Social Acceptence: Variables Predicting Social Acceptance of Teachers Working with Special Needs

 Emre Laçin, Dr., Corresponding Author
Hatay Mustafa Kemal University, Türkiye
emrelacn09@gmail.com
Orcid ID: 0000-0003-0262-1743

 Mustafa Ceylan, Dr.
Artvin Çoruh University, Türkiye
mceylan55@yahoo.com
Orcid ID: 0000-0003-1922-0161

Abstract
The present research aims to investigate the social acceptance of teachers who work with individuals with special needs, along with identifying the variables that may contribute to predicting social acceptance. The study comprised 318 primary and secondary school teachers affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in the central district of Antakya, Hatay province. Employing a descriptive survey model based on the relational model, the research utilized three data collection instruments: the Teacher Social Acceptance Scale for Individuals with Special Needs, the Commitment to Teaching Profession Scale, and the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale-Short Form. Analytically, the research data underwent examination through t-tests, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients, and multiple linear regression analysis. The outcomes revealed that gender had no significant impact on the level of social acceptance among teachers working with students with special needs. However, both professional commitment and the student-teacher relationship emerged as influential and substantial predictors of social acceptance. The implications of these findings were thoroughly discussed within the framework of existing literature, and relevant recommendations were subsequently put forward.
Keywords: Social acceptance, social acceptance of special needs, teacher social acceptance.

Introduction

The capacity of human beings to engage in effective communication and interpersonal interaction is a vital component for the smooth functioning of society. This necessitates the establishment of healthy communication and social interactions that are characterized by mutual respect and reciprocity. Social acceptance refers to the willingness of individuals to include others in their social circles and relationships, and is indicated by a range of behaviors that range from simple tolerance to active engagement (Leary, 2010). However, social rejection results from the lack of desire among individuals to include others in their social networks (Leary, 2010). With respect to individuals with special needs, social acceptance is characterized by communication, preference for social activities, and positive continuance of social relationships in all settings, particularly in the realm of education (Aktan, 2018; Holmes, 2011; Nowicki, 2003). The principle of inclusive education is a key objective of Turkish national education, which integrates all students, including those with special needs, into the mainstream school community. Education must be individualized, based on the premise that each student is unique and has their own distinct role to play within the school community. It is crucial for all students to feel socially accepted and valued by their peers.

Given that individuals with special needs occupy a shared environment with their typically developing peers, their requirement for social acceptance becomes evident. According to data from Turkish Statistical Institute [TUIK] (2020), the proportion of individuals with special needs in the overall population of the country stands at 7%, with 9.4% of this population being of school age. Of these individuals, 64.3% are participating in formal education. Most of the students with special needs in education are part of the inclusion system, which enables them to receive education alongside their typically developing peers. One of the primary objectives of inclusive education is to foster independence among individuals with special needs through the provision of support services, without separating them from their typically developing peers. This promotes their acceptance within society and enables them to coexist in harmony (De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2012; Sucuoğlu & Kargın, 2014).

Despite the objective of inclusive education, there remain significant challenges with regards to the social acceptance of individuals with special needs. These individuals often face difficulties in being

socially accepted by their peers in educational settings and may experience various forms of social exclusion, including communication avoidance, physical isolation, exclusion from classroom activities, lack of participation in playgroups, reluctance to cooperate, exposure to bullying and abuse, and a perception of social marginalization (Baydik & Bakkaloğlu, 2009; Çetin, Ceylan, & Taşlıbeyaz, 2022; De Boer et al., 2012; Garrote, 2017; Nowicki, 2003; Schrumpf, Crawford, & Bodine, 2007; Sucuoglu & Kargın, 2014).

Several factors contribute to the social acceptance of individuals with special needs, including differences in physical appearance compared to typically developing peers (Sucuoğlu and Kargın, 2014), limited and inadequate academic skills (Çetin, Ceylan, and Taşlıbeyaz, 2022), and displaying problematic behaviors due to their limitations (Bakkaloğlu, Sucuoğlu, & Özbek, 2019). Additionally, difficulties in understanding and interpreting the behavior of others (Dobbins, Higgins, Pierce, Tandy, & Tincani, 2010) and slower progress in self-care skills compared to typically developing peers (Sucuoğlu and Kargın, 2014) also affect the level of social acceptance. These factors, which are rooted in the developmental characteristics of students with special needs, influence social acceptance. Furthermore, the role of teachers in promoting the social acceptance of these individuals cannot be overemphasized.

The level of professional commitment of teachers working with special needs is seen as an important factor in determining social acceptance. Schools play an important role in the academic, social, cognitive and emotional development of pupils and teachers are the main facilitators in this process. Therefore, teachers' professional commitment, as defined by Steers, and Spencer (1977), can have a significant impact on students' academic and behavioral outcomes. Professional commitment is characterized by belief in and acceptance of the goals and principles of the institution, an active effort to achieve those goals, and willingness to make sacrifices in pursuit of one's professional goals.

Providing educational services to individuals with special needs requires a high level of commitment and patience. It is paramount that teachers, who play a crucial role in shaping the future of all students, demonstrate a strong connection to their profession to conduct their responsibilities effectively (Shukla, 2014). Research has shown that teachers who are highly committed to the teaching profession demonstrate higher levels of performance in the performance of their duties, experience a strong sense of belonging and have a greater sense of self-efficacy (Chang, 2009). The literature on teachers' professional commitment highlights the need for them to develop skills such as monitoring their own development, effective classroom management, problem-solving skills, independence, planning and organizational skills, communication skills, and professional development (da Costa, 2014; Martineau, 2006; Shukla, 2014).

