

An Evaluation on Mainstreaming Practices of Primary Schools According to the Views of School Administrators, Teachers, and Parents

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Abstract

Individuals are born with various skills and needs. They enter into a life-long process of meeting these needs and developing the correct usage and appropriateness of these skills. The process of making intentional changes in one's life through behavior is called education. No one can be deprived of their right to education. Education is every individual's constitutional right and it is compulsory. This is stated in the 59th amendment of the Northern Cyprus Constitution as follows: "Every child regardless of gender must receive education until the age of fifteen and they have the right to free education until the age of eighteen." This study investigates through comparison the views of administrators, teachers, and parents on the application of mainstreaming in primary schools. This research uses the qualitative research method. In order to consult the opinions of the participants on mainstreaming applications, a semi-structured interview form was prepared. The data collected from the research was analyzed using the content analysis method. The data from the content analysis was analyzed in four stages. These stages are coding the data, finding the themes, arranging the data according to the codes and themes, and interpreting the data. For the study group, 10 administrators, 14 teachers, and 12 parents were included in the research. This study found that the requirements for mainstreaming are not sufficient nor did it have enough information, that normal class teachers are insufficient in their knowledge, that families cannot accept their child's situation, that there is little participation in class, that classes are disorderly, and that there is also a problem with "normal" children in their approach to children with special needs. As a result of the study, the majority of participants agreed that special education teachers should either work on their own or in collaboration with class teachers during the preparation stage of mainstreaming. Almost a quarter of the participants stated that preparations for mainstreaming are done by the class teacher. More than 75% of the participants stated that support services are provided for mainstreaming applications, while less than 75% of them said partial support is provided.

Keywords: Mainstreaming education • Primary schools • Administrator • Teacher • Parent • Interview

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Each individual living in a society has the need for education. The purpose of education is to help individuals be competent in their communication, self-realization, and productivity through programs that are developed based on an individual's needs and differences. However, each child has different learning styles and emotional characteristics (Acar, 2000). Some individuals may acquire disabilities either from birth or later in life. Those individuals need help improving themselves in certain necessary areas in order to live comfortably within society. This is why such people are called individuals with special needs.

Some necessary steps have to be taken to help individuals with special education needs in order to contribute to their development in the required areas (Kargin, 2004). One of the most appropriate actions in this regard is to minimize the barriers in educational settings for people with special needs. It is desirable for them to be more interactive with their normally developing peers as their disabilities are minimal. Such an educational setting encourages mainstreaming (Kırcaali, 1998). In practice, mainstreaming involves allowing special needs students to be educated together with their normally developing peers. Mainstreaming should not be just thought of as being physically in the same class (Kargin, 2004).

The success of the application of mainstreaming depends on the extent to which special education individuals receive adequate and satisfactory levels of special education as well as regular educational services. Moreover, the successful application of such services depends on a few other conditions (Kırcaali & Batu, 2007). In order for the application of mainstreaming to be successful, normally developing children, children with special needs, parents, school staff, and general education classrooms need to be collaboratively prepared for mainstreaming education and its activities (Kargin, 2006).

In developed countries, children with special needs are educated alongside their normally developing peers in classes with minimal constraints (Ataman, 2003). This is the definition of the application of mainstreaming. Mainstreaming education means that children with special needs are not only in the same classroom as their normally developing peers, but also receiving the support of special education (Kargin, 2004). The main purpose of allowing children with special needs to receive the same education as children without special needs is to meet their social and emotional needs by integrating them with their peers academically and socially (Sucuoğlu & Özokçu, 2005).

The education system is organized for children who are considered "normal," in other words children with average proficiency and capacity. Classrooms, textbooks, teaching methods, and techniques are all shaped for children that are accepted as normal. If a child has adapted to the average expected level, then the education system considers them normal. Children that are considered "normal" deviate only slightly from pre-determined standards. If those standards cannot meet the needs of a child, then this child is put into a special needs group because of this difference (Ataman, 2003).

Children who are considered having special needs require the implementation of individualized education programs due to either their physical disabilities or learning skills. These children show differences in terms of standards at a level requiring special education. The concerning difference can be below or above the standard. Accordingly, the term "children with special needs" covers children with mental disabilities, learning or behavioral problems, children with physical or emotional inadequacies, as well as children with cognitive superiority and children with special skills (Eripek, 2003). In other words, children who show negative differences from their peers and stand out socially from them because of this are considered "disabled" (Özer, 2001). Inadequacy is a condition that is observed as complete or partial damage in cognitive, behavioral, physical or sensory organs (Ataman, 2003).

Many barriers can be discarded with appropriate set-ups in an environment. If appropriate arrangements are not made, people with disabilities will continue to have more and more problems. The two most important factors in preventing these limitations from turning into barriers is to provide them with necessary information, skills support, and arrange the setting in a way that is most beneficial for them (Cavkaytar & Diken, 2007).

Special education studies in the Northern part of Cyprus as in many other countries, began with a focus on the segregation of special education. Individuals with special needs were being educated in schools that were arranged according to their disabilities. Lapta's School for Children with Hearing Impairment was opened in 1974 and was the first private education institution for children with hearing impairments. Students would board there during the week due to transportation problems, and would spend weekends with their families. The institution was then moved to Lefkoşa in 1998. It continued to serve as a boarding school until 2005 when the boarding unit was closed down. The

name of the school was changed to Lefkoşa Special Education and Profession Training Center (Çakmak, 2008). Although, the boarding unit had been closed, segregation continued and students were still receiving special education isolated from their peers and a normal social environment. Part-time mainstreaming was only attempted with children who had hearing impairments (Saygı, 2007).

Jannel, Snell, Beers, and Raynes (1995) conducted a research study in order to get the opinions of special education teachers, regular education teachers, and school managers in regard to mainstreaming related to students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities in school. In the research, it was concluded that activities had to be planned beforehand, and special education teachers must help normal education teachers.

As a result of the study conducted by Batu (1998) on teachers' opinions and recommendations, it was identified that teachers were mainly pleased with the application of mainstreaming as applied in their schools. It was also identified that the way parents applied mainstreaming to the mainstreaming students had an important effect on their success.

