



Analysis of the Problems of Special Education Teachers Özel Eđitim Öğretmenlerinin Sorunlarının Analizi

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to reveal the opinions of special education teachers about the problems experienced in special education and the solutions for these problems. The research was conducted using a qualitative research design. The study group consists of the teachers of the Trabzon Province Sürmene Special Education Practice School in the 2022-2023 academic year. Qualitative data were analyzed by content analysis. According to the findings, teachers working in special education schools experience problems arising from the education system, parents, school management, teachers and students. In addition, they stated that educational environments do not meet the needs of special education students and that the tools provided are insufficient. Teachers working in special education schools, graduated from different fields, consider the wages they receive to be insufficient. In the appointment of field experts and special education graduates as teachers to special education schools, it is expected that it is necessary and important to have competencies such as patience, understanding, compassion, effective communication and motivation within the scope of personal and professional competencies.

Keywords: *Special education, special education teacher, problems of special education teachers'.*



ÖZ

Bu araştırma, özel eğitim öğretmenlerinin özel eğitimde yaşanan sorunları ve bu sorunlara yönelik çözüm önerileri ile ilgili görüşlerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma nitel araştırma deseni kullanılarak yürütülmüştür. Çalışma grubunu 2022-2023 eğitim öğretim yılında Trabzon ili Sürmene ilçesi Özel Eğitim Uygulama Okulu öğretmenleri oluşturmaktadır. Nitel veriler içerik analizi ile çözümlenmiştir. Ulaşılan bulgulara göre, özel eğitim okulunda görev yapan öğretmenler eğitim sistemi, veli, okul yönetimi, öğretmenlerle ve öğrencilerden kaynaklanan sorunlar yaşamaktadır. Ayrıca eğitim ortamlarının özel eğitim öğrencilerinin ihtiyaçlarına cevap vermediği, sunulan araç gereçlerin yetersiz olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Özel eğitim okullarında çalışan farklı alan mezunu öğretmenler, aldıkları ücreti yetersiz görmektedirler. Özel eğitim okullarına alan uzmanı ve özel eğitim mezunlarının öğretmen olarak atanmasında, kişisel ve mesleki yeterlilikler kapsamında sabır, anlayış, merhamet, etkili iletişim ve motivasyon gibi yeterliliklere sahip olmanın gerekli ve önemli görülmesi beklenmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Özel eğitim, özel eğitim öğretmenliği, özel eğitim öğretmenlerinin sorunları.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is an important process that prepares individuals for life in every field and supports the improvement and development of societies in sociocultural, economic, and technological fields (Özgenel, Işık and Bahat, 2019). For learning, which is the purpose of education, to take place, special arrangements are required for those who need special education due to capacity and developmental differences among students (Himmetoğlu, Shikhkamalova & Bayrak, 2022). Therefore, special education is provided in appropriate environments with specially trained personnel and training programs developed to meet the educational and social needs of individuals who differ from their peers in terms of individual and developmental characteristics and educational competencies (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2021). The purpose of special education is to educate students in a way that will enable them to act independently and to have a place for themselves in society by gaining social life skills (Ataman, 2013). Nowadays, since some of the teachers working in special education schools are field experts and some of them are from outside the field, the knowledge and experience sought by teachers are not met. It is necessary to prevent problems by eliminating the deficiencies in the field of special education that teachers have problems with due to different

reasons such as students, parents, and schools. Even if teachers are knowledgeable and experienced in the field of special education, they may have difficulties due to the problems they encounter at school. Therefore, it should be accepted as normal that problems faced by special education teachers differ, and the solutions they expect are specific to these schools (Billingsley & Cross, 1991). Teachers work to provide the necessary knowledge and skills to students who need special education due to their differences and to reach a close and sufficient level to their peers in terms of educational qualifications. However, due to personal and organizational negativities in special education schools, teachers' ability to cope with the problems they experience should be considered important for the training of students who need special education.

Special education is the whole of the educational services provided to students who differ significantly from the average student characteristics, individually planned and aiming to maximize the individual's possibility of living independently (Gündüz & Akın, 2019). Individuals with special educational needs differ from their peers at the expected level in terms of their individual characteristics and educational qualifications for various reasons. In special education, it is aimed that individuals with special educational needs can fulfill their social roles, become self-sufficient and prepare for life (Ataman, 2013; MoNE, 2018). Individuals with special needs, with more than one disability, divided into gifted individuals and individuals with intellectual disabilities who have attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, language and speech difficulties, emotional and behavioral disorders, visual or hearing impairment, orthopedic disability, special learning disability, autistic, cerebral palsy, chronic disease (MoNE, 2018). The education given in special education schools is based on the individual learning needs of the students. Learning environments are organized for a single student or very small student groups. Therefore, it requires the use of different methods-techniques and equipment (Zigmond & Kloo, 2011).

