CURRENT RESEARCHES IN EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES V

EDITORS

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CHAPTER 1

OPINIONS OF SYRIAN FAMILIES LIVING IN TURKEY ABOUT THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS OF THEIR CHILDREN AT PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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INTRODUCTION

Today, there is a rapidly developing migration wave due to reasons such as hunger, famine, and lack of life safety resulting from various social and economic reasons. Countries have been taking necessary precautions, developing policies, and conducting studies against this migration wave experienced in the world in recent years. With these studies, individuals can live independently and, thus, adapt to society more easily when their basic needs, such as health, education, shelter, employment, and economy, are met (Feuerhern, 2013). Syria, which has a border with Turkey, is one of the countries most affected by the war environment and immigrates to different countries. The migration wave from Syria to Turkey has been increasingly continuing due to the ongoing war since 2011. In Turkey, at the beginning of this migration wave, contrary to the efforts to find solutions focused on meeting the temporary basic needs (Emin, 2016; UNICEF, 2015) such as shelter, food, and health,

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the thought that the temporary solutions would not be sufficient and that it was necessary to find permanent solutions and policies emerged. Thus, with the idea that permanent solutions are important instead of temporary and quick solutions, it was aimed to make regulations in the education system and support these regulations with laws. For this, one of the first concrete steps was Law 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection in 2014, which included basic information about the education of children from migrant families, such as the curriculum, methods to be used, and characteristics of teachers (Emin, 2016).

Besides taking some precautions by legal regulations regarding the education of children from migrant families, the family's contribution to education services, school-family cooperation, and mutual information exchange are also important for the quality of education services provided. Because children's parents are their first teachers, and school-family cooperation is effective for academic and social success when they start school, the role of the families in education life is undeniable. In their study, McIntyre, Eckert, Fiese, DiGennaro & Wildenger (2007) emphasized that the quality of school-family cooperation was parallel to academic success, and the family must actively participate in the education services to provide this cooperation. Çelenk (2003), drawing attention to the importance of cooperation between the families of children who continue primary school first grade and the school staff, stated that family support was necessary. School-family cooperation also has an important place in preschool education services in the early childhood period. In many studies conducted on this subject, it was stated that family participation in education services had a great role in children's completing development stages healthily, ensuring their cultural competencies, and generalizing the learned skills as well as academic success (Ma, Shen, Krenn, Hu, & Yuan, 2016; Murray, McFarland-Piazza & Harrison, 2015; Şahin & Kalburan, 2009).

Thus, families may have more detailed information about the education services provided and their children's development, and they can support their children by continuing education services at home. Cooperation and mutual information exchange make an important contribution to the teachers. Thanks to the cooperation, teachers know the family with their cultural, social, economic, and many other features and make the necessary adaptations for the child. Cooperation positively affects aspects such as supporting the family and the child and making gained skills permanent (Murray, McFarland-Piazza & Harrison, 2015).

In studies conducted about migrant families and education; it is emphasized that education should be given to the children and families to provide language skills of the country where they migrated to, and the cultural structure of the countries where the migrant family comes from should be taken into account while giving this education (Wanger, 2013). Many Syrian families have language problems in communication and cooperation with the administrator and teachers in the school as they do not know how to read and write in Turkish; thus, they have difficulty benefiting from education services and choosing a curriculum. Borrell (2011) stated that individuals who migrated to another country had problems with second language acquisition other than their native language, the difficulty in their language skills delayed the children's adaptation to their school and friends. Therefore, these problems negatively affected the acquisition of social skills and a sense of being a member of society. According to AFAD (2014) data, mothers' education levels differ in Syrian families, and it draws attention that 21% of the population is illiterate. It is stated that 35% of the parents are primary school graduates, 20% are secondary school graduates, 10% are high school graduates, and a very low percentage of 6% are university graduates. Families, especially mothers, have an important role in migrant children's school attendance, teacher-family cooperation, language skills

acquisition, generalization in the home environment, and doing homework starting from school enrollment. According to AFAD (2014) data, it is emphasized that the education level of Syrian mothers gradually decreases towards the university level, and a considerable number of individuals are illiterate. It is predicted that the literacy and education levels will increase with the services provided to the mothers and children, and it is aimed to enable mothers to have a more active role in society and provide cooperation and information exchange. Thus, children's adaptation skills will be supported in this direction when the integration of the family into society is easier and faster.

It is thought that besides the studies on opinions of the teachers who work in the schools where the migrant children continue (Işıkdoğan-Uğurlu & Kayhan, 2018; Kardeş & Akman, 2018; Mercan & Bütün, 2016), studies in which the opinions of the Syrian families are taken about education services, preparation for a school, and family participation are needed. Based on the fact that family participation and school-family cooperation are important in a child's academic success, social adaptation, and all levels of development in education services, this study aims to investigate the opinions of Syrian families living in Turkey about the school preparation and literacy teaching processes of their children.

For this purpose, answers to the following questions have been sought.

1. What are the opinions of Syrian families about their experiences in preschool and preparation for the school process?
2. What are the opinions of Syrian families about their children's primary school enrollment process?
3. What are Syrian families' experiences in their children's primary school education regarding material, social skills, communication, and language?
4. What are the opinions of Syrian families about school-family cooperation at the primary school level?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

This study, which was focused on the opinions of Syrian families living in Turkey about the education process of their children at the primary school level, was conducted using the semi-structured interview technique in the qualitative research method. The interview technique was used as it was aimed to include participants' own experiences and opinions and to obtain in-depth natural data (Creswell, 2015; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

Sample/Participants

Participants of the study, which was conducted in the spring term of the 2018-2019 academic year, were determined with criterion sampling using the purposive sampling method. 6 (six) families living in the center of Ankara province were included in the study. The following criteria were sought in determining the families: 1) to have a child continuing the first or second grade of primary school, 2) to have migrated from Syria, and 3) to be able to use Turkish enough to communicate in daily life. Besides the criteria determined in this study, an additional criterion to accept conducting interviews with an interpreter was determined to communicate with the families healthily. The parents' comprehension, listening, and speaking skills were taken into account during the interviews (The interpreter provided support when necessary). In determining participant families, the researchers paid attention to giving priority to the places where the majority of Syrian citizens live in Ankara. Firstly, the school administration and teachers we were in cooperation were interviewed, local neighborhood administrators were informed about the study, and the families were reached. In informing the families, the first researcher interviewed the school administrators, classroom teachers, and local administration

unit executives, then informed parents who volunteered to participate in the study individually. Both researchers planned the appropriate time interval for the families regarding the day and time of the interview, and an application calendar was formed for the participation of an Arabic-speaking interpreter. Finally, a guide who knows Arabic-Turkish accompanied the interviews during the data collection process for healthy communication. In the study, based on volunteer participation, providing that the privacy and ethical principles are kept, names of the family members, their place of residence and addresses, information on the school where their children continue, etc. were not included in the study. Lastly, codes such as Parent P1 were used for the participants. The demographic information of the participants is described in Table 1.

When examining Table 1, the frequency of school visits and source of support of 6 participants consisting of 1 father and five mothers show similarity. It is understood that all participants but P5 do not go to school unless they are called from school, and it is needed. It is emphasized that they did not experience a formal problem in the school enrollment of their 1st and 2nd graders; their children can continue to school and learn the language faster and more effectively in the school environment. Parents, stating that there is a supportive environment in terms of language skills in the social cycle and game environment for their children starting from the early period of school, stated that their speaking skills of Turkish are best developed in neighborhood relations.

Data Collection Tool and Application

Firstly, the semi-structured interview form was prepared as a draft for this study. It examines the opinions of Syrian families about their primary school children's preparation for the education process, communication and language skills, peer interaction in

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants (n: 6)

	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q 6	Q 7
	Children					Parents	
	Age	Grade Level	Gender	Employment Status	Frequency of School Visits	Materials used by the child to support literacy skills	Sources he/she thinks he/she receives support most frequently
P1	7	1	Male	Yes/Worker	2-3 times a week	He can speak Turkish but is limited in sufficient comprehension. He learned it at work. He doesn't have difficulty using the language in social life. He finds games, television, and storybooks effective for his child.	Relatives, neighbors
P2	7	1	Female	No	She only went during enrollment, her husband goes to school.	The children learn to speak Turkish at school very quickly, they speak Arabic and Turkish at home. She learns from them. She finds picture cards and television effective.	Immediate family, teachers at the child's school
P3	7	1	Female	No	When they call from school, she goes if needed.	She uses Turkish in neighborhood relations most frequently. She learned it without education but limited. Only the children speak both Turkish, Arabic at home.	Neighbors (who are migrants like her)

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants (n: 6) (Devamı)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
P4	8	2	Female	No	She has never gone.	The parents are not good at speaking, understanding, writing, and reading Turkish. The children can speak Turkish in neighborhood games, and parks. She finds the television, written sources, and coursebooks effective.	Migrant relatives
P5	8	2	Female	No	She goes 1-2 times a week. She attends all parents' meetings.	Parents are sufficient in speaking and understanding Turkish. They most frequently use television and coursebooks for literacy education.	Her interaction with teachers, her child's classmates, other parents at the child's school is at a very good level
P6	8	2	Female	No	They went during enrollment. She has 2 children at the same school. She goes if needed.	Parents' level of using Turkish for communication in daily life is not sufficient.	Neighborhood relations, teachers at school.

the school environment, and support process at home. Opinions of 4 experts were received. The experts, 2 of whom conduct studies on special education, language, and speech, and early literacy, and 2 of whom conduct studies on literacy teaching in classroom teaching and children's literature, evaluated the draft form in terms of comprehensibility of the language, participation of the migrant families in social life, quality of social interaction, and support process at home before literacy teaching. Both researchers are graduates of the classroom teaching field and have 7-15 years of classroom teaching experience. They have teaching experience in the multicultural classrooms where the migrant students with special needs continue, and they also have professional experience in strengthening the professional skills of teachers who have international students in their classrooms, school-family-society, supporting academic and social participation of migrant children with special needs conducted by the Ministry of National Education. The revised semi-structured interview form took its final form and included seven demographic and six open-ended questions. In the data collection tool, the parents were asked questions about the age of children, grade level, gender of the parent, employment status, frequency of school visits to their children's schools, sources they prefer to support their children's language skills in Turkish, and the sources of support for their children's education.

To determine their opinions about their children's education at school, questions about preparation and enrollment to school process, whether there is a school change, if so, its reason and their opinions about the process, children's experience in school life before they come to Turkey, their impression about support process for Turkish literacy teaching and communication process with peers and adults in social life, what skills they need in this process, and out-of-school life of their children and supporting their literacy skills were asked. In addition, 20-25 minute

interviews were conducted with 6 participants consisting of 1 father and five mothers; an interpreter whose native language was Arabic attended the interviews for the intelligibility and explanation of the questions, and interviews were completed with voice and written recordings. One participant (P1) did not allow voice recording, the voice was recorded in the interviews conducted with 5 participants, and observation and interview notes were also recorded. Interviews were conducted in the office of the neighborhood administrator, in an appropriate environment for the interviews instead of the participant's residence. To obtain data more effectively in the data collection process with the qualitative research interview technique; the researchers paid attention to the principles of not being directive, not interrupting the participant before he/she completes his/her speech, and making changes in asking the questions following the course of the interview, and giving encouraging and reassuring feedback (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Six open-ended questions were asked in the interview form; examples of the questions are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Examples of the questions in the interview form
1. Can you tell us about the school enrollment process for your child/children? (Deciding on which school they will go to, enrollment admission process) From whom and how did you get support in this process?
2. Can you tell us about your child's learning Turkish for literacy?
3. What are the materials which you mostly use in teaching literacy to your children and think effective? From whom do you get support in this process?

Data Analysis

In the data analysis stage, transcription of voice records was conducted. Besides the data consisting of 12 pages, the notes taken

by the researchers and reflections written after the interviews were included in the analysis as additional data. For descriptive and holistic analysis, both researchers read the data documents independently. They focused on the similarities and differences among the answers given to the questions. Content analysis was conducted according to the answers to the questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Both researchers are experienced in qualitative data analysis. They conducted reporting process together and worked together in the stages of simplifying and combining the data and reaching themes from codes. Main themes and sub-themes were reached as a result of data analysis. Parents' opinions were included directly; thus, it was aimed to provide credibility and validity (Creswell, 2015).

In the preparation stage of data analysis, the data obtained by coding each parent as P1, P2, P6.... and based on the opinions of the 6 participants were descriptively analyzed using the N Vivo program. Reliability was based on inter-coder reliability and repeatability, and the result of the inter-coder reliability analysis related to the sub-themes obtained from the opinions of the participants was calculated as %92 using the Reliability=[Agreement/(Agreement+Disagreement)]x100 formula (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The main theme and the sub-themes obtained from the data analysis are shown in Figure 1.

Findings

As a result of the analysis, participants' opinions were turned into findings in four (4) main themes and 12 sub-themes. The main theme, sub-themes, and participants' opinions on this theme were given below.

In the Family Patterns theme, participants drew attention to the duration of their arrival by migration, the break-up of the family, for example, other parent's staying in Syria, and some of the siblings' living in different provinces; they emphasized the

limitations of these factors on coordinating children's school life, continuing to school, supporting language skills in the family and development of literacy skills. For example, P1 and P6 stated that they did not have any difficulty in the school enrollment process; however, they drew attention that the family has an important role in children's learning of the language. They stated that they receive great support from their relatives' children who went to school earlier and learned Turkish since the language spoken at home is Arabic. P1 stated his opinion: "We did not have any difficulty. Our child's teacher and friends supported us a lot. Our child has Syrian friends in the neighborhood. His/her classmates do not live here. He/she learns a lot from them at school," while P6 emphasized that family life affects children's school and adaptation process by saying, "As we live together with the relatives, they supported him/her. We did not have any problems with the school enrollment. We got out of the school immediately after enrollment. Two of my children stayed in Syria. I thought about how they will be with these children. The children affected". All parents stated that they received great support from their relatives' children who went to school earlier and learned Turkish. Participants stated that they went to school for enrollment of their little child with more confidence if they had older students who enrolled and continue to school, and stated that having an older sibling positively affects the children's attitudes towards school. Thus, they stated they went through the adaptation period more easily (P4-P5-P6).

Readiness Early Education

It draws attention that the parents can support their children's readiness for school and academic and social skills when they can use Turkish for communication at a sufficient level. For example, while school adaptation, social skills, and literacy skills of the migrant students who have just started primary school are affected by factors such as language skills in daily life/games/

district of residence/Turkish friends; P3 emphasized that she is exposed to the language most frequently in neighborhood relations because Turkish is not spoken at home; however, she learned Turkish without any education, and she can understand what she hears. For example, while P5 stated that her children could speak both Arabic and Turkish at home, P4 stated that she is not sufficient in speaking, understanding, writing, and reading Turkish as a migrant parent, and she only communicates with neighbors whose native language is Arabic. P3-P4 stated that they think the children can learn and speak Turkish in neighborhood games and parks, but they are not sufficient in literacy at school like their peers. They stated that the children should use the television and written materials more often and emphasized that the children usually have difficulty understanding written texts in the coursebooks at school. Finally, they emphasized that they do not have experience in areas such as games in the early period and preschool education (all parents).

Peer Relations Out-of-School Life

While all participant parents stated that children could learn Turkish better by communicating with their peers in the school environment, they emphasized that peer relations were more sincere during breaks which included more games and experiences involving movement. For example, P5 said, "...I don't know how he/she solves the problems, but his/her friends support him/her in their lessons without our help. Children learn with games and entertainment. They socialize better at school. There are not any problems". P2-P3-P4 emphasized that their children participated more in the neighborhood games and stated that the children could use Turkish and Arabic together while they were with their peers in out-of-school environments. P2 stated her opinion: "Children play games, speak more. We have neighbors coming from Syria, their children and our children speak Turkish

with their friends at school...". In this sense, P1-P5, emphasizing the importance of social activities at school, stated that parents' meetings were also important and they were an opportunity for their children to express themselves and for the teachers to know the parents. On the other hand, P3-P4 stated that their children were unwilling to go to school when their academic success was low, and the most important source of support at home was their older siblings, who continued to school when there was something they did not understand, or they were not able to do homework. The parents emphasized that their children's number of friends was limited, and they could only make friends with migrant children due to the district of residence. Finally, they stated that social activities at school, neighborhood relations, out-of-school life activities such as sports areas of the municipality, and playgrounds were more entertaining (P2-P3).

Literacy Skills and Digital Materials

Parents stated that both themselves and their children could learn Turkish faster in digital environments and with printed materials and devices such as television; they emphasized that they did not have problems in understanding when they have opportunities like television and computer because they see the visuals and the writing and hear the pronunciation at the same time. P5, stating that the child's coursebooks were very effective and positive, stated that her child's teacher and friends were very supportive, and her child could speak and understand Turkish better than his/her parents. Parents stating that their children understood the text by writing thanks to digital materials when they did not understand the texts in the books, stated that the visuals in the books should be comprehensible and clear.

P1-P3-P6 stated that the parents of migrant children had limited communication with teachers and school administrators regarding language competence. For example, P1 said that he went

to school, P6 said "... His/her Turkish is better. I haven't learned yet. When he/she has a problem, he/she asks me for help..." and emphasized the parents' language competence was a factor that affected social participation.

