



**THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN AND THEIR
TYPICALLY DEVELOPING CHILDREN IN TURKEY**

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Abstract:

In Turkey, whereas there are a number of studies which examine the communication of parents with their typically developing children, there are limited studies which examine the communication of parents with special needs children with their typically developing children. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the communication of parents with special needs children with their typically developing children. 295 parents who have both mentally disabled and typically developing children participated in the study in the 2019-2020 academic year. The data in the study were obtained by using the Parent-Child Communication Scale (PCCS) developed by Kahraman (2016). The scale consisting of 27 items contains 5 sub-dimensions and explains .54,3 of the total variance. For the overall reliability, the Cronbach's alpha was .865. The data were analyzed by using the statistical techniques included in the SPSS program to analyze the data collected through the scale. There are two main objectives in the study: to explore the communication of parents with special needs children with their typically developing children in terms of various variables, and relationship between perception of problem-solving and unobstructed listening, open to share, respect-acceptance and sensitivity, which are among to the subscales of PCCS. As a result of the research, it was revealed that there was a significant difference between the genders, ages, education status, disability status of their special needs children and their monthly income levels of parents with special needs children and their communication levels with their typically

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developing children. As the perception of problem-solving increased in the communication of parents with special needs children with their typically developing children. However, there was no correlation between the perception of problem-solving and unobstructed listening skills of parents with special needs children with their typically developing children.

Keywords: communication, special needs individuals, typically developing children, parents

1. Introduction

Parents play an important role in the healthy development of children. Wholesome families are defined as families where the needs of all individuals are properly met and all family members enjoy being members of that family (Özguven, 2001). It is among the responsibilities of the parents to guide their children in the establishment of a facilitator, mediator, adaptive and protective system for talents and potentials of their children. Parents also need to develop their talents of children, ensure their socialization, help their children in meeting their needs, establish a physical and mental environment necessary for the well-being of the family, and establish effective communication with their children (Akbaba, 2010; Kut, 1994; Çikılı ve Karaca, 2017; Karaca ve Sarı, 2017).

In order to develop positive self-perception among children, it is important that family members have good relationships among themselves and that parents have a reassuring and tolerant approach towards their children (Körükçü, 2004; Tuzcuoğlu, 2004). It was revealed that adequate or inappropriate parent-child relationships were caused by many events that negatively affect children's psychological development and lead to their own social adjustment disorder (Eminoğlu, 2007; Yavuzer, 2010). It is known that the most suitable environment for the physical and mental development of children since their birth is family. Parents are primarily responsible for the physical, psychological and mental development of their children, and taking various roles and responsibilities in society. When a child has special needs, the responsibility of the parents increases even more (Özşenol et al., 2003).

Due to the development and differentiation of the parent-child relationship through various interactions (Pridham et al., 2010), parents need to get observable feedback by initiating observable interactions with their children. Accordingly, Cornell and Grossberg (1987) found that parents must communicate effectively with their children for them to adapt to the family. Effective communication leads to high self-confidence, low anxiety and solidarity among family members. The fact that parents express their feelings correctly in their communication with their children makes a great contribution to the positive interaction between family members. (Karness and D'llio, 1988). It is important for parents to make efforts to improve their communication attitudes with their children, to perceive the contributions made by each member to the family, and to involve the children in family decisions for a healthy parent-child

communication (Clark, 2013). Parents express what they want or do not want from their children through communication. These emotions form the basis of the child's relationships with family members, his/her attitudes towards other individuals, objects and all life, his/her attitudes and behaviors adopted (Kalkınç, 2008 and Yavuzer, 2002).

There are basic psychological needs that must be met from birth of mentally handicapped children and their typically developing siblings. Effective communication attitudes of parents with their children is among the basic needs of children. Children whose such basic needs are not met and neglected for various reasons begin to feel ashamed of their own existence. In the first year, the child's physical health, character, adaptation, and affection and support from the family play an essential role in his/her growing (Özmert, 2006).

In the process of a typical child being born, it causes many changes and difficulties for the family to get used to. If the born child is disabled, it may cause disruption to the usual situations and relationships in family life. It is stated that this situation causes various negativities and differences in the family (Küçüker, 2001). It is known that the siblings of special needs children experience many different situations compared to the siblings of typically developing children. Parents generally spend less time with typically developing children at home because of taking more effort and time to care for a special needs child (İçmeli, 2008; Whitman, 2004). Having a special needs child brings along various difficulties regardless of the child's disability. These difficulties can be listed as psychological state, financial situation, educational background, socio-cultural conditions, relationships and communication with family and social environment (Dönmez et al., 2000).

The reasons for such negativities can be listed as follows: 'stress caused by a child with special needs in the family', 'physical, material and psychological problems', 'having siblings with special needs in the family', 'roles taken by the parents of special needs child', 'families unable to communicate effectively with professionals', and 'negative reactions from family members, friends and other people'. It is known that these negativities faced by parents cause deterioration of relationships in the family. Researches revealed that these negativities affected the family relationship and often cause leaving home, divorces, suicides and alcohol addiction (Eripek, 1993; Evcimen, 1996; Damiani, 1999).

