

Online Preschool Inclusive Education in Turkey During the Pandemic

Ahmet İlkhān Yetkinⁱ

Anadolu University

Esra Orum-Çattıkⁱⁱ

Eskişehir Osmangazi University

Melih Çattıkⁱⁱⁱ

Anadolu University

Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of preschool teachers who have inclusion students with special needs in their classrooms during distance education process carried out due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For this purpose, interviews were conducted with 10 preschool teachers who have inclusion students with special needs in their classrooms through online platforms. The findings obtained were analyzed by content analysis. As a result of the interviews, preschool teachers stated that they still had problems in technological infrastructure and difficulties using the online teaching systems, the families of the inclusion students with special needs did not participate in the distance education process at a sufficient level, and this process negatively affected the social interactions of the students. In addition, all preschool teachers who participated in the study stated that the online preschool inclusive distance education process was not suitable for students with special needs. All data obtain from this study discussed and some implications were suggested according to literature.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, Inclusive Education, Preschool Teachers, Distance Education.

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ⁱ **Ahmet İlkhān Yetkin**, Research Assist, Research Department of Special Ecudation, Anadolu University, ORCID: 0000-0003-1199-7283

ⁱⁱ **Esra Orum-Çattık**, Assist. Prof. Dr., Special Education, Eskişehir Osmangazi University Faculty of Education, ORCID: 0000-0002-9080-3311

Correspondence: eocattik@ogu.edu.tr

ⁱⁱⁱ **Melih Çattık**, Assist. Prof. Dr., Special Education, Anadolu University, ORCID: 0000-0003-2682-377X

INTRODUCTION

The new coronavirus disease, which emerged in Wuhan, China in 2019, was declared as a pandemic all over the world by the World Health Organization (WHO) (Velavan & Meyer, 2020; WHO, 2020). This disease all over the world had negative effects, especially on the health system; the economy and tourism fields (Williamson & Hogan, 2020). The very high transmission rate and the rapid increase in the number of cases has abnormally complicated the burden on the healthcare system (Lai et al., 2020; Sethi et al., 2020). This situation has caused countries to take some measures (such as, lockdown, interruption of education, transition to distance education). One of these measures is the continuation of education services in the form of distance education (DE). According to the recommendations of the Scientific Council and the Ministry of National Education (MNE) in Turkey, DE was compulsory instead of formal education (MNE, 2020). The DE started to be performed in special education schools, preschools and other school levels through the Education Informatics Network (EIN), first on a television and then on a computer with a virtual classroom. The DE carried out on television, was performed in accordance with the daily curriculum of the general education schools on EIN, which is a national channel and can also be accessed via internet. In the virtual classroom, teachers were able to interact with students simultaneously on the computer. In different periods of 2020 and 2021, compulsory DE was also implemented for preschools and for a while DE was continued for preschool education.

The fact that the DE has different stakeholder such as teachers, students, parents. Using technologies like computers, tablets... may cause negative effect for the stakeholders in contrast to formal education. (Lassoued et al., 2020; Onyema et al., 2020). In addition to this, reasons such as long online courses, have more than one siblings at home, lack of internet infrastructure and technological tools have also caused the interruption of the DE (Habiba et al., 2020; Lassoued et al., 2020). One of the groups adversely affected by this situation is children with special needs. Because of their poor attention span and focus those children need adaptations and individualization for their education and also accompanying problem behaviors in disability make them more disadvantaged in the DE than other groups (Kaya, 2020). When it comes to inclusion practices it is getting even more difficult in DE. Socialization and social acceptance, individualized education, family participation are the benefits of inclusive practices. But having these profits is not easy during the DE. However, the importance of early education to be provided to individuals with special needs is indisputable. Intensive and uninterrupted education in the early years is very important in terms of reducing the developmental gap with peers, gaining skills, participating in independent life, and increasing the quality of life. Gaining these profits are not a suitable option for individuals with special needs who continue their inclusion practices with DE. In the light of this information, it is aimed to get the opinions of teachers who have inclusive student (IS) regarding the DE. In this context, the following questions were answered:

1. What are the experiences of teachers regarding the use of technology in DE?
2. What are the experiences of teachers regarding family (IS) participation in the DE?
3. What are their views on comparing the DE with formal education?
4. What are the experiences of teachers regarding peer interaction of the IS during the DE?
5. How did they perceive the DE?
6. What are the solutions of teachers regarding DE?

