



## **According to Special Education Teachers, School Principals' Responses to Classroom Management Investigating the Effects**

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### **Abstract**

**Introduction:** The aim of the study was to investigate the effects of school principals on classroom management according to special education teachers.

**Materials and Methods:** In this study, phenomenology research design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. 15 special education teachers were interviewed and the data were obtained using a "Semi-structured Interview Form". The data were coded and categorized, and expert opinion was consulted by using descriptive and content analysis techniques in the analysis. Miles and Huberman's (1994) <sup>[7]</sup> reliability formula was used in reliability calculations.

**Results:** The importance of knowing the concept of classroom management well, the need to use the classroom management process effectively, and the positive

contributions of school principals to the classroom management process were observed.

**Conclusion and Evaluation:** At the end of the research process, it was concluded that the majority of special education teachers saw the physical arrangement of the classroom as a measure taken at school for classroom management, rewarding positive student behaviors contributed to classroom management, applying sanctions in school/classroom rules contributed to classroom management, and the school principal's classroom visits contributed to classroom management. In addition, it was observed that the school principal established good communication with parents and coordinated with the guidance service while finding solutions to the problems encountered in the classroom discipline process.

**Keywords:** Special Education, Administrator, Classroom Management

### **1. Introduction**

Classroom Management is actually an art. In that classroom there is the teacher and his/her special students. An expected and/or unexpected event may be met with an expected and/or unexpected sudden reaction. It is an art to be able to eliminate an event that can be called a crisis with cold blood. Of course, you should not be alone in this art. Because sometimes you need a leader who can help you and/or whose support you need in matters that may overcome you, there must/will be a leader. That leader is the school principal (Sirinkan, Sirinkan and Aydın Güngör 2022) <sup>[10]</sup>.

The teacher dominates and manages the classroom. Good management of the classroom is the most important step to achieve the goal in education and training. The teacher's duty is not only to teach, but also to participate in management and support management (İlgar, 1996) <sup>[5]</sup>.

Classroom management is a group of rules, concepts and principles aimed at creating and developing a classroom environment that will facilitate students' learning and enable them to realize their educational goals effectively (Aydın, 2007) <sup>[2]</sup>.

The quality of educational management depends on the quality of classroom management (Ök, Göde, & Alkan, 2006) <sup>[8]</sup>. In effective classroom management, student behavior is regulated not by force and coercion, but by teaching students to control their own learning environment and behavior. Teachers will realize that no teaching method will be effective if the relationship between them and students is not good. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers should pay attention to principles such as openness, caring and need for each other in their communication with students (Gordon, 1996) <sup>[4]</sup>.

Special education is an education provided by specially trained personnel in an educational environment arranged in accordance with the disabilities and characteristics of the child in need of special education according to specially prepared programs (Çağlar, 1998) <sup>[3]</sup>. Teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and attitudes towards their profession have a significant impact on students' cognitive and affective skills (Akay & Boz, 2011) <sup>[1]</sup>.

One of the important stakeholders who meet the needs of families with children with special needs and provide support to them is special education teachers (Öztürk, H., Şahin, V., & Vuran, S. 2022) [9].

Special education teachers play a critical role in understanding students' special needs and providing them with appropriate education. Their dedicated work helps students maximize their potential and contribute to society.

Special education teachers are expected to coordinate, plan and implement educational activities in the school in coordination with other special education teachers and administrators. The principal, who is in the position of school administrator, tries to keep teachers under control by going around the classrooms and looking at their approaches to some new practices. However, such practices may create a sense of pressure on teachers over time. The principal sometimes attends classes to make an easier evaluation (Marshall, 2004).

Some special education teachers who show some negative attitudes and behaviors in classroom management have negative consequences such as making students feel sadness, oppression, regret, resentment, hatred, lack of self-confidence, learning difficulties and communication problems. Special education teachers with high self-efficacy can meet the educational and other needs of students with special needs in the classroom and keep the situation in the classroom under control (Meijer & Foster, 1988) [6]. On the other hand, special education teachers who do not feel competent direct their students to guidance and counseling services without making the necessary effort (Podell & Sodak, 1993).

**2. Material and Method**

In the study, a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers was used to collect data on the classroom management process views of special education teachers working at secondary and high school levels. The semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher as a result of literature review was used as a data collection tool in this study. Before preparing the interview questions, national and international literature on the research topic was reviewed and qualitative and quantitative studies on the subject were utilized. After the theoretical foundations of the studies were established through the literature review and comprehensive information about the subject was obtained, the items to be included in the form were determined.

