EVALUATION ON PROGRESS ABOUT RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Menil CELEBİ[a], Meryem BASTAS[b], Nesrin Menemenci BAHCELERLI[c]

Abstract

In this study, it is aimed to evaluate the process in ensuring the right to education for disabled children. In workshop, it was examined what kind of changes and developments are experienced as a day. Case analysis and content analysis, which are among the methods of qualitative research, were applied in the study. The workshop report was examined within the scope of the content analysis of the research, and the opinions of the participants were presented with semi-structured interview questions within the scope of the case analysis. While determining the study group, purposeful working group approach, one of the non-random working group styles, was used. As a result of the research, the progress was analyzed by comparing the workshop report and research results. In the study, it was concluded that the findings obtained with the workshop report were similar. The requirements and what need to be done in line with the education rights of disabled children are similar. This is an indication that no progress has been made in this process.

Keywords: Children with disabilities, disabilities, rights, case study

Introduction

As in other areas of public administration, implementation within the scope of educational administration is carried out according to certain laws. In this case, all work and transactions related to education management should be based on legal texts that comply with education regulations and contain detailed regulations.

The right to education is one of the fundamental rights granted to all citizens by the Constitution. In terms of the quality of educational activities or for the individual, his country and the world, it is extremely important to have a good education and qualified modern person. The Constitution and legal texts contain regulations that concern every citizen and every person. All rights including education are guaranteed and these regulations are included in these regulations, especially for individuals who have received special education in social conditions and within the scope of equal opportunity (Deveci, 2019).

The aim of special education is to eliminate the individuals with disabilities by reducing their independence from others in daily life. Therefore,

it aims to improve adaptability and improve social skills in the current society. The goal of preparing an independent life for all is the same as for everyone (Parlak, Dündar and Coşkun, 2014). The main purpose of special education is to provide students with special needs skills so that they can live as independently as possible in society (Ergül, Baydık and Demir, 2013).

Therefore, the aim of the education of children with special needs is to help them increase their knowledge and skills by providing special education and to make the lives and living environments of children more comfortably (Kınık, 2018; Yanık, 2018).

Special Education

It is a form of education that enables individuals with special education needs to meet all their needs in their social and educational lives, and specially trained teachers and education programs provide individuals with all their needs (Çuhadar, 2014).

Accordingly, most scientists have defined education in different ways. In the most general sense, education is defined as the process of changing behavior according to specific goals (Şahin, 2011). This is the birthright of everyone and is provided by constitutional arrangements. Therefore, for education to cover all individuals,

[a] Near East University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Social Services, KKTC, menil.celebi@neu.edu.tr
[b] Dr. Kyrenia University, Faculty of Education, KKTC,
[c] Assoc. Prof. Dr. Near East University, Tourism Department, Faculty of Tourism, KKTC,

each state divides the education system into several steps to improve the types of citizens they want through the relevant institutions and devise separate plans for each step (Kanat, 2015).

The most important goal of the education system is to adopt a rights-based approach to provide services to all children that solve problems that may arise in their development and to provide education in the necessary fields. The purpose of the special education in the system is to provide equal education opportunities to those who cannot benefit from the normal education process for some reason. In order to achieve this goal, it is believed that private education institutions should support the multi-directional development of their education curriculum (Nalbant and Izgar, 2018).

The Right to Education of Children with Disabilities

According to the data of the World Health Organization and the World Bank, it is estimated that there are 1 billion individuals with special needs in the world today and 93 to 150 million of these individuals are children (RTE [The Right to Education Initiative], 2017). According to the report of Plan International, an independent humanitarian aid organization that works on children's rights and equality for girls at a global level and published in 2013, children with special needs are 10 times less likely to go to school than other children and those who attend school can benefit from the same educational environments as their peers. It turned out that they could not find the opportunity (Plan International, 2013). Considering the data of the Global Partnership for Education Platform, which aims to strengthen the education systems in developing countries and increase the number of children attending school, it is estimated that 90% of children with special needs do not attend school in low and middle-low income countries (GPE, 2017).