According to Bilge (2013), nowadays, the place and impact of school, which prepares students for the future, are questioned and monitored. Educational institutions are a part of the cultural and social field with broad and dynamic characteristics that should be suitable for teaching and learning targeted by education (Campbell, Saltmarsh, Chapman & Drew, 2013). Providing special education support to individuals with special education needs, developing basic life skills, and meeting their learning needs or preparing them for work and profession are the main duties of teachers working in day education institutions. However, it is considered quite important to support teachers working in special education institutions, especially by



school administrators, regarding the problems they encounter (Himmetoğlu, Shikhkamalova & Bayrak, 2022). Because, due to the nature of special education, the unique aspects of these schools play a role in the individual or organizational problems experienced by teachers in special education schools (Billingsley & Cross, 1991). In schools, it is especially important to support teachers psychologically so that they feel valued by the school and are willing to improve their performance. This situation comes to the fore more in special education schools (Yalçın, 2017). Because the lack of necessary knowledge and experience for the education of children with physical and psychological differences other than the usual characteristics is back-breaking and tiring for teachers. (Akçamete at, al., 2001). Therefore factors such as teachers' willingness to do their jobs, the bonds with school, students, and colleagues, high knowledge, skills, expertise, and motivation, have an important place in the success of the school they work and the education system (Sudarjat, Abdullah & Sunaryo, 2015; Tehseen & Ul-Hadi, 2015). It is seen that the focus of many studies on success and effectiveness in education is the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of teachers (Brunsting, Sreckovic & Lane, 2014; Çankıran, 2019; Sudarjat, Abdullah & Sunaryo, 2015; Tehseen & Ul-Hadi, 2015). Because it is seen that special education teachers experience more exhaustion than other teachers due to the different problems they experience (Akçamete, Kaner & Sucuoğlu, 1998), and even some special education teachers quit their profession due to the characteristics of the student group they work with (Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002; Billingsley & Cross, 2004).

To meet the increasing needs related to special education in Turkey, there is a need for new special education schools and teachers specialized in special education who are highly motivated, and who constantly renew themselves considering the working conditions and the student group they work with. First of all, it is important to determine what needs to be done to improve the current situation in special education. The fact that some of the teachers working in special education requiring specialization have different higher education graduation areas, the working conditions of special education schools, and the expectations of parents and society from the education given to individuals with special education needs increase the importance of studies in this field. This research offers solutions in line with the problems and opinions of

teachers working in a special education institution, considering their educational fields and experiences.

METHOD

In this research, a qualitative research method was used to examine a situation in depth and to see the subject by including the subjective perspectives of the participants. The research aims to examine the problems faced by teachers in a “typical” special education school and their opinions and suggestions for the solution to these problems. In line with this purpose, the research was designed using an explanatory case study, one of the qualitative research methods. The case study is defined as the process of making an in-depth examination of a current topic in real life, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clear (Yin, 2009). Qualitative research investigates different social environments, the behaviors, opinions, and social movements of individuals living in these environments, how they make sense of life, and the functioning of the society they live in (Willis, 2008).

In qualitative research, the concepts of credibility, transferability, consistency, and confirmability are tried to be reached for validity and reliability (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). To support credibility, researchers spent a long time with the teachers working at the Special Education Practice School. For the themes that emerged in the research, the corrections suggested by the experts were made by consulting the expert opinion. For participant confirmation, the final version of the themes was presented to the participating teachers and their approval was obtained. For external validity, detailed descriptions and citations of teachers' opinions are made (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Raw data and initial codings are stored to be used for confirmation when consistency review is needed.

Participants

The study group of the research consists of teachers working in special education schools. The fact that it is a typical special education school was a factor in the selection of this school. The purposeful determination of sample selection in qualitative research stems from the research purpose rather than the methodological requirements (Creswell, 2017). Stake (1995) states that it may be beneficial to prefer a typical situation while doing a case study. It seems appropriate to prefer purposive sampling methods in case studies. Within this study, typical case sampling was preferred among the sampling types. Typical case sampling is a process of sampling that may represent similar cases, and is ordinary in terms of the feature under consideration or reflects the average (Patton, 2002). In this study, first of all, a school with

typical characteristics was determined from the special education practice schools in the province where the research was conducted, taking into account the number of student-teachers and the student's disability.