METHOD

Research Design

This study was designed with qualitative research and phenomenological method was used. In this study, the qualitative research method will be used to understand the preschool teachers' experiences with IS in the DE carried out during the pandemic and the effects. Thus, the structure of the targeted phenomenon was tried to be reveal out.

Participants

The study group was formed by purposeful sampling. Accordingly, the study group consisted of ten preschool teachers who have IS in their classes. Inclusion criterias are (a) voluntarily participating in the study, (b) working as a preschool teacher in the MNE, and (c) having at least one IS. Demographic information about the participants of the research is included in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic information of the participants

CN	GT	A	G	EY	WYIS	SECU	TCRT	ST	CW
T1	U	26	F	5	1.5	+	-	NC	İstanbul
T2	U	39	F	15	15	-	-	NC	İstanbul
T3	U	35	F	11	5	+	+	KG	Bursa
T4	G	31	F	2	1/2	+	-	KG	Bursa
T5	G	49	F	25	10	+	-	KG	Denizli
T6	U	36	F	14	14	+	-	NS	Kastamonu
T7	U	37	F	5	5	+	+	KG	Çanakkale
T8	G	33	F	7	7	+	-	KG	Eskişehir
T9	U	40	F	14	10	+	-	KG	Eskişehir
T10	U	27	F	5	3	+	-	KG	Kütahya

CN: Code Name, GT: Graduation of Type, A: Age, G: Gender, EY: Experience of Years, WYIS: Working Years with Inclusive Students, SECU: Special Education Courses In Undergraduate, TCRT: Taking Courses Related To the Use of Technology, ST: School Type, CW: City of Work, T: Teacher, F: Female, U: Undergrad, G: Grade NC: Nursery Class, KG: Kindergarten

Data collection tools

In this study, teacher information form and semi-structured questionnaire were used to collect data. Interview questions were prepared together by all researchers, and then five field experts were asked about the suitability of the questions to the research purpose. According to the expert's opinions, the questions are finalized. Seven interview questions were used in the interviews. A pilot interview was conducted with a preschool teacher who was not a participant of the study in order to decide that

the final version of the questions. At the end of this interview, it was decided that the form and questions were suitable for interview and this study.

Settings

The data in the study were collected through online platforms due to the global pandemic. During the interviews, both participants kept their cameras open. The interviews were conducted in the participants' and the researcher's own homes.

Collection and analysis of data

While collecting the data, the third researcher made explanations about the purpose and process of the research and obtained the consent from the teachers. The timing of the interviews was planned with the participants in advance, and according to the preferences of the participants, meetings was held in the evening. The average time of the interviews is 46'.32" and total duration was eight hours and 12'. Content analysis was used to analyze the data obtained from interviews. The findings of interviews were transcribed by the first researcher. Then, the second and third researchers reviewed the consistency. The latest version of the transcripts 29 pages and 950 lines. Gathered data were examined by the researchers, analyzed descriptively and placed in the table. All data have been collected in a single database. The created analyzes were coded independently by three researchers, finalized by looking at the consistency of the codes and a code list. The resulting lists were then grouped and interpreted under certain themes. Thus, raw data, which does not make sense on its own, has been made easy to interpret thanks to the created database.

FINDINGS

Themes and sub-themes are shown in Table 2. At the same time, the information obtained from the answers given by the teachers to the questions was written in the form of quotation.

Table 2

Theme and sub-themes

Theme	Sub-themes
Use of technology	<i>Competence to use the system</i> <i>Internet access and technological infrastructure</i>
Involving families to the process	<i>Experiences regarding family's participation in the education process</i> <i>Experiences regarding lack of knowledge while using the system</i> <i>Experiences of not being able to participate in education due to other factors</i>
Similarities and differences	<i>Similarities between formal education and DE</i> <i>Differences between formal education and DE</i>
Peer interaction	<i>Peer interaction and decreased social skills for the IS</i>
Expectations	<i>Expectations for the IS in DE</i> <i>Teachers' expectations in terms of their professional development regarding special education in DE</i>

Teachers' Experiences Regarding Using Technology in the DE

In the theme of teachers' experiences of using technology in the DE, two sub-themes were reached: (a) Experiences related to the competence of using the system (b) Internet access and technological infrastructure.