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the progress regarding the rights of children with disabilities. In this direction, the workshop report on the rights of disabled individuals was examined and the opinions of the research participants, selected with a purposeful sample, on the education rights of children with disabilities were taken. The subject, which was discussed in the workshop in 2017, is now examined what changes and developments have been experienced as a day. As a result of the research, the progress was analyzed by comparing the workshop report and research results.

Methodology

Qualitative scanning design was used in this study. In qualitative research, the researcher is the person who makes the research meaningful and attempts to make sense of a part of social life (Rossman ve Rallis, 2012). Case analysis method was used in the study. Case analysis, like other research methods, aims to collect and analyze experimental evidence (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016).

In this study, semi-structured interview, content analysis and document analysis, which are qualitative data collection methods, were used. The main feature of the interview technique is to reveal the interviewer's point of view. The main feature of the interview technique is to reveal the interviewer's point of view. Content analysis methods have become one of the most frequently used methods in media research (Krippendorff, 2004). Content analysis is a research technique used to draw reproducible and effective results in the context of text (or any other meaningful item) use (Neuman, 2014). In the research, the workshop report organized in 2017 within the scope of content analysis was analyzed.

While determining the study group, purposeful working group approach, one of the non-random working group styles, was used. The non-random working group is carried out for a specific purpose. The purposeful working group allows for in-depth examination and analysis of situations where rich data are required (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011).

The researcher selected the experts forming the research group with the purpose of random working group in order to determine the participants to serve its purpose. 2 special education school principals, 1 expert and the president of the association, 2 presidents of the association were taken as the working group for the purpose of the study in Northern Cyprus.

After the determined situation becomes clear, the arrangement is made and it is divided into codes and categories and concretized (Yaman, 2010). Content analysis method was used in order to reach the concepts, relationships and facts for the explanation of the data.

Findings

Findings Regarding Document Analysis

The document analysis findings of the research were obtained as a result of the examination of the report produced as a result of the "Workshop about Rights for Disability" workshop held in 2017. As part of the workshop, participants were asked how to improve the right to education of disabled children in society. In this respect, the answers

given by the participants can be summarized as follows;

- Inclusion in state laws and developing policies in this direction
- Development of infrastructure
- Raising awareness of the society
- Increasing the quality of education

Another point emphasized within the scope of the workshop is how to provide support to the families of children with disabilities in the society. The prominent views and statements in this direction are as follows;

- Providing financial and psychological support
- Organizing trainings for families
- Providing cooperation and support services

Another issue discussed for disabled children is that there is no institution where disabled and orphans can shelter and what can be done for this. In this regard, the participants mostly advocate the view that the state should take steps and take action on this issue. In addition, many participating foundations, volunteers, sensitive institutions, organizations and individuals put forward the view that this problem can be solved in a short time.

Suggestions were developed as a result of the opinions and discussions obtained during the workshop. The suggestions put forward in the workshop report are grouped under 9 headings. The themes and suggestions put forward are as follows;

Starting early seminars informing the disabled people that they have equal rights and living conditions within the scope of the theme "Children learn from what they live", educating families, raising awareness with technology support. Developing program software to support the education of mentally disabled individuals

within the scope of the theme of problems related to the "Hearing impaired", spreading sign language education. Media play a role in raising awareness and supporting social projects in the theme of "media without barriers". Developing research and projects in creating learning conditions for gifted individuals along with barrier-free campuses and living spaces under the theme of "successful unimpeded informatics applications". Providing counseling services to families with distance education practices on the theme of "barrier-free society" and increasing the cooperation of associations and non-governmental organizations. Developing environmental projects under the theme of "unimpeded environment and tourism, health", increasing unimpeded tourism activities, realizing physical infrastructure and structuring in a way that facilitates the lives of disabled people in accordance with the statutes and laws.

In the workshop in which the needs to be done in line with these suggestions were put forward, it was stated that the number of disabled should be determined first, studies and trainings for families with disabilities should be carried out, studies should be carried out to change the perspective of people with disabilities, equal education rights should be offered and accessible environment, transportation and infrastructure standards should be implemented.

Findings Related to Qualitative Research Results Provided for Children with Disabilities

Table 1 shows the answers given by the participants to the question of what kind of support is provided in which situations in which services education to the child with disability status.

