



**CHILD IN THE WORLD:
A COMPREHENSIVE PERSPECTIVE
ON CHILDREN'S FUTURE**

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Child in the World: A Comprehensive Perspective on Children's Future

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Foreword

A Call for Collective Responsibility towards the Future of Our Children

Prof. Dr. Ersan Aslan

Kırıkkale University, Türkiye

Introduction

In October 2024, Kırıkkale University proudly hosted two notable events: the 1st International Congress on Children in All Dimensions and the 2nd Rectors' Conference with the theme "Child in the World: A Comprehensive Perspective on Children's Future." These events brought together leading academics, policymakers, and international rectors to engage in thought-provoking discussions about the serious concerns confronting children globally. The main focus was the role of education, social justice, and community support in shaping a better future for children. "Being a Child Photography Exhibition" which vividly captured the struggles and resilience of children across the world, was on display parallel to the proceedings.

Reflections on the Congress on Children and 2nd Rectors' Conference

The International Congress and the 2nd Rectors' Conference provided a platform to analyze the multifaceted challenges faced by children, ranging from digital transformation to climate change and social inequality. Key presentations highlighted the transformative potential of education with topics such as "Technology in Assessment of Young Children" by Prof. Dr. Eugene Kennedy from Louisiana State University, USA and "Artificial Intelligence in Personalized Learning" by Prof. Dr. Mohammad Abdus Salam from Chicago State University, USA underscoring the need to harness innovation to address disparities in educational access. The Rectors emphasized the importance of global collaboration in their presentations. Representatives from diverse regions including USA, Algeria, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Indonesia, and Romania shared their institutional initiatives aiming at promoting inclusivity and safeguarding children's rights. The Rectors' Declaration, signed at the conference's conclusion, serves as a testament to this shared commitment, outlining actionable strategies for fostering sustainable development and equity for all children.

The Current Situation of Children: Insights from the Photography Exhibition

The "Being a Child Photography Exhibition" provided a powerful visual narrative of the lives of children from Myanmar, East Turkestan, Gaza, Ukraine, and Bosnia Herzegovina. These images highlighted the harsh circumstances many children endure in today's world, revealing the urgent need for international advocacy and intervention.

- **Myanmar:** Myanmar has faced decades of political turmoil, ethnic conflict, and military oppression. The plight of the Rohingya people, an ethnic minority, has been one of the gravest humanitarian crises of our time. The photographs of Rohingya children in refugee camps vividly illustrate the consequences of the violence in Rakhine State, where thousands of families have fled systematic persecution since 2017. These children, often orphaned or separated from their families, live in overcrowded places and in conditions with limited access to education and healthcare services. Despite these challenges, their hopeful smiles in the photographs serve as a poignant reminder of the resilience of the human spirit.
- **East Turkestan:** In East Turkestan, Uyghur children face cultural and familial disintegration due to the systemic policies of the Chinese government. Reports of forced assimilation and re-education camps highlight the severity of the situation. The photographs depict children in Kashgar and other regions, separated from their families and denied the right to practice their cultural and religious traditions. These children's loss of identity and the psychological trauma they endure underscore the need for urgent global intervention to protect their basic human rights.
- **Gaza:** Gaza has referred to ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis. For decades, children in this region have grown up amidst blockades, bombings, and displacement. Photographs in the exhibition portray the faces of children whose lives have been shaped by war, their eyes reflecting both sorrow and resilience. In one image, a child holds a toy amidst the rubble of their home, encapsulating innocence lost to violence. The situation in Gaza demands immediate action from the international community to address the cycles of violence and provide these children with opportunities for a peaceful future. The values upheld by the United Nations and the core principles of humanity must be preserved.

There must be an urgent end to Israel's genocide in Gaza and the unrestrained violence by Israel that has turned Palestinian lands into a graveyard for innocent civilians, especially children and women.

- **Ukraine:** Since the outbreak of conflict in 2014 and the full-scale war in 2022, Ukrainian children have faced displacement, loss, and uncertainty. The photographs from Ukraine highlight the struggles of families fleeing their homes and the psychological impact on children who witness the destruction of their communities. Scenes of children at border crossings or seeking shelter in makeshift camps demonstrate their resilience in the face of adversity. Yet, these images also serve as a stark call to action for the global community to support rebuilding these young lives.
- **Bosnia Herzegovina:** The legacy of the Bosnian War (1992-1995) left a lasting impact on generations. The "Death March" photographs from Srebrenica depict a tragic chapter in history when thousands of Bosniak men and boys were killed in the act of genocide. Images of Bosnian children growing up in the aftermath of such atrocities remind us of the enduring scars of war. These children's stories highlight the importance of reconciliation and the need to educate future generations about the perils of ethnic hatred and violence.

These photographs not only documented the struggles of children but also acted as a call to action, urging attendees to advocate for policy changes and direct support for affected communities.

A Vision for the Future

The discussions at the congress and conference, along with the compelling visuals of the exhibition, underscored the interconnectedness of global challenges. The need to prioritize children's well-being in all dimensions—education, health, safety, and socio-emotional support—is evident. These events called upon leaders, educators, and communities to embrace a collective responsibility for shaping a world where every child can thrive.

As a global academic community, we must act as agents of change, fostering environments where children's voices are heard and their rights protected. Let this be a turning point—a moment

where we move from dialogue to action, ensuring a brighter and more equitable future for all children.

Conclusion

The 1st International Congress on Children in All Dimensions and the Rectors' Conference reaffirmed the critical importance of global collaboration in addressing the challenges faced by children. By weaving the narratives from the "Being a Child Photography Exhibition" into our academic and policy efforts, we are reminded of the urgent need for empathy, action, and innovation. Together, we can and must build a world where every child has the opportunity to flourish.

Prof. Dr. Ersan Aslan

Rector

Kırıkkale University, Türkiye

The Effect of AI on Today's Children

Barbara W. Carpenter, PhD

Dean, International Affairs

Southern University, USA

New advances in technology are changing education. Some educators say AI will be essential to learning.

There are lots of promises but also many potential pitfalls.

Those pitfalls include:

- student data being collected and misused
- creating a dependence on technology
- Some information can reinforce and perpetuate biases against some groups

Researchers and educators must be aware of those problems and develop strategies to avoid them.

We also see many potential benefits for students AND teachers:

- Data-driven insights and advances for individual students and for entire schools and systems
- Creating innovative teaching tools
- Giving teachers more time working with students

“But there are a lot of ways we teach that aren’t great, and a big fear with AI in particular is that we just get more efficient at teaching badly. This is a moment to pay attention, to do things differently”. Says, Dan Schwartz, Dean of the Stanford Graduate School of Education

Educators’ first worry about AI was students using ChatGPT or other chatbots to cheat by passing off the AI’s writing as their own.