Experiences related to the competence

This sub-theme is divided into two groups: those who think they are sufficient in using the system and those who still need support in using the system. T5, one of the seven teachers who thought they were sufficient to use the system, explained, "...You know, something bad happened but the result was good. For example, I was far away from technology, but in this way I learned to use the system easily. I don't think it's a difficult system ". The number of teachers stating that they still need support in using the system is three. One of these teachers, T1, "I think we should have been given pre-training at the beginning of the term. In this way, we suddenly switched. I mean, it was unprepared. I personally have shortcomings" has explained her experiences.

Internet access and technological infrastructure

This sub-theme was divided into three as those who stated that access to the internet but had deficiencies in technological infrastructure, those who stated that both access to the internet and technological infrastructure were deficiencies, and those who thought that both access to the internet and technological infrastructure were sufficient. T3, one of the three teachers who stated that they had access to the internet and had deficiencies in technological infrastructure, stated that "Because the socio-economic level of my IS's family is low, only the father has a phone at home. Although he has an internet connection, my student can participate in DE only if any time remains from the father. I think the technological infrastructure is insufficient for this system". T8, one of the two teachers who stated that both internet access and technological infrastructure were inadequate, said, "Sometimes even my internet doesn't work here, let's say we are connected to the internet and the system collapses because everyone hold education sessions at the same time. It becomes very difficult to reconnect and communicate with everyone, the infrastructure needs to be strengthened... ". T4, one of the five teachers who thought that both internet access and technological infrastructure were sufficient, said, "We live in a central place. It is not possible to not have internet access or everyone has a smartphone, so there is no problem in accessing it".

Teachers' Experiences Regarding the Involvement of Families in the DE

Three sub-themes were reached from the theme of teachers' experiences regarding the involvement of families in the DE (a) experiences on families participation in the education (b) Experiences of the lack of knowledge while using the system (c) Experiences of inability to participate in education due to other factors.

Experiences on families participation in the education

This sub-theme is divided into two as positive experiences and negative experiences regarding the participation of families in the DE. T2, one of the three teachers who thought that families' participation in the education was positive, said, "The best part of this Covid-19 process was family participation. Normally, parents brought the IS into the classroom. they did not know what we were doing, what we lived in the classroom, but now that the parents are with their child, they can see what their child is learning, what he/she cannot learn, how he/she reacts. The attitudes of the families became more understanding, more moderate" explained their experiences. T3, one of the seven teachers who had negative experiences with families' participation in the education, said, "We included the family in the process, but nothing happened as we wanted. There were activities that we could do with the family or there were situations where the family had to guide the child, but they did nothing, the family just sat next to child and watched, so there was no active participation" explained.

Experiences of the lack of knowledge while using the system

This sub-theme is in the form of lack of knowledge due to the fact that families do not receive preliminary training on using the DE system. T3, one of ten teachers who thought that families did not receive preliminary training for using the DE system, said, “*We could not include the family in the process... Because there was no infrastructure preparation for this with the families. Even I suffered as a parent at the same time. Something could have been done to encourage the IS's family to participate.*”

Experiences of inability to participate in education due to other factors

This sub-theme consists of three headings: inability to access education due to the siblings at home participating in DE at the same time, the fact that one or both of the parents are working, and the parents do not want their inclusive children to be seen by their peers and parents in the classroom during the DE. T2, one of the three teachers who thought that it was due to the lack of sufficient tools and time due to the other siblings participating in DE at the same time, said, “*So, there are more than one children in a house; Those who go to high school, to secondary school... Obviously, in this case, preschool, especially the IS, is in the last row for education*”. T1, one of the four teachers who thinks that one or both of the parents are working, stated that “*My IS's mother and father are also working. In this case, the child and his family do not participate the DE*”. T10, one of the three teachers who think that parents want their children's disabilities not to be seen by their peers and their parents, stated that “*So, DE is not very efficient for IS, for example my student is hyperactive. It is very difficult to keep him on the screen. I can't even make eye contact. When he is not paying his attention, you cannot get answers to the questions you ask. When family realized that turns off the screen and wants to exit*”. Another teacher T3 has stated, “*There is no problem sending the IS to school, families come to the meetings during the formal education, but parents do not want to participate in DE. Because during the formal education the child is alone with me and his peers in the classroom; however, all parents witness the behavioral problems of the child in DE.*”

Teachers' experiences regarding the similarities and differences between formal education and DE

From the theme of teachers' experiences of similarities and differences between formal education and DE, two sub-themes were reached: (a) the similarities between formal education and DE, and (b) the differences between formal education and DE.

