

Resilience Program with University-Community Cooperation for the Prevention of School Dropout: The Case of SOYAC*

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Abstract: Within the scope of school-based community studies coordinated by Maltepe University Homeless and Working Children Application and Research Center (SOYAC), a program aiming at increasing the resilience of students was implemented in a secondary school with high school dropouts. This international program, briefly known as RESCUR, was implemented for one hour two days a week with the cooperation of the interdisciplinary SOYAC team and classroom teachers with a whole school approach. The program aims to protect the right to education of students who are at risk of dropping out of school, to increase their resilience against the disadvantages they experience, to help them gain social and emotional skills, and to strengthen the teachers. In order to understand the experiences of teachers about the application process and their observations and evaluations about their students, the research is designed as a qualitative study through semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the in-depth interviews was carried out using thematic and interpretive phenomenological analysis methods. The themes determined in the research are 'teachers' experiences regarding the RESCUR implementation,' 'the importance of university-community cooperation,' 'the effect of the implementation on the social and emotional development of the students and school culture,' and 'problems encountered in the implementation process.' The results of the research reveal the importance of school-based studies that consider the needs of teachers and students for the elimination of the problems experienced by students at risk of school dropout, the protection of their right to education, and their social inclusion. The implementation is a successful example of the contribution of universities to society in coordinating and cooperating with relevant institutions and organizations in fields such as education, health, and social services for the best interests of the children.

Keywords: School dropout, resilience, university-community cooperation, right to education, SOYAC example

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Introduction

Children reflect their psychological and physical problems caused by their destructive experiences and the challenging life conditions they are exposed to directly to their school lives and unconsciously to their relationships, which negatively affects their attitudes and behaviors, feelings, and academic success (Souers & Hall, 2016). Although the nature of the relationship established with the primary caregiver in early childhood determines the relationships established in later periods, it may also change in the following periods (Ainsworth, 1969). For example, children who have not been able to establish a secure attachment relationship with their first caregiver have the opportunity to develop a secure attachment relationship with their teachers who build safe and consistent relationships with them at school (Kegerreis, 2013). In this context, teachers play an important role as a second attachment figure in children's lives (Geddes, 2006). Teachers who are able to make sense of and encompass the child's emotions take on the role of "inclusive parent" (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al., 1983). When conditions that threaten the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social development of children are determined, family members, peer groups, and school employees may have a role to guide children so that they can overcome their problems (Pianta & Walsh, 1998; Masten, 2011; Ungar, 2012).

Resilience is to have the capability to recover quickly after dangerous, anxious, and tension-creating situations, to develop strategies to cope with problems, to be able to flex, and to be in emotional well-being (Joseph, 2011; Joseph & Linley, 2008; Lemay & Ghazal, 2001; Masten, 2001; Seligman, 2011). Being able to cope with challenging life conditions, feeling safe, being able to relate to others, and showing academic success are indicators of resilience (Masten, 2011). As Durlak (1998) suggests, it is known that children can develop resilience despite health, psychological, social, and environmental risk factors. In particular, the child's temperament against traumatizing risks, his/her tendency to a solution-oriented approach, the secure attachment relationship he/she establishes with a supportive adult increase his/her resilience as protective factors (Cheavens & Ritschel, 2014; Ruiz-Roman et al., 2017).

Symptoms such as school absenteeism, adjustment problems, and anxiety give an idea about the child's destructive experiences (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2015). In order to prevent school dropout and create a safe, inclusive school environment, it is necessary to support the resilience of children, to raise awareness of teachers about the effects of the challenging experiences of children on their learning experiences and academic success, to strengthen the children, and to make them gain the skills they need (Kramer et al., 2013).

Problems that may interfere with the socialization and the academic, social, and emotional development of students in the school environment arise from the incompatibility between the students and the environments surrounding them. One of the most concrete indicators of the child's inability to solve the problems experienced in the education process is school dropout (Bademci et al., 2016). Therefore, to prevent

school leaving, the causes and consequences of dropout should be understood by both school employees and families, and the role and responsibilities should be assumed in this regard. Considering the causes and consequences of multidimensional problems experienced by students who "drop out/were made to drop out" of school, protective and preventive school social studies should be carried out by reducing the impact of risk factors with school-based programs (Dupper, 2013).

Students who are not supported socially and in the school against social and economic problems, such as factors originating from the family, the school, and the environment, lack of a safe and supportive school environment, inability to develop a sense of belonging to school, negative relationships with teachers, teachers' indifference and being uninterested to students' academic status, peer bullying, an oppressive and hierarchical school environment, the influence of friends, parents' inability to adequately support their children's school life, problems with family, health problems, neglect and abuse, disability, being a seasonal worker, discrimination based on ethnicity, class, race, religion, and gender, social exclusion, and poverty drop out of school, or they are forced to drop out (Bademci et al., 2018; Sunar, 2016; Tas et al., 2013; Boyaci & Oz; 2018; Zorbaz & Ozer, 2020).

Under the coordination of Maltepe University Homeless and Working Children Application and Research Center (SOYAC), school-based community studies are carried out to support children, teachers, and families with a whole school approach and interdisciplinary, inter-institutional, and international cooperation. The foundation of SOYAC studies, the principle of which can be defined as "peer-based therapeutic group support through the establishment of attachment relationships" (Bademci, 2020), was laid with a series of research in which Bademci and Karadayi (2013) consulted the opinions of children to evaluate their practices with street children. Attachment theory, which reveals the curative and detrimental effects of relationships on personality development, constitutes the theoretical basis of the SOYAC study model. In another study conducted by Bademci et al. (2015), the effects of the secure bond that street children establish with their peers in the university environment on their psycho-social development were revealed. The "SOYAC Model" is a dynamic model that is constantly developing in interaction with children at risk, university students, the cooperation of families and employees of institutions, and faculty members from different disciplines.

