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Investigation of School Perception and Participation of Families whose Children Receive Special Education and General Education

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ABSTRACT

Family participation is the cooperation of the family with the school and the active contribution of the family in the child's education process. The importance of family involvement is not limited to academic success. Families' participation in activities organized at school, their participation in parent meetings, and their support for school social activities also contribute positively to the child's social and emotional development. This study aims to compare the perceptions of families of normal developing and special education school-age children about school and their views on the possibilities and forms of their children's participation in education programs. In this study, the Family School Perception and Participation scale, which considers the parents of SEN and normal students of all ages and levels, was applied to the parents. Therefore, it is a quantitative study using a graded 5 Likert-type scale. A total of 366 parents, including 284 mothers and 82 fathers, participated in the study. According to the results, there is a significant difference between the scale scores of families whose children receive special education and those whose children continue to receive normal education. Furthermore, on the parent development and student development sub-dimensions, there was a significant difference between families whose children received special education and whose children continued to receive normal education. However, on the parent involvement and school perception sub-dimensions, there was no significant difference between families' scale scores.

Keywords: school perception, school participation, families, special education needs,

Introduction

Parental involvement refers to a process in which parents are involved in their children's learning process by the school and teachers or parents are directly involved in their children's education. Parents do their part to ensure that the student is assisted in the learning process as much as possible. This expression of participation refers not only to the parents who question the student's performance at school but also to the process of taking an active role in communication with their children to establish a healthy relationship. Educators and parents play a significant role in the educational success of students. Students need a positive learning experience to be successful in school. Although parent involvement has been researched as the subject of many studies, studies on parental involvement and "effective" parent involvement in the education of students are still insufficient. This is because educators have different views on effective parent involvement practices and how each can contribute to the educational process (Konokman & Yokuş 2016; Young & Growe, 2013).

Many studies have shown that students' academic success increases with the participation of their families. Research also shows that parent involvement works most effectively when viewed as a collaboration between educators and parents. Parents who both develop a positive attitude toward the school and help their children develop positive attitudes provide support to provide a safer and healthier educational environment for their students. In studies, parent involvement in school is stated as an important and positive variable in the academic and socio-emotional development of children. Positive interactions between family and school, which are two main areas of socialization, contribute positively to the socio-emotional and cognitive development of the child. Research findings showed a positive relationship between parental involvement in education and academic achievement. While improving children's self-esteem and academic performance, family involvement is also associated with positive school attachment and positive school climates for children. Research has also proven that programs focused on increasing parent involvement in education have positive effects on children, families, and school communities (Akyürek & Bülbül, 2023; Gettinger & Guetschow, 1998; Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems & Holbein, 2005; Özcan, & Aydoğan, 2014)

There is also a consensus about the positive impact of parental involvement on a child's academic achievement among the many studies that have been conducted with a larger or narrower population and have variously defined what parental involvement is. Effective communication between schools and families is crucial for understanding and addressing the individual needs of children with special needs. Open and clear dialog between school and family helps build trust, allows for insight and ideas to be shared about the child's abilities and challenges, and facilitates the development of special education plans (Avnet et al., 2019; Đurišić, & Bunijevac, 2017; Wilder, 2014).

Parents and families have a great influence on the success of children's education and upbringing. Parent involvement relates to their position at home (observing and supporting children's learning) as well as their participation in school activities (conferences, volunteer activities, parent meetings, workshops, and seminars). The importance of parental involvement is associated with the success of children at all levels. Primary school children gain more academic, language, and social skills. Secondary and high school students, on the other hand, have more positive attitudes toward doing homework and attending school. Studies show that family involvement is more effective than the socioeconomic and educational status of the family in increasing the academic success of children. Children of parents who read to their children, help them with homework, and support their children in matters they do not understand tend to be more successful than children whose parents do not help them. In addition, the involvement of families in education, in other words, family participation, is one of the strategies to increase the quality of education (Garcia & Rios, 2014; Gözde, 2007; Wong et al., 2006).