The relationship between teachers and students is an important factor influencing the social acceptance of students with special needs. Research has shown that students build relationships with their teachers to foster their social, emotional, and mental development (Longobardi, Prino, Marengo, & Settanni, 2016). Positive teacher-student interactions are crucial in determining the quality of relationships that students form with their peers and social environment. Studies have found that positive teacher-student relationships are associated with higher academic achievement and better adjustment to the classroom environment (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2002). A longitudinal study by Curby, Rimm-Kaufman, and Point (2009) found that students who developed positive relationships with their teachers were more successful in reading and mathematics than their peers who did not. These studies

suggest that student-teacher relationships are a strong predictor of academic success for students with special needs.

A critical factor in social acceptance is the relationship between teachers and students with special needs. Unfortunately, available research suggests that this relationship is often not positive. DeBoer, Pijl, and Minnaert (2012) conducted a systematic review of 26 studies on teachers' perceptions of inclusive education and found that none of the studies reported a positive relationship between teachers and students with special needs. The researchers attributed this negative relationship to teachers' lack of experience and knowledge of inclusive education, and their inability to communicate effectively with these students. Similarly, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) found that a lack of positive relationships between teachers and students with special needs led to exclusion from peers, increased problem behavior and lower academic achievement. More recent studies have examined teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and found that teachers with more professional experience and knowledge of special education have more positive attitudes than those with less experience and knowledge (Dudiyono, Wahyudi, & Mawardi, 2022; Guillemot, Lacroix, & Nocus; 2022; Laçin & Taşlıbeyaz, 2020).

In conclusion, the social integration of people with special needs faces many challenges. These challenges have a negative impact on the individual's school adjustment, academic performance, self-esteem, social competence, and emotional development. Some of these challenges serve as direct or indirect predictors of social acceptance. Factors contributing to social inclusion include student-teacher relationships, teacher commitment to the profession, behavioral problems, type of disability, teacher knowledge and attitudes toward people with special needs, gender, academic ability, and self-care skills. Understanding these predictors of social acceptance will inform the development and implementation of effective strategies for teachers in the future, thereby promoting the social acceptance of people with special needs and ensuring their access to quality education alongside their peers. The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between teachers' commitment to their profession, a potential predictor of social acceptance, and the social acceptance of student-teacher relationships. To this end, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. Does the level of social acceptance of teachers toward people with special needs differ according to gender?
2. Is teacher commitment to the profession and to the student-teacher relationship a predictor of social acceptance?

Method

The methodology of this study was based on a descriptive survey research design and investigated the relationship between variables that predict social acceptance levels and the social acceptance of teachers working with individuals with special needs. The aim of this research was to identify the variables that influence social acceptance in the context of working with students with special needs.

Sampling and Participants

The study group of the research consists of teachers from different branches working in Antakya, Hatay province. The study group of the research was determined by the purposive sampling method. Accordingly, the teachers included in the study: a) to be a permanent member of the state schools providing primary and secondary education under the Ministry of National Education, b) to have a student with special needs in their class or to have been in the past, and c) to be a volunteer to participate in the study. 318 teachers who fulfilled all these conditions were included in the study group. The demographic information form of the teachers included in the study group is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Demographic information on the teachers participating in the study*

Field of Study	Gender		Professional Seniority (year)					Educational Status		
	Woman	Man	1–5	6–10	11–15	16–20	20-over	Associate Degree	Degree	Postgraduate
Classroom Teacher	69	78	54	45	24	15	9	0	144	3
Special Education	15	9	9	9	6	0	0	21	3	24
Science and Tech.	9	21	18	3	3	3	3	0	18	12
Pre-school	9	6	9	3	3	0	0	0	12	3
Turkish Teacher	9	39	18	30	0	0	0	0	36	12
English Teacher	21	33	33	21	0	0	0	3	51	0
Total	132	186	141	111	36	18	12	3	282	33
	318		*318*					*318*		

Data Collection Tools

Teacher Social Acceptance Scale for Individuals with Special Needs

The "Teachers' Social Acceptance Scale" [TSAS] developed by Aktan (2021) was used to measure the social acceptance of teachers working with students with special needs toward their students. The TSAS is composed of 31 items and two sub-dimensions, namely, "Teachers' Social Acceptance Behaviour" [TSAB] and "Development of Social Acceptance Competencies." The scale has a possible score range from 31 to 151 points. In terms of construct validity, the explained variance was found to be 55.08%. To establish the reliability of the TSAS and its sub-dimensions, various methods including Cronbach's Alpha, the test-retest method, and composite reliability methods were employed. The results of these methods indicated high reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability value of .94 for the TSAB sub-dimension, .92 for the BDSA sub-dimension, and .94 for the total scale. The composite reliability values were .92 for the TSAB sub-dimension, .89 for the BDSA sub-dimension, and .91 for the total scale. The test-retest reliability values were .93 for the TSAB sub-dimension, .92 for the BDSA sub-dimension, and .91 for the total scale.

Scale of Commitment to the Teaching Profession

In to measure teachers' commitment to their profession, Yıldız (2020) developed the Teaching Profession Scale. The scale is composed of 33 items and four sub-dimensions, including Professional Identification, Professional Value, Professional Effort, and Professional Commitment. The variance explained by these four factors was 48.14%. The scale data's reliability was determined through the calculation of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding values of .92 for the Professional Identification dimension, .80 for the Professional Value dimension, .84 for the Professional Effort dimension, .83 for the Professional Commitment dimension, and .93 for the scale as a whole. The higher the score, the higher the level of commitment to the teaching profession. Confirmatory Factor Analysis was conducted, and the results showed that the factor loadings, factor correlations, and error variances were all

statistically significant. The goodness-of-fit indices, X2/sd, and RMSEA indicate a good fit, while CFI and TLI values approach an acceptable fit.