The data were collected through face-to-face interviews with the teachers working in the Special Education Practice Schools in the Trabzon province Sürmene district in the 2022/2023 academic year. As the limitations of the interview require an expensive and time-consuming process, interviewing a limited number of resource persons limits the research. In addition, it is a limitation that the participant responds to the questions with prejudice by being positively or negatively affected by the interviewer's opinion, gender, age, social status, and attitudes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participants	Gender	Marital Status	Education Degree	Branch	Permanent/ Wage employee	Seniority	Disability Level
P 1	M	S	Master's degree	Special Teaching Education	P	10	Mentally disabled/light level
P 2	F	S	Bachelor's Degree	Special Teaching Education	P	10	Blind
P 3	F	M	Bachelor's Degree	Special Teaching Education	P	21	Blind
P 4	F	M	Bachelor's Degree	Special Teaching Education	P	16	Mentally disabled/light level
P 5	M	M	Bachelor's Degree	Special Teaching Education	P	6	Autism
P 6	M	M	Bachelor's Degree	Special Teaching Education	P	8	Autism
P 7	M	M	Bachelor's Degree	Special Teaching Education	P	8	Autism
P 8	M	S	Bachelor's Degree	Special Teaching Education	P	9	Autism
P 9	M	S	Bachelor's Degree	Special Teaching Education	P	10	Mentally disabled/heavy level
P 10	M	M	Bachelor's Degree	Special Teaching Education	P	11	Mentally disabled/ Medium heavy
P 11	F	S	Bachelor's Degree	Special Teaching Education	P	12	Mentally disabled/light level
P 12	F	S	Bachelor's Degree	Social Studies teacher	wage employee	6	Mentally disabled/medium heavy
P 13	F	M	Bachelor's Degree	Sociology	wage employee	5	Autism
P 14	F	S	Bachelor's Degree	Social Studies teacher	wage employee	10	Mentally disabled/ medium heavy

P 17	F	M	Bachelor's Degree	Philosophy	wage employee	8	Autism
P 18	F	M	Bachelor's Degree	Turkish Teacher	wage employee	5	Mentally disabled/medium heavy

The study group of the research consists of 7 men and 11 women. 10 of the participants are single, 8 are married and 17 are undergraduates, 1 is a graduate. While 11 participants are permanent teachers who graduated from special education teaching, 7 of them graduated from different fields and work as paid teachers. While 3 paid teachers have 5 years of experience, 4 paid teachers work between 6-10 years. It is seen that the professional experience of staffed teachers that took special education, varies between 6 and 21 years.

Data Collection

The data were collected through face-to-face interviews with the teachers working in the Special Education Practice Schools in the Trabzon province Sürmene district in the 2022/2023 academic year. As the limitations of the interview require an expensive and time-consuming process, interviewing a limited number of resource persons limits the research. In addition, it is a limitation that the participant responds to the questions with prejudice by being positively or negatively affected by the interviewer's opinion, gender, age, social status, and attitudes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006).

The data of the research were collected through a semi-structured interview form. While preparing the questions in the semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher, the objectives of the research were taken as a basis. In the first part of the form, there are demographic information questions for the participating special education teachers, and in the second part, questions about the preferences of special education teachers and the problems they face, and their opinions on the solution to these problems are included. Allowing another expert to examine the research to ensure the validity of the research, and providing expert confirmation contributes positively to the validity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The form was submitted to the opinion of two special education experts and a language expert to determine whether the questions were suitable for the research purposes and qualitative application. The following questions were included in the semi-structured interview form:

1. What are the reasons for choosing special education teaching?

3. What are the problems experienced by special education teachers?
4. What are the practices of special education teachers for solving problems?

In the research phase of the data collection tool, which was finalized in line with expert suggestions, after the research permission of the Ministry of National Education with the number E-82438636-605.99-68491839 and dated 17/01/2023, face-to-face interviews were held with the teachers of the special education practice school after the end of the class hours in the school environment where they felt comfortable.

Data Analysis

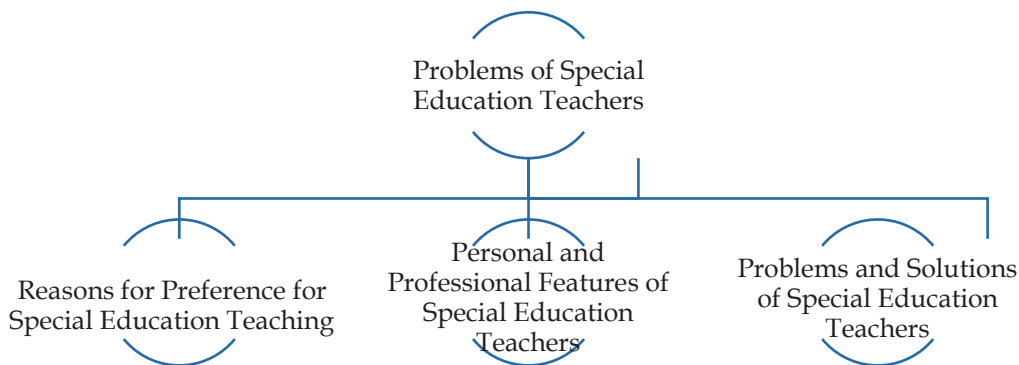
In addition to the above questions, in the semi-structured interview form, testing questions were included in order to get more in-depth information. An appointment was made with the teachers before the interviews were conducted; The interviews were held at the school to provide the researchers with the opportunity to observe. The interviews lasted about 20-50 minutes, and the recordings were taken because all of the interviewees gave permission.

