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Şakir Çınkır (ed.)

Empowering Education: Research, Theory and Practice

PETER LANG

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Pelin TAŞKIN & Onur GÜLBAHAR

The Reality behind the Ideal: Children's Rights as Perceived by Principals and Parents

Abstract: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) regulates children's fundamental rights and article 29 specifically frames the right to education focusing on the aim of education. There are some conflicting areas in the practice when operating article 29 of CRC in school context. This paper aims to investigate the opinions of school principals and parents about the implementations of the article 29. The study carried out in public and private schools in Ankara. A qualitative case study research design was employed. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews from 18 school principals and 8 parents. The findings of the study showed that school principals believed that they contribute students' development providing school clubs, gyms, music rooms. But the schools' capacities are limited with the insufficient funding. Also, parents stated that they are not happy with the physical conditions of public schools. Moreover, both parents and school principals stated that they are not satisfied with the content of the books on children's rights and human rights. As a result, it can be said that the article 29 of the CRC is not sufficiently implemented in Turkish Education System.

Key Words: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children rights, aim of education, implementation of article 29

Introduction

The first convention which regulates children's rights in international law is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). As addressed by Fortin (2009, 53) that the "touchstone for children's rights throughout the world" it has been in force for 30 years. Today, CRC has been ratified by 196 countries except for the USA (Doek, 2019) and became the most widely approved human rights treaty (Lundy, 2012). Turkey is one of the countries which became a signatory state of the Geneva Declaration, which remains the first international document to address children's rights, and the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959. Despite their claim to be a universal set of moral or ethical standards, declarations are not legally binding. With the Polish initiative, a comprehensive draft was prepared in 1978, and in 1989, the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 (Mower, 1997).

"The right to education is one of the most widely accepted of all human rights provisions, having been a consistent feature of international human rights

treaties since the establishment of the UN" (Beiter, 2006 cited in Lundy, 2012, p.395). CRC is one of those treaties, which has 54 articles not only grants comprehensive rights to children such as right to education, leisure, health, family life etc., but also ensures protection against harmful media, neglect, and abuse etc. Moreover, the CRC has four general principles: "freedom from discrimination (art 2); the best interests principle (art 3); the right to life, survival and development (art 6) and the right of the child to be heard in decision-making (art 12)." These principles guide implementation of the CRC in all areas (Kilkelly, 2019).

As Akyüz (2019) pointed out each right granted in the CRC is equally important; and they complete each other. The right to education has special importance among the rest of the rights as it plays a crucial role to know and protect the other fundamental rights. In this sense, right to education is a prerequisite of the realization of all rights such as the right to life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, etc. (CRC/GC/2001/1; Akyüz, 2019). The right to education is considered as positive status rights, which provide entitlements to public services (Curie, 1986 cited in Bauries, 2014). While the article 28 focuses primarily on issues of access to education, the article 29 addresses its aims (Lundy, Orr,& Shier, 2016, p.365). There is a close relation between article 29 of CRC and the article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 13(1) of the the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The main difference is that the article 29 of CRC "expands upon the aims of education significantly compared to its predecessors" (Lundy & O'lynn, 2019, p.266). Moreover, "General Comments" are an important source for interpretation of the provisions of CRC, so the States should take these comments into account when they implement the convention.

Turkey ratified and put CRC into effect in 1995 with a reservation of the right to interpret and apply the provisions of articles 17, 29 and 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child according to the letter and spirit of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey and of the Treaty of Lausanne of 24 July 1923[1] (CRC/C/2/Rev.8). This reservation is made to protect the Unitary State of Turkish Republic. Therefore it is not possible to teach in different languages other than Turkish. No other mother-tongue education is possible in public education. In other words, this reservation restricts the language of formal education; however, Turkey upholds children's right "to be raised in an atmosphere of brotherly love and peace" (Ennew, 2011), which is pointed out in article 29 of CRC. Despite the reservation in reference to the letter and spirit of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey and of the Treaty of Lausanne, Turkey can still be claimed to assume all the responsibilities of article 29 except for mother-tongue based education.