Table 1. **Participants' views on the support provided**

Theme	Participants' views	
	N	%
Financial support	4	27
Psychological support	5	33
Training and Seminars	4	27
Creating a cooperation and support environment	2	13
Total Views	15	100

The answers given by the participants were grouped under four themes. These are financial support (n5), psychological support (n4), training and seminars (n4), providing a cooperation and support environment (n2). The opinions of the participants are as follows;

"We especially provide psychological support to

students' families and students. We are trying to solve a problem together. We want them to know that they are not alone. In addition, seminars for educators and parents are mostly organized by associations." P3

"Some of our families receive aid from the state. In addition to this, we try to provide support

with our other parents and volunteer citizens in terms of providing tools and equipment." P1

"We form cooperation and support groups between the school and parents. We develop solutions for the creation of the healthiest educational environment for our children by

talking and discussing the problems encountered." P4

Reasons for Application of Families

The responses of the participants to the question asked to define the reasons for the families to apply to them are examined in Table 2.

Table 2. **Participants' views on families' reasons for applying**

Theme	Participants' views	
	N	%
Financial support	5	31
The way to follow	3	19
For cooperation	3	19
For support	5	31
Total Views	16	100

All of the participants regarding their families' application needs expressed the view that they are for financial aid and support. In addition to these, the way to be followed (n3) and the opinions of the participants for cooperation (n3) are among the statements of the participants. The statements of the participants are as follows;

"Families mostly apply to us for financial assistance. Families need support on many issues. In addition, they refer to us about what kind of path they should follow in the education of the child." P2

"Having a disabled child is seen as a financial and moral difficult process, but the difficulties experienced in support and cooperation can be overcome. The reasons for our families to apply to

us are generally to seek support for education and to need a guide in this direction." P5

"They need cooperation. These collaborations are important in order to establish effective communication with other families and the school, to solve the problems urgently, and for the child to receive the education he / she deserves in a healthy way. They need support both financially and psychologically" P4

Responsible for Special Education

Participants were asked where and what duties they had in order for children with disabilities to receive a better education, and the answers given by the participants were given in Table 3.

Table 3. **Participants' views on those responsible for special education**

Theme	Participants' views	
	N	%
State	5	25
School administrators and teachers	5	25
Parents	5	25
Non-governmental organizations	5	25
Total Views	20	100

All of the research participants (n5) answered the question of who is responsible for special education in the form of government, teachers, school administrators, parents and non-governmental organizations. The opinions of the participants regarding which tasks are assigned to whom are as follows;

"You cannot hold only one institution or person responsible for this. Everyone has duties. While the teacher and school administrator are responsible for the development of the child at school, parents should support their children at home. They must cooperate with the school. The state is responsible

for protecting the equal education rights of these children and preparing the environment where they will receive a comfortable education. Non-governmental organizations should also provide support and cooperation." P2

"These children need to be reintegrated into society, and everyone should do their part for this. In my opinion, the integration of disabled children into society is an indicator of the development level of that society. School principals, teachers, parents, ministries and associations should put forward the requirements for the development of education and carry out in cooperation. The

Ministry of Education should prepare curricula and training programs for these students to ensure that they have a profession, first of all school principals, teachers and families should learn how to support children by training, and associations can prevent their exclusion by raising the awareness of the society in this direction." P3

Economic Dimension of Special Education for Families

Research participants were asked to evaluate the economic dimension of education for disabled children in terms of families. The themes that emerged for the responses of the participants are examined in Table 4 below.

Table 4. **Participants' views on the economic dimension of special education for families**

Theme	Participants' views	
	N	%
Costly	5	63
Get support	3	37
Total Views	8	100

For the participants to evaluate the economic dimension of education for children with disabilities in terms of families, all of the participants stated that it is costly. Some of the participants (n3) who participated in the study stated that they received additional support. The responses of the participants in this direction are as follows;

"Special education is economically costly for families. Health services, special education and necessary tools and equipment can force families financially. So much so that many families receive financial support." P1

"It is forcing families economically. Special education needs and health services of the child are costly." P5

Responsible for Curriculum Control and Planning

To the research participants, "Who and by whom is the supervision and planning of the education curriculum in your institution?" the question was asked. The answers of the participants were collected under two themes.

