination test; at Düzce University, career scores play the most significant role; whereas at Celal Bayar University, the barrier score system means that branch scores become decisive in the initial stage. However, the most critical finding, common across institutions, is that when the barrier score is applied, the YGS (Higher Education Entrance Exam) emerges as a secondary yet crucial determinant. Among candidates with equal YGS scores, those with higher Special Talent Exam Scores (ÖYSP) tend to stand out.

In Turkey, apart from programs admitting students through special talent examinations, nearly all other higher education programs admit students based on YGS and LYS scores. The present study demonstrates that AOBP (Weighted High School GPA) has only a limited effect on placement scores, with an influence far less substantial than that of the YGS.

This research was confined to three institutions, highlighting their respective differences. Yet, Turkey hosts many universities offering sports education, each implementing different selection procedures. Within the expanding sports industry, graduating from a School of Physical Education and Sports (BESYO) or a Faculty of Sport Sciences (SBF) has become increasingly prestigious compared to many other academic programs. BESYO and SBF graduates enjoy broader employment opportunities than their peers, with career prospects ranging from private coaching, sports instruction, and sports facility management to teaching and sports management. Consequently, studying at BESYO or SBF has gained notable prominence among students in recent years. Particularly, students with lower YGS scores, who might believe they have limited chances of entering other higher education programs, often turn to these faculties as an alternative.

The findings of this study confirm that admission into BESYO and SBF programs is influenced by different variables depending on the institution. While coordination tests dominate in some universities, others emphasize branch-specific examinations or athletic career achievements. These insights enable prospective students to identify the universities where they hold the greatest potential for success. For instance, individuals confident in their coordination skills may be more inclined to apply to Bartın University, whereas those with strong athletic career backgrounds may find Düzce University more favorable. Given the variety of BESYO and SBF institutions across Turkey, it is essential for students to carefully match their competencies with the criteria of individual universities, guided by educators who can help direct them appropriately. For example, Karadeniz Technical University admits students solely based on YGS scores, whereas at Dumlupınar University the YGS plays no role in the initial stage of selection.

This study also provides insights into the general profiles of these institutions. Students admitted to Celal Bayar University were found to have higher YGS scores on average, which may be attributed to its longstanding reputation in sports education and its geographical proximity to İzmir. Application statistics further reveal that Celal Bayar University receives the highest number of applicants among the institutions examined.

Special talent examinations not only assess candidates' physical abilities and academic performance but also evaluate their capacity to perform under the scrutiny of a jury, and whether they possess the qualities necessary for teaching. For this reason, researchers have examined additional characteristics of candidates sitting these exams. For instance, Çağlayan et al. (2010) investigated the stress-coping styles of candidates participating in special talent exams. Their results indicated that candidates' coping scores were above average, suggesting that they actively combat stressors, rely heavily on social support, and, at times, choose to ignore stressors as a coping strategy.

In nearly all higher education institutions offering sports education, the YGS constitutes the foundation of placement scores. In the three universities studied, YGS consistently ranked as the second most influential factor after institution-specific requirements. This aligns with findings from the literature, which consistently highlight the substantial effect of YGS scores on placement outcomes (Sevimli et al., 2010; Kizir et al., 2014; Yıldız et al., 2015).

Arapgirlioglu and Tankız (2013), for example, studied 387 candidates applying to the Special Talent Examination of İnönü University's Music Teaching Program. Their findings revealed that successful candidates had higher YGS scores, while those with lower YGS scores generally failed the exam. Similarly, candidates graduating from fine arts high schools were observed to hold an advantage due to the weighting of field-related coefficients. This is consistent with the results of the present study: candidates with higher YGS scores achieve more favorable placement outcomes compared to equally performing peers.

By contrast, Ece (2007), who investigated music education programs, found differing results, suggesting that for BESYO and SBF programs, field-related or unrelated backgrounds had little impact. However, both studies indicate that out-of-field candidates typically exhibit higher YGS scores than in-field candidates. Comparable conclusions were drawn by Atar and Yılmaz (2011) in their study on fine arts students, which showed that despite official guidelines suggesting a 75% weight for special talent scores, in practice this weight was closer to 35%, with YGS exerting significant influence.

Several studies further highlight that coordination test performance often shows stronger correlations with placement scores than YGS/ÖSS results (Zırhlıoğlu & Atlı, 2011), though both remain significant. Similarly, Ece (2011) reported that the weighting of YGS scores increased substantially following changes implemented by ÖSYM in 2011.

Nevertheless, concerns persist that the emphasis on YGS undermines the evaluation of genuine athletic skills. Many scholars argue that the weighting of YGS should be reduced to prioritize athletic performance (Çankaya et al., 2007; Ece & Sazak, 2006). Beyond physical performance, oral interviews are also recommended to assess candidates' pedagogical aptitude and potential as future coaches or physical education teachers.