Student-Teacher Relationship Scale-Short Form

The Student-Teacher Relationship Scale is a widely used and established measurement tool in the field of education. It was developed by Pianta (1999, 2001) and initially referred to as the "Student-Teacher Relationship Scale [STRS]." Ası and Karabay (2018) conducted an adaptation study of the "Student-Teacher Relationship Scale-Short Form" in Turkey, which has gained popularity due to its ease of use. The study established the validity and reliability of the scale in the Turkish context.

The Student-Teacher Relationship Scale-Short Form [PTS-C], developed by Pianta (2001), is a 15-item, 5-point Likert-style measure designed to assess teachers' perceptions of their relationship with a specific student. This scale can be used to evaluate secondary school students, starting from the pre-school stage. Each item in the scale is rated on a scale from 1 (not fitting) to 5 (fitting). Furthermore, it is a predictive scale in regards to academic and social outcomes, as evidenced by research (Drugli & Hjemdal, 2013; Milatz et al., 2014; Koomen et al., 2012). The short form of the scale consists of two sub-dimensions.

The Conflict sub-dimension of the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale-Short Form [PTS-C] (Pianta, 2001) assesses teachers' perceptions of conflictual dynamics in their relationship with a specific student. This sub-dimension encompasses three facets: the negative perception of the student's behavior by the teacher, adverse emotional interactions, and the lack of effective management of the student's behavior. High scores in conflict, as reported by the teacher, imply potential disagreements with the student, emotional struggles, and a limited ability to assert oneself in the relationship. The range of scores for the conflict sub-dimension is 8 to 40, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived conflict.

The Closeness sub-dimension of the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale-Short Form [PTS-C] measures the level of intimacy between the teacher and student, which encompasses the teacher's care for the student, responsiveness, and engagement in positive emotional interactions. High scores on this sub-dimension indicate a positive perception of the student by the teacher and a supportive relationship between the teacher and the student. The scores on this sub-dimension range from 7 to 35, with a higher score indicating a stronger sense of closeness. The reliability of this sub-dimension was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, and the internal consistency reliability coefficient was found to be .76. Meanwhile, the Conflict sub-dimension measures the level of disagreement between the teacher and student, including negative behaviors and emotions, as well as the teacher's effectiveness in managing these issues. Scores on this sub-dimension range from 8 to 40, with higher scores indicating a higher level of conflict. The internal consistency reliability coefficient for this sub-dimension was found to be .84. The overall internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as .82.

Analysis of Data

The data obtained from the forms were subjected to several preliminary checks to ensure its validity and reliability. To begin with, the forms were screened to eliminate those that left more than half of the scale items blank or appeared to have been completed in a random pattern. Subsequently, missing values and extreme values were assessed. The results revealed that no data points exceeded the Z-value range of ±3.29. Multivariate outlier analysis was conducted using the Mahalanobis distance

metric. The results showed that the skewness and kurtosis coefficients were within the acceptable range of ±1 and the distributions were found to be close to normal. To examine the multicollinearity assumption, the variance inflation factors [VIF], condition index [CI], and tolerance values were analyzed. The results showed that the VIF values were equal to 1.00, the CI values ranged from 1.00 to 25.45, and all the tolerance values were 1.00, thus indicating the absence of multicollinearity between the independent variables. The Durbin-Watson test was used to determine the presence of sequential dependence (autocorrelation) between the observed values, and it was found to be within the reference values (2.009). With these results, it was concluded that the data collected from 318 teachers were suitable for analysis, and further statistical procedures, including t-test, Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficients, and multiple linear regression analysis, were carried out to analyze the data.

Ethical Permits of Research

In accordance with the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive," this study adheres to all established ethical principles and regulations. No violations of ethical standards, as specified in the "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics" section of the directive, have occurred during this study.

Ethics Committee Permission Information:

Name of the committee that made the ethical evaluation = Artvin Çoruh University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee

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Findings

An unpaired sample t-test was used to determine whether the participants' social acceptance levels changed according to gender. The results are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. *Teacher sociala acceptance behavior scores t-test results*

TSAB	n	x̄	ss	t	sd	p
Women	117	85,70	11,97	,675	316	,501
Man	201	83,85	15,12			

Table 3. *Development of social acceptance competencies score t-test results*

DSAC	n	x̄	ss	t	sd	p
Women	117	51,88	8,61	,819	316	,415
Man	201	50,30	10,53			

The results of the unpaired samples t-test, as shown in Tables 2 and 3, indicate that there was no statistically significant difference in the level of social acceptance between genders in both sub-dimensions. The t-value calculated for the first sub-dimension was .675 (t(316)= .675, p>.05), and for the second sub-dimension was .819 (t(316)= .819, p>.05).

Regression Analysis Findings on the Prediction of Social Acceptance Scores

In this study, the interconnections among the predictor variables were first evaluated before conducting regression analysis to predict participants' social acceptance scores. The results of the regression analysis in this regard are subsequently presented.

Relationships Between Variables in Regression Analyze

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients indicating the associations between the study variables (teacher's behavior regarding social acceptance, advancement of social acceptance skills, dedication to the teaching profession, conflict within the student-teacher relationship, and intimacy within the student-teacher relationship) are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Relationships between variables in the study*

Variables	x̄	ss	1	2	3	4	5
1. TSAB*	84,62	13,86	-				
2. DSAC*	50,96	9,77	,89**	-			
3. CTP*	120,39	28,20	,11**	,10*	-		
4. Conflict	21	6,42	-,10*	-,07*	-,25**	-	
5.Proximity	31,21	5,05	,43**	,38**	,07*	-,24**	-

*TSAB: Teacher Social Acceptance behavior, DSAC: Developing Social Acceptance Competencies, CTP: Commitment to the Teaching Profession

As shown in Table 3, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients reveal a positive and significant relationship between the research-predicted variable of social acceptance behavior and the development of social acceptance competences, as well as with commitment and closeness to the teaching profession. Conversely, a significant negative relationship was found with the conflict variable. The correlation coefficients range from -,89 to -,07, with the highest significant correlation between the predictor variables of social acceptance behavior and the sub-dimensions of teacher-student relationship, closeness, and conflict. The least significant correlation was found between commitment to teaching and closeness.