The similarities between formal education and DE

This sub-theme is in the form of similarities in the parts of the formal curriculum presented with visual aids, and the similarities of the IS's participation to the activities in the course. T2, one of the six teachers who stated that there are similarities in the parts of the curriculum presented with visual aids, said, “*In the classroom, sometimes we did activities on the smart board. We can also do them in computers in DE. In other words, similar things actually...*” T1, one of the four teachers who stated that there are similarities regarding their level of participation of the IS in the activities held in the course during the formal and DE, said, “*The student who attends the class in formal education also participates in DE. The IS often cannot attend properly, but if formal education continued, he/she would probably come to school*”.

The differences between formal education and DE

These differences regarding to inclusive student-teacher interaction, attention spans, providing physical prompt, responding to behavioral problems, and providing material support. T8, one of the three teachers who stated that there are differences in the interaction between the IS and the teacher, has stated, “*... For example, we noticed and saw, at least when he was distracted in the classroom. We could intervene, but now from the screen we don't know, what is he doing, is he/she focusing at the*

activity, is he/she listening to the teacher? We do not know about any of them. The attention span is probably short". T9, one of the two teachers who stated that there are differences regarding the presentation of physical prompt, said, "Of course, it is not like face to face. There, if necessary, we provide prompts to the students and direct them. But in here we can't do it. We're telling the family to provide prompt to child, unfortunately it doesn't always happen as desired". T7, one of the two teachers who stated that there are differences regarding the responding to behavioral problems, said "... For example, if the mother or father is next to the IS when he / she gets angry in the online classroom or exhibits a behavioral problem, we tell them about what they can do. But they also often don't understand, they don't know what to do. They can also behave completely wrong against to him/her. Then it may take time to get the child back to class again anyway. Sometimes it completely breaks off from the lesson anyway... ". Stating that there are differences in providing material support, the teacher T6 said, "For example, we can find every material or sample in the classroom or we want it from the other class. Children have the opportunity to look and examine one by one. But in DE, we can only use what we have visually".

Teachers' experiences of peer interaction in the DE in terms of IS

The theme of teachers' experiences of peer interaction in the DE for the IS is that both peer interaction and social skills decrease for the IS.

Decrease in both peer interaction and social skills for the mainstreaming student

This sub-theme includes those who think that peer interaction and social interaction skills are decreased. T1, one of ten teachers who thinks that it reduces peer interaction, said, "Of course, he inevitably interacts with his friends in the classroom is much more in formal education. That's why the child comes to class to socialize anyway. It is not possible to give these experiences in DE to IS."

Teachers' expectations for DE

The theme of teachers' expectations for DE consists of two sub-themes: (a) expectations for the IS and (b) teachers' expectations in terms of professional development in DE regarding special education.

Expectations for the IS

This sub-theme consists of those who think that DE is not beneficial for IS. Accordingly, T1, one of ten teachers, said, "This practice is contrary to the nature of inclusion. It is not possible to include the child in this way. We cannot adequately provide academic knowledge to those students, because our knowledge is not enough. They come to school to be with their peers. DE does not help in this respect..." Another teacher T9 has stated, "Or, these children should be given the opportunity to be with a small number of peers on certain days of the week. Frankly, I think it is necessary to take precautions and open schools as soon as possible in order to reduce developmental losses for both peers in a critical time like preschool".

Teachers' expectations in terms of professional development in DE regarding special education

This sub-theme is in the form of those who think that a pre-training or support is necessary for their professional development related to special education in DE. T3, one of ten teachers who thought this way, said, "It is very difficult to provide special education, especially from a distance. In this sense, the MNE can provide a pre-training to preschool teachers. Because the normally developing child is okay to handle, but we really don't know what to do with the IS in this process".

