

An Investigation of Social Acceptance Levels of Students with Typical Development toward Their Peers with Special Needs in terms of Certain Variables

M.Abdulbaki KARACA¹ Hasan H. TOPRAK²

Abstract:

The aim of this study is to investigate the level of social acceptance of students with typical development in inclusive classes towards individuals with special needs in terms of certain variables. In this study, the screening model was used, which is one of the quantitative research methods. The reason for choosing the screening model in the research is to determine the relationship between different variables such as gender, parents' education level, and whether there is a person with disability in the student's immediate environment and the level of social acceptance. In the 2019-2020 academic year, 1083 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade students in inclusive classes in public secondary schools in Türkiye participated in the study. The Social Acceptance Scale was used in the study. The statistical package was used to analyze the data. The results of the study revealed that there was a significant difference in social acceptance levels of students with typical development towards their peers with special needs ($p < 0.001$) according to the variables as gender, father's education level, grade level, Having a person with disability among relatives, previous attendance to kindergarten and nursery in the past, family status. However, it was found out that there was no statistically significant difference between the mother's level of education of the students with typical development and their social acceptance levels towards their peers with special needs.

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¹ Asst. Prof. Dr. Inonu University, Faculty of Education, akaracaegitim@gmail.com,

 Orcid ID: 0000-0002-4192-6307.

² PhD Candidate, Necmettin Erbakan University, htoprak@erbakan.edu.tr

 Orcid ID: 0000-0002-9580-1534

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is defined as the education practice based on the principle that individuals with special education needs have the right to receive the same education with their peers, by providing support education services to individuals with special education needs to ensure that they interact with other individuals of all types and levels and achieve their educational goals at the highest level (Turkish Ministry of National Education, 2018). In Türkiye, the least restrictive educational environment is supported by the changing school policies and laws recently, and people with special needs benefit from the same educational environment as their peers, in other words, their participation in inclusive practices is guaranteed (Özkan-Yaşaran, 2009; Nal and Tüzün, 2022; Karaca, 2018). The most important factor for the successful implementation of inclusive practices is the team that will implement the inclusion. Inclusion students and their peers are among the people who participate in the team that will carry out the inclusion practices (Batu and Kırcaali-İftar, 2006; Graham, 2020)

Some of the main goals of inclusion are: Individuals with special needs interact with peers, have positive attitudes toward themselves, and are socially accepted by their peers (Krahe and Altwasser, 2006; Batu, 2008). One of the expected benefits of inclusive education is that students with special needs learn to live with their peers with typical development. In inclusive education, students with special needs learn skills by observing students with typical development. In this way, they acquire life experiences that prepare them for life in society. In addition, students with typical development can obtain realistic information about people with special needs, acquire skills to live with individuals different from themselves, and develop positive attitudes toward them (Sucuoğlu and Kargin, 2006). However, students with special needs may differ significantly from their peers with typical development in terms of their cognitive, physical, and adaptive skills and abilities. These differences can sometimes affect the level of interaction between students with special needs and students with typical development. In order for individuals with special needs to develop these skills, they must be taught together with their peers with typical development (Firat and Koyuncu, 2019). It is not considered sufficient for students to be physically in the same environment to ensure the social integration of students with typical development and students with special needs. The need for increased social interaction is emphasized (Kargin and Baydık, 2002). In order for this interaction to occur, students with typical development are found to be associated with the social acceptance of students with special needs (Firat and Koyuncu 2019; Watson and Keith 2002; Hogan, McLellan, and Bauman, 2000).

Social acceptance is thought of as playing games or spending time with students being accepted by peers or being accepted as a member of the class (Chan and Mpofu, 2001; Odom et al., 2006). Considering the basic characteristics of children that affect social acceptance, developmental disabilities are among the important factors that affect social acceptance (Guralnick, 2002; Odom and Diamond, 1998; Avcıoğlu, 2017; Odom et al., 2006). The level

of social acceptance of students with special needs is among the topics of interest. This is because understanding the level of social acceptance of students who show typical development in inclusive classrooms versus students with special needs is considered important for teaching various concepts and information to the groups of children with whom experts work in inclusive programs (Şahin and Çiçek, 2008). The social acceptance of children with special needs increases when they are taught in the same environment as their peers. In practice, children with special needs have not been accepted or rejected by their peers without the necessary support. Many people have difficulty in communicating with individuals with special needs because they do not have enough information about them. Individuals with special needs are not accepted by their peers because of their disabilities, because they do not know what impact the disability has on daily life, or because they have negative attitudes (Aktaş, 2001).