Regression Analysis Findings Regarding the Prediction of Social Acceptance Scores for Students with Special Needs

The study used a multiple linear regression approach to assess the predictive level of the Teachers' Social Acceptance Behaviour [TSAB], as a sub-dimension of the Social Acceptance Scale for Students with Special Needs, and the total scores obtained from the Commitment to Teaching Scale and the Conflict and Closeness sub-dimensions of the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *Results of multiple regression analysis in which TSAB was considered as the predicted variable*

Variables	B	SH$_b$	ß	t	p	Double r	Partial r
Invariant	54,055	9,33	-	5,79	,000		
CTP	-,185	,045	-,125	-1,36	,030	-,419	-,434
Conflict	,363	,147	,075	2,47	,014	,219	,105
Proximity	1,174	,250	,428	4,69	,000	,436	,421
R=0,741	R^2=0,452						
F$_{(3,316)}$=8,744	P<,05						

As shown in Table 5, the combination of the variables Commitment to Teaching, Conflict, and Closeness significantly and strongly predicts the scores of teachers' social acceptance behavior, R=0,741, R2=0,452, p<,01. These variables together account for about 45% of the total variation in

teachers' social acceptance behavior. The results of the t-tests on the significance of the regression coefficients indicate that each of these variables significantly predicts teachers' social acceptance behavior, with the most important predictors being intimacy, commitment to the teaching profession, and conflict.

Table 6 presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis, which was conducted to investigate the predictive power of the scores obtained from the Development of Social Acceptance Competencies [SKYG] and the total scores obtained from the Commitment to Teaching Scale and the Conflict and Intimacy sub-dimensions of the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale. The aim was to determine the extent to which these variables could predict the scores of the Development of Social Acceptance Competencies sub-dimension of the Social Acceptance Scale.

Table 6. *Multiple regression analysis results in which SCIG was considered the predicted variable*

Variable	B	SH_b	ß	t	p	Double-r	Partial r
Invariant	32,358	6,73	-	4,80	,000		
CTP	-,204	,038	-,115	-,928	,020	-,315	-,308
Conflict	,204	,149	,089	,823	,022	,214	,108
Proximity	,781	,180	,404	4,29	,000	,388	,394
R=0,743	R²=0,482						
$F_{(3,316)}$=6,750	P<,05						

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis indicate that the combined effect of Commitment to Teaching, Conflict, and Closeness significantly predicts the scores of developing social acceptance competencies, as evidenced by the correlation coefficient R=0,743 and R2=0,482 (p<,01). This finding suggests that approximately 48% of the total variance in the development of social acceptance competencies is accounted for by these three predictor variables. The t-test results on the significance of the regression coefficients further indicate that all three predictor variables have a significant effect on the development of social acceptance competencies. The relative importance of these predictor variables for developing social acceptance competencies is, in order of significance, intimacy, commitment to the teaching profession, and conflict.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research focused on assessing the impact of teachers' professional commitment and the influence of the student-teacher relationship on social acceptance. The results of the study are presented in two main sections, namely, the differentiation of social acceptance levels based on gender and the examination of predictors of social acceptance.

Social Acceptance by Gender

This research aimed to determine the level of social acceptance held by teachers, with particular attention to gender differentiation. The results showed that there was no significant gender difference in the social acceptance behavior and social acceptance competence sub-dimensions of the social acceptance scale. This is in contrast to previous studies, which have found mixed results regarding the acceptance of people with special needs by gender.

This study's findings of no significant difference in social acceptance behavior and competencies between male and female teachers follow previous research (Carroll, Forlin, & Jobling, 2003; Haq & Mundia, 2012; Kaner, 2010). These findings are supported by the results of Bilen's (2007) semi-structured interviews with 10 teachers who work with students with special needs, which showed no

relationship between teacher gender and social acceptance. Similarly, in Fırat's (2014) study of 310 teacher candidates from various disciplines, the results indicated that gender did not affect the acceptance of students with special needs. These studies suggest that teacher gender is not a determinant of social acceptance toward students with special needs. The literature on the influence of teacher gender on the social acceptance of individuals with special needs presents a mixed picture. Some studies (Carroll et al., 2003; Haq and Mundia, 2012; Kaner, 2010; Bilen, 2007; Firat, 2014) have found no significant difference in social acceptance by teacher gender, whereas others (Chong et al., 2007; Vignes et al., 2009; Fakolade et al., 2009; Düşünür, 2018) have reported a higher level of social acceptance by female or male teachers. These discrepancies in results may be attributed to the varied samples used in the studies. The need for further research in this area is clear, and it is hoped that effective measures can be taken to enhance the social acceptance of individuals with special needs by all teachers, regardless of gender.

Predictors of Social Acceptance

There is a robust and significant correlation between the level of commitment to the teaching profession and both sub-dimensions of the Social Acceptance Scale, which assess social acceptance behavior and social acceptance competence. This finding suggests that teachers with a high level of commitment to their profession do not experience difficulties with the social acceptance of students with special needs. The work of Melo, Barbaso, and Sozua (2011) highlights that those who lack commitment to their profession experience physical and mental exhaustion, perform poorly at work, lack efficiency and often have conflicts with colleagues. Similarly, Tunca, Şahin, and Oğuz (2015) emphasize that the level of commitment to the teaching profession is reflected in the performance of teachers' responsibilities such as lesson planning, classroom management, and evaluation. The challenging context in which teachers of individuals with special needs operate in Turkey, including the lack of adequate resources, the inability to implement training programs, and the personal characteristics of such students, requires a high level of professional commitment from these teachers.