Since 2014, when the school-based community studies began, SOYAC has been utilizing the ecological system approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which focuses on the mutually dynamic relationships and interactions established by the individual with his environment; students, teachers, school employees, and families of students who are at the risk of dropping out of school are supported by interdisciplinary, inter-institutional, and international cooperation.

Educational programs and practices developed by considering the social and emotional needs of students enable their cognitive, social, and emotional development and the establishment of harmonious relationships with their peers and teachers (Woolf, 2012).

Social and emotional skills are associated with self-awareness, emotion regulation, self-expression, understanding the emotions of others, establishing positive relationships with others, having a constructive attitude in relationships, being able to solve problems, developing resilience, and being open to lifelong learning and development (Payton et al., 2008; Elias et al., 2008).

The aim of this research is the teachers' evaluation of the implementation process and results of the program, which will be referred to as RESCUR (Resilience Curriculum) and which aims to support teachers to increase the resilience of secondary school students within the scope of school-based community studies carried out under the coordination of SOYAC between 2019-2020. With the purpose of increasing the resilience of students, this program was developed in 2015 with the support of the European Union (EU). Focusing on social and emotional learning, RESCUR aims to create a safe school environment that students need against the difficulties they experience with the support of teachers and the whole school approach (Cefai et al., 2015b).

RESCUR's fieldwork was first carried out with 199 teachers and 1935 students from the project partners Croatia, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, and Sweden. With the aim of protecting the right to education, respecting cultural differences, and ensuring social justice, the social inclusion of disadvantaged children from poor, different ethnic backgrounds, children with special education needs, refugees, nomads, those who are exposed to social exclusion and discrimination, who have family problems, and who are victims of neglect and abuse was targeted. It is intended that children gain resilience against the disadvantages they experience, have hope for the future, be empowered, and develop cognitively, socially, and emotionally. RESCUR consists of activities that focus on developing the skills of 'effective communication,' 'healthy relationship building and maintaining it,' 'being open to development,' 'gaining autonomy,' 'developing strengths,' and 'turning challenges into opportunities.' A guide has been created for teachers and parents to help children gain these skills. The skills are also reinforced by activities that children are expected to do at home with their families. In this way, the teachers and parents who surround the child interact with each other (Cefai et al., 2015b).

Method

Qualitative research was carried out in order to understand the experiences of the classroom teachers who performed the RESCUR Application with the facilitation of interdisciplinary classroom teams and classroom psychologists, to learn these teachers' opinions, and to evaluate the application process and results.

Research Design

The phenomenological approach constitutes the design of this research. The phenomenological approach enables a group or individuals to describe their behavior, beliefs, and values about a certain event, to discover their perspectives and perceptions, and to understand, interpret, and analyze their experiences (Silverman, 2013; Smith & Osborn, 2004). The approach was used to learn the opinions and experiences of the classroom teachers in the school where the study was carried out and to discover the meaning that they attributed to the relationships in the implementation process.

Participants of the Study

Classroom teachers of 11 classes in a secondary school included in the 'We are at School: Uskudar Project' carried out in the 2019-2020 academic year in Istanbul were the participants of the research. The 10 teachers who were interviewed participated regularly in the RESCUR Application from the beginning of the process. One teacher participated only in the second semester of work. Of the teachers, nine were female, and two were male. The mean age of the teachers was 38. The professional experience of the participating teachers was 12 years on average.

Table 1.

Demographic Information of the Teachers Participating in the Research

Participating Teachers	Age	Gender	Experience (Years)	Number of Academic Semesters Attended to the Application
Participant 1	33	Female	4	2
Participant 2	49	Male	25	2
Participant 3	33	Female	6	2
Participant 4	26	Female	2	1
Participant 5	33	Female	8	2
Participant 6	35	Female	8	2
Participant 7	43	Female	18	2
Participant 8	47	Female	20	2
Participant 9	31	Female	4	2
Participant 10	46	Male	21	2
Participant 11	42	Female	19	2

Data Collection Techniques

In-depth interviews were conducted with semi-structured questions to understand the opinions and experiences of the participating teachers about the process. Based on the observations and experiences of the classroom psychologists who supported the teachers in the RESCUR Application, the semi-structured interview questions were prepared together with the thesis advisor by taking the opinions and feedbacks of these psychologists. Accompanied by open-ended questions, the teachers were enabled to

convey their experiences and opinions, and the interviewees were encouraged to explain how the process and relationships developed and transformed.

The semi-structured in-depth interview questions were based on demographic information as well as teachers' impressions, evaluations, and suggestions on the overall functioning of the RESCUR Application in the entire school. Questions were asked to understand how the activities to increase resilience carried out by teachers under the facilitation of classroom psychologists were evaluated by the teachers. The teachers' opinions were taken about whether RESCUR implementations had an impact on students' communication and relationships with each other and with their teachers, and if so, how the implementation affected them. Questions were posed to teachers to understand how working with classroom teams supported by regular supervisions affected the overall school environment and the classroom environment. In addition, how the RESCUR activities applied in the whole school affected the teachers' relations with each other was also examined.

Before the in-depth interviews, an informed consent form was sent to the participants, they were informed about the process, and their consent was obtained. Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the in-depth interviews were conducted online throughout April 2020. The interview was voice-recorded with the permission of the participants. The in-depth interviews lasted about an hour, and after the audio recordings, they were transcribed in detail.

Procedure

Before starting the RESCUR Application, interviews were conducted with the teachers and the school administration by the SOYAC team, and the problems and needs experienced by teachers in the context of teacher-student relations were identified. A total of six themes, 126 activities, and conscious awareness activities in the RESCUR Application were translated into Turkish within the process by the SOYAC team during the applications. Before the implementation of RESCUR, the application was introduced to the teachers in an orientation meeting, and exemplary activities were carried out. The applications consisted of activities and games that were practiced in groups within the classroom addressing effective communication, advocacy of rights, building friendships, and empathy skills. The teachers managed the RESCUR implementations that consisted of activities and games and ensured the participation of all students. The RESCUR Application was carried out between December 2019 and March 2020.