Parents' perceptions of school are related to their thoughts and feelings about schools. Parents' perception of school can be effective in their children's educational process and may affect children's attitudes toward school. Families' perception of school can affect factors such as the child's success, school participation, and family-school cooperation. Studies show that a positive perception of school by families has a positive effect on the child's academic success. Families' trust in school and teachers can increase the child's motivation and interest in school. In addition, families with a positive perception

of school can encourage their children to attend school regularly and be actively involved in school activities. Conversely, a negative school perception of families can have negative effects on the child's education. In cases where families do not care about school or have negative thoughts about school, children's interest in school may decrease and their motivation may decrease. This can affect the academic success of the child. Parents' perceptions of school are also important for family-school cooperation. Families with a positive school perception may be more willing to participate in school activities and communicate better with the school. It is important to support the child's education. As a result, parents' perceptions of school play an important role in the child's educational process. A positive school perception can affect factors such as a child's academic success, school participation, and family-school cooperation. Families' trust in school and teachers can increase the child's attitude and motivation toward school. Families' perception of school is an important factor for a child to have a successful educational experience (Avnet et al., 2019; Altuntaş, Demirdağ & Ertem, 2020; Linares et al., 2008).

The importance of parental involvement and school perception in the educational process has been recognized in both the general and special education. It is important to comparatively examine parental perceptions, including those of parents of children of different ages and levels of special education needs, due to obvious differences in traditions regarding parent involvement in general and special education. The benefits of productive home-school interactions are widely recognized, and knowledge of the factors that influence these relationships can improve schools' ability to meet the needs of parents of all students, including those with the most serious disabilities. This study aims to compare the perceptions of families of normal developing and special education school-age children about school and their views on the possibilities and forms of their children's participation in education programs. This study makes a substantial contribution to the field of education by shedding light on the complex dynamics surrounding the perceptions and participation of families with children receiving special education and general education services. In an era where inclusive education is increasingly emphasized, this study contributes to the ongoing dialog on how to create educational systems that meet the diverse needs of all learners. It underscores the importance of actively involving families in the educational process and highlights the potential for improved outcomes when this involvement is optimized. In summary, "Investigation of School Perception and Participation of Families whose Children Receive Special Education and General Education" enriches our understanding of family-school interactions in diverse educational settings.

Methods and Materials

Research Model

In this study, the Family School Perception and Participation scale, which considers the parents of special education needs (SEN) and normal students of all ages and levels, was applied to the parents. The study is a quantitative study using a graded 5 Likert-type scale. The scale is a data collection tool that lists a set of structured questions that respondents answer based on their knowledge and experience. Different types of questions may be included in the scale, depending on the research context and the type of information desired. Quantitative research scales are scales used in quantitative research where data are expressed numerically. These scales allow participants to rate their views or experiences on a specific scale. Quantitative research scales can generally be of different types, such as Likert-type scales, semantic differential scales, or rating scales. Likert-type scales allow participants to express their thoughts on a particular topic or situation within a specific measurement range. For example, responding on a scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Quantitative research scales provide researchers with a solid basis for analyzing data and statistically evaluating results (Allen, Titsworth & Hunt, 2008). The use of these scales is important for finding answers to research questions, testing hypotheses, and understanding research data in general. Scales can be applied in two main forms; paper forms and online forms. The paper survey is a more traditional method of data collection and can easily result in data loss. Editing and processing paper forms are also cumbersome. Online surveys are usually created through data collection platforms such as Google Forms (Mallette & Barone, 2013).

Sample

A total of 366 parents, including 284 mothers and 82 fathers, participated in the study. The distribution of the participants regarding the type of school their children attend is given in Table 1 in terms of frequency and percentage. Of the 284 participating mothers, 95 children attended special education and 189 children continued normal education. Of the 82 participating fathers, 17 children attended special education and 65 children continued normal education. As a result, while 112 of 366 participants receive special education, 254 continue normal education.

Table 1. The distribution of Participating Parents by Education of the Child

			Child's education		
			Special education	Normal Education	Total
Parent	Mother	N	95	189	284
		%	26.0%	51.6%	77.6%
	Father	N	17	65	82
		%	4.6%	17.8%	22.4%
Total		N	112	254	366
		%	30.6%	69.4%	100.0%

Detailed information about the education levels of the participating families and the type of education the child received is presented in Table 2. Of the 112 parents who have children attending special education, 20 are in primary school, 11 are in secondary school, 19 are high school graduates, and 62 are university graduates. Of the 254 parents whose children receive a normal education, 73 are primary school graduates, 67 are secondary school graduates, 42 are high school graduates, and 72 are university graduates.

