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Examining University Experiences of Students with Special Needs

Abstract

Various legal arrangements are made to provide appropriate educational opportunities for individuals with special needs (SN) in the process from preschool education period to higher education period. However, it is seen that individuals with SN experience various problems in their education processes. It is also thought that these problems differ according to the university the students attend and the type of disability. At this point, it is necessary to determine the student experiences of students with SN and to identify the problems they experience, if any. This qualitative study aimed to identify the university experiences of students with SN. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Ten students with SN were interviewed during the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. Findings showed that participants focused on the conveniences and challenges of being a university student with SN and the reasons for choosing the university and department. Moreover, their university experiences, course registrations, and their views about the physical environment on campus were discussed. In addition, the study presented the expectations of students from their universities and the solutions they proposed for the problems they encountered.

Keywords: Students with special needs, university students, student experiences

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Özel Gereksinimli Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Öğrencilik Deneyimlerinin İncelenmesi

Öz

Okul öncesi eğitim döneminden yükseköğretim dönemine kadar olan süreçte özel gereksinimli (ÖG) bireylere uygun eğitim olanaklarının sağlanması için çeşitli yasal düzenlemeler yapılmaktadır. Bununla birlikte ÖG bireylerin eğitim süreçlerinde çeşitli sorunlar yaşadıkları görülmektedir. Söz konusu sorunların, öğrencilerin devam ettiği üniversiteye ve yetersizlik türüne göre farklılaştığı da düşünülmektedir. Bu noktada ÖG öğrencilerin öğrencilik deneyimlerinin ve varsa yaşadıkları sorunların belirlenmesi gerekmektedir. Bu çalışmada, ÖG üniversite öğrencilerinin öğrencilik deneyimlerinin belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Söz konusu amaç doğrultusunda bu çalışma nitel araştırma paradigması çerçevesinde desenlenmiştir. Betimsel bir çalışma olan bu çalışmada, farklı yükseköğretim kurumlarında öğrenim gören 10 ÖG öğrenciyle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. ÖG üniversite öğrencilerinin öğrencilik deneyimlerinin belirlenmesi amacıyla, 2021-2022 eğitim öğretim yılı bahar döneminde toplanan veriler içerik analizi yaklaşımıyla analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma bulgularında, ÖG üniversite öğrencilerinin üniversitede ÖG öğrenci olmanın kolaylıklarını, zorluklarını, üniversiteyi ve bölümü tercih etme nedenlerini açıkladıkları görülmektedir. Bunun yanı sıra öğrencilerin üniversite ve ders kayıtları sırasında yaşadıkları deneyimlerine, kampüsteki fiziksel çevre hakkındaki düşüncelerine yer verilmiştir. Ayrıca öğrencilerin eğitim aldıkları kurumdan beklentileri ve yaşadıkları sorunlara yönelik çözüm önerileri açıklanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Özel gereksinimli bireyler, üniversite öğrencileri, öğrencilik deneyimleri

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Eğitim hakkı evrensel bir haktır ve çeşitli yetersizlikleri olan bireylerin de tipik gelişim gösteren yaşlıları gibi eğitimden eşit şekilde yararlanmaları gerekmektedir. Yetersizliği olan bireyler için kanunlarda ve uygulamada birtakım olumlu yaklaşımlar olmasına rağmen bu bireyler eğitimlerinde bazı sorunlarla karşılaşmaktadırlar (Biçer ve İşcan, 2020). Türkiye’de yetersizliği olan bireylerin yaşadıkları sorunlar ve onların beklentileriyle ilgili çalışmaların sınırlı olduğu ve bu alandaki alan yazında eksiklikler bulunduğu belirtilmektedir (Mengi, 2019). Bundan dolayı Türkiye’de yetersizliği olan üniversite öğrencileriyle ilgili bu bireylerin yaşadıkları sorunlarla ilgili (Burcu, 2002) ve yetersizliği olan bireylerin üniversite başarıları konusunda daha fazla araştırmanın yürütülmesi önerilmektedir (Moriña ve Biagiotti, 2021). Yetersizliği olan üniversite öğrencileriyle ilgili çalışmaların yapılmasının bu bireylerin psikolojik iyilik durumu üzerinde önemli olduğu belirtilmektedir (Koca Atabey ve Öz, 2018).

Alan yazında ÖG üniversite öğrencileriyle ilgili görme yetersizliği (Aydın, 2012; Dal vd., 2013; Partici, 2018; Kaniş ve Demir, 2018; Doğuş, Aslan ve Çakmak, 2020; Okur ve Demir, 2019), işitme yetersizliği (Karasu ve Kaya, 2021; Karasu, Uzuner ve Beral, 2018) görme yetersizliği ve fiziksel yetersizliği (Burcu, 2002; Dökmen ve Kışlak, 2004) ve fiziksel yetersizliği (Koca Atabey ve Öz, 2018; Çivici ve Gönen, 2015; Sevinç ve Çay, 2017) olan bireyler ve bu bireylerin üniversitede yaşadığı sorunlarla ilgili araştırmaların yapıldığı görülmüştür. Bununla birlikte, farklı yetersizlik gruplarının bir arada bulunduğu üniversite öğrencileri (Bahadır vd., 2016; Biçer ve İşcan, 2020; Kaya, 2019, Mengi, 2019; Tekin, 2019; Kayhan, Sen ve Akcamete, 2015; Topsaç ve Bişgin, 2014) ilgili araştırmalar da yapılmıştır. Ancak işitme, görme ve fiziksel yetersizliği olan üniversite öğrencileriyle ilgili daha fazla araştırmalar yapılması gerektiği belirtilmektedir. Yetersizliği olan üniversite öğrencilerinin okullarında yaşadıkları sorunların belirlenmesi ve çözüm yollarının geliştirilmesi noktasında farklı örneklerin incelenmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Bu araştırmaya söz konusu gereksinimlerden yola çıkılarak karar verilmiştir.

