An Investigation Of Inclusion Students' Absenteeism From School

Kaynaştırma Öğrencilerinin Devamsızlık Durumlarının İncelenmesi

Şahin CİNCİOĞLU[1], **Özgür KURT**[2], **Meral DEVECİ**[3]

Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study was to examine the absenteeism status of inclusion students.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study group consisted of 25 secondary school teachers working in inclusive classes in public secondary schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in the central Edirne province in the 2023-2024 academic year. The study was created to use a case study, one of the qualitative research designs. The semi-structured interview technique was used to collect study data and the data obtained was analyzed using the content analysis method.

Findings: According to the results of the study, the teachers stated that inclusion students were mostly absent due to peer bullying and lack of familial attention, that these students had problems adapting to school and that the reason for this was that they had difficulty communicating with their friends, and that the problems in their friendship relationships were due to being excluded by their friends.

Highlights: According to the results obtained, teachers stated that family education and peer education to ensure that the situation of mainstreaming students is accepted by their friends are necessary for the solution of the absenteeism problems of mainstreaming students. Based on the study results, it is recommended that a multidimensional support education model be developed in cooperation with ministries, non-governmental organizations and relevant associations in order to prevent school absenteeism among inclusion students.

Öz

Çalışmanın amacı: Kaynaştırma öğrencilerinin devamsızlık durumlarını incelemektir.

Materyal ve Yöntem: Çalışma grubunu 2023-2024 eğitim-öğretim yılında Edirne ili merkezinde Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'na bağlı devlet ortaokullarında kaynaştırma sınıflarında görev yapan 25 ortaokul öğretmeni oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma nitel araştırma desenlerinden biri olan durum çalışması kullanılacak şekilde oluşturulmuştur. Çalışma verilerinin toplanmasında yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniği kullanılmış ve elde edilen veriler içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir.

Bulgular: Araştırma sonuçlarına göre öğretmenler, kaynaştırma öğrencilerinin en çok akran zorbalığı ve aile ilgisizliği nedeniyle devamsızlık yaptıklarını, bu öğrencilerin okula uyum sorunu yaşadıklarını ve bunun nedeninin arkadaşlarıyla iletişim kurmakta zorlanmaları olduğunu, arkadaşlık ilişkilerindeki sorunların ise arkadaşları tarafından dışlanmalarından kaynaklandığını belirtmişlerdir.

Önemli Vurgular: Elde edilen sonuçlara göre öğretmenler, kaynaştırma öğrencilerinin devamsızlık sorunlarının çözümü için aile eğitimi ve kaynaştırma öğrencilerinin durumunun arkadaşları tarafından kabul edilmesini sağlayacak akran eğitiminin gerekli olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Araştırma sonuçlarına dayanarak, kaynaştırma öğrencilerinin okula devamsızlığının önlenmesi için bakanlıklar, sivil toplum kuruluşları ve ilgili derneklerle işbirliği içinde çok boyutlu bir destek eğitim modeli geliştirilmesi önerilmektedir.

[1] **Corresponded Author,** Ministry of Education, Edirne, TÜRKİYE; https://orcid.org/ 0009-0005-7566-3348

[2] İstanbul 29 May University, Education Faculty, Department of Special Education, İstanbul, TÜRKİYE; https://orcid.org/ 0000-0001-9055-0601

[3] Namık Kemal University, Vocational School of Health Services , Department of Child Development , Tekirdağ, TÜRKİYE; https://orcid.org/ 0000-0003-1432-8544

INTRODUCTION

The school represents a crucial environment for the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children and adolescents. School absenteeism can have significant and adverse consequences, including impaired social and emotional growth, lower academic achievement, the formation of negative habits, and an increased risk of dropping out (Eaton et al., 2008; Chang et al., 2017).

Inclusive education refers to the educational environment that aims to provide the least restrictive environment in which students with special needs can develop their daily life, social, communication, academic, psychological and emotional skills at the highest level by benefiting from supportive education services in the same environment with students with typical development and can continue their lives independently and productively (Batu, 2000; Banks et al., 2017; Jochova et al., 2018).