Since two researchers took part in the interviews, it was possible for the researchers to take notes during the interview. The main data source of qualitative research is human and the researcher does not collect the data from the whole but reproduces the data together with the interviewed subject (Kümbetoğlu, 2015). The aim of this research is to know the problems and to develop solutions by benefiting from the opinions and experiences of the teachers working in the special education school. Re-reading the data is recommended as the most important task to be done while performing the content analysis (Patton, 2002). To increase the reliability of the analyzes, the data of this study were analyzed independently by two different researchers, and care was taken to read the data several times. As a result of the readings, codes, categories, and themes were reached. The findings were finalized by the analysis process, the comparison of the findings obtained by the two researchers, the determination of common patterns, and the expert opinion of two faculty members from the field of educational administration. In order to ensure credibility, methods such as conveying the research process from beginning to end in a detailed and accurate manner, participant confirmation, and purposive sampling methods are preferred (Başkale, 2016). In the research, the participation of two researchers in the interviews, the independent conduct of the analyzes by two separate researchers, the taking of expert opinion for the findings obtained from the analyzes, and the presentation of the findings with

direct quotations are the measures taken for the credibility of the research. Objective reading principles are introduced against the reader's comments made easily and automatically, depending on their knowledge, intuition, attitudes, values, and reference circles (Bilgin, 2014). The content analysis of the research was carried out using the MAXQDA program.

FINDINGS

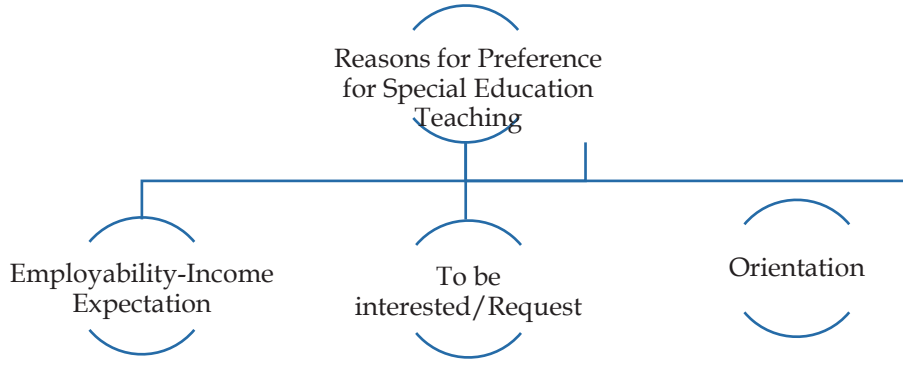
In this study, the problems faced by teachers working in special education institutions and their opinions on the solution to these problems are examined. For this purpose, as a result of the analysis of the data obtained from the in-depth interviews to understand the problems faced by the teachers working in special education schools, the themes of "Reasons for Preferring Special Education Teaching", "Characteristics of Special Education Teachers" and "Problems of Special Education and Suggestions for Solutions" and categories belonging to these themes were reached.



Model 1. “Reasons for Preferring Special Education Teaching”, “Characteristics of Special Education Teachers” and “Problems of Special Education and Suggestions for Solutions” themes and categories

1. Reasons for Preferring Special Education Teaching

Three themes emerged as a result of the analysis of the opinions of the teachers working in the Special Education Schools about the problems they faced and their methods of coping with the problems: “Reasons for Preferring Special Education Teaching”, “Characteristics of Special Education Teachers” and “Problems of Special Education and Suggestions for Solutions”. Three sub-themes in Model 2 emerged as a result of the analysis of teachers' opinions about the preference for special education teaching.



Model 2. Sub-themes related to the Reasons for Preferring Special Education Teaching

□ ***Employability/Income Expectation***

According to the participating special education teachers, economic income expectation, ease of appointment, and employment come to the fore in the preference for special education teaching. Some of the opinions of special education teachers expressing their reasons for preference are as follows:

“Appointment was good at that time (G 5)”.

“I chose it because it has more additional courses, it is easy to assign, and it is easy to finish the department (G 6)”.