In conclusion, migrant families stated opinions about the education process of their children who continue primary school in four main themes. In the first theme, which is family patterns, they stated opinions about attitudes of the family towards school, language spoken at home, time of starting/continuing school, and in-family support. In the second theme of the study, readiness early education, families stated opinions about the importance of language skills, adaptation to school, social skills, and development of literacy skills. Parents, mentioning the importance of early education services in academic success, stated that they did not have knowledge and experience in subjects such as game activities in the early period. In the third theme, peer relations out-of-school life; they drew attention to their children's participation in social activities. They stated that peer interaction increased language skills, language skills were developed in a natural context, and social and cultural characteristics were shared. The last theme of the study is related to literacy skills and digital materials. Families drew attention to the importance of visual and auditory materials in acquiring literacy skills; they stated that the children's comprehension skills increased, and they participated with more pleasure.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Suggestions

Findings regarding the education services provided to the migrant families' children who continue primary school gather around four main themes: family patterns, readiness for early education, peer relations out-of-school life, and literacy skills and digital materials. Regarding the family patterns, it was stated that the children with broken family structure due to migration had

difficulty in various areas such as starting school, adaptation, and attendance; besides, they also had difficulty in academic skills due to all these reasons. Contrary to these difficulties, families, stating that they did not have any difficulties in the school enrollment process, expressed that necessary convenience was provided in reaching education services. Parallel to study findings, studies stated that migrant families could not benefit from education services for a long time because of the war in their countries, and it was stated that the education gap would grow rapidly unless this situation was supported as soon as possible (Seydi, 2014). In the placement of Syrian families who come to our country to the Turkish schools, Provincial Directorates of National Education evaluate the educational needs of the children according to the education services they had received before they came and their characteristics and decide on the appropriate classrooms and school environments where the children will be placed (Seydi, 2014). MEB [MoNE] (2014). As stated by the families who expressed their opinions, they enroll their children in different educational institutions to benefit from education services as soon as possible.

When looking at the families' opinions about readiness for early education services, it draws attention that they emphasize the importance of language, and if there is someone who knows Turkish in the family, it contributes to their children's benefits from education services. For early education, families, glad that their children are included in social environments, stated that peer interaction would contribute to language skills and game activities, and TV programs will enable this. The early childhood period has a critical importance for the children's adaptation activities and language skills, and it is seen that the children who are supported during this period are healthier and more adaptable. Thus, it is suggested to include narration studies, concrete materials, picture cards, and games that will support literacy skills

as a teaching tool (Piştav Akmeşe, 2019; Piştav Akmeşe, Başkan Çelikli, 2021). It is seen that although the children who came to Turkey with migration are immediately enrolled in schools and admitted to the education system, regulations regarding the adaptation processes of the children have not been completed yet. It is necessary to conduct studies about the language acquisition of the children whose native language is different and those in the middle grades, compensation for the losses, and eliminating differences between programs. Thus, the children can adapt to the classroom in which he/she starts. It is seen that these children who are enrolled in the middle classes in state schools do not attend school due to language problems (Emin, 2016). Families, emphasizing that the main problem for their children is language skills, stated that language skills are necessary for both their children and themselves in terms of communication skills. Besides, it is emphasized that the group which adapts to the school most easily and learns Turkish most easily is the lower grades (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Thus, it is important to give preparation and language courses to support the children's language skills starting from the early childhood period. It is seen in the study that some families take their children to the parks, groceries, etc., starting from early childhood and support their interaction with peers and development in terms of language skills. It is seen that the situation is different for the children who started state schools at older ages and have problems adapting to the lessons and their peers. The adaptation problems are based on the insufficiency in language skills and they experience problems in understanding the lesson and social involvement with their friends.

Regarding peer relations out-of-school life, families mentioned the importance of peer communication activities out-of-school for social and language skills. However, thinking that the district where they live consists mostly of migrant families, the children who cannot spend much time with their

peers with different cultural and language characteristics have social interaction limitations in the development of language skills due to the limited number of friends. One of the most important problems experienced by Syrian families is related to the education of their children. Children and families experience difficulty in communication in education services due to the limitations in language skills and face some difficulties in social life because of the differences in language, culture, and lifestyle. Especially these problems experienced in language skills and economic life negatively affect the success of the children in school life and social life (Orhan & Şenyücel Güngör, 2015). Families, expressing opinions about literacy skills and digital materials, mentioned the importance of educational materials with visual/audio content such as coursebooks, visual materials, computers, and TVs in the acquisition of academic skills. They said that the children's comprehension skills were developed with these materials, and they went to school more willingly, thanks to these materials. Families, drawing attention that the parts that cannot be understood due to the language difference can be more easily acquired with digital materials, stated that they receive support regarding language skills thanks to their children. With the development of digital technology, computers entered school environments and homes, and children started to use these technologies from an early age. The literature supports the outcomes of the study. Digital materials contribute significantly to children's learning skills related to getting attention, directing, learning, and organizing information (Huang et al., 2012). Many families support that using digital materials in education is entertaining and effective. Families who migrate to different places around the world experience economic problems, problems in benefiting from education services in a qualified way, problems in health and support services, and political problems. Adapting families who come through migration to the societies in which

they live becomes easier with the supply of job opportunities, education services, and economic support services which will enable them to meet their individual needs independently (Feuerherm, 2013). Regarding the adaptation of Syrian families to society, it is seen that courses are opened to support language skills in Turkey. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) give multi-directional courses to support families. Thus, it is aimed that they come together with the society they live in through social activities and find solutions to their problems.

In our country, the education of Syrian children has developed and continued more systematically every passing year, and the schooling rate of these children has increased. Educational services continue in formal schools by giving Turkish education (Seydi, 2014). However, there has been an apparent increase in the number of students who receive education services in formal state schools in recent years (General Directorate of Migration Management, 2017). In the literature, it is seen that the difficulties experienced are related to the factors such as being deprived of educational services due to negativities, duration, loss of the year, not knowing the language of the country where they migrate to, and having economic problems (Choi & Nguyen, 2009). Thus, these difficulties may cause children to pull away from education services and may also lead to a decrease in willingness to learn. Family attitudes and expectations are also important in education services. The family can support the child if they believe in the importance of education services. Besides, it can be seen that sufficient importance is not given to education services when the family's socioeconomic status is not sufficient in the country where they migrate, they have to work continuously, and they need children's support. Besides needing the children's support, it is seen that they cannot adequately support the children because they work hard. In addition, language differences and cultural characteristics are important factors in the adaptation period

(Suarez-Orozco, 2000). Moreover, it is seen that opportunities are offered to migrant families and their children in Turkey within the framework of every individual's right to education principle. Despite the opportunities provided in various areas, such as participation in educational services and enrollment in state schools and universities, it is seen that the participation of the children and cooperation with the family are not at the expected levels and there are problems. This can mainly result from the fact that children have to work due to economic problems and especially children in upper grades have difficulty in language acquisition (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

In conclusion, in light of the findings obtained, one of the important difficulties faced by migrant families is experienced in the education field. Communication, language, and social skills must have been acquired for the education services to be conducted healthily. Migrant families have to deal with various factors such as their problems in their own country, anxiety about coming to a new place, language, cultural differences, and economic problems. Thus, this situation prevents them from participating in education services and establishing cooperation. It is seen that children may have difficulty transferring past knowledge into the schools they have just started, adapting, and academic skills and have problems such as pulling away from the school or not receiving education services appropriate for their expectations in the following period. When looking in terms of families, they have difficulty cooperating with the school due to communication and language problems and do not have much information about the education services provided to their children. In light of these findings, regulations taking a) effect of early education services on language skills, b) language acquisition in social environments, c) the effect of peer support on literacy skills can be suggested for future research regarding migrant children. The following suggestions can be developed for

today's practices: a) Social adaptation skills of migrant families can be supported by public and social institutions. b) Awareness can be increased to widespread preschool education services. c) Peer support and active participation of the families in education services can be provided. d) School-family cooperation can be provided, and the number of activities regarding the school adaptation skills of the families can be increased. e) Social environments can be enriched for providing Turkish language skills to both families and children and for the development of language skills; Visual and audio materials can be included in the education environments; children's games can be used both in education and social environments.

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CHAPTER 2

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH SENSORY IMPAIRMENTS IN INCLUSIVE SETTINGS: TIPS AND STRATEGIES

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is spreading worldwide, and more students with disabilities, including those with sensory disabilities are attending general education classrooms in Turkey and the world. Kart and Kart (2021) reviewed the literature regarding the social and academic effects of inclusion on students without disabilities. Findings showed that students without disabilities also benefited from inclusive classrooms in both social and academic ways. Moreover, inclusion had mostly positive and neutral effects on students with or without disabilities in terms of academic achievement and social development.

More and more students with disabilities have been receiving education in general education classrooms in Turkey. For example, the number of students with disabilities in general education high schools in Turkey increased from 27730 to 59572 in five years from the academic year 2015-2016 to 2020-2021. Similarly, the number of students with disabilities in general education

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elementary schools in Turkey climbed from 81380 to 114991 and in general education middle schools from 92032 to 144769. With the rise of those numbers, research also has increased in the area of inclusion of students with disabilities. (MEB, 2016, 2021).

Sensory impairments are low-incidence disabilities and any type or degree of hearing loss, visual impairment, or a combination of both interferes with typical learning. Teachers play an important role in effective and successful inclusive education but many teachers are not adequately trained in working with students with sensory impairments. Therefore, this chapter aims to provide relevant information on students with sensory disabilities and ways to differentiate instruction with tips and strategies.

STUDENTS WHO ARE D/DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

Deaf and hard of hearing (d/Dhh) students are a very diverse group of students with unique educational needs. Even teachers of the deaf may feel unprepared to teach d/Dhh students and may need guidance on a range of topics such as communication, teaching strategies, and collaboration with parents (Muskoya et al., 2017). The literature indicates that teaching techniques and strategies, classroom environment, and collaboration are the most important teacher competencies (Luckner & Carter, 2001). Unfortunately, most general education teachers have no or very limited experience working with this group. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to present an overview of advanced and controversial issues concerning the education of d/Dhh students in inclusive classrooms and to provide resources and suggestions to enhance the educational experiences of d/Dhh students. Details across a range of topics are provided: (a) definition of hearing impairment and deafness, (b) the demographics of d/Dhh students, (c) causes of hearing impairments, types, and degrees,

(d) communication and language approaches, (e) differentiated instruction, and (f) teaching tips and strategies.

Definitions

According to IDEA (2004), "hearing impairment means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness" (34 CFR 300.8(c)(5)), and "deafness means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's educational performance" (34 CFR 300.8(c)(3)).

Demographics of Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Hearing impairment is a generic term for all degrees of hearing loss, and deafness is low-incidence disability because it does not occur in many children (Smith et al., 2015). However, the use of the phrase d/Dhh refers to all students with a wide range of hearing loss. This includes both audiological and sociocultural parameters of deafness and individuals who are members of Deaf culture.

Even though there have been some advances in the field over the last two decades through early identification and intervention, some demographics remain the same over the years as for every 1000 children born in the United States, two to three babies were identified as having permanent hearing loss (Hartman et al., 2019). Ninety-five percent of d/Dhh children are born into families with at least one hearing parent (Paul et al., 2009). Also, approximately 60% of d/Dhh students have slight to moderate or unilateral hearing loss (Trezek & Hancock, 2013), and only a small percentage of the population has severe or profound hearing loss (Paul et al., 2009).

Deaf and hard-of-hearing students are a very heterogeneous group of students. The existence of an additional disability or disabilities, functional hearing status, mode of communication, and educational placement options make this population even more diverse. One-third to one-half of all d/Dhh students have an additional disability such as learning disabilities, deafblindness, cognitive disabilities, attention disorders, and autism spectrum disorders (Spencer & Marschark, 2010). Students with or without functional hearing are two broad distinct groups that differ in language use (Paul, 2019). For example, in schools, the majority of d/Dhh students (51.4%) use speech only as their primary mode of communication; 25.6% use both spoken and sign language, and 20.2% use sign language only (The Gallaudet Research Institute, 2014). Furthermore, d/Dhh students whose home languages differ from the mainstream language are other contributors to deafness and diversity (Guardino & Cannon, 2015). Lastly, 85% of d/Dhh students attend general education classrooms, and 43% of them spend most of the day there (Hartman et al., 2019).

Causes of Hearing Impairments and Types

Hearing impairment can be congenital or acquired, and many different genetic and environmental factors can lead to hearing loss. For example, some environmental causes include infections during pregnancy and childhood, such as rubella and measles, prematurity, Rh incompatibility, severe jaundice, chronic ear infections, and meningitis (Smith et al., 2015). With respect to location, there are four types of hearing impairment that can be bilateral (affecting both ears) or unilateral (affecting only one ear) (Paul & Whitelaw, 2011; Virginia, 2019).

Four Types of Hearing Impairment:

1. Conductive losses are any malfunctions or abnormalities of the outer or middle ear with the presence of a normal inner ear that can be improved and corrected with amplification and surgery.

2. Sensorineural losses are the most common type of hearing loss that involves damage to the inner ear (cochlea) and/or the auditory nerve. They are not medically correctable, but improvements have been made with hearing aids and/or cochlear implants.

3. Mixed losses involve a combination of conductive and sensorineural components.

4. Central losses occur in the central auditory nervous system which is called an auditory processing disorder (APD). APD exists in the presence of normal hearing, but it causes difficulty in perceiving, discriminating, and understanding sound (Paul & Whitelaw, 2011; Virginia, 2019).

Degrees of Hearing Loss

There are five categories of hearing loss: slight (27-40 dB), mild (41-54 dB), moderate (55- 69 dB), severe (70-89 dB), and profound (>90 dB). Individuals with the first three types of hearing loss have been referred to as hard of hearing, whereas students with the last type of hearing loss are labeled as deaf. Students with severe hearing loss have been labeled either hard of hearing or deaf (Paul & Whitelaw, 2011).

Minimal hearing loss is defined as between 16 and 25 dB (Smith et al., 2015), and research shows that even minimal hearing loss has negative effects on students' achievements (Paul, 2009). Every classroom has background noise. The difference between the teacher's voice and background noise is called the signal-to-noise ratio (SNR). If the teacher's voice is 60 dB and the background noise level is 50 dB, then there is a +10 dB SNR. This rate is important because children with normal hearing require a +6 to +10 dB SNR in the classroom to understand the teacher and other students. On the other hand, children with hearing loss require a +12 to +20 dB SNR. Studies show that classrooms have a -7 to +5 dB SNR (Paul & Whitelaw, 2011). For this reason,

every student's hearing loss should be determined, and special arrangements must be provided. Even slight hearing loss can lead to academic failure, but this group is often not qualified for special education services and is neglected.

Language and Communication Approaches

Hearing impairment causes delays in communication and language development (Bruce & Borders, 2015). Communication is sharing ideas, thoughts, and information, and language is used for communicating either by speaking or signing (CDC, n.d.). Communication is the biggest barrier for d/Dhh individuals and the most important reason for failing in academic and social life. This section provides an overview of the major communication approaches. The first communication option is using speech only, and this approach supports spoken language development.

Oral Philosophy/ Use of Spoken Language

Hearing is one of the most important senses of humans. The five senses are sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Individuals get to know the world with these senses. The lack of one of these senses creates adverse effects. The acquisition of spoken language is linked to hearing, and hearing loss impacts every aspect of spoken language and literacy acquisition, such as vocabulary, grammar, reading, and speech (Thagard, Hilsmier, & Easterbrooks, 2011).

95 % of deaf children are born into hearing families, and parents want their children to talk and understand speechreading (Paul, 2009). Oral approaches focus on using residual hearing and hearing aids or cochlear implants to enhance functional hearing (Gravel & O'Gara, 2003). There are two groups of approaches: auditory -verbal (unisensory) and auditory – oral (multisensory). Both stress the importance of using hearing aids and cochlear implants to use most of the residual hearing to develop spoken language (Virginia, 2019). The auditory-verbal approach focuses

only on audition, while the auditory-oral approach focuses on developing two primary senses, audition and vision, through speech reading, facial expressions, and gestures (Gravel & O'Gara, 2003). There is an equal stress on both senses (Paul, 2009).

Sign Language/ Bilingual-Bicultural Philosophy

ASL is a visual-gestural, rule-governed language that is complete and naturally evolved by the members of the Deaf community. Many members of the Deaf community consider themselves bilingual (use of singing and some form of spoken language) and advocate that deaf children need to be able to communicate in two languages that also allow them to experience two cultures (deaf and hearing) (Gravel & O'Gara, 2003). Bilingual-Bicultural (Bi-Bi) educational philosophies hold the premise of deaf children are inherently members of Deaf culture, and ASL should be their first language, then English should be taught as a second language.

Cued Speech

Cued Speech (CS), also known as Cued Language, is a manual system of cues in combination with spoken language (speech and speechreading) and visual cues (Moores, 2010; Virginia, 2019). CS uses eight different hand shapes and four different locations around the face (Gravel & O'Gara, 2003). Hand shapes represent consonants, and locations around the mouth identify vowels. A hand shape and a location together make a cue that removes the ambiguity of lipreading (Virginia, 2019) since only 40% of speech sounds are visually distinguishable (Gravel & O'Gara, 2003).

Sign Systems (Simultaneous or Total Communication)

A sign system and sign language differ from each other. Sign systems use signs, which are generally borrowed from American Sign Language (ASL), and English word order with some morphological markers while speaking at the same time. On the

other hand, ASL is a natural language that also uses gestures and nonmanual aspects and has a finite set of rules (Paul, 2009).