Yöntem

Bu araştırmada, ÖG üniversite öğrencilerinin öğrencilik deneyimlerinin belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Söz konusu amaç doğrultusunda nitel araştırma paradigması çerçevesinde betimsel bir araştırma desenlenmiştir. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden fenomenoloji kullanılmıştır. Bu tür araştırmalarda görüşme, gözlem ve belge incelemesi gibi veri toplama teknikleri kullanılmaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra var olan durum ya da olgu gerçekçi ve bütüncül bir biçimde ortaya koyulmaya çalışılmakta ve genelleme kaygısı güdülmemektedir. Dolayısıyla bu tip araştırmalardan elde edilen verilerin içinde bulunduğu koşullar göz önüne alınarak değerlendirilmesi gerekmektedir (Cresswell, 2016; Mills ve Gay, 2016; Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2018). Bu araştırmada, Türkiye’deki üç farklı üniversitede öğrenim gören öğrencilerinden veriler toplanmıştır. Elde edilen veriler sonucunda oluşturulan bulguları nitel araştırma paradigması çerçevesinde değerlendirmek gerekmektedir.

Bulgular

Bu araştırmada, ÖG üniversite öğrencilerinin öğrencilik deneyimlerinin belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu doğrultuda “Verilerin Toplanması ve Analizi” başlığında açıklandığı üzere 18 Mart-16 Temmuz 2022 tarihleri arasında üniversitelerde öğrenim gören ÖG öğrencilerle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler aracılığıyla veriler toplanmıştır. Tablo 1’de demografik bilgilerine yer verilen katılımcılarla gerçekleştirilen görüşmeler toplamda 5 saat, 41 dakika, 28 saniye sürmüştür. En uzun süren görüşme 51 dakika 58 saniyeye Arif olmuştur. En kısa süren görüşme 23 dakika 23 saniyeye Burak’la gerçekleştirilen görüşme olmuştur. Ortalama görüşme süresi 34 dakika, 8 saniye olarak hesaplanmıştır. Görüşmelerin dökümleri toplamda 108 sayfa olarak belirlenmiştir.

Araştırmadan elde edilen verilerin analizi sonucunda elde edilen tema, alt tema ve kodlara Tablo 3'te yer verilmiştir. Tablo 3'te de görülebileceği üzere araştırma sonucunda, a) ÖG üniversite öğrencilerinin öğrencilik deneyimleri ve düşünceleri ve b) ÖG üniversite öğrencilerinin beklentileri ve önerileri olmak üzere iki temaya ulaşılmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra 15 alt temaya ve 48 koda ulaşılmıştır.

Tartışma ve Sonuç

Araştırmada katılımcılara üniversiteyi tercih etme nedenleri sorulmuş, katılımcılar cevap olarak üniversitenin ikamet ettiği şehirde veya şehre yakın olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Bu araştırma bulgusuyla benzer şekilde Partici (2018), Sevinç ve Çay (2017) araştırmalarında yetersizliği olan üniversite öğrencilerinin öğrenim gördükleri üniversiteyi tercih etme nedenleri olarak ikametlerine yakın olması bulgusuna ulaşmışlardır. Benzer şekilde Tekin (2019) araştırmasında, katılımcıların %60'ının ailesiyle yaşamak zorunda kaldıklarını belirtmektedir. Bununla birlikte bazı katılımcılar, okulun imkânlarının iyi olmasının okulu tercih etme sebebi olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu üniversite tercih ederken okulun ikamet ettiği şehirde veya şehre yakın olmasını dikkate almıştır. Bu durumun nedeninin yetersizlikleriyle ilgili yaşayabilecekleri ulaşım ve erişim sorunları olduğu düşünülmektedir. Katılımcıların tercih ettikleri programa ilgi duymaları ve üniversiteye giriş sınav puanlarının eğitim gördükleri programları karşılaması bu programları tercih etme nedenleri arasındadır. Bu araştırma bulgusundan farklı olarak Partici (2018) çalışmasında, görme yetersizliği olan üniversite öğrencilerinin ağırlıklı olarak sözel bölümleri tercih ettiği bulgusuna ulaşmıştır.

Katılımcıların uzaktan eğitimle ilgili düşüncelerinin ise çoğunlukla olumsuz olduğu görülmektedir. Uzaktan eğitime ilişkin önerilerinde kaynakların erişilebilir olmasının gerektiğini sıklıkla ifade etmişlerdir. Bu araştırma bulgusuyla benzer şekilde Stambekova ve arkadaşları (2021) çalışmalarında, ÖG üniversite öğrencilerinin uzaktan eğitimle ilgili görüşlerinin olumsuz olduğu bulgusunu rapor etmiştir.

Katılımcılara üniversitedeki sosyal ortamlarla (Spor salonu, halı saha vb. işletmelere yönelik deneyimlerinizden bahsedebilir misiniz?) ilgili düşünceleri sorulmuştur. Katılımcıların bu soruya verdikleri cevaplar çeşitlilik göstermektedir. Dört katılımcı kantini yeterli bulurken üç katılımcı kantinin yetersiz olduğunu ifade etmiştir. Dört katılımcı kütüphaneyi yeterli bulurken üç katılımcı kütüphanenin yetersiz olduğunu belirtmiştir. Bu araştırmanın bulgusuna benzer olarak, gerçekleştirilen çalışmalarda yetersizliği olan bireyler için kütüphanenin yetersiz olduğu belirtilmektedir (Aydın, 2012; Biçer ve İşcan, 2020; Burcu, 2002; Mengi 2019; Dökmen ve Kışlak, 2004; Sevinç ve Çay, 2017; Partici, 2018). Ayrıca beş katılımcı yemekhanelerin de yetersiz olduğunu ifade etmiştir. Bu araştırma bulgusuyla benzer şekilde Burcu (2002), Dökmen ve Kışlak (2004) da çalışmalarında yemekhanenin yetersiz olduğu bulgusuna ulaşmışlardır.

Katılımcıların sınavlara ilişkin önerileri elektronik sınav yapılması ve ayrı bir gözetmen eşliğinde sınav yapılması şeklinde olmuştur. Bu bulguyla benzer şekilde yapılan iki araştırmada, öğrencilerin sınavlarda okuyucu ve kodlayıcı desteği sorunu yaşadıklarını rapor edilmiştir (Mengi, 2019; Tekin, 2019). Dökmen ve Kışlak (2004), görme yetersizliği olan öğrencilerin sınav salonuna ulaşmada ve dersin içeriğinin yetersizlik türüne göre ayarlanması konusunda katılımcıların sınavlarla ilgili sorun yaşadıkları bulgusuna ulaşmıştır. Örneğin Canan diğer öğrencilerle aynı sınav salonuna yerleştirilmesinden dolayı sorunlar yaşadığını ifade etmiştir. Bu sorunun çözümü için ayrı bir gözetmen eşliğinde sınav yapılması gerektiğini belirtmiştir. Buna ek olarak Hakan da sınav programının yetersizliği olan öğrencilerin gereksinimleri doğrultusunda oluşturulması gerektiğini dile getirmiştir.