Schools are adopting policies about AI use and exploring opportunities:

AI can generate reading assignments

AI can coach students during the writing process

AI can automate tasks like grading and lesson planning

“AI has the capacity to actually help teachers and free them up to do the human work that drew them to the profession in the first place”

Some moves are being made to make teachers’ lives better, not replace them.

Virtual field trips to help students experience what they are studying is positive. These are just some of my thoughts.

The benefits of AI and its effect on our children are exciting, but there are shortcomings. Understanding both will help educators innovate and create to support and teach Today’s Children.

Impacts of Global Climate Change on Food Security

Prof. Dr. Naim Deniz AYZ

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Abstract

Global climate change refers to the increase in average surface temperature and changes in climate as a result of the rapid increase in the accumulation of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere by human impacts such as the use of fossil fuels, land use changes, deforestation and industrial processes. The agricultural sector is both the sector most affected by climate change and one of the most important sectors for combating climate change. While each degree Celsius increase in average temperature will reduce the yield of food production, food production systems cause significant greenhouse gas generation, water use and water pollution. Food loss and food waste cause 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, achieving food security in the face of climate change requires coordinated global efforts, innovative agricultural practices and resilient food systems. By proactively addressing these challenges, food security should be protected for future generations and a more sustainable and equitable world should be built.

Introduction

Climate change is the changes in climate and weather conditions resulting from human activities that directly or indirectly disrupt the composition of the global atmosphere, in addition to natural climate change observed over comparable time periods. Global climate change refers to the increase in average surface temperature and changes in climate as a result of the rapid increase in the accumulation of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere by human impacts such as; use of fossil fuels, land use changes, deforestation and industrial processes. Climate change is not just about temperature increase, drought and changes in rain regime. The frequency and severity of extreme events like wind, storm, hail, and natural disasters such as floods, landslides and forest fires are also increasing. The agricultural sector is both the sector most affected by climate change and one of the most important sectors for combating climate change. In addition to measures to reduce greenhouse gas emission, measures for food security need to be taken. The

world is facing an unprecedented challenge with climate change posing a serious threat to food security (Kırıkkale Üniversitesi, 2022; TARPOL, 2024).

Global climate change is altering weather patterns, affecting water supplies, and degrading soil health, which in turn impacts food production, distribution, and accessibility. As global temperatures continue to rise and the weather becomes increasingly erratic, food security for human around the world is at risk. This article explores the various ways climate change influences food security and outlines potential strategies to address this growing crisis (Kırıkkale Üniversitesi, 2022; TARPOL, 2024).

Changes in Crop Yields and Productivity

The most important constraint of agricultural production is climate. One of the most direct ways climate change affects food security is through its impact on crop yields. Extreme weather events, such as droughts, heat waves, floods, and storms, are becoming more frequent and intense, disrupting farming cycles. Higher temperatures can impair crop growth, especially for temperature-sensitive staples like wheat, rice, and maize. For instance, prolonged periods of heat stress can reduce the flowering and fruiting of crops, leading to lower yields. It is predicted that each degree celsius increase in average temperature will reduce the yield of wheat by an average of 6%, corn by 8%, rice by 3% and soybeans by 3%. It should not be forgotten that these products are both direct human food and animal feed (TARPOL, 2024; UN, 2023). Therefore, the decrease in productivity in crop production will also negatively affect animal-origin food production. This year, we are experiencing the hottest period in the 200 years since the industrial revolution. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports state that the world's average temperature has increased by 1.1 °C compared to the pre-industrial revolution period (UN, 2023). Under current conditions, this increase is expected to be 3°C in 2100. It is stated that a 3 °C temperature increase will cause an efficiency loss of 25-50% (TARPOL, 2024). Furthermore, shifting rainfall patterns make it difficult for farmers to predict planting and harvesting seasons. In many areas, water scarcity has already become a limiting factor for agriculture.

Degradation of Soil and Water Resources

Soil health and water availability are vital for agricultural productivity, and climate change is negatively impacting both. As temperatures rise, soil quality deteriorates due to increased rates of erosion, nutrient depletion, and reduced organic matter. Heat and drought conditions cause soil to dry out faster, making it more vulnerable to erosion by wind and water. Flooding, another consequence of climate change can wash away nutrient-rich topsoil, further reducing soil fertility (FAO, 2014). If precautions regarding global climate action are not taken, about 20% reduction in water availability is expected by 2030. Water scarcity, exacerbated by climate change, is already a pressing issue in regions dependent on rainfall and irrigation for agriculture. Melting glaciers, declining snowpacks, and shrinking river flows are reducing the water supplies needed for irrigation, threatening the productivity of millions of farms globally. This is especially problematic in water-scarce regions like the Mediterranean basin, Middle East, parts of Africa, and Central Asia, where agriculture relies on stressed water resources (Ayaz and Göncüoğlu, 2024).

Increased Pests and Diseases

Warmer temperatures and shifting precipitation patterns are creating favorable conditions for the spread of pests, pathogens, and invasive species that can devastate crops. For example, locust swarms, which have historically impacted parts of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, are becoming more frequent and intense due to climate-driven changes in weather patterns. In warmer and wetter climates, insects and fungi that harm crops can thrive and expand their geographical range, impacting food production in new areas (UN, 2024). Additionally, livestock are also vulnerable to heat stress and disease spread under changing climate conditions. The increase in pests and diseases not only affects the quantity of food available but also its quality and safety, as contaminated crops and livestock products can pose health risks to consumers (Göncüoğlu and Ayaz, 2024).

Rising Food Prices and Economic Instability

As climate change disrupts food production and supply chains, food prices are expected to rise. Crop failures, reduced yields, and higher costs associated with adapting to climate impacts will

lead to increased costs for food. This is particularly concerning low-income households and regions where food expenditures already make up a significant portion of family budgets. Higher food prices could lead to increased malnutrition and hunger as more people struggle to afford basic dietary needs. Moreover, economic instability due to climate-related food scarcity can exacerbate political tensions and lead to social unrest. Countries that are highly dependent on food imports or have fragile economies are especially vulnerable. For example, countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of the Middle East are susceptible to food price shocks, which could destabilize local economies and lead to wider regional consequences (UN, 2024).

Displacement and Migration

Climate-induced displacement is a growing concern, particularly for communities that rely on agriculture as a primary livelihood. As land becomes less arable and food production becomes more uncertain, people may be forced to migrate in search of better opportunities. Climate-related displacement often disrupts local food systems, creating additional pressures in the areas where people migrate. For instance, rural communities in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, where agriculture supports large portions of the population, face higher risks of climate-induced migration (UN, 2024).

