**Social acceptance levels of normal developed students towards disable students**

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| **Article Info** |  | **ABSTRACT** |
| ***Article history:***  Received Jun 9, 2018  Revised Nov 20, 2018  Accepted Dec 11, 2018 |  | In this study, it is aimed to examine whether there is a significant difference between the social acceptance levels of the normally developing middle school students towards students with disability according to the variables of gender, grade level, number of siblings, income level and whether there are individuals with disability in the family. This study was conducted in overall scanning model with appropriate sampling model. The population of this research consists of 6th and 7th grade students in 3 secondary schools in the city centre of Burdur in the 2019-2020 academic year and associated to the Ministry of National Education. The sample of the research consists of 220 students, 130 of whom are female (59.1%), 90 of which are male (40.9%). The "Social Acceptance Scale" was used to collect the data. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), t, were calculated by using test techniques. As a result of the study, in general when the results of the study were evaluated, it was seen that the average score of "peer attitude" of female students was higher than male students. No significant difference was found between the total scores of the social acceptance scale subscales, "social skills" and "student behaviour" subscales and "social acceptance scale" according to the grade level of students with normal development. According to the number of siblings of the participants, a significant difference was found between the "student behaviour" subscale of the social acceptance scale and the total score averages of the "social acceptance scale". |
| ***Keywords:***  Disabled individual  Social acceptance  Self-esteem  Secondary school students |
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1. **INTRODUCTION**

Different special education services are provided according to the development and learning characteristics of individuals with disability to continue their lives independently in the society. It covers different educational services, from the students with disability studying with their peers through normal growth to living by care in residential institutions [1]. It is defined as social acceptance that normally developing students have positive attitudes towards students with special needs and accept them as one of them [2].

The purpose of integration practices is not only to increase the academic skills of the students with disable students, but also to increase their social skills and social acceptance, as well as to improve their empathic skills and positive self-esteem [3]. There are studies on the effect of inclusive educational practices on the social acceptance of students with special needs. Determining the social acceptance levels of students with disable students who participate in mainstreaming applications when researches on the subject are examined [4, 5]. It is seen that researches have been conducted to inform normally growing individuals about disable students and the relationship between this situation and the social acceptance levels of these students [6, 7, 8]. The exceptionally gifted students have frequently verbal arguments and this arises mainly from their competitive personalities. The students specifies that the controversies they have may be solved with the face to face communication and this situation has no influence either on their courses or friendship [8, 9]. It is recommended that all primary teachers consider the best practice of social support within their own classroom, and further research be carried out to investigate best practice in fostering and supporting the social growth and needs of students with ASD [10]. Kahveci [11] the Proactive Model emphasizes the conceptual, operational, evaluative, public relations, and personal development of student counselors. These components are sequenced, interrelated, and precede one another in significance during implementation.

Social acceptance is defined as the acceptance of individuals to their groups and relationships by others, being chosen as a group member for assembly activities, and being adopted by their friends [6, 12]. Cagran and Schmidt [13] show that a successful implementation of inclusion of children with special needs (SN) largely depends on the teachers' positive attitude towards it. In other words, it is expressed as social acceptance that students have positive attitudes towards disable students, see them as they are and accept their participation in their activities [2]. Having social abilities does not mean that the individual will be on a social basis competent and accepted by the society [14]. Social acceptance is also an important factor for the socialization of students with disabilities. On the contrary, not being accepted by their peers decreases the sense of self-confidence and causes anxious and timid behaviours to increase [3]. Negative attitudes of the peers, teachers and other people actively involved in the implementation process of inclusive education of disable students may cause these individuals to experience loneliness and social exclusion [15, 16].

As a result of negative attitudes, teachers' not taking into account the needs of students with disable and not meeting these disabilities, focusing more on students with normal development can be considered as the most important factors that prevent the realization of social acceptance [17]. Students with disabilities may also show delays in social skills, which also affect academic achievement, compared to their peers, and these inadequacies can lead to a decrease in the level of social acceptance in the classroom with the addition of problematic behaviours [18]. Teachers' positive attitudes towards students with disabilities, providing them with peer support, and making environments that enable them to learn by having fun in the classroom are very important in increasing the social acceptance of those students [19, 20]. Kahveci and Serin [21], children with learning disabilities are at greater risk of being victims of sexual abuse in schools.