“The reason why I chose to be a special education teacher was for commercial reasons at first. I wrote this section so that I can open rehabilitation when I graduate from high school (G 8)”.

“It is a guaranteed job without doing math. Repose on the government, as a Turkish logic. Go away from here as soon as possible special education (G 9)”.

□ ***Be Interested/ Willingness***

According to the participating special education teachers, special education teaching is described as a special and different field from other teaching fields. Some of the opinions expressing that special education should be chosen consciously and voluntarily during the preference process as a special field that needs to be done with interest and willingness are as follows:

“I decided to become a special education teacher during the internship period as a counselor. As I did this job, I loved it and continue to do it. (G17)”.

“I didn't like children at first. I guess this is true in all fields. The sense of being helpful to someone led me to this section (G 3)”.

“Because I love the children here, I love the children with special educational needs. I love spending time with them, revealing their talents (G 12)”.

□ **Guidance**

Participant teachers stated that it is important to be guided by family, friends, teachers, and the environment during the university preference period for special education teaching. Some of the views of teachers about guidance in preferring special education teaching are as follows:

“I was guided by my friend (G6)”.

“My friend helped me during my university preference period. I made my choice with him (G7)”.

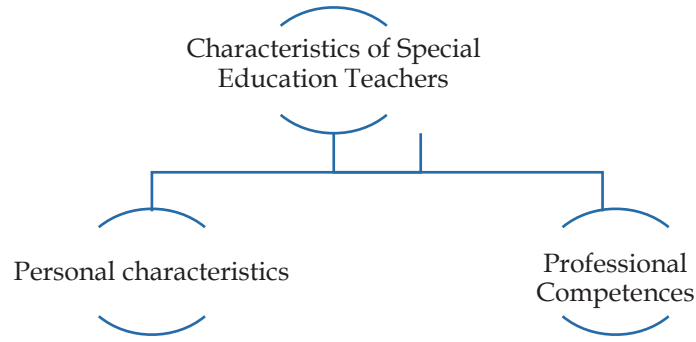
“At that time, I chose it with the guidance of my teacher and informing me about the field. It wasn't a well-known field. I researched the field, with the guidance of the counselor (G 5)”.

“In high-school, I asked my teacher if I could be a teacher or a special education teacher. He said yes you can. Today, I say I am glad that I chose this path. This path is so long, and different (G 11)”.

2. Characteristics of Special Education Teachers

Special education teachers should be trained to teach individuals with special educational needs. However, due to the insufficient number of teachers who graduated from special education, graduates of different fields are assigned to special education schools. However, teachers in these schools should be trained to provide this education.

Participant teachers also state that teachers working in this field should have some personal characteristics and professional competencies.



Model 3. Related sub-themes about “Characteristics of Special Education Teachers”

□ *Personal Characteristics*

According to the participants, it is expressed that special education teachers should be a patient, self-sacrificing, compassionate, disciplined, empathetic, high sense of responsibility, love children, be open to communication, stable and forward-looking. Due to the long educational process and slow development of students in need of special education, it may be seen as a necessity for teachers in special education to have some personal characteristics, unlike other branches. Some of the opinions of the participants on this subject are as follows:

“In special education, you don’t receive a recompense for your work right away. You have to be patient and contented (G 3)”.

“Must be patient, inclusive, devoted (G 4)”.

“They need to be conscious of responsibility, sensitive, and compassionate. Being patient and responsible is essential. Compassion arises naturally in this work environment because children are adorable. I love them all. Authority is needed, it varies according to the child (G 12)”.

“Must be a patient person. He/she should be able to be a child with children. Also, should be able to come down to their age, and live with them. Special education teachers need to be people with strong empathy skills. He/she should know how to apologize, how to apologize to a child. There should be understanding, compassion, and creativity. (G 14)”.

“He/she must be patient, disciplined, and foreseeing. Because he/she should be able to predict different solutions for learning and what a child can do in the future. There must be discipline, internal discipline in the work and he/she should be in his/her attitudes towards a child (G 16)”.

□ *Professional Competencies*

Professional competencies expected of special education teachers are described as thinking in many ways, knowing and applying scientific methods and techniques, researching, questioning, following innovations and being open to innovations, being able to communicate effectively, being able to observe, and being prone to personal and professional development. Some of the participant teachers' views on professional competencies are as follows:

“It is necessary to patiently apply the scientific methods that we have been taught and to be more innovative and to be able to apply new methods by reading, to have the courage to apply, to approach new situations boldly and to go in the light of science (G 1)”.

“All students who need special education consist of individuals with different characteristics. For this reason, special education teachers think student-based, not class-based. The aim is to create positive changes in the student (G 2)”.