The first social institution that both individuals with special needs and individuals with typical development encounter after the family is a school. The reason parents send their children with special needs to the same environments as students with typical development is the limited and inadequate social opportunities in special education institutions (Scheepstra, Nakken and Pijl, 1999). Parents expect their children with special needs to be socially accepted by their peers (Watson and Keith 2002; Hogan, McLellan and Bauman, 2000). This is because research emphasizes that acceptance of children with special needs in inclusive environments, in other words, ensuring social acceptance of children with typical development, is an important element for inclusive education and providing social acceptance for teachers, parents, and students is extremely important (Uysal, 2004).

When students develop positive relationships with peers in the school environment, when they are sought out and desired as friends by their peers, when they are recognized and accepted by their peers, this contributes to them seeing themselves as competent and valuable individuals and being socially accepted. The opposite situation can cause the child to feel inadequate, worthless, and lose self-confidence (Bishop and Inderbitzen, 1995). Thus, the fact that individuals with special needs are not socially accepted by their peers causes their already low self-esteem to drop even further and they experience feelings of inadequacy due to negative self-perceptions. In addition, individuals with special needs who are not socially accepted may exhibit problematic behavior and avoid social relationships (Civelek, 1990).

The social acceptance of students with special needs by their peers may vary depending on the quality of their relationships with them. The characteristics of children with special needs also influence the quality of their relationships with peers. According to the related studies, the social skills, interactions, and language skills of children with special needs may be lower compared to their peers, and they may exhibit more problem behavior (Siperstein and Bak, 1985; Guralnick et al., 2006), and these characteristics are considered among the common traits of children who are excluded from their peers (Kargın and

Baydık, 2002). In particular, the low self-esteem of individuals with special needs may cause them to behave negatively and engage in problematic behavior that their peers expect from them, and which may negatively affect the psychological state of individuals with special needs by preventing them from developing themselves (Kaner, 2000; Aktaş and Küçüker, 2002).

Sucuoğlu and Kargın (2006) talk about two basic factors that affect social acceptance. The first factor is the characteristics of the individual with special needs and their differences from their peers, and the second factor is the attitude and level of social acceptance of teachers and peers towards the individual with special needs. Additionally, in the inclusion practices of students with special needs, the variables that affect the social relationships with peers who has a typical development were also addressed. These variables include peer attitudes, type of disability, degree of disability, gender, age, and educational level (Nal and Tüzün, 2011; Sünbül and Sargın, 2002; Civelek, 1990). Although there are many studies in Türkiye that examine the opinions and attitudes of peers towards individuals with special needs (Aral and Dikici, 1998; Ercan, 2001; Turhan, 2007; Çiftçi, 1997), in the secondary school period which is considered as a breaking point (Steinberg and Morris, 2001) limited studies have been conducted on the social acceptance of students with special needs by their peers who show typical development (Chamberlain, Kasari and Rotheram-Fuller, 2007).

The social acceptance levels of individuals with typical development towards their peers with special needs is important for the success of inclusive education practices. At the secondary school level, where attitudes are still being shaped, students' social acceptance levels towards individuals with special needs need to be determined. For this reason, it is important to carry out further studies to determine the social acceptance of individuals with typical development towards individuals with special needs. This study is expected to contribute to the literature from a different perspective by addressing various variables of social acceptance levels of students with typical development towards their peers with special needs. This study is important in terms of contributing to the literature with the data provided on social acceptance. Quantitative studies conducted with large samples are insufficient in the literature on the social acceptance of students with typical development towards individuals with special needs in Türkiye. In this respect, this study has higher representativeness by reaching 1083 students studying in many schools in Konya, Türkiye.

Similarly, when the studies conducted to examine the social acceptance levels in Türkiye are examined systematically, they are conducted especially on primary school students (Şahbaz, 2007; Aktan, Budak, and Botabekovna, 2019). This study fills an important research gap in Türkiye by researching the social acceptance levels of the students with special needs at the secondary school level including inclusive education students toward their peers with special needs.

In order to integrate individuals with special needs into society, various research and studies should be conducted on the social acceptance of them by children with typical

development, especially in the educational process (Peters, 2004; Chamberlain, Kasari and Rotheram-Fuller, 2007). This study is important in terms of understanding the social acceptance of students with typical development towards individuals with special needs in Türkiye.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the level of social acceptance of students with typical development in inclusive secondary school classes toward individuals with special needs in relation to certain variables. In this study, the answers to the following questions were sought.

1) Is there a significant difference between the gender of students with typical development and the level of social acceptance toward students with special needs?