The literature review on the relationship between professional commitment and social acceptance of teachers working with people with special needs showed similar findings to this study. Although there is no direct examination of the relationship between these two constructs, the impact of difficulties in the teaching profession on students with special needs is discussed. Zarafshan et al. (2013) found that among 93 special education teachers, despite difficulties, a loss of professional commitment led to burnout and dissatisfaction with working with students with special needs. Similarly, Mutkins, Brown, and Thorsteinsson (2011) conducted a study with teachers working with people with intellectual disabilities, who expressed that the current environment did not meet their professional needs and that conditions needed to be improved to benefit students. Van der Meer et al. (2018) assessed the professional commitment of teachers working with individuals with special needs and found it to be at a moderate level. To increase this level, the authors suggest providing individual support and financial assistance to these teachers. Although the literature does not directly address the relationship between social acceptance and professional commitment, it does highlight that teachers working with individuals with special needs have low levels of professional commitment and, as a result, do not find enjoyment in their work.

The student-teacher relationship has been identified as a key factor in predicting the social acceptance of students with special needs. Empirical studies have established a strong and significant

correlation between the student-teacher relationship and the sub-dimensions of the social acceptance scale, namely, social acceptance behavior and social acceptance competence. This evidence suggests that teachers who foster positive relationships with their students with special needs do not encounter issues with regard to their social acceptance. Research by Howes, Shivers, and Ritchie (2004) highlights the enduring impact of healthy student-teacher relationships, with positive relationships established in early childhood having a positive influence on later relationships with peers and teachers, the development of social skills, and academic success. Addition, Curby, Rimm-Kaufman, and Point (2009) conducted a longitudinal study of 147 students and their teachers from kindergarten to the end of the first grade and found that the student-teacher relationship significantly impacted students' performance in mathematics, phonological awareness skills, and overall adjustment in the classroom.

The literature underscores the impact of the teacher-student relationship on students' social acceptance and academic performance. A study by Griggs et al. (2009) investigated the relationships between preschool teachers and students, and found that students with positive relationships with their teachers were more likely to be preferred by their peers, exhibit fewer problematic behaviors and demonstrate better adjustment skills in the classroom compared with those without positive teacher-student relationships. Addition, research suggests that the teacher-student relationship plays a crucial role in regulating peer acceptance and school adjustment (Wu et al., 2015). Moreover, Wentzel (2009) highlights that positive teacher-student relationships foster trusting relationships, increase acceptance among peers, and contribute to a positive classroom environment. The research has consistently indicated that the quality of the teacher-student relationship is a critical factor in promoting the social acceptance of students with special needs. In a study by Odom et al. (2006), it was found that positive teacher-student relationships are crucial for individuals with special needs to be accepted by their peers. Similarly, David and Bawa Kuyuni (2012) highlighted that the relationships between individuals with special needs and their teachers in the classroom activities have a significant impact on the level of social acceptance. Moreover, Bakkaloğlu, Sucuoğlu, and Özbek (2019) found that the student-teacher relationship was the strongest predictor of social acceptance of preschool children with special needs. Diamond, Hong, and Tu (2008) also found that the relationship between students with special needs and their teachers, as well as the classroom environment created by the teachers, enabled students with special needs to be accepted by their peers. Thus, it can be deduced that promoting positive teacher-student relationships would not only enhance social acceptance, but also model appropriate behavior for students. Therefore, it is crucial to support teachers in managing their relationships with individuals with special needs to improve the quality of student-teacher relationships and social acceptance.

This study investigates the predictors of social acceptance of individuals with special needs, focusing on two key variables: teacher professional commitment and student-teacher relationships. The results indicate that these two variables have a significant and positive impact on social acceptance. Additionally, other factors, such as problem behavior, degree and visibility of disability, teacher knowledge level, social skills, and classroom management skills, are also relevant predictors of social acceptance. Further research should examine the predictive power of these variables and others that were not addressed in the current study. Effective interventions could be developed by considering all the relevant predictors and providing appropriate support to teachers working with individuals with special needs. This may involve offering pre-service and in-service training programs to enhance effective communication skills, classroom management strategies, differentiated teaching methods, and

problem behavior management techniques, which would contribute to the social acceptance of students with special needs and create a supportive learning environment.

Recommendations

This study examines the factors that influence the social acceptance of teachers working with students with special needs. The factors discussed in the study include variables such as the teacher's professional commitment and the student-teacher relationship. However, other factors such as the physical appearance of the students, family involvement, and the quality of the student-teacher relationship may also play a role in shaping social acceptance. To further enhance the validity of the research, a complementary study can be conducted that incorporates additional variables identified in the literature as impacting social acceptance. The results of the present study and the results of the additional study can be integrated and interpreted in concert to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing social acceptance of teachers working with students with special needs.

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Author 1: 50%

Author 2: 50%

Conflict Statement

We declare that there is no conflict of interest between the persons, institutions and organizations where this research was conducted and the researchers.

Genişletilmiş Türkçe Özet

Sosyal Kabul: Özel Gereksinimlerle Çalışan Öğretmenlerin Sosyal Kabulünü Yordayan Değişkenler

Giriş

İnsanların birbirleriyle iletişim ve etkileşim içerisinde olabilmesi, toplumun olağan akışının sağlanabilmesi için gerekli olan becerilerdendir. Bunun için birbirleriyle sağlıklı etkileşim kurmaları ve etkileşime geçmek için birbirinin iletişim isteklerini kabul etmeleri gerekmektedir. Sosyal kabul, diğer insanların sizi gruplarına ve ilişkilerine dahil etmek istediklerini belirtmeleri anlamına gelmektedir (Leary, 2010). Sosyal kabul, yalnızca başka bir kişinin varlığına müsamaha göstermekten ziyade, aktif bir etkileşim ortağı olarak birini takip etmeye kadar uzanan bir süreci içermektedir. Sosyal reddetme, başkalarının sizi gruplarına ve ilişkilerine dahil etmek için çok az arzusu olduğu anlamına gelir (Leary, 2010). Özel gereksinimli bireylerin sosyal kabulü ise; öncelikle eğitim olmak üzere özel gereksinimli bireylerin yer aldığı tüm sosyal ortamlarda, başta normal gelişim gösteren akranları ve toplumun tüm bireyleri tarafından benimsenmesi, kendileriyle iletişim kurulması, sosyal etkinlikler için tercih edilmesi ve sosyal ilişkilerde pozitif devamlılığın sağlanması olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Aktan, 2018; Holmes, 2011; Nowicki, 2003).