Table 5. **Participants' views on curriculum control and planning**

Theme	Participants' views	
	N	%
Ministry of Education	5	71
School principals	2	29
Total Views	7	100

All of the participants (n5) stated that the control and planning of the curriculum is carried out by the Ministry of Education. 29% of the participants also stated that school administrators are also responsible for curriculum control and planning. The statements of the participants are as follows;

"While inspectors of the ministry of education are responsible for the supervision of the curriculum in special education, the ministry of education is responsible for the planning of education" P5

"Due to the central structure of our education system, the planning of the training in inspections is also carried out by the ministry officials. However, many special education school administrators work with the education staff within the awareness of responsibility and within the scope of the implementation and planning of education programs for the continuity of effective education." P4

Activities Conducted for Participants on Education Rights of Children with Disabilities

Research participants were asked if there are any institutions in the society that they work with regarding the education rights of children with disabilities and how they define them. The expressions of the participants are given in Table 6.

Table 6. **Participants' views on the studies on the education rights of children with disabilities**

Theme	Participants' views	
	N	%
Ministry of Education	4	33
Universities and academic experts	3	25
Other associations	3	25
Official government agencies	2	17
Total Views	12	100

33% of the participants stated that they are working with the ministry of education. Other

responses of the participants were expressed as universities and academic experts (n3), other association managers (n3), official government agencies (n2). The statements of the participants are as follows;

"We work in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and other associations to provide solutions to the problems faced by disabled students in education and to get a better education. In this direction, we receive support from the university and expert academicians." P1

"We organize various training, seminars and workshops in cooperation with other associations that support and work in this field. We organize these events and support many official institutions including the Presidency." P4

"Various projects are developed with the Ministry of Education and official institutions, as well as universities, associations and academicians in the works for the equal education rights of disabled children for special education. However, what is important here is to put these projects and studies into practice and to ensure equal education right for these children." P5

Acquisition, Protection and Sustainability of the Education Rights of Children with Disabilities

In Table 7, the themes that emerged regarding the answers given by the participants to the question of what can be done in order to gain, protect and maintain the education rights of children with disabilities are examined below.

Table 7. **Participants' views on the acquisition, protection and sustainability of educational rights of children with disabilities**

Theme	Participants' views	
	N	%
The right to equal education	4	29
Training of Parents	3	21
Training of school administrators and teachers	3	21
Public awareness raising	4	29
Total Views	14	100

Participants' views on the acquisition, protection and sustainability of the educational rights of children with disabilities are in the direction of equal education right (n4), education of parents (n3), education of school administrators and teachers (n3), raising awareness of the society (n4). The statements of the participants are as follows;

"Education rights of our students with special education needs should be excluded and equal education rights should be provided for this to be sustainable. It is the necessity of sustainability for students to receive education like their peers, to be integrated into the society and to have a profession." P3

"For disabled children to have the right to effective education, first of all, parents, teachers and school administrators should be educated. School and family are important in the education of disabled people. These two institutions should continue the education of the child in cooperation." P1

"The most important requirement for children with disabilities to gain, protect and sustain the right to education is the development of public awareness. Increasing the awareness of the society on this issue and the equal rights and opportunities of persons with disabilities in the society are

important in terms of ensuring the right to life beyond the right to education." P5

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this research, it is aimed to evaluate the progress regarding the rights of children with disabilities. In line with this purpose, within the scope of the document analysis of the research, the final report of the "Workshop about Rights for Disability" workshop held in Northern Cyprus in 2017 was examined, within the scope of qualitative research, 2 special education school principals, 1 expert and the president of the association, 2 association heads, the functioning of the process and the disabled children. The data obtained by presenting their views on education rights were evaluated. Researchers have revealed that there is a great need for projects and studies to increase the rights of children with disabilities and education opportunities and services for their families (Altınay et al., 2018)

In line with the qualitative findings obtained in the research, it was concluded that disabled children and their families need financial and psychological support, families need education, cooperation and support. Similar to the research results, the workshop results support these needs. It is seen that the needs of children with

disabilities and their families, as laid out in the workshop report, are the same.

