

CHAPTER 3

An Investigation of Relation Between Special Education Teachers' Psychological Resilience, Self-Efficacy, and Attitudes Toward Seeking Psychological Help*

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main elements affecting the individual's and society's future. In this sense, it is imperative to raise adults of the future with purpose and quality from the first day of their lives (Semerci, 2015). Education is an effective way of providing this (Taşkaya, 2012). Teachers, who are among the indispensable elements of education, are the people who change and develop students' behaviors (Karahan, 2008).

Teachers must be aware that each child has a unique bodily structure and functions and teach according to learning and emotional characteristics. However, in children whose differences reach large sizes, general education services may be inadequate, and special education services may be needed (Kırcaali-İftar, 1998). While the type of service for the individual to receive

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education varies, special education services must be provided with the cooperation of different experts in the least restrictive environment. This team comprises experts such as special education teachers, psychological counselors, classroom teachers, staff to provide medical support, physiotherapists, and language speech therapists (Gürsel, 2007).

Qualified teachers are needed for an individual who needs special education to be reintegrated into society and be productive (Erbaş & Yücesoy, 2002). Special education teachers are expected to create a positive effect in the lives of students who need special education, to develop positive relationships between the families of these individuals and school managers, to provide support for professional development opportunities, and to provide access to professional development opportunities (Çokluk, 1999).

In our country, problems such as the lack of resources and working under unfavorable physical conditions are experienced by special education teachers (Uçar, 2014). Many teachers think teaching is exceptionally stressful (Chan, 2003). Teachers working with individuals with special needs have different duties and responsibilities besides the educational activities that the teachers working with individuals with typical development should conduct (Akdoğan, 2009). These additional responsibilities increase the stress level of special education teachers (Girgin & Baysal, 2005).

In the special education field, situations such as the insufficient number of teachers in the special education institutions for the current need, lack of materials in these institutions, and insufficiency of physical conditions to meet the needs of students cause teachers who work in special education institutions to experience difficulties. Special education teachers struggle against these difficulties in their work life. Teachers may need more social support while trying to deal with the difficulties they experience (Uçar, 2014). Psychological resilience is vital for special education teachers to deal with problems. Psychological

resilience is explained as the individual's recovery process from a negative experience in life and the strength of returning to the everyday life process quickly. Individuals with high psychological resilience may deal with stressful events in life more easily (Terzi, 2008). The individuals may seek help from other people when their psychological resilience for a problem is insufficient and they cannot solve the problem themselves (Selki, 2021). This help may be provided by the individual's immediate environment, such as a teacher, parent, friend, and partner, or sometimes by a professional (Kalkan & Odacı, 2005).

Teachers need to receive professional help for the problems they experience concerning their cognitive health and the efficiency of the education services they provide to students. The attitudes toward seeking help become more critical for special education teachers. Special education teachers may sometimes ask for help in showing this effort (Karataş, 2016). Köse (2007) emphasized that teachers with high self-efficacy levels achieve satisfaction in providing education services and can make organizations healthier.

Teachers having positive personality traits besides professional competencies is seen as an essential factor that best uses the teaching profession (Kalafat, 2012). When examining the studies, no studies examined three variables together were not found. From this viewpoint, this study investigates the correlation between special education teachers' psychological resilience, self-efficacy, and attitudes toward seeking psychological help. Answers to the following questions were sought.

- Do the special education teachers' psychological resilience, self-efficacy, and attitudes toward seeking psychological help differ following the demographic characteristics?
- Is there a correlation between the psychological resilience and self-efficacy of teachers?

- Is there a correlation between attitudes toward seeking psychological help and the psychological resilience of teachers?
- Is there a correlation between attitudes toward seeking psychological help and the self-efficacy of teachers?

METHOD

Research Model

This study investigating the correlation between special education teachers' psychological resilience, self-efficacy, and attitudes toward seeking psychological help is a descriptive study designed in the survey mode.