In a study made by Metin and Güleç (1999), the thoughts of primary school teachers were examined regarding mainstreaming programs for students with and without disabilities. In the results of this study, it was identified that the mainstreaming education program provided the opportunity for teachers and typically developing students to be sensitive to the needs of disabled individuals as well as providing an opportunity for disabled students to socialize.

The study of Temir (2002) involved identifying the problems that families face in the process of a child's mainstreaming education, as well as what their expectations were from it. In the results of the study, it was identified that the parents were able to learn what their child wasn't capable of, that the parents did not face any problems as far as the process of mainstreaming, and that the children were successful in school.

Praisner (2003) examined the attitudes of school principals on mainstreaming education for children with special needs. The findings suggested that principals who had had positive experiences with children who have special needs had a more positive attitude.

In the results of the research by Yıkılmış and Sazak (2005) which identified the thoughts of primary school principals on mainstreaming, it was found that primary school principals did not have enough

knowledge on what to do before and during mainstreaming in order to be successful with it. It was also found that most of the principals did not have a positive attitude towards mainstreaming.

Türkoğlu (2007) identified that information activities performed for the application of mainstreaming affected teacher's thoughts related to mainstreaming in a positive manner; also, the teachers who did not have positive feelings on mainstreaming thought that the mainstreaming applications were quite beneficial after receiving the information.

Mainstreaming applications began to be discussed in the TRNC during the 1990's, and a decision was made to open up resource classrooms for part-time mainstreaming. The first classroom that opened in Lefkoşa was shut down due to the demands of parents. Resource classrooms started to spread after the 3rd National Education Council. Today, there are 13 resource classrooms that have been opened in 13 primary schools within Northern Cyprus.

Up to the present, there have been no researches found in the literature on the application of mainstreaming related to mainstreaming in Northern Cyprus. There have only been publications explaining special education. Research studies that have taken place in other countries related to the application of mainstreaming established the need for similar studies to take place in the TRNC. The fact that the TRNC is a small country and its people come from different cultural backgrounds makes this research more important. Because of the lack of studies, it is important to identify the requirements; types of disabilities that individuals with special needs who benefit from mainstreaming have; problems faced in the application of mainstreaming; expectations of the Ministry of Education, class teachers, and families; what type of benefits mainstreaming gives to disabled students, normally developing students, class teachers, and families; the applicability of mainstreaming; and the current situation of mainstreaming. The participants providing the information and views on the practices of mainstreaming in this study are administrators, teachers, and parents who are in direct contact with the practices mainstreaming.

In this respect, the aim of this research is to explore the views of administrators, teachers, and parents on mainstreaming in primary schools within the Northern Cyprus education system. Answers to certain questions were used in order to reach the goal of investigating the views of administrators, teachers, and parents towards mainstreaming in primary schools in the TRNC.

Method

Research Model

In this research, the application of mainstreaming was evaluated by analyzing the views of administrators, teachers, and parents. This research used qualitative research methods. Qualitative research can be defined as a research method during which qualitative data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and document analysis are used in a setting where perceptions and events are presented in a realistic and holistic manner through qualitative studies (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008).

According to Kuş (2009), the main feature of qualitative research is to state the participants' views and meaning of their words as well as to look at the world from their perspective.

In this research, the qualitative case study was used. The most basic feature of qualitative research is the in-depth investigation of one or more cases (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). Interviews were conducted in this study. The most significant feature of the interview technique used in qualitative research is that it explores the perspectives of the interviewees (Kuş, 2009).

The semi-structured interview technique was used in this qualitative study. For this reason, the main goal was to understand the meaning of the words, perspectives, emotions and ideas of the interviewees and to collect in-depth information (Kuş, 2009). Questions were pre-determined in the semi-structured interviews with the intention of collecting data based on those pre-determined questions (Karasar, 2003). This method, being semi-structured, is neither as strict as structured interviews nor as flexible as non-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview technique was used in the interviews to allow the researcher some flexibility (Dağlı, Silman, & Birol, 2009).

Population

The population of the study consists of the principals of state primary schools that applied mainstreaming

in the 2012-2013 academic year in the TRNC, teachers with mainstream students in their classes, and parents of special-needs students. According to the information gathered from the Primary Education Unit's Special Education Coordination Center of the National Ministry of Education and Youth, 13 state primary schools use mainstream applications with resource room support services.

Working Group

10 administrators, 14 teachers, and 12 parents were included in the research. The working group was formed by following the purposive sampling method according to maximum variation sampling (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). This sampling method was preferred because the differences in geographical areas, urban divisions, and schools formed the basic criterion of variability, and also because the findings and results that emerge from the conclusion of this method are richer than the results reached from any other method. The random sampling method was chosen to determine the working group. The reason for this was the limitation of not being able to reach a large portion of the population. This necessitated the determination of a more feasible working group, smaller in size but representative of the whole population. Through analysis of the data, one can work on a smaller group and still see a bigger picture through consideration of the possible variety, richness, differences, and deviances that potentially exist in the whole population (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008).

As can be seen from Table 1 when the working group is analyzed, 17 of the participants were female while 19 were male. Based on the level of education, one can also see that two were secondary school graduates, five were high school graduates, nineteen of them were undergraduates, nine of them were post-graduates and one of them holds a PhD. The mainstreaming experience of the 10 administrators that participated in the research varied from four to ten years, and the mainstreaming experience of the 14 teachers that participated varied from 6 to 12 years. The number of students in mainstreaming classes in 17 schools of the TRNC amounted to 220 people.