Özel gereksinimli bireylerinde normal gelişim gösteren akranlarıyla aynı ortamı paylaştıkları düşünüldüğünde sosyal olarak kabul görme gereksinimleri ortaya çıkmaktadır. Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [TÜİK] (2020) verilerine göre, özel gereksinimli bireylerin toplam ülke nüfusuna oranı %7, okul çağındaki bireylerin içerisindeki oranı %9.4 olarak belirtilmektedir. Özel gereksinimli öğrencilerin %64.3'ü eğitim almaktadır. Eğitim alan özel öğrencilerin büyük bir kısmı normal gelişim gösteren akranlarıyla bir arada eğitim almalarını sağlayan kaynaştırma sisteminin bir parçasıdırlar. Kaynaştırma eğitiminin temel amaçlarından biri, özel gereksinimli bireylerin normal gelişim gösteren akranlarından ayrıştırılmadan gerekli destek hizmetleri sağlanarak bağımsızlaşmalarını ve toplum tarafından kabul

görerek uyum içerisinde yaşamalarını sürdürebilmelerine katkı sunmaktır (De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2012; Sucuoğlu & Kargın, 2014).

Kaynaştırma eğitimi çalışmalarının amacının bu olmasına rağmen özel gereksinimli bireylerin sosyal kabullerine ilişkin bazı sorunlar vardır. Özel gereksinimli bireyler akranları tarafından sınıf ortamlarında sosyal kabul görememekte; iletişim kurmaktan kaçınılmakta, fiziksel olarak yalnız bırakılmakta, sınıf içi etkinliklere dahil edilmemekte, boş vakitlerinde oyun gruplarında yer edinememekte, iş birliği kurulmaktan kaçınılmakta, akranları tarafından zorbalığa ve istismara maruz kalmakta ve sosyal olarak dışlanan bireyler olarak görülmektedirler (Baydik & Bakkaloğlu, 2009; Çetin, Ceylan, & Taşlıbeyaz, 2022; De Boer ve diğ., 2012; Garrote, 2017; Nowicki, 2003; Schrumpf, Crawford, & Bodine, 2007; Sucuoglu & Kargın, 2014).

Özel gereksinimli bireylerin sosyal kabullerinde birtakım sorunlarla karşılaşılmaktadır. Karşılaşılan sorunlar özel gereksinimli bireylerin okula uyumlarını, akademik başarılarını, öz güvenlerini, sosyal becerilerini ve duygusal gelişimlerini olumsuz olarak etkilemektedir. Bu sorunların bir kısmı doğrudan bir kısmı ise dolaylı olarak özel gereksinimli öğrencilerin sosyal kabullerini yordamaktadır. Sosyal kabulün yordayıcılarından bazıları; öğrenci-öğretmen ilişkileri, öğretmenlerin mesleklerine olan bağlılıkları, problem davranışlar, yetersizliğin türü, öğretmenlerin özel gereksinimli öğrencilere ilişkin bilgileri ve tutumları, cinsiyeti, akademik becerileri ve öz bakım becerileridir. Sosyal kabulün yordayıcılarının belirlenmesinin ileride öğretmenlere yol gösterecek olan uygulamaların planlanmasında ve uygulanmasında yol gösterici olacağı düşünülmektedir. Bunun da özel gereksinimli öğrencilerin sosyal kabul görmelerinde ve akranlarından ayrıştırılmadan nitelikli ortamlarda eğitim almalarına katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir. Bu çalışmada da sosyal kabulün yordayıcılarından olduğu düşünülen öğretmenlerin mesleklerine bağlılıkları ve öğrenci-öğretmen ilişkilerinin sosyal kabulü ile aralarındaki ilişkinin belirlenmesi hedeflenmektedir. Bu hedef doğrultusunda aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına yanıt aranmaktadır:

1. Öğretmenlerin özel gereksinimli bireylere yönelik sosyal kabul düzeyi cinsiyete bağlı olarak farklılık göstermekte midir?
2. Öğretmenlik mesleğine bağlılık ve öğretmen öğrenci ilişkisi, sosyal kabulün bir yordayıcısı mıdır?

Yöntem

Bu çalışmanın yöntemi; ilişkisel tarama modeline dayalı betimsel bir çalışmadır. Araştırmanın genel amacı; özel gereksinimli öğrencilerle çalışan öğretmenlerin sosyal kabul düzeyini ve sosyal kabullerini yordayan değişkenleri belirlemektir.

Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu Hatay ili Antakya ilçesinde görev yapan farklı branşlardaki öğretmenler oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi ile belirlenmiştir. Buna göre çalışmaya dahil eden öğretmenlerde; a) milli eğitim bakanlığına bağlı ilk ve orta öğretim yapan devlet okullarında kadrolu olarak görev yapıyor olmak, b) sınıfında özel gereksinimli öğrencisi bulunmak ya da öncesinde bulunmuş olmak, c)çalışmaya katılmak için gönüllü olmak şartları aranmıştır. Tüm bu koşulları sağlayan 318 öğretmen çalışma grubuna dahil edilmiştir.