Sign systems were developed to communicate with deaf children without learning a new language and to give deaf children early access to spoken language. There are five sign communication approaches, ranked from the least to the most representative: English sign, Signed English (SE), seeing essential English (SEE1), signed exact English (SEE2), and Rochester method (RM) (Paul, 2009). English sign is an ASL sign with English word order and has no general rules. Signed English is a system that has 3100 signs and 14 sign makers. Among the SEE systems, SEE 2 is widely used; it incorporates ASL-like signs, and there are 74 invented sign markers. SEE1 has more sign markers. RM conveys English via fingerspelling.

Simultaneous communication (SimCom) is a technique that uses speech and signs at the same time. The usage of sign systems differs among people, and they borrow signs from different systems (Paul, 2009). Total Communication (TC) is the most commonly used communication approach that uses multiple modalities such as sign language, speech, best use of residual hearing through technology, signs, fingerspelling, gestures, body language, facial expression, listening, and speechreading (CDC; Gravel & O'Gara, 2003; Virginia, 2019). Unlike SimCom in this method, all the elements of communication should be used based on the individual needs of a particular child (Moores, 2010).

Fingerspelling

There should be special attention to fingerspelling because all major communication approaches use fingerspelling. The English alphabet has 26 letters, and fingerspelling uses 23 distinct handshapes (three handshapes in two different positions) to represent letters (Paul, 2009). Fingerspelling in RM and ASL differ from each other. RM conveys English via fingerspelling.

It is possible to fingerspell all spoken sentences. Still, there are obvious differences between fingerspelling and English writing because fingerspelling is like a Morse code that uses an enactment of English letters with no direct relation to English phonology (Paul, 2014).

When words are fingerspelled in ASL, they generally refer to names and places. Deaf parents of deaf children's fingerspelling development differ from deaf children who have hearing parents. Skilled fingerspellers perceive and execute words as a movement envelopes. It is common to omit letters during rapid delivery, but unskilled fingerspellers tend to deliver each letter. Deaf children of Deaf parents need to learn fingerspelling twice (Paul, 2015) because, in the beginning stages, children learn words as movement envelops and knowledge of English is not a prerequisite. Then they should learn to associate fingerspelling and letters.

Differentiated Instruction

Even though the hearing loss has adverse effects on learning, d/Dhh students learn in a developmentally similar fashion to hearing students (Paul, 2021). The qualitative similarity hypothesis (QSH) states that the development of certain subject areas such as English language and literacy for d/Dhh children and adolescents is similar to that of typically developing individuals (Paul & Lee, 2010). The QSH argues that there is no need for a separate curriculum for d/Dhh students (Paul, 2021) because the components of the curriculum should be the same. However, the instruction needs to be differentiated, and additional supplements may be necessary (Paul et al., 2013). Thus, the QSH provides a strong rationale for access to the general education curriculum (Paul, 2021).

One of the most important promises of inclusion is access to the general education curriculum and federal policies aim to

improve this access for students with disabilities (Gilmour et al., 2019). To measure access, student achievement is used, and a recent meta-analysis shows that students with disabilities perform more than three years behind their typically developing peers (Gilmour et al., 2019). For this reason, differentiated instruction is especially important for learners like d/Dhh students who may not benefit from traditional strategies (Shepherd & Albert, 2015).

Differentiated instruction is adopting and/or modifying instruction to meet the diverse and individual needs of all students in the same classroom while presenting information in multiple ways. Differentiated instruction also incorporates the principles of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Stanford & Reeves, 2009). Universally designed curriculums offer multiple ways for access, usage, and student engagement and recognize that no single option is effective for all students (Hitchcock et al., 2002). In addition, UDL empowers learners and requires teachers to plan instruction for the success of all students. In UDL classrooms, teachers are responsible for using varied instructional formats and strategies for acquiring knowledge (Stanford & Reeves, 2009).

Individualized education is a key principle of inclusive education for all students, and collaboration supports individual learning in inclusive education (Allman et al., 2019). Collaboration is any interaction between educators. General education teachers and teachers of deaf and hard of hearing students share goals, resources, and decisions to facilitate participation and optimal access to the learning of d/Dhh students in general education (Berndsen & Luckner, 2012). The following lists are adapted from the literature to offer various comprehensive instructional tips and strategies for d/Dhh students (Allman et al., 2019; Erbas, 2017; Berndson & Luckner, 2012; Knoors & Hermans, 2010; Guardino, 2015; Luckner et al., 2016; Esterbrooks & Stephenson, 2006, 2012; Virginia, 2019; Smith et al., 2015; Shields & Lennox, 2017).

Environmental Modifications

- Use preferential seating (at the front of the classroom) to maximum use of residual hearing and speech reading
- For small classrooms, arrange desks in a semicircle.
- Try to reduce background noise so closing doors and windows, and also turn off any unused electrical equipment
- Make sure the classroom is well lit.

Instructional Strategies

- Chose an effective and preferred communication approach based on student's needs
- Provide a note taker and/or interpreter
- Try not to talk when the students can't see your face, such as while writing on the board or walking around the room.
- Speak directly to the student and use a clear, normal tone of voice and speed
- Use facial expressions and hand gestures
- Encourage the student to ask for clarification and always check the comprehension
- Provide extra time for students to complete assignments and examinations
- Give assignments in writing (handout, overhead projector, on the board, via e-mail, or web page).
- Use repair strategies
- Write instructions on the board for visual reference
- Plan short activities and lessons, use brief directions during verbal instruction
- Retain focus by having frequent brain breaks.
- Scaffolding
- Metacognitive strategies
- Use hands-on activities
- Pre and post teaching
- Use one on one instruction
- Use multisensory strategies

Visual and Technological Support

- Use assistive listening devices and amplifiers in the classroom
- Use an FM system
- Make sure the student is using his/her devices
- Use as many visual aids as possible (images, demonstrations, task organizers, graphic organizers, semantic organizers, charts)
- Use videos with real-time captioning, closed captions, or subtitles
- Use technology (smart board, iPads, computer programs, internet sources)

Conclusion

Inclusion becomes a norm for students with disabilities. More d/Dhh students than ever before are educated in general education. Each d/Dhh student has unique educational needs. Therefore, for optimal success in inclusive classes, d/Dhh students should be supported using an appropriate combination approach with a variety of instructional strategies and techniques. Also, collaboration is another key factor for the success of d/Dhh students in an inclusive setting.

STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Students who are blind or visually impaired are a diverse group of students with different characteristics and needs. According to the recent national statistical data (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], Fall 2016), approximately 90% of students with visual impairments were enrolled in general schools in Fall 2012, and 64% of them received 80% or more of their daily instruction in general education classrooms. Inclusion begins in regular education settings, and students' academic performances are not the concern of inclusion but are only concerned about students' benefits of being in the general education class (Huston, 2007).

Inclusion has numerous advantages and there is a mutual benefit for both typically developing and disabled students such as:

- Increased social interaction between students with and without disabilities
- Typical children are raising awareness of differences, become more supportive and helpful and learn to give value to the relationship with students with disabilities
- Accessing the general curriculum
- Support in academic and social environments
- Higher expectations
- Preparation for adult life (MEB, 2014; Smith et al., 2015).

Definitions and Classifications of Students with Visual Impairments

According to IDEA (2004), "visual impairment including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness" (34 CFR 300.8(c)(13)). Students with visual impairments are a heterogeneous group that represents a group of students that ranges from those with low vision to those who are blind, and they can be classified based on different characteristics such as congenital and adventitious visual impairments (Welsh & Tuttle, 1997). Congenital visual impairment means a visual impairment is present at birth whereas adventitious visual impairment is a subsequent loss in the later of life (Welsh & Tuttle, 1997).

There are different classifications for students with visual impairments. Perfect vision is 20/20 visual acuity, and the term legally blind is used for people with 20/200 visual acuity or less in the better eye. That means there could be some useful vision even if the person is legally blind. Totally blind is defined as people who do not have any useful vision, and low vision is defined as

20/70 visual acuity in the better eye (Wiener, Welsh, & Blasch, 2010). Students who are blind use braille or auditory methods to receive instructions in school whereas vision is the primary sensory channel for students with low vision (Smith et al., 2015).

Demographics of Students with Visual Impairments

Visual impairment is a low-incidence disability that accounts for less than 1% of the school population. Albinism, amblyopia, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, hereditary, physical trauma, prematurity, refractive errors, retinal degeneration, retinitis pigmentosa, and rubella are some of the causes of visual impairments.

Many students with visual impairments can read print. According to the American Printing House for the Blind (2018), approximately 33% of students with visual impairments are visual readers, 8% are braille readers, and 12% are auditory readers. The rest of the students with visual impairments are pre-readers or non-readers. Approximately 63% of students with visual impairments are visual readers, 15% are braille readers, and 22% are auditory readers by reading medium if we exclude pre-readers and non-readers. Visual readers use large print and magnification devices to read.

One of the most significant components of the IDEA was the Least restrictive environment, which is described as the environment that allows students with disabilities to be educated with their non-disabled peers as much as possible. This includes general education classrooms but can also include specialized schools or hospitals if the IEP team deems this setting is the most appropriate for the individual students (Smith et al., 2015).

Inclusion practices have been spreading for students with visual impairments. Approximately half of the children who are classified as legally blind in the United States lived in residential schools for the blind in 1963 (Smith et al., 2015). American Printing

House for the Blind (2018) reported that 83% (51271) of children with visual impairments attend public schools, and 8.4% (5196) of children with visual impairments attended specialized schools for students with visual impairments. According to the American Printing House for the Blind (2018), 84.3% (53551) of children with visual impairments attended public schools, and 7.9% (4994) of children with visual impairments attended specialized schools for students with visual impairments. Those statistics show that the number and percentage of students with visual impairments in public schools have still increased from 2015 to 2018.

Mainstreaming and inclusion are sometimes used interchangeably, but they are different concepts. According to Dev (1996), mainstreaming is a partial integration of students with disabilities into general education settings, based on their individual needs, abilities, and characteristics. On the other hand, inclusion begins in general education settings, and students' academic performances are not the concern of inclusion but are only concerned with students' benefits of being in the general education class. In addition, full inclusion means that students with disabilities will be in a general education classroom full-time regardless of their disabilities' condition and severity.

Assistive Technologies

Assistive technology has positive impacts on people with vision loss can be anything such as Braille notetakers, refreshable Braille notetakers, computers, smartphones, talking books, CCTVs, large print, screen readers, tactile maps, and DAISY format (Kelly & Smith, 2011).

In the assistive technologies for students who are visually impaired, screen readers and audiobooks are most used. In 2014, 9.2% of legally blind students were auditory readers. These books have advantages and disadvantages. The main disadvantage is that students cannot freely choose any page.

Tactile maps are another assistive technology that helps students with vision loss, especially in math and science classes. Rosenblum and Herzberg (2015) study what qualities comprise an excellent tactile graphic in mathematics and science classes. Visual impairments usually have lower achievement in science and mathematics than their sighted peers. Tactile graphics supply readers with critical information included in charts, graphs, diagrams, or maps. Visually impaired students' opinions are examined about tactile graphics in this research. Twelve youths who read braille shared their practices with tactile graphics in science and mathematics classes. The students usually reported difficulty locating particular information on the y-axis even though there were gridlines. Most youths expressed they preferred graphics that had clear divisions among elements. Youths were eagerly aware of the certainty of their abilities. Students with visual impairments can need extra time and direct instruction to acquire skills related to measurement and interpreting bar charts and line graphs. If three-dimensional printers can be used in the graphics, the visually impaired students can easily understand them.

According to Kelly and Smith (2011), assistive technologies have been developing rapidly, and they have significant positive impacts on people who are blind or visually impaired. Another useful assistive technology different than listed earlier is Video Magnifiers or Closed Circuit Television Systems (CCTVs). CCTVs are devices that enlarge written or printed texts. These devices are generally for individuals with low vision.

Differentiated Instruction

Students with visual impairments can successfully receive education in general education classrooms with appropriate accommodations.

Classroom accommodations:

- Use preferential seating (at the front of the classroom) to take advantage of any vision the child can use
- Create extra space for students with visual impairments to use and store equipment
- Ensure students with visual impairments have proper lighting
- Orient the students to the classroom and building to help students with visual impairments to understand the physical layout of the building and classroom.

Instructional Considerations:

- Use concrete materials
- Use verbal cues
- Use high-contrast colors on papers and boards
- Share notes with students with visual impairments
- Develop a peer support system
- Engage in various activities
- Use more auditory and tactile materials
- Use more hands-on activities
- Provide large print and braille materials based on students' needs
- Allow extra time for students with visual impairments in-class assignments and tests

Social-Emotional Considerations:

- Teach other students about visual impairments
- Create situations for students with visual impairments to socialize with other students
- Reinforce students for their efforts
- Meet regularly with parents of the students
- Meet regularly with Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI)

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CHAPTER 3

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES TOWARDS SCHOOL AND GENERAL SELF-EFFICACY: THE MODERATION EFFECT OF LEVEL OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

Students are expected to reach pre-determined goals in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains through planned practices of teaching at schools (Ertürk, 1991) However, it is seen that the outcomes obtained from instruction do not always occur at the desired level, students may have difficulty in reaching the expected educational goals, and they fail to demonstrate the desired achievement in international exams (Taş et al., 2016; Yıldırım et al., 2016) Several measurements are taken, considerable changes are made in curricula, and teacher competencies are improved in order to enhance student achievement (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2009a, 2009b, 2017; Muñiz, 2020) In this respect, many professional development programs are also employed for teachers in line with the updated curricula (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2013, 2015) In addition to updating the curricula and teacher competencies, it is important to examine the variables that are effective on students'

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school life and academic achievement to increase the efficiency of educational practices. This may help meet the instruction principle based on the learner (Ertürk, 1991). In this regard, studying the variables affecting students' academic achievement and affective characteristics towards school would be beneficial. Many researchers associate attitudes towards school with such variables as students' academic achievement, school attendance rates, peer relationships, peer bullying, positive teacher-student interaction, and school motivation (Alıcı, 2013; Cheng & Chan, 2003; İlhan, 2017; Veas et al., 2017) Attitudes towards school are formed by students' positive or negative feelings, opinions and behaviors related to school and affect their school motivation and self-regulation skills (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007; Stern, 2012) Students with a positive attitude towards school are seen to have better learning motivation and self-regulation skills while students' self-regulation skills decrease when they are not motivated, which in turn affects their school achievement negatively (Stern, 2012) Moreover, attitudes towards school also influence students' school attendance, and students with a positive attitude towards school have lower absence rates (Adıgüzel & Karadaş, 2013).

In addition to attitudes towards school, self-efficacy perceptions are positively correlated with students' academic achievement, self-respect, self-regulation skills, school engagement, and attitudes (Aktamış et al., 2016; Asakereh & Yousofi, 2018; Erdoğdu & Yüzbaş, 2018; Lee et al., 2014; Serpil Yorganci, 2017). On the other hand, self-efficacy is negatively related to anxiety (Tuncer & Akmençe, 2019, and it is important to examine students' attitudes toward school and self-efficacy that affect their academic achievement and many other school-related affective characteristics. The present study aimed to examine secondary school, high school, and university students' attitudes towards school, their self-efficacy perceptions, and the

relationships between these variables in terms of education and gender. Also, the level of education was examined as a moderator for the relationship between attitudes towards school and general self-efficacy.

Attitude toward School

The related literature includes a variety of studies on attitudes towards school. One of the variables to be effective in attitudes towards school is gender. Many researchers state that attitudes towards school vary by gender, and most of them report that females hold more positive attitudes towards school than males (Adıgüzel & Karadaş, 2013; Erkman et al., 2010; Marks, 1998; Veas et al., 2017). However, Cheng & Chan, (2003) found higher attitudes towards school in males, which was associated with the tradition of more pressure for academic success on men than women in the Chinese culture. Başaran & Yıldırım (2017), on the other hand, reported no relationship between attitudes towards school and gender.

In addition to gender, level of education is also an influential factor in attitudes towards school. Wigfield et al. (1997) report that compared to secondary and high school students, primary school students show more interest in school-related tasks and find them more meaningful. On the other hand, Entwisle et al. (2005) state that one-third of high school students lose their interest in school, show less persistence in fulfilling school-related tasks and are less willing to obey the school rules. Stern (2012), claims high school students generally find school meaningless and think working hard has very little related to their future. It is seen that students who think what they learn in class is not related to real-life have low attitudes toward school and are less motivated for academic success (Willingham, 2009). Similarly, Cheng and Chan (2003) found that younger students held more positive attitudes toward school. To sum up, it can be understood that attitudes towards

school vary by level of education; they are negatively affected as they level up, and students begin not showing interest in school-related tasks and find these tasks useless (Entwisle et al., 2005; Gottfredson, Marciniak, Birdseye, & Gottfredson, 1995; Stern, 2012; Wigfield et al., 1997).

Another variable considered effective in attitudes towards school is school engagement (Jenkins, 1997; Özdemir, 2017; Stern, 2012). Such concepts nourish school engagement as the sense of belonging to the school and school commitment. This feeling manifests in the sense of belonging to the school, belief, obedience to the school rules, and respect for teachers (Jenkins, 1997). Many researchers state that students participating in extracurricular activities have higher school engagement levels (Gottfredson et al., 1995; Uyan, 2013). Since student clubs and sports activities are not compulsory, students choose to spend their free time joining in such school-related activities and have stronger connections with school, while students with weaker school engagement do not prefer to participate in these activities (Stern, 2012). Likewise, Uyan (2013 suggests that voluntary music education positively affects students' attitudes toward school.

