Educational Activities for Disabled Adults

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Abstract: The purpose of the research was to find out all educational activities implemented for disabled adults. Structuring upon the approach of phenomenology, the answer of what kind of studies have been made for disabled adults was sought. In order to describe the meaning of a phenomenon (disabled adults' education), qualitative research and phenomenology were handled. Dealing with this phenomenon, all provinces sent Province Status Reports, but eight of them declared no activity for disabled adults' education in their provinces. The study involved a sample universe. The data were written, rearranged, and placed in tables; afterward, codes and categories were formed. Finally, it was converted into numbers as the frequency and percentage of codes and categories. With the usage of qualitative interpretation experts' opinions, literature comparison and legislation accord were conducted to provide content validity. The adequate engagement was ensured, researcher position indicated, peer review conducted, and dependability on the context provided from experiences of the researcher in the fields of special education and adult education benefited. After the research, it was inferred that not only legal infrastructure should be built, but the practice should be needed as well. In conclusion, this study could be the starting point for attracting attention to disabled adults' education. Disabled adults' education needs to be studied, researched, and improved later on.

Keywords: Adult education, disability, lifelong learning

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, politicians care about educational developments, approaches, and changes which produce the generation required. Hereby, adult education, life-wide learning, and lifelong learning are getting more important. With respect to Turkey's Eighth Quinquennial Development Plan (Ministry of Development, 2001), after the 1960s, recurring education and the 1980s lifelong learning appeared as new concepts of education. Actually, the term lifelong learning is not limited to compulsory education. It presents from preschool till post-retirement (European Union, 2011).

Taking into consideration the statistics of Eurostat (2018) and (European Centre for Development of Vocational Training, 2017), the lifelong learning participation rate of adults in Turkey has been increasing, but nevertheless, Eurostat (2018) declared Turkey's last rate was below (6.2%) the average of European Union countries (11.1%). Targeting at the lifelong learning participation of adults, Turkey's Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper has been

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reorganized including priority domains since 2009 (European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training, 2009). Access of disadvantaged groups to lifelong learning is one of the domains that need to be improved (Ministry of National Education, 2014; Yilmaz, 2017). However, regarding this domain, there hasn't been any implemented research in the related literature yet.

Aim of the Study

After basic education, non-formal education has the responsibility of adaptation, socialization, upper education, knowledge repetition and development, vocational training, and leisure time management of the people who need special education. Although it is not easy to assure adaptations for all individual diversity within the context of improving lifelong learning, the study has taken place. The purpose of the research was to find out all educational activities implemented for disabled adults. As a further goal, it was intended to regulate learning environments, seek problems and solutions, gather related institutions for coordination, and develop an operational curriculum. This study played a significant role in providing an opportunity for disabled adults'education for the first time, and it was believed to contribute to the field.

The Problem

As the approach of the research was phenomenology, there was no hypothesis tested. Based on the following problem, the inquiry was implemented: With respect to the institutions dependent upon the General Directorate of Lifelong Learning of Turkey (GDLL), what are the studies that have been made for the adults who need special education?

Assumptions

1. Collected data reflects reality.

2. Changes (the workplace of the researcher, the researcher's perception of science) and beliefs (just due to the responsibility of General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance Services) didn't affect the research.

Limitations

The research is limited to;

1. The problem question

2. Reports and attachments obtained from 81 provinces of Turkey

3. Institutions of GDLL

4. Adults who need special education

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As Creswell (2007) expressed to conduct qualitative research for exploring a problem or issue needs, a qualitative research design was employed in order to find out the studies that have been made for disabled adult education. Besides, Merriam (2009) indicated that rather than determining cause and effect, predicting or describing the meaning of a phenomenon, a qualitative inquiry is preferred. Sonmez and Alacapinar (2016) explained qualitative research as a method of reconstruction of human knowledge. Thus, for the demand for bringing out the meaning and the arrangements of disabled adults'education, qualitative research was used. What's more, based on the explanations of Creswell (2007), and Sonmez and Alacapinar (2016) describing the essence of the experience and examination of perception, phenomenological approach fitted into the research because of the intention of finding out the special education process for adults in terms of meaning, sense, and description.