Participants

The group consists of teachers who worked in the special education field in Konya. The group of the study consists of 210 special education teachers in Konya. The demographic characteristics are shown in Table 1.

Variables	Groups	N	%
Gender	Female	137	65,2
	Male	73	34,8
Age	Under the Age of 25	68	32,4
	26-30	68	32,4
	31-35	33	15,7
	36 years and above	41	19,5
Professional Seniority	0-5 years	137	65,2
	6-10	34	16,2
	11-15	19	9,0
	16 years and above	20	9,5
Type of Institution	Special Education and Rehabilitation	113	53,8

	Special Education Kindergarten	31	14,8
	Special Education Practice School 1st Stage	13	6,2
	Special Education Vocational School	5	2,4
	Primary School Special Education Classroom	20	9,5
	Secondary School Special Education Classroom	11	5,2
	Counseling and Research Center	17	8,1
Total		210	100

In Table 1, female teachers form 65% of the teachers, and 64.8% are between the ages of 25-35. 65% have been working for 1-5 years. In addition, 53.8% of the teachers work in special education and rehabilitation centers.

Data Collection Tool

The demographic form was utilized to define the participants' characteristics. The psychological resilience scale for adults teachers' attitudes toward seeking psychological help scale short form and self-efficacy was used. The permissions were received from the Ege University Publication Ethics Committee and the Ministry of National Education.

Demographic Form

The demographic form was developed. Form regarding gender, age, department of graduation, professional seniority, and institution where they work was obtained through this form.

Psychological Resilience Scale for Adults

The scale was developed by Friborg et al. in 2003. The sub-dimensions of the scale are social competence, personal strength, social resources structured style, and family cohesion (Basım & Çetin. 2011).

Teacher Efficacy Scale

Gibson and Dembo developed the scale in 1984. The scale was revised by Guskey and Passaro (1994) and adapted by Diken (2005) into Turkish. The Teacher Efficacy Scale comprises 16 questions. On the scale, when the score approaches 5 points, it decreases when the score approaches 1 point (Diken, 2005).

Attitudes toward Seeking Psychological Help Scale-Short Form

The scale was developed by Fischer and Turner in 1970, the Scale short form was developed by Fischer and Farina (1995), and Topkaya (2011) adapted the scale to Turkish.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the SPSS 25 package program. Normality controls were conducted to determine which analyses should be used. The analysis results show that the kurtosis and skewness values regarding the variables were normally distributed. Independent group t-test, one-way analysis, and Pearson correlation analysis were used.

FINDINGS

Three scales were applied in the study. The scales' mean and standard deviation values are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation Values of the Scales

Scale	Dimension	N	Min	Max	\bar{X}	SD
Psychological Resilience for Adults	<i>Perception of Self</i>	210	10	27	18,32	2,18
	Perception of Future	210	7	18	12,30	1,73
	Structured Style	210	8	20	12,48	2,36
	Social Competence	210	12	26	18,95	2,80
	Family Cohesion	210	10	26	18,48	3,23
	<i>Social Resources</i>	210	11	28	18,94	2,73
Teacher Efficacy	<i>Individual Teaching Efficacy</i>	210	17	27	21,87	2,13
	General Teaching Efficacy	210	17	32	23,13	2,85
ATSPHS-SF		210	18	34	25,98	2,66

In Table 2, teachers' perception of self (18,32±2,18), perception of future (12,30±1,73), structured style (12,48±2,36), social competence (18,95±2,80), family cohesion (18,48±3,23), social resources (18,94±2,73), individual teaching efficacy (21,87±2,13), general teaching efficacy (23,13±2,85), and attitudes toward seeking psychological help (25,98±2,66) were above medium level.