Teacher characteristics are another variable that is thought to affect students' attitudes towards school (Gottfredson et al., 1995; Stern, 2012)Teachers' friendly approaches and student-teacher interaction affect interest in and attitudes towards school positively (Gottfredson, Cross, Wilson, Rorie, & Connell, 2010) Students who think teachers and peers support theme seen to feel more academically responsible and hold more positive attitudes towards school as well as acting according to the rules (Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997) Jenkins (1997) also claims that students who find school rules fair and reasonable have more positive attitudes towards school. Similarly, according to Mok and Flynn (2002), students' in-class experiences are highly effective in

their school-related quality of life. The classroom atmosphere, which is mostly shaped by teacher behavior, affects attitudes towards school as well. In order to enhance positive attitudes towards school, the classroom atmosphere must include rich learning materials easily accessible by the student. In addition, mutual support and relationships that help the learners in class trust each other; and academic support provided by the teacher on learning and motivation basis both at individual and group levels may improve attitudes towards school (Mok & Flynn, 2002; Stern, 2012) In addition to an organized classroom setting, when teachers create an atmosphere that promotes safe and positive interpersonal relationships, they can enhance attitudes towards school (Mok & Flynn, 2002; Stern, 2012) Evaluation approaches employed in the class by teachers may as well be effective on students' attitudes towards school. While a learning-oriented evaluation atmosphere is positively related to students' attitudes towards school, a performance-oriented evaluation approach has a negative relationship (İlhan, 2017)Teachers' expectations is also one of the important factors that influence students' attitudes towards school (Gottfredson et al., 2010) Gottfredson et al. (2010) state that students perceive their teachers' low expectations and act accordingly. According to Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), teachers first set expectations from their students in this process, and later students comprehend the clues reflecting their teachers' expectations and act in this direction. Then, student performances come out in line with these expectations. Thus, low-grade averages affected by teacher expectations is one of the strongest determiners of attitudes towards school (Jessor et al., 1995; Stern, 2012; Veas et al., 2017). In other words, students with a moderate and high level of achievement hold higher attitudes towards school than those with low achievement (Mccoach & Siegle, 2003). However, Marjoribanks (1992) reports that attitude towards school has a moderate effect on females' academic

achievement, whereas it does not affect males' achievement.

General Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the belief that individuals are capable of exercising control over the events that affect their lives. In other words, it can be defined as individuals' beliefs in their performance. Self-efficacy beliefs affect how individuals feel, think, be motivated and behave (Bandura, 1994). Individuals' self-efficacy perceptions are seen to be significantly correlated with their attitudes (Baltacı, 2004; Emre & Ünsal, 2017; Özokcu, 2018; Sani & Zain, 2011; Serpil Yorganci, 2017) Baltacı (2004) claims that perceived self-efficacy of school administrators is effective on their attitudes towards profession. Emre & Ünsal (2017) state that secondary school teachers' self-efficacy is a meaningful predictor of their attitudes. Özokcu (2018) claims that teacher self-efficacsignificantly predicts their attitudes towards inclusive education. According to Wu & Tsai (2006), university students' internet self-efficacy is highly correlated with their attitudes towards the internet. Although significant relationships have been reported between self-efficacy and attitude in many fields, no study has examined students' attitudes towards school and their general self-efficacy at secondary, high, and university levels. Therefore, it is important to examine how general self-efficacy relates to attitudes towards school at different levels.

There are several variables concerning students' self-efficacy, one of which is gender (Aypay, 2010; Bonsaksen et al., 2019; Hodačová et al., 2020). Many studies show that men's general self-efficacy scores are higher than those of women (Aypay, 2010; Bonsaksen et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2019). On the other hand, several studies report no relationship between gender and general self-efficacy (Uysal, 2013). As for age, Bonsaksen et al. (2019) state that general self-efficacy does not vary by age, while Aktamış et al. (2016) claim that secondary school students' self-

efficacy perceptions improve as their grade level gets higher. Chen, Björkman, Zou, and Engström (2019 report that third-year students at universities hold lower self-efficacy perceptions than second-year students.

Besides gender and age, general self-efficacy positively correlates with many positive affective characteristics. These include life satisfaction, self-esteem, communication skills, and brief resilience (Capri et al., 2012; Orkaizagirre-Gómara et al., 2020; Poorbaferani et al., 2018). On the other hand, general self-efficacy has negative correlations with many affective characteristics that can be considered negatory. These can be listed as stress, burn-out, and anxiety (Capri et al., 2012; Orkaizagirre-Gómara et al., 2020). Students with high general self-efficacy experience lower anxiety, stress, and less burnout. Students' self-efficacy is correlated with many school-related traits as well. Some of them are self-regulated learning and metacognitive abilities, and students with higher self-efficacy have higher scores on both self-regulated learning and metacognitive abilities (Chen et al., 2019).

Another variable correlated with students' general self-efficacy is school engagement (Erdoğdu & Yüzbaş, 2018). Students who have higher general self-efficacy love school more, want to take more part in school activities, and better embrace the goals and values of the school (Erdoğdu & Yüzbaş, 2018). Many studies report a significant positive relationship between general self-efficacy and academic achievement (Aktamış et al., 2016; Asakereh & Yousofi, 2018). Nevertheless, according to Tang and Westwood (2007), there is no relationship between general self-efficacy and academic achievement. Individuals' self-efficacy perceptions and attitudes are also positively correlated (Baltacı, 2004; Emre & Ünsal, 2017; Özokcu, 2018; Serpil Yorganci, 2017).

As one can see, the related literature includes a variety of studies

examining the effects of teacher behavior, learning environment, gender, and level of education on attitudes towards school and general self-efficacy (Cheng & Chan, 2003; Marjoribanks, 1992; Mccoach & Siegle, 2003; Stern, 2012) While studies are looking into the relationship of attitudes towards school and general self-efficacy with such variables as academic achievement and gender (Adıgüzel & Karadaş, 2013; Başaran & Yıldırım, 2017; Erkman et al., 2010; İlhan, 2017; Uyan, 2013), no study has been found on the effect of level of education from secondary school to university on attitudes towards school and general self-efficacy. In addition, no study has been found to examine the moderator effect of level of education on the relationship between attitudes towards school and general self-efficacy.

The Aim of the Study

The present study aimed to examine the relationships between secondary school, high school, and university students' attitudes towards school and general self-efficacy in terms of the level of education and gender. To this end, answers were sought for the following research questions.

1. Do secondary school, high school, and university students' attitudes towards school and general self-efficacy scores vary by level of education and gender?
2. What is the moderating role of the level of education in the relationship between attitudes towards school and general self-efficacy?

The Significance of the Study

Students' attitudes towards school and their general self-efficacy are closely related to many variables like academic achievement, school engagement, self-regulated learning, and metacognitive learning. A positive attitude towards school and high general self-efficacy levels not only reduce the risk of school dropout

but also promote learning motivation, increase students' school attendance rates and improve academic achievement (McCoach, 2000; Veas et al., 2017). The present study aims to determine the attitudes towards school and general self-efficacy levels of students at different levels of education through a cross-sectional survey and to examine the moderating effect of the level of education on the relationship between these two variables. Therefore, the study is important in understanding the existing situation and leading the way for future studies. The data obtained from the study might help offer recommendations to make evidence-based decisions in designing and implementing curricula. Thus, the study is expected to make a scientific contribution to instruction's planning and implementation processes.

There are many studies about the results of training on attitudes (Uyan, 2013), the correlations between attitudes towards school and other variables (Kaya & Sezgin, 2017; Özdemir, 2017), the effects of assessment atmosphere on attitudes towards school (İlhan, 2017) and the effects of school attitudes on academic achievement (Adıgüzel & Karadaş, 2013; Başlantı, 2002; Erkman et al., 2010) Although some studies state level of education affects attitudes towards school (Cheng & Chan, 2003; Entwisle et al., 2005; Stern, 2012; Wigfield et al., 1997) no study has been found to examine how school attitudes vary by secondary school, high school, and university levels. General self-efficacy, on the other hand, has been studied concerning many variables like gender, life satisfaction, and school engagement (Erdoğdu & Yüzbaş, 2018; Hodačová et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2019) While there are studies examining whether general self-efficacy varies by age or grades at a single level of education (Aktamış et al., 2016; Bonsaksen et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2019); no study has looked into general self-efficacy at secondary school, high school and university levels. In addition, while some studies examine the relationship between self-efficacy and attitude broadly (Baltacı,

2004; Emre & Ünsal, 2017; Özokcu, 2018; Serpil Yorganci, 2017), no study has been found on the moderating role of the level of education in the relationship between general self-efficacy and attitudes towards school. Thus, the present study is expected to significantly contribute to the literature.

Method

The study was conducted as a cross-sectional survey. The study population comprises a secondary school, high school, and university students studying within the borders of İzmir Metropolitan municipality. Using a stratified sampling method, approximately 200 students were included in the study from the sixth, eighth, ninth, eleventh grades, and first and fourth years at the university level. In this regard, sixth (n=175) and eighth (n=185) graders who are likely to get into the formal cognitive operational stage at the secondary education level and ninth (n=248) and eleventh graders (n=246) –twelfth graders were excluded due to exam pressure- at the high school level were included in the study. At the undergraduate level, first (n=189) and fourth (n=239) year students were included to see the situation at the start and the end of university education. In addition, one school was selected from the upper, middle, and lower socio-economic levels at the secondary education level. As for high schools, one Anatolian high school was chosen from each of the high, medium, and low score groups according to high school entrance scores. In addition, university students were selected from among the undergraduate students studying in different departments of the faculty of education and attending the pedagogical formation certificate program.

Data Collection Instruments

Attitude Scale Towards School

The Attitude Towards School Scale was developed by Alıcı (2013)

to use with high-school students. The scale consists of twenty items and three components. The components are titled "School as a Barrier to Personal Development", "School as a Supportive of Personal Development," and "School as an Entity to be Longed For". The responses to the five-point Likert type scale range from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". The maximum possible score to be obtained from the scale is 100, while the minimum score is 20. The Alpha reliability coefficients of the first, second, and third sub-components were found as .87; .81 and .79, respectively. The confirmatory factor analysis results showed that the goodness fit indexes were within the acceptable range. In the present study, the Alpha reliability coefficients of the three sub-components were calculated as .89, .88, and .81. The psychometric properties of the scale were tested for undergraduate students by Author (2018) In the light of the data obtained from 771 undergraduate students, confirmatory factor analysis was performed, and the scale was seen to apply to undergraduate students (RMSEA: .074, CFI: .91, SRMR: .049).

The appropriateness of the psychometric properties of the Attitude Scale towards School for secondary school students was examined with CFA in the present study. The goodness-of-fit indexes are presented in Table 1, and the standardized values are shown in Figure 1. The Coefficient Alpha reliability values are presented in Table 2. The scale's psychometric properties were also shown to be appropriate for secondary school students.
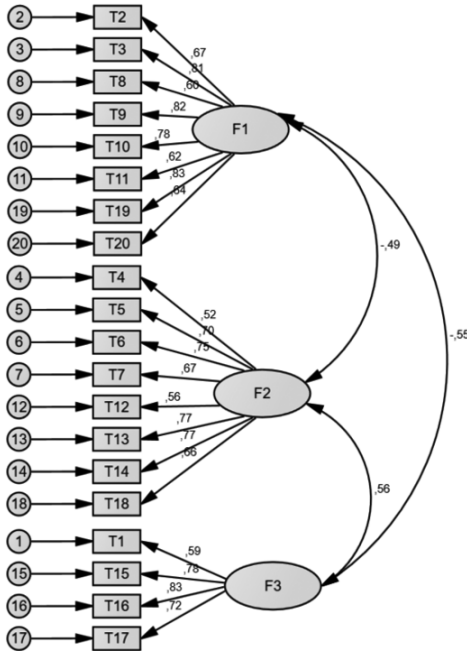
Figure 1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model for the Sample of the Attitude Scale towards School (Standardized Values)

General Self-Efficacy Scale

The General Self-efficacy Scale (GSE) was developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem and adapted to more than 25 languages (Aypay, 2010; Scholz et al., 2002). The cultural adaptation of the scale into Turkish was conducted by Aypay (2010) with a sample of preservice teachers. The original single-dimension scale consists of 10 items (Scholz et al., 2002). Total scores can be obtained over the scale, with low scores showing low general self-efficacy and high scores high general self-efficacy (Aypay, 2010) Aypay (2010) states that the Turkish form of the scale consists of 10 items and two dimensions. The appropriateness of the psychometric properties of this scale for secondary school and high school

students was evaluated in the present study. The goodness of fit indexes obtained from the CFA are shown in Table 1, and the standardized values are presented in Figure 2. The Coefficient Alpha reliability values are presented in Table 2. The psychometric properties of the scale were also appropriate for secondary and high school students.
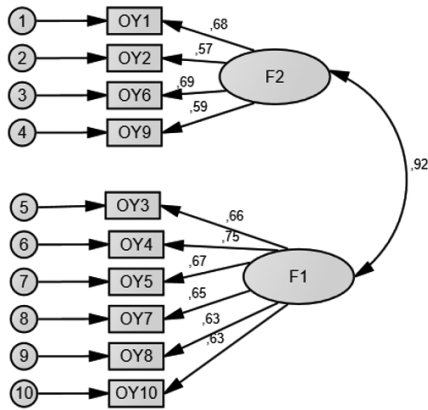

Figure 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model for the General Self-Efficacy Scale (Secondary School - Standardized Values)
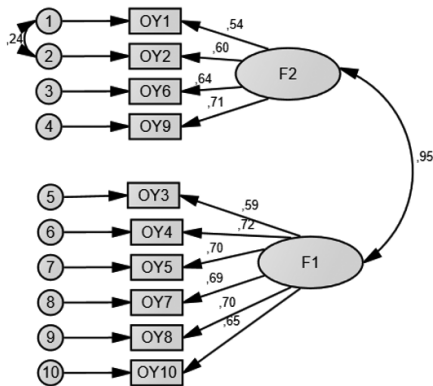
Figure 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model for the General Self-Efficacy Scale (High School - Standardized Values)

Table 1: The Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analyses of the Scales Examined for Psychometric Properties					
Fit Indices	Good Fit*	Adequate Fit*	GSE (Secondary)	GSE (High)	Attitude toward School (Secondary)
RMSEA	0<RMSEA<0.05	0.05<RMSEA<0.08	.074	.08	.068
SRMR	0<SRMR<0.05	0.05<SRMR<0.1	.044	.045	.06
NNFI	0.97<NNFI<1	0.95<NNFI<0.97	.91	.92	.91
CFI	0.97<CFI<1	0.95<CFI<0.97	.94	.94	.92
			100**	138**	422**
sd			34	33	167

* (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2015; Şimşek, 2007) ** p<.01

Table 2: Alpha Coefficients of Reliability				
		Secondary	High	University
Attitude	School as a Barrier to Personal Development	.89	.88	.89
	School as a Supportive to Personal Development	.86	.89	.89
	School as an Entity to be Longed for	.81	.77	.77
General Self-efficacy	Effort and Resistance	.83	.83	.84
	Ability and Confidence	.72	.75	.72

Data Analysis

T-test, ANOVA and regression analyses were performed to answer the research questions. SPSS Hayes process v.3.5 was used to analyze the moderator effect. The measurement models were tested using SPSS AMOS 23, and the inter-variable relationships using SPSS 23 package programs. Missing data analysis was conducted with the listwise method, and the missing data were

replaced by the series mean (Kalaycı, 2008). Normal distribution, which is among the main assumptions of the analyses used, was evaluated with skewness and kurtosis values, and the assumption of normal distribution was met as the values ranged between -1,5 and +1,5 (Leech et al., 2014). The assumption of the linear relationship between variables was met when the Q-Q graphs were checked.

