Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi / The Journal of Social Sciences

Akademik Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi, Yıl: 8, Sayı: 53, Ağustos 2021, s. 407-430

ISSN: 2149-0821 Doi Number: <http://dx.doi.org/10.29228/SOBIDER.52147>

Arş. Gör. Aslı İZOĞLU TOK

Hacettepe Üniversitesi, izogluasli@gmail.com

Arş. Gör. Şuheda BOZKURT YÜKÇÜ

Hacettepe Üniversitesi, suhedabzkrt06@gmail.com

Arş. Gör. Çiğdem KAYMAZ

Hacettepe Üniversitesi, kaymazciğdem@gmail.com

Arş. Gör. İbrahim GÜNGÖR

Hacettepe Üniversitesi, ibrahim8806@hotmail.com

Prof. Dr. Emine Nilgün METİN

Hacettepe Üniversitesi, enmetin@gmail.com

INTEGRATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate the implications of the experience of integration for children with special needs. The study was conducted using the qualitative research method of phenomenology. The study group comprised integration students with specific learning disability, currently attending primary and secondary school in Ankara. A semi-structured interview form was used within the scope of the research. The interviews, which were turned into written documents, were coded in the MaxQDA program in three stages as open coding, axis coding and selective coding, respectively. Then, four main themes were formed: communication, social environment, academic field and peer bullying. Being a student of mainstreaming is a "obstacle" that disrupts communication in the communication field; it means "rejection" in the social environment field and "being different" in the academic field. When all the results are evaluated together, it can be said that being a mainstreaming student means "not belonging".

Keywords: Inclusion, integration, education, teachers, students with special needs.

ÖZEL GEREKSİNİMLİ ÇOCUK GÖZÜYLE KAYNAŞTIRMA UYGULAMALARI: FENOMENOLOJİK BİR ÇALIŞMA

Özet

Bu araştırma, özel gereksinimli çocuklar için kaynaştırma öğrencisi olmanın ne anlama geldiğini araştırmak ve konuya ışık tutmak amacıyla yapılmıştır. Araştırma nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden fenomenolojik desen kullanılarak yürütülmüştür. Çalışma grubu Ankara’da ilkokula ve ortaokula devam eden özgül öğrenme güçlüğü tanıılı kaynaştırma öğrencilerinden oluşmaktadır. Araştırma kapsamında yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Yazılı dokümanlar haline getirilen görüşmeler, MaxQDA programında sırasıyla açık kodlama, eksen kodlaması ve seçici kodlama olmak üzere üç aşamada kodlanmıştır. Kodlamalar sonucunda iletişim, sosyal çevre, akademik alan ve akran zorbalığı olmak üzere dört ana tema oluşturulmuştur. Kaynaştırma öğrencisi iletişim boyutunda “iletişime ket vuran –engel-”; sosyal çevre boyutunda “reddedilmek” ve akademik boyutta “farklı olmak” anlamına gelmektedir. Tüm sonuçlar birlikte değerlendirildiğinde özel gereksinimli çocuk gözünden kaynaştırma öğrencisi olmak ne anlama geliyor soruna “ait olmamak” cevabını vermek mümkündür.

Anahtar kelimeler: Bütünleştirme, kaynaştırma, eğitim, öğretmenler, özel gereksinimli öğrenci.

INTRODUCTION

Equality of opportunity for education is the basis for individuals with special needs to live their lives as part of society. Education for individuals with special needs can be in separate schools or through coeducation in general education schools. In determining the type of education in which individuals with special needs can participate, the type and degree of disability and the child’s resulting developmental characteristics are the most important criteria (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2018). According to the circular numbered 2017/28 on "Education Practices through Integration", it is aimed that individual with special needs interact with other individuals of all types and levels and achieve their educational goals at the highest level (Circular on Education Practices Through Inclusion/Integration, 2017). By means of integration, an educational environment that is least restrictive is prepared for individuals with special needs; this is achieved through special education offered in full-time, part-time, or private classes based on students’ needs (Dikici Sığırtmaç & Deretarla Gül, 2014). In this way, it is aimed to ensure that children in both groups communicate in common activities, facilitate their acceptance of each other, and enable individuals with special needs to be active and independent in the society by supporting their social development. Professionals working in this field are expected to gain an important understanding of "awareness" of individual differences and "taking into account individual differences" in their approach to the individual (Metin, 2018). Of course, these variables include supervisors, administrators, teachers, families, integration students, normal students, and the physical environment (Dikici Sığırtmaç & Deretarla Gül, 2014).

When the literature on integration practices was examined, it was seen that there were many opinions and attitudes towards practice, and these studies were discussed in three categories as teacher, family and children. It appears that the majority of teachers' attitudes toward integration is negative (Batu, Cüre, Nar, Güvercin & Keskin, 2018; Demirbilek & Levent, 2020; Gül, Yürümez, Gül, Kılıç & Günay-Ay, 2016; Engin, Tösten, Kaya & Köselioğlu, 2014; Yatgın, Sevgi & Uysal, 2015). It is stated that types and severity of disabilities of students influence the teachers' attitudes toward integrated education (Can & Kara, 2017). It was also observed that teachers do not have enough information about integration (Balcı, 2019; Birol & Aksoy-Zor, 2018; Coğaltay & Çetin, 2020; Demirbilek & Levent, 2020; Deniz, 2019; Fırat & Koçak, 2018; Gül et al., 2016). In the studies, it was stated that teachers had problems in educational arrangements in the integrated environment and could not get the necessary support (Çuhadar, 2017; Sivrikaya & Yıkılmış, 2016), and the support of the family, teachers and school administration was important in solving the problems (Altun & Uzuner, 2016). In studies conducted with families, it has been observed that the families of students receiving normal education have negative attitudes toward the students receiving integrated education and their families (İçyüz, 2016). However, families with children who receive normal education develop positive opinions about integration when they are informed about integration practices (Tık-Yakar, 2015). An examination of the studies conducted on children, who are the most important stakeholders of integrated education, reveals that there are several studies focusing on opinions of children with normal development regarding integrated education (Ayrıl et al., 2015; Çetrez-İşcan, Fazlıoğlu & Parlak, 2015; Gümüş & Tan, 2015). Studies conducted on students with special needs are generally focused on courses, academic skills, class participation (Çimen, 2019; Gül & Vuran, 2015; Karakoç, 2020), and the problems that students with special needs face because of integration practices (Girli & Atasoy, 2012; Ulugöl & Erbaş, 2020).