Katılımcıların yetersizliği olan diğer öğrencilere bazı önerileri olmuştur. Katılımcılara göre yetersizliği olan öğrenciler taleplerini dile getirmeli, lisans eğitimi almalı ve zorluklar karşısında pes etmemelidir. Bu çalışmayla benzer şekilde Tekin (2019), Sevinç ve Çay (2017) araştırmalarında öğrencilerin üniversitedeki engelli öğrenci biriminin önemini vurguladıkları görülmektedir.



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Araştırma sonunda ÖG üniversite öğrencilerinin, üniversite öğrenimi sırasında çeşitli sorunlar yaşadıkları görülmektedir. Öğrenciler yaşadıkları sorunlara ilişkin öneriler de ortaya koymaktadır. Araştırma sonuçlarının alan yazınla büyük ölçüde paralel olduğu düşünülmektedir. Yükseköğretim yöneticilerinin ve yasa koyucuların, öğrencilerin yaşadıkları sorunlara çözüm bulmaları konusunda bu araştırmanın bulgularını dikkate almaları önerilebilir. Bununla birlikte, konuyla ilgili nicel araştırma yöntemleriyle araştırmaların gerçekleştirilmesi önerilebilir. İleriki araştırmalarda farklı yetersizliklere sahip (örneğin; süreğen hastalık, otizm spektrum bozukluğu, dikkat eksikliği ve hiperaktivite bozukluğu gibi), muhtelif fakültelerin farklı bölümlerinde okuyan özel gereksinimli öğrencilerin yaşadıkları sorunlarla ilgili çalışmalar yapılması önerilebilir.

Introduction

Special education refers to

“the education carried out in appropriate environments with specially trained personnel and with education programs developed to meet the educational and social needs of individuals who differ significantly from their peers in terms of their individual and developmental characteristics and educational qualifications”.

An individual with special education needs is defined as “an individual who differs significantly from their peers in terms of individual and developmental characteristics and educational qualifications” (Ministry of National Education Special Education Services Regulation, 2021). According to the Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye (Article 42), no one should be deprived of the right to learning and education. Besides, it states that “The State should take necessary measures to rehabilitate those in need of special training so as to render such people useful to society.” The right to education of individuals with disabilities is legally guaranteed by international and national legal regulations. There are problems in Türkiye in terms of individuals with disabilities benefiting from the right to education. They face various problems in universities. These problems are about physical arrangements, education and materials, and exposure to prejudiced attitudes of others (Bahadır et al., 2016).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 15% of the entire population in society experience a significant disability (WHO, 2022). The types of disability of individuals with disabilities may differ from each other (Bahadır et al., 2016). In an educational setting, individuals with special needs are those with a physical disability, visual impairment, language and speech disorders, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, hearing impairment, psychological problems, and traumatic brain injury. Individuals with special needs are likely to experience different learning problems in the courses they study (Okur & Demir, 2019), and the needs of individuals with different disabilities may differ from each other (Bahadır et al., 2016). Because individuals may consist of different disability groups and each disability group can have different characteristics from each other, it is necessary to have expertise in this issue (Kamış & Demir, 2018).

One of the most common problems faced by individuals with disabilities in Türkiye is the problems arising from the physical characteristics of the spaces. However, in addition to spatial problems, individuals with disabilities may experience problems with many different issues (Sevinç & Çay, 2017). The problems experienced by individuals with disabilities are important in all areas of life, and as the type of disability changes, the problems they experience also change. Individuals with disabilities also have problems in the field of education (Bahadır et al., 2016).

Education is a fundamental human right for everyone (Kayhan, Sen & Akcamete, 2015). The right to education is a universal right and individuals with disabilities should benefit from education equally as their typically developing peers. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) underlines the education of individuals with disabilities and the relevant principles. In addition, some regulations are also made in public spaces for individuals with disabilities. Higher education institutions also make some arrangements for those individuals in this context. Individuals with disabilities can have higher-quality education opportunities thanks to the arrangements made by universities for them (Biçer & İşcan, 2020). Although there are some positive approaches in law and practice for individuals with disabilities, they still face some problems in their education (Sevinç & Çay, 2017). In higher education institutions in Türkiye, the concept of --a "barrier-free university" has gained importance. Significant progress has been achieved in the Higher Education Institution (YÖK) and universities with such studies. The purpose of such incentive studies for individuals with disabilities is to ensure that these individuals are successful both in their education and social life (YÖK, 2022). Lifelong learning aims to integrate and support all individuals involved in the educational process. It is important to make adaptations and arrangements in learning and teaching processes so that individuals with

disabilities can benefit from education equally with their typically developing peers throughout their university life (Kayhan, Sen & Akcamete, 2015).

University students have different needs and problems. They experience some problems due to their inadequacies (Dal et al., 2013; Kaya, 2019; Burcu, 2002). According to a report published by YÖK, there were 54232 university students with special needs in the 2020-2021 academic year, including open and distance education students at state and private universities in Türkiye (YÖK, 2021). Since the number of individuals with disabilities is increasing in universities, some important decisions need to be made about these individuals (Lombardi et al., 2018). Universities need to make arrangements to ensure the learning and academic success of individuals with disabilities. Education systems need to ensure permanent and equal access to learning and teaching processes and resources for all (Moriña & Biagiotti, 2021).

With developments in communication and information technologies, the amount of information has increased, and access to this information presented in different environments has become crucial. Advances in technology offer convenience in terms of accessing and producing information. Every individual should have opportunities to access the information they need on time (Aydın, 2012). However, in Türkiye it can be said that individuals with special needs experience the problems they face in their general lives during their university education life (Tekin, 2019). Although university students with disabilities are placed in university on equal terms with their typically developing peers, they experience limitations in participating in education and training processes equally like their peers, due to the psychological, biological, or sociological changes they experience or the inadequacies they have. Since the facilities of universities (e.g., equipment, program, plan, availability, and accessibility) are often made for university students with typical development, those who are deficient at these points may face various problems in their university life., it is thought that research should be conducted in this field in order to understand the problems, expectations and needs of university students with disabilities in Türkiye.