Although the concept of "inclusion / integration" is used in the regulation on special education services (2018), in the education system implemented in Turkey, students with "moderate" and "severe" level needs continue their education in special education schools, while students with "mild" level special needs are included in "inclusion" education by making necessary arrangements and providing support special education services. In the education system of countries where "integration" is practiced, students with "moderate and 'severe' level special needs also receive education in general education environments as a result of necessary arrangements and adaptations. In this case, considering the system applied in our country, it was deemed appropriate to use the term "inclusion" in our research.

School absenteeism is a significant issue for students with special needs in inclusive schools and classes. Ensuring regular attendance is crucial for the success of inclusive education and for its positive effects on students with special needs to be fully realized. Although research on absenteeism among these students is limited, it is considered a serious problem (Munkhaugen et al., 2017). Studies have shown that students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), intellectual disability, and other developmental delays experience chronic absenteeism at a rate 1.5 times higher than that of typically developing students (US Department of Education, 2016; Black & Zablotsky, 2018; Theobald et al., 2017).

The definition of "inclusion" extends beyond merely placing students with special needs in inclusive classrooms. Inclusion implies that schools should not only address the social and academic needs of these students but also "create inclusive communities where inequality is not a barrier" (Anderson, 2021). Therefore, inclusive education should offer both individual and social benefits. The success of inclusive education is influenced by attitudes towards students with special needs, their school attendance, and their general acceptance by typically developing students (Teixeira De Matos & Morgado, 2016).

In the literature, "excused" absences are identified as one of the reasons for school absenteeism among inclusion students. These absences often result from health problems and doctor's appointments related to their disabilities. Since these excused absences are typically short and occasional, they tend to have fewer negative consequences (Melvin et al., 2023; Mattson, 2022). On the other hand, "unexcused" absences tend to be linked to stress at home or school (Mattson, 2022; Teasley, 2004; Hoşgörür & Polat, 2015), and represent ongoing difficulties that are likely to worsen without additional support (Mattson, 2022).

If students with special needs are absent from school, there may be deviations in the short-term goals outlined in their individualized education programs, and long-term goals may not be achieved. In other words, absenteeism limits these students' learning opportunities, reduces their motivation due to frustration caused by academic difficulties (Bülbül, 2012), and leads to academic failure. This failure often triggers chronic absenteeism, perpetuating a vicious cycle (Gershenson et al., 2017; Gottfried & Kirksey, 2017).

In addition, students with special needs who experience chronic absenteeism may face exclusion and peer bullying due to inadequate socialization with their peers. Problems in social relationships can exacerbate absenteeism among these students. Those exposed to bullying, experiencing social anxiety, or having difficulty making friends are more likely to avoid school (Salend & Garrik-Duhaney, 1999; Anderson, 2021). A student's school life is defined not only by academic success but also by their psychological and emotional well-being. Issues such as peer conflicts or in-group exclusion can diminish the desire of students with special needs to attend school (Gottfried, 2014; Melvin et al., 2023).

School absenteeism impacts a student's school experiences, academic success, and behavioral issues, with consequences that extend into adulthood (Kearney & Graczyk, 2020). Therefore, it is essential to address the causes of absenteeism, prevent it, and provide appropriate interventions to support students and families.

For inclusion students, it is necessary to address the reasons for absenteeism and provide appropriate support to help them attend classes. Schools often collaborate with parents, teachers, and support staff to develop strategies and interventions aimed at increasing attendance and removing barriers to participation (Taylı, 2008). Enriching lessons with various activities, motivating students, and raising awareness in order to overcome barriers to socialization and decrease incidents of bullying in the classroom can significantly reduce absenteeism (Yıldırım & Dönmez, 2008).

Recent suggestions for reducing absenteeism among inclusion students have focused on improving the school environment, fostering better teacher-student relationships, and promoting socialization, such as involving students in social activity clubs at school (Marvul, 2012; Egalite, 2018). Studies have highlighted the significant impact teachers can have in reducing absenteeism among students with special needs, leading researchers to a consensus on the crucial role of teachers in addressing this issue (Gershenson, 2016).