Results

This section includes descriptive statistics in the first place and presents the findings obtained from the analyses conducted in light of the research questions. The study was participated by a total of 1282 students from three different secondary schools, four different high schools, and eight different departments of two universities. 723 of these students are females, 542 are males, and one student marked "other" while 33 students left this question unanswered. Participants' distribution by grades is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Participants' distribution by grades		
Grade	f	%
6	175	14
8	185	14
9	248	19
11	246	19
Undergraduate year 1	189	15
Undergraduate year 4	239	19
Total	1282	100

Descriptive statistics concerning the dependent variables are presented in Table 4

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics concerning the Dependent Variables

Level			n	Min	Maks	Mean	S. S.	Skewnes	Kurtosis
Secondary	Attitude towards School	School as a Barrier to Personal Development	360	1	5	2,26	1,00	0,61	-0,47
		School as a Supportive to Personal Development	360	1	5	3,97	0,82	-0,89	0,59
		School as an Entity to be Longed for	360	1	5	2,87	1,13	0,19	-0,78
		Attitude Total	360	33	84	60,99	7,70	-0,41	1,28
	General Self-efficacy	Effort and Resistance	360	1	4	3,21	0,58	-0,82	1,03
		Ability and Confidence	360	1	4	3,34	0,58	-0,94	0,59
		General Self-efficacy Total	360	10	40	32,54	5,41	-0,76	0,75
High	Attitude towards School	School as a Barrier to Personal Development	494	1	5	2,91	1,03	0,26	-0,74
		School as a Supportive to Personal Development	494	1	5	3,32	0,93	-0,57	-0,17
		School as an Entity to be Longed for	494	1	5	1,96	0,87	0,84	0,28
		Attitude Total	494	41	84	57,56	7,09	0,52	0,93
	General Self-efficacy	Effort and Resistance	494	1	4	3,02	0,59	-0,41	0,58
		Ability and Confidence	494	1	4	3,23	0,59	-1,06	2,04
		General Self-efficacy Total	494	10	40	30,95	5,52	-0,59	1,18
University	Attitude towards School	School as a Barrier to Personal Development	428	1	5	2,28	0,82	0,89	0,87
		School as a Supportive to Personal Development	428	1	5	3,79	0,68	-0,79	1,45
		School as an Entity to be Longed for	428	1	5	2,32	0,79	0,27	-0,05
		Attitude Total	428	42	79	57,68	5,38	0,21	0,90
	General Self-efficacy	Effort and Resistance	428	1,67	4	3,03	0,44	0,13	0,33
		Ability and Confidence	428	2	4	3,20	0,40	0,11	0,39
		General Self-efficacy Total	428	20	40	30,91	3,96	0,25	0,41

Table 3 shows that school attitude scores and general self-efficacy levels of secondary school students are higher than those of high school and university students. Independent samples t-test was applied to see whether the students' school attitude and general self-efficacy scores varied by gender, and the results obtained are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. T-test results concerning the Scores of "School as a Barrier to Personal Development"								
Level	Variable	Gender	n	Mean.	S	Sd	t	p
Secondary	Attitude	Female	154	59,79	8,61	352	-2,56	,01
		Male	200	61,89	6,86			
	General Self-efficacy	Female	154	32,16	5,28	352	-1,12	,26
		Male	200	32,81	5,50			
High	Attitude	Female	263	58,20	7,44	478	1,95	,05
		Male	217	56,94	6,64			
	General Self-efficacy	Female	263	31,04	5,60	478	,19	,84
		Male	217	30,94	5,22			
University	Attitude	Female	117	58,80	5,93	415	2,77	,01
		Male	300	57,21	5,03			
	General Self-efficacy	Female	117	30,99	4,21	415	,77	,77
		Male	300	30,87	3,74			

Table 5 shows that the students' attitudes towards school vary by gender at secondary school and university levels. While males' attitudes toward school (=61.89) are higher than those of females (=59.79) at the secondary school level (t(352)=2.56, p<.05). On the other hand, female students' mean scores (=58.80) are higher than those of male students [(=57.21) t(415)=2.77, p<.01], at the university level. Cohen d effect sizes were found as .27 for the differences among secondary school students and as .29 for the differences among university students. On the other hand, general self-efficacy does not vary by gender at secondary, high,

and university levels. Variance analysis was conducted to see whether attitudes from school and general self-efficacy varied by level of education, and the values obtained are given in Table 6.

	Level	n	Mean.	S	sd	F	p	Source of Difference
Table 6. Distribution of School Attitude and General Self-efficacy Scores by Level of Education								
Attitudes towards School	Secondary	360	60,99	7,70	1279	32,22	.00	Secondary-High Secondary-University
	High	494	57,56	7,09				
	University	428	57,68	5,38				
General Self-efficacy	Secondary	360	32,54	5,41	1279	13,33	.00	Secondary-High Secondary-University
	High	494	30,95	5,52				
	University	428	30,91	3,96				

Table 6 shows that attitude scores towards the school and general self-efficacy scores vary by level of education. Secondary school students' total scores are higher for both variables. Examining the source of the difference with LSD test, it is seen that secondary school students differ from high school and university students in both attitudes towards school and general self-efficacy scores. Cohen d effect sizes concerning these differences in attitudes towards school are .46 for the difference between secondary and high school students and .50 for the difference between secondary school and university students. These effect sizes were found as .29 for secondary and high school students and .34 for secondary school and university students for the differences in general self-efficacy scores.

Regression analysis was performed to check if general self-efficacy is a significant predictor of attitudes towards school. General self-efficacy appears to be a significant predictor of attitudes towards school at all three levels [R=.17, R2=.03, F=39.78, p<.01]. However, 0.3% of the total variance of attitudes towards

school is explained by general self-efficacy. General self-efficacy is a significant predictor of attitudes towards school at the secondary school level [R=.22, R2=.049, F=18.59, p<.01], and general self-efficacy explains 0.5% of the total variance of attitudes towards school. Similarly, general self-efficacy is a significant predictor of attitudes towards school at the high school level [R=.12, R2=.014, F=7.18, p<.01] explaining 0,14% of the total variance of attitudes towards school. On the other hand, general self-efficacy is not a significant predictor of attitudes towards school at the university level.

In order to determine if the difference between levels is significant in predicting attitudes towards school by general self-efficacy, the moderating effect of the level was examined. The model concerning this analysis is presented in Figure 4.
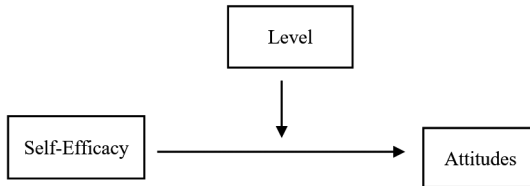

Figure 4: Moderating effect of level of education on the relationship between general self-efficacy and attitudes towards school.

The moderating effect of the level was analyzed to determine whether the relationship between general self-efficacy and attitudes towards school varied by level of education. The analysis was performed using Hayes Process for SPSS. The effect of general self-efficacy on attitudes towards school was positive and significant (b=-.56, s.e.=.12, p<.001), conditional on level = 0; the conditional effect of level was positive and significant (b=3.84, se=1.88, p<.05), conditional on general self-efficacy = 0. The interaction term was statistically significant (b=2.6055,

s.e.=1.0509, p=.0136) in the model, indicating that level was a significant moderator of the effect of general self-efficacy on attitudes towards school. The R-square change from Model 1 (effect of general self-efficacy on attitudes towards school) to Model 2 (adding in the interaction of general self-efficacy and level to model 1) was .0062, indicating the interaction effect accounted for only 0.62% added variation in Y. The moderation effect of level on the relationships between general self-efficacy and attitudes toward school was presented in Figure 5.
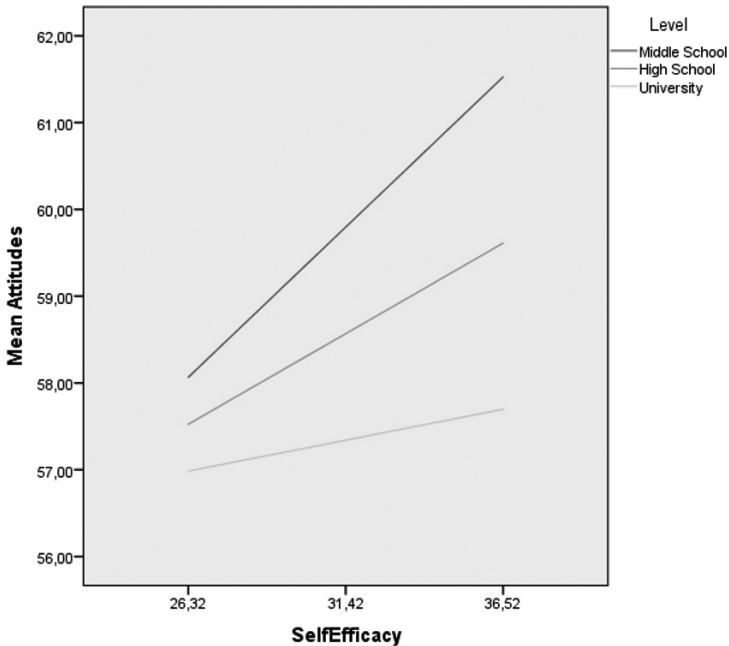

Figure 5: The moderation effect of level on the relationships between general self-efficacy and attitudes towards school

These are the simple slopes for the relationship between general self-efficacy (X) and attitudes towards school (Y) at different levels of the moderator (W=school level). Graph 1

shows that the relationship between general self-efficacy and attitudes toward school in higher at the secondary school level, while regression coefficients of this relationship and the slopes of the graph decrease as the level of education gets higher.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined whether general self-efficacy levels and attitudes towards secondary school, high school, and university students varied by level of education and gender as well as the moderating effect of education on the relationship between attitudes towards school and general self-efficacy. The results show that males' attitudes towards school are higher while general self-efficacy does not vary by gender. Attitudes towards school are higher in secondary school students and decrease in high school and university students. General self-efficacy is a significant predictor of attitudes towards school, and level is a significant moderator of the relationship between general self-efficacy and attitudes towards school. The relationship between general self-efficacy and attitudes towards school is higher among secondary school students than high school and university students. Regression coefficients between the two variables decrease as the education level increases.

At the secondary school level, males' attitudes towards school are higher at a statistically significant rate. Similarly, Cheng & Chan (2003) found that males' attitudes towards school were higher than those of females in the group where secondary and high school students were studied together. However, Marks (1998) states that females hold higher attitudes toward school among 14-15-year old students in Australia. The present study found that the scores of males at the high school level were higher, while the difference was not significant. Parallel with this finding, Başaran & Yıldırım (2017) report that high school

students' attitudes towards school do not vary by gender. Adıgüzel & Karadaş (2013), on the other hand, state that females' attitudes towards school are higher among 10th graders. In the present study, females at the university level are seen to have significantly higher scores of attitudes towards school. Effects sizes of significant differences were found as .27 for secondary school students and .29 for university students. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) these are modest effects.

On the other hand, general self-efficacy does not vary by gender at all three levels. Uysal (2013) states that general self-efficacy does not vary by gender in parallel with these findings. However, many researchers claim that general self-efficacy varies by gender, and males have higher general self-efficacy scores (Aypay, 2010; Bonsaksen et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2019).

When attitude towards school is examined according to the level of education, it is at the highest level at secondary school but decreases at high school and remains at the high school level in undergraduate education. Cohen d effect sizes were found as .46 for the secondary-high school difference and .50 for the secondary-university difference. These are moderate-level effect sizes (Cohen et al., 2007). These differences in attitudes towards school by the level of education are parallel with many findings in the literature (Argon & Yılmaz, 2016; Cheng & Chan, 2003; Özdemir, 2017; Stern, 2012) Cheng and Chan (2003) report that secondary school students' attitudes towards school are more positive. Similarly, Özdemir (2017) states that high school students' attitudes towards school are low. Argon and Yılmaz (2016) also found that high school students' attitudes towards school were low and that students' peer relationships were negatively affected by lowered attitudes towards school. Negative attitudes towards school may be expected to negatively affect many conditions, such as academic achievement, absence rates,

and disobeying school rules(Jenkins, 1997; Marjoribanks, 1992).

The fact that high school students hold lower attitudes towards school compared with secondary school students can be associated with several reasons. Compared with secondary school students, high school students are reported to find school-related tasks more meaningless, show less persistence in academic tasks, are less willing to obey school rules, and think that hard work is only little related to their future (Entwisle et al., 2005; Stern, 2012; Wigfield et al., 1997) These negative opinions about school may cause attitudes towards school to fall as well.

Regarding general self-efficacy, secondary school students' scores are higher than those of high school and university students. Cohen d effect sizes were found as .29 for the differences between secondary and high school students and .34 for the difference between secondary school and university students. The effect sizes found for the differences in general self-efficacy are at a modest level (Cohen et al., 2007). Similarly, Chen et al. (2019) state that third-year students at universities have lower self-efficacy perceptions than second-year students. Aktamış et al. (2016), on the other hand, report that secondary school students' self-efficacy perceptions increase as their grades get higher. However, Bonsaksen et al. (2019) found that general self-efficacy did not vary by age.

General self-efficacy is a significant predictor of attitudes towards school. However, the total variance explained is considerably low (0.5%). Similarly, many studies report relationships between individuals' self-efficacy perceptions and attitudes (Baltacı, 2004; Emre & Ünsal, 2017; Özokcu, 2018; Sani & Zain, 2011; Serpil Yorganci, 2017). In some of the studies state that self-efficacy predicts attitude, almost 50% or more of the variance is explained (Baltacı, 2004; Tuncer & Akmençe, 2019) in some others, 10% of the variance is explained (Emre & Ünsal,

2017) while some studies explain less than 1% of the variance (Özokcu, 2018).

Recommendations

In light of the findings obtained, attitudes towards school fall together with the start of high school education. In this regard, it would be beneficial to take measures to increase attitudes towards school in the curriculum for high school. Performance-based evaluation has a negative impact on attitudes towards school, while a leaning-oriented evaluation approach promotes the attitudes (İlhan, 2017). In addition to the pressure caused by the university entrance exam, usually, performance-based evaluations are conducted at high schools. Adopting evaluation approaches that focus on student learning and aim to fill the gaps in learning instead of performance and competition-based evaluation in curricula is highly important to promote students' attitudes towards school. In addition, high school students generally find school meaningless and think that academic studies are hardly related to their future may cause attitudes towards school to decrease at the high school level (Stern, 2012). Thus, curricula should be revised in line with the principles of suitability for the social environment, student appropriateness, active learning, and learning-based evaluation (Açıkgöz, 2003; Ertürk, 1991; İlhan, 2017).

Teacher expectations and behaviors also greatly impact students' attitudes towards school. For example, teachers' friendly approaches, positive student-teacher interactions, and students' being supported by their teachers and peers improve attitudes towards school (Gottfredson et al., 2010; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). In this respect, implementing professional development programs for teachers can be useful.

Attitude towards school is directly related to many variables concerning school and teachers. Students' participation in

extracurricular activities like art and sport promotes an increase in their attitudes towards school (Jenkins, 1997; Uyan, 2013). Therefore, students must be encouraged to participate in such activities; the variety of activities offered to students should be enlarged, especially at the high school and university levels, where attitudes towards school appear to be low. Moreover, finding school rules fair and reasonable affects attitudes towards school (Jenkins, 1997). Creating a democratic environment in schools and promoting the inclusion of students in decision-making processes is important in improving attitudes towards school. Similarly, Akkan (2011) suggests that students' democratic awareness is significantly related to academic achievement.

Despite the findings and recommendations offered for practice, the present study has some limitations. The study was carried out with 1284 students within the borders of İzmir Metropolitan Municipality. The study can be repeated with samples that could represent the whole country throughout Turkey. Variables related to students' attitudes towards school were limited to general self-efficacy, gender, and level of education. Researchers can be recommended to conduct new studies, including other variables influencing attitudes towards school. The difference between the levels of education was examined with a cross-sectional approach; thus, the findings can be evaluated with longitudinal studies. In addition, it would be fruitful to conduct experimental studies to see how curricular amendments affect attitudes towards school.

In conclusion, the present study examined general self-efficacy and attitudes towards school from secondary school to university; it was found that both general self-efficacy and attitudes towards school are higher at the secondary school level while lower at the high school and university levels. General self-efficacy is significantly related to attitudes towards school, and level of education has a moderating role in this relationship. Therefore,

it would be useful to consider the findings concerning attitudes towards schools when making amendments to the curriculum.

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CHAPTER 4

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE RELATION BETWEEN GENDER AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN A STATE HIGH SCHOOL LOCATED IN ANTAKYA

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INTRODUCTION

Each society places its members into specified categories known as "status" in the socialization process, as pointed out by Fichter (1994, p.177). People achieve this status either by their efforts or are born directly into the necessary status. Sometimes, people can occupy more than one status like; mother, doctor, sister, patient, or passenger, which constitutes a social stratum. All these statuses require specific roles in society in order to be a part of the socialization process and universality of the culturally vital roles. The problem with this kind of perspective, according to Fichter (1994), is that it is a judgment that can be applied to the roles of gender within the society and culture, which assumes that being a woman and a man are universal statuses people are born with. In this socialization process, the attitudes equated with gender and the internalization of these attitudes as expected from the "girls" and "boys" are taught mainly through family, schools, and other similar institutions.

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According to earlier studies, girls often perform better in school than boys. According to a recent survey by Hartley and Sutton (2013), gender stereotypes about girls' academic superiority in terms of drive, aptitude, performance, and self-control are more prevalent among boys. However, prior research on gender inequalities in several areas of academic attainment produced somewhat contradictory findings. This study illustrates how teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and classroom practices change dramatically with what Giddens (1984) refers to as "discursive consciousness", particularly in the gendered school discourses. On the other hand, the study argues the attributions of gender (male/ female) in the students' adolescent relationships through everyday classroom study. This study analyses the case in a state Anatolian High School in Antakya, Turkey. Additionally, some concepts and generalizations that have become stereotypes uttered by the students and teachers of the high school will be shown in detailed analyses.

We first presented the school's profile that this study was conducted in terms of its status as academic performance and its typical mission as a regulatory unit. Secondly, one of the issues emphasized was to explore the construction of schoolgirl and schoolboy gender, referring to the results and suggestions in the study conducted by Gidden's (1984). The research does not attempt to conceptualize school as a place where students practice gendered relations or perspectives but, as Giddens (1984) calls it, a hegemonic site where gender is reconstructed within the context of education rather than instruction. The gendered nature of school has various and complex dimensions, including teachers and management's perception of successful male and female students. On the other hand, many factors influence students' perceptions of their teachers and friends. Finally, we focus on the differences between the gender perceptions of female and male students and female and male teachers.