Table 1
Participants' Cases

Type of Participant	Gender		Level of Education				
	Male	Female	Secondary School	High School	LBA	Post-Graduate	Ph.D.
Administrator	7	3			7	3	-
Teacher	8	6			9	5	-
Parent	4	8	2	5	3	1	1
Total	19	17	2	5	19	9	1

Data Collection Process

Research data was collected between February 20th and March 21st, 2014 from school administrators in their offices when they were available, and with other participants at times and places that were convenient for them. 30-minute face-to-face interviews were conducted with the participants in order to find out their views on the application of mainstreaming in their schools. As Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008) explained, it is important for the participant and the researcher to interact based on trust and empathy. Forming this kind of environment helps the individuals bring out experiences and meanings they may have never realized or thought about. This is why the private, personal thoughts and opinions of the participants are kept confidential, and the quotations collected from them are coded. The interviews took place in a quiet environment with suitable physical conditions. For the participants to state their thoughts and opinions as well as express their feelings comfortably, the researcher took good care in forming a healthy environment based on trust and empathy. The data source of the research was formed using written records from the interviews with the participants. For this reason, the voices of participants who gave permission for being recorded during the interviews were transferred to a computer. After that, these voice recordings were converted into written form. In order to increase the validity of the conversion of voice recordings into written form, two more researchers also listened to the recordings and converted them into written form, thereby making sure that the written form was accurately transcribed with no omissions. Some participants expressed their thoughts by filling in the interview forms themselves. A portion of the participants' views were taken by the researcher and put into written form based on his notes from the interview. The interview times were arranged by meeting with the participants at a time and place that was suitable for them.

Data Collection Tool

The semi-structured interview form was prepared in order to learn about the views of the participants regarding the application of mainstreaming. The interview form firstly included a statement to make the participant feel comfortable and secure, and then an appropriate introduction was prepared followed by short questions where the participants filled in their personal information. The interview then moved on to open-ended questions that

were designed to collect data on the views of the participants according to the aim of the research. Three participants were used to measure the internal validity of the interview form. In order to provide internal validity, a pilot application was made and the interview form was applied to 3 participants. The questions and answers were collected and shown to five experts for review. Some questions were omitted or merged due to content similarities, and in order to increase the intelligibility of some questions, drilling questions were asked. The form was then finalized and the data collection process started. Internal validity is related to whether a researcher is able to measure the desired data with the tool or method that is being used (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). For this reason, questions for the topics that follow were used in the scope of the research. What are the requirements for the application of mainstreaming? What are the types of disabilities primary-school children with special needs have who benefit from mainstreaming?

Further to these, questions are aimed to clarify the focus of the research as follows; What is the relevance of mainstreaming as applied in primary schools to the different types of disabilities? What problems are faced in the application of mainstreaming? What are the expectations of the Ministry of Education, normal class teachers, and families on how to apply mainstreaming in the best possible way? What are the benefits of mainstreaming applications for a student with special needs, a normally developing student, and their families? What preparatory work needs to be done to apply mainstreaming? Are support services provided for mainstreaming? What courses are related to mainstreaming? Lastly, what is the current situation on arranging seminars and recommendations for applying mainstreaming?

Analyzing the Data

The collected data was analyzed using the content analysis method. Content analysis is used for analyzing data collected through interviews. The aim of this method is to reach concepts and relations that can explain the collected data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). Data is reviewed in detail, defined after being organized in a logical framework, and then interpreted. The data is analyzed in four stages using content analysis.

Coding the Data: In the first stage of content analysis, each participant is given a number and

their interviews are transcribed. This is followed by a review of the collected data within a logical framework for meaningful grouping, and these meanings are named and coded in terms of concepts. After reviewing all the data, the code list that was previously formed based on the conceptual framework and interview questions is finalized. This list of codes plays a key role in organizing data. Codes that are outside the scope of the research questions are omitted. The code key and transcriptions are reviewed by the researchers and “agreement” and “disagreement” issues are discussed after which proper arrangements are made. The suggested formula for reliability from Miles and Huberman (1994) was used in the research and the resulting score was 94%. Research is considered to be reliable when reliability calculations exceed 70% (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This result is deemed reliable for this research. The codes and their agreement were used as the basis for uncovering the themes.

Finding Themes: Each code that was found during the previous stage was put into different categories at this stage and evaluated as separate themes. A total of fifteen dimensions were formed in order to investigate views on the application of mainstreaming.

Organization and Description of Data according to Codes and Themes: The participants’ views were explained in a way so as to be understandable by the reader, and the views were presented to the reader from the speaker’s point-of-view. Parentheses after the quotes have been used to clarify which interviewee the quotes belong to, and the notes are presented in quotation marks. The type of participant is stated in parenthesis after the quote. The coding system is presented in the example below:

EXAMPLE: “.....” (Adm, A1)

stands for administrator. T for teacher or P for parent are other possibilities for the first letter in parenthesis. This is followed by a comma and the variable letter “A” to symbolize which school the participant is from, using different letters to represent the different schools involved in the study. The number 1 is the last digit in parenthesis representing the participant’s id number in the study, ranging from 1 to 36.

Interpretation of the Findings: For the last stage the researcher defined and presented the interpretation of the findings along with some of their explanations. The collected data was interpreted after following the steps of qualitative research and some conclusions were drawn. The

significance of the findings is supported by the literature. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013) expressed that the use of numerical analysis for qualitative data when interpreting findings increases the reliability of the qualitative data while decreasing bias and providing less partial interpretation. In addition to this, quantifying the qualitative data makes it possible to compare the themes and categories that were brought out. For this reason, the qualitative method was preferred.

Qualitative data can be quantified in two ways. It can be calculated using either simple percentage calculations or frequency calculations. In this research, tables were formed by using simple percentage calculations.

Findings and Discussion

This section contains the findings and discussions resulting from the analysis of the data collected from the participants for the aims of the research.

1st Dimension: Requirements for the Application of Mainstreaming

The views of 10 administrators, 14 teachers, and 12 parents regarding the first dimension of the study are provided along with the themes and percentages as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Condition of the Requirements for the Application of Mainstreaming

	Administrators	% Teachers	% Parents	%
Narrow scope of regulations	7	70	11	79
Experiencing no problems regarding regulations	1	10	3	21
Having no expectations regarding regulations	2	20	-	-
			2	17

Narrow Scope of Regulations: Table 2 shows 70% of the administrators, 79% of the teachers and 75% of the parents stated that they found the regulations to be too narrow. The principal of School A said, “No. It’s not enough. I certainly believe that regulations should be updated. A separate special education law would be healthier.” (Adm, A1) and emphasized the need for a separate special education law. A parent from school A stated that inadequate requirements were a major concern as follows: “It is insufficient because we don’t have special education regulations. This is our biggest problem.” (P, A2). A teacher

from school B said, “Absolutely not enough. Special education regulations are almost non-existent. Regulations should be made for the educational description, assessment, and location processes of students.” (T, B6).