This study focused on the absenteeism of students with special needs in inclusive education, aiming to address a significant gap in the literature and provide guidance for future research. It seeks to thoroughly examine absenteeism, a critical issue that directly impacts stakeholders and poses a major challenge to achieving the goals of inclusive education.

METHOD

Research Model

In this study, absenteeism among inclusion students was examined using the case study approach, which is a qualitative research method. This method was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of real-life environments, systematic data collection to capture emerging situations, and a detailed examination of the phenomenon under study. Case studies adopt a holistic approach to investigate factors and focus on understanding how they are influenced by the specific situation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

Study Group

The study group of the research consists of 25 secondary school teachers working in inclusive education classes with students with intellectual disabilities in secondary schools in the central district of Edirne province in the 2023-2024 academic year. There were 18 female and seven male participants. The study group of the research was obtained by purposive sampling method. Five of the teachers had 0-10 years of professional experience, 13 had 11-20 years, six had 21-30 years, and one had 31 or more years. In terms of educational background, 20 of the teachers had undergraduate degrees, four had graduate degrees, and one had an associate degree. The teachers represented various subject areas: five in elementary mathematics, five in Turkish, five in social studies, four in English, three in science, one in physical education, one in visual arts, and one in guidance. This information about gender, years of experience, educational attainment, and subject areas is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Demographic Characteristics*

Gender	N	%
Female	18	72.00
Male	7	28.00
Total	**25**	**100**
Years of Employment in the Profession		
0-10 years	5	20.00
11-20 years	13	52.00
21-30 years	6	24.00
31+ years	1	4.00
Total	**25**	**100**
Educational Status		
Bachelor's degree	20	80.00
Postgraduate degree	4	16.00
Associate degree	1	4.00
Total	**25**	**100**
Subject Area		
Elementary Mathematics	5	25.00
Turkish	5	25.00
Social Studies	5	25.00
English	4	20.00
Science	3	15.00

	1	4.00
Physical Education	1	4.00
Visual Arts	1	4.00
Guidance	1	4.00
Total	**25**	**100**

Data Collection Tool and Process

The data gathered from the study were collected using a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher. The semi-structured interview questions were submitted to the review of four experts to ensure internal validity. As a result of the review, the questions used in the research were finalized. Afterwards, a pilot study was conducted with seven teachers in order to measure the functionality of the prepared questions. In order to determine whether the research questions were clear and understandable and whether the answers given by the teachers reflected the answers to the questions, the internal validity of the question items was obtained by four experts, including the researcher and three field experts. The form used in the research consisted of five open-ended questions to determine the reasons for absenteeism among inclusion students, the reasons why inclusion students with absenteeism issues had problems adapting to school, the reasons why these students had problems in friendship relations, the teachers' strategies to overcome this absenteeism, and the teachers' suggestions for overcoming this absenteeism.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the research were analyzed using the content analysis technique, which aims to organize and interpret similar themes and findings in a manner that enhances the reader's understanding (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). After the semi-structured interview questions were applied, the responses of the teachers to the interview questions were analyzed separately by both the researcher and three field experts. According to the data obtained within the scope of the themes and sub-themes, the issues of "agreement" and "disagreement" were discussed and necessary arrangements were made. Miles and Huberman's (1994) reliability formula was used to calculate the reliability of the study. Reliability= Agreement / (Agreement/Disagreement) According to the results of the calculation, the reliability of the research was calculated as 96%. Reliability calculations above 70% are considered reliable for the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this case, the result obtained from our research is considered reliable.

FINDINGS

Various findings were obtained regarding the reasons for absenteeism among inclusion students. Below are the findings derived from the responses provided by teachers of inclusion students. A number of themes and sub-themes were formulated as a result of the research.