The ultimate purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of both male and female students and teachers regarding their academic achievement, personal characteristics, and behaviors by their teachers and peers. In an attempt to examine the different perceptions between male and female students in the school system, the following research questions were developed:

1. How do teachers perceive male and female students' academic achievement and personal characteristics?
2. How do students perceive male and female students regarding their academic achievement and personal characteristics?
3. Is there any relationship between gender and students' academic achievement and personal characteristics?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Because of their enormous impact on academic motivation and utilization for boosting academic success, factors impacting academic performance have been accepted as one of the most crucial elements to analyze. For example, one of the personal factors linked to variations in academic achievement is gender. Various studies have shown that boys and girls have different attribution patterns, with boys placing more emphasis on talent and luck as the reasons for their academic success and girls tending to emphasize work when explaining their accomplishments (Georgiou, 1999; Burgner & Hewstone, 1993).

Gender discourses have taken center stage in many types of research. Many scholars have wondered why male and female students are perceived differently in society. Tannen (1991) claimed that women belong to a different cultural-linguistic community because of their language. However, Hyde (2005) contended that males and females are alike regarding some psychological variables. Hyde (2005) also dismissed as unfounded many popular notions that girls are more in tune with learning

roles and simple tasks while boys have a higher cognitive ability to learn more complex tasks. This, therefore, suggests that there is no suitable position regarding the psychological differences in gender, including the beliefs that girls are more social than boys; and boys are bolder than girls. This position seems to contradict Maccolay and Jacklin's (as cited in Hyde, 2005) findings which established that there are four differences between boys and girls. These areas are identified as "verbal ability, visual/ spatial ability, mathematical ability, and aggression" (Hyde, 2005, p. 581).

In addition, Reynolds et al. (2015) pointed out that academic differences between male and female students are not static. Generally, girls seem to show more academic achievement in reading and writing, while boys are significantly more successful in mathematical concepts and problem-solving. However, our investigation is concerned with how institutions like schools contribute to entrenching these beliefs and perceptions because there is clear evidence in scholarly research (Foucault, 2006; Hyde, 2005) that suggests that girls are equally mathematically brilliant and successful as boys.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The current study is a descriptive and interpretive case study that is analyzed through quantitative and qualitative methods. Descriptive research, according to Calderon (2006), is a purposeful process of gathering, analyzing, classifying, and tabulating data about current conditions, practices, trends, and cause-and-effect relationships and then providing an adequate and accurate interpretation of the data, sometimes with little or no help from statistical methods. Additionally, this method establishes the facts in a group being studied and yields results that can be qualitative, quantitative, or both in terms of descriptions of the overall features of the group.

Context of the study and Participants

The study was conducted in a state high school located in the city of Antakya. The school was selected for the following reasons: (1) it is one of the best schools in Antakya regarding students' performance in the national examination; (2) most students are from middle-class families; (3) its spectrum differs from the other state schools as it is well-disciplined and still uses mostly classical teaching models; (4) the majority of the students and teachers are from the same ethnic community.

The study participants were 50 male and female students and 25 male and female teachers. Of the 50 students, 25 male and 25 female students were administered questionnaires. Of the 25 teachers, 15 are male teachers, and 10 are female teachers who were administered questionnaires as well. We also interviewed 8 teachers; 4 of them are male teachers while 4 are female teachers. We collected the result of an examination conducted in the school to assess the percentages of male and female students' success levels. To understand teachers' perceptions of students, the questionnaires were designed to actively investigate how gender differences are constructed in the classroom by the teachers and the students as well.

Data collection tools

The curiosity about gender differences in academic achievement resulted from the researchers' desire to be both teachers and teacher trainers in a society where there seems to be a dichotomy between the male and female gender. This curiosity paved the way to research gender differences to determine if gender differences are constructed by various institutions, especially in schools, and why these differences are so built. To accomplish this task, two different questionnaires were designed and administered to 50 male and female students and 25 male and female teachers. Of the 50 students, 25 male and 25 female students were administered

questionnaires. Of the 25 teachers, 15 are male teachers, and 10 are female teachers who also responded to the questions in the questionnaire. We also interviewed 8 teachers; 4 of them are male teachers while 4 of them are female teachers.

Additionally, we collected the result of an examination conducted in the school to assess the percentages of male and female students' achievement levels. In order to understand teachers' perceptions of students, the questionnaires were designed to actively investigate how gender differences are constructed in the classroom by the teachers and the students. These questionnaires were aimed at revealing students' interaction among themselves and by trying to understand the insights of teachers' "gender" perceptions in terms of how the school can be described as an active maker of a range of gender roles. Firstly, in the questionnaires and interviews, we tried to explore gender effects, roles, identities, and responsibilities internalized by students by the regulatory motive of the school. Secondly, we attempted to figure out the teachers' approaches in the context of "gender differences" and the teachers' perceptions of the discursive construction between femininity/masculinity and academic achievement, discipline, attitudes, and some distinct personal characteristics.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

School as an institutional setting: regulation and control

The school is the only place in society where so many different young people come together for an extended period daily. The classroom is typically much more challenging when it is assumed as a basic unit in the school. Therefore, teacher-student relationships may have a considerable amount of influence on the male and female learners' lives more than predicted (Fredriksen, 2004). On the other hand, schools have a significant role in

disposing of social norms besides reaching traditional outcomes. The school has been widely discussed, and education systems can be re-evaluated considering many variables when analyzed in a historical context. However, the point that cannot be ignored is the functional perspectives of the school as an institution in shaping its identity. Concerning this function of school, Foucault (2006) claimed that school could produce some kinds of subjects. Foucault (2006) also denoted that it aims to achieve bodily and psychological discipline by controlling the mind. She referred to this as "conscious and permanent visibility" (Foucault 2006, p. 201). In other words, perpetual surveillance is internalized by individuals to produce self-awareness.

This changing perspective brings to the fore the position of Myhill (2006), which agrees with Wiener's (1997) view that feminists have argued that, while biology creates sex differences, femininity is culturally constructed. Myhill's (2006) view regarding masculinity also agrees with Ghaill's (1994), where masculinity is described as socially and discursively constructed. This is not to say that people are passively shaped by society, in line with sex-role socialization theory, but rather that everyone is active in taking up the discourses through which they are shaped. Hence, as the schools cannot be discussed without thinking about them in power discourses and policies, gender policies or constructions in the schools might not be considered independent from the state policies. That is why the binary gender system can be transmitted through schools successfully or education policies enforced or conducted through the binary gender system within the constructed status of gender.

The school has a function of producing gender or sex paradoxically as it is a means to construct femininity and masculinity but also another agent that improves pre-given sex accepted by schooling as a juridical conception (Butler, 1990). For instance, teachers of the high school we interviewed gave

various answers to the problematic nature of gender as a cultural interpretation of sex. When asked, they stated that gender is what we already have. In adolescence, teenagers learn and characterize their sexes as part of society and culture. From this point, Butler (1990) has posed fundamental thought-provoking questions. These questions are related to whether gender is an attribute that a person has or claims to have, especially in the context of the question, 'what gender are you?'. The issue of gender becomes even more complicated if we look at the claim by feminists regarding gender as being constructed culturally. Butler (1990), therefore, questioned the mechanism and manner of this construction. This is because the feminist view presupposes that gender can be built differently. This equally raises questions about the agency of the construction and tends to suggest a form of determinism. In addition, schools constitute a part of our lives that cannot be underestimated, which means that if the school has a masculine and gendered regime, it is pedagogically complicated to deconstruct. So, to speak, the source of the problem may lie at the very beginning of the regulation process itself.

Teacher-student interaction: Does it contribute to the construction of the masculine and the feminine gender?

Students' relationships with their teachers can influence and affect their academic performance, motivation, and psychosocial well-being. Students spend a great deal of time at school, and the classroom is the source of many relationships and activities. Initially, we will try to argue the school context and teachers' perceptions of various factors, students' academic performance, and personal characteristics in the sense of gender differences. Moreover, the second argument is on classroom practices, mostly teachers' attitudes towards students without a clear awareness of girls' and boys' distinctions. In my observations and interviews, we realized that teachers have already presumed certain

prejudices that are culturally imposed. we attempted to address some questions such as 'How does gender influence teacher-student interaction?', 'What are the internalized gender roles of the students who disrupt the discipline in the classroom?' and 'Do the students learn their gender roles in school life or not?'

Firstly, the school is where the discursive construction of tension between femininity and academic achievement or/and intelligence makes it a particular site for constructing femininity. As is going to be suggested in the results of the questionnaire applied, schoolgirls are expected to be "successful", well-mannered and disciplined; the principal contradiction is that they should be both feminine and successful. The criteria teachers consider while identifying success according to girls and boys, it is not difficult to understand that they generalize students' attitudes and tolerate their masculine traits thinking of "being a girl or a boy". The most common criterion while assessing students is their tendency to obey the school's rules. For instance, students' dressing (especially girls) shows resistance to being educated as they are culturally expected to get dressed in a given way.

Dressing has always been a problematic issue in schools. However, it is valid primarily for girls consistently criticized for their low-cut skirts or make-up. When asked, teachers state that these girls dress indecently, whereas schoolgirls respond to it quite differently. Teachers believe that girls wearing make-up cannot be seen as socially ideal women even if they have high academic performance as they are classified as "whores". Girls who behave respectfully towards their teachers and friends, who are not very talkative or aggressive, and always obey the rules, are appreciated by the management and teachers. Inside the masculine culture, there may be multiple femininities in the eyes of the teachers.

On the other hand, girls are usually assumed not to have problems until they reveal themselves, which is rarely seen. In

contrast to the visibility of the boys and masculine girls, girls display different behaviors, such as hesitating to participate in class which the teachers overlook. This may negatively affect students' learning by affecting the level of discipline in the classroom. Consequently, the contradictory answers to the questions make gender identity stereotypes very clear, exposing how school femininities are constructed within a masculine culture and dominant masculinity. According to the teacher participants in the questionnaire and our interviews, a prominent issue is that teachers often complain about the "babbler" students, whether they are girls or boys, in classroom interactions.
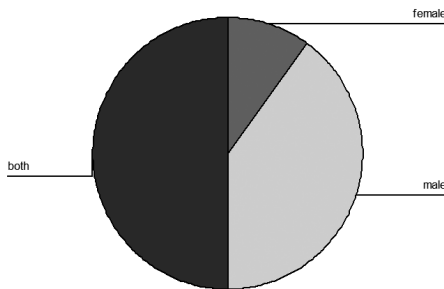

Margin 1: "Babbler" students

Teachers think it is natural for boys to talk so much in the classroom because they are teenagers ignoring the girls' silence. When asked, the answer is typical: *"girls are more compatible and obedient. They support authoritarian practices and adapt to school more easily."* Teachers perceive the "good girl" image as passive and controllable to measure good student behavior. It might be helpful to remind us of Najmabadi's (1998) example about a little Iranian girl, Kawkab, whom a majority of people dislike because she is undisciplined and shameless and laughs a great deal for no reason.

In contrast, the exemplary four-year-old girl, Khawrshid Khanum, is impeccably obedient and well-mannered. Everyone likes her. She spends her whole day doing only good things (p. 97).

This approach represents the moral construction and desirable moral traits for girls in high school. Furthermore, teachers are asked if their interaction style changes according to the sex of the student or not. Teachers principally claim that they give importance to equality in terms of using language or metaphors. However, as Duffy (2001) stated, teachers' attitudes change according to the sex of the student, even if they cannot notice it (Duffy, Warren, Walsh, 2001, p. 583). The girls are accepted as hardworking students, and when they have high marks, it is seen as the result of their hard work, but when the boys get high marks, it is because they are intelligent; if they are not successful, they most probably, it stems from their laziness. In the interview with the teachers at Başarı State Anatolian High School (pseudo name), five of eight teachers said boys, two of them said both sexes, and one said girls when given some concepts to categorize according to sexes.
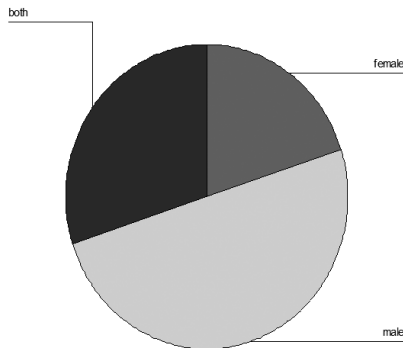

Margin 2: Intelligent (students) portions

For instance, Sevi is a 14-year-old girl in Class-A who is very successful. On the other hand, Murat is a 14-year-old boy in Class-B who is again very successful. However, even if these two students have the same success stories, teachers believe that Murat is a brilliant boy, yet Sevi is a very hardworking, responsible, and obedient girl. The clear distinction made is not only wholly subjective but also the statements of teachers serve directly to culturally constructed gender roles or stereotypes. This unconscious process is the social belief that women should have intellectual and cultural knowledge as they are expected to achieve a proper societal position. On the other hand, the intellectual capacity of men is accepted as prestigious and necessary since philosophical elements peculiar to men construct the pillars of society.

Another determinant factor of the gender differences for teachers is "violence", which is widely equated with masculinity. Teachers respond similarly to concepts such as "aggressiveness" and "disobedience". The point to be paid attention to is that. In contrast, teachers correlate the concept of aggressiveness with boys, the idea of being rebellious or disobedient is accommodated by girls, as seen in the pie graphs below. The contradictory point in girls' disobedience is that, since girls are expected to be respectful of teachers' authority and better behaved, the girls resisting management or control are labeled as "rebellious". A comparative analysis is given below, including teachers' answers to the questions about the sexes of students who "aggressive and rebellious" students are.
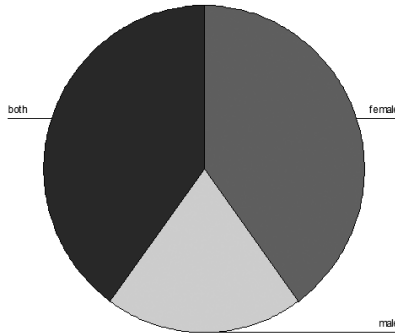
Margin 3: The rebellious-disobedient sex
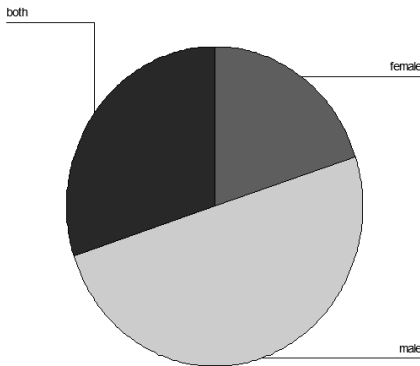
Margin 4: The aggressive sex

If a girl is aggressive, teachers ascribe her to having too many "masculine" features. To illustrate, Berna is a 14-year-old girl who eavesdrops on others' conversations, pays no attention to others, swears, and becomes violent when angry. Teachers warn her frequently by stating, "you are just like a boy, behave like a girl…." Butler (1990) suggested analyzing the sex-gender distinction based on its performances. Gender is performative, and institutionalized discourses support these performances.

School as a disciplining and regulatory institution contributes to the concept of gender. In the quotation below, Butler (1990) problematized the "binary gender system".

Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of "men" will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that "women" will interpret only female bodies. Further, even if the sexes appear to be binary in an unproblematic way, in their morphology and constitution, there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two. The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it. When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that man and masculine might just as quickly signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as soon as a female one (p. 6).

Derived from Butler's "performance" argument, another significant point is that the masculine power culture in society shapes the school experience of girls and boys inside the 'masculine culture. Patriarchal society requires specific responsibilities for the students and suppressive discourses in families and communities. Therefore, no matter how the male practices are applied in the schools, having masculinity qualifications is accepted as the only way to succeed. Education is essential to empowerment in the patriarchal system that suppresses girls first and dominates them consistently.

Student-student interaction: a variety of gender perceptions of students

When analyzed carefully, the gendered power relations and gender perceptions of teenagers are much more complicated. Considering competing gender discourses, this study highlights

the points that justify the construction of multiple femininities and masculinities in the school context. For example, it is observed that most students refer to generalized presuppositions at the center of patriarchal society. In this part, we will try to reveal how students perceive some "symbolic concepts" about "girls" and "boys" by giving statistical information. However, while analyzing the gendered thinking mechanism of the students, We will emphasize the most common and constructed points. First, we mainly examined how students attribute academic achievement, discipline, responsible, and hardworking besides symbolic attributions such as "independence", "management", and "home" based on biological sex division. Derived from these attributions, we will try to set out how gender perceptions in society are shaped during the school-age by the influences of the teachers and the students, oppositions, and categorizations constructed in a patriarchal society.