During the practice, upon the request of the teachers to work with psychologists, the classroom teachers were matched with psychologists attending the Maltepe University Clinical Psychology (Body Psychotherapy Certificate) Master's Program. The clinical psychology graduate students were included in the project as classroom psychologists. During the implementation, the classroom psychologists and students of the Department of Social Work were present in each class. As the needs of the students were noticed due to the interdisciplinary team work carried out within the school, the students of

psychology, nursing, and nutrition departments were also included in the practices with the request and approval of the teachers. University students regularly accompanied the teachers in the role of facilitators during the RESCUR practices, which were held for one hour twice a week, and actively maintained their communication via the communication group established over the telephone when they were not in the classroom. The university students were given regular supervision and training support by faculty members during the applications.

Research Context and the Roles of the Researchers

This research is based on the evaluation of RESCUR applications implemented in the whole school by classroom teachers under the facilitation of an interdisciplinary team within the scope of school-based community studies carried out under the coordination of SOYAC. The researchers were also regularly and actively involved in the practical work carried out at the school as part of an interdisciplinary team. The researchers undertook tasks such as translating the RESCUR practices into Turkish, organizing application themes (games), following up the practices carried out in the classroom, regular supervision support to the interdisciplinary team who were in the role of facilitator, contributing to the research literature, collecting research data, and advising about and evaluating the analysis of the data.

In-depth interviews of the research, which was based on a master's thesis, were conducted online due to the COVID-19 global pandemic period by the researchers who also actively participated in the applied tasks. The in-depth interviews with semi-structured questions were conducted only once with each teacher participating in the practice; however, owing to the school-based community studies carried out within the school, the communication and interaction with the teachers participating in the study were regularly maintained by all researchers.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the in-depth interviews was carried out using thematic and interpretive phenomenological analysis methods. In thematic analysis, as stated by Braun and Clarke (2006), the researcher should gain familiarity by reading the data obtained again and again, code the data, collect the codes under themes, review the compatibility of the themes with the given content, name the themes, and associate the samples selected from the statements with the literature. In accordance with these stages, the thematic analysis was completed. In addition to thematic analysis, interpretive phenomenological analysis was used to explore the narratives and perspectives of the participants. With this method of analysis, the researcher can focus directly on the narratives and discover the meaning that participants ascribe to events (Smith & Osborn, 2004). All 11 teachers who participated in the RESCUR Application were interviewed in depth, and their evaluations of the application process and its results were tried to be discovered and understood.

The audio recordings obtained from the interviews were converted into text with an exact transcription by the thesis student. The common expressions of the participants were identified, and which common meanings were represented was tried to be determined. The expressions converted into text were read repeatedly to gain data familiarity. The process of coding and separating the data into meaningful themes was carried out with the thesis advisor. The themes created were scrutinized, the data were read repeatedly, and the themes were reviewed when necessary. As a result of the data analysis, the defined themes were given their final form. The statements of the participants were quoted directly in the findings. The experiences of the teachers in this process were interpreted in relation to the theoretical framework.

Credibility and Ethics

Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasize that for effective qualitative research, the criteria of credibility, transferability, consistency, and confirmability must be met. Two of the frequently recommended methods in the literature to achieve credibility are long-term interaction and peer or expert evaluation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2014; Creswell, 2003). A long-term interaction between the researcher and the participants providing the data is defined as a long-term interaction (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yildirim & Simsek, 2013). In this regard, all the researchers who interviewed the participating teachers in the research interacted with the teachers throughout the application process and were present in the environment where the application was made. Thus, it was aimed to increase the researchers' understanding of the context they are investigating by controlling their prejudices and to establish a trust-based relationship with the participating teachers to obtain sincere and realistic responses. In addition, the comprehensibility of the determined research questions was tested by taking the opinions of two teachers from the sample group. After the interviews, it was stated to all participants that they could contact the researchers again if they wanted to add any further views to their statements. Another method suggested to ensure the credibility of qualitative research is peer or expert evaluation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this context, the determination and application of the design of the research was carried out with a faculty member who is competent in qualitative research.

Transferability is usually achieved by using the detailed description method in qualitative research. In this method, the arrangements separated according to the themes organized in line with the raw data obtained in the research are conveyed by the researcher without adding any comments (Erlandson et al., 1993). In this study, the detailed description method was used by transferring the statements of the participants directly to the text.

In order to ensure the consistency and confirmability of the research, the same semi-structured questions were asked to each participant, and the questions were clarified by giving examples related to the application process. In addition, all interviews were recorded, and the discourses of the participants were transcribed in detail. The data was

first coded independently by two analysts, and then the researchers who performed the analysis came together regularly and reconciled by reading the data repeatedly. In this process, peer opinions were obtained from three different colleagues who had mastery in the practice. The data collection and analysis process are explained in detail in the method section of the research.

In accordance with the rules of research ethics, the participants were told that they could end the interviews at any time, and they were explained the privacy and confidentiality principles. Ethical sensitivity was also taken into consideration in the preparation of the questions to obtain in-depth information from the participants. The researcher's showing respect towards the participants of the study and creating a safe space for them during the process is an indication that the researcher acts in accordance with ethical principles (Brounéus, 2011). During the data collection and interview process, observing the well-being of participants, anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent are the prominent issues in research ethics (Kara & Pickering, 2017, p. 239). This research was deemed by the university ethics committee to be in accordance with the principles such as "adherence to scientific discipline, respect for life, not doing harm, informing all relevant persons about possible damages and risks, responsibility to humans and society," which are also written in the ethical directives of the university. Giving an informed consent form to those who will participate in the research, sharing the confidentiality principles, and giving the information that they can end the research constitute the ethical framework to be considered in the research process. In this regard, the participants in this study were given an informed consent form to create a safe space, they were told that participation in the research was based on the principle of volunteerism, and their approval has been obtained. In order to protect privacy and confidentiality in the research, attention was paid to ensure that the identities of the participants were not exposed. In the informed consent form, it was also stated that they can end the research at any time and that they may not answer them when they encounter questions that may disturb them. When conducting interviews based on semi-structured questions, the questions that would create a challenging experience for the participants were avoided. Permissions were requested to make audio recordings. In order not to harm the participants, efforts were made to comply with all ethical principles before, during, and after the interviews.