It is stated that appreciations to the education of students with special needs in the same environment with their coevals, their social skills develop and they develop in social, emotional and academic fields through the interaction they establish [22]. Families who share responsibilities related to their children are respected as important partners by experts, activities for the student are carried out jointly in a coordinated method, accordingly simplifying the process of gaining skills functionally [23]. Saltalı and İmir [24], the study examines children’s aggressive, prosocial and socially inhibited behaviors in association with parenting dimensions namely warmth, inductive-reasoning, obedience-demanding and punitive. Kahveci and Selcuk [25], parent training programs have proven the most effective way to treat child behaviour problems. Without effective treatment, disruptive or problem behavior problems related long-term outcomes include academic difficulties in late school years unemployment, family problems, and mental health problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, addiction, and antisocial personality disorders. The relations of students in the educational environment with their teachers and the quality of these relationships; they play an important role in the emotional, social and academic development of students [26, 27]. However, when it comes to mainstreaming education practice, it has been revealed through research that teachers do not consider themselves competent [28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33].

Peers play an important role in the psychosocial development of most of their coevals. The support of peers is providing opportunities for individuals to gain interpersonal relationships, social skills and a sense of involvement. In order to achieve the success in combining; It is seen in researches that informing normal peers, families, teachers, school administration and other staff about students with normal special development, organizing coalescence activities plays an important role in the social acceptance of those students [6, 3, 18, 34, 8]. In this situation, it has revealed that more studies should be carried out to determine the social acceptance levels of students with normal developing towards students with disabilities.

**The aim of research**

The aim of this study is to examine whether there is a significant difference in the social acceptance levels of disable students towards disable students in secondary schools in the city center of Burdur according to the variables of gender, grade level, number of siblings, incoming level and whether there are individuals with disabilities in the family. For this purpose, the following questions were required;

Is there a significant difference in the social acceptance levels of secondary school students towards disable students according to the variables of gender, grade level, number of siblings, income level and whether there are individuals with special needs disabilities in the family?

1. **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this study, the descriptive screening model was used as it was aimed whether there was a significant difference in the social acceptance levels of the disable students towards the students with disabilities in secondary schools in the city center of Burdur according to the variables of gender, grade level, number of siblings, income level and whether there are individuals with disabilities in families.

**2.1. Population and sample**

The population of this study consists of three secondary schools in the city center of Burdur, between 2019- 2020, affiliated to the Ministry of National Education. The sample of the study consists of a total of 220 students, 130 (59.1%) female and 90 (40.9%) male, studying in three secondary schools in the province of Burdur. 110 of these students are 6th grade students and 110 of them are 7th grade students. Appropriate sampling method was used in the selection of samples from the population.

**2.2. Data collection tools**

Social acceptance scale, developed by Arslan [5], is a Likert-type scale with a triple rating of 32 points. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis for the construct validity of the scale, a three-factor structure was determined. The percentage of explaining the total variance of the three-factor structure is 46.66%. The first of the three factors that make up the scale is defined as "Social Skills", the second as "Student Behaviour", and the third as "Peer Attitude". In the reliability analysis of the scale, the Cronbach Alpha Internal Consistency Coefficient was found as .92. The high value taken from the scale indicates that the students have developed a "positive attitude" towards the mainstreaming students, while the low value indicate that the students have developed a "negative attitude". In this study, the Cronbach's Alpha value of the scale was found .93.

**2.3. Data analysis**

The arithmetic means, standard deviations, t-test, using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) analysis of the data in the applied scale will be calculated using the "SPSS 20" package program on the computer. The level of importance in the study was accepted as .05.

1. **RESULTS**

The findings obtained for the sub-problems determined in line with the purpose of this research are presented in the following order.

Table 1. Analysis of the social acceptance scale and social acceptance subscales score average of the participants by gender

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dependent Variables | Gender | | | | P-Value (Sig.) |
| Male | | Female | |
| Mean | Std.Dev | Mean | Std.Dev. |
| Social Acceptance | 37.911 | 7.810 | 39.261 | 7.391 | .201 |
| Student Behaviour | 25.188 | 2.647 | 25.600 | 2,604 | .287 |
| Peer Attitude | 18.388 | 2.629 | 19.238 | 2.018 | .011\* |
| Social Acceptance Scale | 81.488 | 11.594 | 84.100 | 10.867 | .096 |

\*p<.05

When Table 1 was examined, no significant difference was found between the total score averages of the social acceptance scale subscales, "social skills", "student behaviour" subscales and "social acceptance" scale of the participants with normal development by gender. However, a significant difference was found according to the "Peer Attitude" subscale of the social acceptance scale. Accordingly, it was observed that female students' peer attitude towards students with special needs was higher than male students.