2) Is there a significant difference between the educational level of mothers of students with typical development and the level of social acceptance toward students with special needs?

3) Is there a significant difference between the educational level of the fathers of students with typical development and the level of social acceptance toward students with special needs?

4) Is there a significant difference between the grade levels of students with typical development and the level of social acceptance toward students with special needs?

5) Is there a significant difference between the presence of a student with special needs in the family of students with typical development and the level of social acceptance toward students with special needs?

6) Is there a significant difference between the past attendance to kindergarten and level of social acceptance toward students with special needs?

7) Is there a significant difference between the past attendance to nursery and level of social acceptance toward students with special needs?

8) Is there a significant difference between the nuclear and extended family status of students with typical development and the level of their social acceptance toward students with special needs?

METHOD

Research Design

Quantitative research method was used in this study. The main purpose of the quantitative research method is to obtain the most objective, unbiased information that explains the cause-effect relationship and can be generalized to the population (Gali, Borg,

and Gali, 1996). In this study, the relational screening model was used. In studies using relational screening, the positive or negative relationship between two or more variables is revealed and the effect of one variable on the other is examined. The quantitative data obtained in relational studies are screened for relationships that are in the same or opposite directions, and the strong or weak relationships with each other (Erefe, 2012). In this way, relational screening models enable to understand the amount of change between two or more variables (Karasar, 2006). Therefore, in this study, the findings of the relationship in terms of various variables between the levels of social acceptance of students with special needs by their peers in their classes in secondary schools are expressed with numerical data.

Participants

The current study was conducted with the participation of 1083 students who were attending in inclusive education classes in public secondary schools in Konya, Türkiye in the 2019-2020 academic year. Before starting the research, permission was obtained from the Directorate of National Education in Konya. In the research, 6 general education secondary schools with inclusive students were determined. It has been stated that participation in the research is entirely on voluntary basis and that information about the participants will not be shared in any way. The demographic information of the participants is given in the table below.

Table 1
Demographic information of the participants

	Gender					
	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Grade 6	175	46.1%	205	53.9%	380	100%
7	165	43.3%	216	56.7%	381	100%
8	122	37.9%	200	62.1%	322	100%
Total	462	42.6%	621	57.3%	1083	100%

It can be seen in Table 1 that 175 of the 380 students in the 6th-grade are males while 205 of them are females. Similarly, among the 381 students in the 7th-grade, 165 of them were males and 216 of them were females. Of the 322 8th-grade students, 122 were males and 200 were females. A total of 1083 students participated in the study.

Instruments

Along with the "Social Acceptance Scale", the background information form which was developed by the researchers was used to determine the social acceptance levels of students with typical development toward students with special needs in the inclusion classes. The social acceptance scale developed by Arslan (2010) is a 32-item 3-point Likert scale. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis conducted to ensure the construct validity of the scale, a three-factor structure was determined. The first factor was named as "Social

Skills", the second as "Student Behavior" and the third as "Peer Attitude". The percentage of explaining the total variance of the three-factor structure is 46.66%. As a result of the reliability analysis, the internal consistency coefficient of 32 items was found to be .93, and the Spearman Brown Two Half Test correlation was found to be .96. In the reliability analysis performed on the data of this study, the Cronbach Alpha Internal Consistency Coefficient was found to be .92.

Data collection process and analysis

Data were collected from 6 general education secondary schools in Konya, Türkiye. Data collection tools were distributed in the classroom environment to typically developing students who are attending inclusive classes at their school. The students who participated in the research were informed about the data collection tools. Data collection tools were distributed to students who volunteered to participate in the study. The average coding time of the data collection tool is 15 minutes. After coding, measurement tools were collected by the researchers. The data were collected in February of the 2019-2020 academic year.

The analysis of the data was conducted with the help of the statistical package program. The independent samples t-test was used to understand whether there exists a difference based on the gender of the students with typical development, Having a person with disability among relatives, their previous attendance to nursery, their previous attendance to kindergarten, and their family status. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to understand the difference between the grade levels, father education levels, and mother education levels of students with typical development. In cases where a difference was found, Tukey test was used to control the difference between the mean scores to find the reason for the difference.

FINDINGS

The findings regarding the gender of the students, their grade level, having a person with disability among relatives, their previous attendance to nursery, their previous attendance to kindergarten, the education level of the parents, and the relationship between family status and social acceptance levels are included in this section.