Students' academic achievement depends on their characteristics and personal experiences. Personal traits are related to self-awareness, self-decision, and self-defense. However, academic achievement is also affected by other external factors such as support services, family, peers, and faculty members (Moriña & Biagiotti, 2021). Therefore, university students with special needs should be supported for being successful and fulfilling the requirements of the program they study (Abed & Shackelford, 2020). Modern universities aim to reduce student problems, organize physical spaces and materials for the use of individuals with disabilities, help individuals with disabilities be less dependent on others, and ensure that they become productive and happy individuals. In addition, it will be a crucial development to increase working areas in both public and private sectors for individuals with disabilities and create opportunities for them to work in the jobs they want (Dökmen & Kışlak, 2004).

In Türkiye, individuals with disabilities experience problems in many areas such as employment, education, participation in society, and accessibility. The solution to the problems experienced by individuals with disabilities requires the effort of everyone, not just themselves and their families. Universities are also one of the educational institutions that work for the development of individuals and society. The practices of universities can shape the whole world. Therefore, universities' inability to provide qualified services to individuals does not coincide with their practices and objectives. Universities play a key role in increasing the welfare level of individuals with disabilities and the existence of justice. University students with disabilities need different support systems to receive qualified education (Sevinç & Çay, 2017). There is a dearth of research on the problems experienced by individuals with disabilities and their expectations in Türkiye (Mengi, 2019). Therefore, it is recommended that more studies should be conducted on the problems experienced by these individuals with disabilities in Türkiye (Burcu, 2002) and their academic achievement (Moriña & Biagiotti, 2021).

The literature reports that studies mostly have focused on individuals with visual impairment (Aydın, 2012; Dal et al., 2013; Partici, 2018; Kaniş & Demir, 2018; Dođuş, Aslan & Çakmak, 2020; Okur & Demir, 2019), hearing impairment (Karasu & Kaya, 2021; Karasu, Uzuner & Beral, 2018), visual impairment and physical disabilities (Burcu, 2002; Dökmen & Kışlak, 2004), physical disabilities (Koca Atabey & Öz, 2018; Çivici & Gönen, 2015; Sevinç & Çay, 2017) and the problems these individuals experience at university. Besides, there are studies on university students with different disability groups (Bahadır et al., 2016; Biçer & İşcan, 2020; Kaya, 2019, Mengi, 2019; Tekin, 2019; Kayhan, Sen & Akcamete, 2015; Topsaç & Bişgin, 2014). However, more studies are needed to examine university students with disabilities (Moriña & Biagiotti, 2021). It is important to examine different university examples to identify the problems experienced by university students with disabilities and thus find solutions. This research was conducted based on these requirements. Today, in parallel with the increasing young population, the number of universities and students attending universities is increasing. As a result, more and more students with special needs attend universities (Lombardi et al., 2018). However, since the disabilities of individuals with special needs may vary, they may experience different problems in different universities. One of the reasons for conducting this study is to reveal the problems experienced by students with special needs who have different disabilities and study in different departments in different faculties in different universities today and to share their own solution suggestions. Previous research on the subject has generally either focused on a specific type of disability or only one university has been selected and the current situation in that university has been revealed. In terms of the aforementioned aspect of this study, it can be said that it differs from other studies since it was conducted with the participation of students from more universities and with different types of disabilities.

Method

This qualitative study aimed to identify the university experiences of students with special needs. To achieve this goal, descriptive research was designed. It can be said that the phenomenological approach, one of the qualitative research methods, was adopted in this study. Qualitative data collection tools include interviews, observations, and documents. In qualitative research, the existing situation and phenomenon are tried to be presented realistically and holistically. Also, the aim of qualitative research is not to achieve generalizability. Therefore, the data should be evaluated considering the current conditions (Cresswell, 2016; Mills & Gay, 2016; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In this study, qualitative data were collected from university students studying at three different universities in Türkiye. The findings were evaluated within the framework of the qualitative research paradigm.

Participants

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with university students studying at five different universities in Türkiye. Detailed information on how the data collection tool was developed is given in the following section. To ensure confidentiality, all participant names were changed to pseudonyms. Table 1 presents demographic information of the participants.

Table 1.

Demographic Information

Code Number	Pseudonyms	Gender	Age	Grade	Disability	Department/Program
1	Mert	Male	28	4	Visual	Turkish Language and Literature
2	Burak	Male	20	2	Hearing	Nursing
3	Kemal	Male	20	2	Visual	Special Education Teaching
4	Nedim	Male	20	Prep.	Visual	History
5	Turan	Male	20	2	Physical	Science Teaching

6	Canan	Female	25	3	Physical	Russian Language and Literature
7	Fatma	Female	22	3	Visual	Sociology
8	Arif	Male	25	2	Physical	Social Science Teaching
9	Mercan	Female	23	3	Hearing	Special Education Teaching
10	Hakan	Male	20	1	Visual	Law

Data Collection Process

The researchers developed the semi-structured interview questions. The questions were sent to four experts on qualitative research methods and special education. Based on the expert opinions, the semi-structured interview questions were finalized (see Table 2). The contributions of the experts to the data collection tool were as follows: Questions 1 and 8 were added according to the opinions of the experts. In addition, question 5 previously consisted of several different questions. According to the feedback from the experts, these different questions were combined as sub-questions of question 5.

Table 2.

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. What would you like to say about being a university student with special needs?
 - a) What do you think about conveniences?
 - b) What do you think about challenges?
2. Why did you choose this department/university?
 - a) What were your expectations for the department?
 - b) What kind of research did you do about the accessibility of the universities you prefer for individuals with special needs?
3. What did you experience on the day you registered at the university? (Online or in person?)
 - a) Challenges
 - b) Conveniences
 - c) Expectations
 - d) Suggestions
4. What did you experience on the day you registered for the course for the first time?
 - a) Challenges
 - b) Conveniences
 - c) Expectations
 - d) Suggestions
5. What services do you receive as a student with special needs on campus?
 - a) Are there any special arrangements made for you? If yes, what are they?
 - b) What kind of arrangements did you request on campus and faculty? What kind of process did you go through while submitting your requests?
 - c) What can you say about life on campus?
 - d) What would you recommend for challenges, if any?
 - e) Could you tell us about your school canteen/dining hall experiences? What do they mean to you? What are you doing there?
 - f) Could you tell us about your library experiences?
 - g) Could you tell us about your experiences regarding gyms and carpet pitches?
6. What would you like to say about being a student with special needs in your department?
 - a) What are your suggestions for the situations you are experiencing?
7. What are your views on online courses?
 - a) What are your expectations in online courses?
 - b) What are your suggestions regarding the courses you take online?