Table 2. Social acceptance scale and social acceptance sub-scale score averages analysis by class level of participants

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dependent Variables | Class Level | | | | P-Value (Sig.) |
| 6th grade | | 7th grade | |
| Mean | Std.Dev | Mean | Std.Dev. |
| Social Acceptance | 39.236 | 7.343 | 38.181 | 7.801 | .356 |
| Student Behaviour | 25.336 | 2.845 | 25.527 | 2.391 | .686 |
| Peer Attitude | 19.245 | 2.151 | 18.536 | 2.437 | .008\* |
| Social Acceptance Scale | 83.818 | 11.265 | 82.245 | 11.167 | .225 |

\*p<.05

According to Table 2, a significant difference was found according to the "Peer Attitude" subscale of the social acceptance scale subscales of the 6th grade and 7th grade participants with normal development. Accordingly, 6th grade students' average of “peer attitude” towards disable students is higher than 7th grade students.

Table 3. Social acceptance scale and social acceptance subscales score average analysis according to the income level of the participants' family

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dependent Variables | Level of the Participants' Family | | | | | | P-Value (Sig.) |
| 0-3000 tl | | 3000t1-4000 tl | | 4000t1 and Above | |
| Mean | Std.Dev | Mean | Std.Dev. | Average | St.Dev |
| Social Acceptance | 40.181 | 5.095 | 40.049 | 6.912 | 37.674 | 8.275 | .169 |
| Student Behaviour | 25.818 | 1.424 | 25.901 | 1.903 | 25.103 | 3.090 | .038\* |
| Peer Attitude | 18.697 | 2.567 | 19.163 | 1.881 | 18.809 | 2.448 | .652 |
| Social Acceptance Scale | 84.697 | 7.359 | 85.114 | 9.681 | 81.587 | 12.517 | .029\* |

\*p<.05

When Table 3 was examined, a significant difference was found between the total score averages of the social acceptance scale sub-scales "student behaviour" subscale and "social acceptance scale" according to the income level of the students with normal development. Middle-income students have higher social acceptance levels for students with disabilities than high-income students.

Table 4. Social acceptance scale and subscale analysis according to whether there is a family member with special needs or not

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dependent Variables | Family Member With Special Needs or Not | | | | P-Value (Sig.) |
|  | Yes | | No | |
|  | Mean | Std.Dev | Mean | Std.Dev. |  |
| Social Acceptance | 41.000 | 6.144 | 38.611 | 7.628 | .380 |
| Student Behaviour | 26.111 | 1.833 | 25.402 | 2.651 | .186 |
| Peer Attitude | 19.666 | 1.322 | 18.857 | 2.350 | .408 |
| Social Acceptance Scale | 86.777 | 8.212 | 82.872 | 11.316 | .323 |

\*p<.05

When Table 4 is examined, a significant difference was not found between the social acceptance scale and subscales mean scores of the participants with normal development according to whether there is a family member with special needs or not.

Table 5.Social acceptance scale and social acceptance subscales score average analysis according to the number of siblings of the participants

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dependent Variables | Number of siblings | | | | | | P-Value (Sig.) |
| 1 | | 2 | | 3 and above | |
| Mean | Std.Dev | Mean | Std.Dev. | Mean | Std.Dev |
| Social Acceptance | 37.301 | 8.406 | 38.989 | 7.242 | 39.733 | 7.085 | .268 |
| Student Behaviour | 24.650 | 3.460 | 25.721 | 2.308 | 25.783 | 1.841 | .042\* |
| Peer Attitude | 18.365 | 2.665 | 19.195 | 2.148 | 18.950 | 2.134 | .089 |
| Social Acceptance Scale | 80.317 | 12.868 | 83.907 | 10.458 | 84.466 | 10.195 | .045\* |

\*p<.05

When Table 5 is examined, a significant difference was found between the total score averages of the social acceptance scale subscales, "student behaviour" subscale, and "social acceptance scale", according to the number of siblings of the participants with normal development. Accordingly, students with 3 or more siblings have a higher level of positive social acceptance than students with 1 sibling. However, no significant difference was found according to the "Peer Attitude" and social skills subscale, which are the subscales of the social acceptance scale.

**4. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION and SUGGESTIONS**

In general when the results of the study were evaluated, it was seen that the average score of "peer attitude" of female students was higher than male students. In this context, female students with normal development have found a higher level of positive peer attitudes towards disable students than male students. This situation can be explained by the fact that females' social skills and communication skills are at a higher level than male students and that females are better than males in disclosing and expressing themselves. In general social acceptance, no significant difference was found in terms of gender. Aktan, Budak, and Botabekovna [4], Karatas and Arslan [35] found a significant difference between social acceptance level and gender in their study. Ayral, Ozcan, Can, Unlu, Bedel, Sengun, Demirhan and Caglar [36] found that there is no significant difference between social acceptance and gender in their study, where they examined social acceptance levels of inclusive students. These research findings support the findings of the present study.