Another common result of the research findings and workshop report is that all stakeholders (school, teacher, ministry, family, universities, non-governmental organizations, academicians, etc.) should work together to raise awareness of the society and to ensure equal rights for disabled children.

In this regard, suggestions made for the equal education rights of children with disabilities are as presented in the workshop report. The fact that the same results are produced and the suggestions are similar is an indication that no progress has been achieved in the last three years after the workshop. The biggest duty is the state for the proposed realization and the elimination of the problems. However, it can be said that bureaucratic procedures and cumbersome structure in the state slowed down what needs to be done.

Education of disabled children with equal rights and finding job opportunities is an indicator of the development level of the society. It is necessary to ensure that children with disabilities can easily access all opportunities, not only in education but also in all areas of life.

References

[1] Altınay, F., Celebi, M., & Altınay, M. *et al.* (2018). Development of education rights for disabled children in Northern Cyprus and evaluation of grants for their families. *Qual Quant* 52, 1267–1274. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-018-0698-5

[2] Büyüköztürk, Ş., Kılıç Çakmak, E., Akgün, Ö.E., Karadeniz, Ş. & Demirel, F. (2014). *Research Methods* (17. ed.). Ankara: Pegem Publish

[3] Çuhadar, S. (2014). Special Education Process. (Ed. S. Vuran), *Special Education*, (3.ed.). Ankara: Maya Academy Publications.

[4] Deveci, M. (2019). Evaluation of Special Education Vocational School Academic Program According to Teachers' Views (Master's Thesis). Bolu İzzet Baysal University, Institute of Educational Sciences, Bolu.

[5] Ergül, C., Baydık, B., & Demir, Ş. (2013). The views of special education teacher candidates and teachers on the competencies of the undergraduate program of teaching the mentally disabled. *Educational Sciences in Theory and Practice*, 13(1), 499-522.

[6] GPE. (2017). Children with Disabilities. Retrieved from http://www.globalpartnership.org/focus-

[7] Kanat, H. (2015). Opinions and suggestions of social studies teachers who are mainstreaming students about their educational activities, (Unpublished Master's Thesis) Gazi University, Institute of Educational Sciences: Ankara.

[8] Kınık, B. (2018). Investigation of the Effect of Montessori Based Individual Education Program on Problem Solving Skills of Children with Special Education Needs. (Master Thesis). Bolu, Abant İzel Baysal University, Institute of Educational Sciences, Department of Primary Education, Preschool Education, Bolu.

[9] Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (2. ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

[10] Nalbant, S. & Izgar, N. (2018). Perspectives of Special Education and Rehabilitation Center Institutions on Physical Education Teacher Employment. *Journal of National Sport Sciences*, 2(1),68-83

[11] Neuman, W. (2014). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. UK: Pearson, Essex,

[12] Parlak, C., Dündar, Ş & Coşkun, İ. (2014). Investigation of Several Variables Made of Graduate Thesis in Special Education in Turkey (2008-2013). *Journal of Ege Education*, (15) 2, 375-396.

[13] Plan International. (2013). Include us! A study of disability among Plan International's sponsored children. Retrieved from http://www.right-to education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resourceattachments/Plan_Include_Us%21_Report_2013_En.pdf (02.12.2020).

[14] Rossman, G.B. and Rallis, S.F. (2012). *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (3rd Ed.). Los Angeles: Sage,

[15] RTE [The Right to Education Initiative]. (2017). Persons with disabilities. Retrieved from http://www.right-to-education.org/issue-page/marginalisedgroups/persons-disabilities (02.12.2020)

[16] Şahin, A. (2011). Effective teacher behaviors according to teacher perceptions. *Journal of Ahi Evran University Kırşehir Faculty of Education,* 12(1), 239-259.

[17] Yaman, E. (2010). Organizational Culture and Climate Perceptions of Academic Staff Subjected to Psycho Violence. *Journal of Theory and Practice Educational Sciences*, 10(1) (547-578)

[18] Yanık, F. (2018). The Relationship Between

Special Education Teachers' Perceived Effective Leadership Traits and School Engagement Levels with Their Job Motivation. (Master Thesis). Istanbul Kültür University Institute of Social Sciences. Istanbul.

[19] Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2011*). Research methods in social sciences.* Ankara: Seçkin Publishing.