Table 2

Independent samples t-test results on the relationship between social acceptance level and gender

	Gender	N	\bar{X}	Sd	t	p
Peer attitudes	Male	462	17.14	3.85	-7,115	,000
	Female	622	18.73	3.44		
Student behavior	Male	462	22.16	4.03	-5,483	,000
	Female	622	23.39	3.32		
Social skills	Male	462	35.91	7.22	-5,083	,000
	Female	622	38.05	6.57		

p<0.001

When Table 2 is examined, it can be seen that the social skills, student behavior and peer attitudes, which are sub-dimensions of social acceptance level, were compared to the gender of the students. Regarding the mean scores in Table 2, in the peer attitudes dimension, it was determined that males had $\bar{X} = 17.14$ and females had $\bar{X} = 18.73$ points. In student behavior dimension, males had $\bar{X} = 22.16$ and females had $\bar{X} = 23.39$ points. Finally, in the social skills dimension, males had $\bar{X} = 35.91$ and females had $\bar{X} = 38.05$ points. The relationship between the genders of students with typical development in inclusion classes and their social acceptance levels toward individuals with special needs was investigated. There was a significant difference ($p < 0.001$) in favor of female students in the sub-dimensions of peer attitudes, student behavior, and social skills.

Table 3

The findings of one way -ANOVA test regarding the relationship between mothers' level of education and social acceptance levels of the students

		N	\bar{X}	Sd	F	p
Peer attitudes	Primary school	344	18.42	3.18	2,118	,077
	Secondary school	261	17.90	3.97		
	High school	251	18.07	3.75		
	University	153	18.10	3.66		
	Postgraduate	39	16.76	5.15		
	Total	1048	18.10	3.69		
Student behavior	Primary school	344	23.18	3.34	,791	,531
	Secondary school	261	22.78	3.78		
	High school	251	22.75	3.89		
	University	153	22.97	3.44		
	Postgraduate	39	22.49	4.71		
	Total	1048	22.92	3.66		
Social skills	Primary school	344	37.63	6.94	1,894	,109
	Secondary school	261	37.43	7.04		
	High school	251	36.64	6.90		
	University	153	36.11	6.51		
	Postgraduate	39	38.07	7.28		
	Total	1048	37.14	6.92		

p < 0.05

When Table 3 is examined, the relationship between the education levels of mothers of students with typical development and their social acceptance levels toward individuals with special needs can be seen. The mean scores of the mothers in the dimension of peer attitudes, which is one of the sub-dimensions of the level of social acceptance are as follows: primary school graduates $\bar{X} = 18.42$, secondary school graduates $\bar{X} = 17.90$, high school

graduates $\bar{X} = 18.07$, university graduates $\bar{X} = 18.10$, and graduates of postgraduate education $\bar{X} = 16.76$. The mean scores of mothers in the social acceptance level's student behavior sub-dimension are as follows: primary school graduates $\bar{X} = 23.18$, secondary school graduates $\bar{X} = 22.78$, high school graduates $\bar{X} = 22.75$, university graduates $\bar{X} = 22.97$, graduates of postgraduate education $\bar{X} = 22.49$. In the social skills sub-dimension, the means scores of the mothers were found as follows: primary school graduates $\bar{X} = 37.63$, secondary school graduates $\bar{X} = 37.43$, high school graduates $\bar{X} = 36.64$, university graduates $\bar{X} = 36.11$, graduates of postgraduate education $\bar{X} = 38.07$. There was no significant difference between the sub-dimensions of social acceptance level, peer attitudes, student behavior and social skill levels, according to the education levels of the mothers of the students with typical development ($p > 0.05$).

Table 4

The findings of one way -ANOVA test regarding the relationship between fathers' level of education and social acceptance levels of the students

		N	\bar{X}	Sd	F	p	Significant Difference
Peer attitudes	Primary school	154	18.20	3.48	1,249	,288	
	Secondary school	235	18.13	3.64			
	High school	303	18.26	3,51			
	University	259	18.14	3.85			
	Postgraduate	92	17.31	4.12			
	Total	1043	18.11	3.68			
Student Behavior	Primary school	154	23.34	3.28	2,802	,025	2-3 (in favor of 2)
	Secondary school	235	22.37	3.94			
	High school	303	23.28	3.39			
	University	259	22.72	3.89			
	Postgraduate	92	22.75	3.75			
	Total	1043	22.90	3.67			
Social skills	Primary school	154	38.27	7.03	3.65	,006	1-5 (in favor of 1) 3-5 (3 in favor)
	Secondary school	235	36.60	7.27			
	High school	303	37.81	6.38			
	University	259	36.75	6.86			
	Postgraduate	92	35.47	7.59			
	Total	1043	37.13	6.95			