Findings

As a result of the thematic analysis of the in-depth interviews conducted to understand the evaluations, opinions, and experiences of the classroom teachers participating in the RESCUR Application, four main themes were identified: "Teachers' Experiences on the RESCUR Application," "University-Community Cooperation: The Case of SOYAC," "Social and Emotional Skills Acquired Through the RESCUR Application," and "Problems Encountered."

Table 2.

Main Themes and Sub-Themes

1. Teachers' Experiences on the RESCUR Applications	2. University-Community Cooperation: The Case of SOYAC	3. Social and Emotional Skills Acquired Through the RESCUR Applications	4. Problems Encountered
1.1. Difficulty in Doing an Extracurricular Activity in the Classroom	2.1. Classroom Psychologists and Interdisciplinary Classroom Teams	3.1. Development of Teacher-Student Relations	4.1. Parents' Indifference to Their Children's Education
1.2. The Teacher as an Authority Figure	2.2. Peer-Based Support Studies	3.2. Strengthening Communication and Bond Between Teachers	4.2. School Absenteeism and School Dropout
1.3. Feeling Inadequate About "Knowledge of Psychology"	2.3. Participation of Teachers and Students in Activities at University	3.3. Development of Students' Interpersonal Relationships	
1.4. Students' Need for the RESCUR Applications	2.4. Body-Oriented Psycho-Social Support for Teachers	3.3.1. Gaining Self-Confidence and Ability to Advocate in a Safe Classroom Environment	
		3.3.2. Development of Emotion Regulation Skills	

1. Teachers' Experiences on the RESCUR Applications

Teachers' accounts of their experiences with RESCUR were described under the four sub-themes of "difficulty in doing an extracurricular activity in the classroom; the teacher as an authority figure; a feeling of inadequacy about 'knowledge of psychology'; and students' needs for the RESCUR Applications."

1.1. Difficulty in Doing an Extracurricular Activity in the Classroom

In the interviews, it was seen that most of the teachers expressed that they experienced uncertainty when they started to apply RESCUR for the first time, they had difficulty in implementing RESCUR activities, and doing an extracurricular activity with children in the classroom was different for them. It is understood that over time, they got used to the practice and found it more useful for students than the lessons. An example excerpt of the difficulties teachers experienced in carrying out extracurricular activities in the classroom is provided below:

There was an adaptation process for us, too, because it was the first time the event process was held. The first time we had a meeting, I did not understand what was happening. As I got into the process, I got used to it. Over time, I found that it was much more efficient for them and for me to do this activity than to teach the course. (Participant 6)

1.2. The Teacher as an Authority Figure

The participating teachers stated that their relationships with their students differed due to RESCUR's practices that required peer interaction with students. Previously an authority figure in the classroom, the teachers stated that these roles were shaken during the practices and that this challenged them. The teachers, who ascribed to themselves an authoritarian role in maintaining classroom order, said that they wanted to preserve that role; therefore, they requested the SOYAC team to be at the forefront of relations with students during the applications. Sample excerpts about these views of teachers are presented below:

We were constantly dealing with the students from the university [SOYAC team], and they were with us face to face. It was very good, but in a way, it was a statement that lowered our status in the eyes of children. "Are they teachers, too?," we were asked. (Participant 7)

The teacher had a position of authority. The kids saw the teammates as big sisters; they could have been more active. They could have taken a more explanatory role. We could have retained the authority, and they could have been more active in the classroom. (Participant 4)

1.3. Feeling Inadequate About "Knowledge of Psychology"

After the implementations began, teachers often expressed that they were worried, especially when they encountered activities such as conscious awareness they experienced for the first time, that they felt inadequate in "knowledge of psychology," and that they were unfamiliar with the field. With these works, the teachers emphasized that the theoretical knowledge they learned about the field of pedagogy required for professional formation was not sufficient in practice, and they stated the difficulty they experienced with the expression of "We do not know enough psychology!" Thereupon, a while after the RESCUR Applications started, classroom psychologists who would work closely with the teachers for each class were put into operation by the SOYAC team to support both the teachers and the students. Examples of teachers' feelings of inadequacy about "knowledge of psychology" during the practice are given below:

Obviously, we teachers are sometimes inadequate because we are not very competent in these activities and about conscious awareness. (Participant 9)

We were getting pedagogical trainings at the university, but it is obvious if they were any good; we got them in three months or so. (Participant 4)

1.4. Students' Need for the RESCUR Applications

In the classroom, RESCUR gave students the opportunity to interact with their friends and teachers through extracurricular activities. From the statements of the teachers, it is understood that RESCUR, which consists of practices to support the social and emotional learning of the students, was quickly accepted by the students. For example, some of the teachers compared their level of participation in the activities in the body-oriented psychosocial support studies created to support the teachers in the school with the level of students' participation, and they stated that the students were more interested and ready than the teachers according to their observations. Direct sample quotes from teachers' statements are presented below:

The difference between the [teachers'] conscious mindfulness sessions at Friday's meetings and the conscious mindfulness that children implemented are poles apart. What the children did was more effective. The children approached the issue more moderately and accepted it better than us. (Participant 7)

From the date of the first implementation of the RESCUR study in the school and on, the children did not feel alienated from the study, and they participated in the studies very willingly. (Participant 9)

2. University-Community Cooperation: The Case of SOYAC

The teachers, who carried out studies in coordination with the interdisciplinary SOYAC team and volunteers, shared their evaluations about the ongoing project under the coordination of SOYAC as well as the RESCUR Application in in-depth interviews. Having been regularly supported by the SOYAC team, the majority of the teachers mentioned that working with a team had a facilitating and improving impact on them in the interviews. In this section, the four sub-themes that were identified, i.e., classroom psychologists and interdisciplinary classroom teams, peer-based support studies, the participation of teachers and students in the activities at university, and the provision of body-oriented psychosocial support to teachers will be presented.