The education statistics from the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) indicate that a consistent rise in the number of students receiving formal education between the academic years 2004–2005 (40,050) and 2012–2013 (161,295), and the majority of special education students receive integrated education (Melekoğlu, 2014). These numerical data demonstrate that special education services and integration practices within the sphere of special education have greatly increased. Therefore, integration practices must be examined from the viewpoint of children with special needs, who constitute the main target and the most important element of integrated education. Considering the general trend of the abovementioned research on integration practices, there are many studies that shed light on the subject from the perspectives of teachers, families, and children with normal development, who are the other crucial stakeholders in integration practices; however, the number of studies that discuss the matter from the perspective of children with special needs is limited. However, considering the developmental needs of children with special needs in their language and communication skills, these children appear as a difficult study group to interview. Assuming that this will minimize the limitation of the research, it was decided to include mainstreaming students with normal intelligence levels and diagnosed with specific learning difficulties (SLD) in the study group. However, children with SLD are diagnosed in primary school according to the diagnostic criteria. In order for the children to have experience as mainstreaming students, it was thought that including children attending the final grade of primary school or secondary school in the study group would reduce the limitations of the study. Therefore, this study aims to look at mainstreaming practices from

the eyes of special needs children and to examine what it means to be a mainstreaming student for a child with special needs. Within the scope of this main purpose, the sub-objectives of the research are listed below:

1. To examine the academic experiences of mainstreaming students with SLD and to produce in-depth explanations for this.
2. To examine the experiences of mainstreaming students with SLD about the people they interact with at school and to produce in-depth explanations for this.
3. To examine the social environment of mainstreaming students with SLD and to produce in-depth explanations for this.

Thanks to these purposes, it is thought that the study will contribute to the literature in terms of evaluating the experiences of mainstreaming students with SLD diagnosis in a holistic perspective and identifying possible problems and needs regarding the subject. However, in this study, only the opinions of children with SLD were taken and the opinions of educators or other peers were not included in the process. In this context, the findings obtained from the research are also limited to this study group.

METHOD

Research Design

This study aims to explain how integrated students perceive, interpret and interpret being an integrated student depending on their daily experiences in the academic field, with the people they interact with and in their social environment. According to Fraenkel & Wallen (2006), these common points are accepted as the core of the experiences. The phenomenological design aims to reach this core. In this context, this study aims to reach the core of being an integrated student in different experiences, to understand these cores and to express them through conceptualization. In this interpretation process, the experiences of being an integrated student has been examined by constructing the main themes such as communication, social environment, academic field and peer bullying. Because of that reason, the phenomenological approach is used as a research design in this study.

The phenomenological approach, whose foundations were laid by Husserl and Schutz, is one of the approaches mostly used in qualitative research. According to Husserl (1970), an event can only be known by those who experience this event. This issue reflects the philosophical perspective of phenomenology. Schutz, on the other hand, laid the methodological foundations of the approach by defining phenomenology as an effort to make sense of the details underlying daily experiences (as cited in Sever, 2016). In this context, the phenomenological design focuses on the life experiences of the person and reveals how she interprets these experiences (Goulding, 2002).

Study Group

In phenomenological research, information is produced interpersonal and the people participating in the research are a very important part of the data production. Therefore, the characteristics of the participants in the study and how the study group is formed is important (Sever et al., 2016). The study group was formed using a typical sampling method. The typical sample refers to individuals with typical characteristics that are considered relevant to the research question. The study group consisted of 16 students with learning disability who were receiving secondary education in integrated settings while also attending a special education and rehabilitation center in Ankara. The group with learning disability is one of the groups that benefit the most from integrated practices in schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education. However, it was thought that children with SLD would have less difficulty expressing themselves and understanding interview questions compared to other diagnostic groups and were included in the study group. Participants do not have any additional diagnosis. Five of 16 children were girl and the other ones were boys. Five of the children in the study group were in Grade six , four in Grade seven , two in Grade eight, four in Grade five and one in

Grade four. This study group included children diagnosed with SLD. Children with a diagnosis of SLD were included in the study group of children who came to the last grade of primary or secondary school in order to have experience as mainstreaming students because they were diagnosed in the primary school period due to the diagnostic criteria.

Data Collection Tool

A semi-structured interview form that was developed by the researchers was used for the study. The questions in this interview form were prepared and applied by the researchers. In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted one-on-one, face-to-face and on a voluntary basis with the help of the prepared interview forms. Interview questions were prepared in order to discover the meanings that can be obtained from students' experiences of integration practices and to reveal what such experiences mean for individuals. While preparing these questions, primarily national and international field research was reviewed. Later, the questions were discussed in the group meetings attended by all researchers, and the questions that were thought to bring out the result of the study were included in the interview form from the pool of questions. Expert opinion was taken for the interview form that was formed and the interview form to be used in the study came out in line with the feedback given. The last interview form consisted of 11 questions on three main themes: school environment, peer relations, and relations with teachers.

Data Collection Process

First, the necessary official permits were obtained. Afterward, the participants were informed about the objective of the researchers, the necessity and nature of the study, and the voluntariness of participation. Informed consent was obtained from the participants for the interview, and they participated voluntarily. The participants were also informed that they may terminate the interview at any point.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 students with special needs who were experiencing integrated education. In practice, semi-structured interviews with 16 students having special needs who were integrated were conducted in the special education center where

the students were attending. The interviews were conducted by four researchers who are continuing their doctoral studies in the field of child development. Each researcher interviewed four participants. In line with expert opinion, 45-minute-long interviews were planned, but the actual interviews lasted 30 minutes on average. The interviews were recorded after obtaining the consent of the participant. At the same time, it was observed that the participants easily adapted to the interviews. All participants answered all questions.

Data Analysis Process

In the first phase, the recorded interviews were transcribed into written documents to prevent data loss. The transcribed records were analyzed using the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis program. The transcribed records were analyzed by the researchers using the phenomenological coding technique. The coding process was carried out in three stages, namely, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the first stage of the analysis process, the transcribed records were read line by line and coded with open coding. In the second stage, the axes were formed by combining the codes resulting from open coding. In the third stage, themes began to appear around these axes. At the last stage, what it means to be an integrated student for students with special needs in integrated practices has emerged in certain cores. The research findings obtained from the analysis of the data have been discussed by considering the relevant researches in the literature.

The Role of the Researchers

In a research using phenomenological design, the process of generating knowledge is interpersonal. Researchers are actively involved in the knowledge generation process. Because the experiences of the study group are interpreted by the researchers and turned into a core. For this reason, the characteristics of the researchers and how they approach the experience of the study group are very important (Creswell, 2005). The research was conducted by a professor at Hacettepe University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Child Development and four research assistants who continue their doctoral studies. The theoretical background of the research design (phenomenological) and the research was prepared by the researchers gathered twice a week in an academic semester. Four research assistants from the researchers, who are continuing their doctoral studies, also took the doctoral courses named "Qualitative Research Techniques" and "Integration in Childhood". The study was implemented in a private special education and rehabilitation center.