It is common to see that parents who learn that they have special needs children review their life goals and postpone or cancel many things they want to do. Unwholesome family functions before the child is born can further increase the negative impact on the family (Özşenol et al., 2003). When parents for the first time find out that they have a special needs child, emotions such as shock, desperation, and denial that parents experience are replaced by extreme sadness, psychological breakdown, depression, and sense of pity. These feelings negatively affect families emotionally. It was observed that this shock of the families affected the typically developing children (Erkan, 1991). The additional responsibilities brought by the special needs individuals to the family life may negatively affect the economic situation of the family, many parents show

an increased level of anxiety, depression and low self-esteem and this affects the family communication (Girli et al., 2000).

It is stated that some of the typically developing children who have special needs siblings may experience avoidance behaviors and give up trying to get their parents' attention (Siegel, 2002). However, it has been emphasized that these children are at great risk for depression. Therefore, parents with special needs children and typically developing children should be able to communicate properly with them. In order to prevent the emergence of these expressed mechanisms, parents with special needs children should be able to communicate properly to be aware of the needs of typically developing children (Vardarçı, 2011; Siegel, 2002). The importance of parents' problem-solving perceptions is emphasized in this respect (Çam, 2016).

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The positive or negative reactions of parents play a key role in the development of personalities of children (Shapiro, 2010). Accordingly, parents of special needs children must bring up their typically developing children with the awareness that they are as important as special needs children. Since the social dimension of special needs individuals is evaluated in the society, this phenomenon seems to be related to communication, which is also a social process. Due to the increased stress situations with the mentally disabled children in the family, children whose words are ignored, whose ideas are not allowed to be expressed or who are constantly criticized when expressed can be introvert, insecure, grumpy and aggressive (Koçak, 2010).

The presence of a special needs child in the family is perceived as a situation that affects the lives, perceptions, thoughts and behaviors of all family members. The siblings of special needs children can experience different experiences compared to the siblings of typically developing children. Parents are often worried about spending less time with their typically developing children at home since the care of the special needs child is very demanding. However, in the literature, researches on this topic are not very common (Whitman, 2004). In this respect, it is essential to examine the relationship of parents with special needs children with their typically developing children.

When the literature was examined, it was seen that the importance of problem-solving perception in the family communication was emphasized (Mathews et al., 1986). Conditions such as poor communication attitudes of parents with their children, less sharing with their children, and having less active and less attachment negatively affect the child's development (Rimm & Lowe, 1988; Çağlar, 2004). The researches emphasize that parents must be respectful, participative to share their feelings and thoughts, and take a sensitive and accepting approach to their child's various problems to establish balanced and effective communication with their children (Aral, Kandır & Yaşar, 2003; as cited in Afat, 2013).

Bingham (1998) defines the problem that it occurs as a result of a situation that contains known or ambiguous elements. The fact that these elements are completely unknown prevents the individual's sensitivity to existing problems. In this respect,

effective problem-solving perception serves as a vital coping mechanism in reducing the negative effect of emotional stress as well as eliminating the preventing effect of personal and interpersonal problems (Aslan, 2001). McMaster Family Functions Model suggests that problem-solving perception is among the family functions (as cited in Bulut, 1990). Given its role in preventing inter-individual problems, effective problem-solving must be among the skills that parents of special needs children must have. Eskin (2018) stated that it was not possible to reach a proper conclusion without researching the reasons behind the individual's avoidance of problems. For this reason, it is necessary to examine the general opinions, feelings, thoughts, and perceptions about the problems of individuals before giving guidance about them (Eskin, 2018, p. 274). Therefore, this study will also examine the relationship between parents' problem solving perceptions and their sensitivities, respect and acceptance, open to sharing and unobstructed listening, which are among the sub-dimensions of the Parent-Child Communication Scale (PCCS).

The literature review showed that there were several studies about the difficulties that parents encountered on their special needs children (Ludlow et al., 2012; Altug-Özsoy et al., 2006; Bıçak, 2009; Nuri, 2017), stress and anxiety levels of parents with special needs children (Altındağ-Kumaş & Sümer, 2019; Avşaroğlu & Gilik, 2017) and communication attitudes of parents and their special needs children (Kochanska & Aksan, 2004; Doğan et al., 2016; Ceyhun et al., 2015; Siller & Sigman, 2002; Bakkaloğlu & Sucuoğlu, 2000). However, no previous research has investigated the communication attitudes of parents with special needs children with their typically developing children. The purpose of this study is to explore the communication attitudes of parents with special needs children with their typically developing children. With this purpose in mind, the following research questions were investigated in the study:

- 1) Is there a significant difference between genders of the parents with special needs children and their communication attitudes with their typically developing children?
- 2) Is there a significant difference between ages of the parents with special needs children and their communication attitudes with their typically developing children?
- 3) Is there a significant difference between educational status of the parents with special needs children and their communication attitudes with their typically developing children?
- 4) Is there a significant difference between the disability status of special needs children and their communication attitudes of parents with their typically developing children?
- 5) Is there a significant difference between the monthly income level of the family of special needs children and communication attitudes of the parents with their typically developing children?
- 6) Is there a significant difference between the family type of special needs children and the communication attitudes of the parents with their typically developing children?

- 7) Is there a significant correlation between the problem solving perception levels of parents with special needs children and their sensitivities, respect and acceptance, openness to sharing and unobstructed listening which are among the subscales of the Parent-Child Communication Scale (PCCS).

2. Method

In this section of the study, which is conducted to examine the communication attitudes of parents with special needs children with their typically developing children, information on the research model, study group, data collection tool and data analysis were included.