“The difference between special education teachers from other branches is that we received training in special education, but other teachers trained in their field. We learned a lot of teaching method techniques about how to teach a concept. Our differences start with the field of education we received first (G 7)”.

“He/she should be able to observe, the moment he looks at it, he has to draw a picture of it in his head. Should be able to observe all kinds of events and take pictures. The special education teacher should observe. The ability to observe allows the teacher to get to know his/her students (G 9)”.

“The aim in special education is to give the child's needs first. Literacy education is not the primary goal. Special education is a holistic field and it is necessary to gain basic life skills such as speaking, communication, reading, and writing. It is necessary to give the child basic skills (G 12)”.

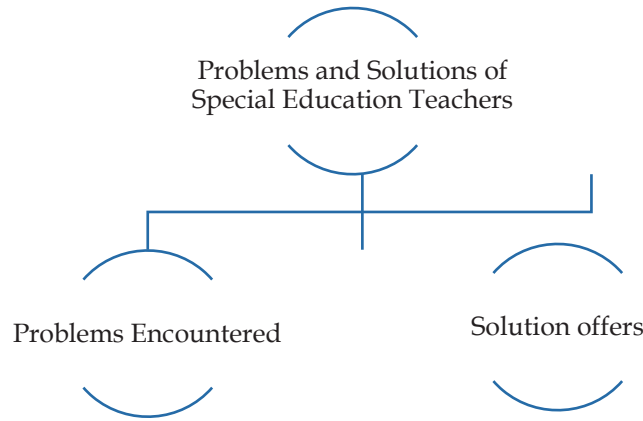
“A special education teacher should not say "I am sufficient" (G 18)”.

“Must tend research and development. He should research to improve himself, every student is different, and every student has different needs. Every student in our school has very different characteristics and needs. You

have to adapt your knowledge to your student. Every child is special, so we have to adapt it very well (G 5)”.

3. Problems of Special Education and Suggestions for Solutions

The needs of the students of special education teachers, the responsibilities and working conditions of special education, the numerical inadequacy of field specialist teachers and special education schools, the work of graduates from different fields as teachers, the inadequacy of physical conditions, the lack of equipment, bureaucratic obstacles, the problems caused by parents and teachers, the failure of school administrators to fulfill their responsibilities for providing resources, cooperation, and coordination are expressed as the problems faced in special education.



Model 4. Problems of Special Education and Suggestions for Solutions

□ *Experienced Problems*

The participants stated that the inadequacy of the number of permanent teachers in special education schools and the employment of graduates from different fields as paid teachers is a problem in the education of students in need of special education. In addition, the participating teachers think that there are many different problems arising from the physical conditions of the schools, the lack of equipment, other teachers, especially the parents, and the school administration. According to the participants, problems are experienced due to students, parents, teachers, school management, the physical environment, and lacking equipment.

“Some parents have high expectations from their children. (G 2)”.

“It can be from student, parent, and environment (G 5)”.

“We have problems with students, we experience developmental or instructional problems. We find solutions for these (G 6)”.

“I think it is a problem to have substitute teachers while there are special education graduates (G 7)”.

“My problems are adults who seem normal, administrators, teachers, and people around. People who cannot communicate are the biggest problems (G 9)”.

“Educationally, other stakeholders in the field of special education should be trained by people who have received training in this field. (G 10).”

“Parent problems come first. They reject their child’s problems. Insecurity, feelings of rejection happen (G 14)”.

“There are a lot of parental problems. There are people who have difficulties because their children are special. We do not agree on the characteristics of children, we cannot convince them that children are different and they are sick (G 13)”.

“It is another problem that branch teachers who received normal education in subjects that require expertise are allowed to give classes (G 18)”.

“The biggest problem encountered in special education schools is generally the lack of materials (G2)”.

“The first problem is that we could not create the physical environments of the schools for children (G 9)”.

“There is a great lack of materials for students to learn (G 15)”.

“The physical deficiencies of schools are also a problem. Life doesn't just end at school. It continues outside of school (G 16)”.

□ Solution Suggestions

The opinions of the permanent and paid teachers working in the special education school about the problems experienced are also similar in the solution suggestions they offer. According to the participating field experts and paid teachers who graduated from different departments, opening schools suitable for the needs of special education students, all teachers being field experts, providing special education training to parents, improving the physical conditions of the schools and equipment deficiencies are seen as important practices in solving the problems.



“I try to use scientific methods in student's compulsive behavior (G1)”.

“I’m solving it by talking. I'm looking for a solution by consulting everyone. I get ideas from my colleagues, especially those working in different institutions and fields. I get support from the Internet, I get support from books (G5)”.