In phenomenological research, the relationship established between individuals with difficult experiences and researchers who will interpret these experiences and make inferences from these experiences and how this relationship is established is very important. According to Creswell (2005), during this relationship, researchers should be aware of their own feelings and thoughts and move away from all their prejudices, judgments, beliefs and assumptions. All of the researchers involved in this study work as academicians in the field of Child Development; conducts practical work with children with special needs; and make developmental evaluations of children with special needs. For this reason, various discussions have been made to allow these biased concepts to be discovered, as they may have different biases on the subject. Keeping these discussions in mind, the researchers participated in the fieldwork with as much self-awareness as possible.

Validity and Reliability

Participants were given detailed information about the research process by the researchers before participating in the study. It was stated by the researchers to the participants of the study that they could express the questions they did not want to answer during the interview, leave unanswered if they do not want to, terminate the interview whenever they want, and leave the study whenever they want. All participants in the study group participated in the study voluntarily. However, necessary permissions were obtained from the parents of the children included in the study and from the special education and rehabilitation center they attended.

Clear definitions and explanations should be made to ensure the transferability of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Therefore, in order to ensure the transferability of the research, clear definitions and explanations about the subject were made while explaining the research process. In this context, the role of the researchers, how the study group was chosen, the development of the data collection tool, data collection and analysis were described in detail above (transparency). In order to obtain reliable data (Reliability), the coding of each researcher was checked by another researcher. Encodings were made four times by each researcher and it was discussed whether each code reflects its meaning or not. Also, raw data and codes are archived for review by other researchers. To ensure verifiability, each step of the study (data collection tools, analysis, and reporting) was clearly written by the researchers and checked by the research directors.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Four main themes were formulated from the data obtained through interviews with participants: communication, social environment, academic field, and peer bullying. These themes were examined in detail together with their sub-dimensions.

The Main Theme of Communication

The teacher sub-dimension: “No, I wouldn’t chat (with the teachers).”

The peer and teacher dimensions are discussed under the main theme of communication. Teachers are the most important actors in the implementation of successful integration practices. They can act as bridges that connect children with special needs to the school and their peers during their transition from the special education environment to the integrated classroom. In this context, the teacher is the first person that the integrated children communicate with. This provides the base for the communication they will later establish with their peers. Therefore, the quality of this communication is of great importance. However, several studies have reported that teachers usually have negative attitudes toward integration practices (Batu et al., 2018; Engin et al., 2014; Yatgın et al., 2015). Such attitudes will in turn negatively affect the communication of teachers with children with special needs. In the present study, further sub-themes such as limited communication, academic communication, and negative communication were found in the teacher dimension under the theme of communication. The teacher having positive communication with children with special needs was not mentioned at all. Here, the term “positive communication” refers to the existence of affection in the child’s relationship

with the teacher. Affection was not mentioned in statements regarding children's relationships with their teachers.

Model 1. Model of the Main Theme of Communication

The following statements by the students reveal that affection was neglected: *"The teachers are very aggressive. They always take a jab at us," "They (teachers) scream and shout."* in the negative communication sub-theme; *"When I ask something, I raise my hand, and we communicate"* and *"No, I wouldn't chat (with the teachers)"* in the sub-theme of limited communication; and *"Sometimes, I ask questions. It's not that often. Sometimes I do homework, and about the homework, I ask about the pages for homework, which doesn't happen all that often anyway. So, we don't do anything else, that's it"* and *"We often talk when there are special circumstances, or when we have a performance [project] or homework, we talk about how to do it"* in the sub-theme of academic communication, which the students mostly emphasized. As can be seen, children with special needs communicated with their teachers mostly about academic issues, and they had limited communication with them.

Akalın and Sucuoğlu (2010) examined the behaviors of class teachers of integrated classes and found that the teachers mostly exhibited academic behavior in the classroom and the most frequently observed behaviors were academic speaking and listening. It was further concluded that the students also mostly exhibited academic behaviors and the most frequently observed behaviors were engaging in listening and participating in extracurricular activities. Although teachers are expected to hold academic communication as part of their profession and the very nature of the school environment, the point to be emphasized here is neglect of

affection toward children with special needs. This disrupts the bridging role attributed to the teacher for successful integration.

The peer sub-dimension: “I usually don’t spend time with anyone during breaks.”

In the sub-dimension of communication with peers under the main theme of communication, negative communication and social skills of peers were considered as sub-themes. Children with special needs are believed to belong to a risk group that establishes weaker friendships in comparison with their peers who have normal development, and they are considered to have a high likelihood of facing undesired situations such as excessive anxiety, depression, and exclusion from the group (Beckett, 2014). In fact, this study’s findings indicate that these risks are much more than just a probability. The following statements in the negative communication sub-theme reveal this situation: *“I don’t know; I don’t really interact with them much. We do not hang out or something”*; *“Either because they do not want me to play with them or something like that...”*; and *“I usually don’t spend time with anyone during breaks.”* The negative communication between children with special needs and their peers may be due to the inadequacy of communication skills among children with special needs. However, the negative communication feedback they receive from their peers with normal development can also be the cause of this situation. The findings of previous research in this field have demonstrated that children with normal development have negative attitudes toward their peers with special needs. In a study about the opinions of integrated students about their school lives and their relationships with their peers, Girli and Atasoy (2012) found that special children described their friendships by noting that they were often left alone and were exposed to exclusion and ill-treatment. In the study conducted by Pemik and Deniz (2017) to examine the perceptions of mainstreaming students towards their own school environment, the exclusion and verbal abuse of mainstreaming students was a negative dimension; emphasized the importance of teacher and peer acceptance.

When these results are evaluated together, it can be said that the children with special needs, their peers who have normal development, and the teachers—all play a role in the negative communication between the children with special needs and their peers. Teachers also shape the communication between children with special needs and those with normal development through the communication behaviors they exhibit toward children with special needs. Furthermore, the negative communication behaviors of the children with normal development are reciprocated by the children with special needs. Attitudes toward integration are one of the main reasons for this “*action–reaction*” mechanism. In Turkey, unfortunately, it is known that positive attitudes toward integration are not at the desired level currently.

Therefore, communication with teachers and peers often leads the integrated student to think of herself/himself as an “obstacle” that disrupts communication.

The Main Theme of Social Environment: “Most of my friends do not want me.... The teachers do not want me or love me either.”

The social environment includes some of the most basic and influential elements for the development of individuals from the early years of life. The first elements that come to mind in this context are family and school. When the social environment of school-age children is examined, the developmental role of the family is gradually replaced by that of peers and the

school environment. In this study, the main theme of social environment covers the dimensions of family, peers, and school.