Data for the study were collected through interviews with 15 special education teachers. The data were analyzed using descriptive and content analysis techniques.

In the analysis process, firstly, the forms were deciphered and analyzed on the basis of special education teachers.

**Problem Statement:** According to special education teachers, what are the effects of school principals on classroom management?

**Sub-Problems:**

1. According to special education teachers, what are the school-based measures taken in the classroom management process?
2. According to the special education teachers, what was the effect/contribution of the school principal on the classroom management process?
3. According to special education teachers, what are the strategies for solving problems encountered in classroom management on a class/school basis?

**Table 1:** School-based Measures Taken in the Classroom Management Process

Theme	Codes	Frequency
Measures taken at school	Classes start/end on time	15
	Preventing tardiness to class	13
	Preventing interruption of the lesson	10
	Physical organization of the classroom	17
	Prevention of undesirable behaviors	9

When Table 1 is analyzed, the participants mentioned some measures taken at school. The majority of special education teachers saw the physical organization of the classroom as a measure taken at school for classroom management, and a certain number of them saw the prevention of interruption of the lesson by preventing tardiness as a measure taken at school for classroom management.

**Table 2:** The Effect/Contribution of the School Principal on the Classroom Management Process

Theme	Codes	Frequency
Impact on classroom management process	Making classroom visits	18
	Use of body language	15
	Communicating with the student	16
	Enforcement of school/class rules	7
	Applying effective behavior modification methods	13
Contribution to the classroom management process	Ensuring order in the classroom	16
	Rewarding the student	18

When Table 2 is analyzed, the participants expressed their opinions about the effect/contribution of the school principal on the classroom management process. The majority of special education teachers stated that rewarding positive student behaviors contributed to classroom management, some special education teachers stated that applying sanctions on school/classroom rules contributed to classroom management, and some special education teachers stated that the school principal making classroom visits contributed to classroom management.

**Table 3:** School Principal's Strategies for Solving Classroom Problems

Theme	Codes	Frequency
Encountered on Class/School Basis solutions to problems	Making family visits	19
	Communicating with parents	19
	Student-teacher-parent dialog	18
	Timely communication	14
	Persuasion	11

When Table 3 is analyzed, the participants expressed their opinions about the school principal's solutions to the problems encountered in the classroom. The majority of the special education teachers mentioned that the school principal establishes good communication with the parents while finding solutions to the problems encountered in the classroom discipline process, and some of them mentioned that they work in coordination with the guidance service.

**3. Discussion and Conclusion**

Participants' perceptions of the school principal's and special education teacher's guidance-related duties within the school organization increase as their professional experience increases. This may be due to the fact that a newly

graduated teacher does not clearly know his/her duties as a special education teacher. For this, both the number of hours of the teaching practice course in undergraduate education can be increased and in-service training can be organized more intensively for teachers with a professional seniority of up to 10 years.

If an effective education is to be achieved, an appropriately prepared special education classroom environment, efficient student-parent-teacher communication and a set of special classroom rules are expected. The classroom environment is the place where education and training activities take place; in a school year, a large part of the learning time is spent in the classroom and during this period of time, students spend time face to face. Thus, it is here that the main purpose of education, the acquisition of behavior, takes place. In the classroom there are teachers, students and materials. Because of all these, it can be said that the quality of educational management depends on the quality of classroom management. An understanding appropriate to the level of special education should be approached about the goals to be achieved. In order to increase and activate the benefits of the rules and minimize their harms, the rules to be established should be created in the student-parent-teacher triangle by taking the opinions of stakeholders into consideration, and their number should be small. In order for the rules to be followed, the possible consequences of not following the rules should also be decided together with the class. Parents should be informed about undesirable behaviors in the special class and their support should be sought.

Reward and punishment are useful for both positive and negative behaviors, but the concept of punishment should be used sparingly and rarely. In order for students to be responsible and socialized, they should be encouraged to take social responsibility outside of school and participate in various activities in the community. Individual and group activities, social and sportive activities in the classroom and school should be emphasized and functionalized. For this purpose, students can be encouraged to participate in individual and team sports competitions. Excursions can be organized for students and thus activities that develop the individual and ensure their socialization can be organized. Since preventive and developmental guidance prevents undesirable behaviors from the very beginning and minimizes their negative impact, as well as providing teachers with ideas, guidance services should be made functional in schools.

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