Considering the number of States parties of the CRC and the importance of educational rights, it is expected that "it will have engendered positive changes in the experience of children's lives at school in the signatory nations." (Lundy,

1 The similar reservation is available for article 13 of ICESCR.

2012, p.394.) "Article 4 of the CRC requires that States parties shall undertake such legal, administrative and other measures to the maximum extent of their available resources with respect to economic social and cultural rights"(Byrne & Lundy, 2019, 364). However, it is highly called upon by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) that the states must "take the necessary steps to formally incorporate these principles into their education policies and legislation at all levels" (CRC/GC/2001/1: para 17).

Therefore, the Constitution of the Turkish Republic does firmly address the quality and content of education i.e., Turkish education system shall be established on the base of laicism, contemporary and scientific visions (art.42 of Turkish Constitution). In parallel to this definition, the national curriculum is designed according to these constitutional principles (Başaran & Çınkır, 2013). Thus, the quality and content of education addressed by the institution are consistently reflected in the official curriculum. However, these principles and definitions are not necessarily observed in the curriculum and school context. This conflicting situation between official provisions and implementation may cause an infringement of the right to education. The gaps between provisions on paper, and school and classroom implementations and consequences of these gaps may influence the parties in different ways. Thus, it is crucially important to understand the perceptions of school and communities as they are the essential parties in both influencing the implementation and influenced by the consequences. In order to understand conflicting areas and afore-mentioned consequences of these processes deep inquiry into the practice areas such as classroom and school settings is needed. Within this context, this research focuses on inquiring the opinions of school principals and parents about the implementations of the article 29 of the CRC.

The following questions were asked in this study:

1- What are the practices related to article 29 of CRC in the Turkish Education system?
2- What kind of problems emerge during the implementation of article 29 of CRC as perceived by the schools principals and parents?
3- What are the recommendations in order to prevent the problems in the implementation of article 29 of CRC?

Methodology

Research Design

Research design was a qualitative case study conducted in public and private schools in Ankara between 2018 and 2020. Qualitative case studies offer rich and profound data in inquiring meanings and experiences that the participants encounter in real life (Merriam, 1998). The implementations of article 29 of CRC in school and classroom context was taken as a case.

Tab. 1: The Demographic Information about the Participants

School principals	Gender	Female	1
		Male	17
	Educational Degree	Undergraduate	17
		Master	1
	Work of experience	0–5 years	3
		6–10 years	11
		10 years and more	4
	Having training on children's rights	Yes	3
		No	15
Parents	Gender	Female	3
		Male	5
	Educational Degree	High school	2
		Undergraduate	2
		Master	1
		PhD	3
	Occupation	Bus driver	1
		Tradesman	1
		Teacher	1
		Public official	2
		Academician	3

Participants

In qualitative case study research, as the aim is to reach in-depth understandings of the participants (Miles &Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2014), a small sample of principal and parents were selected. The purposeful sampling technique was used. A total of 17 male and one female school principals from nine central districts of Ankara province were interviewed. The demographic information about the participants presented in Tab. 1.

Data Collection

The data were collected through semi-structured interview developed by the researchers. The interviews lasted 20 to 45 minutes. Participants were asked about the practices, problems which emerge during the implementation of article 29 and their suggestions to overcome these problems in order to determine their views on the implementation of article 29 of CRC. Permissions were obtained from the Ethics Committee of Faculty of Educational Sciences of Ankara University and Ankara Provincial Directorate of National Education for the application of the interview form.

Validity and Reliability

The semi-structured interview form was sent to experts for content validity. Through the corrections and suggestions received from the experts, the interview form was finalized. The data gathered by face-to-face interviews was first transcribed then read more than two times by the researchers. In order to ensure the internal reliability, findings obtained from the interviews were cited directly with quotations as a basis for the discussion part. Data analysis based on the conceptual framework and other research results on similar topics enrich internal reliability (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by simple descriptive content analysis technique which is one of the methods frequently used in the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Merriam,1998). The data fell into four categories taking into account the article 29 of CRC which regulates aim of education and focuses on four prominent objectives such as "development of the child," "respect for human rights," "respect for people and cultures, and the natural environment"; and lastly "sense of responsibility and tolerance for children." In presenting the interview findings, a label system was used to display the quotations from the responses of the participants. Quotations from the principals' responses were shown with labels from Y1 to Y18 and of parent with labels from V1 to V8.