The dimension of family, the context to which children are most intimate to among their social environments, was examined. During the interviews, children seldom mentioned family in relation to social support but expressed it as a determining factor in choosing friends and as a coercive factor forcing them to go to school; children's families also visited the school in case of problems

In the peer dimension, another context to which children are close to in the social environment, the sub-themes of exclusion and positive peer relations emerged. The main goal of integration practices is to support the social development of children with special needs and to transform them into members of society by providing them education along with their peers who have normal development. This goal implies that integration practices are more than just physically gathering children with normal needs and those with special needs under the same roof. However, there are a number of necessary preliminary preparations in order to ensure that integration practices are successful and that the integrated children truly become a part of the school and build positive social relations with their peers. Preparing children with normal development for integration practices before they meet children with special needs is of utmost importance. However, as shown in previous research, when this preparation does not take place, the integration of children with special needs with their peers becomes difficult, and they are subjected to exclusion because of their special needs. The following statements included in the sub-theme of exclusion reveal this situation: "Most of my friends do not want me anyway" and "I don't know what to say, they don't want to play with me. That's it." Other research in this field has reported that children with normal development exhibit behaviors of exclusion toward their peers with special needs (Girli & Atasoy, 2012; Pemik & Deniz, 2017; Karadağ, Yıldız Demirtaş & Girli, 2014).

Model 2. Model of the Main Theme of Social Environment

The findings of this study revealed that the general tendency of peers was to exclude children with special needs, but some special-needs children had positive peer relations. These children defined their peers with whom they could establish positive peer relationships through the following statements: *“They can keep a secret”*; *“They do not stab me in the back”*; *“They protect me from the teacher”*; *“They let me play with them”*; and *“We have a good time together.”* These expressions indicate that the integrated students mostly felt a need for trust in the relationships they established with their peers in the school environment.

The last dimension to be examined in the context of the social environment was the school dimension. The research findings related to the school sub-dimension revealed the sub-themes of humiliation, neglect, exclusion, and mistrust. Negative and limited communication, which was previously discussed in the teacher dimension under the main theme of communication, was also observed in the school dimension under the main theme of social environment. *For example, during the multiplication table game, I said I don't know all of it. I said that I know just a little bit. The teacher said that I should do it as much as I can. I said that I only know the multiplication table of two. The teacher came to me and made me play. All my friends laughed at me, and I was humiliated,*” in the sub-theme of humiliation; *“For example, a*

friend comes and slaps my head in the back. His name is E.. After that, I go and tell the teacher. I tell it to the teacher and the deputy principal. They both do nothing. He didn't even call him to talk about what he did," in the sub-theme of neglect; *"They tell me to shut up and not say anything"* and *"The teachers do not want me. They don't like me,"* in the sub-theme of exclusion; and *"For example, a friend teases me. He pisses me off and makes me talk during the class. Then, the teacher comes and hits me on my head,"* in the sub-theme of mistrust. In a study by Yatgın, Sevimli, and Uysal (2015), which examined class teachers' opinions about integrated education, it was found that most teachers did not want integrated students in their classroom, and they evaluated the efficiency of the integrated system alongside their self-perceived adequacy of special education. Gök and Erbaş (2014) examined the opinions and suggestions of preschool teachers who had integrated students in their classrooms in their study; they demonstrated that teachers had positive opinions about the necessity of integrated education. This indicates a conflict of opinions among teachers; this may be because teachers have very little knowledge about integrated education; they are insufficiently trained in integration practices, and therefore, they have problems in their classrooms (Gök & Erbaş, 2014). Furthermore, some teachers perceive integrated students as an added burden in overcrowded classrooms, which is an issue across the country (Demirbilek & Levent, 2020). It should be noted that teachers are given many responsibilities for the management of integration practices even though the necessary financial and moral support to fulfill these responsibilities are not provided; they are expected to achieve the highest level of success with the existing means. In such a situation, teachers try to overcome this challenge in their own way.

In this context, the sub-theme of labeling was identified under the main theme of the social environment. The negativities mentioned above result in children with special needs labeling themselves. The following are the most striking examples of self-labeling: *"I am mentally ill. That's what it says in my report"; "It's not just what I think; they really do not like me. They say that they don't love me. They even wrote it on paper and made a protest. They asked our teacher if they could hold a demonstration. The teacher said nothing. He said that he was going to the restroom. The teachers don't want me either. They do not like me. Many of my friends do not want me either";* and *"None of them (the teachers) let me speak in the classroom"*

So, I'm not raising my hand anymore, even for the things I know because they don't let me speak. They're not listening to me. So, I don't even bother raising my hand anymore. I also don't want to raise my hand because they won't choose me anyway." This is a natural consequence of all the negative judgments, attitudes, communication, and behaviors directed to the child in the social environment. Consequently, being an integration student in the context of the social environment means rejection.

The Main Theme of Academic Field: "Do you think we don't know anything just because we came from the special [lower] class?"

In Model 3, an examination of the information provided by the children regarding their academic life reveals that it can be divided into five sub-themes. The first of these is academic acceptance, which represents the acceptance of the integration students' academic limitations by their classmates and/or teachers. When the opinions in this area were examined, one of the children emphasized the importance of the acceptance and understanding of their limitations in the academic field by saying *"I really... (love Turkish). The teacher asks us to read. They give us a book or something. They make us read it in parts. They tell me, 'Polat, read this part.' I tell*

the teacher that I can't read it. They say okay. I... The teacher doesn't force me much because I come from a special [lower] class." The same child expressed that he did not have to worry about making an error in another course because of the accepting environment, *"For example, the teacher says, 'Polat, don't be shy, raise your hand if you know the answer to the question'. I say okay, and I do raise my hand, and the teacher does not get angry at all."* However, the child also expressed the sadness he felt when his peers tried to protect him in the classroom environment when he did not know the answer to a question by saying, *"Polat has come from the special [lower] class..."* In this case, the teacher's academic acceptance of the child allowed the child to be more comfortable in the classroom environment, but the fact that his peers recognized that he had special academic needs and tried to protect him in that environment made him upset.

However, the fact that the child with special needs told his classmates *"Do you think we don't know anything just because we came from the special [lower] class?"* drew attention to the individual characteristics of the child and the importance of the attitudes in the classroom atmosphere toward him. The fact that the child with special needs expressed his feelings and needs in a clear way using his personal skills such as communication and self-confidence and that these expressions received a positive, accepting, and supportive reaction prevented the child from developing an inferiority complex because of his special needs. When the school environment of this child was examined, it was found that the child's friends helped him with the school homework. In reality, the fact that his classmates accepted the present academic status of the child with special needs and provided social support in this context allowed the child to gain a positive perspective toward school. However, the child still did not want to feel like the odd one out in the classroom environment. Whether the cognitive style exhibited by the peers is thoughtful or impulsive affects the learning skills of the integrated student in the school environment (Gander and Gardiner, 2004). One of the best examples of this is a statement by a child under the academic sub-theme *"Because I find it difficult to read, (the teachers don't like me)."* Here, the importance of the motivation and academic acceptance provided by teacher becomes obvious. Although children with special needs are already lagging behind their peers in terms of development, they cannot do anything but add to this developmental gap because of the lack of motivation (Gander and Gardiner, 2004). Another child stated that although he knew only the multiplication table of two and told the teacher so, the teacher asked him to recite in front of the class. The child

Model 3. Model of the Main Theme of Academic Field

expressed his feelings about this event saying, "...all my friends laughed at me, I felt humiliated...."