Table 2. Demographic Information on the Education Level of Participating Families

		Education level				
Child's Education		Primary school	Middle school	High school	University	Total
Special education	N	20	11	19	62	112
	%	5.5%	3.0%	5.2%	16.9%	30.6%
Normal Education	N	73	67	42	72	254
	%	19.9%	18.3%	11.5%	19.7%	69.4%
Total	N	93	78	61	134	366
	%	25.4%	21.3%	16.7%	36.6%	100.0%

Table 3 contains detailed information about the type of school children attend and their ages. Of the 112 children attending special education, 14 are in the age range of 3-6, 64 are in the 7-10 age range, 26 are in the 11-14 age range, and 8 are in the 15-18 age range. Of the 254 children receiving normal education, 14 are 3-6 years old, 75 are 7–10 years old, 141 are 11–14 years old, and 24 are 15–18 years old. When we evaluate the children of the participants according to their age, the age range where the number of children receiving special education is 7-10, while the age range where the number of children receiving normal education is 11-14.

Table 3. Demographic Information on the Age of Children in Participating Families

Child's Education		Child's Age				Total
		3-6	7-10	11-14	15-18	
Special education	N	14	64	26	8	112
	%	3.8%	17.5%	7.1%	2.2%	30.6%
Normal Education	N	14	75	141	24	254
	%	3.8%	20.5%	38.5%	6.6%	69.4%
Total	N	28	139	167	32	366
	%	7.7%	38.0%	45.6%	8.7%	100.0%

Data Collection Tool

The "Family School Perception and Participation Scale" developed by Yurtbakan and Akyıldız (2020) was used as a data collection tool. The scale consists of 26 questions and 4 dimensions. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale applied to 319 parents was found to be 0.907. According to Yurtbakan and Akyıldız (2020), the effect of demographic characteristics on families' perceptions and participation in school can be examined thanks to the scale, which measures families' perceptions and participation in school simultaneously. In this study, the aim of which was to compare the perceptions of the families of normal and special education school-age children about their school perceptions and the possibilities and forms of their children's participation in educational programs, the Family School Perception and Participation Scale was applied to 366 families. Considering the 4-factor scale with 26 questions obtained because of the analysis and the items under the factors, the factors were named as school perception 8 items, student development 7 items, parent development 7 items, and barriers to school participation (4 items) sub-dimensions. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.929 in this study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The ethics committee approval of the study was obtained from the Publication Ethics Committee of Afyon Kocatepe University with the decision numbered 2022/172 dated 13.05.2022. Data were collected online via Google forms. After obtaining the necessary permissions and approvals for the implementation of the scale, the scale was transferred to the digital environment via Google forms using the scale items, and the scale link was sent to the families. The obtained data were transferred to SPSS and analyzed by SPSS.

To determine the test to be applied to compare the school perception of the families of normal and special education school-age children and the opportunities and forms of their children's participation in the educational processes, it was first examined whether the data were normally distributed.

Kolmogorov –Smirnov tests were applied to determine the normality of the data. and Shapiro-Wilk normality tests were applied, and it was determined that the data showed normal distribution. The analysis results are in Table 4.

Table 4. Normality Test Results

	Kolmogorov– Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistics	Df	Shallow.	Statistics	df	Shallow.
Total	,059	366	,004	,973	366	,000

To determine whether there is a significant difference between the perceptions of the families of normal and special education school-age children and their views on the opportunities for their children to participate in the educational processes, a sample t-test was conducted independent of the parametric tests. Detailed information about the test results is provided under the heading of findings. The independent sample t-test was used to test whether there was a statistically significant difference between two independent groups by looking at the means. This test is a parametric test.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, all rules stated to be followed within the scope of "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed. None of the actions stated under the title "Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", which is the second part of the directive, were not taken. Quantitative data was collected electronically and there were no ramification if they decided to opt-out at any time. The results and consent information were hosted on the researchers' personal account and safeguarded by a password.