Sample

In Turkey, there are 81 provinces. Assuming that in all provinces, there are institutions of GDLL, countrywide official reports have been required. Then reports from 81 provinces were delivered to the researcher. In other words, the study involved a sample universe.

Data Collection Instruments

Based on the strategy paper and actions intended about disabled adults, research was required. Within the co-decision of both the authorization and the researcher, subsequently, with the confirmation, one open-ended question was asked to gather deep information. Provinces were demanded to answer the question: What kind of studies do you perform for disabled adults? The question was short, but considering all the institutions inside a city and its districts, lots of data were gained and put into a detailed Province Status Report as a document. In this case, a simple, written, and structured interview form was used. Trying to achieve as much information as possible without restriction and to consider that observing some institutions could inhibit multilateral characteristics of the research or may cause bias, only a written interview was used. In the future, depending on the results of this research, it was anticipated to deal with the problems and solutions about the education of disabled adults as a second step.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher sent the purpose and requirement of the study from GDLL to all of the provinces. The researcher followed delayed reports and to other directorates or departments missent reports, communicated with the authorities, checked the arrival of reports to the right place safely. Within a month, all province reports were reached via mail or electronic document system. In other words, until 23 March 2015, all responses came. However, eight provinces declared that there hadn't been any activity yet. For this reason, while calculating the percentage, 73 provinces were taken into account. After filing, saving, ordering, reorganizing, and eliminating duplications, the author worked on the reports to make them readable and transcribed in Microsoft (MS) Word.

Post-Data Screening and Data Description

After over and over read, all of the data were written in MS Word. The data were arranged with coding, relating, merging, matching, reviewing, recording, separating, deleting, and creating categories. While forming tables in MS Excel, data were rearranged as codes and categories referring to provinces. Then the data were converted into numbers as the frequency (N) and percentage of codes and categories. After calculating and checking all the data a few times, the reports were converted into the last form.

Maintaining Participants' Rights

In the research, the name of the provinces and officers were kept confidential. While analyzing, no comparison was made between provinces and regions. The researcher took care of the data and never identified, declared or shared the data with irrelevant persons. As the researcher put herself in an external position, it was attempted not to make subjective comments according to initially determined experiences and probable prejudgments.

DATA ANALYSIS

A qualitative interpretation was used. For providing content validity, experts' opinions, literature comparison, and legislation accord were referred to, and variables were examined. Using content analysis, codes and categories were formed and listed in terms of percentage and frequency. In three months, working in flexible hours (especially in the last weeks until late nights, all night long) and places (workplace, libraries, home), the researcher completed the analysis. As a consequence of analysis, 62 codes and seven categories appeared.

Creswell (2007) and Merriam (2009) take into consideration the reliability and validity of qualitative research in some cases. On account of their inferences, adequate engagement (adequate participation and time) in data collection (81 provinces) was ensured, external position indicated for the researcher, peer review conducted, dependability on the context provided from experiences of the researcher in the fields of special education and adult education benefited. On the other hand, it was thought to share the results with provinces, and so verify the research by member check, but the sudden changing of the researcher's workplace made this impossible.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Seven categories consist of: fields of courses, conducted research, studies for informing and publicizing, regulation of education and environment, disabled groups, coordination, financial, and administrative activities.

Generally, disabled adults took courses from 31 fields. Commonly, they enrolled in handicrafts, personal development, music and performing arts, literacy, art and design, and information technology (Table 1). Amongst handicrafts,

they chose 46 modular programs of which the most popular were wood decoration, weaving, embroidery and jewelry. Under the field of personal development, preparation of selection tests of government officials and sign language were preferred most. At the third place, music and performing arts stood. Disabled adults usually demanded voice training and folk dances. Then, literacy came due to a period of 120 or 180 hours. Art and design field often opened with watercolor painting, oil painting, sandblasting and forming three-dimensional courses. Usage of computers for disabled adults, especially visually impaired adults, frequently picked up as a modular program of information technology.