Impact of food production on Global Climate Change

Food systems account for approximately 21-37% of greenhouse gas emissions, 70% of freshwater use and 78% of water pollution. Animal farming, especially cattle, is responsible for 15% of global emission by enteric methane (Erol and Demir, 2024; OECD, 2023). Therefore, some European countries such as the Netherlands are reducing livestock numbers to combat climate change (Erol and Demir, 2024).

The global dimensions of food loss and food waste are significant and cause environmental, social and economic risks and threats. Approximately 1.3 billion tons of food, which are 1/3 of the total food produced worldwide, are lost and wasted annually (FAO, 2011). Food loss and food waste cause unnecessary use of 20% of the agricultural production area, 24% of water consumption and 20% of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. About 38% of the total energy expenditure in the food supply chain is wasted through food loss and food waste. Food loss and

food waste cause 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions 4.4 GtCO₂-eq (Erol and Demir, 2024; FAO, 2013; FAO. 2024)

In this context, it is considered a more realistic approach to take measures to prevent food loss and waste in order to reduce the impact of food production on global climate change while combating hunger.

Key Policy Documents Regarding the Agriculture and Food Sector in the Fight Against Climate Change

Although Türkiye is not responsible for climate change, has declared that it will reduce greenhouse gas emission and fight against climate change by becoming a part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2004, Kyoto Protocol (UNFCCC, 1998) in 2009 and Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015) in 2021.

In this context key policy documents regarding the agriculture and food sector have been prepared such as:

- Twelfth Development Plan (2024-2028)
- Medium Term Program (2024-2028)
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Strategy Plan (2024-2028)
- EU Green Deal Action Plan (EU Commission, 2020)
- Climate Council (2022)
- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (2024-2030)
- Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan (2024-2030)
- Water Efficiency Strategy Document and Action Plan (2023-2033)
- Energy Efficiency 2030 Strategy

Mitigating the Impacts of Climate Change on Food Security

Today, approximately 735 million people in the world face hunger (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WHO and WFP, 2023). Despite the negative effects of climate change, it is estimated that the world population will be 10 billion in 2050. In this case, it is stated that there will be 50% increase in

food and meat needs. Fair sharing and waste issues should also be taken into consideration (UNEP, 2021 and 2024).

To combat the effects of climate change on food security, a multifaceted approach is needed. A few key strategies are (World Economic Forum, 2023):

Climate-Resilient Agriculture: Developing and promoting climate-resilient crop varieties that can withstand heat, drought, and flooding will be critical. Crops that are genetically resilient to changing weather patterns will help stabilize food production.

Improved Water Management: Efficient irrigation systems, rainwater harvesting, and groundwater recharge projects can help mitigate water scarcity. Techniques such as drip irrigation and precision farming help optimize water usage and increase agricultural productivity.

Sustainable Land Use Practices: Practices like crop rotation, agroforestry, and conservation tillage can help maintain soil health and reduce erosion. Soil conservation will be essential to preserving arable land and ensuring long-term food security.

Early Warning and Disaster Preparedness: Early warning systems and improved meteorological forecasting can help farmers prepare for extreme weather events and reduce crop losses. Disaster preparedness initiatives are also vital for providing immediate assistance to communities affected by climate-related food shortages.

Investment in Agricultural Innovation: Advances in agricultural technology, such as gene editing, vertical farming, and smart irrigation systems, can improve resilience and productivity. Governments and private sectors must invest in research and innovation to ensure that food systems can adapt to changing climates.

International Cooperation and Policy Support: Addressing climate change's impact on food security requires global cooperation. Policies that support climate-smart agriculture, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and provide financial aid to vulnerable regions are essential to building a more resilient global food system.

In addition to all these, wars around the world also cause an increase in greenhouse emissions. It was reported that jet fuel, bombs and concrete generated 60 MtCO₂-eq in Gaza. The projected

emissions from the first 365 days of the Israel-Gaza war were greater than the annual emissions of 120 individual countries and territories. Also, the rebuilding of Gaza will entail a total annual emissions figure higher than over 130 countries (Neimark, 2024). Additionally, war-related greenhouse gas emissions for the first 18 months of the war in Ukraine were 77 MtCO₂-eq (Bun et al., 2024). Therefore, if global climate change is to be combated sincerely, wars around the world must end.

Conclusion

In conclusion, climate change represents one of the most significant challenges to global food security, and its effects are felt in many parts of the world. Rising temperatures, erratic weather conditions, and increasing pests and diseases threaten food production, distribution, and affordability. Achieving food security in the face of climate change requires coordinated global efforts, innovative agricultural practices and resilient food systems. By proactively addressing these challenges, food security should be protected for future generations and a more sustainable and equitable world should be built.

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A Global Vision for Empowering the Children of Tomorrow with a Focus on African American Children in the United States

Sonja Feist

Provost and Senior Vice President
of Academic and Student Affairs
Chicago State University, USA

Introduction

I bring a particular lens through which I view children's future. My focus is on two groups of children whose futures we must prioritize: African American children in the United States and children worldwide.

African American Children in the U.S.: A Legacy of Inequality

When we consider the plight of African American children, we must acknowledge the painful legacy of inequality that continues to shape their lives. The history of systemic racism in the United States has left African American children facing significant disparities in education, healthcare, housing, and justice. Despite progress in certain areas, the racial divide continues to limit opportunities for millions of Black children.

Consider the education system, where African American children are still more likely to attend underfunded schools, to be disciplined at disproportionately higher rates, and to have less access to advanced coursework. The "school-to-prison pipeline" is a grim reality, with African American children more likely to be funneled into the juvenile justice system due to racial biases, both implicit and explicit. These challenges are compounded by a lack of access to quality mental health services, particularly for children living in poverty. Trauma and adversity impact their ability to thrive academically and socially.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further widened these gaps. African American children were disproportionately affected by the digital divide, with many lacking the technology and internet access needed for remote learning. Families already struggling to make ends meet faced even more financial insecurity, leaving many children in precarious living conditions. The economic

impact of the pandemic is something African American children will continue to feel for years to come.

At Chicago State University, we are acutely aware of these challenges because many of our students come from these very communities. Staff and faculty alike work tirelessly to create pathways for success for our students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college. However, as an educator, I know that we must reach children much earlier to address the systemic barriers that African American children face long before they enter higher education.

Addressing the Root Causes of Inequity

To truly improve the future of African American children, we must address the root causes of their challenges. This requires bold, comprehensive policy reform, and an unwavering commitment to equity at all levels of government and society. We must invest in early childhood education, making sure that African American children have access to high-quality preschool programs that lay the foundation for future academic success. Research consistently shows that early education can help close the achievement gap, yet African American children are less likely to be enrolled in these programs due to cost and accessibility issues. We must reform disciplinary practices in schools. African American children are often subject to harsher disciplinary measures than their peers for similar behaviors. This not only contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline but also creates a hostile learning environment that undermines their potential. We need restorative justice models that promote healing and reconciliation, rather than punishment, for children who are often reacting to the trauma and instability in their lives.