Ethical review board name: Afyon Kocatepe University Social and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board

Date of ethics review decision: 13.05.2022

Ethics assessment document issue number: 2022/172

Findings

The research findings are presented in Table 5 considering the obtained data and analysis. The table contains the analysis results for each subdimension of the scale. The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 130, and the lowest score is 26. According to the research data, the average scale score of families with children with special needs was 102.76, whereas the average scale score of families with children with normal development was 91.47. Because of the statistical analyzes, there is a significant difference between the scale scores of the families whose children receive special education and whose children continue to receive normal education.

Table 5. Independent Sample T-Test Results Regarding Scale Total and Sub-Dimensional Scores

Child's Education		N	Average	SS	t	sd	p
Total	Special education	112	102,7679	10,08967	7,924	364	,000
	Normal Education	254	91.4724	13.51113			
Parent Development	Special education	112	27.2321	3,46406	11,114	244,944	,000
	Normal Education	254	22,6339	4,03294			
Student Development	Special education	112	25,5000	4,17845	11,687	268,668	,000
	Normal Education	254	19.4370	5.36365			
Parent Involvement	Special education	112	15.4286	2,52453	-.042	226,345	,967
	Normal Education	254	15,4409	2,70457			
School Perception	Special education	112	34.6071	3,81169	1,452	230,770	,161
	Normal Education	254	33,9606	4.16821			

Significance value ($p < 0.05$).

The highest score that can be obtained in the "Parental Development" sub-dimension is 35. The score for families whose children receive special education is 27,2321, and that for parents of children with normal education is 22,6339. In the "Parent Development" sub-dimension, according to the t-test results, a significant difference was found in favor of families with children in special education.

The highest possible score in the "Student Development" sub-dimension is 35. The average score for families whose children receive special education is 25,5000. The mean score received by the families of students whose children receive a normal education is 19.4370. In terms of significance value, the scores in this sub-dimension were low in both sample groups. However, when the two sample groups were compared a significant difference was found in favor of families whose children received special education.

The highest possible score for the "Parental Involvement" sub-dimension is 20. The mean score of families whose children receive special education in this sub-dimension is 15,4286. Families of children with normal education received an average of 15,4409 points. When we look at the significance value in Table 5 for this sub-dimension ($p = ,967$), no significant difference was found between the two groups. Parents in both groups scored similarly on the importance of their involvement in school activities and keeping in touch with the school.

The highest score that can be obtained in the "School Perception" sub-dimension is 40. The average score of families whose children receive special education is 34,6071, and the mean score of families whose children receive normal education is 33,9606. When we examine Table 5 for this sub-dimension, the significance value is $p = 161$. Although both sample groups received high scores for this sub-dimension, no significant difference was found between the two sample groups.

Discussion

Parent involvement in school is important for all parents and students, whether their child is developing normally or has special needs. Although the reasons or participation rates may differ, positive perceptions toward school and participation in school activities for all parents will both increase the quality of service that children receive from school and increase their academic success. While studies on family participation are limited in the literature, there are very few studies on school perception and participation of families whose children receive special and regular education.

Family participation, which aims to increase the success of children, includes the acquisition of many skills, from learning subject-specific skills to developing appropriate relationships within the family. Although the necessity of family participation has been determined by the provisions in the laws, it is still difficult to ensure participation in many countries in the field of practice today. When the studies on the participation of families of children with special education needs were examined, it was found that the variables affecting family participation (socio-economic level, education level of families, participation styles of families) were similar to the participation of families of children who did not need special education. Although the participation of the parents of children in need of special education in education is determined by the laws, there may be difficulties in ensuring the participation of the families. In particular, research should be conducted on how to ensure the participation of low-income families, families with different cultural characteristics, and families of children who need special education, and which way educators or educational institutions will follow in ensuring family participation (Keçeli-Kaysılı, 2008). According to the study findings, both groups of participants are aware of the importance of their participation in school activities and being in contact, and they are highly conscious of this issue.