Table 1 *Subject to GDLL Extensively Opened Course Fields (%)*

Row No	Course Fields	N	%
1	Handicrafts	40	55
2	Personal development	37	51
3	Music and performing arts	30	41
4	Literacy	26	36
5	Art and design	24	33
6	Information technologies	23	32

Field scanning, palm vine structure screening, determination of pedagogues for assignments, and saving the statistical data of courses implemented in coordination with special education institutions were the conducted research areas. By means of field scanning, it was possible to save and follow the address and communication information of disabled adults. Dependent on Table 2, only a few (13%) provinces gave importance to research.

Table 2 *Implemented Research in the Provinces (%)*

Row No	Research Areas	N	%
1	Fields scanning	7	10
2	Palm vine structure screening	1	1
3	Determination of pedagogues for assignments	1	1
4	Saving the statistical data of courses in coordination	1	1

Informing and publicity studies consist of seminars and trainings, the guidance of distant education (correspondence school) and guidance of vocational courses. Likewise research studies, informing and publicity studies were not spread over Turkey enough (Table 3).

Table 3 *Informing and Publicity Studies in the Provinces (%)*

Row No	Research Areas	N	%
1	Seminars and trainings	14	19
2	Guidance of distant education	5	7
3	Guidance of vocational training	2	3

Regulation of education and environment was divided into seven items: Physical regulations (ramps, WCs, and elevators for disabled adults), conduction of projects, regulations of educational settings, production of galoshes, utilization of attendants, parents and support staff, deploying both of special education and vocational education teachers, the participation of disabled attendees with the aid of projects. Regarding legislation, attendants, parents, and support staff in the courses are illegal (Ministry of Education, 2010, 2019). However, some of the provinces conducted assistants or co-partners.

Table 4 *Educational and Environmental Regulations in the Provinces (%)*

Row No	Research Areas	N	%
1	Physical regulations	14	19
2	Conduction of projects	3	4
3	Educational settings	2	3
4	Galosh production	2	3
5	Including attendants, parents or support staffs in courses	2	3
6	Deployment of both special and vocational education teachers	2	3
7	Through projects attendance of disabled adults	1	1

As seen in Table 5, only the adults having mild, moderate or severe mental inadequacy, orthopedic disability, visual, hearing or speech impairment or Down's syndrome are registered for courses. Adults with mild mental inadequacy had the highest percentage of participation. Nevertheless, adults with severe mental inadequacy had only the lowest percentage (1%).

Table 5 *Disability Groups of the Adults in the Provinces (%)*

Row No	Research Areas	N	%
1	Mild mental inadequacy	9	12
2	Orthopedic disability	8	11
3	Visual impairment	5	7
4	Down's syndrome	4	5
5	Hearing impairment	4	5
6	Speech impairment	3	4
7	Moderate mental inadequacy	2	3
8	Severe mental inadequacy	1	1

For the purpose of ensuring coordination, cooperation with other institutions, NGOs, special education vocational practice schools, municipalities, educational institutions belonging to the other general directorates and special education teachers was ensured. Almost one-third of provinces (33%) collaborated with the Ministry of Labour, Social Services and Family (including Turkish Employment Agency), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Forest, Presidency of Religious Affairs and local authorities. 20 provinces worked with NGOs. The studies were carried on with other general directorates, such as public training centers, special education vocational education centers, guidance and research centers and vocational education centers. Provinces got support from guidance and research centers in the context of vocational guidance, diagnosis and identification process; they received help from centers of public training, special education, and vocational education about the vocational and technical processes (Table 6).

Table 6 *Disability Groups of the Adults in the Provinces (%)*

Row No	Co partners	N	%
1	Inter-institutions	24	33
2	NGOs	20	27
3	Special education vocational practice schools	11	15
4	Municipalities	8	11
5	Other institutions depending on the Ministry of Education	8	11
6	Special education teachers	2	3

Merely six provinces mentioned about financial and administrative activities. Four provinces used their own opportunities to provide transporting of disabled adults to public training centers. Besides, two provinces created employment and monthly payment from circulating capital (Table 7).