2.1. Research Method

In this study, relational survey model was used since it was aimed to examine the communication attitudes of parents with special needs children with their typically developing children. It describes a situation that exists before or still exists. It aims to explore the existence or degree of change between two or more variables. It investigates the existence and degree of significance between two or more variables (Karasar, 2006).

2.2. Study Group

Table 1: Demographics of Parents

		Genders			
		Female		Male	
		N	%	N	%
Age	25-32	18	90,0%	2	10,0%
	33-39	56	83,6%	11	16,4%
	40-47	113	72,0%	44	28,0%
	48-55	26	66,7%	13	33,3%
	55 and over	6	50,0%	6	50,0%
Educational Status	Primary School	111	80,4%	27	19,6%
	Secondary School	46	80,7%	11	19,3%
	High School	33	62,3%	20	37,7%
	University	29	61,7%	18	38,3%
Disability Status of Their Children	Mentally Disabled	94	70,1%	40	29,9%
	Autism	54	87,1%	8	12,9%
	Hearing Impaired	43	78,2%	12	21,8%
	Visually Impaired	28	63,6%	16	36,4%
Monthly Income	1200-2400 TL	110	74,8%	37	25,2%
	2400-3600 TL	79	75,2%	26	24,8%
	3600-4800 TL	30	69,8%	13	30,2%
Number of Family Members	3 People	15	71,4%	6	28,6%
	4 People	73	76,0%	23	24,0%
	5 People	98	72,6%	37	27,4%
	6 or more	33	76,7%	10	23,3%

295 parents with special needs children participated in the study that 219 of them are females and 76 of them are males. Demographic information about the age of the parents, their educational status, disability status of their special needs children, monthly income and the number of family members were given above (Table 1).

2.3 Data Collection

The data obtained in the study were obtained by using the Parent-Child Communication Scale (PCCS) developed by Kahraman (2016). The scale consisting of 27 items contains 5 sub-dimensions and explains .54,3 of the total variance. A Five-point Likert-type scale was used: '1' Always, '2' Often, '3' Sometimes, '4' Rarely and '5' Never. The lowest score is 27, and the highest score is 135 from the scale. Low scores indicate that parents have a high level of communication attitudes with their children. For the overall reliability, the Cronbach's alpha was .865. The alpha values of the 5 subscales were .762 for problem-solving, .842 for open to sharing, .768 for respect-acceptance, .769 for sensitivity and .703 for unobstructed listening. The results indicated that the scale could be used to measure the communication levels of parents with their children.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by using the statistical techniques included in the SPSS program to analyze the data collected through the scale. The independent samples t-test was used to determine whether there is any correlation between genders of parents and communication levels with their children. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to determine whether there are any statistically differences among genders, ages, educational status, disability status of special needs children and monthly incomes of parents, the number of family members, and communication attitudes of parents with their typically developing children. The Tukey's test was used to test differences among sample means for significance. The Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis was used to assess the correlation between the problem-solving perception and open to sharing and respect-acceptance. The multiple regression analysis was used to determine which of its subscales predict.

3. Results

In this section of the study, the findings obtained from the statistical analysis of the data collected for the purpose and sub-objectives and the comments of these findings were included.

In Table 2, the communication attitudes of parents with special needs children toward their typically developing children were compared by the gender variable and the mean scores were included: $\bar{x}=8,70$ for female and $\bar{x}=8,37$ for male in the subscale of problem-solving; $\bar{x}=7,10$ for female and $\bar{x}=7,91$ for male in the subscale of open to sharing; $\bar{x}=10,18$ for female and $\bar{x}=11,09$ for male in the subscale of respect and acceptance; $\bar{x}=10,28$ for female and $\bar{x}=11,31$ for male in the subscale of sensitivity; $\bar{x}=14,16$ for female and

$\bar{x}=14,17$ for male in the subscale of unobstructed listening. It was examined whether there was a significant difference between being parents and their communication perceptions with their typically developing children. As a result of the independent t-test, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between being parents and problem-solving, open to sharing, respect-acceptance and unobstructed listening subscales ($p>0,05$). However, it was concluded that there was a significant difference between being parents and sensitivity subscale in favor of mothers ($p<0,05$).

Table 2: The t-test Results by the Gender Variable

	Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	T	p
Problem Solving	Female	219	8,70	2,97	,838	.403
	Male	76	8,37	2,92		
Open to Sharing	Female	219	7,10	3,39	-1,814	.071
	Male	76	7,91	3,26		
Respect-Acceptance	Female	219	10,18	3,23	-1,965	.050
	Male	76	11,09	4,12		
Sensitivity	Female	219	10,28	3,41	-2,127	.034
	Male	76	11,31	4,14		
Unobstructed Listening	Female	219	14,16	4,16	-,016	.987
	Male	76	14,17	3,75		