p<0.05

When Table 4 is examined, the relationship between the education levels of the fathers of the students with typical development and the social acceptance levels of the students toward individuals with special needs can be seen. The mean scores of fathers in the dimension of peer attitudes, which is one of the sub-dimensions of social acceptance are as follows: primary school graduates $\bar{X}=18.20$, secondary school graduates $\bar{X}= 18.13$, high school graduates $\bar{X}= 18.26$, university graduates $\bar{X}= 18.14$, and graduates of postgraduate education $\bar{X}= 17.31$. The mean scores of fathers in the social acceptance level's student behavior sub-dimension are as follows; primary school graduates $\bar{X}= 23.34$, secondary school graduates $\bar{X}=22.37$, high school graduates $\bar{X}=23.28$, university graduates $\bar{X}=22.72$, and graduates of postgraduate education $\bar{X}= 22.75$. In the social skills sub-dimension, the mean scores of the fathers are as follows: primary school graduates $\bar{X}= 38.27$, secondary school graduates $\bar{X}= 36.60$, high school graduates $\bar{X}=37.81$, university graduates $\bar{X}= 36.75$, and graduates of postgraduate education $\bar{X}= 35.47$. No statistically significant difference between peer attitudes sub-dimensions of social acceptance level and father's education levels was found ($p>0.05$), but there is a significant difference between student behavior and father's education levels ($p<0.05$), the result of the Tukey test which is one of the Post Hoc tests shows that the difference is between the fathers who are graduates of secondary school and those who are graduates of high school in favor of fathers who are secondary school graduates. It was seen that there was a significant difference between social skill level and father's education level ($p<0.05$), and it was between primary school and university graduates and the direction of the difference was in favor of primary school graduates. Similarly, there was a significant difference between high school graduates and graduates of postgraduate education, and it was in favor of high school graduates.

Table 5

The findings of one way-ANOVA test regarding the relationship between the social acceptance levels of the students and their grade levels

		N	\bar{X}	Sd	F	p	Significant Difference
Peer attitudes	6	380	17.47	4.11	7,735	,000	6-7; 7 in favor
	7	381	18.48	3.36			6-8; 8 in favor
	8	322	18.24	3,51			
	Total	1083	18.05	3.71			
Student behavior	6	380	22.13	4.02	15,054	,000	6-7; 7 in favor
	7	381	22.94	3.40			7-8; 8 in favor
	8	322	23.64	3.43			6-8; 8 in favor
	total	1083	22.86	3.69			

Social skills	6	380	36.63	7.08	2,172	,114
	7	381	37.67	6.61		
	8	322	37.14	7.09		
	Total	1083	37.15	6.93		

p<0.05

Table 5 shows the relationship between the level of social interaction of students with typical development and their grade levels. Peer attitudes mean scores was found as follows: 6th-grade \bar{X} =17.47, 7th-grade \bar{X} =18.48, and 8th-grade \bar{X} =18.24. In the student behavior sub-dimension the mean scores were found as: 6th-grade \bar{X} =22.13, 7th-grade \bar{X} =22.94, and 8th-grade \bar{X} =23.64. In the social skills sub-dimension the mean scores were found as: 6th-grade \bar{X} =36.63, 7th-grade \bar{X} =37.67 8th-grade \bar{X} =37.14. There is no significant difference between the social skill levels of the students with typical development and their grade levels ($p>0.05$). There is a significant difference between peer attitudes and grade levels ($p<0.05$). The difference was in favor of the 7th-grades between the 6th and 7th-grades, and it was in favor of the 8th-grades between the 6th and 8th-grades. There was a significant difference between student behavior and grade levels ($p<0.05$). The difference was in favor of the 7th-grades between the 6th and 7th-grades, in favor of the 8th-grades between the 7th and 8th-grades, and in favor of the 8th-grades between the 6th and 8th-grades.

Table 6

The results of the independent samples t-test conducted to understand the relationship between the presence of a student with special needs among relatives and social acceptance levels and the relationship between student's attendance at kindergarten and their social skill levels