Children in the age group corresponding to the pre-adolescent period demonstrate "reflectivity." In other words, the child tends to think about what is going on in the mind of the persons around him/her and starts to examine himself/herself in more detail. It can be said that the most primitive feeling underlying this tendency is the fear of exclusion. Being the odd one out in the group as opposed to being a part of it and the fact that other individuals have "different" thoughts about him/her can be issues of concern for the child. This can also lead to a situation where in the child is left alone in the classroom environment instead of being integrated to her/his peer groups. At such a stage in which the importance of peers increases for children, peers' opinion is of great importance for them. In the case of children with special needs, it can be said that being an integrated student means being different because of academic failure in the classroom environment. It should be noted in the example stated earlier that the teacher attempts to ensure that the child does not stand out within the class by encouraging him without any pressure; however, the teacher still stresses the fact that the child is different from the other students without being aware of it by emphasizing the special needs of the child. This

goes against one of the most fundamental principles of integration, which is to make it easier for children with normal development to accept children with special needs and to develop positive attitudes toward them; integration practices are aimed at creating opportunities for children with normal development to contribute to the education of their peers with special needs (MoNE, 2018). Therefore, the acceptance of the child's potential in the academic field by his peers and teachers is essential; however, this acceptance should be at a level that would not harm the child's status of being a member of the classroom. This point raises the importance of teaching in the classroom environment.

The sub-theme of teachers' personality traits further reveals the importance of the teacher in the classroom environment. While describing the teachers of their favorite subjects, children used concepts such as *"smiling"*; *"very enthusiastic (lecturing)"*; *"playful"*; *"not shouting"*; and *"understanding."* Among these descriptions, teachers' shouting at students stands out as a negative element that made the children dislike the course, or even if they liked it, they still stated their discontent saying *"...but he shouts at us."* Therefore, a child's opinion of a course may be affected by whether he/she was successful in it, the teacher's teaching techniques, the lesson content, and the attitudes and behaviors of the teacher rather than the homework given. In other words, integrated children develop a positive opinion about a course when they like the teacher of a course in addition to their success in a course. In other words, teacher-student relationship is important in terms of students' level of adaptation to school (Göktaş & Gülay-Ogelman, 2020). Considering the fact that children are often aware of their mental health diagnoses, it is of great importance that teachers are thoughtful and intuitive in their cognitive styles (Gander and Gardiner, 2004). Extracurricular activities, too, affect children's views on academic courses. As shown by the sub-theme of alternative practices, activities such as *"watching movies"* and *"having celebrations"* can affect children's perceptions about a course. In this sub-theme, there is an example in which the teacher assigned the child as *"the supervisor for cheating"* to catch those who cheated during the exam because the child was failing in the English course. This situation was expressed positively by the child because the child gained power in the classroom environment, and his peers had to respect him. The importance of uncovering the strengths of integrated students in the classroom environment is often emphasized. However, in this case, how a child might derive a sense of satisfaction through the power given by an authority figure rather than his own skills is still a matter of debate. The power that was granted to the child through positive discrimination actually separated the child from the rest of the classroom instead of integrating him into the group. Furthermore, it can be argued that the power granted by another person rather than the power that the child gains through his own skills may cause him to be dependent on others and prevent him from discovering himself.

When the opinions in the sub-theme of awareness of limitations are examined, it can be seen that although children did not use any expressions related to their current diagnoses, they were aware of the limitations created by those diagnoses and of the necessity of instructional adaptations that would take these diagnoses into consideration. In this context, the following statements by the children clearly demonstrate that they were aware of their limitations due to their current diagnoses: *"...The courses are too long, but I cannot listen for that long..."*; *"For example, the teacher tells us to bring some items to the classroom, or what we should study at home that day, but sometimes, I forget those things"*; and *"This is because, for example,*

proverbs and idioms, I know a bit too few of them at the moment...” Difficulty in personal organizational skills such as paying attention, doing homework, and taking necessary materials to class and the disparities between the child’s mental ability and their academic achievement (Bender, 2008) were reported as limiting factors for children with learning difficulties in this area. It should be noted that some children not only were aware of these limitations but also tried to deal with these limitations, as seen by the following statement by one of the students: *“I have learned that I have to listen to the teachers carefully in order to overcome this.”*

In the sub-theme of self-confidence, results indicate that the children had low self-confidence in academic areas in which they had difficulties in learning due to their limitations. The following statement by a child with learning difficulties is a good example: *“Well, I do not like reading. For example, I get shy fearing that I will read a word wrong...”*

Another example is the following statement by a child who sat in an isolated part of the classroom and suffered from attention problems: *“At first, I was sitting on a single desk at the back. Usually, I was like this (lays his head on his arm as if lying down on the desk); sometimes I was just lying down. That is why my grades are not very good.”* However, it is possible to say that the attitudes of teachers toward active participation during the lessons also played a role in this case. That this was the case was confirmed by another statement by the same child: *“None of them (the teachers) let me speak in the classroom. So I’m not raising my hand anymore, even for the things I know because they don’t let me speak. They’re not listening to me. So I don’t even bother raising my hand anymore. I also don’t want to raise my hand because they won’t choose me anyway.”* In both children’s statements, there is an acceptance of failure. They were aware of their limitations and accepted the situation. Nevertheless, when their other statements were examined, it appeared that they actually have self-confidence: *“...I would like to get good grades... I can’t really do that. But I still have faith in myself”*; *“...Everyone gets low grades, and the teacher reads out grades as they are, but he says that mine is 100 even when it is lower”*; and *“For example, I raise my hand in all the classes. I show myself. I know that this is better.”* These children were encouraged both by the school and their families. Providing children with opportunities to deal with their academic and personal problems and treating them with academic acceptance and tolerance enables them to develop coping strategies for their academic failures. In general, the position of such children in the academic field can be impacted by the acceptance of their limitations in the academic field without directly showing this accepting approach to them, by providing extracurricular activities that will not make those children stand out in the classroom environment, by helping them increase their levels of self-confidence, and by the personal characteristics of the teacher. In this context, the attitudes, emotions, and behaviors of all individuals within the school system may have an impact on the school’s atmosphere and may contribute to a safe school environment (Tavşanlı, Birgül & Oksal, 2016). Furthermore, the way that children with special needs are affected by academic difficulties in the school environment is also directly related to the individual characteristics of those children. The differences in the statements by the students quoted above as well as in the ways in which they coped with situations also clearly reveal this difference. In this context, being an integrated student means “being different” in the academic field.