* $p<.05$

In Table 3, the communication levels of the parents with special needs children toward their typically developing children were compared by the age variable and their mean scores were included: $\bar{x}=9,95$ for 25-32 age, $\bar{x}=8,80$ for 32-39 age, $\bar{x}=8,53$ for 40-47 age, $\bar{x}=7,43$ for 48-55 age, $\bar{x}=10,35$ for 55 and over age in the subscale of problem-solving; $\bar{x}=7,50$ for 25-32 age, $\bar{x}=7,23$ for 32-39 age, $\bar{x}=7,10$ for 40-47 age, $\bar{x}=7,48$ for 48-55 age, $\bar{x}=9,66$ for 55 and over age in the subscale of open to sharing; $\bar{x}=11,30$ for 25-32 age, $\bar{x}=10,00$ for 32-39 age, $\bar{x}=10,29$ for 40-47 age, $\bar{x}=10,25$ for 48-55 age, $\bar{x}=13,41$ for 55 and over age in the subscale of respect-acceptance; $\bar{x}=11,48$ for 25-32 age, $\bar{x}=10,02$ for 32-39 age, $\bar{x}=10,41$ for 40-47 age, $\bar{x}=10,30$ for 48-55 age, $\bar{x}=14,47$ for 55 and over age in the subscale of sensitivity; $\bar{x}=13,71$ for 25-32 age, $\bar{x}=14,34$ for 32-39 age, $\bar{x}=14,37$ for 40-47 age, $\bar{x}=13,16$ for 48-55 age, $\bar{x}=14,59$ for 55 and over age in the subscale of unobstructed listening. It was examined whether there was a significant difference between the ages of parents and their communication levels with their typically developing children. As a result of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test, there was a significant difference between ages of parents and problem solving, open to sharing, respect-acceptance and sensitivity subscales, but there was no significant difference between ages of parents and unobstructed listening subscale. The significant differences between the age groups of 25-32 and 48-55 resulted in favor of the age group of 48-55. The age groups of 48-55 and 55 and over resulted in favor of the age group of 48-55. The significant differences between the age groups of 32-39 and 55 and over resulted in favor of the age group of 32-39; the age groups of 40-48 and 55 and over resulted in favor of the age group of 40-48;

the age groups of 48-55 and 55 and over resulted in the age group of 48-55 in the subscales of open to sharing, respect-acceptance and sensitivity.

Table 3: Perceived Communication Levels of Parents by the Age Variable

Age of Parents		N	\bar{X}	SD	F	p	Difference
Problem-Solving	1. 25-32	20	9,95	3,03	3,828	.005	1-4 4-5
	2. 32-39	67	8,80	2,53			
	3. 40-47	157	8,53	2,85			
	4. 48-55	39	7,43	2,63			
	5. 55 and over	12	10,35	5,40			
	Total	295	8,62	2,96			
Open to Sharing	1. 25-32	20	7,50	4,45	1,676	.156	
	2. 32-39	67	7,23	3,48			
	3. 40-47	157	7,10	2,97			
	4. 48-55	39	7,48	3,59			
	5. 55 and over	12	9,66	4,39			
	Total	295	7,31	3,37			
Respect-Acceptance	1. 25-32	20	11,30	3,38	2,890	.023	2-5 3-5 4-5
	2. 32-39	67	10,00	2,70			
	3. 40-47	157	10,29	3,37			
	4. 48-55	39	10,25	2,64			
	5. 55 and over	12	13,41	8,16			
	Total	295	10,41	3,50			
Sensitivity	1. 25-32	20	11,48	5,08	4,470	.002	2-5 3-5 4-5
	2. 32-39	67	10,02	2,80			
	3. 40-47	157	10,41	3,38			
	4. 48-55	39	10,30	2,73			
	5. 55 and over	12	14,47	7,26			
	Total	295	10,55	3,63			
Unobstructed Listening	1. 25-32	20	13,71	3,79	,815	.517	
	2. 32-39	67	14,34	3,53			
	3. 40-47	157	14,37	4,30			
	4. 48-55	39	13,16	3,80			
	5. 55 and over	12	14,59	4,63			
	Total	295	14,17	4,05			

*p<.05

In Table 4, the communication levels of parents with special needs children toward their typically developing children were compared by the educational status variable and their mean scores were included: \bar{x} =8,78 for primary school graduate parents, \bar{x} =8,47 for secondary school graduate parents, \bar{x} =8,33 for high school graduate parents, and \bar{x} =8,65 for university graduate parents in the subscale of problem-solving; \bar{x} =7,42 for primary school graduate parents, \bar{x} =7,21 for secondary school graduate parents, \bar{x} =6,59 for high school graduate parents, and \bar{x} =7,93 for university graduate parents in the subscale of open to sharing; \bar{x} =10,74 for primary school graduate parents, \bar{x} =10,32 for secondary school graduate parents, \bar{x} =9,77 for high school graduate parents, and \bar{x} =10,29 for

university graduate parents in the subscale of respect-acceptance; $\bar{x}=11,02$ for primary school graduate parents, $\bar{x}=10,36$ for secondary school graduate parents, $\bar{x}=9,69$ for high school graduate parents, and $\bar{x}=10,35$ for university graduate parents in the subscale of sensitivity; $\bar{x}=14,57$ for primary school graduate parents, $\bar{x}=13,82$ for secondary school graduate parents, $\bar{x}=14,73$ for high school graduate parents, and $\bar{x}=12,75$ for university graduate parents in the subscale of unobstructed listening. It was examined whether there was a significant difference between the educational status of parents and their communication levels with their typically developing children. As a result of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test, there was no significant difference between educational status of parents and problem solving, open to sharing, respect-acceptance and sensitivity subscales, but there was a significant difference between educational status of parents and unobstructed listening subscale. It was found that the differentiation is between primary school graduate and university graduate parents.