2.1. Classroom Psychologists and Interdisciplinary Classroom Teams

Upon the request of teachers for psychologist support on a classroom basis, Clinical Psychology graduate students started to work with teachers as classroom psychologists. Supported by the regular supervision of the advisor faculty members, the classroom psychologists and interdisciplinary classroom teams assumed the role of facilitators for teachers during the practice. Regarding this assistance, the teachers stated that the classroom psychologists and interdisciplinary classroom teams accompanying them during the practices played facilitating, reassuring, and supportive roles. It is understood that meeting this demand of the teachers made them feel incorporated by the team. The following sample quotes convey this sense of inclusion:

I was very relieved when the psychologists arrived. They helped us when we did not know what to do because, sometimes, we felt stuck in class and had trouble curbing our anger. The psychologists gave us relief. (Participant 11)

When we requested a psychologist, I honestly did not anticipate and did not expect an immediate response. Yes, we are listened to. An incident was immediately intervened, and I liked this change. (Participant 6)

In order to respond to the needs of students appropriately and with a holistic understanding, interdisciplinary classroom teams consisting of university students studying in different departments, such as psychology, social work, nursing, and nutrition and dietetics also took part to support teachers. As an application that allows direct communication with teachers and students, RESCUR enabled teachers to recognize the needs of students. When it was noticed by the teachers that the student had needs such as health, nutrition, etc. or was exposed to neglect and abuse during the process, it was possible to support the child with a holistic understanding as a team. The teachers remarked about the empowering effect of working in solidarity with a team for themselves:

The fact that social work students are in the classroom is both a difference for the children, and the presence of someone from the outside in the classroom attracts their attention. The positive bonds that the people who come and the psychologists establish with the children have a great impact. They had very good relationships with the children. We were exchanging ideas. I was putting forth my experience, and my friend was putting out his professional experience; we were able to strengthen it together. Maybe thanks to this team, I changed my behavior towards a child. I think interdisciplinary solidarity is very important. It leads to more efficient activities. (Participant 9)

The teachers mentioned that working with an interdisciplinary team that they regularly accepted into their classes, building relationships of trust, and receiving their support positively affected their relationships with their students. For example, a teacher's saying that he started to act more constructively by recognizing his negative behavior towards his students it is a striking example.

They were very calm. Sometimes I can be angry. I cannot be patient, sometimes even to my own child, actually. That I needed to be calmer was something I knew anyway, but it was difficult in practice. I happened to see that calmness with the team. (Participant 10)

The teachers stated that the involvement of classroom teams in practices and peer support to students enabled some students who were absent and did not want to participate in activities to start participating in activities. It is understood that the support of the class teams was a source of motivation for the students. The teachers stated that the children were able to bond more quickly with the university students who were closer to their age group and were able to share more easily because of the strengthened bonds. Two different participating teachers conveyed their observations about the establishment of these ties with the following statements:

We had one or two students who did not attend at first, and our psychologist was not accompanying us then. When our psychologist friend and social worker came and helped, they

started to participate. The kids loved RESCUR and were looking forward to it, too. (Participant 11)

There can be things that children do not want to tell us because we are their teachers. When someone from your team builds direct communication, the child may share his/her distress. Sometimes we do not realize it since we take care of all of the students. (Participant 1)

The teachers stated that the fact that the SOYAC team was present at the school every day of the week contributed to the transformation of the school climate, to students' paying attention to their self-care and the environmental cleanliness, and to the reduction of violence. From the statements of the teachers, it is understood that the support of interdisciplinary classroom teams to the students continued beyond the classroom.

Over time, with the presence of social work and psychology students, the classroom became more colorful. Passing to each other with them about activities on weekdays was nice to complement each other. In the case of slightly more violent students, the fact that the team followed the children during break times may have reduced the violence a little. (Participant 6)

With the arrival of nursing students, there were serious differences in cleaning. The students advise each other to throw the garbage in the trash, they are very careful, they wash their hands in the lavatory, and they brush their teeth. I saw that they take such cleaning measures. (Participant 7)

2.2. Peer-Based Support Studies

Individual support based on the trust relationship needed by the children was provided with "peer-based group support studies through the establishment of a bonding relationship," which formed the basis of the SOYAC Model and which was carried out with supervision. While evaluating the RESCUR Applications, the teachers also mentioned the positive impact of the peer-based support studies provided by SOYAC volunteer psychology undergraduate students on students.

I can speak for my peer-counseled children. For example, I was relieved to know that there was support for them from one more source, that there was support. (Participant 5)

For example, the peer support work that teacher F. [referring to the university faculty member] does on Fridays with the participation of his own university students has a great impact on the change of students' behavior. (Participant 7)

2.3. Participation of Teachers and Students in Activities at University

The teachers stated that the activities they participated in with the whole team by going to the university with their students gave the children the opportunity to see the university environment and emphasized that this was one of the strengths of the project.