Findings

Category 1: Development of Child's potent

Concerning the implementations for the development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential, nine school principals (Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, Y6, Y8, Y9, Y16, Y18) mentioned that via school clubs students are encouraged to take responsibilities and improve their abilities. Additionally, it was stated that within the schools' funding limits, music rooms and sports hall were opened and landscaping of the schoolyard was renewed to improve child's talents and mental and physical abilities. Regarding the facilities of the school, a mother mentioned that her child has a chance to attend weekend courses and basketball team (V1) at school, while another stated that she could not let her child attend such activities which are provided at the weekends as they live far away from the school (V2). Another father (V4) criticized the school

on the grounds of only providing academic courses. A father (V7) indicated the student council provides an opportunity for the students to explain themselves. Moreover, this parent mentioned that the realization of the participation rights of children is ensured via this council. However, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) gave up this implementation and canceled these councils in April, 2019 (Memurlar, 2019).

Related to the problems which emerge during the implementation of article 29, one of the school principals (Y15) mentioned that students from low socio-economic status areas fall behind academically compared to the rest of the students. He added that they do not get along well with other students. Moreover, their parents do not have any expectations from education, and they just send their children without having any hope for their future. According to him, low socio-economic status impedes the child's development. A father (V6) indicated the same problem in terms of the principle of equal opportunity, which is mentioned in the Constitution as a basic principle of the Turkish Education System. He pointed out that some students whose schools located in low socio-economic neighborhoods could not seize the opportunities equally and they could not fully enjoy their right to education. *"Although the conditions in the education system are getting better, it is necessary that this kind of inequalities should be removed"* (V6). Similarly, (V2) it was pointed out the facilities that the school lacks such as a library or areas to play table tennis, volleyball. According to her, students spend their lunch breaks sitting in the parks to waste their time. Additionally, regarding the development of the child, two parents (V3, V4) mentioned that there are not enough extra-curricular activities in the Turkish education system, which should be, as it is necessary for a child's development. They criticized that academic success is considered as the superior aim of the education system.

As for recommendations, one of the school principals (Y11) mentioned the importance of counselor services in the development of a child's ability and pointed out that although schools are very crowded, the number of school counselors is not sufficient. As a result, students cannot get access to the counselor's services, so he recommends enhancing the school counseling services. The other school principals (Y3, Y4, Y13) recommended increasing students' voices in the education processas they think that it is crucial to realize to the right to education and to inculcate to take responsibility and to develop self-confidence. Students should be given the opportunity to explain themselves related to the school implementations. Along with the principals, a father (V4) stated that Turkish education system is based on a hierarchy where the decisions are taken only by the ones who are on the top of this hierarchy, so he recommends this should be changed and the students should be provided with the opportunities to attend the administrational and other educational processes. Two of the parents (V3, V4) recommended that the schools' main concerns should not be academic achievements; therefore, there should be extra-curricular activities to develop students' abilities. Furthermore, a father (V6) indicated that the schools should be reorganized as the areas for the development of children and

physical insufficiencies in schools should be removed. Lastly, a mother (V3) mentioned that teachers should have a second branch or double major undergraduate degrees to let the students gain the achievements mentioned in article 29 of CRC. Thus, she recommends improving the qualifications of teachers; likewise, (V6) also expressed concerns about the qualifications of teachers.

Category 2: Respect for human rights

School principals are asked about the implementations related to human rights and fundamental freedoms. They responded that they treat all their students equally (Y2, Y4, Y9, Y16). They considered equality as a basic component of human rights. One of the school principal's statement is, *"Children's rights do not differ on the basis of language, religion, and race. If we treat them differently due to their parents' identity, it would be discrimination.* (Y16)" which is in compliance with the basic principle of CRC (art.2). One of the principals stated that to ensure equality, *"if we organize a football tournament for boys, we organize a volleyball tournament for girls as well.* (Y4)"

Another principal gave this example regarding a student in need of special education: "We aim to guarantee his rights like other students'. We treat him affectionately in accordance with his disability because we consider that he should access education easily as a part of children's rights. (Y9)." One of the school principals mentioned that in order to raise their students respect to human rights (HR) they explain the importance of human rights during the classes (Y12). Having prayer rooms at schools is mentioned by a parent (V7) as a respectful implementation of freedom of beliefs.