“I’m solving problems with parents by talking. I get support from the counselor service and school administration (G6)”.

“We get support from the school administration. I get support from other colleagues about children. There is a large group of special education graduate friends, I exchange information with those friends. In the diagnosis of children, I get ideas and help by consulting them, especially by sharing predictions and determinations (G7)”.

“Constant communication is the most effective method. We need to be in constant contact with mothers and make them feel that their child is very valuable and important to us. (G10)”.

“I generally get support from field experts and teachers. I consult with anyone who helps me in solving problems. After taking this path, I do what I need to do to be happy and successful. Because I love, because my profession is my love, I endure all kinds of difficulties (G11)”.

“I use talking, consulting. I do not use other methods. Furthermore, I get support from the school administration. Observing is also very important, different methods can be used (G15)”.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

When the participant teacher's views on the problems of special education teachers are examined, the reasons for the preference of special education teachers give important clues in explaining the problems experienced in schools. Participant teachers see special education teaching as a special field that should be preferred with particular interest and desire. The unwillingness, indifference, and low motivation of the teachers working in special education create obstacles to the expected success in education. According to Yalçın (2017), it is important for special education teachers to feel valued and willing to fulfill their duties and responsibilities with pleasure. In addition, their psychological support will make them more

prominent in special education schools. It is expected that teachers who willingly choose special education teaching have a high tendency to solve the problems they encounter. In line with the main purpose of education, it is ensured that individuals have the authority to learn, receive education and self-development in educational environments, and benefit from these authorities as they wish. In special education, it is one of the basic principles of special education that each benefits from education services in line with their interests, wishes, competencies, and abilities.

According to the participants, special education teaching is also preferred due to employability, interest, and desire, and teacher, friend, and family referral. Not meeting the need for teachers in special education, which is presented as a justification for meeting the need for more sensitive and qualified education for unstable individual differences, continues to be a problem today (tedmem, 2016). The belief of having the knowledge and skills required by the teaching profession is important for the teacher. The participants state that the most important characteristics expected of special education teachers are patience and stability. In order to be successful in special education teaching, which requires patience, dedication, and constant improvement, it is necessary to do this profession lovingly and willingly (Çapa & Çil, 2000). According to Kılıç (2020), special education teaching is different from other teaching fields. It requires both being more resistant psychologically and more patience. To work in special education, graduation from the field of special education should be the basic requirement. However, some of the teachers working in special education are assigned outside the field on the grounds that the need cannot be met, and they are assigned because it is more than the norm and is considered among the reasons for the problems experienced.

When the opinions of all the teachers working in the special education practice school were examined, it was concluded that the most common problem related to the problems arising from the parents in special education was the excessive intervention of the families and the lack of sufficient support. In addition, the participating teachers perceive that parents do not accept their children's disability, do not show the necessary attention to their children and their education, their awareness and education levels are low, their socio-cultural levels are low, and their expectations from teachers are high as a problem. This result supports the finding in the literature that special education parents expect the solution to the problems experienced by teachers and the state to improve with the laws (Bakkaloğlu, 2013). It can be said that this situation is due to the fact that the parents have high expectations and the opportunities are limited. However, as one of the important factors that determine the quality of special education, communication, and cooperation between the family and the school should be strong



(Güleç-Aslan, Özbey, Sola-Özgüç & Cihan, 2014; Ngang, 2021; Rodrigues et al., 2015). In addition, the participating special education teachers state that the assignment of graduates from different fields as special education teachers at the school they work in, and even the fact that these paid teachers leave their jobs because they have difficulties frequently, is an important source of problems. In special education schools; The fact that students receive education from teachers who have gone through a different education process within the framework of different education programs from other students in their own age groups clearly reveals that the schools in question have unique characteristics (Himmetoğlu, Shikhkamalova, & Bayrak, 2022).

It has been concluded that the teachers working in special education schools think that the most problematic area in special education is caused by behavioral problems and non-compliance with the rules. The pressure of society and families on teachers and students with their high expectations makes things even more difficult (Altinkurt, 2008). In addition, general problems such as the wage received from special education teaching, the inadequacy of course equipment, the indifference of school administrators, and the problems arising from the disability of special children are added (Vızlı, 2005).

When the views of the participants on the problems arising from the teachers in special education are examined, it is seen that the most problematic reason is the field of education, lack of knowledge, and inadequacy arising from being outside the field. Both the programs of special education schools are designed in accordance with their own qualifications, and the teachers working in these institutions must be trained to give this education (Himmetoğlu., Shikhkamalova & Bayrak, 2022). The fact that non-field graduates work as special education teachers in special education schools can be seen as one of the most important reasons why special education fails to meet expectations.