Yıldırım and Dönmez (2008) emphasized in their study that only teachers and schools cannot provide sufficient education, and therefore parents' support is always needed. When parents are actively involved in their children's education, better outcomes can be achieved in terms of academic achievement, social development, and overall school well-being. Parental involvement and parents' perceptions of school are particularly important for the successful education and development of students with disabilities. Participation in school activities, meetings, and organizations means that parents have a positive attitude toward school, which helps increase children's sense of belonging. Students who encounter various problems related to their disabilities can cope with these emotional problems more easily with parent and school cooperation.

Family participation creates an effective learning environment. In the student development sub-factor, the parents of children receiving special education have higher scores on this factor, which supports this claim. Regardless of the type of disability, families have shown that they are conscious of the fact that their children's most important need is the education they receive and that their participation and perceptions are effective in their children's development. Families of children with special needs showed that they are aware of the importance of the school environment for the academic and social development of children and the value of their participation by obtaining a higher score on this factor (Hara & Burke, 1998; Uslu & Gizir, 2017). Children with normal development are more conscious and competent than their peers with special needs in following and fulfilling their responsibilities both at school and home. They can follow their progress and ask for help when needed. When we evaluate children with special needs from this perspective, they are less likely to follow their development and seek help in this regard. The willingness and consistency of parents to participate in school will have a significant impact on their children's academic, social, and personal development. According to the test results that the parents of children with special needs from the participant groups are more aware of the importance of their school participation in the development of their children.

Epstein (2010; 2001) emphasized that the families of all children with physical disabilities, socio-economically disadvantaged, or different languages and races should be more sensitive about school participation, and for this, all stakeholders should encourage parental participation if necessary. It has been observed that this study shows parallelism with the school participation factor of parents of children with special needs. Parents are not only students' first teachers but also educators' partners. Parents have an understanding of their children, and this understanding can be valuable for teachers when planning their learning experiences. Similarly, teachers can contribute to parents getting to know their children as they get to know students differently from their parents in a different environment. Educators have a responsibility to inform parents about the curriculum and their children's progress. In addition, parents can contribute to the school program and goals. Parents are active in motivating their children, making connections between what is learned in school and opportunities outside. Hence, the study findings indicate that school attendance is higher in participants whose children receive special education in terms of parental development because the parents of these children feel the need to

develop themselves more. Special education children also require rigorous repetition at home to generalize the skills they have acquired in school. Therefore, parents have a great responsibility to support their children's development at home. In this context, parents should always be open and willing to develop themselves to be sufficient for their children. We can say that the difference between the two participant groups is because of this reason.

Academic studies on family involvement and school perception have yielded various findings. These studies show that parent involvement has positive effects on school success. The active participation of families in school increases the academic performance of children and strengthens their commitment to the school. Students working in cooperation with their families support the learning process and increase their motivation. Parents' perceptions of school also affect their children's education. Families with a positive school perception increase their children's interest in school and participate more in school activities. This has a positive effect on children's school success. In addition, families' perceptions of school shape their attitudes toward supporting children's education and being in contact with the school. Some studies have revealed that family involvement also has positive effects on students' social and emotional development. The involvement of families in school increases children's self-confidence and helps them establish better relationships in the school environment. However, some studies also indicate that family participation in school may face some obstacles. In particular, factors such as time and resource constraints of parents, language barriers, and inadequacy of school communication channels can negatively affect family participation. As a result, academic studies show that family involvement and school perception have positive effects on children's education. The active participation of families in school and a positive school perception increase the academic success of children and contribute to their social and emotional development. Schools need to strengthen communication channels and reduce the obstacles that families may face to involve families in the education process (Acar, & Akamoğlu, 2014; Akyürek & Bülbül, 2023; Albez & Şükrü, 2017; Aslan, 2016; Çakmak, 2010; Deslandes & Cloutier, 2002; Lync & Stein, 1982; Taliaferro et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2020; Vural & Kocabaş, 2016). This study shows that the idea that the school is a respectable place and that it is a place where positive attitudes are fostered by parents also affects students' school perception positively. Although there is no significant difference between both parent groups, this perception is high for both groups. This means that the participants see the school as a respected institution and have a positive perspective.