One of the school principals (Y1) claimed that neither teachers nor the principals are adequately familiar with the content of CRC. Another principal (Y4) confirmed that they are not knowledgeable enough about the rights of children and their responsibilities towards children.Additionally, (Y15) stated that if children's, teachers', school principals' and parents' awareness of children's rights could be raised, there would be progress in terms of children's rights. Furthermore, another principal (Y8) claimed that the content of the books is not sufficient to teach human rights. He pointed out that the issues related to human rights are superficially discussed in the books. The principal stated that human rights should be included in the course books, so that the students can learn about their rights.

A father (V4) stated that some teachers might behave unintentionally i.e. yelling at students, and reprimanding and threatening them, as a result of this, students may not consider themselves as valuable and reputable members of society. Several parents (V3, V6, V7) pointed out the crucial role of teachers' qualifications to make progress in terms of children's rights.

To teach respect for human rights, school principals (Y1, Y2, Y3, Y8, Y9, Y16) suggested that the seminars and in-service training about children's rights should be organized. Moreover, some principals (Y4, Y15) and a father (V8)

mentioned that municipalities, teachers' unions, and non-governmental organizations should do something together such as publications in order to get some improvements.

Some principals (Y8, Y19) advised that the books should contain more information about children's rights in order to protect them against child abuse. One of the principals (Y13) indicated that the books are not interesting for children; therefore, books should be visually more appealing to them.

Category 3: Respect for people and cultures and the natural environment

Two of the principals (Y11, Y12) pointed out that although some students at their schools have different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, there is no dispute among them. According to (Y11) "*they make friends easily. Love and respect for each other become a component of their character as they grow up learning the other's differences*" It can be understood that no special policies have been adopted to develop respect for other people and cultures in school settings. Parents, like the principals, have not been able to give any examples of practices to develop respect for people and cultures in the school. However, one principal indicated that with the novelty of curriculum, it is now possible to have elective courses in different languages and dialects, so that students can learn that there are different cultures in the society (Y7). One of the principals (Y8) stated that the new generation is irresponsible, and a father (V8) claimed that the new generation treats teachers disrespectfully. According to them, students should be taught love, compassion, and mercy and respect for their teachers. However, unlike these participants, a father (V4) remarked the authoritarian behaviors of teachers towards the students, which is needed to stop. He also wanted social events such as folk dances, music and theater performances etc. related to different identities and cultures to be organized, which can be a good way for children to learn about other peoples and their cultures.

Related to the development of respect for the natural environment, the school principles (Y5, Y10, Y12) recommended that they organize school trips so that students can get in touch with nature and learn how important to avoid polluting and damaging it. A mother (V1) suggested practices such as organizing school trips, preparing pinboards about the environment, placing special baskets for waste parsing, displaying the environmentally-friendly school award. A father (V6) stated that "*students do not even respect the school area and damage the school property; they destroy the toilet doors in public schools.*" He added that most of the school expenditure is reparation. Also, a mother (V1) recommended that seminars can be given by environmental engineers, schools can collaborate with municipalities on recycling, MoNE and Ministry of Environment and Urbanization might sign protocols for collaboration. Another father (V4) suggested increasing the activities such as nature observation and there should be more chapters in the books related to the environment.

Category 4: Sense of responsibility and tolerance for children

One of the school principals stated that they endeavor to teach them to respect their friends and be more tolerant towards diversity. "*I believe they will remember the stories about being tolerant and responsible, which their teacher told them when they have grown up.* (Y10)" Another school principal (Y14) stated that they organize visits to nursing homes. Thereby, they socialize with the elderly and make them happy so that they learn these kinds of values. One of the school principals (Y18) mentioned that "*the students are given some tasks in which they should work as a group so that they improve their ability to work together and submit their homework on time. They do better when they work together.*"

One of the principals (Y17) mentioned that the students with special needs are looked down on as they fall behind the class or act improperly during the classes. However, the principal indicated that they should be protected and their right to education should be ensured. Lastly, according to him, they deserve respect and special protection. Similarly, a father (V5) mentioned that parents are informed by teachers and school principals about the special needs of one of the students who is reported to have acted improperly. The parent expressed his appreciation for this informative meeting.