We came to the university during the winter break, and the activities we had there were very nice. I have been in that school for seven years, but we have not done anything like that with anyone. Those were things I attended and participated in with excitement. (Participant 5)

The students came to visit the university. Even if it is not a big deal about violence for B in particular, I think it is at least a touch for him. (Participant 6)

2.4. Body-Oriented Psycho-Social Support for Teachers

With the activities implemented in the body-oriented psychosocial support group created for teachers, it was aimed to create a safe environment where teachers could express themselves freely and to share body-oriented psychology knowledge. The teachers emphasized that with the contribution of the experts participating in these studies, they both felt emotionally included and achieved professional gains. It is understood that they carried the skills they gained especially through conscious awareness activities to their classes and transferred the practices to the students:

It is very nice that the experts invited to the school are immediately channeled to us because applying what I learn there to my students immediately is consolidative. I like it, and it adds a difference to the children. In the activities, for example, I did not know what conscious awareness was at first. In the Friday meetings, as Ms. S., and Ms. I. did something, it made sense to me. (Participant 6)

If you ask about our idea sharing, a lady from abroad came, and the shares with her were very nice. We shared dramas, and I really benefited a lot from them. (Participant 7)

3. Social and Emotional Skills Acquired Through the RESCUR Applications

Under the main theme of social emotional skills gained by the RESCUR implementations, the sub-themes of the development of teacher-student relations, the strengthening of the communication and bond between teachers, and the development of interpersonal relations of students were determined. Under the sub-theme of the development of students' interpersonal relationships, the sub-themes of gaining self-confidence and advocacy in a safe classroom environment and the development of emotion regulation skills were identified.

3.1. Development of Teacher-Student Relations

The teachers stated that with the RESCUR Application, they listened to their students more, got to know them better, created a safe classroom environment, had the opportunity to establish a closer relationship with their students and to learn more about their families, and their awareness increased. As a result of the implementation, it is understood that the relationship between the students and teachers was strengthened, and the teachers became more inclusive to students. Excerpts on the development of teacher-student relations are presented below:

Since I entered it in my own classroom, I started to form a different and beautiful bond with them. I saw from a different window, in fact, that the lessons were not enough for this. It created a more intimate relationship with my students as there were activities with specific topics. (Participant 6)

Thanks to RESCUR, I learned their aspects that I did not know. They say something, and I become surprised. I learn something about their family. These were important to us. We can't help but know everything about the children; they don't share everything. During RESCUR, suddenly the child wants to share that thing—he wants to write about it. We meet it there, and that's a beautiful thing. (Participant 8)

As can be understood from the teachers' statements, it is seen that with the RESCUR Applications, a more sincere and open communication was established between teachers and students, and as a result of the strengthened relationships, students' motivation to attend school increased. A teacher illustrated this with the following example:

There was a student in the 8th grades who didn't want to do it—I think it was even C. He, for example, said what he didn't want to do them and asked what they were for. Then I told him something about my own life, that I didn't come here as a teacher all of a sudden, that I went through some levels, because he meant 'I won't study anyway. Nothing will come out of me.' Well, I told him that I didn't get into university right away, that it took a few years. After that, he started to think like, 'Oh, I might do it, and the teacher didn't get into university right away.' It was effective when I shared something about myself while doing the activities. (Participant 3)

3.2. Strengthening Communication and Bond Between Teachers

The teachers stated that thanks to the RESCUR Applications, the communication and bond between teachers within the school became strengthened, and the support and sharing among them increased. It is understood that the RESCUR practices carried out with a holistic school approach created unity among teachers and facilitated the formation of an inclusive relationship. With the application, it was seen that teachers also learned about other students who were not in their own classes. Teachers expressed the strengthening of their communication and bond with their students with the following sample quotes:

The common things we talk about have multiplied. Our shares have increased. During a recess before entering class, by asking, "Friends, that's how I got it. Is it true?," we would discuss the activity among ourselves. Some of our friends had more problems in the class; some of us had less. In that sense, we were supporting each other. (Participant 5)

As we talked about RESCUR, maybe we got into more details and our private subjects. We talked and discussed about the dialogues in the classroom. At least we learned about the relationships in the other classes. (Participant 8)

3.3. Development of Students' Interpersonal Relationships

Most of the teachers stated that with the RESCUR Applications, the students' empathy and ability to respect different opinions improved. It is understood that students' reactive behaviors decreased as a result of a classroom climate that provided trust-based relationships with activities that modeled constructive behaviors:

They gained empathy. For example, they learned to respect different people who are not like themselves, to different personality traits, how to approach their friends, and how to behave

towards them. By talking through activities, they learned lessons about friendship relations. (Participant 1)

It drew groups that were normally outside the classroom into the classroom. In this way, they built more communication because of their not being in the same group and their constant change. And their doing things related to the group had a positive effect on communication in the classroom. (Participant 4)

3.3.1. Gaining Self-Confidence and Ability to Advocate in a Safe Classroom

From the statements of the teachers, it is understood that with the RESCUR activities, which adopt the principle of egalitarian participation, a space was created where all students, including relatively silent and less attending ones, could express themselves more easily. It is seen that a safe classroom environment had an impact on students' gaining self-confidence, starting to defend their rights and the rights of their friends, thus creating the conditions for a safe school climate. The teachers stated that the creation of a safe classroom environment and its manifestation in students' behavior were as follows:

A child of mine who did not like reading and activities began to express himself, started to open up his feelings. This child of mine, who responded in a rebuffing manner, started to express himself properly and participate in activities after the psychologist friend came. One of my students had dyslexia, and when he read directly to me, he could express himself, but he could not speak in class. He could not express his feelings; he started to express himself, too. (Participant 11)

They are able to defend themselves; that is, they have learned this. Even the children who were timid were actually thinking, "I have the right to say no to this; everyone knows this. I will not be guilty when I say this," and they were acting accordingly. (Participant 3)

3.3.2. Development of Emotion Regulation Skills

The teachers emphasized that they learned how to regulate the reactive emotions and behaviors of the students who were psychosocially supported by the RESCUR practices, and the safe environment created made it easier for them to calm down. A teacher cited the following example in her statement:

Y. learned to listen a little, to stop. Our flaring children took on the roles of brakes. "No, look—let's do this first. Let's listen to him," they gave feedback to their friends. "You're angry, so I don't want to talk to you right now. Let's talk later," I saw and heard things like these. (Participant 5)

4. Problems Encountered

During the in-depth interviews, the teachers raised the points where they had difficulties during the RESCUR implementations. They found the practices too layered and

comprehensive and noted that including families along with students was demotivating for them. It is understood that the teachers were generally faced with difficulties and fatigue in ensuring that the families participated in the activities (in-class activities, conscious awareness work, worksheet for the home, etc.) in order to reinforce the achievements of the students. In the analysis of the interviews, the sub-themes of the parents' indifference to the education of the child and the effect of school absenteeism and school dropout were identified.