The individual differences that occur as a result of the high differences between students require special arrangements for some students. When the opinions of the participating special education teachers about the problems arising from the physical conditions of the schools are examined, it is stated that the problems are mostly due to the lack of buildings, classrooms, and gardens. In addition, teachers stated that the lack of course equipment also affects education negatively. These findings in the literature support the conclusion that the classroom, corridor, kitchen, toilet, playground, bathroom, counselor room, and garden arrangement are insufficient (Gündüz & Akın, 2015). The low number of private education institutions, the lack of equipment in these institutions, and the inadequacy of physical conditions to meet the needs of

students put teachers working in these institutions in a difficult situation (Brunsting, Sreckovic, & Lane, 2014; Işıkhan, 2017).

Participating teachers state that it is a problem that school administrators do not support them. In Kılıç's (2020) research, the inadequacy of school administration in meeting the needs is seen as one of the reasons for the problems experienced in special education. Inadequacies in special education and lack of communication are among the problems arising from administrators. However, it is emphasized that school administrators have important effects on their commitment to their work and motivation through the role they play in solving the problems that teachers encounter (Conley & You, 2017). In addition, there are positive and negative consequences of special education teachers' attitudes and behaviors towards their profession, the institution they work for, their students or colleagues (Akbaşlı, Kösece & Balta-Uçan, 2018; Blazar & Kraft, 2017; Franciso & Celon, 2020; Khalid, Yasmin & Azeem, 2011).

As an important feature of special education's unique qualities, the process of coping with students with different needs and behavioral problems increases the workload of the teacher and makes it a heavy profession (Hamama et al., 2013). In order to fulfill the requirements of these responsibilities, it may be necessary for special education teachers to be highly professionally equipped. Considering how important a problem for the development of students in need of special education is that the family and society do not have sufficient knowledge and awareness about the situation of children, the importance of teachers' personal characteristics and professional competencies increases.

The teachers who participated in the study stated that teachers working in the field of special education should know and apply scientific methods and techniques. They also stated that they should have professional competencies such as doing research, following innovations, communicating effectively, being able to observe, and being prone to personal and professional development. The ability of special education teachers to conduct research, follow innovations, communicate effectively with families and make observations contributes positively to the development of students in need of special education. In the context of the specific characteristics of special education, teachers' need for appropriate solutions is also included.

Finally, the expectations in the context of reintegrating students into society bring forward the role of teachers within the scope of research findings to communicate effectively with other stakeholders, especially families, and to cooperate with teachers professionally. According to the results of the research, it can be understood that just as the effectiveness of the school



depends on the success of the teacher, the success of the teacher depends on the decrease in the number of problems encountered in the education process or on the solution of them in appropriate ways.

The number of quotas in the relevant fields of education faculties in Turkey is also insufficient to close this gap in the short term. In addition, the fact that teachers in the field do not have sufficient knowledge and equipment in the field of special education is an important problem area (ERG, 2011).

The results of the research show that in the solution to the problems of the teachers working in the special education school, the teachers who are experts in the field of special education working, increasing the equipment of the schools and classrooms, providing the educational tools and practices to keep the morale and motivation of the special education teachers high are of priority. It is seen that it is also important to increase the awareness levels of student families who need special education and to raise awareness about communication and cooperation.

Within the framework of these results obtained from the research, the following suggestions were developed.

The differences in the characteristics of the students in special education schools and the expectations of the families from education and teachers impose more responsibilities on special education teachers and cause them to experience problems. By increasing the cooperation between school administrators and teachers, training can be organized to inform school staff about special education. By informing families in order to reduce the problems caused by the special situation of children and the low level of knowledge of families in special education schools, families' participation can be increased in a positive way.

As stated by the participating teachers due to its unique characteristics and structure, special education requires specialization in the field and measures can be developed for the teachers who are trained in this field to work. When choosing a field in special education teaching, taking measures to increase desire, interest, and awareness can reduce the problems experienced in special education. In special education, the changing characteristics of each student, the differences in the educational and socio-economic levels of the families, and the unique aspects of the schools negatively affect the patience, stability, strength, desire, and motivation of the teachers. Measures can be taken to reduce the stress levels of special education teachers and increase their desire and motivation.

One of the limitations of this research is that it was carried out with teachers working in a single special education school. It would be more beneficial to conduct similar research with a larger sample of special education teachers.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no personal or financial conflict of interest between the authors of the article within the scope of the study.

ETHICAL CONSENT OF THE RESEARCH

In this study, all the rules specified within the scope of the “Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive” were followed. None of the actions specified in the second part of the directive, under the title of "Processes Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics" were taken.

Ethics committee permission information

Name of the committee that made the ethical assessment: Ahi Evran University Social Sciences and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee

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