8. What do you think about the face-to-face/online exams held at the university?

a) What are your expectations regarding the exams?

b) What are your solutions for the exams?

9. What would you suggest to other students with special needs?

The data were collected from students with special needs studying at three different universities in the Central Anatolian Region, using the interview questions presented in Table 2, between 18.05.2022 and 16.07.2022. The demographic information of the participants is given in Table 1. Before conducting the interviews, ethical approval was obtained from the Scientific Research and Ethics Committee of the university where the second researcher was working.

The researchers applied to the Disabled Student Units of the universities where they work to determine participants. They asked whether these students had peers studying at different universities. The university students were informed about the research, and they were asked whether they could participate in the study. Those who volunteered to participate in the study were recruited. Semi-structured interviews took place at the convenience of the participants and researchers. Before the interviews, participants were informed about the research, the data collection process, and confidentiality. Then written and verbal permissions were obtained from them.

Participants were informed that the interviews would be recorded. Seven interviews were performed via telephone. Two students were interviewed face-to-face. A video call was made with a student via the WhatsApp application. The recordings were transcribed by the authors. The transcripts were then checked for accuracy. Thus, the reliability of the interview transcripts was ensured.

Data Analysis

While analysing the data, the researchers independently read the interview transcripts three times. These readings provide the authors' control over transcripts. Using content analysis, the researchers read and coded the data. Through the codes obtained, they created sub-themes and themes. Direct quotations were used to convey participants' views to the reader in a more striking way (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The researchers created their codes, sub-themes, and themes individually. Finally, they came together to discuss the codes, sub-themes, and themes and reached a consensus by persuading each other (see Table 3).

Ethics Committee Permission Information

Ethical approval was obtained from the Scientific Research and Ethics Committee of the university where the second researcher was working.

Date of Ethical Assessment Certificate: 18.04.2022

Issue Number of the Ethical Assessment Certificate: E-75732670-020-67392

Findings

This study aimed to determine the university experiences of students with special needs. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews between 18.05.2022 and 16.07.2022. The interviews lasted 5 hours, 41 minutes, and 28 seconds in total. The longest interview was Arif's, (51 minutes and 58 seconds). The shortest interview was Burak's (23 minutes and 23 seconds). The average interview time was calculated as 34 minutes and 8 seconds. The transcripts of the interviews were 108 pages in total.

The codes, sub-themes, and themes are presented in Table 3. Two themes were reached: a) university experiences and views of students with special needs and b) expectations and suggestions

of university students with special needs. Besides, 15 sub-themes and 48 codes were reached (see Table 3).

Table 3.

Themes, Sub-Themes, and Codes

-
1. University experiences and views of students with special needs
 - 1.1. Benefits of being a university student with special needs
 - 1.1.1. Exemption from some questions/applications in exams/courses
 - 1.1.2. Support by staff on campus
 - 1.1.3. Adaptation of the lessons
 - 1.1.4. Providing convenience in transportation
 - 1.2. Challenges of being a university student with special needs
 - 1.2.1. Accessibility issue on campus
 - 1.2.2. Having difficulty in using vending machines on campus
 - 1.2.3. Necessity of using the sense of sight/hearing in the lessons
 - 1.2.4. Having difficulty following the lesson in crowded classrooms
 - 1.2.5. Experiencing transportation problems
 - 1.3. Reasons for choosing the university
 - 1.3.1. Being close to/in the city of residence
 - 1.3.2. Facilities of the university
 - 1.3.3. Accessibility of the university
 - 1.4. Reasons for choosing the department
 - 1.4.1. Because of their scores
 - 1.4.2. Good employment opportunities
 - 1.4.3. Having a unit for disabled students
 - 1.4.4. Interest
 - 1.4.5. Learning new information
 - 1.5. Types of enrolment
 - 1.5.1. Online
 - 1.6. Experiences while enrolling in university
 - 1.6.1. Getting support from an acquaintance
 - 1.6.2. Need technical support
 - 1.6.3. Easy registration
 - 1.7. Experiences while enrolling for the first time
 - 1.7.1. Need support when enrolling
 - 1.8. Views on distance education
 - 1.8.1. Positive
 - 1.8.2. Negative
 - 1.9. Views on social environments at the university
 - 1.9.1. Insufficient canteen
 - 1.9.2. Sufficient canteen
 - 1.9.3. Poor quality of food
 - 1.9.4. Insufficient dining room
 - 1.9.5. Insufficient library
 - 1.9.6. Sufficient library
 2. Expectations and suggestions of university students with special needs
 - 2.1. Expectations from the university
 - 2.1.1. Ensuring accessibility on campus
 - 2.1.2. Ensuring the accessibility of the student information system

- 2.2. Expectations for the department
 - 2.2.1. Being easy
 - 2.2.2. Increasing knowledge
 - 2.2.3. Providing employment opportunities
 - 2.3. Suggestions for courses
 - 2.3.1. Adaptation of course contents to the type of disability
 - 2.4. Suggestions for distance education
 - 2.4.1. After distance education, students are required to receive in-service training
 - 2.4.2. Resources must be accessible
 - 2.5. Suggestions for exams
 - 2.5.1. Electronic exams
 - 2.5.2. Taking exams with a different supervisor
 - 2.5.3. Adjusting the exam program according to the student with a disability
 - 2.6. Suggestions for other students with disabilities
 - 2.6.1. Participating in social events
 - 2.6.2. Undergraduate education
 - 2.6.3. Choosing an area suitable for their inadequacies
 - 2.6.4. Accepting their inadequacies
 - 2.6.5. Expressing their demands
 - 2.6.6. Not giving up in the face of challenges
-