Table 4: Perceived Communication Levels of Parents by the Educational Status Variable

Educational Status		N	\bar{X}	SD	F	p	Difference
Problem-Solving	1. Primary School	138	8,78	3,26	,341	.796	
	2. Secondary School	57	8,47	2,88			
	3. High School	53	8,33	2,88			
	4. University	47	8,65	2,16			
	Total	295	8,62	2,96			
Open to Sharing	1. Primary School	138	7,42	3,87	1,408	.241	
	2. Secondary School	57	7,21	2,74			
	3. High School	53	6,59	2,57			
	4. University	47	7,93	3,21			
	Total	295	7,31	3,37			
Respect-Acceptance	1. Primary School	138	10,74	4,01	1,007	.390	
	2. Secondary School	57	10,32	3,32			
	3. High School	53	9,77	2,82			
	4. University	47	10,29	2,71			
	Total	295	10,41	3,50			
Sensitivity	1. Primary School	138	11,02	3,90	1,879	.133	
	2. Secondary School	57	10,36	3,60			
	3. High School	53	9,69	3,43			
	4. University	47	10,35	2,86			
	Total	295	10,55	3,63			
Unobstructed Listening	1. Primary School	138	14,57	3,94	2,898	.035	1-4
	2. Secondary School	57	13,82	4,03			
	3. High School	53	14,73	4,64			
	4. University	47	12,75	3,40			
	Total	295	14,17	4,05			

*p<.05

Table 5: The Correlation Between the Disability Status of Special Needs Children and Communication Levels of Parents with Their Typically Developing Children

Disability Status		N	\bar{x}	SD	F	p	Difference
Problem-Solving	1. Mentally Disabled	134	8,81	3,38	,707	.548	
	2. Autistic	62	8,51	2,47			
	3. Hearing Impaired	55	8,69	2,91			
	4. Visually Impaired	44	8,08	2,19			
	Total	295	8,62	2,96			
Open to Sharing	1. Mentally Disabled	134	7,45	3,58	,570	.638	
	2. Autistic	62	7,39	3,29			
	3. Hearing Impaired	55	7,37	2,78			
	4. Visually Impaired	44	6,70	3,52			
	Total	295	7,31	3,37			
Respect-Acceptance	1. Mentally Disabled	134	10,56	3,89	,819	.484	
	2. Autistic	62	10,29	2,69			
	3. Hearing Impaired	55	10,74	3,73			
	4. Visually Impaired	44	9,73	2,90			
	Total	295	10,41	3,50			
Sensitivity	1. Mentally Disabled	134	10,53	3,95	,805	.492	
	2. Autistic	62	10,34	2,68			
	3. Hearing Impaired	55	11,16	3,95			
	4. Visually Impaired	44	10,10	3,38			
	Total	295	10,55	3,63			
Unobstructed Listening	1. Mentally Disabled	134	14,64	4,33	4,016	.008	1-2 2-3
	2. Autistic	62	12,74	3,33			
	3. Hearing Impaired	55	14,90	3,87			
	4. Visually Impaired	44	13,79	3,91			
	Total	295	14,17	4,05			

*p<.05

In Table 5, the communication levels of the parents with special needs children and their typically developing children were compared by the disability status of special needs children variable and the mean scores were included: \bar{x} =8,81 for parents of children with mentally disabled, \bar{x} =8,51 for parents of children with autism, \bar{x} =8,69 for parents of children with hearing impaired, and \bar{x} =8,08 for parents of children with visually impaired in the subscale of problem-solving; \bar{x} =7,45 for parents of children with mentally disabled, \bar{x} =7,39 for parents of children with autism, \bar{x} =7,37 for parents of children with hearing impaired, and \bar{x} =6,70 for parents of children with visually impaired in the subscale of open to sharing; \bar{x} =10,56 for parents of children with mentally disabled, \bar{x} =10,29 for parents of children with autism, \bar{x} =10,74 for parents of children with hearing impaired, and \bar{x} =9,73 for parents of children with visually impaired in the subscale of respect-acceptance; \bar{x} =10,53 for parents of children with mentally disabled, \bar{x} =10,34 for parents of children with autism, \bar{x} =11,16 for parents of children with hearing impaired, and \bar{x} =10,55 for parents of children with visually impaired in the subscale of sensitivity; \bar{x} =14,64 for parents of children with mentally disabled, \bar{x} =12,74 for parents of children with autism,

$\bar{x}=14,90$ for parents of children with hearing impaired, and $\bar{x}=13,79$ for parents of children with visually impaired in the subscale of unobstructed listening. It was examined whether there was a significant difference between the disability status of special needs children and the communication levels of parents with their typically developing children. As a result of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test, there was no significant difference between the disability status of special needs children and problem solving, open to sharing, respect-acceptance and sensitivity subscales, but there was a significant difference between the disability status of special needs children of parents and unobstructed listening subscale ($p<0,01$). It was found that the differentiation is between parents of children with autism and parents of mentally disabled children or parents of hearing impaired children.