Araştırmanın verilerinin toplanmasında üç adet ölçek kullanılmıştır. Bunlardan ilki; Öğretmenlerin, öğretmenlik mesleğine bağlılıklarını ölçmek amacıyla Yıldız (2020) tarafından geliştirilen "Öğretmenlik Mesleğine Bağlılık Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır. İkinci kullanılan araç; "Öğrenci-

Öğretmen İlişki Ölçeği" dir. Orijinal adı Student – Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) olan Pianta (1999, 2001) tarafından geliştirilmiştir. Ası ve Karabay (2018), kullanım kolaylığı nedeniyle alanda yaygın biçimde uygulanmaya başlanan "Öğrenci-Öğretmen İlişki Ölçeği- Kısa Formu"nun Türkiye'deki geçerlik ve güvenirlik bulgularına ilişkin bir uyarlama çalışmasını yapmıştır. Son olarak; Özel gereksinimli öğrencilerle çalışan öğretmenlerin öğrencilerine yönelik sosyal kabulünü ölçmek amacıyla Aktan (2021) tarafından geliştirilmiş bir ölçektir. 31 maddeden ve Öğretmen Sosyal Kabul Davranışları ile Sosyal Kabul Yeterliliklerini Geliştirme isimli iki alt boyuttan oluşmaktadır.

Bulgular

Katılımcıların sosyal kabul düzeylerinin cinsiyete göre değişip değişmediğini belirlemek amacıyla ilişkisiz örneklemler t-testi yapılmıştır. Yapılan t-testi sonucunda, sosyal kabul düzeyinin her iki alt boyutta da cinsiyete göre anlamlı bir fark göstermediği saptanmıştır. t(316)= .675, p>.05. t(316)= ,819, p>.05.

Araştırmaya dahil edilen değişkenler (Öğretmen Sosyal Kabul davranışları, sosyal kabul yeterliliklerini geliştirme, öğretmenlik mesleğine bağlılık, öğrenci öğretmen ilişkisinde çatışma ve öğrenci öğretmen ilişkisinde yakınlık) arasındaki ilişkileri gösteren Pearson Momentler Çarpımı korelasyon katsayıları hesağlanmıştır. Araştırmanın yordanan değişkeni olan sosyal kabul davranışları ve sosyal kabul yeterliklerini geliştirme ile öğretmenlik mesleğine bağlılık ve yakınlık arasında olumlu yönde anlamlı ilişki bulunmaktadır. Çatışma değişkeni ile olumsuz yönde anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu görülmektedir. Korelasyon katsayılarının ,89 ve -,07 arasında değiştiği görülmektedir. Yordayıcı değişkenler arasındaki anlamlı düzeydeki en yüksek ilişki sosyal kabul davranışları ile öğretmen öğrenci ilişkisi alt boyutları olan yakınlık ve çatışma değişkenleri arasında gözlenmiştir. En düşük ilişki ise öğretmenlik mesleğine bağlılık ile yakınlık arasında olduğu gözlemlenmiştir.

Katılımcıların özel gereksinimli öğrencilere yönelik sosyal kabul ölçeğinin alt boyutu olan, öğretmen sosyal kabul davranışlarından [ÖSKD] aldıkları puan ile öğretmenlik mesleğine bağlılık ölçeğinden alınan toplam puanlar, öğrenci-öğretmen ilişkisi ölçeğinin çatışma ve yakınlık alt boyutlarından alınan toplam puanların yordama düzeyini belirlemek için çoklu doğrusal regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. Öğretmenlik mesleğine bağlılık, çatışma ve yakınlık değişkeni birlikte, öğretmen sosyal kabul davranışları puanlarını anlamlı ve yüksek düzeyde yordamaktadır, R= 0,741, R2=0,452, p<.01. Söz konusu değişkenler birlikte, öğretmen sosyal kabul davranışlarının toplam varyansının yaklaşık %45'ini açıklamaktadır. Regresyon katsayılarının anlamlılığına ilişkin t-testi sonuçları incelendiğinde ise, tüm bu değişkenlerin öğretmen sosyal kabul davranışlarını anlamlı bir şekilde yordadıkları görülmektedir. Yordayıcı değişkenlerin öğretmen sosyal kabul davranışları üzerindeki göreli önem sırası; yakınlık, öğretmenlik mesleğine bağlılık ve çatışma şeklindedir.

Sosyal kabul ölçeğinin bir diğer alt boyutu olan sosyal kabul yeterliklerini geliştirme [SKYG] aldıkları puan ile öğretmenlik mesleğine bağlılık ölçeğinden alınan toplam puanlar, öğrenci-öğretmen ilişkisi ölçeğinin çatışma ve yakınlık alt boyutlarından alınan toplam puanların yordama düzeyini belirlemek için çoklu doğrusal regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. Öğretmenlik mesleğine bağlılık, çatışma ve yakınlık değişkeni birlikte, sosyal kabul yeterliklerini geliştirme puanlarını anlamlı ve yüksek düzeyde yordamaktadır, R= .743, R2=f.482, p<.01. Söz konusu değişkenler birlikte, öğretmen sosyal kabul davranışlarının toplam varyansının yaklaşık %48'ini açıklamaktadır. Regresyon katsayılarının anlamlılığına ilişkin t-testi sonuçları incelendiğinde ise, tüm bu değişkenlerin sosyal kabul yeterliklerini

geliştirmeyi anlamlı bir şekilde yordadıkları görülmektedir. Yordayıcı değişkenlerin sosyal kabul yeterliklerini geliştirme üzerindeki göreli önem sırası; yakınlık, öğretmenlik mesleğine bağlılık ve çatışma şeklindedir.