No significant difference was found between the total scores of the social acceptance scale subscales, "social skills" and "student behaviour" subscales and "social acceptance scale" according to the grade level of students with normal development. However, a significant difference was found according to the "Peer Attitude" subscale of the social acceptance scale. Accordingly, 6th grade students' average of “peer attitude” towards disable students is higher than 7th grade students. Concordantly, it can be said that as the grade level increases, the positive peer attitudes of students towards students with disability decrease. Civelek [6] found in his study that students with low social acceptance level were not accepted by their peers, causing them to feel inadequate, behave more negatively and avoid social relationships. In Sucuoglu and Ozokcu [37] studies; they found that the social skills and academic competence of normally developing students were less than their peers, and their problematic behaviours were higher than their peers. Petry [38], found that normal students generally have neutral attitudes towards their disabled peers at grade level, but social acceptance level varies according to disability status. Gurkan [39], peers who are educated together with disabled children can become aware of personal differences and develop a positive attitude towards these differences. Kahveci and Serin [21], results show immediate improvements in disruptive and aggressive behaviour. Additionally, follow up observations revealed maintenance of intervention effects. Although use of a multiple baseline design had restricted use in experimental control, preliminary results indicate that the Individualized Social Skills Program may be useful for eliminating disruptive and aggressive behaviours.

According to the number of siblings of the participants, a significant difference was found between the "student behaviour" subscale of the social acceptance scale and the total score averages of the "social acceptance scale". Students with three or more siblings have a higher level of positive social acceptance than students with only one sibling. This situation can be explained as having more than one sibling creates a positive environment for students to increase their communication and social skills and these students increase their social acceptance towards disable students. Gulay [40] found that the social skills that children learn as a result of sibling relationships vary according to the number of siblings, and Sarı [41] found that social adaptation and social skills of children with their peers differ significantly according to the number of siblings. The present study supports the findings. Ayral et al. [36]; Karatas and Arslan [35] in their studies; they concluded that there was no relationship between the number of siblings and the social acceptance level of the mainstreaming student. No significant difference was found between the Social Acceptance Scale and its subscales mean scores according to whether there is a family member with disability or not. Ayral et al. [36] found that students' having a disabled sibling did not affect their level of social acceptance. This finding supports the current research. Aktan, Budak, and Botabekovna [4] found in their study that there was no significant difference between the social acceptance levels of individuals with disables according to whether there is a person with disables in their family and close society. Kahveci and Selcuk [25] results of the study show that the PCIT is effective in reducing destructive behavior problems, supporting parental interactions in a positive way, supporting the positive change of the home atmosphere and family wellbeing, and establishing an independent individual by making a healthy separation of the participant from the mother possible.

A significant difference was found between the total score averages of the social acceptance scale subscales ', student behaviours' subscale and 'social acceptance scale' according to the income level of students with normal development. Middle-income students have higher social acceptance levels for disable students with special needs than high-income students. In the literature, there are studies showing that students' social acceptance does not differ significantly according to family income [4, 36, 42], studies differ from the present study findings. Boutot [43] social acceptance; It is defined as individuals who are not affected by disability having positive attitudes towards individuals affected by disability and seeing them as others.

In general, when the results of the study are evaluated, female students with normal development have higher level of positive peer attitudes as disable students than male students. Considering the findings of this research, it is important that the psychological counsellors working in the school guidance services to organize psycho-education programs or informative seminars and conferences for increasing the positive attitudes of male students towards disable students. In terms of the number of siblings’ variable, students with three or more siblings have a higher level of positive social acceptance than students with one sibling. Considering that the result of this research increases social skills, it is important in terms of emphasizing the importance of the trainings to be made to develop social skills for other siblings in the family.

This research has some limitations. In this study, social acceptance levels of only middle school 6th and 7th grade students towards disable students were investigated. The limitation of this study in terms of methods is that it is a descriptive study and is insufficient to explain causal relationships. Another limitation of this study that was implemented in three secondary schools in only one city center and it did not consider the socio-economic levels of the participants. In future studies, it may be more appropriate to conduct quantitative and qualitative studies with larger and heterogeneous working groups. These are serious restriction and limitations of the study. However, researches on this subject are more recent and appear to be limited. It is thought that the results of this study will contribute significantly to the development of positive social acceptance and positive attitudes towards individuals with special needs. In new studies to be carried out about this subject could be suggested to work with students from different education levels, with different variables, and students from different age groups. It is thought that students with normal development will contribute to new studies that will investigate the positive social acceptance levels of disable students and will guide similar studies.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This article is based on a master's thesis conducted under the direction of the second author by the first author in the area of Guidance and Psychological Counselling at the European University of Lefke Institute of Graduate Studies and Research.

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