The Main Theme of Peer Bullying: “It’s not just what I think; they really do not like me. They say that they don’t love me. They even wrote it on paper and made a demonstration.”

Model 4. Model of the Main Theme of Peer Bullying

The concept of bullying, which can be defined as harassing a weaker person through verbal and physical acts, is widespread in schools (Santrock, 2011). Due to their diagnoses, integrated students can be labeled as “weaker” or “powerless.” This situation became very obvious in the interviews. A girl expressed how she was subjected to peer bullying by saying: *“Sometimes my friends take my Turkish book and rip it apart. I tell my mother. And she says that I should not like the Turkish course. They take my chess pieces and throw them all in the trash can. I get new ones and they throw them again. Then, I go and tell the principal about it.”* This child had difficulty in coming up with solutions. The fact that the mother offered irrational solutions to her child, who was asking for help from being subjected to peer bullying, might have a negative impact on the coping strategies that the child could apply when she was exposed to bullying. However, the fact that the teacher, who had significant influence in this situation, ignored the bullying behaviors of other children might also have serious consequences. The following statement is a good example that summarizes this issue: *“It’s not just what I think; they really do not like me. They say that they don’t love me. They even wrote it on paper and made a protest. They asked our teacher if they could hold a demonstration. The teacher said nothing. He said that he was going to the restroom. The teachers don’t want me either. They do not like me. Many of my friends do not want me either.”* Another girl had a

physical and verbal quarrel with a bully in order to stand against the bullying of her brother. However, in this case, the teacher intervened by pulling the hair of the student who was weaker. As a matter of fact, it was an irrational act of trying to solve bullying with bullying. Irrational solutions or actions presented by teachers and parents, who are the most important role modeling mechanisms for children, keeps the child stuck in a vicious cycle of *bullying*. In this situation, the child learned to solve problems by trying to eliminate the problem with unreasonable solutions rather than opting for viable solutions by getting to the underlying causes of the problems or by responding to bullying with bullying. Another solution was also possible. As one of the children stated, in a school in which bullying was prevalent, children with special needs would often become docile children, who always sit quietly in the classroom. The children who preferred this solution reached the following conclusion: “...*I always sit here like this, and when they see me sitting here doing nothing, sometimes they say that they should not touch me because I’m just sitting here quietly.*” Given the fact that children exposed to bullying are more likely to be alone and have more difficulties in making friends, it can be said that being bullied may isolate the child completely from society when combined with the difficulties they face in the social-emotional area due to their existing diagnoses of learning disabilities (Santrock, 2011). However, it was observed that the girls did not respond to bullying with bullying unless they had no other choice because of the gender element.

Sarı and Pürsün (2019) interviewed teachers and students in their study to examine peer bullying in inclusion/integration classes. In this study, it was concluded that mainstreaming / integration students were exposed to emotional and verbal bullying and therefore physically bullied by hitting and spitting on their friends. In this study, boys described their experiences with bullying as follows: “*They are looking for excuses to piss me off, sometimes. I move my desk, but I can't just hit their heads,*” “*One of my friends was swearing. Then, finally, I hit him 22 on his head. Then, I held him from his ear to stop him from hitting me,*” “*They piss me off, and then, beat me up. But when I hit back, they complain and cry out saying that I am the one who hit them,*” and “*There are so many fights in our school... I try to break them apart... Then, they attack me... Then, I beat them up, or they hit me back and bruise my arms and legs.*” The most striking result here is that although the integration students were bullied, they actually responded to their peers with bullying. The boys who were integration students could not be called either the victim or the bully here.

This “**bully-victim dilemma**” pushed the child toward the same solution. However, this is often the case for children who are both integration students and physically strong. Another child who was physically weaker actually expressed a feeling of “**a victim’s helplessness**” by saying “*...I try to do the same thing (the violence), but it doesn’t work.*” In other words, when they cannot come up with a solution against a possible problem, the victim feels helpless. This can either lead to passive acceptance of the situation and the continuation of the bullying or cause fear of authority. Another child who stated that an ill child repeatedly bullied him expressed the situation by saying “*I also pushed him. I was angry. I couldn't control my nerves. Then, I hid somewhere. I also skipped a lesson.*” Another child said, “*No, he tried to hit me. I did not let him hit me.*” In fact, these statements show that children are aware that bullying is not acceptable behavior. However, as the school's climate enabled bullying, and neither the school nor the children could develop solution strategies, the integration students eventually experienced the bully-victim dilemma or the helplessness of the victim. As a result, being an

integration student in terms of the main theme of peer bullying means “being dragged into bullying.”

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Within the scope of the research, four main themes were created: communication, social environment, academic field and peer bullying. Based on these main themes, the results obtained are as follows:

The main theme of communication was divided into two dimensions, that with peers and that with the teacher. Concerning the statements in the teacher dimension, it cannot be said that the teacher had positive communication with the children with special needs. It was observed that the children with special needs communicated with their teachers mostly about academic subjects and had limited communication with their teachers, and this communication lacked affection. It is thought that this undermined the “bridging” role attributed to the teacher for successful integration practices. Considering the results regarding the peer dimension of the main theme of communication, it was seen that the children with special needs had negative communication with their peers. On the basis of the statements by the children with special needs, it was understood that the children, their peers with normal development, and the teachers played a role in the negative communication with peers. Negative communication behaviors from the children with normal development and the lack of affection between the teacher and the children with special needs led to negative communication by the children with special needs. This situation was interpreted as a case of “*action and reaction*.” For this reason, the answer to the question of what it means to be an integration student in the communication dimension is the obstacle that disrupts communication.

The main theme of social environment was divided into four dimensions: the family, the peers, the school, and the children. When the findings related to the family dimension were examined, it was noted that during the interviews, children hardly mentioned the family context in terms of social support but rather mentioned the family as a determinant in the choice of friends and as an element that forced them to attend school or visited the school in case of problems. Concerning the findings related to the peer dimension, it was seen that the children with special needs were mostly excluded by their peers and what they most needed in their positive peer relations was a sense of trust. The sub-themes of humiliation, ignoring, exclusion, and distrust that have emerged at the school dimension reveal that inclusion students do not get the sense of trust they need. In other words, being an integration student in the context of the social environment means facing “rejection.”