Experiencing No Problems Regarding Regulations: Participants were asked to provide their views on the adequacy of regulations for the application of mainstreaming that have been passed in the TRNC. From this, 10% of the administrators, 21% of the teachers, and 8% of the parents said that they found the requirements to be adequate. The principal of school E said, “It’s adequate. When compared to the past, there have been improvements to the regulations.” (Adm, E16) and expressed that the improvements in the requirements are satisfactory. Again, a teacher from school E expressed the adequacy of the requirements as follows: “The requirements are satisfactory.” (T, E18). A parent from school H stated that the requirements are satisfactory as he hasn’t experienced any problems: “The requirements are satisfactory. I don’t see any problem.” (P, H29)

No Expectations Regarding Requirements: With this aspect, 20% of the administrators, 0% of the teachers, and 17% of the parents stated that they had no information regarding regulations for the application of mainstreaming. The principal of school F said “I don’t want to confuse you. I don’t have sufficient information on this issue.” (Adm, F20). The principal of school J stated his view as follows: “I have no idea about the sufficiency of the regulations.” (Adm, J33).

2nd Dimension: Types of Individuals with Special Needs Who Benefit from Mainstreaming at School

Table 3
Types of Individuals with Special Needs Who Benefit from Mainstreaming at School

	Administrator	%	Teacher	%	Parent	%
Those with learning difficulties	10	100	9	64	10	83
Those with mild mental challenges	8	80	9	64	4	33
Those with Autism	2	20	8	57	3	25
Those with hearing impairments	1	10	2	14	2	17
Those with orthopedic disabilities	1	10	1	7	1	8

Those With Learning Difficulties: From this table we can see 100% of the administrators, 64% of the teachers, and 83% of the parents stated that students with special needs benefitted from mainstreaming. The principal of school D listed the disability types in his school as follows: “We have students with learning difficulties and mild mental challenges.” (Adm, D11). A teacher from school A expressed the disability type in her school as: “We have students with learning difficulties.” (T, D13). A parent from school E stated that they have students with the following learning difficulties: “We mostly have students with learning difficulties.” (P, E19).

Those With Mild Mental Challenges. For this aspect, 80% of the administrators, 64% of the teachers, and 33% of the parents stated that individuals with mild mental challenges benefit from mainstreaming in their schools. The principal of school B stated, “We have students with orthopedic disabilities and mild mental challenges.” (Adm, B5) and listed the disability types in his school. A parent from school F stated the disability type of his child and his idea on the other types of disabilities in the school as follows: “My child has a mild mental challenge. I have no information regarding any other disability types.” (P, F23). A teacher from school H expressed the disability types as follows: “We have students with mild mental inadequacies and learning difficulties.” (T, H28).

Those With Autism: Table 3 shows 20% of the administrators, 57% of the teachers, and 25% of the parents stated that students with autism benefitted from mainstreaming in their school. The principal of school G said, “The disability types that benefit from mainstreaming in our school are autistic students, students with learning difficulties, and students with mild mental challenges.” (Adm, J33). A parent from school J said the following on the types of disabilities that children who benefit from mainstreaming applications have: “As far as I know, autistic students and children with learning difficulties are benefitting.” (P, J36)

Those With Hearing Impairments: From this table, 10% of the administrators, 57% of the teachers, and 25% of the parents stated that students with hearing impairments benefitted from mainstreaming in their schools. A teacher from school F stated that children with hearing disabilities benefitted from the service as follows: “Students with hearing disabilities and special learning difficulties benefit from the resource room in our school.” (T, F21). A parent from school A stated having students with hearing disabilities in their school as follows: “We have students with hearing disabilities, autism, and learning difficulties.” (P, A3)

Those With Orthopedic Disabilities: One can see 10% of the administrators, 7% of the teachers, and 8% of the parents stated that students with orthopedic disabilities benefitted from mainstreaming applications. The principal of school B said the following, listing the disability types in his school: “We have students with orthopedic disabilities and mild mental challenges.” (Adm, B5). A parent from school B stated the following about an individual with an orthopedic disability, “There are students with mental challenges. A person with an orthopedic disability came this year. He is in a wheelchair but can read very well.” (P, B7).

3rd Dimension: The Suitability of Mainstreaming According to Disability Types

Table 4
Suitability of Mainstreaming in Primary Schools Based on Disability Types

	Administrator	% Teacher	% Parent		%
Those with learning difficulties	7	70	7	50	4 33
Those with mild mental challenges	3	30	5	36	2 17
Those with autism	1	10	4	29	1 8
Those with hearing impairments	1	10	1	7	1 8
Those with orthopedic disabilities	1	10	-	-	- -
All types of disabilities	3	30	7	50	7 59

Those With Learning Disabilities: Upon review of this table, 70% of the administrators, 50% of the teachers, and 33% of the parents stated that they found that students with learning disabilities are most suited for benefitting from mainstreaming applications. The principal of school A expressed his view as: “I found the ones with learning disabilities and hearing impairments the most suitable. I observed that students with learning disabilities and hearing impairments adapted better.” (Adm, A1). A parent from school H stated his view on these issues as follows: “I find that students with learning disabilities are suitable for benefitting from these applications.” (P, H29). Another principle stated the suitability of students with learning disabilities as follows: “Mainstreaming applications are most suitable for students with learning disabilities, those with lower academic success.” (Adm, I 30).