4.1. Parents' Indifference to Their Children's Education

The teachers stated that the family activities that were intended to be carried out by the students with their families after the RESCUR Application (which the teachers referred to as homework in their statements) were not done. The indifferent attitude of the parents also applied to other studies in the school, which were aimed at involving the family in the educational process of their child. The teachers criticized parents' lack of interest in spending quality time with their children. According to the teachers, the students were also aware of their parents' apathy. As stated by the teachers, it was seen that the family activities expected to be done within the scope of RESCUR were never taken to their families by the students. It is learned that teachers needed more cooperation with families for the educational, social, and emotional development of the students. The teachers conveyed these needs with the following sample statements:

We could not get the assignments back at all. There was this thing with us—we were giving it, but we thought that it would not be handed in again. The children were also saying that their parents would never do it while they were taking them. Many were forgetting, and many were making paper planes of them at the break time. I can say these things. (Participant 5)

The follow-up of family work should have been organized. We could not get much of their feedback. Our parents were not very conscious about spending time with their children. They saw it as a duty and an obligation. (Participant 9)

We couldn't get the returns of homework, and that was because of our children. Either one or two students were bringing their homework. (Participant 11)

4.2. The Effect of School Absenteeism and School Dropout

The fact that the most basic needs of the students cannot be met due to poverty, problems such as children being employed on the streets, child marriages, being exposed to social exclusion due to cultural differences, and the indifference of families to their children's education cause absenteeism and school dropouts/ being made to drop out. In the face of these chronic problems, the teachers associated the inability to solve the problems of children who did not attend school and who could not participate in the RESCUR practices with the cultural characteristics of the neighborhood. It was stated that the problems of students' absenteeism to school made the sustainability of the studies difficult. The sample statements of teachers on the effect of school absenteeism and school dropout on the studies are given below:

What was the problem arising from us? The fact that our students could not adapt, that we already had a certain infrastructure consisting of Roma students, the reality that we could build on top of these was limited to a certain extent. We have students who get married at that age. There are those who get married; they say we are engaged. They don't attend school. (Participant 7)

You have seen our school environment. As you know, measures have started to be taken at certain standards, but we have not been able to go far above those standards. (Participant 7)

Discussion

Teachers' Experiences on the RESCUR Applications

As an evidence-based practice that aims to provide students with the ability to cope with risky and challenging conditions and to ensure that the school environment is positive for all individuals (Cefai et al., 2015a; Cefai et al., 2015b), the RESCUR Applications were conducted by classroom teachers. In the in-depth interviews with the teachers, the themes common to teachers' statements about their experiences with the RESCUR Application are that teachers initially had difficulty in doing an extracurricular activity in the classroom, the games and activities that required peer-to-peer interaction in the classroom transformed teacher-student relationships and made the teachers worry that their authority over the classroom would be shaken, and the teachers felt that they did not have sufficient psychology knowledge to support students in some activities. By the end of the implementation, the teachers began to see the activities that support students' social and emotional learning as a need for the classroom environment and the school environment in general. The findings that teachers do not have sufficient psychological knowledge to make sense of the feelings and behaviors of both their students and their own and that they need to be supported in this regard have been pointed out in other studies (Hasates et al., 2021). Especially in recent years, studies on disadvantaged and at-risk students show that there is a need to add information about trauma to the pedagogical formations of teachers and that sensitizing school social work to trauma gives effective results (Crosby, 2015; Dubus, 2020; McConnico et al., 2016). In the face of the emotional and behavioral reactions of children who are faced with challenging living conditions and risks in the classroom, if teachers do not have sufficient information about the traumatic experiences and conditions faced by disadvantaged children, they cannot understand the reasons for these behaviors and have difficulty in establishing relationships with students. Teachers who responded to students' behavior with anger and resentment stated that they did not have enough psychological knowledge and skills to support them.

University-Community Cooperation: The Case of SOYAC

The emphasis on the supportive impact of SOYAC studies, which constitute a model for school-based community work derived from university-community cooperation, was one of the prominent themes in the interviews. During the RESCUR implementations, the

interdisciplinary SOYAC team consisting of classroom psychologists, students of social work, psychology, and nursing departments and faculty members of related departments supported the teachers and students with their facilitator roles. In the interviews, the teachers drew attention to the empowering role of the interdisciplinary SOYAC team. They stated that with the activities implemented under the facilitation of the SOYAC team, they were able to understand and observe the feelings and behaviors of the students more easily and develop more positive relationships. It was observed that students at risk took the university students who were from different disciplines and who were supported by regular supervision and training as role models. Establishing trust-based relationships with well-defined boundaries with the university students enabled the students to exhibit consistent behaviors and develop friendship relationships. As Ainsworth (1969) argues, a secure attachment can develop when there is an adult with an inclusive attitude. The child can have a secure relationship only with an adult who builds a sincere and consistent relationship (Van der Kolk, 2018). As in previous studies in which the SOYAC model, which combines university and community-based studies, have been applied, the fact that students have established relationships with university students through secure attachment has also been effective in increasing their commitment to school and gaining self-confidence (Bademci et al., 2018).