Tartışma ve Sonuç

Öğretmenlerin sosyal kabul durumlarının incelendiği bu çalışmada sosyal kabul ölçeğinin sosyal kabul davranışları ve sosyal kabul yeterlilikleri alt boyutlarının ikisinde de cinsiyete göre anlamlı bir farklılık görülmemektedir. Yani öğretmenlerin sosyal kabul davranışları ve sosyal kabul yeterlilikleri cinsiyetlerine göre değişmemektedir. Alanyazına bakıldığında cinsiyetin özel gereksinimli bireyleri kabulüne ilişkin çok çeşitli bulguları olan çalışmalar yer almaktadır.

Çalışmada sosyal kabulü yordadığı düşünülen öğretmenlerin mesleklerine bağlılığı ve öğrenci-öğretmen ilişkileri incelenmiştir. Öğretmenlik mesleğine bağlılık ile sosyal kabul ölçeğinin alt boyutları olan sosyal kabul davranışları ve sosyal kabul yeterlilikleri arasında yüksek düzeyde ve anlamlı ilişki olduğu bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu bulgu mesleğine bağlı olarak çalışan öğretmenlerin özel gereksinimli öğrencilerin sosyal kabulüne ilişkin sorun yaşamadıkları yorumunu yapmamızı sağlayabilir. Melo, Barbaso ve Sozua (2011) mesleğine karşı bağlılık duymayan bireyleri kendilerini fiziksel ve ruhsal olarak yorgun, mesleğini icra etmek istemeyen, istenilen düzeyde verim sağlanamayan ve meslektaşları ile sıklıkla sorun yaşayan insanlar olarak belirtmiştir. Tunca, Şahin ve Oğuz (2015), öğretmenlerin mesleki yaşantılarında; öğretimi planlama ve uygulama, sınıf yönetimi ve değerlendirme gibi sorumluluklarını yerine getirirken öğretmenlik mesleğine bağlılıklarını yansıttıklarını vurgulamışlardır. Türkiye'de özel gereksinimli bireylerle çalışan öğretmenlerin yetersiz materyal desteği, geliştirilen eğitim programlarının uygulanamaması, özel gereksinimli bireylerin kişisel özellikleri, gerekli hizmet içi eğitimlerin sağlanamaması gibi problemler yaşamaktadırlar. Bu bilgiler ışığında özel gereksinimli bireylerle çalışan öğretmenlerin mesleğe bağlılığı son derece zor ve bir o kadar da önemlidir.

Özel gereksinimli öğrencilerin sosyal kabullerini yordayan bir diğer değişken öğrenci-öğretmen ilişkisidir. Öğrenci-öğretmen ilişkisi ile sosyal kabul ölçeğinin alt boyutları olan sosyal kabul davranışları ve sosyal kabul yeterlilikleri arasında yüksek düzeyde ve anlamlı ilişki olduğu bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu bulgudan yola çıkarak özel gereksinimli öğrencilerle olumlu ilişkiler kuran öğretmenlerin onlara yönelik sosyal kabulde sorun yaşamadıklarını düşünebiliriz. Okul öncesi dönemden itibaren öğretmenlerle kurulan sağlıklı ilişkilerin ilerleyen yıllarda farklı öğretmenlerle ve akranlarla kurulacak ilişkiyi, sosyal becerilerin edinimini ve akademik yaşantılarındaki başarılarını etkiledikleri bilinmektedir (Howes, Shivers, & Ritchie, 2004). Curby, Rimm-Kaufman ve Pointz (2009), 147 öğrencinin öğretmenleriyle olan ilişkilerini anasınıfından ilkokul birinci sınıfın sonuna kadar boylamsal olarak incelemişlerdir. Araştırmacılar çalışmalarında öğretmenlerin öğrencilerle kurdukları ilişkinin öğrencilerin matematik becerilerini, fonolojik farkındalık becerilerini ve sınıfa uyumlarını etkilediğini belirtmişlerdir.

Sonuç olarak özel gereksinimli bireylerin sosyal kabullerini yordayan değişkenlerden öğretmenlerin mesleğe bağlılıklarının ve öğrenci-öğretmen ilişkilerinin incelendiği bu çalışmada iki değişken sosyal kabulün yüksek ve anlamlı düzeyde yordayıcılarıdır. Ele alınan değişkenler dışında sosyal kabulü yordayan; problem davranışlar, engelin derecesi ve görülebilirliği, öğretmenlerin bilgi düzeyleri, sosyal beceriler, sınıf yönetimi becerileri gibi değişkenler bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmada ele

alınmayan değişkenlerin de sosyal kabulü yordama düzeylerinin incelenmesi gerekmektedir. İncelenen ve bu çalışmada yer verilmeyen değişkenlerin tamamını barındıran uygulamaların oluşturulması ve uygulanması özel gereksinimli bireylerin sosyal kabullerini sağlamada etkili olacaktır. Özel gereksinimli bireylerle çalışan öğretmenlere verilebilecek olan; etkili iletişim becerileri, sınıf yönetimi, farklılaştırılmış öğretim yöntemleri, problem davranışlarla başa çıkma gibi hizmet öncesi ve hizmet içi eğitimlerin yaygınlaştırılması bu öğrencilerin sosyal kabul düzeylerinin artmasını ve ılımlı öğrenme ortamlarının oluşturulmasını sağlayacaktır.

Öneriler

Bu çalışmada özel gereksinimli çocuklarla çalışan öğretmenlerin sosyal kabulünü etkilediği düşünülen değişkenler ele alınmıştır. Öğretmenlerin sosyal kabulünü etkileyebilecek bu değişkenlere ek olarak; Öğrencilerin fiziksel görünümü, ailenin çocuğa ilgisi, çocuk ve öğretmen arasındaki ilişkinin kalitesi, sosyal kabulü etkileyebilecek diğer değişkenler olarak sıralanabilir. Araştırmanın geçerliğini artırmak için literatürde sosyal kabulü etkileyen diğer değişkenlerle başka bir çalışma yapılabilir. Elde edilen sonuçlar ve mevcut sonuçlar birlikte yorumlanabilir.