Those With Mild Mental Challenges: This reveals 30% of the administrators, 36% of the teachers, and 17% of the parents stated that they found students with mild mental challenges benefitted from mainstreaming. The principle from school C expressed his view on this as follows: “I find students with mild mental challenges, autism, and those with physical disabilities the most suitable for mainstreaming.” (Adm, C8). A teacher from school A stated that students with mild mental challenges are the most suitable because they do not have any communication problems: “Students with mild mental challenges are suitable for mainstreaming because they can communicate.” (T, A2). A teacher from school B stated that he found students with mild mental challenges and learning disabilities to be the most suitable for mainstreaming as they adapt to classrooms more easily: “Students with mild mental challenges and learning disabilities are the more suitable. They adapt to classrooms more easily.” (T, B6).

Those With Autism: Table 4 shows 10% of the administrators, 29% of the teachers, and 8% of the parents stated that they found children with autism to be suitable for benefitting from mainstreaming applications. A teacher from school D expressed his view as follows: “I find students with autism to be suitable for mainstreaming. They make improvements by looking to their peers as role models with support from the teachers.” (T, D13). The principal of school M listed the disability types that he finds suitable for mainstreaming as follows: “According to the observations I made on students who benefit from mainstreaming, I find children with autism, children with mild mental challenges, and children with orthopedic disabilities to be suitable.” (Adm, C8). A teacher from school F expressed her view as follows: “I find children with autism (...) and the hearing impaired suitable because these children benefit the most from mainstreaming.” (T F22).

Those With Hearing Impairments: One can see 10% of the administrators, 7% of the teachers, and 8% of the parents stated finding students with hearing-impairments suitable for benefitting from mainstreaming applications. The principle of school A expressed his opinion as follows: “I saw that students with learning disabilities and hearing-impairments adapt better.” (Adm, A1). Again, a parent from school A stated that he finds students with hearing-impairments more suitable: “I find students with hearing-impairments and learning disabilities more suitable. We haven’t experienced any problems.” (P, A3).

4th Dimension: Problems Faced During the Application of Mainstreaming

Table 5
Problems Faced during the Application of Mainstreaming

	Administrator	%	Teacher	%	Parent	%
Regular class teachers do not want students with special needs in their classroom	3	30	-	-	2	17
Regular class teachers lack adequate information	1	10	3	21	9	75
Parents do not accept their child's condition	3	30	1	7	2	17
Less participation in class and rules are not followed	1	10	8	57	-	-
No problems	4	40	-	-	3	25
Class time in the resource room or outside	1	10	1	7	3	25
Regular approaches of normally developing children towards children with special needs	1	10	2	14	1	8

Regular Class Teachers Do Not Want Students With Special Needs in Their Classrooms: Here is shown 30% of the administrators, 0% of the teachers, and 17% of the parents stated that regular class teachers do not want students with special needs in their class or school. The principal from school A expressed his view as: "The most frequent problem we experience is that regular class teachers do not want to accept these children in their classrooms. The reasons given are that they destroy the class structure, the teachers cannot conduct lessons, etc. It's not easy for them to accept such students." (Adm, A1). A parent from school B said the following about teachers not wanting special needs students and finding them difficult to work with: "We have had some arguments in school. Other teachers said they don't want our children. And we wanted to protect our rights. This was actually our biggest problem. Teachers don't want the difficult classes, they want the easy ones." (P, B7).

Regular Class Teachers Lacking Adequate Information: Table 5 shows 10% of the administrators, 21% of the teachers, and 75% of the parents stated that regular class teachers lack

a sufficient level of information. The principle of school D stated that teachers lack sufficient information because there are not enough information sessions: "The biggest problem in the application of mainstreaming, I think, is that teachers don't have a sufficient level of information on this issue because there are not enough information sessions on special education." (Adm, D11). A teacher from school F expressed his opinion as follows: "I ask for information from other relevant teachers as I don't have proficiency with the needed information or what to do, etc. I try to apply mainstreaming with their help and guidance." (T, F21). Another teacher from school F stated about the lack of sufficient training on special education as follows: "Class teachers have difficulty with how to behave in front of these children since they don't receive sufficient information for this during their education." (T, F22). A teacher from school I stated that they are not provided with sufficient training on special education: "The biggest problem is that we did not receive any training as far as the education of special-needs individuals." (T, I31).

5th Dimension: Expectations from the Ministry of Education, Regular Class Teachers, and Parents for the Best Way to Apply Mainstreaming

Table 6
Expectations from the Ministry of Education for the Best Way to Apply Mainstreaming

	Administrator	%	Teacher	%	Parent	%
Regulations should be made	1	10	3	21	2	17
Provide the infrastructure and necessary funds for special education	4	40	4	29	6	50
Put a special-needs teacher and resource room in each school	4	40	3	21	2	17
Increase sensitivity towards mainstreaming	-	-	2	14	4	33
No expectations	1	10	2	14	-	-

Regulations Should Be Made: Analysis reveals 10% of the administrators, 21% of the teachers, and 17% of the parents stated that they expected the Ministry of Education to provide legal rules and regulations. The principal of school A stated the following about the inadequate infrastructure and mainstreaming problems resulting from this: "The Ministry especially should provide infrastructure.

For example, a teacher should not be allowed to say I don't want special-needs children in my classroom, and the principal should not have to convince him. This and similar cases should put into the regulations." (Adm, A1). A teacher from school B emphasized the lack of regulations: "I expect the Ministry to prepare modern legal regulations." (T, B6). A parent from school B highlighted the need for special education regulations and the problem he faced due to the lack of regulations as follows: "Today we don't have special education regulations. We need to have them. Everyone should know their obligations. I'm very sorry, but these days there are laws for even cats and dogs in this country, yet no law for our children with special needs. I have had many problems when registering my daughter at school. She learned the alphabet when she was four-and-a-half, but registering at a school became such big deal, almost as big as the Cyprus problem. I hope regulations are passed as soon as possible." (P, B7). One parent from school F also emphasized the importance of having special education regulations for overcoming problems: "We expect special education regulations to be passed very soon. We can only overcome this problem after that." (P, F23).