The Presence of a student who has a person with disability among relatives						
		N	\bar{X}	Sd	t	p
Peer attitudes	Yes	266	18.44	3,54	1,808	,071
	No	796	17.97	3.72		
Student behavior	Yes	266	23.31	3.32	2,183	,029
	No	796	22.75	3.79		
Social skills	Yes	266	38.29	6.59	3,074	,002
	No	796	36.78	7.01		
Kindergarten						
Peer attitudes	Yes	798	18.01	3.73	-.805	,421
	No	276	18.22	3,58		
Student behavior	Yes	798	22.87	3.66	,055	,956
	No	276	22.85	3.79		
Social skills	Yes	798	36.80	6.89	-2,667	,008
	No	276	38.09	6.95		

p<0.05

In Table 6, the relationship between the status of having relatives with disabilities and the social acceptance levels toward individuals with special needs is given. The mean scores in the peer attitudes sub-dimension are as follows; those who have a person with disability among relatives was $\bar{X} = 18.44$, while the mean scores of those who do not have a person with disability among relatives was found as $\bar{X} = 17.97$. As for the student behavior sub-dimension, the mean scores of students who have a person with disability among relatives was $\bar{X} = 23.31$, while the mean scores of students who do not have a person with disability among relatives was found as $\bar{X} = 22.75$. Last but not least, in the social skills sub-dimension, the mean scores of the students who have a person with disability among relatives was found as $\bar{X} = 38.29$, while the mean scores of the students who do not have a person with disability among relatives was $\bar{X} = 36.78$. No statistically significant difference was observed between the attitudes of peers, which is one of the sub-dimensions of social acceptance, and the presence of a relative with disability among students ($p > 0.05$). It was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the student behavior sub-dimension and the status of the presence of a person with disability among the relatives of the students with typical development ($p < 0.05$). It is seen that there existed a significant difference between the social skills sub-dimension and the presence of a person with disability among their relatives ($p < 0.05$), the differentiation was again in favor of students those who have a relative with disability.

When Table 6 is examined, the relationship between the attendance to kindergarten status of the students with typical development and their social acceptance levels toward individuals with special needs can be seen. The mean scores in the peer attitudes sub-dimension of social acceptance were found as follows; the students who attended kindergarten had a mean score of $\bar{X} = 18.01$, while the students who did not attend kindergarten had a $\bar{X} = 18.22$. As for the student behavior sub-dimension the mean scores of the students who attended kindergarten was $\bar{X} = 22.87$, while the mean scores of the students who did not attend kindergarten was found as $\bar{X} = 22.85$. Finally, the mean scores of the students who attended kindergarten in the social skills sub-dimension was found as $\bar{X} = 36.80$ while those who did not attend kindergarten had a $\bar{X} = 38.09$ mean score. Considering the findings in Table 6, it was found out that there was no statistically significant relationship between peer attitudes and student behavior toward individuals with special needs and the status of previous attendance to kindergarten of students with typical development ($p > 0.05$). However, a significant difference between the social skill

levels of students with typical development toward individuals with special needs and their attendance to kindergarten was found ($p < 0.05$), and the difference was in favor of the students who did not attend kindergarten in the past.

Table 7

The results of the independent samples t-test conducted to understand the relationship between students' attendance to nursery and their social skill levels and the relationship between the family status of students and their social acceptance levels toward students with special needs

Nursery		N	\bar{X}	Sd	t	p
Peer attitudes	Yes	451	17.98	3.79	-.635	,525
	No	613	18.13	3.62		
Student behavior	Yes	451	22.75	3.74	-1,046	,296
	No	613	22.98	3.61		
Social skills	Yes	451	36.54	7.11	-2,348	,019
	No	613	37.55	6.81		
Family status						
Peer attitudes	Nuclear family	841	18.14	3.69	1,234	,217
	Extended family	232	17.81	3.70		
Student behavior	Nuclear family	841	22.88	3.75	,240	,810
	Extended family	232	22.81	3.44		
Social skills	Nuclear family	841	36.90	6.98	-,2028	,043
	Extended family	232	37.94	6.66		

$p < 0.05$

Table 7 shows the relationship between the nursery attendance of students with typical development and their social acceptance levels toward individuals with special needs. Peer attitudes mean scores were found as follows; the mean scores of the students who attended nursery was found as $\bar{X} = 17.98$, while the students who did not attend nursery had a mean score of $\bar{X} = 18.13$, in the student behavior sub-dimension the means scores of the students who attended nursery was $\bar{X} = 22.75$, while it was found as $\bar{X} = 22.98$ for those who did not attend. Finally, in the social skills sub-dimension the mean scores of the students who attended nursery was $\bar{X} = 36.54$, while the mean scores of the students who did not attend was found as $\bar{X} = 37.55$. Considering the findings in Table 7, it was found that there was no relationship between peer attitudes and student behavior toward individuals with special needs and the status of going to kindergarten for students with typical development

($p>0.05$), however, a statistically significant difference was observed between the social skills of the students with typical development and their attendance to nursery toward individuals with special needs ($p<0.05$). The difference is in favor of the students who did not attend nursery.