Mental health support is another critical area where African American children are underserved. The stigma around mental health in Black communities, combined with a lack of access to culturally competent care, leaves many children struggling in silence. We must ensure that schools are equipped with counselors and mental health professionals who understand the unique challenges these children face and can provide the necessary support.

Finally, economic empowerment must be a central component of any effort to improve the futures of African American children. Poverty continues to be one of the most significant

barriers to success for African American families. We need policies that support families through access to affordable housing, healthcare, and fair wages, allowing parents to provide stable, nurturing environments for their children. Only when we tackle these systemic issues head-on will we begin to see real, sustained progress for African American children.

Children in the World: A Shared Responsibility

While the plight of African American children is specific to the United States, many of the challenges they face are mirrored in marginalized communities around the world. Children growing up in war-torn regions, refugee camps, or in extreme poverty face the same barriers to education, healthcare, and stability. Globally, more than 150 million children live in extreme poverty, and many lack access to the basic resources needed to survive, let alone thrive.

At the heart of both the national and international struggle for children's futures is the question of equity: How do we ensure that every child, regardless of race, nationality, or socioeconomic status, has the opportunity to live a life of dignity and fulfillment? How do we create systems that not only protect children but actively nurture their potential? These are the pressing questions that we, as a global community, must answer together.

Education, once again, is central to the solution. In fact, Nelson Mandela once said *Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all.* Just as African American children in the United States face unequal access to quality education, millions of children worldwide lack access to even basic schooling. We must make universal, equitable education a global priority. But education alone is not enough.

Children need stable homes, healthcare, and protection from violence. They need governments that are committed to upholding their rights and ensuring their well-being. They need communities that celebrate diversity and foster inclusivity.

The Role of Technology: Bridging the Divide or Creating New Gaps?

In the 21st century, technology has enormous potential to transform education and create new

opportunities for children around the world. However, we must be cautious about how we deploy these technologies, ensuring that they do not exacerbate existing inequalities. In the U.S., the digital divide was laid bare during the pandemic, but this is a global issue. Children in low-income countries, as well as marginalized children in wealthy countries, continue to lack access to the devices and internet connectivity needed to participate in digital learning.

Bridging this divide will require substantial investment in digital infrastructure, particularly in rural and underserved areas. But we must also teach children how to use technology in ways that are empowering rather than harmful. Digital literacy, cybersecurity, and ethical digital practices should be part of the curriculum for all children. At Chicago State University, we have made it a priority to incorporate these lessons into our programs, ensuring that our students are prepared for a digital future that is equitable and just.

A Vision for the Future

As we reflect on the challenges facing African American children in the U.S. and children around the world, we must also hold onto hope. The potential of these children is boundless, but they need our collective action to help them realize that potential. Our task is not only to protect children from the harms of inequality and injustice but to actively create systems that nurture their dreams, amplify their voices, and support their growth.

It is our responsibility to dismantle the barriers that hold children back—whether those barriers are rooted in racism, poverty, or global inequity. Together, we can build a future where every child has the opportunity to thrive, and where every child can contribute to a just and equitable global society. It will require bold action, sustained commitment, and a shared vision. I believe that we are up to the task.

Mental Health of Children with Special Needs in the Algerian Educational System

Prof. Dr. Adel Mezough

The Rector of Blida 2 University, Algeria

Introduction

Recent years have witnessed a significant development in the field of education, psychological and social care for persons with special needs rights, which states have resorted to plans, strategies and policies to ensure the rights and quality care for persons with special needs through the provision of education and rehabilitation programmes and appropriate activities according to Algeria's situation. Algeria is one of the states that has paid considerable attention to this group by integrating it into social life, from teaching in adapted primary education departments or by incorporating it into specialized centers for different type of disability.

Within the framework of international conventions and obligations to ensure adequate mental health care for people with reduced mobility, this communication will address the educational strategy implemented by the Algerian state for the benefit of disabled children enrolled in the Algerian educational system.

Using AI applications designed for people with special needs:

AI applications are one of the most important technologies designed for people of determination which promotes their psychosocial health integration. Various technical devices such as various devices and applications are also considered as audiovisual dynamics as well as educational materials, teachers and different strategies such as evaluation and various theories and research in the fields rights, the systematic and effective use of all the above contributes to the creation of an enabling educational environment for people of determination, enabling them to make good use of and control over technology conducive to learning, as well as enabling them to carry out educational technology activities in which they are assisted by a specialized team to produce professionals and specialists in various fields despite the existence of disability.

The University of Blida 2 Lounici Ali is one of the first Algerian universities to provide an addition in this field. It has established INSIDE center which was realized in 2023 within the project of Erasmus plus. The center is equipped with modern devices and new technologies and contains departments adapted to the level of the center to teach students with special needs and we can therefore say that we are starting to see good results in this area.