The findings concerning the theme of "reasons for absenteeism among inclusion students" are detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. *Reasons for Absenteeism among Inclusion Students*

Reasons for Absenteeism	R	%
Being bullied by peers	8	18.18
Insufficient attention from the family	8	18.18
Fear of being humiliated in class among friends	6	13.64
Unwillingness to study and learn	6	13.64
Difficulties in communicating with their friends	5	11.36
Failure to adapt to school	4	9.09
Experiencing health problems	4	9.09
Having transportation problems	3	6.82
Total answers	**44**	**100**

The teachers identified "being bullied by peers" and "insufficient attention from the family" as the most common reasons for absenteeism among inclusion students. According to the responses summarized in Table 2, the theme of "reasons for absenteeism among inclusion students" was categorized into eight sub-themes: "insufficient attention from the family", "being bullied by peers", "difficulties in communicating with friends", "unwillingness to study and learn", "fear of being humiliated in class among

friends", "failure to adapt to school", "experiencing health problems". and "transportation problems". These sub-themes reflected the following statements of the teachers:

T1: Because they experience learning difficulties and fear social humiliation among their peers, and because they often struggle to grasp the topics covered in lessons.

T5: Students with special circumstances often experience a sense of disconnection from everyday life. When their families are not fully aware of this, they may not adequately prioritize or recognize the significance of their school absences.

T6: In general, we do not encounter many problems. However, there is one student with whom we face challenges. The primary reason for absenteeism is often lack of interest from the student's family.

T18: Special needs. Indifference of families. Self-skill deficiencies. Not being able to adapt to school and having problems with their friends. Their vulnerability often makes them targets for bullying by other children. Additionally, difficulties in understanding the lessons contribute to these issues to a lesser extent.

The findings regarding the theme of "reasons for problems adapting to school among inclusion students with absenteeism issues" are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. *Reasons for Problems Adapting to School among Inclusion Students with Absenteeism Issues*

Reasons for Problems in Adapting to School	R	%
Difficulties in communicating with their friends	16	47.06
Difficulty in adapting to the lessons and the level of the subjects	9	26.48
Teachers' lack of acceptance and interest in students with special needs	2	5.88
Failure to adapt to school rules	2	5.88
Failure to adapt due to special needs	2	5.88
Failure to develop a sense of belonging to the school	2	5.88
The physical environment of the school is not designed for the student with special needs	1	2.94
Total answers	**34**	**100**

The teachers identified "difficulties in communicating with their friends" as the most common reason for problems in adapting to school among inclusion students with absenteeism issues. According to the responses summarized in Table 3, the theme of problems adapting to school included the sub-themes of "difficulty in adapting to the lessons and the level of the subjects", "teachers' lack of acceptance and interest in students with special needs", "failure to adapt to school rules", "failure to adapt due to special needs", "failure to develop a sense of belonging to the school", and "the physical environment of the school is not designed for the student with special needs". These sub-themes reflected the following responses provided by the teachers:

T3: Inclusion students may encounter problems integrating due to rejection by teachers and class parents, exclusion by classmates, and physical classroom environments that are not organized to meet their needs.

T8: Inclusion students often experience communication difficulties with their peers, making it challenging for them to establish friendships.

T18: Absent inclusion students often struggle to adhere to school rules and discipline from teachers. They face difficulties in making friends and adapting to lessons, leading to a general sense of not fitting into the school environment. These students frequently experience exclusion and isolation from their peers, which exacerbates their sensitivity and tendency to take minor issues personally.

Table 4 presents the findings related to the theme of the "reasons for problems in friendship relationships among inclusion students with absenteeism issues".