The findings of this study were consistent with the relevant literature mentioned above. Similar studies in the field support these findings. Many studies have revealed the reasons why families with children attending special education have higher parental involvement and school perception. When comparing parental involvement and school perception in special education and general education, it is important to consider the unique dynamics and challenges associated with each setting. While there may be some similarities, there are also notable differences. Parental involvement in special education often requires a higher level of engagement because of the unique needs and challenges of students with disabilities. Parents of children in special education may need to attend more meetings, collaborate with a larger team of professionals, and provide additional support at home. Parents of children in special education often play a more significant role in advocating for their child's needs and participating in the development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). They may have a more active voice in decision-making processes related to their child's education. Parents of children in special education may need to provide additional support and resources at home to reinforce concepts and skills learned in school. This can include specialized interventions, therapy sessions, or implementing specific strategies to address the child's unique needs. In special education, teachers may receive specialized training and have a more in-depth understanding of the unique needs of students with disabilities. This can contribute to a more positive perception of the school's ability to provide appropriate support and accommodations. Schools that offer special education programs may have access to a wider range of resources and support services, such as specialized instruction, assistive technology, and related services (e.g., speech therapy, occupational therapy). This can impact the perception of the school's ability to meet the needs of students with disabilities. In general education settings, the level of inclusion and integration of students with SEN may influence the school perception. Schools that prioritize inclusive practices and create a supportive environment for all students may be perceived more

positively. It is important to note that these points are general observations and may vary depending on the specific school, district, and country. Each individual's experience with parental involvement and school perception can differ. For a more detailed understanding, it is recommended to review specific research studies or reports that focus on comparing parental involvement and school perception in special education and general education settings.

The results of the literature review show that the school perception and participation of both families whose children receive special education and those whose children receive normal education have positive effects on the education process of children. Many studies also suggest that the active participation of families increases children's self-confidence, supports their academic success, supports their social and emotional development, and increases their motivation to learn. The school perception and participation of families receiving special education increased the satisfaction and motivation of children in the educational process. Studies have shown that the school's perception of families receiving special education increases children's self-confidence and learning motivation, and this positively affects their academic achievement. It has been emphasized that it facilitates their adaptation to school.

Result

The school perception and participation of families with children with special needs play an important role in the child's education process. The school perception of families with children with special needs includes factors such as being aware of the child's special needs, expectations for his/her education, and evaluating the support provided by the school. The active participation of families in school is also an important factor in the education of the child. Activities such as attending school meetings, communicating with teachers, and participating in school activities demonstrate the involvement of families in the school. The active participation of families with children with special needs in school supports the education of the child, strengthens communication, and ensures cooperation between the school and family.

Examination of parents' perceptions and participation in school is important for understanding the needs and expectations of both parents and the school for their child's education. In this way, cooperation and harmony between the school and the family can be achieved, difficulties in the education of the child can be overcome, and success can be supported. As a result, school perception and participation of families with special needs and normally developing children are important factors affecting the success of the child in the educational process. A positive school perception and active participation of families increase the child's interest in school, strengthen his motivation, and generally support his education. Therefore, this study investigated the school perception and participation of families whose children receive special and general education. The results are as follows:

1. There is a significant difference between families with children with normal development and those with special education needs. Families whose children receive special education are more actively involved in their children's educational process than families whose children receive general education
2. In the "Parent Development" sub-dimension; a significant difference was found in favor of families with children in special education. The family of the child receiving special education should exchange information by communicating with experts and other families regarding the child's education and development. To summarize, the development of families with special education children includes the process of acquiring knowledge and skills for the child's education, access to support resources, and emotional support. The development of families can strengthen their ability to better respond to the child's specific needs and to participate more actively in their child's education.