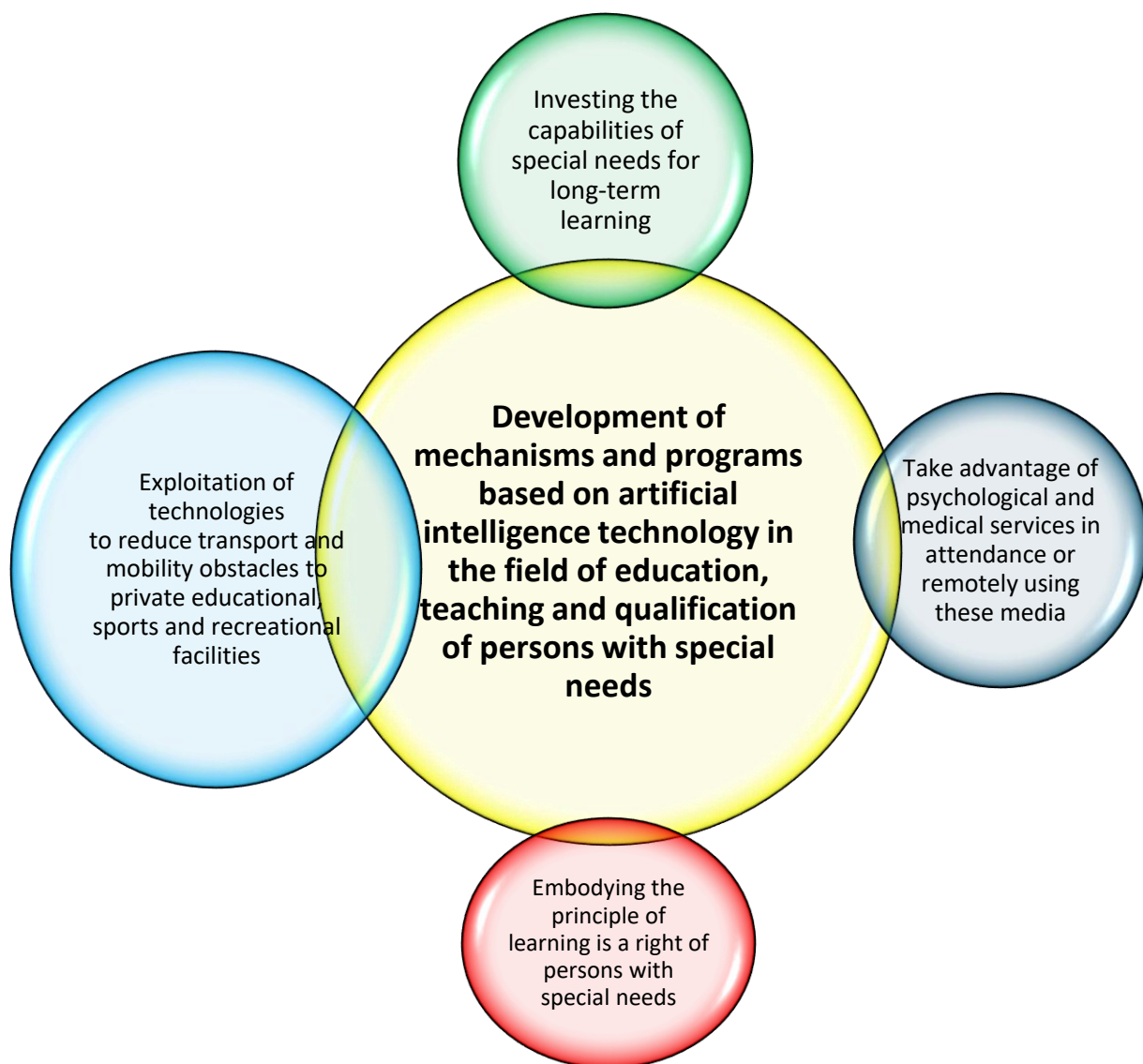
INSIDE aims to:

- Development of educational programmes for persons with special needs
- Develop adapted educational tools for people with special needs that care about their needs and meet their different needs
- Development of various means and media, whether audio, visual or motor, adapted to the type of disability
- Use of auxiliary technologies for education and learning.

Technology help:

Technology help means any device or product made according to demand aimed at increasing the scientific and functional competence of people of determination, including:

- Computers loaded with various applications and programs such as optical control of computer excavator for persons with motor impairment
- Braille printers and tactile images for visually impaired and others
- Smart panels with applications that enable people of determination to learn in ways appropriate to their disabilities
- Various platforms and digital identities for students with special needs



Algerian strategies for teaching persons with special needs:

There is a significant difference between the teaching of people of determination and that of ordinary children. The difference results in two things: curricula and teaching methods. The curriculum of education for people of determination is different from the curriculum of ordinary pupils because it is developed by a specialized committee and is commensurate with the age and corresponding level of schooling.

Pupils with special needs cannot develop a built curriculum, but a plan for each child is developed as individualized according to his or her disability on the one hand, his or her preparedness, performance capacity, and the child's ability to learn skills.

The teaching method is often individual to dissolve, and the special needs depend on teaching basic skills and autonomy skills, such as feeding the use of WC, dress and other skills, while it is collective in teaching children to ordinary and at different stages and stages of education.

Special Education Teacher's Tasks in The System for Algeria

Teachers with special needs are mandated to provide specialized education for persons with disabilities and to carry out all matters relating to the observation of persons with disabilities, their rearing and social integration, ensuring their re-education and adaptation, as well as organizing and monitoring activation and recreation workers for persons with disabilities, as stipulated in article 34 of the Executive Decree of Algerian legislation. Teachers are also required to participate in the preparation and implementation of programmes for the disadvantaged and are required to have a courier size of 22 to 30 hours depending on the type of educational mission.

It is also worth noting that Algerian education for people with special needs is more practical and specialized, covering all categories of individuals identified and all types of disabilities.

Promotion of the mental health of persons with special needs:

People with reduced mobility require special attention in terms of learning, in addition to their specific needs within the educational environment. This makes them extraordinary individuals who need assistance even to meet the most basic needs, both material and emotional. Children with special needs have an impact on the family as a whole, resulting in increased stress and pressure on parents, especially as they are not eligible for this type of duty. Caring for a disabled child requires specific training and rehabilitation, which creates options either for the child's marginalization or for diligent learning and rehabilitation to provide quality and excellent services, depending on the resources available to the parents and their social environment to raise and educate the child.

Children, for their part, feel about themselves and are aware of their disability and that they do not resemble ordinary children, which always makes them vulnerable to anxiety and stress

affecting their mental health and may lead to psychiatric disorders that result mainly from the existence of disability, such as psychological loneliness, anxiety, depression and aggression resulting from isolation or fear of integration into society.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is a state of complete psychological, physical and social well-being and not merely free of disease.

Mental health promotion requirements for persons with special needs:

For persons with special needs a range of needs and requirements:

- Psychological support from the family
- Community support for children with special needs
- Providing relaxing services
- Provide well-being and recreation such as play and exercise
- Provision of health services
- The need for the family to communicate with the school

Which is what the next scheme represents:



The role of Algerian teaching system in supporting the mental health of persons with special needs:

Algeria's teaching system operates on a set of legislation based primarily on the fact that teaching is a right and a duty of every child and guarantees equality and free education at all educational levels, with free treatment and health services for teachers within the screening and follow-up units of educational institutions.

Algeria's teaching system also ensures the allocation of adapted classrooms for children with special needs with facilities and pathways to facilitate their mobility.

Algeria's teaching system contributes support and facilities to support persons with special needs by formulating a substantial budget for the purpose of creating specialized professors and acquiring the necessary means and all the means to contribute to the physical and mental health of children with special needs

The teaching system for persons with special needs seeks to benefit from programmes aimed at persons with disabilities and programmes aimed at families of persons with special needs and their families jointly produced by Algerian universities or available international programmes. It also works to draw on national and international experiences to create and produce competencies and specialists to build or develop such programmes and even supervise their implementation. The Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Ministry of Social Solidarity and other ministries are involved in joining forces to promote physical and psychological health and ensure quality care for persons with special needs.