Table 6: Statistical Data to Explore the Relationship Between Monthly Income Levels of Parents and Communication Levels with Their Typically Developing Children

Monthly Income Level	N	\bar{X}	SD	F	p	Difference	
Problem-Solving	1. 1200-2400	147	8,36	3,01	1,637	.196	
	2. 2400-3600	105	9,03	3,19			
	3. Over 3600	43	8,47	1,98			
	Total	295	8,62	2,96			
Open to Sharing	1. 1200-2400	147	7,04	3,63	,937	.393	
	2. 2400-3600	105	7,59	3,03			
	3. Over 3600	43	7,56	3,20			
	Total	295	7,31	3,37			
Respect-Acceptance	1. 1200-2400	147	10,29	3,67	,591	.554	
	2. 2400-3600	105	10,70	3,58			
	3. Over 3600	43	10,12	2,58			
	Total	295	10,41	3,50			
Sensitivity	1. 1200-2400	147	10,52	4,11	,011	.989	
	2. 2400-3600	105	10,56	3,37			
	3. Over 3600	43	10,60	2,36			
	Total	295	10,55	3,63			
Unobstructed Listening	1. 1200-2400	147	13,91	4,08	3,600	.029	2-3
	2. 2400-3600	105	14,94	4,14			
	3. Over 3600	43	13,16	3,47			
	Total	295	14,17	4,05			

* $p<.05$

In Table 6, the communication levels of parents with special needs children toward their typically developing children were compared by the monthly income level variable and the mean scores were included: $\bar{x}=8,36$ for parents with income level of 1200-2400TL, $\bar{x}=9,03$ for parents with income level of 2400-3600TL, and $\bar{x}=8,47$ for parents with income level of over 3600TL in the subscale of problem-solving; $\bar{x}=7,04$ for parents with income level of 1200-2400TL, $\bar{x}=7,59$ for parents with income level of 2400-3600TL, and $\bar{x}=7,56$ for parents with income level of over 3600TL in the subscale of open to sharing; $\bar{x}=10,29$ for parents with income level of 1200-2400TL, $\bar{x}=10,70$ for parents with income level of 2400-

3600TL, and $\bar{x}=10,12$ for parents with income level of over 3600TL in the subscale of respect-acceptance; $\bar{x}=10,52$ for parents with income level of 1200-2400TL, $\bar{x}=10,56$ for parents with income level of 2400-3600TL, and $\bar{x}=10,60$ for parents with income level of over 3600TL in the subscale of sensitivity; $\bar{x}=13,91$ for parents with income level of 1200-2400TL, $\bar{x}=14,94$ for parents with income level of 2400-3600TL, and $\bar{x}=13,16$ for parents with income level of over 3600TL in the subscale of unobstructed listening. It was examined whether there was a significant difference between the monthly income levels of parents and their communication levels with their typically developing children. As a result of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test, there was no significant difference between the monthly income levels of special needs children of parents and problem solving, open to sharing, respect-acceptance and sensitivity subscales ($p>0,05$), but there was a significant difference between the monthly income levels of special needs children of parents and unobstructed listening subscale ($p<0,05$). It was found that the differentiation is between parents with income level of 2400-3600TL and parents with income level of over 3600TL.

Table 7: Statistical Data to Explore the Relationship Between Family Types of Parents and Communication Levels with Their Typically Developing Children

Number of Family Member		N	\bar{X}	SD	F	p
Problem-Solving	3	21	8,40	1,74	,149	.930
	4	96	8,73	3,26		
	5	135	8,53	2,98		
	6 and more	43	8,75	2,72		
	Total	295	8,62	2,96		
Open to Sharing	3	21	8,59	4,48	1,856	.137
	4	96	7,48	3,14		
	5	135	7,24	3,32		
	6 and more	43	6,55	3,29		
	Total	295	7,31	3,37		
Respect-Acceptance	3	21	11,43	3,86	,735	.532
	4	96	10,43	3,72		
	5	135	10,35	3,40		
	6 and more	43	10,08	3,12		
	Total	295	10,41	3,50		
Sensitivity	3	21	11,06	4,25	,557	.644
	4	96	10,82	3,61		
	5	135	10,28	3,71		
	6 and more	43	10,51	3,14		
	Total	295	10,55	3,63		
Unobstructed Listening	3	21	13,74	3,59	,721	.540
	4	96	13,74	3,97		
	5	135	14,45	3,96		
	6 and more	43	14,45	4,72		
	Total	295	14,17	4,05		

In Table 7, the communication levels of parents with special needs children toward their typically developing children were compared by the number of family members variable and the mean scores were included: $\bar{x}=8,40$ for families with 3 members, $\bar{x}=8,73$ for families with 4 members, $\bar{x}=8,53$ for families with 5 members, and $\bar{x}=8,75$ for families with 6 and more members in the subscale of problem-solving; $\bar{x}=8,59$ for families with 3 members, $\bar{x}=7,48$ for families with 4 members, $\bar{x}=7,24$ for families with 5 members, and $\bar{x}=6,55$ for families with 6 and more members in the subscale of open to sharing; $\bar{x}=11,43$ for families with 3 members, $\bar{x}=10,43$ for families with 4 members, $\bar{x}=10,35$ for families with 5 members, and $\bar{x}=10,082$ for families with 6 and more members in the subscale of respect-acceptance; $\bar{x}=11,06$ for families with 3 members, $\bar{x}=10,82$ for families with 4 members, $\bar{x}=10,28$ for families with 5 members, and $\bar{x}=10,51$ for families with 6 and more members in the subscale of sensitivity; $\bar{x}=13,74$ for families with 3 members, $\bar{x}=13,74$ for families with 4 members, $\bar{x}=14,45$ for families with 5 members, and $\bar{x}=14,45$ for families with 6 and more members in the subscale of unobstructed listening. It was examined whether there was a significant difference between the number of family members and communication levels of parents with their typically developing children. These tests revealed that as the number of family members increased in the subscales of open to sharing and respect-acceptance, the mean scores of communication levels increased. However, the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test showed that the increase of mean scores did not cause any differentiation ($p>0,05$).