Table 7
What is Expected of Teachers as for the Best Way of Applying Mainstreaming

	Administrator	%	Teacher	%	Parent	%
Be more patient, accepting, and warm towards students with special needs	4	40	5	35	11	92
They should develop themselves through research	3	30	2	14	-	-
Collaboration among parents, special education teachers, and counselors	3	30	5	36	1	8
They fulfill their duties, I have no expectations	-	-	-	-	2	16

Patience, Acceptance, and Warmth Toward Students With Special Needs: The results show 40% of the administrators, 35% of the teachers, and 92% of the parents stated that teachers should accept children with special needs and show patience towards them. The principal from school B stated his expectations as: "I expect our class and subject teachers to be more understanding towards such children. They should

be more careful, otherwise it will do more harm than good." (Adm, B5). One teacher from school A expressed his views as: "I expect us to show care and closeness towards our disabled students." (T, A4). A parent from school D expressed his expectations as: "I expect them to be loving, understanding, and patient." (P, D15). The principal from school G expressed his idea that accepting and embracing special needs children would bring success as follows: "I expect them to embrace our special needs children. If they don't do this, all the work that's being done will be of no use." (Adm, G24). A parent from school E expressed his view: "I think teachers should show understanding and caring so that their efforts are successful." (P, F19). A teacher from school H emphasized in their assessment the importance of accepting special-needs children and considering every little success as follows: "Teachers should accept special-needs children in their classrooms, consider every little success and improvement, and give children duties in various activities." (T, H28).

6th Dimension: The Benefits of Mainstreaming for Students with Special Needs, Regular Students, Class Teachers, and Parents

Table 8
Benefits of Mainstreaming for Students with Special Needs

	Administrator	%	Teacher	%	Parent	%
Increases self-confidence and socializing	3	30	12	86	10	84
"Normal" children are looked at as role models	4	40	1	7	1	8
They develop academically	3	30	1	7	1	8

Increases Self-confidence and Socializing: The participants were asked to provide their views on how mainstreaming benefits special-needs children. As a result, 30% of the administrators, 86% of the teachers, and 84% of the parents stated that mainstreaming allow children with special needs to socialize. The principal of school B expressed "normal" children helping children with special needs to socialize: "One benefit for children from mainstreaming is a huge boost from the aspect of socializing. Normally developing peers help them to socialize." (Adm, B5). A parent from school C stated that mainstreaming increased the self-confidence of individuals with special needs as follows: "Mainstreaming develops hand skills and adaptation to a social environment. It strengthens the child's self-confidence." (P, C10). A teacher from school

D stated that mainstreaming is effective in socializing: “Disabled students find new friends while developing their sharing, group work, and cooperative skills through mainstreaming.” (T, D12).

Table 9
Benefits of Mainstreaming Applications for Regular Students

	Administrator	%	Teacher	%	Parent	%
Develops cooperation and support skills.	2	20	1	7	2	17
Develops understanding and acceptance of different individuals	7	70	12	86	9	75
Develops communication skills	1	10	1	7	1	8

Developing Collaboration and Support Skills:

Participants were asked to provide their opinions on how mainstreaming benefits normally developing children. From this, 20% of the administrators, 7% of the teachers, and 17% of the parents stated that mainstreaming developed the cooperation and support skills of “normal” children. The principal from school A expressed his views as: “The child develops a sense of being helpful. I have witnessed it. When she goes home, she tells her mother ‘Ahmet was sitting next to me and he couldn’t hold the pencil so I helped him.’ This is really satisfying. The child develops a sense of being helpful and supportive.” (Adm, A1). A teacher from school F expressed his opinion as follows: “They support these children and learn to help and share with them.” (T, F22). A parent from school G stated that the approaches of normally developing children towards special needs children start to change and they help each other: “Normally developing children spend more time with their challenged friends from the application of modeling. They learn to treat them better and help them out.” (P, G26).

Table 10
Benefits of Mainstreaming Applications for Teachers

	Administrator	%	Teacher	%	Parent	%
They develop themselves and gain experience	8	80	12	86	9	75
No benefit	1	10	1	7	-	-
No idea	1	10	1	7	3	25

They Develop Themselves and Gain Experience:

Participants were asked to provide their views on how mainstreaming benefits teachers. Table 10 shows 80% of the administrators, 86% of the teachers, and 75% of the parents stated

that mainstreaming allows teachers to develop themselves and gain new experiences. The principal from school A expressed his opinion as: “The benefit for class teachers is that in the future they will know how to act if they have such students again as well. They can provide a better education. It also contributes greatly to their self-development” (Adm, A1). A parent from school A stated that teachers developed themselves while researching on the differences between students: “They search for different methods and develop themselves while trying to get to know their students.” (P, A3).

7th Dimension: Preparations for the Application of Mainstreaming

Table 11
Preparing for the Application of Mainstreaming

	Administrator	%	Teacher	%	Parent	%
It is conducted	6	60	6	43	6	50
Not conducted precisely	2	20	5	36	3	25
It is not conducted	-	-	2	14	3	25
No information	2	20	1	7	-	-

Preparations for the Application of Mainstreaming:

Participants were asked to provide their views on the preparations for mainstreaming. Table 11 reveals 60% of the administrators, 43% of the teachers, and 50% of the parents stated that preparations were made for mainstreaming applications. The principal from school C stated, “We have preparations in our school. For example, as a physical change this year with the guidance of our teachers, we moved the resource room to the classroom that is closest to the restrooms. It’s our most special classroom. We also have constant meetings with the parents and teachers as well.” (Adm, C8). The principal from school B expressed his view as: “The planning for preparations is brought to me. Special education is not my field. However, I can say that enough preparations are made in the direction of the information I receive when I ask questions.” (Adm, B6). A parent from school C said, “We had several meetings before the application of mainstreaming. Information exchange will continue next semester as well.” (P, C10). A teacher from school D expressed that parents and normally developing students were informed about the preparations: “Preparations are made for mainstreaming applications. We inform the parents and normally developing students.” (T, D12). A parent from school F stated, “Preparations are made with the efforts of our special education

teachers.” (P, F23). A parent from school J said, “Preparations are made. They are quite sufficient and, of course, very much needed.” (P, J36).