In Table 7, the relationship between the status of living in a nuclear or extended family of students with typical development and their social acceptance levels toward individuals with special needs is presented. In the peer attitudes sub-dimension, the mean scores of the students living in a nuclear family was found as $\bar{X} = 18.14$, the mean scores of those who were living in an extended family was $\bar{X} = 17.81$. In the student behavior sub-dimension, the mean scores of the students living in a nuclear family was $\bar{X} = 22.88$, while the mean scores of the students living in an extended family was $\bar{X} = 22.81$. Finally, in the social skills sub-dimension, the mean scores of the students living in a nuclear family was $\bar{X} = 36.90$, the mean scores of the students living in an extended family was determined as $\bar{X} = 37.94$. No statistically significant difference between the peer attitudes and student behavior toward individuals with special needs and their family situations was found ($p>0.05$). However, there is a significant difference between the social skill levels of the students with typical development and their family status ($p<0.05$), it is seen that the difference was in favor of students with typical development who were living in extended families.

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that among the sub-dimensions of social acceptance of female students toward inclusion students, the dimensions of peer attitudes, student behavior, and social skills were higher than those of male students. In previous studies, the level of social acceptance of 1454 students toward students with special needs was examined and it was found that the level of social acceptance was higher among female students than male students (Ayril et al., 2013). In the study conducted by Townsend et al. (1993), female peers were found to have more positive attitudes toward students with special needs than males. In the study conducted by Veenman et al. (2004), it is highlighted that the social acceptance of female students compared to male students is higher toward children with facial scars or special needs. In other studies, it is found that the median score of social acceptance scale for peers with special needs is higher in female students than that of male students and there is a significant difference between them (Koyuncuoğlu, 2016; Sarı et al., 2010; Georgiadi et al., 2012). The results of this study verify that the gender variable significantly affects the level of social acceptance.

At the end of the study, it was found that there was a significant difference between the grade levels of students with typical development and the sub-dimensions of student behavior and peer attitudes, which are sub-dimensions of social acceptance toward

individuals with special needs. In the peer attitudes sub-dimension, 7th-grade students scored higher than 6th-grade students and 8th-grade students scored higher than 6th-grade students. In the student behavior sub-dimension, 7th-grade students scored higher than 6th-grade students, 8th-grade students received higher scores than 7th-grade students, and 8th-grade students scored higher than 6th-grade students. Therefore, it can be stated that as the grade levels of students with typical development increased, peer attitudes and student behavior, which are sub-dimensions of social validity, increased positively toward individuals with special needs. Previous studies revealed that the grade level of students with typical development impact on the attitude toward students with special needs (Kargın and Baydik, 2002). There are also research results which shows that the level of social acceptance toward individuals with special needs increases as the age level increases especially during adolescence (Koyuncuoğlu, 2016; Pijl and Frostad, 2010). However, contrary to these results, there exist studies with different findings as well. As a result of the research conducted by Ayrıl et al. (2013), it is stated that there is no relationship between the class levels of students with typical development and their social acceptance levels toward individuals with special needs. Similar research results emphasize that young children have higher levels of social acceptance toward their peers with special needs. The definition of disability is perceived more negatively with the increase in the age (Popp and Fu, 1981; Hall and McGregor, 2000). However, the present study's finding as the increase in class level leads to an increase in peer attitudes and student behavior sub-dimensions of social acceptance can be because of the recent widespread implementation of inclusive education activities in general education schools for students with typical development in Türkiye (Odluyurt, 2018; Özkubat et al., 2016; Kılıç, 2011; Özgönel and Girli, 2016; Şahin and Güldenöğlü, 2013).

The results of the study revealed that in the student behavior and social skills dimensions the students with typical development who has an individual with special needs among their relatives had higher scores compared to those who does not have a relative with special needs. There was no significant difference between social acceptance levels in the peer attitude dimension. The results of Ayrıl et al.'s (2013) study, in which the friendship dimension of social acceptance toward students with special needs was measured, revealed that there was no significant difference between the friendship levels of the students who have or don't have siblings with special needs. In another study The Social Acceptance Scale score of the students who knew a person with disability out of or in their family was found to be higher (Koyuncuoğlu, 2016). There are also research results (Nevill and White, 2011; Kargın and Baydik, 2002) stating that the presence of a person with disability among first or second degree relatives affects the social acceptance levels toward individuals with special needs.