The present study thus concludes that although YGS scores remain a necessary baseline for admission, athletic performance and special talent scores are often more decisive. In cases where YGS scores are equal, coordination and performance scores take precedence, and vice versa. The balance between these factors varies across institutions and examination cohorts, depending on candidate profiles and score distributions. Accordingly, students aspiring to join BESYO or SBF programs must strive to maintain high YGS scores while strategically targeting universities whose selection processes align with their strengths.

In summary, BESYO and SBF programs cater to a wide range of students across Turkey, but success requires careful alignment between individual abilities and institutional expectations. Both students and educators bear responsibility for ensuring that candidates pursue the most suitable academic pathways, thereby maximizing both placement opportunities and future career prospects.

In the past two years, the Special Talent Examination System (ÖZYES) introduced by ÖSYM has generated a significant transformation in the admission processes of higher education institutions offering sports education. In earlier years, universities relied on their own criteria and weighting systems, which resulted in considerable discrepancies, creating inequities and uncertainties in candidate evaluation. With the implementation of ÖZYES, the selection process has become more centralized, standardized, and transparent.

ÖZYES evaluates candidates' YKS scores, secondary school grade point averages (OBP/AOBP), and scores obtained from special talent examinations in a balanced manner, thereby establishing a more holistic assessment framework. In this way, students are not assessed solely on the basis of academic performance or athletic ability, but rather through the combined contribution of both domains.

The principal benefits of ÖZYES may be summarized as follows:

- **Standardization:** Minimizes discrepancies in scoring and weighting practices among universities, ensuring that all candidates compete under equal conditions.
- **Transparency:** The centralized calculation of scores allows candidates to better anticipate and understand the evaluation process.
- **Fairness:** By integrating both academic and athletic skills, the system enables a more balanced evaluation of students with diverse profiles.
- **Comparability:** The application of uniform criteria across institutions nationwide facilitates more reliable benchmarking.
- **National-scale data:** The centralized structure of ÖSYM provides systematic monitoring of outcomes and institutional success distributions, offering valuable insights for educational policy.

Nevertheless, certain **limitations and criticisms** have been highlighted. Some scholars and sports scientists argue that ÖZYES reduces the weight of athletic performance, thereby disadvantaging candidates with strong athletic backgrounds but relatively lower academic scores. Furthermore, recommendations have been made to incorporate **supplementary assessment tools** such as oral interviews, portfolios, or pedagogical evaluations to measure candidates' teaching aptitude, communication skills, and leadership potential.

The introduction of ÖZYES has not only reshaped the examination system but also altered the demographic distribution of applicants. Whereas in previous years most candidates were drawn from professional or amateur sporting backgrounds, the increased emphasis on academic achievement has encouraged participation from a wider range of socio-economic groups and academically stronger students. This has expanded the candidate pool and contributed to greater diversity within BESYO and SBF programs.

Placement data from the first two years of ÖZYES also reveal notable trends. According to the 2024 results, 34,231 candidates applied to state universities, where 11,065 places were offered; 10,005 were filled, leaving 1,060 vacant. At private universities, 2,655 places were offered, of which 2,259 were filled and 396 remained vacant. In total, 351 programs offered 13,720 places, with 12,264 filled and 1,456 unfilled.(ÖSYM, 2024)

In 2025, the figures shifted downward: state universities offered 8,050 places across 195 programs, filling 7,417 and leaving 633 vacant; private universities offered 2,048 places, with 1,675

filled and 373 vacant. Overall, 281 programs provided 10,098 places, with 9,092 filled and 1,006 unfilled (ÖSYM, 2025).

When these figures are compared, it becomes clear that in 2025 both the number of applicants and the number of programs/places decreased relative to 2024. In particular, state university quotas were reduced, yet the proportion of unfilled places remained relatively lower, suggesting that in its second year ÖZYES had begun to stabilize. This may reflect that students are making more informed and deliberate choices. By contrast, private universities displayed a relatively higher proportion of unfilled places, indicating that candidates continue to favor state institutions.

Taken together, the data from 2024–2025 demonstrate that while the first year of ÖZYES attracted exceptionally high levels of participation, its second year yielded a more systematic and balanced distribution of placements. This suggests that candidates are developing a clearer understanding of the system and that the overall efficiency of the placement process is improving. In sum, ÖZYES can be regarded not only as a mechanism that has standardized existing practices but also as a framework that may guide future reforms in sports education admissions in Turkey.

Abbreviations

ÖYSP-SP: Student Placement Selection Score – Standard Deviation

AOBP: Weighted High School Achievement Score

YGS: Higher Education Entrance Examination

SÖP: Athletic Background Score

ÖYSP: Special Talent Examination Score

BESYO: School of Physical Education and Sports

SBF: Faculty of Sport Sciences

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