Table 7 *Financial and Administrative Regulations in the Provinces (%)*

Row No	Regulations	N	%
1	Transportation	4	5
2	Employment	2	3

As a result, disabled adults commonly chose few courses like handicrafts, personal development, music and performing arts, literacy, art and design, and information technology. Research in the provinces was primarily carried out by field scanning. Thus, residence and communication information about disabled adults was recorded. Seminars and training for principals, teachers, family, citizens or attendees were widely implemented.

The most required educational and environmental regulations were the physical arrangements. Mental inadequacy, visual, hearing or speech impairments, Down's syndrome, and orthopedic disability were just the groups which involved adult education. In order to make coordination sequentially, inter-institutions, NGOs, special education vocational practice centers, municipals and other departments of the Ministry of Education were taken into account. Quite a few provinces implemented financial and administrative actions.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The names of courses in the research correspond to the Modular Programs of GDLL (Ministry of Education, 2019). Authentication of modular programs for disabled adult education is valid in the country, but programs need to be accredited to the international criterion for recognizing. Besides, after 2018, there is no Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper in Turkey (Ministry of National Education, 2014). However, the Council of the European Union (2011) determined the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth, which acknowledges lifelong learning and skills development as key elements. In addition, the European Union (2011) set a goal 'at least 15% of adults have to participate in lifelong learning'. There is a paradox of lifelong learning participation rate of Turkish adults. According to the European Centre for Development of Vocational Training (2015) and Turkey Statistics Institution (2014), TUIK presented a participation rate higher than CEDEFOP. This would be the result of calculating the participation rate with repeated data.

Regarding legislation, the employment of two teachers appointed in the same course was illegal until 2018. But now master trainers and special education teachers can work together (Ministry of Education, 2010, 2018). On the other side, researchers or policymakers didn't give enough preference and importance for making detailed investigations and interpreting statistics about disabled adults in practice.

Ministry of National Education (2014) in Turkey Lifelong learning strategy paper (2014-2018) referred to increasing lifelong learning access of individuals who need special education, their families, teachers, and principals (Ministry of National Education, 2014). Identically, the Council of the European Union (European Union, 2011) mentioned promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship through adult learning and also focused on learning needs and adequate guidance of people with disabilities. This means, legal infrastructure has been built, but the output needs to be in terms of practice as well.

Bahat (2013) searched for lifelong learning perceptions of principals and found out three themes: individual, economic, social and cultural needs; self, vocational, and social development; systematic, holistic, consistent and easy learning. Kavtelek (2014) studied metaphors of principals about lifelong learning and detected the metaphors as obligation, essential importance, necessity, human life, continuity, treatment, the organ of a human, and guidance. As it was seen in findings, some provinces were recessive and passive while taking actions about disabled adults. Perceptions and metaphors could give shape to regulations and arrangements of disabled adults. To ensure the improvement of lifelong learning of disabled adults, voluntary participation and a positive attitude of partners would be considered.

Categories that appeared in the research could be used in developing attitude scales or questionnaires for partners.

On behalf of disabled adults' needs, public institutions, private sectors, NGOs and universities could develop an operational curriculum. The lower participation limit to open courses for attendees makes it possible to ignore the number of disabled adults (Ministry of Education, 2010). This means disabled adults can enroll in courses without waiting to form a group.

Guidance and consultancy services need to be realized with profession and experience, rather than principals' and teachers' consciences and initiatives. Regarding interest, wish, necessity, talent, prior learning, and vocational background of disabled adults as an integrated fact, research for vocational guidance and placement could be expanded. With the aim of avoiding concept confusion and leading to coherence directorates of the Ministry of Education, cooperative work could be initiated.

In conclusion, this study could be the starting point for the importance of disabled adults' education. This education needs to be studied and improved later on. Further research would be done for teachers' placement and cooperation in the same courses of disabled adults practically.

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