Table 4. *Reasons for Problems in Friendship Relationships among Inclusion Students with Absenteeism Issues*

Reasons for Problems in Friendship Relationships	R	%
Ostracization by friends	10	40.00
Introversion and shyness of students with special needs	7	28.00
Difficulty in expressing themselves	4	16.00

Failure to find common ground with their friends	3	12.00
Negative attitudes of parents of typically developing children	1	4.00
Total answers	**25**	**100**

The teachers identified the "ostracization by friends" of students with special needs as the most common reason for problems in friendship relationships among inclusion students with absenteeism issues. As seen in Table 4, the theme related to these problems was categorized into sub-themes including "ostracization by friends", "introversion and shyness of students with special needs", "difficulty in expressing themselves", "failure to find common ground with their friends", and "negative attitudes of parents of typically developing children". These sub-themes reflected the following responses provided by the teachers:

T4: Middle school students often display selfish behavior and may not readily make sacrifices for inclusion students. Emotional students may initially engage with them, but may eventually lose interest. Integration can be challenging, and interpersonal issues among children can exacerbate these difficulties.

T6: Inclusion students generally do not experience problems with their friends. However, they often prefer to remain in the background in social interactions.

T12: Inclusion students can exhibit heightened sensitivity and touchiness compared to their peers, often exaggerating minor issues. They may also demonstrate behaviors that are developmentally below their chronological age.

Table 5 presents the findings regarding the theme of "teachers' strategies to overcome absenteeism among inclusion students".

Table 5. *Teachers' Strategies to Overcome Absenteeism among Inclusion Students*

Teachers' Strategies	R	%
I contact the family	15	44.12
I teach the subjects according to the level of the student	5	14.71
I make education and training fun	5	14.71
I cooperate with the guidance counselor	4	11.76
I contact the school administration	2	5.88
I make home visits	2	5.88
I am increasing the number of hours I teach in the support room	1	2.94
Total answers	**34**	**100**

The teachers primarily stated that they contacted the families of inclusion students to overcome absenteeism issues. As seen in Table 5, the theme of "teachers' strategies to overcome absenteeism among inclusion students" was categorized into the following sub-themes: "I contact the family", "I teach the subjects according to the level of student", "I make education and training fun", "I cooperate with the guidance counselor", "I make home visits", and "I am increasing the number of hours I teach in the support room". These sub-themes reflected the following responses provided by the teachers:

T1: Through special education classes, academic achievement can be increased a little bit. Thus, when they understand the subjects even a little better, their interest in the lessons may increase. When the subjects are taught in accordance with the level of the student, the problem of absenteeism may decrease. This is what I am trying to do.

T3: The family is contacted. The importance of attendance is mentioned. The attempt is made to solve the problem by making education and training fun and trying to organize the classroom environment for that student.

T14: I try to keep interest in the teacher at a high level. I am more interested in the child and make it fun.

T15: I conduct student and parent interviews and home visits.

Table 6 presents the findings regarding the theme of the "teachers' suggestions" for overcoming absenteeism among inclusion students.

Table 6. *Teachers' Suggestions for Overcoming Absenteeism among Inclusion Students*

Teachers' Suggestions	R	%
Families should be trained	7	18.42
The situation of inclusion students should be accepted by their friends	7	18.42
Lessons should be taught according to students' individual needs	5	13.16
Close relations should be established with families	5	13.16
School should be made a more positive environment and inclusion students should be encouraged to attend	4	10.54
Inclusion students should be educated with students at the same level as themselves	3	7.89
The school administration should cooperate	3	7.89
Teachers should be trained	2	5.26
Support education room activities should be expanded	1	2.63
Each school should have at least one special education teacher	1	2.63
Total answers	**38**	**100**

The most important suggestions made by the teachers for overcoming absenteeism among inclusion students were that the families should be trained and that the situation of inclusion students should be accepted by their friends. As seen to Table 6, the theme of the "teachers' suggestions" was categorized into 10 sub-themes. These were "acceptance of inclusion students by their peers", "families should be trained", "lessons should be taught according to students' individual needs", "close relations should be established with families", "inclusion students should be educated with students at the same level as themselves", "school should be made a more popular environment and inclusion students should be encouraged to attend", "the school administration should cooperate", "teachers should be trained", "support education room activities should be expanded" and "each school should have at least one special education teacher." These subthemes reflected the following responses provided by the teachers:

T2: First of all, families should be trained. Most parents do not accept their children's situation and absenteeism is one of the simplest problems these children face.