In addition to these practices, father (V6) shared his concerns on the Turkish education system by indicating that education systems are being transformed to serve the goals of political power. According to him, the greatest characteristic of the Turkish Education System (TES) is that it is organized in line with political power and its ideological discourses and policies. "This situation prevents the realization of the role that schools should play to develop a sense of responsibility and tolerance in children. Every political power interferes with the education program. However, a child educated for the good of the society also provides social peace. The child must be educated not for the sake of ideology, but for peace." Another mother (V3) shares (V6)'s concerns by stating that "the ruling party is educating new generations by ignoring their own culture but in line with its own ideology." She raised another concern about secularism and indicated that the increasing number of *Imam Hatip Schools* (religious schools) means that the ones who do not graduate from imam hatip schools are not welcome. Moreover, she criticized that a big portion of monetary resources of MoNE is allocated to imam hatip project schools. Similarly, (V2) complained about the transformation of TES into religionization and she stated that she is worried about her daughter's education life.

A father (V6) refers to the importance of peace education and recommends that each educational level should contain a topic on peace. Another parent (V4) suggested that the authoritarian behaviors of teachers should be prevented and the participatory and democratic educational praxis should be adopted.

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

According to the first General Comment of CRC, education is more than learning and teaching, and schools should provide students with the opportunities to develop their personalities and talents and to equip them individually or collectively to live a full and satisfying life. Therefore, the content of the curriculum,

the educational process, the pedagogical methods, and learning environment should be in line with the aim of education (CRC/GC/2001/1: para 2; CRC/GC/2001/1: para. 8; cited in Lundy & O'lynn, 2019). The results of the study show that school principals are contributing to the child's development through school clubs, gyms, music rooms. But the schools' capacities are limited with the insufficient funding. Also, parents are not happy with the physical conditions of public schools. The budget issues are an important hindrance to the realization of the aim of education, which is mentioned as "availability" obligation in Tomasevsky's 4A doctrine. Similarly, according to Verhellen (1999, cited in Louviot, Moody,& Darbellay, 2019), one of the operation levels of children's rights in education is "the right to education," which implies that all individuals shall have guaranteed access to high quality, free and mandatory education. Besides, Tomasevski refers to "funding for public schools" and indicates that resource allocation is generally seen as a political decision (Tomasevski, 2001). Similarly, "The Committee has consistently recommended that States parties develop child budgets as a key aspect of implementation of the CRC" (Byrne & Lundy, 2019, p.364).

At this point, the amount of budget that is allocated to schools by MoNE is important, since "without funding, it is difficult for many states to provide the necessary reform, afford to maintain the reform, and meet compliance standards" (Boumans, 2015). According to the Report of Eğitimsen (2019), in 2019 the ratio of MoNE's budget to central government budget is 11,84% and the biggest spending item is the personnel expenses, which comprises 72% of the budget. Although the principle of equal opportunities is guaranteed as a component of right to education by Turkish Constitution, unequal distribution of financial resources brings about drastic differences in the physical conditions of schools across the country (Dağlı & Han, 2017). However, "education systems must develop the potential of all children on the basis of the principle of equal opportunities, including the child's "talents" in the areas of creativity, the arts, handicrafts, sports and professional abilities; the child's "physical abilities", ranging from simple motor coordination to activities such as swimming, gymnastics and ball games; and the development of "personality" (Dávila & Naya, 2007, p.259). Furthermore, low economic status, lack of equal opportunities, lack of extracurricular activities, and inconvenience of the physical structure of the school, stated by school administrators and parents, can be resolved by increasing the budget allocated to education.