8th Dimension: Providing Support Services for the Application of Mainstreaming

Table 12
Providing Support Services for the Application of Mainstreaming

	Administrator %	Teacher %	Parent %
Support services are provided	8	80	93
Support services are partially provided	2	20	7

Participants were asked to provide their views about whether support services were provided or not for the application of mainstreaming. Table 12 shows 80% of the administrators, 93% of the teachers, and 75% of the parents stated that support services were provided. The principal of school H said, “Yes, it is provided. Our special education teacher provides training in the resource room. She constantly meets with the parents and class teachers.” (Adm, H27). A teacher from school A stated, “Yes, it’s provided. We have a special education teacher. She carries out individual and group activities in the resource room. Our school counselor also provides some support.” (T, A2). A parent from school A expressed his view as: “Support services are provided. We benefit from the resource room and in-class help. We also provide parental support every two weeks.” (T, A3). One teacher from school A said, “All kinds of support services are provided in our school. Our special education teacher is very hard working.” (T, A4).

9th Dimension: Organizing Courses and Seminars on the Application of Mainstreaming

Table 13
Status of Organizing Courses and Seminars on the Application of Mainstreaming

	Administrator %	Teacher %	Parent %
They are organized	4	40	36
They are not organized	6	60	64

Courses, Seminars Are Organized: Participants were asked to provide their opinions on if courses and seminars were organized for mainstreaming. Table 13 shows 40% of the administrators, 36% of the teachers, and 33% of the parents stated

that courses and seminars are organized for the application of mainstreaming. The principal from school A said, “In our own school, we provide such services for primary school teachers and parents from time to time, and it needs to be done.” (Adm, A1). One teacher from school D expressed his view as: “Yes, they are organized. I have also attended them.” (T, A2). A parent from school J stated that he attended one of the sessions: “I attended an event last year, but it wasn’t very useful.” (P, A3).

10th Dimension: Suggestions for the Application of Mainstreaming

Table 14
Suggestions for the Application of Mainstreaming

	Administrator %	Teacher %	Parent %
Time spent in the resource room should be increased	-	6	44
Infrastructure problems should be resolved	1	10	7
Resource rooms should be opened in all schools	2	20	21
Teacher development should be enabled	3	30	21
Mainstreaming applications should serve their purpose	2	20	-
The relationship among parents, teachers, and administrators should be good	2	20	1

Time Spent in the Resource Room Should Be Increased: Participants were asked to provide suggestions for the application of mainstreaming. Results show 44% of the teachers and 26% of the parents stated that the time children with special needs spend in the resource room should be increased. One teacher from school A said, “I think spending more time in the resource room would be more beneficial for our disabled children. Currently, they are still lagging behind on some academic aspects. One or two hours every day should be enough in the regular classrooms.” (T, A2). Another teacher from school A stated that one-on-one education is very important for the development of special-needs children, so the time in regular classrooms should be decreased and the time spent in the resource room should be increased: “Our special children spend too much time in regular

classrooms. I think these children would be more successful with one-on-one education. We cannot get the performance we want from the regular class setting. It would be more beneficial for them to spend more time in the resource room.” (T, A4). A teacher from school E said, “I suggest that individualized education should be increased and mainstreaming in regular classrooms should be decreased.” (T, E17). A parent from school J expressed his opinion as: “It is good to have mainstreaming up to a certain point, but spending only one or two hours in the resource room is not enough.” (P, J34). Teachers from schools B and C, and parents from schools A and E all said, “Resource room hours should be increased.” (T, B6), (T, C9), (P, A3), and (P, E19).

Results and Suggestions

A total of 36 people (10 administrators, 14 teachers, and 12 parents) participated in this study. Most of the participants stated that they found the regulations in the TRNC governing the application of mainstreaming insufficient and that there is a need for special education regulations. The insufficiency of the legal requirements is an important issue as it allows no room for guidance on the clarification of obligations and responsibilities or on how it should be applied. Saygi (2007) also stated that when mainstreaming in Northern Cyprus is compared to other important countries, the biggest problem seems to be the lack of special education regulations. It can be said that a special education law should be passed in order to correct the problems arising from uncertainty in regards to the obligations, responsibilities, and application of mainstreaming as well as the lack of regulations.

The participants' views on the suitable types of disabilities for mainstreaming show some differences. Although there are a high percentage of views that express all students with special needs are suitable for mainstreaming, there are also a high percentage of views that only consider students with learning difficulties and mild mental challenges as suitable. No views were provided on the suitability of students that are visually impaired. The study shows 50% to 60% of teachers and parents stated that it was suitable for all types of disabilities to join mainstreaming; disability level and class rules being broken were some of the restrictions that were placed. The percentage of administrators that found all types of disabilities suitable for mainstreaming was 30%. This finding is similar to the findings from the study of Yıkımiş and Sazak (2005). In their study, primary education principals' views were asked in

regard to mainstreaming, and the principals stated that not all students should be mainstreamed.

Varying views on the problems faced during the application of mainstreaming were found. The majority of parents stated that regular class teachers lacked sufficient knowledge when it comes to applying mainstreaming. This finding is consistent with the findings from the study of İzci (2005). One of the problems experienced during mainstreaming was that regular class teachers did not want students with special needs in their classrooms. This problem was stated by 30% of the school principals and 17% of the parents. In studies conducted about the views of teachers, more than half of the teachers stated that mainstreaming was not useful and that there were physical inadequacies as well as a lack of knowledge and skills present on the part of the teachers (Sucuoğlu, 2004).

Teachers, on the other hand, stated that children with special needs spend too much time in regular classrooms when they should spend more time in resource rooms. School administrators stated that this problem is due to both regular class teachers who do not want children with special needs in their classrooms and parents who do not accept their children's condition. Almost half of the school administrators and a portion of the parents expressed that they did not experience any problems. Although low in number, administrators, teachers, and parents stated that they experienced problems with the behavior of “normal” students towards children with special needs. “Normal” children isolating children with special needs, bullying, and non-acceptance were stated as problems as expressed by 8% to 14% of the participants. Other studies have shown that children who develop normally had negative views on mainstreaming, that mainstreamed children did not receive sufficient acceptance, and that the social acceptance level in classrooms was low (Şahbaz, 2003; Vuran, 1996).