The first thing intended to reveal is the academic achievement and personal characteristics of girls and boys students. The questionnaire results were striking in their reflection of most generalizations in society. Students are asked twelve questions; each table in the appendix indicates the comparison of the answers given. The first table (app.table1) shows the comparative statistics about "undisciplined students and the most successful students in the class". Most students think that "boys" are undisciplined and not orderly. However, twenty-eight of them believe that these "undisciplined boys" are successful as well. Another interesting result is that both girls and boys believe that girls are more obedient and orderly. However, it can be said that girls are "mothers" of the future, assumed to be trimmer, disciplined, and organized, whereas it is not an element of success; however, even if boys are undisciplined, they can be successful thanks to their intelligence. Similarly, out of the 50 students, 17 students claim that female students are babblers, 27 students claim that male

students are babblers, and only six students believe that both males and females are babblers. (Tables 1. and 2)

Table 1.				
Female students are:	…more intelligent	…more obedient	…babblers	…more aggressive
50 Students	18	42	17	13
25 Teachers	5	19	3	6

Table 2.				
Male students are:	…more intelligent	…more obedient	…babblers	…more aggressive
50 Students	28	8	27	35
25 Teachers	16	6	13	14

Table 3.				
Both are:	…intelligent	…obedient	…babblers	…aggressive
50Students	4	0	6	2
25 Teachers	4	0	9	5

Regarding "being hardworking", most students believe girls are more hardworking than teachers. Nevertheless, being hardworking does not necessarily mean being successful academically; that is why the answer to the question of more successful sex of the students is not "girls", but "both". The matter of "physical appearance" has been proven by the results of the interview as an indicator of achievement. The majority of the students attribute girls as the ones who care very much about their physical appearance to be popular. In school, students have strong relations with these girls; nonetheless, they are not included in the respected friends or successful categories;

instead, they have links so as not to be excluded or humiliated by the fame of these girls. This type of femininity means "having power", which is indeed "masculine" even if it is not performed; obviously, the schoolboys approve and support its practice. From another point of view, students were asked what the first sex they can say when they hear the concept of "independent". The answer was expected: "male" (Table 4). Nevertheless, when the word "home" was pronounced, most girls and boys said: "girls". Girls feel "dependent"; however, girls think that boys are independent as they are "boys", which means masculine. Without a doubt, in the hegemonic masculine culture, the answers are not surprising, yet the fact that it is a public high school and most of the students have non-conservative and liberal-minded families besides being in a moderate socioeconomic status makes the results directly to be related to boundaries of construction of gender.

Table 4.						
Research Participants: (50 Students)	Administrator	Artist	Home	Baby	Independence	Protection
Female	13	22	31	38	17	15
Male	26	18	10	5	27	19
Both	11	10	9	7	6	16

Finally, two results are based on two concepts: "administrator" and "baby". These are symbolic representations of boys for the former and girls for the latter. Boys and girls believe that the status of administrator is the concept of masculinity, providing a position for boys. In patriarchal societies, the education given to women and occupations chosen for women is acceptable only if these occupations do not create problems in the private sphere of women's and men's lives (Gümüşoğlu, 1996). This analysis gives way to the "sexual division of labor" and its perception in

society. (app.Table-4) As Mohanty (2003) suggested that sexual division of labor means more than just a description. It shows the different importance that is placed on the work of men against that of women. Society has already determined the value since the administrator category has been assigned to the boys, but "house managers" cannot even be mentioned. Girls think boys are better at management, but when asked, the most responsible and hardworking students are girls who cannot be "administrators".

Secondly, "baby" is associated mainly with "girls" (app.Table:4), which shows that "motherhood" is constructed within the "women" and "child" dichotomy. In parallel with these answers, girls are also associated with "home". Betül, a 15-year-old girl, said, *"Is there any chance to think about men at home? I do not imagine my brothers and father sleeping at home incessantly."* Students who agree with this idea have responded to "independence" as it is a concept belonging to "boys" as they are caged into the "house", which is perceived as a natural phenomenon. However, it is not paradoxical but "an inheritance". Historically, it started with the first father, "Adam". As a prolongation, social contract theorists predicated the doctrine that men were by nature free and equal which is seen as the "main foundation of popular sedition" (Pateman, 1992, p. 37).

In this part, we tried to bring up the most common matters in the reception of gender differences and roles. The other comparative analyses of these perceptions can also be seen in the appendixes. The results of the questionnaire applied and the interviews confirm the gendered school culture, although schools in Antakya are claimed to be modern and liberal. The issue of gender is not a simple problem within "modernity" or "society". Therefore, it is expected to be discussed in a historical context related to "subjectivity" and "power discourses", because of which, in this study, an institutional context has been provided.

To draw a line in the argument between who is more successful, the result of an examination was analyzed (Table 5). The results showed an unexpected outcome: Out of 162 students that sat for the study, 79 were girls, while 83 were boys. However, the result showed that 28 girls made it to the first fifty while only 22 boys were found in the first 50. In the last 50, there were 20 girls and 30 boys. Suppose the result of an examination is an indicator of academic achievement and intelligence. In that case, the female students in the collated results are more intelligent and academically successful than male students.

Table 5.			
Exam Participants: Total Number	Number of girls and boys	Within **first fifty**	Within **last fifty**
162 Students	79 girls	28	20
	83 boys	22	30

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There has always been a tendency to interpret academic performance, personality traits, and attitudes of schoolgirls and boys using gendered culture and dominant masculine everyday life practices. Even though teachers and students display relatively unconscious perspectives, it is almost impossible to say that they do not perform in a gendered stage. Gendered stereotypes that have been in use in social contexts become acceptable as gendered rules and roles. All these produced rules become internalized for each subject of society. No matter how these rules occur, they constrain individual behavior and reproduce the activities of each issue from top to bottom.

Consequently, all approved daily routines and interactions become "gendered", of which practices have been systematized in the schools as "institutional settings". Schools constitute the first step just before re-producing women-men dichotomies. Since schools are the institutions where this "binary system" is rooted, we must begin to address it from there. Therefore, in this study, it is emphasized that the *ordinary* practices in a state Anatolian High School have significant roles in constructing gender identity and stereotypes about the vital functions of the school as a regulatory setting.

The study presented noteworthy findings between gender and academic achievement. However, the study participants may not be representative of the population of interest, and they came from a relatively homogeneous middle-class socio-economic background. Thus, the results cannot be generalized to a greater population, and caution should be exercised when generalizing the study's conclusions to avoid misinterpretations. Finally, to generalize the results of the current study to broader populations, it would be advantageous for future research to use more extensive and diverse samples.

We recommend that the Ministry of National Education should organize conferences and workshops for teachers and administrators to educate them on the dangers of using perceived ideas regarding gender differences in assessing and analyzing students regarding their academic success, personal characteristics, and behaviors. Secondly, students should be encouraged to view other students as equals without prejudice against their gender. Finally, we believe that if this is done, the effect will trickle down to the home front, where gender differences are also constructed.

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CHAPTER 5

TEACHING PRACTICE EXPERIENCES IN ACCREDITATION PROCESS: OPINIONS OF PRACTICE TEACHERS[1]

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Nilay KAYHAN[3]

INTRODUCTION

Quality and accreditation in higher education institutions have an important place in the world and our country. Interest in accreditation processes has gradually increased due to the issues such as accountability of higher education institutions, their place among international institutions, and the employment potential of diplomas (Alpaydın & Topal, 2022; Özer, Gür & Küçükcan, 2011). In our country, higher education institutions conduct studies to ensure quality standards. Similarly, studies on determining and implementing quality standards continue in Europe (European Standards and Guidelines [ESG], 2015). Accordingly, programs are accredited by completing accreditation processes in line with the determined standards (Staub, 2019). The accreditation concept in higher education is defined as an institution or program's having national/international standards (Özer, 2012). Studies and improvements to ensure quality in higher education

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also affect the success of student mobility, human resources, or economic efficiency (Dey, 2011; Mandavkar, 2019).

Higher education institutions have great importance in training professional staff who are productive, innovative, add value to society, are open to development, and can use cooperation skills effectively in different disciplines such as science, art, and sports. Training graduates from different disciplines with knowledge, skills, and competence in their fields is one of the main purposes of higher education institutions. Therefore, studies conducted based on quality and accreditation in higher education contribute significantly to achieving these purposes. Council of Higher Education (2016) defined the steps of the accreditation process as setting standards, preparation and self-assessment, institution visit and external evaluation process, monitoring, accrediting, decision and approval, and systematic review. Thus, when higher education institutions and programs become accredited, they go through a long and difficult process that starts with setting the standards and continues with the continuation of supervision. It is important for the education system that teacher training programs in higher education institutions continue education according to the determined quality standards. Thus, it is expected that the faculties of education are included in accreditation processes and have these standards. In 1954, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and faculties of education came together and established an accreditation institution at a national level for the first time in the world; thus, accreditation in faculties of education became a current issue (Erkuş & Özdemir, 2010). In our country, the quality of higher education drew attention in the 1990s (Tezsürücü & Aybarç-Bursalıoğlu, 2013). Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) was the only institution responsible for quality institutions (Turkish Higher Education Quality Council, 2016). Faculties of education are evaluated by the Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs (EPDAD) (Atatekin & Dulupçu, 2018;

Borat, 2011). One of the teacher training programs in the faculty of education is special education teaching.

The special education teacher training system is carried out as an undergraduate program in faculties of education. Special education preservice teachers take courses in the fields of professional knowledge, general culture, and field knowledge in the program that admits students by verbal scores of the Higher Education Institutions Examination (YKS) conducted by the Center for Assessment, Selection, and Placement. When they graduate, they can work in special education schools where the individuals with special needs receive education, special education classrooms in the inclusion and integration environments, Counseling and Research Centers within the body of the Department of Special Education and Counseling Services affiliated with the Ministry of National Education, and private special education institutions. Preservice teachers receive elective courses in different sub-disciplines (Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Hearing Impairment, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Gifted and Talented Education, Visual Impairment) in the undergraduate program and graduate with the title of special education teacher. There is a pool of elective courses for each of these fields, and preservice teachers are responsible for taking at least one (1) course from each field, and they graduate by completing at least seven (7) elective courses in the field they want to specialize in. Three applied courses in four semesters of the program draw attention. These are Observation in Special Education Institutions in the IV semester of the 2nd year as a Field Training course, School and Institution Experience in Special Education in the VI semester of the 3rd year, and Teaching Practice in the VII and VIII semesters of the last year within the scope of Vocational Knowledge course (Council of Higher Education [CoHE], 2018). In the theoretical and applied courses of the program, it is planned for the preservice teachers

to take basic field courses such as educational sciences, foreign language, and information technologies and courses based on academic and non-academic characteristics of individuals with special needs; medical, developmental and educational screening and diagnosis in education and psychology; educational services in line with science-based practices; early childhood; effective instructional planning in the scope of legal rights in school age; Individualized Education Program; support and services provided to the individuals and families. The starting point of this study was the idea that the quality of education received in the pre-vocational period is related to the quality and quality standards in higher education and is also a determinant of the transition to the profession and vocational practices of the graduates of the programs in this institution. This study, designed for the special education field, aims to examine the opinions of teachers who give teaching practice courses in special education practice schools about teacher training, quality, accreditation, and practices related to these concepts. Because the closest vocation members of the preservice teachers are internship coordinators at school and teachers in the practice classrooms throughout the practice period in the scope of school-faculty cooperation. When examining the relevant literature, it is found that there are several studies on accreditation process in faculties of education (Al-Ghaith, 2015; Alpaydın & Topal, 2022; Ataman & Adıgüzel, 2019; Doğan, 1999; Erkuş & Özdemir, 2010; Grossman, Sands & Brittingham, 2010; Günel, Türe & Deveci, 2020; Karslı, Yıldız, Akgün & Cerit, 2001; Kavak, 1999; Lewis, 2016; Murray, 2000; Yanpar-Yelken, Çelikkaleli & Çapri, 2007). These studies were conducted as informative studies about the accreditation processes of faculties of education or based on the opinions of the instructors and students. Besides knowing the importance of practice experience in faculties of education, it is important to investigate the practice experiences of the teachers in special

education practice schools in special education programs within the scope of accreditation and quality. It is considered necessary to include practice teachers, who have an important role in the accreditation of the programs, in the studies on quality and accreditation. This study is thought to be an original study in terms of investigating the opinions of practice teachers about the accreditation process.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

This study, which was conducted to examine the opinions of practice teachers about the special education teacher training process in accreditation quality studies, was designed in phenomenological design among qualitative research methods. Phenomenological design is seen as an effective design to state individuals' viewpoints, perceptions, and experiences (Creswell, 2017). This design was preferred to determine the perception and experiences of the practice teachers about teacher training in the accreditation process and examine them in-depth. The data of the study were collected with the focus group technique.

Sample/Participants

Six teachers working in special education schools in the Southeastern Anatolia Region of Turkey participated in the study voluntarily. The purposive sampling technique was used in determining the participants. The participation criteria are: a) to have a teaching practice certificate b) to have graduated from faculty of education teacher training programs c) to have worked as a practice teacher in the schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education at least once d) to have taken responsibility in the practices of special education preservice teachers in the 2021-2022 academic year e) to volunteer to participate in the study. The

participants were informed about the purpose and importance of the study and were asked whether they wanted to participate in the study voluntarily. All pre-interviewed teachers stated that they wanted to participate in the study voluntarily. Teachers' oral approvals were received before and after the meeting for voluntary participation and recording of the audio and video. Each teacher was given a code name to keep his/her identity confidential. The demographic information of the participants was shown in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, all six teachers are graduates of hearing impaired teaching or intellectual disability teaching in special education, and their professional seniorities vary between 7-11 years. The teachers received their certificates of teaching practice between 2017-2020. Their duration of working as a practice teacher varies between 1-3 years. The classroom sizes of the teachers are between 2-8 students, and the number of teachers who attend teaching practice courses varies between 4-10.

Data Collection Tool and Application

The data were collected with the focus group interview form developed by the researchers. The form consisted of two sections, the first section included demographic information, and the second section included open-ended questions prepared for literature review and related to the purpose of the study. The draft form was submitted to the opinions of three experts who have doctoral degrees, have at least ten (10) years of professional experience, and have been conducting teaching practice for the last five years. The data collection tool was revised after receiving the experts' opinions and took its final form. The data collection tool is the Practice Teacher Opinion Form, consisting of seven demographic and six semi-structured interview questions. The open-ended questions included in this form were asked to the participants in the online environment by taking audio and

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants

No	Code Name	Branch	Professional Seniority	Year of Certificate	Number of Teaching Practice Duties	Classroom Size	Number of Pre-service Teachers (Last 1 year)
1	Elif	Intellectual Disability Teaching	8 years	2019	3	4	10
2	Fırat	Intellectual Disability Teaching	7 years	2019	2	4	4
3	Umut	Intellectual Disability Teaching	7 years	2018	2	4	6
4	Sevgi	Hearing Impairment Teaching	7 years	2017	2	5	4
5	Helin	Intellectual Disability Teaching	10 years	2020	1	2	6
6	Nur	Hearing Impairment Teaching	11 years	2018	3	8	5

**All teachers work in Special Education Practice Schools.

video recording. The participants' demographic information was collected via Google Forms application, where they can answer the questions only with their personal e-mails and save each question only once. After collecting electronic information, a focus group interview which lasted for 1 hour 40 minutes was conducted on May 10, 2022, determined to be a suitable day and time for all participants and researchers. Six practice teachers who attended the focus group interview stated their opinions about quality and accreditation processes in higher education and about being accredited in terms of education programs. Teachers also stated opinions about the effect of accreditation studies on the teacher training process. Both researchers took part in the interview; the first researcher took written notes during the interview, and the second researcher became the moderator of the interview. The focus group interview was conducted in the online environment with the participation of both researchers and six practice teachers, who were determined using purposive sampling. The second researcher is an academic member of the special education field and has been conducting teaching practice for 13 years. She also lectures and works on projects about qualitative research at undergraduate and graduate levels. She provides consultancy for the thesis studies designed in the qualitative research method. The first researcher got a master's degree in the special education field, continues her graduate study at the doctoral level, and has been conducting teacher practice for 4 years. Both researchers are experienced in quality and accreditation studies in special education. The second researcher voluntarily contributes to accreditation studies of teacher training programs at national levels and evaluator education in quality studies.

Data Analysis

The first researcher transferred the data from the focus group interview with semi-structured questions in the online environment into writing in the computer environment.

Demographic information obtained with Google Forms was converted into a table (Table 1). As a result of the transcription process, a data document consisting of 9 pages, 514 lines, and 1771 words in 12 point-size in Word was obtained by listening to the interview records. The data obtained were evaluated with content analysis. Then, the written document analysis method was used, and codes were reached from the related statements. Related codes were colored in groups, and sub-themes and main themes were reached from these codes. Three main themes and ten sub-themes were reached as a result of content analysis conducted by researchers who reached an agreement (90%) from validity and reliability studies. Finally, the researchers conducted validity and reliability studies of the codes and themes reached from the codes based on agreement.

Findings

The findings of this study which was conducted to investigate the opinions of practice teachers about the teacher training process in special education within the scope of accreditation and quality studies, consist of three main themes and ten sub-themes. Figure 1 shows the themes which constitute the findings.

As seen in Figure 1, three main themes, which are Quality of Teaching Practices, Contribution of Teaching Practices, and Aspects to be Developed, and sub-themes constitute the findings of this study. The following titles give explanations of the themes.