On the development of the child's respect for human rights, it is seen that school principals especially highlighted the equal treatment to students. Even though some of the statements of principals seem to be egalitarian and rational, they seem to reinforce some patriarchal gender roles through sports. In the case of England, for example, football was incorporated into the public school system in the 19th century, making it exclusive for boys only (Kuhn, 2011, cited in Sözmen, 2019). The practice of organizing football tournaments for boys and volleyball tournaments for girls in schools help maintain patriarchal gender roles, which may cause children to grow up far from the spirit of understanding

"equality of sexes" indicated in CRC. School principals should "promote the full and equal participation of girls in extracurricular activities, such as sports, drama and cultural activities...." Considering the statements of principals, it may be claimed that they have the common conviction that everyone should be treated equally and should exercise the right to education without any discrimination. Research conducted by Üste (2007) showed that in the province of Aydın, 58,1 % of 5th-grade students believe that equality is not considered as an important principle in their schools.

The findings of this research showed that the principals and teachers should be a part of active movements for raising awareness on children's rights. Because lack of awareness is directly related to the implementation of CRC in schools (Öztürk, Eren,& Topçu, 2019; Robson, 2016). Moreover, both parents and school principals state that they are not satisfied with the content of the books on children's rights and human rights. The Committee advises that not only human rights are included in educational programs, but also the members of the educational community should practice a form of education based on human rights" (Dávila & Naya, 2007, 359). Moreover, Lundy (2012, 401) makes some recommendations regarding children's rights to education and the first one is "adequate and systematic training on the CRC for staff and students including child-friendly material and initiatives to reach marginalized groups." Depending on the participant's statements, it can be claimed that TES should develop more effective curriculum and more effective learning materials integrated into text books. Secondly, the "inclusion of CRC in curricula and principles of the CRC integrated into the structure and practice of schools" is recommended. Implementation of this principles may require alternative thinking and realistic projects. To develop a curriculum, there should be some objective criteria such as scientific education, secularism, gender equality etc., which are also fundamental principles of the TES according to Turkish Constitution and the Basic Law of Education. This will also relieve parents' some of the concerns on the issues of secularism and ideology.

Only one participant mentioned a practice regarding "the development of respect for people and cultures" category, which is an elective course named "Living Languages and Dialects" which has been in the middle school curriculum since 2017. The living languages and dialects are not allowed to be used as a teaching language in schools other than Turkish. But people can use their mother language in their daily life. In the General Report of the Committee (CRC/C/TUR/CO/2–3), in 2012, Turkey was criticized on the grounds that Turkish reservations on the article 29 of CRC may have a negative impact on the right to enjoy one's own culture and use one's own language. Despite Turkey's efforts to overcome these critiques, it was announced that 85,000 students took elective mother-tongue courses in the first semester of 2014–2015 (Bianet, 2017).

Additionally, it can be deduced from the statements of the principals that they do not act to promote multiculturalism in the school settings because they do not see any problem caused by multiculturalism in their schools. However, in

this regard, there might be some practices that do not require any additional cost and endeavor. For example, "when a child practices any parts of his/her culture, like trueness or collaboration as a good value, the teachers should reward him/her for driving to continue practicing virtues" (Alsubaie, 2015.) In order for these practices to have an impact on the student, "the teacher should be a role-model, in respecting and embracing the multicultural aspects (Kennedy, 2017). As a result, authoritarian teacher behavior, which was criticized by one of the participants, may decrease. Besides, it is highly recommended that when developing teacher education programs, cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversities and other cultures and minority cultures should be taken into consideration (Banks, 2013; Öztürk, 2017). Considering these recommendations, Turkey implemented a new higher education curriculum, which offers an elective course on inclusive education in 2018. This minor change is in compliance with the expectations of the Convention, which is "for the development of a curriculum suitable for the training of citizens and for peaceful coexistence in a free society" (Dávila & Naya, 2007, 359).