A significant difference ($p=.047$) was determined only in the psychological resilience structured style sub-dimension following gender. No significant difference was found between age groups ($p>.05$). The scores obtained by the teachers who graduated special education and the teachers whose area of graduation was not special education but who received a certificate and became special education teachers were compared in three scales in terms of the department of graduation. A significant difference ($p=.008$) was found in the general teaching efficacy dimension only in the self-efficacy levels in favor of the teachers with special education certificates.

Results of the Pearson correlation analysis to examine the correlation between special education teachers' psychological resilience attitudes toward seeking psychological help and self-efficacy are shown in Table 3-5.

Table 3. Correlation between Psychological Resilience and Self-Efficacy

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Psychological Resilience	1	.501	.425	.447	.479	.492	.512	.046	-.092	.129
2.Perception of Self		1	.224	.056	.041	.163	.099	-.028	-.142*	.069
3.Perception of Future			1	.097	.061	.086	.062	.089	.024	.101
4.Structured Style				1	.148	-.008	.068	.132	.068	.124
5.Social Competence					1	-.084	.140	.046	-.103	.139*
6.Family Cohesion						1	.026	-.119	-.060	-.114
7.Social Resources							1	.065	-.027	.107
8.Self-Efficacy Total								1	.667	.831
9.Individual Teaching									1	.140
10.General Teaching										1

*p < .01

When examining Table 3, no correlation was seen between teachers' psychological resilience levels and self-efficacy levels. There was a positive relationship between the social competence

sub-dimension of psychological resilience level and the general teaching efficacy dimension of self-efficacy level ($r=0.139$). A negative correlation was found between the perception of self and the individual teaching sub-dimensions ($r=-0.142$).

Table 4. Correlation between Attitudes toward Seeking Psychological Help and Psychological Resilience

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Psychological Resilience	1	.501	.425	.447	.479	.492	.512	-.050
2. Perception of Self		1	.224	.056	.041	.163	.099	-.096
3. Perception of Future			1	.097	.061	.086	.062	-.029
4. Structured Style				1	.148	-.008	.068	-.155*
5. Social Competence					1	-.084	.140	.116
6. Family Cohesion						1	.026	-.015
7. Social Resources							1	-.041
8. ATSPHS-SF								1

* $p < .01$

When examining Table 4, no correlation was seen between teachers' attitudes toward seeking psychological help and psychological resilience levels. However, in the structured style sub-dimension of psychological resilience, a negative relationship was found with attitudes toward seeking psychological help ($r=-0.155$).

Table 5. Correlations between Attitudes toward Seeking Psychological Help and Self-Efficacy

	1	2	3	4
1. Self-Efficacy	1	.667	.831	-.153*
2. Individual Teaching		1	.140	.078
3. General Teaching			1	-.262*
4. ATSPHS-SF				1

* $p < .01$

When examining Table 5, a negative correlation was seen between teachers' attitudes toward seeking psychological help and self-efficacy levels ($r = -0.153$). It would be said that teachers' attitudes toward seeking psychological help increase as their perception of self-efficacy levels decreases. For example, it was stated that there was a negative correlation in teachers' self-efficacy level general teaching efficacy sub-dimension ($r = -0.262$).

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS

In this study that examines the correlation between special education teachers' psychological resilience, self-efficacy, and attitudes toward seeking psychological help, teachers' psychological resilience was found to be above the medium level. It is seen that special education teachers have psychological resilience to deal with the difficulties they experience. Uçar (2014) and Sönmezer (2015) found teachers' psychological resilience levels to be high.

It was seen that self-efficacy levels and attitudes toward seeking psychological help from special education teachers are above the medium level. For example, teachers' scores obtained from individual teaching and general teaching sub-dimensions were found to be high. Similar to the findings obtained from this study, it was stated that teachers' self-efficacy levels were high (Akdoğan, 2009; Alaçayır, 2011; Diken, 2006; Korkut, 2009).