T12: Support should be provided for them to get on better with their classmates and to adapt to school. Help can be obtained from the guidance counselor. Communicating with the family will be useful.

T13: Efforts to integrate them socially should be increased and they should be encouraged to participate in activities and events.

T16: Efforts to help them adapt socially should be increased and they should be encouraged to participate in activities and events.

DISCUSSION

The data collected to examine absenteeism among inclusion students were analyzed in accordance with the research objectives. Statistical tables were constructed for each research objective based on the teachers' feedback, and themes and sub-themes were formulated and interpreted to align with the findings.

In terms of the reasons for absenteeism among inclusion students, teachers highlighted two primary factors: "insufficient attention from the family" and "children being exposed to peer bullying". Aküzüm et al. (2015) emphasized that families who are engaged with their children and cooperate with the school significantly contribute to their children's regular attendance at school. Altınkurt (2008) found that students often miss school as a way of attracting their family's attention or due to excessive pressure, with numerous physical, psychological, and social reasons underlying their absenteeism. In their meta-analysis, Marlow and Rehman (2021) reported that negative communication in the family is a significant factor leading to student absenteeism. Child absenteeism has been linked to parental efforts to keep the child at home or a lack of parental effort to ensure their child's attendance (Totsika et al., 2020). In this instance, the finding from our research that families do not show sufficient interest in absenteeism aligns with other studies. The educational level of families and their perspectives on education influence the behaviors of students. Families should be made aware that school is not only a place for academic development but also important for the socialization of the child. Another finding of the present study was that inclusion students are often absent from school

because they have been exposed to peer bullying. When the literature is examined, there are findings that support these results. Vilaplana-Prieto (2011) examined the relationship between children with special needs, peer bullying, and the related absenteeism rate. The study reported that 80.72% of children with special needs were victims of bullying, which significantly increased the likelihood of school absenteeism. Similarly, Sunera et al. (2012) and Ochi et al. (2020) found that conflict with peers and peer bullying were significantly associated with school absenteeism in children with special needs. Specifically, students with special needs are more at risk of peer bullying than their typically developing peers due to their cognitive, physical, and social vulnerabilities. Students with special needs in inclusive classrooms can become socially isolated if they are not perceived by other students as a "valued member of the class". Therefore, it is important to strengthen socially supportive relationships for these students. Changing environmental factors, educational policies, teacher influence, and peer education are vital in fostering a supportive and inclusive environment (Vilaplana-Prieto, 2011).

The least common reason cited for absenteeism among inclusion students, according to the teachers' responses to the question "What are the reasons for absenteeism among inclusion students?", was transportation issues. Inclusion students often face challenges accessing school due to lack of free transportation provided by the state. However, it is believed that this issue could be alleviated if families prioritize the importance of school attendance. Therefore, addressing absenteeism problems in students necessitates considering the ecology of the education system as a whole and emphasizing the importance of strengthening the family-school-student relationship.

In the responses provided by teachers to the question "What are the reasons for the problems inclusion students with absenteeism issues have adapting to school?", it was consistently noted that these students often face "communication problems with their friends." This challenge is common among all children who do not attend school regularly, affecting their ability to build and maintain relationships with peers and teachers alike. Adaptation, in this context, refers to the student's capacity to establish meaningful connections within their environment and with themselves. The process of adaptation is influenced by various factors including family dynamics, the school environment, and the quality of friendships (Dağ, 2018). Communication difficulties with peers may stem from the cognitive, behavioral, and social limitations experienced by students with special needs.

Difficulties in social interaction, particularly in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), can significantly contribute to school absenteeism. Mebostad et al. (2024) highlight that aspects of social engagement are closely linked to school refusal among children with neurodevelopmental disorders like ASD and ADHD. These children may struggle to initiate or participate in social activities, which can exacerbate their reluctance to attend school. Furthermore, Sevim and Atasoy (2020) discuss how behavioral issues among students with special needs can lead to communication challenges with their peers. Effective strategies include preparing students with special needs for social interactions and educating typically developing peers about their classmates' unique needs and behaviors (Batu, 2000).