DISCUSSION

As many people in World have been infected with coronavirus disease it has brought the DE back into the spotlight in the field of education. In this context, the DE has been activated in education services at all levels in Turkey (MNE, 2020). This unexpected transition has come with up some problems (Jeste et al., 2020). These problems can be listed as: inadequacy of teachers, stakeholders adaption to the DE, internet infrastructure, supplying technological equipment and using the system. These factors can lead to more critical consequences when it comes to individuals with special needs in early childhood, their teachers and their families, who continue their inclusive practices. This situation also created a need for this research to be carried out.

The findings of the study showed that the experiences of preschool teachers focused on the use of technology in the DE, family participation, peer interaction and expectations regarding DE. The results of studies on individuals with special needs during the pandemic in national and international literature are similar (e.g., Aishworiya & Kang, 2020; Constantino et al., 2020; Navas et al., 2021).

One of the findings, which is considered to be important in this study, is about teachers' use of technology. Most of the teachers stated that they did not have any problems in using the DE system. Technology and technological equipment's have been used frequently in the field of education in recent years. In the pandemic, the use of these tools has become more widespread (Goldschmidt, 2021). The reason why teachers consider themselves sufficient to use the system may be that in formal education, tools such as smart boards and computers are employed in classrooms and teachers are already familiar with using these technologies. Another reason for this situation is thought to be the courses related to instructional technologies that teachers took in their undergraduate period. When the findings were examined, it was seen that the teachers who took the instructional technologies course thought that they were sufficient to use the system with their pedagogical and technical background. In addition, teachers may have learned to use the system compulsorily due to the sudden transition to DE with the pandemic (Acar, Erbas & Eryaman, 2021; Kırmızıgül, 2020; Kurt & Kurtoğlu-Erden, 2020).

In contrast, a small number of teachers said they still needed support in using the system. This situation is thought to have several reasons. Guernsey and his colleagues (2020) explained this situation as the fact that not everyone has the same technological equipment in DE carried out for the sustainability of students' education in many countries, and that factors such as inadequacies in the use of technology (such as internet connection) cause teachers to have problems using the system. However, it is thought that starting the process without giving pre-training to teachers about the use of the DE system causes some teachers to be insufficient to use the system even though they have technology knowledge and to be caught unprepared for the process (Kurt & Kurtoğlu-Erden, 2020).

Another remarkable problem with teachers' use of technology is the lack of internet access and/or technological infrastructure. It is seen that this situation is related to the places where teachers work, regardless of their professional development. Teachers who participated in this research and worked in the countryside also stated that they still have problems accessing the internet. The fact that this problem can be experienced in places where internet infrastructure is still not sufficient throughout the country is supported by teachers' opinions (Kırık, 2014). The opinions related to the technological infrastructure, which is another variable, are as follows. In cases where DE coincides with the same hour, technological equipment may be insufficient, a single technological device falls on more than one child, or some families do not have these devices at all. Similar research findings indicate that not every child or teacher has the same facilities to participate in DE (Iivari et al., 2020; Rose et al., 2020).

One of the findings of the study concerns the participation of the families. It is possible to evaluate participation in the process positively and negatively. A small part of the teachers stated that the participation of the families of the students with special needs increased in this period. Teachers stated that the reason for this was that their parents accompanied them during the lesson due to behavioral problems (such as not sitting in place) displayed by students with special needs during the DE. This situation is thought to be beneficial in terms of reinforcing the cooperation with the family

and their participation, which is one of the core factors in the success of the inclusive practices. In this process, it is stated that family participation is beneficial for all stakeholders involved in inclusive practices (children with special needs, families, peers and teachers) (Salend, 2005). These benefits enable students to increase their academic success and different skills. The increase in the awareness of the parents of the typical developing peers and the change in their attitudes, the psychological well-being of the families of children with special needs and the easier acceptance of the inadequacy can be listed as increasing the professional development of teachers in planning and conducting the process (Salend, 2005). In this context, the participation of families in the education can be seen as a positive contribution. In addition, parents' involvement in the process enables them to observe their children's various skills (Gürgür, 2020). So, it is clear that family participation is very important in both formal and DE.