When examining teachers' psychological resilience following gender, a difference was defined in the structured style sub-dimension. It was found that females' structured styles were at higher levels than males. This difference is higher in the females because women adapted to maintaining daily responsibilities more quickly than men in the study period that coincided with the Covid-19 period. Besides, it can be said that women know their strong sides better than men. In the literature that it, some studies show that women's psychological resilience is higher than men's (Dündar, 2016), men's psychological resilience is higher than women's (Erdoğan, 2015; Uçar, 2014), and there is no difference following gender (Gökmen, 2014; Karakaya; 2019; Karataş, 2016; Nurhat, 2017).

When examining teachers' self-efficacy in line with the variable of gender, no difference was found. However, it was stated that self-efficacy did not differ per gender, similar to the results of this study (Alaçayır, 2011; Gençtürk & Memiş, 2010; Şenol, 2012).

When examining teachers' psychological resilience levels in accordance with the age in the study, it was stated that there was no difference between the groups. However, some studies similarly show that psychological resilience did not differ by the age in the literature (Gökmen, 2014; Nurhat, 2017). Unlike the results of this study, Yalçın (2013) stated that primary school teachers' psychological resilience increased with age.

No difference was found when examining teachers' self-efficacy levels in accordance with age in the study. Similar to this study, it was determined that teachers' self-efficacy did not show differences with age (Özata, 2007; Semerci 2015). Şenol (2012), in a study on teachers and teacher candidates, stated that self-efficacy increased with age.

No difference was found when examining teachers' attitudes toward seeking psychological help by the study age. In the literature, similar to the results of this study (Akgün, 2019; Akpınar, 2021).

In the study, no difference was found between the teachers who graduated from the department of special education undergraduate program and the teachers who received a certificate to work in special education regarding psychological resilience. In the literature, similar to the results of this study (Karakaya, 2019; Sönmezer, 2015).

When examining teachers' self-efficacy levels in accordance with the department of graduation, it was determined that there was a difference in the general teaching dimension. Gençtürk and Memiş (2010) stated that classroom teachers' self-efficacy was higher than branch teachers. Unlike this study, some studies state that special education teachers' self-efficacy perception levels did not differ in accordance with the department of graduation (Erisen & Çeliköz, 2003; Karahan, 2008).

The study determined a positive correlation between the social competence dimension of special education teachers' psychological resilience scale and self-efficacy, and there was no relationship between psychological resilience levels and self-efficacy. It can be said that teachers' self-efficacy levels increase when they are supported socially and become active in social life by communicating with people. There was found to be a negative relationship with the perception of self. Azkapu (2019) stated that psychological resilience increases as general self-efficacy perception increases. Betoret (2006) stated that teachers with high efficacy have a higher potential to deal with problems.

The study found a negative correlation between the structured style dimension of special education teachers' psychological resilience scale and attitudes toward seeking psychological help. It can be stated that teachers' attitudes toward seeking psychological help decrease as their self-confidence, planning, and organization skills increase. Supporting the results of this study, Kaya (2019) stated that no correlation was observed.

The study found a negative correlation between special education teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes toward seeking psychological help. While individuals do not need external support when they have enough self-efficacy to overcome the problems they experience, people with low self-efficacy perception have a weak belief that they can solve the problem (Öcel, 2002). Similar to this study, Judd et al. (2006) stated that attitudes toward seeking psychological help of individuals with low self-efficacy perception were at higher levels. However, unlike this study, Bicil (2012) stated that there was a positive correlation between attitudes toward seeking psychological help and self-efficacy.

The results of this study will contribute to determining support services to provide to teachers, individuals, and families who benefit from special education services.

SUGGESTIONS

- The study can be conducted in the same design with teachers who work in different grade levels, and their psychological resilience, self-efficacy, and attitudes can be examined.
- The study is limited to the province of Konya and its districts. The study can be conducted in other provinces or may include all regions of Turkey.
- This study conducted with special education teachers can be carried out with teacher candidates or families of individuals with special needs.

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