University Experiences and Views of Students with Special Needs

Benefits of Being a University Student with Special Needs

Regarding the conveniences of being a university student with special needs, Mert and Burak focused on being exempted from some questions and practices in exams and/or lessons. For example, Burak said, *"I was not participating in some practices, using my special needs as an excuse. I used to say that I did not want to make that practice."* Mert, Nedim, Arif, Turan, Mercan and Hakan stated that they were supported by the staff on campus, which was a convenience for them. Arif stated, *"They made me feel like they would take care of me when I ran into a problem. The supervisor of the unit for disabled students was also a disabled person. Thus, he could understand us. Our coordinator teacher had worked with disabled people for a long time. Staff on campus had the vision to remove barriers. They made my job a lot easier."* Kemal, Nedim, Fatma and Arif reported the adaptations made in the courses for them. For example, Kemal said, *"Our instructors were knowledgeable about students with special needs. For example, when our teachers had to use visuals while teaching, they would interrupt the lesson and give me audio descriptions. Apart from that, one of our teachers was trying to explain the subject to me by bringing three-dimensional shapes in class and making me touch those shapes."* Regarding the convenience of being a university student with special needs, Kemal, Turan and Mercan said that they were provided with ease of transportation. For example, Mercan said, *"There are ring buses on the campus. We can also use this service free of charge. This is a great convenience for us."* On the same subject, Nedim, Arif and Hakan stated that the accessibility of the campus made it easier for them. For example, Nedim stated *"Our university has many arrangements such as building elevators that announce each floor as they pass, embossing Braille on keys and buttons, and having the yellow line inside the building. Many universities don't have them. Our university considers such arrangements."*

Reasons for Choosing the University

Considering the reasons for choosing the university, Mert, Burak, Turan, Canan, Fatma and Arif chose universities because of their proximity to their places of residence. Fatma said, *"Because my family is in Kayseri, I couldn't choose another university. Families with disabled are more conservative*

in this regard." Kemal, Arif and Hakan preferred it because of the good facilities. Kemal said, *"Before making a choice, I visited the unit for disabled students and the person there was very warm to me. When he told me about the possibilities of the university, I decided."* Canan and Arif preferred their universities because they were accessible. Canan stated, *"Actually, it is a faculty with an orange flag. This was the reason why I chose the faculty of literature. Because it was said to be convenient, accessible."*

Reasons for Choosing the Department

Regarding the reasons for choosing the department, Mert, Kemal, Fatma, Arif and Mercan stated that they preferred the department because of their scores. Mert expressed, *"I graduated from open high school. I wanted to go to university formally. My goal was radio and television programming. I took the exam and made choices, however my exam score was sufficient for admission to the Literature department. I decided to study because it was a 4-year department."* Burak and Turan underlined the employment opportunities of the department. Turan said, *"Teaching is a difficult profession, but the graduates of this department are recruited much easier. And I thought I could study this department."* Kemal and Arif studying in their departments as it was related to their inadequacies. Kemal said, *"I cannot see. Therefore, I already know how things will be and how I will approach students with visual impairment. Also, I want to work in the field of vision in the future. For these two reasons, I preferred special education teaching."* Nedim, Arif, Mercan, Hakan and Fatma studies in their department because of their interests. Hakan described this situation as *"My interest in the history department started with a trip when I was in the 11th grade. I went to the Balkans with a high school project. I have traveled to five countries: Macedonia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Romania. The history, culture and experiences of these places caught my attention. Then I did some research in this regard. I watched various documentaries. I have done various readings on the places I have visited. Gradually I realized that I liked it. So, I decided to study history."* Canan preferred the department to gain new knowledge: *"I chose the department of Russian language and literature because I know English as my mother tongue, and I want to learn a third language."*

Types of Enrollment and Experiences While Enrolling in University

Participants were asked to explain how they enrolled in their universities and their experiences of enrollment. All of them said that they had enrolled online. Some of them stated that they enrolled easily. For example, Burak said, *"It was not difficult. It was better than face-to-face. I didn't have to worry about getting tired; I used my computer to do it at home."* Mert, Nedim and Hakan had to get support from an acquaintance during their enrolment. Nedim said, *"Because the screen was not accessible to the reader, I had to constantly seek help from my surroundings."* Mert, Nedim and Mercan needed technical support. For example, Mercan suggested *"A booklet should be prepared for the students who will register. We need technical support."* During the course registration, Nedim, Turan, Canan and Arif needed support. For example, Arif said, *"It was very difficult for me to understand the course registration system. I couldn't log in; I didn't know how to register for the course. My friends were in a panic like me. Everyone was asking me what to do and how to do it, I was under such pressure. We needed support in this regard."*

Views on Distance Education

Regarding the views of participants on distance education, Mert and Arif reported positive opinions. For example, Mert said, *"Distance education made everything easier. I couldn't complete my program for seven years without distance education because I retook a lot of failed courses. The pandemic made it easier because we were assigned homework for most of the courses. I did my homework. I could use the computer very actively, so I did not have any problems."* Kemal, Fatma, Mercan and Hakan reported negative views. Fatma complained, *"The distance education process was seriously challenging regarding additional time problems or visual-based lectures. Also, I can't reach*

the teachers on Zoom because they have turned off the microphone or texting. While some teachers gave their contact information, others did not.”

Views on Social Environments at the University

Considering their views on social environments at the university, they emphasized the insufficiency of the canteen (Burak, Canan, Fatma and Arif), the dining hall (Canan, Fatma, Arif, Mercan and Hakan), and the library (Canan, Fatma and Arif). Burak said, *“The canteen is too small. There are only four tables but there are 400 students in our program. There are also different departments. In other words, there are 600 students at the faculty; thus, the canteen is insufficient.”* Canan complained about the dining hall: *“The dining hall is too far. There are two dining halls. Both are quite far from our department. Distance is not a problem, but there is no accessibility, and it is very inadequate.”* Fatma focused on the library: *“I went to the library once in three years. I think it will be the first and last. Well, yes, roads have been built for the visually impaired, and the interior is very accessible. A room is provided for the visually impaired. People outside are uncomfortable because the printer makes sound. We told this problem to the librarian, but he said that they could work on the upper floors and that there were empty rooms there. I have a problem caused by people's discomfort. The library is not appropriate for us.”* Kemal, Turan and Mercan found the school canteen sufficient. Turan voiced, *“I did everything myself in the school canteen. Our canteen was appropriate for me.”* Burak, Nedim, Mercan and Hakan found the library sufficient. For example, Burak said, *“I think the library has a good system. It is open on 7/24. Working places, individual halls... The library is running very clean and orderly.”* On the other hand, Burak underlined the poor quality of the food in the dining hall.