However, another group of teachers stated that families did not actively participate in educational activities during this period. These teachers opinion, parents did not participate in activities that required their participation during online classes, and they could not be an active participant in the points where they should direct their inclusive students. Participation of families in this process is not considered at a full and fulfilling level. Family participation, which is also mentioned in the definition of inclusive practices, is incompatible with this stated participation. However, the DE increases the instructor role of families regarding the education of their children with special needs compared to formal education (Mengi & Alpdoğan, 2020). In this period, the family's inability to take an active role in the educational processes reduces the education quality of their children and causes the developmental difference between them and their peers to widen further. Such a loss experienced in early childhood, which is one of the most critical periods for development, can lead to situations that cannot be compensated in the future.

Another view of teachers regarding family participation is that families have passed the DE system without any preparation. Families have suddenly transitioned to this process, just like teachers and students. This situation caused the families not to know how to adapt the DE system to the education of their children. According to Şenol and Yaşar (2020), parents' inadequacy of knowledge regarding the education of their children with special needs, the lack of integrating technology into education and the inadequacy of parent-teacher communication prevent families from actively participating in the process. Similarly, teachers state that the way to overcome these obstacles is for parents to make more efforts regarding their children's education. Therefore, the responsibilities of the families regarding the education of their children increased more in this period. However, the participation rates of families of children with special needs have also decreased. Another reason for families not being able to actively participate in the process is that one or both parents are working and other siblings participate in the DE at the same time. This situation indicates that in terms of the nature of the DE, it is not suitable for the individuals with special needs.

Another finding regarding family participation in this study is that parents do not participate in the DE because they do not want disabilities of their children to be seen by their peers and parents. The teachers stated that they could interact with the children in the classroom during the formal education and that peers could better tolerate the differences of the students with special needs without witnessing of other families. They emphasized that the fact that families of typical developing child witnessed the differences and disabilities of children in the DE caused the families of children with special needs to be disturbed by this situation and not participate in the process. This suggests that parents still need support in coping with disability in the early childhood period when disability is first encountered, and when this support is not sufficient, they tend to hide their inadequacies. This situation brings to mind the processes related to the acceptance of disability.

One of the themes obtained in this research is the similarities and differences between formal and DE in terms of inclusive practices. Teachers stated that there were similarities between the two education processes in terms of presenting the curriculum to students with special needs using visual supports and participation in activities. The reason may actually be that the widespread use of technology (smart board, e.g.) in formal education and the teachers' use of similar technologies in the

DE may have caused these two educational processes to be compared to each other. The teachers stated that the level of similarity regarding participation in the lesson was at the same level in the formal education of the student who continued the inclusive practices. While this level of participation was not at the desired level in formal education, it was also at a similar level in DE. This situation is consistent with the results of studies in which inclusive practice was carried out formal (Bakkaloğlu et al., 2018). However, teachers stated that there were differences between the two educational processes in the attention span of students, providing physical prompts, interfering with behavioral problems and providing material support. Teachers stated that the attention span of the student with special needs who continues the inclusive practices in the DE is shorter than the formal education. They also explain that when the student's attention is distracted, the teacher can intervene more easily in formal education. Considering the characteristics of students with special needs, it is known that the first condition for acquiring skills is to attract attention (Alberto & Troutman, 2013). It is thought that while it will be difficult for students, who develop typical in the DE, to pay attention to the activity being studied, it will be even more difficult to concentrate the attention of special needs students. Teachers stated that the stages of activities that the student cannot perform during the DE can be performed with physical prompt of teachers during formal training. Pre-behavioral stimuli (such as prompts) are important for individuals with special needs to acquire skills. Due to its nature, the DE does not allow the effective use of pre-behavioral stimuli. This situation is consistent with similar research findings. In addition, teachers stated that they could better intervene in problem behaviors in formal education. The process of changing behavior is a process that requires control and follow-up on the student (Plötz et al., 2012). It is important to implement this process face to face in a systematic way. In this context, it seems difficult for teachers to establish behavioral control remotely. Finally, teachers stated that while individualizing students' activities, they could use different materials more effectively in formal education. While it is possible to diversify the materials suitable for the performance levels of the students by the teachers in formal education; the use of materials in the DE is only possible with technologies offered by computers. This situation may prevent teachers from individualizing the activities in accordance with the students who continue the inclusive practice.