3. The scores in the child development sub-dimension were low in both sample groups. However, when the two sample groups were compared with each other, a result was found in favor of families whose children received special education. For families receiving special education, child development includes the education and support process for the child's special needs. This process advances the child's cognitive, social, emotional, and motor skills. Special education includes an education program designed for the individual characteristics and special needs of the child. The role of families is crucial for the development of children receiving special education. Families can provide support for the child's special needs by actively participating in the child's education. They can contribute to the education of the child by cooperating in the implementation of the special education program. To summarize, the development of children of families receiving special education includes the education and support process for the special needs of the child. The active participation of families and the use of supportive strategies to increase the child's motivation and support his/her strengths positively affect the child's development.
4. In parental involvement, the sub-dimension showed no significant difference. Parents' participation in school activities and being in contact with the school have a positive effect on the child's education and are important for the child's development. Parent involvement in school activities allows the child to feel more support and motivation in the school environment. By participating in school activities, parents demonstrate their active involvement in their child's education. This increases the child's self-confidence and strengthens his belief in success. Being in contact with the school is also important for the development of the child. Regular communication between parents, the school, and teachers ensures that the child's educational process is followed. Communication enables the exchange of information about the child's academic performance, social interaction, and behavior. In addition, parents' communication with the school facilitates the identification and implementation of support for the child's needs. The study results show that parents in general are aware of the importance of their participation in school activities and know that being in contact with the school increases the success of the child at school, increases his motivation, and enables him to participate more actively in the learning process. Simultaneously, such a parent involvement positively affects the child's a more positive experience in the school environment and overall attitude toward school.
5. Although there was no significant difference between both parent groups, school perception was high for both groups. Parents' perception of school refers to their attitudes and beliefs toward school and education. These perceptions affect parents' interest and expectations of their children's education. Parents' perceptions of school can also affect their children's commitment and motivation to school. In addition, parents' perceptions of school can also play an important role in a child's academic success. A positive perception of school by parents can contribute to a child's education. Parents with a positive school perception encourage their children to attend school, actively participate in school activities, and support their children's learning process. In addition, parents' perceptions of school can increase the child's motivation and success in learning. Conversely, a negative school perception of parents can have a negative impact on the child's education. Parents with a negative perception of school may prevent the child from going to school, avoid participating in school activities, and may not support the child's learning process. This may reduce the child's commitment to school and negatively affect academic achievement.

This study revealed that families play a pivotal role in shaping the educational experiences of their children, whether they are enrolled in special education programs or integrated into general education classrooms. Effective communication between schools and families, coupled with readily accessible support services, is pivotal in enhancing family engagement and fostering a positive perception of the educational process. Through a comparative lens, this study nuanced differences

in the experiences of families navigating the special education and general education landscapes. These disparities underscore the importance of tailored strategies and targeted support mechanisms to address each group's unique needs and challenges. The implications of this study extend far beyond its research context. It calls for the development and implementation of inclusive education policies that actively involve families in decision-making processes and recognize their invaluable contributions to their children's learning. In conclusion, "Investigation of School Perception and Participation of Families whose Children Receive Special Education and General Education" advances our understanding of the intricate interplay between families and schools in diverse educational settings. This study underscores the transformative potential of inclusive education practices and highlights the necessity of collaborative efforts among educators, policymakers, and families to create educational environments where every child can thrive. Ultimately, the findings of this study serve as a catalyst for positive change in the realm of education, advocating for equity, inclusivity, and improved outcomes for all learners.

Limitations

1. The data collected for this study primarily relied on self-report measures completed by parents. This introduces the potential for response bias, as participants may have provided socially desirable responses or may not accurately recall their experiences or perceptions.
2. The study employed a scale which only captures a snapshot of families' perceptions and participation at a single point in time. Longitudinal research would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these factors evolve over time.
3. The study was conducted in a specific geographic area with a particular demographic composition. Consequently, the findings may not apply universally and might be influenced by regional or cultural factors.
4. While standardized scales and questionnaires were used to measure school perception and participation, these tools may not capture the full complexity of the experiences and attitudes of families. Qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could provide richer insights.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and results, the research recommendations are presented below:

1. School management, who understands the importance of school and family cooperation, can organize activities and informative seminars for parents.
2. The school administration must inform the parents about the work of the school and use various means of communication (mail, telephone message, letter to the student, etc.).
3. The school should consider the demands and opinions of the parents, and make parents feel importance of their participation.
4. Parents should be informed about the individual situations of their children without delay.

5. A positive school environment should be created so that children with special needs do not experience emotional problems at school.
6. The family should be informed about the IEP prepared for children with special needs, and the family should feel that it is an important stakeholder in the IEP.
7. Activities that support families' school participation and school perceptions should be presented in the school climate.
8. A similar comparison study can be conducted using the mixed method with different demographic variables.
9. A needs analysis study can be conducted for education regarding the factors that negatively affect parents' school participation and school perception.

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