Expectations and Suggestions of University Students with Special Needs

Expectations

Participants were asked to express their expectations from their universities. Kemal, Nedim, Turan, Canan, Arif and Hakan expected accessibility within the campus. Kemal emphasized that *“I couldn't find the faculties easily. That was one of the difficulties I have experienced on campus. It is the same case for the dining hall.”* Nedim and Canan expressed their expectations regarding the accessibility of student information systems. Nedim said, *“The student information system of our university should be improved. It is complex in terms of accessibility and usage. This is a complaint brought forward not only by a visually impaired individual but also by other students.”* Kemal and Nedim wanted their departments to increase their knowledge. For example, Kemal said, *“I want to increase my knowledge in other areas of disability (such as autism, hearing impairment, learning disability, and special ability).”* Arif, who expected employment opportunities, uttered *“My expectations... First of all, to be appointed...”* Mert expected the study program to be easy.

Suggestions

Participants expressed their suggestions for courses, distance education, exams and other students with disabilities. Regarding the courses, Mert, Fatma and Arif suggested that the course contents be adapted according to the type of disabilities. Mert said, *“There is one visually impaired student in the department. However, there may be more students in the future. Therefore, course content can be more verbal and descriptive rather than visual.”* For distance education, Nedim, Turan, Canan, Arif and Mercan said that resources should be more accessible. For example, Mercan advised, *“There should have been subtitle support in online classes for the student with hearing impairment during the pandemic period.”* Mert also mentioned the insufficiency of distance education and suggested in-service training for students after distance education. Students also made some recommendations regarding exams. Mert, Arif and Canan suggested that electronic exams be given to them. For example, Canan said, *“For example, it would be better if we were given a computer and I would write my answers in a Word file.”* Canan and Arif suggested that exams be held with a different supervisor. For example, Arif recommended, *“Exams must be taken in a separate classroom, in a*

separate hall, and with the help of a computer, with a supervisor teacher.” Hakan suggested that exams should be prepared according to the students with disabilities. Finally, participants reported their suggestions for other students with disabilities. Mert stated, “There are various activities such as theatre, concerts... They should go. That is because disabled people must prove themselves. Of course, they don’t have to perform. They may or may not have theatrical talents. But at least they should go to the theatre and watch that theatre. Our society does not recognize the disabled. Some people have never encountered a disabled person. We must prove ourselves to them. We are responsible for this issue.” Mert and Turan recommended that students with special needs take undergraduate education. Burak stated that students should choose an area suitable for their inadequacies by saying “They should know their shortcomings. In other words, if they feel this deficiency in this profession, they should not study such a program. For example, a person with a prosthesis on his leg should not choose the physical education department by saying that he has a right to be a physical education teacher. A blind or hearing-impaired student should not choose medicine, dentistry, or nursing.” Similarly, Kemal said that students should accept their inadequacies. Nedim, Canan, Arif, Mercan and Hakan stated that students with special needs should express their demands. For example, Nedim said, “A person may not know that you’re disabled. Or even if they know, they may not realize. Thus, ask, demand, and explain what you want.” Turan and Mercan also recommended that these students should not give up in the face of difficulties. For example, Mercan advised, “I want them to face up to these challenges. I don’t want them to give up when they encounter a problem, I never did that.”

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Educational systems are expected to meet the socio-cultural, developmental, and individual needs of all individuals around the world. However, university students with special needs may experience problems in different areas such as education, accessibility, and participation (Stambekova et al., 2021). The present study focused on the university experiences of students with special needs and their suggestions for the problems they had experienced. Interviews were conducted with 10 students from three different universities in Türkiye, including five different faculties and nine different programs. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, via phone and WhatsApp, considering students' preferences and the different cities they live in. As a result of the analysis, themes were reached. It is expected that results will serve as a guide for the administrators of the YÖK, instructors of university students with special needs, those who have administrative duties at universities, policymakers, researchers, and university students with special needs.

First, the participants were asked about their university experience and education. Regarding the convenience of being a university student with special needs, they stated that they were supported by the staff on campus and that the courses were adapted for them. For the challenges of being a university student with special needs, they reported the accessibility problem on the campus and the necessity of using the sense of sight/hearing in lessons. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Higher education should be equally accessible to all based on merit.” Universities are important institutions in raising the awareness of societies. In the past, universal design and accessibility issues were not considered in universities (Tutal, 2018). Today, however, Barrier-Free Universities Awards are distributed by the YÖK, and a great deal of importance is given to the issues of barrier-free access in universities. Thus, it is thought that universities should solve accessibility problems for each student to benefit from education equally. Besides, the YÖK gives "Barrier-free Program Decorations" to ensure that university students with special needs benefit from education better, and it is seen that various incentives are offered to universities that make adaptations/regulations for individuals with disabilities to receive appropriate education in their programs.

Participants chose universities because of their proximity to their places of residence. The same findings were reported by Partici (2018) and Sevinç and Çay (2017). However, some participants chose a university because of its good facilities (Tekin, 2019). Many participants preferred the

university to be in their city of residence or close to the city because of the transportation and access problems they may experience due to their disabilities. The reasons why participants preferred the departments were their interests and scores. Unlike this finding, Partici (2018) found in his study that university students with visual impairment mainly preferred social sciences.

Participants indicated that they enrolled online. There is no doubt that technology has made our lives easier today. In this context, it can be said that university students with special needs also benefit from technology. Sevinç and Çay (2017) emphasize the importance of using technology for university students with special needs. They argue that the use of new technologies would facilitate the lives of these students. However, since students with different special needs will also register during the registrations, it may be suggested to integrate applications or software that will facilitate their registrations into the registration systems, taking into account that the degree of disability of these individuals will change as well as the degree to which they are affected by the disability. For example, it is thought that arrangements such as voice commands for individuals who have difficulty in writing, and the system reading the text aloud when the cursor is placed on a text for individuals with visual impairment will not only facilitate the lives of individuals with special needs but also contribute to their independence.