Quality of Teaching Practices

All participant teachers stated opinions about the quality of practices. These opinions were stated in the context of the effect of feedback, technology use, past practice experiences, and characteristics of preservice teachers. Teachers (Elif, Fırat, Helin, Sevgi) stated that the preservice teachers underwent a qualified teaching practice process. They described it as a chance
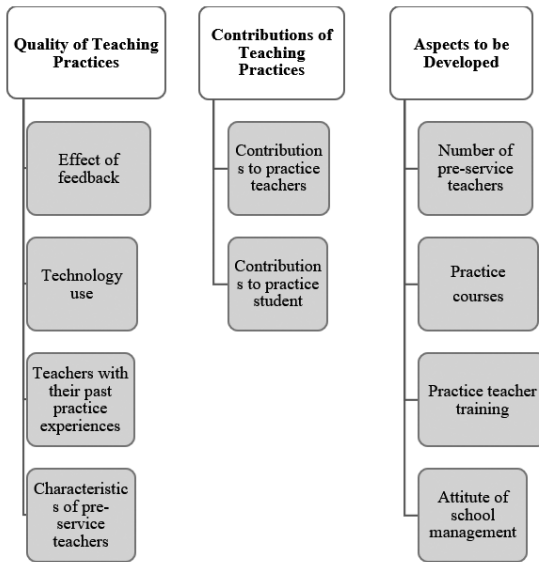
Figure 1. Themes and Sub-themes

for the preservice teachers to have the opportunity to practice together with teachers who graduated from the special education field. Accordingly, Teacher Elif stated her opinion by saying, "Today, intern teachers are so lucky. We are all special education teachers, branch teachers such as the music teacher are special education teachers, too. I think we contribute to putting theory into practice." She also stated that the preservice teachers had a good supervision process in practice courses. Teachers (Sevgi, Helin), expressing the importance of giving feedback during teaching practice, emphasized that the preservice teachers had an opportunity to receive feedback from both the instructors at the university and themselves regularly. Teacher Helin stated that the instructors are satisfied with the feedback process by saying, "Practice teachers (university's instructors) were very good. The process was observed closely, and feedback was provided.

Feedback was given one by one. He/she took notes for each student separately and talked about them for minutes..." (Teacher Helin). She also added that the preservice teachers were satisfied with her feedback. Another subject emphasized by the teachers (Umut, Nur) was that technological opportunities used during teaching practice were efficient in education. Teacher Umut stated the effect of technology use comparatively: "There is a serious difference between our era and current technology. They are so lucky now. We are moving with the files uploaded to Classroom weekly. Feedback is given weekly. We used to submit files at the end of the term and receive marks. They are so lucky about this." (Teacher Umut).

Teachers evaluated the teaching practice opportunities based on their own past practice experiences. Teacher Elif, who had negative experiences in the practice period, said "There was no information and supervision process in our era. Not in the bad sense. We were extensively free. The practice teachers were not special education teachers. We did not work with special education teachers. Intern students now are so lucky." (Teacher Elif). Similarly, Teacher Fırat sees his teaching practice process as an unlucky period. Despite the negative experiences of Teacher Elif and Teacher Fırat, Teacher Nur describes herself as lucky in terms of her experiences in those years: "They used to send us to all disability groups. I see myself lucky about feedback. We used to receive feedback for each file. We used to see each student group. I feel lucky about this subject" (Teacher Nur). The participants stated preservice teachers' characteristics as another factor determining the quality of teaching practices. Teachers (Sevgi, Helin, and Elif) stated that the positive characteristics of preservice teachers contributed to the practice period. Accordingly, Teacher Sevgi said, "...They used to do it fondly, they used to come here willing to learn... Not for receiving marks" (Teacher Sevgi). Teacher Helin said "I had intern students in both semesters, I had a very

qualified time. My students used to question information. I think we cannot talk about practice without knowledge. I was very satisfied" (Teacher Helin). Teacher Elif said "...For example, the interns supported us on autism day. they were there voluntarily. There was a beautiful climate, cooperation. Level of cooperation is very high among interns." (Teacher Elif).

In conclusion, teachers mentioned various factors that affect quality by sharing their opinions and experiences at different levels in the main theme, the quality of teaching practices. It is understood that different subjects, such as reflections of past experiences, characteristics of preservice teachers, technology use, and feedback, are among the determinants of quality.

Contributions of Teaching Practices

Contributions of teaching practices were discussed under two sub-themes; a) contributions to practice teachers and b) contributions to practice students. Four teachers (Helin, Elif, Fırat, and Umut) expressed their opinions on this main theme. Teacher Helin stated that the teaching practices are an advantage for preservice teachers. She explained why she sees it as an advantage with these words: "...They can see all disability groups. They can evaluate students in all social aspects. They see branch teachers. They see the problems experienced by teachers." (Teacher Helin). The participants also mentioned the contribution of teaching practices to practice teachers besides their contribution to preservice teachers. Teachers (Helin, Elif, Fırat, Umut) stated that they contribute to their knowledge during practice courses of preservice teachers. For a preservice teacher, Teacher Helin said "he/she was so well-equipped and curious. Luckily I had interns this year. I refreshed my memory...". Teacher Elif stated that they stayed active and energetic. Teacher Fırat emphasized the contributions of preservice teachers to him by saying "You improve yourself to answer the questions asked

by interns, in order not to feel embarrassed. When the students ask the questions in the right place, it improves us, we make research to answer questions and not to fall short". With a similar expression, Teacher Umut expressed his opinion by saying "New studies are being conducted in special education. We renew ourselves with the questions asked us. I learned that there are new discussions about concept teaching. We learn new information. I think that the field can be developed constantly since it is open to development. Probably, we wouldn't have learned this unless we had had a practice student and wondered about it. They have such a contribution, every new student renews the teacher."

Aspects to Be Developed

Five participant teachers (Umut, Nur, Fırat, Helin, Elif) noted that teaching practice had some aspects to be developed in the accreditation process. The subjects emphasized by the teachers were discussed under the number of preservice teachers, practice courses, practice teacher training, and attitude of school management sub-themes. According to teachers (Fırat, Helin), the excessive number of preservice teachers in the classroom constitutes a limitation in teaching practices. Teacher Fırat stated that the excessive number of preservice teachers in the classroom constituted a limitation by saying "...They are too many in number. We took four people here, they lose their concentrations, they form groups. Our classroom sizes are low". The teachers (Elif, Fırat, Umut) drew attention to some aspects to be developed in teaching practices. For example, Teacher Elif stated that a digital platform for providing cooperation in practice courses should be created: MoNE (Ministry of National Education) may create a mutual pool, a digital pool. We used to present internship files, but it has changed. I think teacher (practice teacher)-student (preservice teacher)-academician-MoNE can be a mutual source of information". Another suggestion is related to increasing the

teaching practice course hours. Teacher Fırat said "…number of practice courses can be increased. They can come here for 8 hours in two days". Besides suggestions about the course hours, Teacher Umut suggested putting practice courses in earlier years in the curriculum and mentioned making practice experiences widespread in institutions such as special education and rehabilitation centers, practice schools, counseling and research centers. Teacher Umut expressed these opinions and suggestions by saying, "…institution-based experiences should be made more widespread, they should be in institutions such as rehabilitation centers, CRC (Counselling and Research Centers), so that they can see where they would work. They should see them in earlier years. I mean, I think they should be put in earlier years so that the people who won't be able to carry out this profession can realize it earlier".

Another subject emphasized by the teachers (Nur, Fırat, Helin, Nur) in the Aspects to be Developed theme was the training of practice teachers who carry out practice courses with preservice teachers. According to teachers, there are skills and knowledge that teachers who carry out teaching practice should have. Teacher Nur's opinion that the practice teachers should provide quality standards in the professional aspect, especially in the accredited programs, draws attention. "There should be much difference between the accredited and not accredited in terms of practice. Academic standards are set. The teacher meets them or not… Not only you (academicians) in academic terms but also we should know the accreditation standards. What can or should we provide practice students with? Maybe I am not sufficient. This directs me to research… It can be necessary for me to learn new techniques. Maybe I should update myself. Not only practice students but also practice teachers have some responsibilities. Sometimes we may think that we are already sufficient. We shouldn't say I graduated from this field, my diploma is sufficient; we should say that we

could be better." (Teacher Nur). On the other hand, Teacher Fırat drew attention to the education processes of practice teachers and stated: "Only the certificate is not enough for the teacher. It depends on information technologies a little bit. He/she should receive education on how to train a teacher. He/she can explain to us how to train an intern and how to be a model for them. It is not enough to tell us on what days and for how many hours we will conduct courses. MoNE does not give a clear program. They sometimes coincide with holidays, what will we do when this happens?..." (Fırat teacher). In addition to these opinions, Teacher Fırat shared the opinion that the knowledge and skills of the teachers who graduated from unintegrated programs (such as intellectual disability teaching undergraduate program) and were appointed to institutions that provide services in different areas of need, such as visual and hearing impairment were insufficient. His suggestion for this is to provide the teacher with the opportunity of developing themselves in these fields with in-service education. Similarly, Teacher Helin stated her opinion about the quality of practice teachers; "I think the quality of the teachers who will conduct practice together with the preservice teacher in this process should be evaluated. Not every teacher should be a practice teacher, they should have competence. Special education is a developing field but I think the student should be able to work with teachers who provide opportunities and direct correctly and see enough number of students." (Teacher Helin). Teacher Nur supported these opinions and argued that the teachers who are the stakeholders of teaching practice courses should go through an accreditation process and standards should be developed for these teachers. The last subject in this theme is related to the attitude of school management in the schools where practice courses are carried out. Teacher Fırat stated that he paid attention to the attitude of the manager and said: "One of the most important things is the attitude of school management.

Some school managers see the intern as their guests but these people will be our colleagues, a regulation should be made regarding this. They will work together after a year. An attitude should be developed taking this into account. They should feel comfortable using the shared areas of the teachers' room. The school management should familiarize students with the school."

In conclusion, it is seen that teaching practice experiences in the accreditation process are presented with different viewpoints by practice teachers. The data obtained show that various factors determine the quality of teaching practices. The teachers mentioned their satisfaction with the way preservice teachers and academicians manage the process. Besides, it is a prominent finding that practice courses contribute to both preservice teachers and practice teachers. It draws attention that the teachers see this process as an opportunity to improve themselves and renew their knowledge. Based on the opinions of the teachers, it was determined that there are some aspects to be developed regarding the practice courses. Findings obtained with semi-structured questions and focus group technique are discussed in line with the literature under the next title.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Suggestions

This study was conducted to examine the opinions of practice teachers about the accreditation process. For this purpose, the focus group interview was conducted with six practice teachers in the online environment. The data were collected through semi-structured interview questions and demographic information form and analyzed with content analysis. As a result of the analyses, three main themes and ten sub-themes were reached. Finally, the findings obtained were discussed in line with the literature.

In this study, in which it is prominent that various factors determine the quality of teaching practices, the participants

expressed the importance of feedback provided to preservice teachers. Accordingly, the feedback provided to the preservice teachers by both instructors and practice teachers during the practice period has an important place in teacher training. A study examining the functionality of teaching practices in terms of the stakeholders determined that the instructors and preservice teachers exchanged information regularly. The importance of exchanging information or providing feedback shows similarity with the findings of this study (Görgen, Çokçalışkan & Korkut, 2012). Another factor in teachers' opinions was related to the idea that technology use is effective in teaching practices. The fact that the preservice teachers use technology for practice courses and conduct the studies between the higher education institution and practice school is seen as an advantage. The development of digital platforms to continue systematic interaction between the other institutions and stakeholders in higher education was also suggested in the literature (Piştav Akmeşe & Kayhan, 2021). From the results of another study in which videos that provide professional knowledge and skills for teachers were used, it is understood that teachers made a positive contribution to their improvement through these videos (Gaudin & Schalies, 2015). Hence, the integration of developing technological opportunities is seen as important in the quality of teaching practices. Another subject frequently mentioned by the teachers is related to their own practice experiences. Teachers stated that especially not having special education teachers in their own practice period created a limitation. In this sense, they expressed that the preservice teachers who received an education with them were lucky. This can result from the idea that a qualified education in knowledge, skills, and competence in the special education field can be obtained only at the end of a 4-year undergraduate education. Thus, the literature includes explanations that corroborate this opinion. For example, in a study that was conducted in a qualitative method

and examined special education teaching practice courses and teachers' experiences in the Covid-19 pandemic, Piştav Akmeşe & Kayhan (2021), emphasized the importance of applied education and drew attention to the need for qualified staff in education. It is suggested that the field experts should give the theoretical and applied courses, especially while conducting teacher training. In a study conducted with 130 preservice teachers, Wiens et al. (2020) stated that preservice teachers followed the example of practice teachers' teaching and interaction behaviors. On the other hand, it is considered a problem to appoint teachers from other fields who received a short education period instead of the staff who trained in the field of special education in Turkey (Özyürek, 2008). It is understood that the teachers who graduate from the field exhibit a difference in terms of planning, preparation, classroom environment, and organizing teaching (Nougaret et al., 2005). Besides, in action research focused on training practice instructors in the teacher practice process, it was emphasized that practice instructors should be experienced and competent in their fields (Vuran, Ergenekon & Ünlü, 2014).

The participants stated that the characteristics of preservice teachers are determinant and they were satisfied with the participation of the students in the practice period. In addition, they mentioned that the preservice teachers make positive contributions to their professional knowledge and skills in the field by keeping their knowledge and skills up-to-date. Another prominent finding of the study is related to the problems resulting from the excessive number of preservice teachers in practice courses. The participants find the number of preservice teachers in the classrooms excessive, suggesting that it should be decreased. It is seen that this finding was supported in other studies. It was stated that the excessive number of preservice teachers is limiting as the duration of learning by observation and one-on-one working opportunities is shorter (Piştav Akmeşe & Kayhan, 2021). The importance of practice experiences in

special education teacher training is known. However, the low number of institutions appropriate to conduct teaching practice courses formally can be given as the reason for this situation. Teachers made suggestions about the duration of the courses besides the number of preservice teachers. The duration of the teaching practice course is found to be insufficient, and it is stated that this course should be included in the curriculum in earlier periods. In a study, Görgen, Çokçalışkan & Korkut (2012) stated that preservice teachers suggested increasing the duration of practice as a solution. Because preservice teachers do not have enough opportunity to achieve the expected goals, the suggestion regarding the increase in the duration of practice courses coincides with the findings of other studies (Baştürk, 2007; Boz & Boz, 2006).

Another remarkable finding of the study is related to training practice teachers who conduct teaching practice courses. Participants' opinions about this subject gather around in-service education, knowledge and skills, development, and accreditation studies. It was argued that the teachers who conduct practice courses should have definite quality standards and be equipped with knowledge and skills. This opinion is supported by other studies in the literature (Kiraz, 2001; Sarıçoban, 2008, Topkaya & Yalın, 2005). Hence, it is seen that Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development affiliated with MoNE has taken steps to carry out education to provide quality of teachers who will take part in practice courses (Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development, 2017). The finding that in-service education should be organized for the instructors and practice teachers for the quality of preservice teachers supports the finding of this study (Azar, 2003). Özyürek (2008) stated that a qualified teacher can be trained by providing the standards and benefiting from the accreditation process. Thus, with accreditation, it can be guaranteed that the teacher training programs meet the standards. However, in a study, Adıgüzel &

Sağlam (2009) stated that teacher training programs can meet the standards at a moderate level. Kossar (2003), emphasizing that practicing in the preservice process has critical importance for preservice teachers, stated that professional examples should be provided to the preservice teachers during the practice. Wiens et al. (2020) stated that preservice teachers took support from practice teachers and their willingness to teach as an example. Participant teachers experience the disadvantages of combining areas of special needs under a single title and making them a single program. For example, a teacher who graduated from an intellectual disability teaching program stated that he/she felt insufficient when he/she had to teach in the hearing impairment field. Thus, they think that is important for preservice teachers to work with all groups and gain experience in different institutions before starting to teach. This finding shows similarity with the suggestions of another study. Piştav Akmeşe & Kayhan (2016) stated that the ability of teachers who will teach in the hearing impairment area to provide education with sign language is significant. One of the participant teachers suggested that in-service education should be organized regarding the professional needs of the teachers as a solution.

Finally, the participants stated that the attitude of school management is a determinant of the quality of practices. For example, they emphasized that the attitudes of the school principal and vice-principal, stakeholders of school teaching practices, should be improved. Similarly, in a study, Görgen, Çokçalışkan & Korkut (2012) stated that there were problems in informing the preservice teachers about the management by school managers who participate in teaching practices. Besides, a subject mentioned in the findings of this study was mentioned by the preservice teachers in the study by Görgen et al. (2012). Thus, preservice teachers stated that they were not adopted as teachers. However, the teachers in our study emphasized that the school management should adopt preservice teachers as teachers.

Besides, other study findings support this finding (Boz & Boz, 2006; Sağ, 2008; Tok & Yılmaz; 2011).

Suggestions

Based on the study's findings, this section includes suggestions regarding practice and research. Following suggestions can be made regarding teaching practices;

- Quality standards that state the quality of teaching practices, teachers, and instructors can be determined, and the accreditation process of the programs can be encouraged.
- When thinking about the importance of providing feedback in teaching practices, a systematic program for providing feedback to preservice teachers by both instructors and practice teachers can be developed and applied.
- Digital platforms that enable the cooperation of MoNE and CoHE can be developed to continue the teaching practice process.
- Legal regulations that improve the duration and frequency of practice courses can be developed to increase the quality of teaching practices.
- Studies that improve the knowledge, skills, and competency of practice teachers through in-service education and that enable them to receive practice courses can be carried out.
- To decrease the number of preservice teachers in the same classroom, increasing the number of practice teachers can be encouraged.
- Preservice and post-service education can be carried out to improve positive attitudes and behaviors of the managers in practice schools.

   Following suggestions can be made for further research;
- More studies on the quality and accreditation process in teaching practices can be carried out.

- Teaching practice processes can be examined with qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research designs.

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