Conclusion

Access to a child with special needs does not always mean a lack of mental health. A range of different factors and assistance, especially the availability of mental health requirements, may lead to the psychosocial well-being of this group and from permanent precious health while providing and using modern technologies and auxiliaries and providing psychological support to ensure that children with special needs are taught skills and science, and techniques that help them progress in life and remove the burden on their families, that is what Algeria seeks, let alone all the world's nations, to pursue a good and balanced system of teaching aimed primarily at

involving children with special needs in parallel with their ordinary counterparts in the educational process and at all stages of study, so as to reach the university, move to professional life and enjoy the most mental health.

Raising Children and Education in the Digital Age

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Abstract

This study explores how technology has transformed parenting and education, offering both opportunities and challenges. While digital tools provide children with enhanced learning experiences and access to vast information, they also bring concerns like excessive screen time, cyberbullying, and the need for digital literacy.

The article emphasizes the importance of teaching children responsible technology use, setting boundaries around screen time, and ensuring online safety. It highlights the role of teachers and parents in guiding children through this digital landscape, balancing the benefits of technology with healthy habits for physical and emotional development.

Key words: Digital age, Cyberbullying, Screen time, Online safety, Children

Introduction to the Digital Age

The rapid development of educational technologies and the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in education are topics of great interest worldwide (Karoğlu, Bal & Çimşir, 2020). However, the ease with which children can access these new digital tools has raised concerns among teachers, parents, and policymakers. Managing children's use of ICTs, particularly at home, is challenging as many believe that the digital-native generation will ultimately gain more benefits than harm from easy access to the internet and mobile devices. Given the rapid advancement of digital technologies and the potential negative impacts of overuse, along with the difficulty in mitigating digital risks, it is essential for both parents and governments to exercise greater caution in the future (Kaya, 2021).

This study delves into the opportunities and challenges presented by emerging digital technologies, which offer dynamic teaching environments, student-centered learning experiences, vast educational resources, and widespread broadband access, even at the household level. While restrictions in today's digital age may seem outdated, the potential educational benefits from digital technologies include self-paced learning, creative exploration, continuous learning outside school, and access to diverse, non-traditional educational resources. This study focuses on the role of families in education, particularly how children under 18 can leverage these technologies to develop foundational skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Defining the Digital Age

What is the Digital Age? If we use the definition of the Digital Age in Media Literacy, the Digital Age is full of wonder and potential. It fosters creativity and collaboration. Technology in the Digital Age lets us communicate anywhere and at any time. We can experience the world in new, fascinating ways. We can learn about virtually anything that we want to know.

In the digital age, it is also seen that new technologies communication and culture are reshaping and that in the recent past, these technologies have rapidly surrounded children's culture. The Internet was initially a network structure where people shared information and communicated and had not yet become an area that children could access and benefit from. Technologies that have been failing for thirty years have provided children with access to the internet, and for example, search engines, digital games and educational programs have provided children with online information exchange and game opportunities. According to the report prepared by the American Pediatric Association in 2016, today's children spend a lot of time in virtual environments that are both digital and abstract. In the last decade, the use of digital media, including interactive and social media, has been increasing rapidly. In the digital age, children are also trying to keep up with the abundance of screens that surround them and enslave them. They are living a completely different childhood, a digitalized life, than ours (Biricik, 2022).

According to TUIK data, 82% of the population in Turkey are internet users. This confirms that digital platforms are a reality and necessity of our age. According to the Information Technology Usage Survey conducted in 2021 among children between the ages of 6-15, 82.7% of children in

Turkey use the internet. Approximately 90% of children who use the internet stated that they use the internet almost every day. According to the same survey, 64.4% of children use mobile phones and 55.6% use computers (TUIK, 2021).

Impact of Digital Technology on Parenting

The digital revolution has transformed the way parents approach raising their children. From infancy through adolescence, children are exposed to digital devices, and parents face the challenge of guiding them through this highly connected environment. While technology offers many advantages, such as access to educational content, communication tools, and entertainment, it also introduces a host of new concerns.

The development of communication technologies re-interprets social relations. The new form of socialization that occurs independently of time and space through digital platforms has also affected family relations. One of these relations is the parent-child relationship. Parent-child relations have been reshaped by the influence of digital platforms, and the era of digital children and digital parents has begun. While digital parents ensure that their children benefit from all the opportunities of digital environments, they also aim to protect them from the risks that these environments contain (Sancar, 2023).

In the digital age, parents are tasked with the responsibility of guiding their children through the complexities of the online world. This involves not only setting boundaries but also modeling positive digital behavior. Parents should demonstrate a healthy relationship with technology, showing children how to use it for learning, creativity, and communication while avoiding overreliance on screens for entertainment or social validation.

Screen Time and Its Effects

Screen time is a hot topic in digital parenting due to concerns over its potential impact on children's physical and mental health. Excessive screen use can contribute to physical issues like poor posture, eye strain, and sleep disturbances. Mentally, it has been linked to attention problems, reduced social interaction, and emotional challenges such as anxiety and depression,

especially if social media is involved (Muppalla, Vuppalapati, Pulliahgaru & Sreenivasulu, 2023).

Setting clear boundaries is essential to help children maintain a healthy balance. The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests a maximum of one hour of screen time per day for children aged 2-5, with older children needing to balance screen use alongside activities like physical exercise, schoolwork, and socializing. Parents play a vital role in setting these boundaries, ensuring technology use is complemented by physical, social, and enriching activities. Techniques like establishing specific device-use times, monitoring content, and promoting family activities can help mitigate the negative effects of excessive screen time.

Digital Literacy and Education

Digital literacy is a critical skill for children growing up in the digital age. More than just knowing how to use devices, digital literacy involves understanding how to navigate the vast digital landscape responsibly and critically. This skill is essential not only for academic success but also for personal growth and future employment.

Karoğlu, Bal and Çimşir (2020) mention that digital literacy and education play a critical role in adapting to the demands of a technologically advanced society. Society 5.0 envisions a human-centered society integrating technology into all aspects of life, including education. In this context, Türkiye's educational system aims to develop students' digital skills, preparing them for a digital economy and fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability in a digital environment. They emphasize the importance of integrating digital literacy into school curricula, ensuring that students are not only proficient with technology but also understand its ethical use and potential impact on society. This transformation includes implementing new teaching methods, such as blended learning and digital classrooms, and investing in digital infrastructure to ensure equitable access for all students. Educators are encouraged to undergo professional development to stay current with digital tools and teaching strategies. Overall, digital literacy in Türkiye's education system is positioned as a foundational skill, necessary for success in the digital economy and for shaping students who can contribute responsibly to a technologically integrated society.

Importance of Digital Literacy

The importance of digital literacy cannot be overstated in today's society. As schools increasingly adopt digital tools in their teaching methods, students need to learn how to use these tools effectively. This includes understanding how to research, create, and collaborate online. Digital literacy also encompasses learning about digital etiquette, ensuring children know how to interact respectfully and responsibly with others online.