Table 8: Descriptive Statistical Data on Problem-Solving and Respect-Acceptance

	N	Minimum	Maximum	\bar{X}	SD
Problem-Solving	295	5,00	25,00	8,62	2,96
Open to Sharing	295	4,00	20,00	7,31	3,37
Respect-Acceptance	295	7,00	35,00	10,41	3,50
Sensitivity	295	6,00	30,00	10,55	3,63
Unobstructed Listening	295	5,00	25,00	14,17	4,05

Table 8 showed that 295 parents participated in the study. The highest scores that can be obtained in the subscales are as follows: 25 for problem-solving subscale consisting of 5 items, 35 for respect-acceptance subscale consisting of 7 items, 30 for sensitivity subscale consisting of 6 items, and 25 for unobstructed listening subscale consisting of 5 items. These findings revealed that parents of special needs children have a high perception of problem-solving, respect-acceptance, sensitivity, open to sharing and unobstructed listening with their typically developing children.

Table 9: Correlation Values of the Parent-Child Communication Scale Sub-dimensions

		Problem-Solving	Open to Sharing	Respect-Acceptance	Sensitivity	Unobstructed Listening
Problem-Solving	r	1	,368**	,582**	,547**	,012
	p		,000	,000	,000	,843

*N=295

Table 9 revealed that there was a significant and positive correlation between the subscales of problem-solving and respect-acceptance ($p < 0,001$). Therefore, as the perception of problem-solving increased, the perception of communication skills related to being open to sharing, respect-sensitivity increased, but there was no correlation between the perception of problem-solving and unobstructed listening. As a result of the regression analysis, VIF values and Tolerance values for respect and sensitivity, which are among the communication skills, were examined. Since the VIF values were lower than 3 and the Tolerance statistics were over 0.5, it was observed that there was no perfect linear correlation between the variables.

Table 10: The Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for the Prediction of Communication Skills Subscales on Problem-Solving Level

	B	SD	Beta	T	p
(Invariant)	2,814	,659		4,270	,000
Open to Sharing	,068	,047	,077	1,445	,150
Respect-Acceptance	,309	,056	,366	5,514	,000
Sensitivity	,218	,052	,267	4,219	,000
Unobstructed Listening	-,014	,034	-,019	-,419	,676

R =,622 p=,000

R²=,387 F =45,766

Durbin-Watson (D-W) test was used to determine whether there is autocorrelation in the model. D-W value was found to be 1.786, and it had a value close to 2 that there was no autocorrelation detected in the sample. As the respect-acceptance and sensitivity increase, the perception of problem solving skills increase. Therefore, there is significant correlation between them ($R = .622$ $R^2 = .387$, $p < 0,001$). Communication skills related to being open to sharing, respect-acceptance and sensitivity explain about 38% of the total variance of problem solving perceptions. When the predictor variable with standardized regression coefficient is evaluated, it is observed that the respect-acceptance and sensitivity variables are predictive on problem-solving levels of parents, but the unobstructed listening and being open to sharing are not predictive on them.

4. Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the communication attitudes of parents with special needs children with their typically developing children. For the main purpose of the research, the communication attitudes of parents with special needs children with their typically developing children were examined in terms of various variables. Besides, the relationship between parents' attitudes to communication with their normally developing children and their perceptions of problem-solving skills, respect-acceptance, unobstructed listening, open to sharing and sensitivity.

As a result of the research, it has been observed that there is a significant difference between the genders of parents with special needs children and their sensitivity levels

with their typically developing children. Communication levels of mothers of special needs children in terms of sensitivity with typically developing children were found higher than fathers. However, there was no difference between the mothers and fathers in terms of problem solving, being open to sharing, respect-acceptance and unobstructed listening. Yiğit (2019) found that there was a significant difference between the genders of parents in reacting emotionally and showing the necessary attention. Researches on families of special needs children revealed that the mother was more affected than the father due to various demands and needs of the child (Rodriguez & Murphy, 1997). It is emphasized that the parents who blame themselves for the fact that the child is a person with special needs are more successful in solving the material and spiritual problems they face while fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in the family and especially these parents successfully fulfill their family functions (Özşenol et. al., 2010). Therefore, it can be concluded that mothers of special needs children are more sensitive in their communication with their normally developing children than fathers.

This study revealed that there was a significant difference between ages of parents with special needs children and the levels of being open to sharing, respect-acceptance and sensitivity with their typically developing children. It was found that the problem-solving, respect-acceptance and sensitivity levels of the parents in the age groups of 32-39, 40-47 and 48-55 were higher than the parents in the age group of 55 and over. However, it was observed that there was a significant difference between the problem-solving levels of parents in the age groups of 25-32 and 48-55. It was revealed that the problem-solving levels of parents in the age group of 48-55 were higher than other age groups. The problem-solving dimension shows the ability of the family members to solve the material and spiritual problems at a level that they can perform their effective functions (Bulut, 1993). It can be inferred that the parents in the age group of 48-55 have higher perception of skill in solving family problems than the parents in the age group of 25-32. Our results share a number of similarities with Yiğit's (2019) findings that as the age increases, the problem solving skills of the family increase.