Another question that needs to be asked regarding the practices related to the environment is whether they are effective in developing respect for the natural environment. A research conducted by Atasoy and Ertürk (2008), showed that the primary school students' knowledge on and attitudes towards environment were not at a sufficient level. The reasons for this are the students' poor environmental awareness, lack of environmental morality and love of nature, and superficial ecological knowledge. Considering these reasons, extra curricular activities including school trips may facilitate the development of respect to the natural environment, as mentioned by school principals in this research. Mentioning development of respect to the natural environment among the aims of education "reflects a growing recognition of the global and local challenges facing the environment and the consequent importance of children learning respect for nature and natural resources" (Hart, 2013, cited in Lundy & O'Lynn, 2019, 268). Besides, this aim should be considered as combined with other rights, such as right to play in Article 31 (Lundy & O'Lynn, 2019). Additionally, after Greta Thunberg's protests for getting attention for global warming, it should be taken into account that this aim of education is also in correlation with the right to peaceful demonstration and freedom of thoughts. However, in Turkey, students received disciplinary punishments on the ground that they participated in protests or made public speeches in defense of their fundamental rights (Taşkın, 2017). Students should be able to practice and enjoy their civil rights at school (Lundy, 2012). This kind of disciplinary sanctions are not only infringements of article 28 and 29 of CRC, but may also cause authoritarianization.

Referring to the statement of a father regarding the student council, it can be claimed that children's participation in decision-making in schools is now practiced within the context of article 12 of the CRC. The value of student's voices has been indicated by UN Committee Reports and educational research (Lundy, 2012), so Turkey should legislate for the "school councils and children's right

participation in school decision-making in terms of both school administration and classroom education." (Lundy, 2012, 401).

Discrimination is apparent in the case of disabled children. In Turkey, "it is more blatant than in EU countries" (Dávila & Naya, 2007, 360). However, the results showed that school principals have been fighting against the misconception of the public that disability may be an obstacle before the right to education. Integration of children with disabilities in mainstream settings and public awareness campaigns recommended by the Committee (Lundy, 2012). Referring to the statements of the participants Turkey should enhance the educational conditions for the benefit of students with disabilities. For instance, to raise awareness on the importance of education for disabled children can be explained via public broadcast.

The results showed that the school principals mostly believed that they did their best to fulfill their duties to the extent of their financial means. On the other hand, families stated that they were not satisfied with the physical conditions of the schools, the quality of teachers and the content of the education program and books. The difference of opinion between these two groups of participants can be explained by the fact that the article 29 of the CRC is not sufficiently realized in TES. But if the state is seriously concerned about realization of article 29, it should enhance the economic and physical conditions of the schools and should prepare a curriculum with respects to children rights. Lastly, it can be suggested for the future research that the opinions of children related to the implementation of the article 29 of CRC can be inquired. So that, the realization of the right to education can be seen through the eyes of the real right holders.

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Sinem KARS, Gökçen AKYÜREK

Evaluation of Occupational Therapists' Lifelong Learning Tendencies

Abstract:

Purpose: Lifelong learning is an inclusive term sporting whole individual, social and professional, knowledge, skills and competence development activities. Related literature indicates relationships between various factors and life-long learning. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the life-long learning tendencies of occupational therapy students and the relationship between occupational therapy students' lifelong learning tendencies, their career decision self-efficacy and vocational outcome expectations.

Method: The study is a quantitative study designed in the survey model. The universe of the study is comprised of 115 students attending the Hacettepe University Department of Occupational Therapy in 2018–2019 academic year. In the study, Lifelong Learning Tendencies Scale, Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale and Vocational Outcome Expectations Scale were employed as a data collection instrument. Within the study, descriptive statistics were calculated to determine the occupational therapy students' life-long learning tendencies. Spearman correlation coefficients were used to examine the relationship between lifelong learning tendencies, career decision self-efficacy and vocational outcome expectations.

Findings: It can be argued that the occupational therapy students' life-long learning tendencies are low. Moreover, there was a moderate negative correlation between lifelong learning tendencies, career decision self-efficacy and vocational outcome expectation.

Implications for Research and Practice: The results showed that the lifelong learning tendencies of the occupational therapy students were low. The reason for this situation should be examined with a qualitative research in the future. Furthermore, in future research, it can be determined what other predictors of occupational therapists' lifelong learning tendencies are.

Keywords: Continuing education, occupational therapy, students, professional competence, career choice

Introduction

Lifelong learning is defined as any kind of learning activity that individual participates throughout life in order to develop knowledge, skills, interests and competences with a personal, social, social and employment related approach (Ministry of National Education (MoNE), 2009). Lifelong learning is important