Another finding is teachers' experiences of peer interaction in terms of IS in the DE. Teachers stated that the interactions of IS during the DE decreased with their peers. One of the important conditions for the success of inclusion is the acceptance of the IS by their peers, increasing their social interactions and increasing their class participation in these ways (Amado et al., 2013; Simplican et al., 2015). In this context, the DE negatively affects the inclusion practice.

One another finding of the study is the expectations of teachers about DE. This finding is consistent with similar research findings. Teachers expressed their expectations in terms of their professional development related to special education during the DE and stated that their professional development in special education should be increased. At this point, it is thought that if the DE will be carried out with the inclusive practices, pre-training and preparatory trainings should be carried out on how teachers will work with special needs students. In this context, teachers stated that support education services should be included in the DE in order to minimize the developmental losses of children with special needs in the DE. The inclusive practices is defined as full-time education with their peers or part-time in special education classes by providing support education services to individuals in need of special education in order to ensure that they interact with other individuals at all types and levels and achieve their educational goals at the highest level (SESR, 2018). As can be understood from the definition, it will not go beyond a waste of time for students with special needs to receive education without providing support education services in the same classroom (Gürgür, 2020). Support education services are in three types: special education counseling, co-teaching and resource room, and these support types can be used alone or together (Friend et al., 2010). However, the results of the researches carried out on inclusive practices in the national literature and examining teacher opinions show that support education services are not carried out at the level they should be (Bakkaloglu et al., 2018; Özdemir, 2010). The fact that support education services, which are considered indispensable even in formal education, do not exist in the DE negatively affects the early education, which is one of the most critical periods for children with special needs. Another point to be discussed is that the DE of teachers is not beneficial for students continuing the inclusive practices.

By taking necessary precautions, it is considered that students with special needs continue their formal education without further developmental losses. In other words, preschool teachers state that the characteristics of DE are against individuals with special needs and the nature of special education. Children with special needs should receive systematic and intensive training from specialists trained in the field of special education with appropriate methods, materials and adaptations according to their individualized education programs (IEP). They need formal training due to their inadequacy in some skills and problem behaviors. However, the compulsory DE has already led to the complete elimination of supports that cannot be carried out at the level it should be. This view is also consistent with the findings of research conducted with individuals with special needs in the DE (Aishworiya et al., 2020; Navas et al., 2021). Finally, the participating group of this research consists of teachers working in different provinces and different schools. This difference is important to see if teachers' views and experiences regarding the DE differ according to where they live. In addition, it is thought that the participation of teachers in this research from different places is important for the maintenance of the findings.

Implication of Study

- One of the results obtained in this study is that teachers have some problems in using the system due to a rapid transition to the DE. For this reason, if the process will continue, it is recommended to make a preliminary preparation for the DE and to inform all stakeholders before the next training period.
- Another result obtained is the experiences of teachers regarding infrastructure problems. Therefore, it is recommended to complete the shortcomings related to infrastructure in order to make DE equally accessible to all stakeholders.
- With the transition to the DE, the importance of family role and participation in the inclusion education of individuals with special needs has been understood once again. For this reason, it is recommended to expand family education programs for the families of children with special needs.
- Whether it is continued through formal or DE, teachers need support in preparing IEP, determining appropriate teaching methods, adapting teaching strategies and materials when training with special needs students. When support education services are not provided, inclusion will not go beyond sharing the classroom. In this context, it is recommended to expand the support education services.
- Another finding that emerged in this study is related to the courses that teachers took in special education and technology fields during their undergraduate education. In the study, it was observed that teachers who took courses on the use of technology in undergraduate education adapted more easily to the DE. Considering that technology will be used more widely in education processes in the following years and it is necessary to be prepared for a similar pandemic again, it is thought that it is important to enrich the course content on technology use.
- In addition, it is seen that taking courses in undergraduate education of preschool teachers related to the field of special education positively affects the adaptation of teaching and materials, individualization and coping with problem behaviors while working with students with special needs. It is thought that enriching the course content in undergraduate education and adding more compulsory courses related to the field of special education will increase the success of inclusive practices in the future.

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