In this study, it was observed that there was no significant difference between educational status of parents and their problem-solving skills, being open to sharing, respect-acceptance and sensitivity levels, but there was a significant difference between educational status of parents and their unobstructed listening levels. Unobstructed listening levels of university graduate parents were found higher than primary school graduate parents. Yiğit (2019) emphasizes that the perception of problem solving increases as the education level increases in individuals.

It was among the research results that there were no significant differences between disability status of special needs children and communication levels of parents with their typically developing children in terms of problem-solving, being open to sharing, respect-acceptance and sensitivity dimensions. However, there was a significant difference between the parents of children with autism and parents of children with mentally disabled or hearing impaired in terms of unobstructed listening. It was found that unobstructed listening levels of parents who had autistic children to their typically

developing children were higher than parents who had mentally disabled or hearing impaired children. It was stated that the level of stress experienced by parents with special needs children due to various difficulties differs in accordance with their disability type and behavioral problems (Lecavalier, Leone & Wiltz 2006; Köktürk, 2008).

As a result of the research, it was observed that there was no significant difference between the family type of special needs children and the communication levels of the parents with their typically developing children. Yiğit (2019) concluded that family type had an effect on perceptions of problem solving skills whereas it was not related to the emotional response, showing the required attention and general functions which were among the family functions. There are also research findings stating that the increase in the number of siblings in the family with special needs individuals does not affect the compatibility, interaction and communication among siblings (Mate, 1990; Ferrari, 1984). In this study, we concluded that there was no significant difference between the monthly income levels of parents and dimensions of problem-solving, open to share, respect-acceptance and sensitivity, but there was a significant difference between the monthly income levels of parents and the unobstructed listening. It was also revealed that parents with a monthly income level of 3600TL or more have higher levels of unobstructed listening to their typically developing children than parents with a monthly income level of 2400-3600TL. Yiğit (2019) found that there was no significant difference between monthly income levels of parents and their problem-solving skills. Boyraz and Sayger (2010) concluded that as the monthly income levels and economic welfare levels of parents with special needs children increased, their communication within the family, their listening skills and thus their family compliance levels increased positively. Our study findings are consistent with previous research results.

As a result of the study, it was found that parents of special needs children had high perception of problem-solving skills, open to sharing, respect-acceptance, sensitivity and unobstructed listening in their communication attitudes with their typically developing children. As parents' perception of problem-solving increased, their perceptions about being open to sharing, respect-acceptance and sensitivity skills increased, but there was no relationship between parents' perception of problem-solving and their perceptions on unobstructed listening skills. Yiğit (2019) observed that there was a positive correlation between perception of problem-solving and general functions in communication, roles, emotional response, showing the required attention, behavioral control and family communication. Individuals who evaluated their families in a wholesome condition also found their competence in problem-solving in good condition. On the other hand, individuals who did not find their families in a wholesome condition also perceived their problem-solving skills inadequate. Our results have a number of similarities with Gau et al.'s (2012) findings. As a result of the study, it was observed that parents of special needs children had high scores in the level of sensitivity related to family communication.

A recent review of the literature on this subject found that parents of special needs children could not receive support from their spouses, experience intense stress, and therefore their family communication was negatively affected (Whitman, 2004; Lecavalier, et al., 2006; Estes et al. 2009). In the previous studies, it was emphasized that the problem-solving skills of the parents who did not receive social support from their spouses decreased, and the problem-solving skills of the parents who received social support from their spouses significantly increased (Özbey, 2012; Okanlı, 2003). Besides, the stresses experienced by parents struggling with the difficulties of having a child with special needs, and the reason why this stress is reflected in communication on family members was also investigated (Hornby, 1994; Whitman, 2004). It was emphasized that the difficulties faced by families of special needs children not only affect the communication of family members but also negatively affect the communication between family members. There are research results indicating that family communication is problematic in families of special needs children (Whitman, 2004; Risdal & Singer, 2004; Higgins, Bailey & Pearce, 2005). Besides, Özida (2000) revealed that typically developing children experienced various emotional and behavioral problems as a result of neglecting them due to the presence of special needs children in families.

In previous studies, it was observed that families of special needs children experienced a feeling of inadequacy in coping with different aspects of the demands and needs of their special needs children, and this situation negatively affected domestic communication (Küçüker, 2001). It was emphasized that due to the increasing need for care of special needs children and uncertainties in their current and future lives of them, negative domestic communication could be experienced (Dereli & Okur, 2008), and physical, emotional and mental problems related to disability status of children affected domestic communication of parents (Bayramlar, 2009). One of the previous research findings is that the parents of special needs children spend less time with other members of the family and therefore cannot communicate effectively (Şenel & Akkök, 1996).

It is known that problem-solving skills in family communication develop with family education practices (Hastings & Beck, 2004). The studies to evaluate the interaction between children with various disabilities especially in early childhood and their parents are considered vital in terms of revealing the differences in interaction. In early childhood education programs, issues such as explaining the importance of the interaction of parents with their children and improving the quality of the parents' interactions with their children are among the purposes of early childhood intervention programs (Ceber, 1998). We recommend that parents of special needs children should be included in family education programs related to increasing problem-solving skills in their communication with their children. Future studies should focus on examining the communication of parents with their spouses and the communication of parents with their special needs children.

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