The results of the study revealed that there was no significant difference between the mother's education levels of the students with typical development and the social acceptance levels toward individuals with special needs. In the study conducted by Ayrıl

et al. (2013), similar findings were reached. As a result of the present study, there was no relationship between the education levels of students with typical development and their social acceptance levels. Again, as a result of this study, there was a significant difference between the father's education levels and social acceptance levels of students with typical development in the student behavior and social skill levels sub-dimensions. In the student behavior sub-dimension, it was revealed that the difference was between those whose fathers were secondary school and high school graduates, and those whose fathers were secondary school graduates had higher scores. In the social skills sub-dimension, it was found that the difference was between postgraduate and primary school graduates and it was in favor of primary school graduates. As for the difference between high school graduates and graduates of postgraduate education it was in favor of high school graduates. As a result of the study conducted by Ayral et al. (2013), it was found out that the social acceptance levels of students with typical development whose fathers were high school graduates were higher than those who graduated from a university. As a result of this study, while there is no significant difference between the education level of the mother and the social acceptance levels of the students with typical development, there is a significant difference between the education level of the father and the social acceptance levels of the students with typical development (Ayral et al., 2013). In the study conducted by Dağlı-Gökbulut et al. (2017), significant differences were found between social acceptance scores according to the father's education level. Students whose fathers have undergraduate and master's degrees have lower social acceptance scores than the students whose fathers are primary, secondary and high school graduates. Children are not born with attitudes, but they learn their attitudes later (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1988), and they get their first attitudes largely from their parents. This finding shows that fathers with undergraduate and graduate degrees do not benefit from education programs that include a perspective on students with special needs. It can be said that this situation may negatively affect the social acceptance levels of the students with typical development.

When the previous research findings (Öncül and Batu, 2005) are examined, it can be seen that the limited cooperation between the school and the family regarding inclusion practices and the fact that the parents of children with typical development are aware of the existence of students with special needs only through their children who attend an inclusion class can be the reason behind this finding.

According to the results of the study, it was revealed that the level of social skills sub-dimension of social acceptance toward individuals with special needs, was found as lower for students with typical development who attended kindergarten or nursery in the past. The previous studies revealed that inclusion applications or teaching environments organized and carried out without planned activities to positively change attitudes toward students with disabilities and improve social acceptance do not improve the acceptance levels of children with typical development, and even reinforce existing negative attitudes and reduce social acceptance levels (Siperstein and Bak, 1985). Due to these reasons,

especially in pre-school and primary education stages, because of the lack of effective and planned practices of inclusion, students with typical development do not adopt students with special needs as playmates, they can have negative perceptions toward inclusive students in terms of their mental, emotional and social development (Buisse, Goldman, and Skinner, 2002; Harper, 1997; Guralnick, Neville, Hammond, and Connor, 2007; Lee, Yoo, and Bak, 2003; Royal and Roberts, 1987).

According to the results of the study, while there was no significant difference between living in a nuclear or an extended family for students with typical development in the dimensions of peer attitudes and student behavior, which are among the social acceptance sub-dimensions toward students with special needs. However, there was a significant difference in the social skills dimension. Considering the results of this study, it was figured out that the students with typical development living in extended families had higher social skill levels toward students with special needs. The previous research results emphasized that individuals who grow up in extended families are affected by the cultures and perceptions of grandparents in addition to the parent factor (Ünal, 2013). The importance of family structure is emphasized in solving social problems and in the development of the social aspect of an individual (Özdemir et al., 2009). The sub-dimensions of perceived social support from the family were higher in mothers living in extended families compared to the mothers living in the nuclear families. This suggests that in extended families, parents share their duties and responsibilities for educating their children, and the perceived social support from the family is high (Bahar et al., 2009).

In increasing the social acceptance levels of their peers toward students with special needs, enabling the development of social skills and providing peer support are considered as important factors (Lorger et al., 2015; Košir, 2013; Ayril et al., 2015; Metin, 1992; Sucuoğlu and Özokçu, 2005). These are expected to positively affect the attitude toward students with special needs as well. Therefore, it can be recommended to spend effort on teaching social skills to students with special needs and those with typical development within the scope of inclusion practices in the school environment. In this respect, planned and effective activities should be included in the kindergarten and nursery periods of students with typical development, and their social acceptance levels should be increased. Information activities about inclusion practices for secondary school students should be increased by the Directorates of National Education in Türkiye. Academic and social activities should be included in the classroom that will enable students to realize each other's needs and improve their social relationships. The inclusive students who have inadequacies were handled in general in the study. Therefore, the limitation of the study is that the relationship between the social acceptance of inclusion students and the types of disability was not examined. In future studies, the social acceptance levels of students with special needs with different disabilities can be compared. Comparisons can be made by examining the social acceptance levels of primary and secondary school students toward students with special needs. In

addition, the social acceptance levels of parents and teachers toward inclusive students can be evaluated.

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