The importance of the acceptance of such children’s limitations in academic fields by their classmates and/or teachers became obvious in the main theme of the academic field. However, this academic acceptance should not be at a level that makes the child stand out in the classroom. On the other hand, it was observed that the children's opinions about the course were mostly affected by the attitudes and behaviors of the teacher rather than whether the children were successful in that course, as well as the teacher's lecturing techniques, the content of the lesson, and the homework given. Furthermore, extracurricular activities positively affected children’s views on the course. The children with special needs did not use any expressions related to their current diagnoses, rather they used expressions that revealed their awareness of the limitations created by such diagnoses and were aware of the necessity of instructional

adaptations that should have been made accordingly. It was observed that the children who came up with solution strategies to these limitations were encouraged both by the school and their families. In this context, being an integration student means being “different” in terms of the academic field.

When the main theme of peer bullying was examined, it was observed that the irrational solutions or actions presented by the most important role modeling mechanisms for the children, such as the teachers and parents, imprisoned the child with special needs in a *vicious cycle of bullying*. Alternatively, it put the children with special needs into a passive position in the classroom environment. Integration students exposed to bullying respond to their peers with bullying. In other words, they are both victims and bullies, and they experience “**the bully-victim dilemma**”. However, it was observed that this was not the case for the children with special needs who were physically weaker than their peers. It was seen that these children experienced “**the victim’s helplessness**” instead of being a bully because they could not find a solution to a possible problem in terms of physical strength. As a result, being an integration student in terms of the main theme of peer bullying means “*being dragged into bullying.*”

When all the results are evaluated together, it is possible to say that the answer to the question of what it means to be an integration student with special needs is “*lack of belongingness.*”

Research results obtained; Although it is limited to the experiences of children with learning difficulties in integration practices, it is very important in terms of giving an idea about the general situation of integration students. Considering the limited number of studies in which integrated children can express the processes they experience in the inclusion process, the results obtained become more important. Integration practices in Turkey is carried out in good faith. However, when the results obtained are evaluated, it is seen that the desired point cannot be reached in terms of the socialization and acceptance of the integrated child, which is the main goal of the applications. The result of inclusion students' “lack of belongingness” to integration environments should be evaluated not only in terms of the flaws in the practices, but also by considering all the elements included in the integration practices. Considering that communication involves reciprocity, it is understood that the problems experienced by integrated students in communication with their peers and teachers can be eliminated with the support of participants from each group involved in communication. Integration students and their families, normally developing children and their families, not only teachers but all school staff should be made aware of integration practices and a school culture related to integration practices should be created. From this point of view, it is understood that there is a need for the inclusion practices that aim to maximize the harmony of the children with the educational environment instead of the integration practices that seek to place children together physically. For this reason, the preparation phase, one of the first steps of a successful integration practice, seems to be ignored. It is necessary to brief the children with special needs, their peers, teachers, and families about the integration process through a comprehensive preparation practice.

Teachers are one of the most important elements of the process that play an active role. For integrated students, the teacher acts as a bridge to both the school and peers. However, teachers have difficulties in carrying out integration practices at many points. For this reason, visiting teachers who can provide guidance to school teachers about integration practices should be actively promoted in the field. Additionally, the staff working in the guidance and research

center and the teachers who work in the special education and rehabilitation center that the child attends should make regular school visits and cooperate with the class teachers. On the other hand, the personal skills of teachers are also important in the adaptation of integration students to the process. For this reason, the teachers who can communicate emotionally, are open to professional development, can blend traditional methods with alternative ones, and are open to criticism should be involved in the integration system. In this context, the concept of the “integration teacher” should be created, and it should be ensured that the teachers with the characteristics that define this concept are included in the integration system.

While interaction with peers may be the most important source of support for integrated students, in practice the opposite emerges as a part of the bully-victim dilemma. For this reason, it is necessary to create a healthy school climate in order to prevent peer bullying in terms of both normally developing peers and integration students. In this context, the children, their families, and all school staff have the responsibility to ensure a healthy school climate. Still, both the school and the child should be able to come up with solution strategies in case of crisis. In particular, written intervention programs for crisis management should be developed in schools.

Finally, it is necessary to increase the number of studies that provide understanding of integration students, which is the main goal of integration practices, and to include various studies that reflect the perspective of integration students from different diagnosis groups. Particularly, it is thought that including families, normally developing peers, teachers, and school officials will enrich the researches.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to Assoc. Dr. Mustafa Sever for his contribution to the research.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest between the authors.

REFERENCES

- Akalın, S. & Sucuoğlu, N.B. (2010). An investigation of the behaviors of the teachers and the students with and without disabilities in inclusive classrooms. *E-Journal of New World Sciences Academy*, 5(4), 1710-1729.
- Altun, T. & Uzuner, F. G. (2016). Views of primary school teachers about education of students with specific learning difficulties. *The Journal of Academic Social Science Studies*, 44(Nisan), 33–49.
- Ayral, M., Özcan, Ş., Can, R., Ünlü, A., Bedel, H., Şengün, G., Demirhan, Ş. & Çağlar, K. (2015). The factors that affect the views of normally developing students on mainstream students. *Abant İzzet Baysal University Journal of Education Faculty*, 15(Special Issue), 218-230.
- Balci, E. (2019). Teachers' opinions about dyslexia and the challenges they face. *Ege Journal of Education*, 20(1), 162–179. doi: [10.12984/egeefd.453922](https://doi.org/10.12984/egeefd.453922)
- Batu, E. S., Cüre, G., Nar, S., Güvercin, D. & Keskin, M. (2018). A review of mainstreaming/inclusion research in elementary and secondary schools in Turkey (2006-