Social and Emotional Skills Acquired Through the RESCUR Applications

As important places in the socialization process, schools should provide the appropriate environment for academic development as well as the acquisition of social and emotional skills and competencies on the basis of the relationship that students and teachers establish with each other (Durlak, et al., 2011). The main objective of the RESCUR implementation, which aims to support and empower children at risk and to help them gain the capacity to cope and solve the problems they face, is to increase students' resilience by improving their social and emotional learning skills, highlighting positive social behaviors, supporting their cognitive, emotional, and social well-being, and by improving their academic motivation (Cefai et al., 2015a). The teachers who participated in the research drew attention to the social and emotional skills gained by the RESCUR Application. As stated by the teachers, the activities implemented in the resilience program in the presence of the SOYAC team have improved the students' relations with each other. It has been observed that regardless of their academic success, students actively participated in activities, expressed themselves freely, and had self-confidence in putting forward different ideas. These activities also allowed teachers to get to know the students better, to recognize the interests and skills of the students, and to establish more sincere relationships. The teachers' expressing their own emotions more easily in the classroom also affected their making sense of students' emotions and behaviors. These results are in line with the positive results (e.g., improved close relationships between students and more collaborative, more social classroom environments) achieved in the practices of RESCUR in six European countries (Cefai et al., 2018). The teacher-student relationship is effective in the development of students' social and emotional skills (Turnuklu, 2004). With the work of the therapeutic counseling

and body-oriented psychosocial support group within the scope of the resilience practice and SOYAC studies, teachers think that they get to know their students better and that they gained skills such as emotion regulation and empathy when they are in more supportive relationships with students. One of the aims of resilience practices is to create a supportive and trusting environment created in the whole school and to ensure the healing and development of relations between teachers and students (Cefai et al., 2015a). When schools are organized to provide a social and emotional learning environment, students' relationships with each other and their teachers can change in a positive way, conflicts in school can be resolved, and the school can become a safer environment (Zins, et al., 2007). After the resilience practices applied in the whole school, it is seen that the teachers conveyed their observations to each other in the teachers' room, shared their feelings and thoughts, and supported each other in the activities they have difficulty in, and these contributed to the development of relations between them. As Fineman (2010) points out, employees carry emotions such as excitement, anxiety, and sadness to the institution where they work; the convergence of employees' emotions creates an emotional culture specific to the organization. Therefore, it can be said that the corporate culture is affected in general by the RESCUR Application that aimed to increase resilience. According to the evaluations of the teachers, with the resilience program implemented under the facilitation of the interdisciplinary team, the students developed social and emotional skills and started to establish more positive relationships with their friends and teachers. The works also mediated the development of teachers' relations with each other.

Problems Encountered

In the school where the resilience program is carried out, the majority of the students are poor and of Roma origin, and the absenteeism rates are rather high. As the teachers stated in the in-depth interviews, absenteeism, poor relations with the students, the indifference of the parents to the education of their children, school dropout, and peer bullying are the main problems encountered in the school. In in-depth interviews with the teachers, it was determined that violence and peer bullying were intense in the school environment. As research has shown, the prevalence of such behaviors among students may be related to the school climate, the difficult and traumatic life conditions to which students are exposed, and their lack of adequate emotion regulation skills (Sofuoglu & Pur, 2019). As the studies point out, the necessity of sustainable practices in which teachers and students will be supported psycho-socially is obvious. Ensuring school attendance, positive peer relationships, the development of safe and consistent teacher-student relationships, and especially the prevention of school dropout can be achieved by supporting both teachers and students inside and outside the school. (Bademci et al., 2018; Cefai et al., 2015a).

Limitations of the Study

In this research, which aims to evaluate the RESCUR Application process and its results, the in-depth interviews only with the teachers are among the limitations of the research. It is considered that interviewing the students participating in the RESCUR implementations can support the study; however, during the research process, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the students could not be interviewed since the schools were closed. In similar studies, conducting multiple in-depth interviews with participants is recommended; nevertheless, in-depth interviews in this research were conducted online only once. In addition, the fact that triangulation was not used when collecting data is among the limitations of the research. Besides individual in-depth interviews, the addition of focus group interviews with teachers in the school and the observations of the RESCUR team participating in the practices can strengthen and improve the scope of the study.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Ensuring the school attendance of students living in socio-economically difficult conditions and who are victims of neglect and abuse is an important protective factor. A safe school climate needs to be created to ensure student attendance. This article is about the teachers' evaluation of the RESCUR flexible resilience program implemented in a secondary school with a high dropout rate in the 2019-2020 academic year. Teacher evaluations were analyzed by dividing them into themes with the phenomenological approach, and the findings were compared with the current literature.

With the school-based community studies carried out by SOYAC through university-community cooperation, it has been observed that social emotional learning conditions have been created in the whole school, and a safer, social inclusion-based environment has started to form within the school. In addition, recognizing the needs of teachers and supporting them socially and emotionally has contributed to the transformation of the school climate. It is seen that the development of peer relationships, the inclusion of university students who can be role models in the process, and the interdisciplinary teamwork, which are also the distinguishing features of SOYAC's previous practices, are very compatible with the RESCUR flexible resilience program previously tried in six countries, and these two ways of working support each other.

In the applied research conducted by SOYAC without financial support, it was seen that acting in coordination not only with the school but also with other relevant institutions and NGOs where the children and their families can be supported for the best interests of the children provides a more holistic and sustainable work. The study also reveals the power of university-community cooperation and constitutes a successful example of the responsibility of universities to contribute to society. It is recommended that similar

studies that will take into account the best interests of the children should be carried out in coordination and cooperation with relevant institutions and organizations in areas such as education, health, and social services. Creating a safe space where all stakeholders, especially children, can express themselves and integrating the human resources and knowledge of universities into community-based studies will increase the effectiveness of the studies

Research on the evaluation of practices carried out with the active participation of teachers and with the whole school approach is important in terms of guiding subsequent applications. It is extremely important for researchers to determine their research methods in a way that is attentive to the sensitivities of the field and ensures the active participation of the participants of the research. It is also necessary for the researchers to conduct their research "with" the participants and not "on them" in terms of the reliability of the information produced.

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