Almost half of the administrators, teachers, and parents stated that supportive infrastructures were needed and funding should be provided with the expectation that the National Ministry of Education should be responsible for this. Another issue where participant expectations were intense concerns opening up resource rooms and providing a special education teacher in every school. Even though almost all of the participants stated the need for a special education law to be passed in the first question of the research, a low number of participants stated this was an expectation of the Ministry of Education. The reason for this can be a result of the increased rate of infrastructure

problems combined with a lack of funding. However, with the passing of a Special Education Law and establishment of a separate education branch, it could be possible to overcome these problems. In one study, Aydın and Şahin (2002) examined the Management of Special Education Services in schools where mainstreaming programs were applied. In their research, it could be seen that the application of regulations that are legally binding do exist and are suitable in regards to student registration; types of insufficiencies of registered students; reseating classes; family co-operation; educational and support services for teachers; taking precautions for social acceptance; and rearranging the physical, social, and psychological environments of institutions. In this scope, one can say that it is of great necessity and with great urgency that regulations and a special education law should be passed.

Almost all parents and a third of administrators and teachers stated that they expected regular class teachers to be more accepting towards special-needs children and show more warmth and patience towards them. A third of the administrators and teachers and a small number of parents demanded that parents, class teachers, counselors, and special education teachers should collaborate together. Though not as high, another expectation was for class teachers to improve themselves by performing research. A low number of parents also stated that teachers are already doing everything they can, and they do not have any more expectations. According to Jobe, Rust, and Brissie (1996), classroom teachers should receive training related to the integration of people with disabilities and the study also stated that teachers should be given special education.

Half or more of the school administrators and teachers as well as a significant number of parents stated that they expected parents to accept their child's condition and be more informed about their needs. Almost half of the parents stated expectations that parents should help their children and teachers in all respects. According to Avcıoğlu, Eldeniz, and Özbey (2004), it is necessary for class teachers that participate in mainstreaming applications to take intensive classes, and they mentioned that including children with special needs into mainstreaming classrooms is beneficial for normally developing students, easing the understanding and acceptance of differences among students.

Almost all teachers and parents as well as a third of the administrators stated that mainstreaming increases the self-confidence of children with

special needs and enables them to socialize. Almost half of the administrators stated that children with special needs take their normally developing peers as role models. A third of the administrators and a low number of teachers and parents stated that mainstreaming helps children with special needs to develop academically. It can be seen that the results of studies made by Banerji and Dailey (1995) and Temir (2002) overlap with the results of this study, and one can say that with mainstreaming education, children with special needs show academic development.

Most of the participants stated that the application of mainstreaming allows "normal" children to accept different individuals and show understanding towards them. A low number of participants stated that it develops cooperation and support skills.

A majority of participants stated that mainstreaming is beneficial for teachers in terms of self-development and experience. Only one administrator and one teacher said there is no benefit. According to Salend (2001) and Şahbaz (2008), children without special needs have learned to accept the children with special needs and to put themselves in the others' shoes. They also mentioned that mainstreaming education has provided "normal" students benefits such as being more tolerant, respecting individual differences, and increasing the abilities of co-operation and assistance.

In relation to benefits for parents, half of the administrators and more than half of the teachers and parents stated that parents observed the positive improvements in their children and were happy about it. A third of the participants stated that parents have accepted the condition of their children and improved themselves. Although low in number, parents stated a benefit of mainstreaming as the inclusion of the child into the community. According to Salend (2001), in terms of parental benefits, parents obtained healthier information about attending to their children, their needs and skills. Also from parents communicating about their expectations of students in that study, the feelings of concern and doubt towards their child's development was turned into hope with the expectation that family conflict would decrease. This study shows overlaps with that one.

More than half of the participants stated regarding support services for the application of mainstreaming that the special education teacher provides support services. Almost a quarter of the participants stated that special education teachers

and class teachers provide support services while the rest of the participants stated that support services were provided by the special education teachers and counselors. It can be concluded that special education teachers are always part of the support services either by themselves or in collaboration with other teachers.

Over a third of the participants stated that courses and seminars were organized in regard to mainstreaming. The other two-thirds stated that no courses or seminars were organized. According to Avcioğlu et al. (2004), class and branch teachers who have mainstream students in their class must get intensive education related to the application of mainstreaming.

Almost half of the teachers and a third of the parents suggested spending more time in resource rooms in relation to mainstreaming. According to Ataman (2003), students received support services for a minimum of 21% and a maximum of 60% of their school time in the resource rooms. This statement shows parallels with the findings of this research. A third of the participants suggested opening up resource rooms in all schools and almost a third of the participants suggested teachers should develop themselves in terms of the processes of applying mainstreaming. A small number of participants also suggested that the application of mainstreaming served its purpose and that the administration, teachers, and parents had good working relations.

Suggestions

There are problems due to the inadequacy of regulations regarding special education policies, the uncertainty of obligations and responsibilities, and a lack of guidance on how to properly apply mainstreaming. It can be said that a Special Education Law should be enacted to solve these problems.

It is thought that raising awareness on mainstreaming starting from class teachers, administrators, and going up to parents and all school staff would increase its success rate. It is suggested that organizing in-service training programs would increase this level of awareness. Also, parents should be encouraged by the school to participate in family training programs in order to enable their active participation in mainstream education and to meet the informational needs of parents. In addition to these, the resource rooms used for mainstreaming in primary schools should be strengthened.

Class teachers should be advised to collaborate with special education teachers, school counselors, and school administrators in order to find more positive solutions to problems. In this context, it can be said that school administrators should have regular assessment meetings with teachers who have mainstream students and other relevant teachers. According to Türkoğlu's (2007) study, the evaluation and information sessions performed for the application of mainstreaming effect teachers' thoughts on mainstreaming in a positive manner, and it is suggested that these meetings should be held more often.

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