- 2016). *Ankara University Faculty of Educational Sciences Journal of Special Education*, (19), 1-38.
- Beckett, A. E. (2014). Non-disabled children's ideas about disability and disabled people. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 35(6), 856-875.
- Bender, W. N. (2008). *Learning disabilities: Characteristics, identification, and teaching strategies*. Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.
- Birol, Z. N. & Aksoy-Zor, E. (2018). The views of the primary school teachers regarding the problems they have with the students who have been diagnosed with special learning difficulties. *GUJGEF*, 38(3), 887-918. doi:10.17152/gefad.400054
- Can, E & Kara, Z. (2017). Examining the factors that affect classroom teacher's attitudes towards the mainstreamed students. *Trakya University Journal of Social Science*, 19 (2), 71-96.
- Circular on Education Practices Through Inclusion / Integration, (2017, August 19). Official Newspaper (Number: 10096465), Retrieved from https://orgm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2017_09/21112929_kaynastirma_genelge.pdf
- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd ed.). New Jersey, NJ: Pearson Ed. Inc.
- Çetrez-İşcan, G., Fazlıoğlu, Y. & Parlak, C. (2015). The attitudes of typically developing primary school students' towards their retarded peers. *Abant İzzet Baysal University Journal of Education Faculty*, 15 (Special Issue), 128-138.
- Çimen, A. (2019). *Evaluation of articulation and Stroop TBAG Form Test results on elementary school children with specific learning disability* [Master Thesis]. Yıldırım Beyazıt University Institute of Health Sciences, Ankara.
- Çoğaltay, N. & Çetin, İ. (2020). The classroom teachers' competencies regarding to special learning disabilities: A qualitative research. *Academia Journal of Educational Research*, 5(1), 126-140.
- Çuhadar, S. (2017). Teachers' views regarding educational assessment procedures. *Trakya University Journal of Education*, 7(2), 526-549. doi: 10.24315/trkefd.307946
- Demirbilek, M. & Levent, F. (2020). The opinions of school counselors on teacher behaviors towards students with special needs inclusive classrooms. *Ankara University Faculty of Educational Sciences Journal of Special Education*, 21(3), 479-511.
- Deniz, S. (2019). *The effectiveness of the teacher qualification training program developed for teachers working with students with special learning difficulties* [Doctoral Thesis]. Necmettin Erbakan University Institute of Educational Sciences, Konya.
- Dikici Sığırtmaç, A. & Deretarla Gül, E. (2014). *Special Education in Preschool*. Ankara: Vize Publication.
- Engin, A. O., Tösten, R., Kaya, M. D. & Köselioğlu, Y. S. (2014). The evaluation of manners and point of views related to mainstreaming education having responsibilities of students

- who are in needs of special education for primary education (Example of Kars). *Kafkas University Journal of the Institute of Social Sciences*, 13, 27-44.
- Fırat, T. & Koçak, D. (2018). Investigating the opinions of class teachers' on the concept of learning difficulty. *Abant İzzet Baysal University Journal of Education Faculty*, 18(2), 915-931.
- Frankel, J. R., & Wallen, N. E. (2006). *How to design and evaluate research in education (6th ed.)*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Gander, M. J. & Gardiner, H. W. (2004). *Child and Adolescent Development* (Translator: B. Onur, N. Çelen, A. Dönmez). Ankara: İmge Bookstore Publications.
- Girli, A. & Atasoy, S. (2012). The views of students with intellectual disabilities or autism regarding their school experience and their peers in inclusion. *Buca Faculty of Education Journal*, 32, 16-30.
- Goulding, C. (2002). *Grounded theory: A practical guide for management, business, and market researchers*. London, UK: Sage.
- Gök, G. & Erbaş, D. (2014). Preschool education teachers' opinions and suggestions on inclusive education. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*, 3(1), 66-87. doi: 10.20489/intjcesse.107947
- Göktaş, İ. & Gülay-Ogelman, H. G. (2019). Examining the predictor effect of the teacher-student relationships on school adjustment levels of students in preschool education. *International Anatolia Academic Online Journal*, 5(1), 30-42.
- Gül, H., Yürümez, E., Gül, A., Kılıç, H. T. & Günay-Ay, M. (2016). The misinterpretations and stigmatization of teachers on specific learning disorders: A multi-center study. *Ortadoğu Medical Journal*, 8(2), 76-82.
- Gül, S. O. & Vuran, S. (2015). Children with special needs' opinions and problems about inclusive practices. *Education and Science*, 40(180), 169-195.
- Gümüş, M. & Tan, Ç. (2015). An investigation of primary and middle school students' attitude toward inclusive students. *Siirt University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, 3, 79-94.
- Husserl, E. (1970). *Logical investigation*. New York, NY: Humanities Press.
- İçyüz, R. (2016). *Determining the problems and needs of parents who continue to integrate the child with hearing loss* [Master Thesis]. Anadolu University, Eskişehir.
- Karadağ, F., Yıldız Demirtaş, V. & Girli, A. (2014). Preferences of preschool children towards peers with disabilities. *Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Journal of Education Faculty*, 1(31), 191-215.
- Karakoç, K. (2020). *Assessment of suprathreshold auditory processing skills in children with specific learning disorder* [Master Thesis]. Hacettepe University Graduate School of Health Sciences, Ankara.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2013). *The constructivist credo*. California, CA: Left Coast Press.

- Melekoğlu, M. A. (2014). Special education today in Turkey. A. F. Rotatori, J. P. Bakken, S. Burkhardt, F. E. Obiakor & U. Sharma (Ed.). *Special education international perspectives: Practices across the globe* (sf. 529-557). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.
- Metin, N. (2018). Teacher in an integration preschool classroom. *Journal of Early Childhood Studies*, 2(2), 428-439.
- MoNE (2018). Special education services regulation. Official Newspaper, (30471), 7 July 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2018/07/20180707-8.htm>
- Pemik, K. & Deniz, L. (2017). Inclusion students' perceptions toward their school environments. *The Journal of Academic Social Sciences*, 5(41), 76-89.
- Santrock, J. W. (2011). *Life-span development: Developmental psychology* (Translator: Yüksel, G.). Ankara: Nobel Academic Publication.
- Sarı, H. & Pürsün, T. (2019). Examining peer bullying in inclusive classrooms from the perspectives of teachers and students. *Journal of Social Policy Studies*, 19(44), 731-768.
- Sever, M., Fulya Soğuksu, A., Türe, E., Koçmar, Y., Olğ Un, M., Üçüncü, N., & Öztürk, İ. (2016). What does it mean to be a student in different types of high schools in turkey through the eyes of students? *Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Bilimleri*, 16(1), 231-259. <https://doi.org/10.12738/estp.2016.1.0157>
- Sivrikaya, T. & Yıkılmış, A. (2016). The instructional process requirements of special education graduate and non-graduate teachers working in special education classes. *Abant İzzet Baysal University Journal of Education Faculty*, 16(4), 1984-2001.
- Tavşanlı, Ö. F., Birgül, K. & Oksal, A. (2016). Analysing the variables that predict secondary school pupils' perceptions of the school climate. *Electronic Turkish Studies*, 11(9), 8 21-838. doi:10.7827/TurkishStudies.9616
- Tık-Yakar, F. A. (2015). *The anxiety level of families with normally developing children in inclusive classes* [Master thesis]. Dokuz Eylül University, Institute of Educational Sciences, İzmir.
- Ulugöl, F. & Erbaş, E. (2020). School Transitions of students with special needs: challenges and recommendations. *Trakya University Journal of Education*, 10(2), 444-459.
- Yatgın, S., Sevgi, H. M. & Uysal, S. (2015). Classroom teachers' opinions on inclusive education and investigation of their occupational burnout according to various variables. *Abant İzzet Baysal University Journal of Education Faculty*, 15 (Special Issue), 167-180.