According to Kaya (2021), digital literacy is crucial because it equips children with the skills needed to navigate an increasingly digital world responsibly and effectively. As digital technology shapes nearly every aspect of daily life, digital literacy goes beyond basic tech skills; it involves critical thinking, the ability to assess information accurately, and understanding online safety and ethics. The importance of digital literacy lies in preparing children to be informed digital citizens who can use technology thoughtfully, avoid misinformation, and engage positively in online environments. The article underscores that both parents and educators play a key role in fostering these skills by modelling responsible technology use and guiding children on how to interact safely and ethically online. Digital literacy is essential not only for academic and future career success but also for helping children thrive in a connected, global society.

Cybersecurity and Online Safety for Children

As children spend more time online, concerns about cybersecurity and their safety have become paramount. The internet is a vast and often unpredictable space, with threats ranging from cyberbullying to identity theft and exposure to harmful content. Ensuring children's online safety requires a proactive approach from both parents and educators.

Hartikainen, Iivari and Kinnula (2015) discuss cybersecurity and online safety for children, focusing on the activities they engage in, the associated risks, and the protective measures in place. Children frequently use Web 2.0 platforms for social networking, gaming, content creation, and communication, which allow them to connect, learn, and express themselves. However, these interactions also expose them to potential risks like cyberbullying, privacy breaches, and harmful content. Parents and educators are particularly concerned about children's exposure to inappropriate content, online predators, and privacy issues, as children may not fully

understand the long-term consequences of their online activities. To address these concerns, various cybersecurity measures have been implemented, such as parental control tools, privacy settings, and age restrictions on social media. Educational initiatives also play a significant role, teaching children about secure online behaviors, such as maintaining strong passwords, recognizing potential threats, and knowing when and how to report suspicious activities. Parents and educators are encouraged to actively guide children's online interactions by setting boundaries, monitoring activity, and discussing safe practices. The article highlights the importance of balancing children's freedom to explore the internet with the protective steps needed to ensure they navigate it safely.

Best Practices for Keeping Children Safe Online

According to Elsaesser, Russell, Ohannessian, & Patton (2017), here are some recommendations for parents to help prevent cyberbullying or protect their adolescents from being victims of it:

Open Communication: Establishing strong communication between parents and children and discussing potential online risks openly can make it easier for children to share experiences of cyberbullying. Encouraging non-judgmental, open discussions about online experiences is key.

Setting Boundaries on Technology and Social Media: Parents are encouraged to regulate their children's screen time and social media use. These boundaries can help reduce the risk of exposure to harmful content or bullying. Limiting device use before bed, in particular, can help prevent digital overuse.

Education on Online Behavior: Teaching children the importance of respectful behavior online can help them avoid actions that may lead to cyberbullying. Emphasizing the significance of showing respect toward others supports the development of a healthy digital identity.

Awareness of Online Safety and Privacy: Parents should educate children about being careful with personal information and using privacy settings properly. Teaching children about privacy protection and building a secure online identity is essential.

Monitoring Online Activities: Instead of fully controlling children's online activities, parents are advised to supervise them with awareness. Parents should know which platforms their children are on and, if needed, check the age restrictions for those platforms.

Creating a Supportive Environment: Providing a supportive space where children feel safe to talk to their parents about bullying or negative online experiences is crucial. This approach fosters a sense of security, allowing children to express themselves and cope with challenges.

These recommendations offer parents strategies for helping their children stay safe in the digital world. The parental role in preventing cyberbullying involves guiding children appropriately and establishing healthy boundaries for online activity.

Conclusion and Future Perspectives

As we move further into the digital age, the relationship between children, technology, and education will continue to evolve. The challenge for parents and educators will be to harness the benefits of digital tools while mitigating the risks they pose. As technology advances, the importance of fostering digital literacy, promoting cybersecurity, and managing screen time will only increase (Biricik, 2022; Kaya, 2021).

As technology continues to evolve, parents and educators must stay informed and adaptive. By promoting digital literacy, teaching responsible online behavior, and setting boundaries for screen time, we can help children develop the skills they need to thrive in a digital world while safeguarding their well-being. Parents and educators must create a balanced digital environment that fosters growth while protecting children from these risks (Elsaesser, Russell, Ohannessian, & Patton, 2017). The widespread availability of technology also raises concerns about its effects on children's physical and emotional well-being. The overuse of screens, exposure to inappropriate content, and social media pressure can negatively impact a child's development. In the future, we may see the development of more sophisticated tools for protecting children online, as well as greater integration of digital literacy into school curricula. Parents will need to stay informed about emerging trends in technology to ensure they can guide their children effectively. By maintaining a balanced approach to technology and continuing to emphasize personal development, we can raise children who are not only tech-savvy but also responsible and thoughtful digital citizens (Muppalla, Vuppalapati, Pulliahgaru & Sreenivasulu, 2023).

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Violence in Children

Prof. Dr. Ova Emilia

The Rector of University of Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

It is actually child in the work and comprehensive perspective on our children's future. I apologize that I could not come in person, but my heart is always there. I think because here in Indonesia now, the inauguration of the new president and cabinet is approaching, and there are many dynamic movements. So, I think it is not the right time to have a like to sit in other countries this time. We promise to continue the project under our MOU and also research that will be discussed in the very near future. We are interested in continuing our proposal. We have Kırıkkale University on arms industry and also dry soil agriculture. So actually, the theme is about child in the world. I will share about violence in children and that is also included the sexual violence in children.

Introduction

Child sexual abuse by definition is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend and unable to give informed consent or for which the child is not prepared and cannot give consent so that violates the laws or social agreements of society, and it can include into several types of activities like for example the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity. Second is the exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices, and the third is the exploitative use of children in pornographic performance and material.

Actually, the burden of violence against children is and globally is hard to comprehend. It's too big, and violence affects more than 1 billion children in every country and every community every year. From the best available data from high income countries, the burden and long-lasting consequences of violence against children are considerable both to the children themselves and to society at large, and these are likely to be magnified many fronts in low- and middle-income countries.

Potential Risk Factors

What are the potential risk factors? At least, there are several factors like physical disabilities, prior sexual victimization, and the absence of a protective pattern, so protective pattern is very important here. Also, the sexual victim is victimization which is more frequent in girls than in boys. Boys, however, might be less likely to disclose sexual abuse and might be victimized more often than the reported gender ratio such as this is some of the literature mentioned about this. Compared with other age groups, teenagers have the highest of sexual assault. So, the magnitude is one out of two children or in number #1 billion children suffer from any form of violence each year, and one in four children 25% pick number. One in four children aged under five years live with a mother who is affecting of intimate partner violence. It means that intimate partner violence highly influences the development of children. There is also a tendency that children who live in a house where there is intimate partner violence. Then he or she will also become experiencing this violence in the future life. Thus, 120 million girls and young women under 20 years of age also suffered some form of forced sexual contact. As a consequence, globally each year, there are more than 40,000 deaths in children aged 0 to 17 years with the number of boys more than girls.