Participants were asked about their experiences while enrolling in the university. While some participants found it easy, others needed technical support or support from a relative. They also needed support when registering for a course for the first time. Kayhan et al. (2015) found that individuals with visual and hearing impairments did not have difficulty in recording. However, students with physical disabilities needed support during registration. In this study, students with hearing impairment and students with physical disabilities stated that they could register online with little or no help from others. However, especially students with visual impairment stated that they needed someone else's help during online registration. Therefore, although technology makes our lives easier, it is thought that sharing the information that students have special needs with universities before registration by YÖK and asking students whether they need help or support during registration by the disabled student units of universities will make it easier for individuals with special needs to register.

Participants had negative views about distance education. They argued that most resources should be accessible. Similarly, Stambekova et al. (2021) reported negative views of university students with special needs regarding distance education. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak in the world and Türkiye, an urgent decision was made for distance education at all levels of education. In this context, universities have also switched to distance education. However, in the process of transition to distance education, either the orientation was not provided to the instructors or the students who took the courses, or it was not provided sufficiently. Therefore, it can be said that distance education has various difficulties for typically developing university students. However, as for typically developing students, students with special needs also experienced various difficulties in distance education, and their views on distance education are thought to be negative. Therefore, it is recommended to make improvements in distance education for both typically developing and special needs university students with different disabilities, taking into account their problems, expectations and suggestions.

Regarding the social environments at the university, they indicated both positive and negative views. While some participants stated that the canteen and library were sufficient, others found them insufficient. The literature supports this finding, reporting the insufficiency of libraries (Aydın, 2012; Biçer & İşcan, 2020; Burcu, 2002; Mengi 2019; Dökmen & Kışlak, 2004; Sevinç & Çay, 2017; Partici, 2018) and the dining halls (Burcu, 2002; Dökmen & Kışlak, 2004) for individuals with disabilities. Although there are different opinions in the literature, most university students with special needs have problems with access or accessibility to places where they can meet their basic needs such as libraries, canteens and dining halls. Therefore, it can be said that the necessary adaptations and arrangements should be made urgently for individuals with special needs, especially access to libraries

that provide access to information and contribute to students' academic development and course success. In addition, it is thought that accessibility to canteens and dining halls where students socialize and meet their basic needs and accessibility in these places should be transformed into environments where students with special needs can easily benefit from all of them regardless of their disability status.

Considering participants' expectations from their universities, participants mostly expected the university to ensure accessibility on campus. Various research supports this finding (Burcu, 2002; Çivici & Gönen, 2015; Partici, 2018; Mengi, 2019; Bahadır et al., 2016; Dökmen & Kışlak, 2004; Sevinç & Çay, 2017; Tekin, 2019). In another study, it is stated that university students with learning disabilities need educational support (Abed & Shackelford, 2020). University campuses are like a small city. In this city, there are various buildings, food and beverage, entertainment venues, libraries, and many other areas. However, the services within the campus are mostly organized in a way that students with typical development can benefit from. Sometimes even typically developing individuals may have problems with accessibility or transportation on campus. Moreover, very few arrangements have been made for them, and the yellow stripes made especially for individuals with visual impairment in recent years can be given as an example of these few arrangements. There are also some problems with it. For example, there may be various problems such as the yellow line ending suddenly, or running into a tree or a pole. However, it is thought that campuses should be designed according to universal design principles and should be equally accessible and accessible spaces for everyone. There are still some problems with this, too.

Participants were asked to express their expectations from their departments. They expected the program to increase their knowledge and adapt the course contents according to the type of their disabilities. Similarly, Partici (2018) reported students' complaints about the lack of content adaptation. According to Kayhan et al. (2015), while some participants stated that adaptations were made according to their disabilities, others said that there was no adaptation. Moriña and Biagiotti (2021) emphasized the vital role of faculty members in students' academic achievement. Therefore, it is important to increase the university academic staff's knowledge of and positive attitudes toward special education.

Participants also suggested electronic exams and conducting an exam with a separate supervisor. Mengi (2019) and Tekin (2019) reported students' complaints about the lack of reader and coder support in exams. Dökmen and Kışlak (2004) and Sevinç and Çay (2017) found that the participants had problems with the exams. University students with special needs may not be able to demonstrate their real performance in exams due to the disabilities they experience. Therefore, they may not be successful in the exams. Students with special needs do not want privileges to be made for them. They only want to participate in exams by making appropriate arrangements for their disabilities. However, in Türkiye, exam adaptations that can be made for students with special needs studying in schools and institutions affiliated to the Ministry of National Education are determined by regulations. However, since there is no such regulation in universities, the arrangements vary from university, faculty or instructor to instructor. Since there is no legal regulation, some instructors may even refuse the justified requests of the students regarding the exams. As a result, university students with special needs may experience failure. Therefore, it is thought that legal regulations should be enacted to ensure that necessary adaptations are made both in courses and exams for students with special needs in universities.

Participants advised other students with disabilities to express their demands, get an undergraduate education, and not give up in the face of difficulties. Like this study, in Tekin (2019) and Sevinç and Çay (2017), students emphasized the importance of a unit for the disabled students at the university. Similar to this finding, Moriña & Biagiotti (2021) emphasize the role of the disabled student unit in the success of university students with special needs and state that students should be self-confident. The number of university students with special needs is increasing (Lombardi et al., 2018).

When students with special needs voice their demands, it means that I am here as an individual. It means to consider me in the arrangements you make or will make. Because when these individuals do not voice their demands, no one will realize the difficulties they face. Therefore, it is thought that studying at university and defending their rights will be beneficial not only for themselves but also for other individuals with special needs who will come to university after them. Because when these individuals do not voice their demands, no one will realize the difficulties they face.

At the end of the research, it is seen that the students with students with special needs experience various problems during their university education. Students also put forward suggestions regarding the problems they experience. It is thought that the results of the research are supported by the literature to a great extent. It can be suggested that Higher Education administrators and legislators should take into account the findings of this research to find solutions to the problems experienced by students. In addition, it may be recommended to conduct research on the subject with quantitative research methods. In further research, it may be recommended to conduct studies on the problems experienced by students with special needs who have different disabilities (such as chronic illness, autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit, and hyperactivity disorder) and who study in different departments of different faculties.

Declaration of Contribution Rates of the Researchers

The first author contributed to the introduction and discussion sections of the study, and the second author contributed to the method and findings sections.

Statement of Support and Acknowledgements

There is no statement of support and acknowledgment from the authors regarding the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The authors do not declare any conflicts with the research.

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