Among the answers given by the teachers to the question "What are the reasons for the problems in the friendship relations of inclusion students who have absenteeism issues?", the problem of "being excluded by their friends" was mentioned. This exclusion can lead to significant social and behavioral challenges for these students. Baydık and Bakkaloğlu (2009) and Göl (2014) have similarly highlighted that children with special needs are frequently excluded by their classmates in school settings. Tomaskova et al. (2024) identified that 25% of adolescents with autism faced exclusion from their schools, and 15% of these individuals were permanently absent as a result of this exclusionary experience. To mitigate absenteeism among students with special needs, it is crucial for teachers to prioritize and facilitate positive peer communication. Teachers should prioritize peer communication to mitigate absenteeism among students with special needs. Facilitating positive interactions between these students and their peers not only enhances their social integration but also supports their overall adaptation to society (Sullivan et al., 2014, Stiefel et al., 2017; Fleming et al., 2020; Akıncı-Düzel & Girgin-Akın 2024).

It was found that teachers primarily answered the question "What are your strategies for overcoming the problem of absenteeism among inclusion students?" as "communicating with the family". Implementing strategies in which subject teachers assign responsibilities aligned with students' academic strengths or abilities could potentially reduce absenteeism among these students. Uğraş (2018) found that physical education teachers effectively reduced absenteeism among inclusion students by including them in the school's sports team. Yılmaz and Bayar (2020) emphasized the importance of preventing absenteeism among students in special education through cooperation between school, family, and teachers, highlighting its significance in addressing potential issues with these students. Gün (2013) noted that in cases where inclusion students were absent, this issue was reported to the administration, and if deemed necessary, the administration took steps to retrieve the child from home. This intervention was observed to effectively resolve the issue.

In response to the question "What are your suggestions for overcoming absenteeism among inclusion students?", the most common responses were "families should be trained" and "the situation of inclusion students should be accepted by their friends". In line with these findings, there has been renewed emphasis on the importance of providing education to both families and students. Additionally, it has been suggested that positive behavior intervention programs should be developed and implemented in schools. These programs aim to encourage appropriate behavior and prevent antisocial behaviors, thereby promoting acceptance of inclusion students by their peers.

The results of our study are important in terms of determining the reasons for school absenteeism of mainstreaming students, examining the practices and suggestions of teachers to overcome this problem. As a result of the literature studies we conducted in this field, it was concluded that more studies should be conducted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A multidimensional support education model should be developed in collaboration with ministries, non-governmental organizations, and relevant associations to prevent school absenteeism among inclusion students.
2. School-family cooperation should be enhanced to address absenteeism issues among inclusion students.
3. Responsibilities should be assigned to inclusion students based on their abilities and their participation in group activities should be encouraged.
4. Additional reinforcement should be provided in lessons for inclusion students.
5. More social interactions should be facilitated for inclusion students during their free time through clubs, sports, joint activities, projects, etc..
6. Implementing various sanctions by the state on families as a deterrent to absenteeism among inclusion students should be considered and the family's role in this issue should be recognized.
7. Role models should be invited to participate in school activities to inspire inclusion students.
8. In this study, reasons for absenteeism among inclusion students were given from the teachers' perspectives. Obtaining input directly from the inclusion students themselves could provide a clearer understanding of their absenteeism.

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The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

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Statements of publication ethics

We hereby declare that the study has not unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed Carefully.

Examples of author contribution statements

First Author: Writing – original draft, Methodology, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Second Author: Writing – review & editing, Supervision.

Third Author: Review & editing, Supervision.

Researchers' contribution rate

The study was conducted and reported with equal collaboration of the researchers.

Ethics Committee Approval Information

In conducting this research study, we have complied with APA guidelines for the ethical conduct of research. Ethics committee approval for this study was granted by the İstanbul 29 May University Senate Ethics Committee Commission on 06.11.2023, decision number 2023/11-3, unanimously confirming the study's ethical appropriateness.

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