Consequences of Violence Against Children

Ladies and gentlemen, what are the consequences? The evidence offered in the past 30 years from needles neuroscience and developmental psychology, social science, and also epidemiology shows that violence against child contributes to social, emotional and cognitive impairments and high-risk behaviors leading to disease, disability social problems and premature mortality, and die at the young age. The other consequences also contribute to child morbidity and mortality, long-lasting effect on mental health, substance misuse, risky sexual behavior, also obesity, and criminal behavior. This kind of effect is the one you will see. When you find a teenager with this kind of effect at school, you can ask what happened in their early life? They also have violence during childhood. The other consequence is exposure to early childhood abuse and trauma, which is not only associated with short and medium-term consequences for the child but long-lasting detrimental effects.

Management and Prevention

And from the study documented from our strong rated literature reveals that there is a strong relationship between exposure to abuse and the cause of death in adults. The problem is really big. How do we manage this case? The management like in Indonesia, we have a team approach. Thus, we cannot only deal with the hospital or health office, but it should start with the adder, community leader, and also the primary healthcare, hospital, health office, and even the police. We make sure that all cases are managed comprehensively until finished. We have many cases that is already being solved because when the case is finished but for the child, the trauma and the detrimental effects should be also managed by the psychologists and by the growth and development unit of the pediatrics department.

The other thing is that we have to increase public literacy, and we use many channels like we also involve schools, universities, and many kinds of media including social media. How do the university rules work for the prevention of this violence against children? Actually, university also has a great role in preparing a future generation so they can lease health and can care their children at their schools in a more conducive and nice family life. We have what we call the movement of health promotion in the university, and one of the pillars is the regulation of the zero tolerance of violence. It started with the commitment which was signed by rector regulation in 2020. It was four years back. Since then, there are many activities that have already been done like for example, training not only to the students but also to the teachers and all the staff and also recruiting the students and ambassadors for mental health and also psychology consultation if they suffered from violation, and we also provide a chalkboard to report. On our website, we also have the link of crisis centre. Anyone can report what happened. Then, we can explore and investigate further the case. We also provide resources for reading whether it is printed and library or online.

Conclusion

I think we have done a lot, and we are very proud that we win the first prize for this effort as healthy campus in Indonesia. Thank you, and I am very pleased if we can share further or this enables with other universities. All children in the future are healthy and also happy because we are very sure that child violence is not inevitable, it is preventable.

Protection and Promotion of Child Health in Türkiye

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Abstract

Children represent a vital segment of society, embodying the future and holding the promise of prosperity for any nation. Their health, well-being, and development are essential in building sustainable societies. This review defines "child" and "health" per international frameworks and focuses on the status of child health in Türkiye, including child mortality, nutrition, and immunization indicators. It also examines the policies and programs Türkiye has implemented to protect and promote child health, such as the National Children's Rights Strategy Document and various healthcare initiatives.

Introduction

The well-being of children is critical to the development of nations (1). The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as any individual under 18 years of age (2). This framework, endorsed globally, stresses the importance of viewing children as unique individuals with special needs that require nurturing and protection. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health is defined not merely as the absence of disease but as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being (3). With children comprising nearly 30% of the world's population as of 2022, their health remains a global priority (4).

Children are particularly susceptible to diseases, malnutrition, and violence. Globally, it is estimated that 15,000 children die each day from preventable causes (5), and every 15 seconds, a child dies due to malnutrition (6). Recognizing the need to protect this vulnerable group, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted in 1989, with Türkiye signing it in 1990 (2). Subsequent frameworks, such as the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) (7) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (8), set further international targets to ensure the welfare of children.

Türkiye's Policies and Frameworks for Child Health

Türkiye has taken considerable steps toward child health promotion. The National Children's Rights Strategy Document (2023-2028) (9) and the Twelfth Development Plan (2024-2028), designed within the framework of Türkiye's 2053 vision, guide the country's efforts (10). Child health policy and maternal and child health services are overseen by the Ministry of Health, and all healthcare services related to child health are provided free of charge.

The major determinants of child health in Türkiye include maternal and family health, socioeconomic conditions, environmental factors, and social support systems.

Key Child Health Indicators in Türkiye

Child health indicators offer a comprehensive view of a society's health, covering aspects such as mortality, fertility, disease prevalence, vaccination, and nutrition. These indicators help assess progress and identify areas requiring improvement.

- **Child Mortality:** Globally, the under-five mortality rate dropped from 76 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 37 in 2022 (11). In Türkiye, the under-five mortality rate fell from 17.7 per 1,000 births in 2009 to 14.5 in 2023 (12), although a slight increase was observed following the earthquakes in February 2023. Infant mortality also decreased from 14 per 1,000 in 2009 to 10 in 2023, while neonatal mortality fell to less than 5 per 1,000 live births. These achievements align with the SDGs (12).
- **Nutrition:** Türkiye faces challenges in nutrition, with a 41% rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months, decreasing to 14% at 4-5 months. Approximately 53% of children under two are appropriately fed, and 34% continue breastfeeding until age two (13). While stunting has declined since 2008 (14, 15), 25% of children aged 6-15 were overweight or obese as of 2022 (16). Among children aged 7-8, the obesity rate increased slightly from 9.9% in 2016 to 10.1% in 2019, as per the European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (17).
- **Immunization:** Immunization coverage is vital for disease prevention. In 2018, 67% of Turkish children were fully immunized. Türkiye's Expanded Program on Immunization

includes vaccinations for pertussis, diphtheria, tetanus, measles, rubella, mumps, tuberculosis, and polio, aiming to control and eventually eradicate these diseases.

Child Health Promotion Programs in Türkiye

The Ministry of Health in Türkiye has implemented several programs to protect and promote child health:

- **Disease Control and Immunization Programs:** These programs target the elimination and eradication of vaccine-preventable diseases.
- **Monitoring Programs:** Systems such as the Birth Notification System and the Infant Mortality Monitoring System track child health data.
- **Health Promotion Programs:** Initiatives include the Health Protection and Promotion Program at School and the Preventive Oral and Dental Health Program.
- **Nutritional Support Programs:** Türkiye addresses deficiencies in iron, iodine, and vitamin D through targeted programs.
- **Screening Programs:** These include neonatal metabolic and endocrine disease screening, as well as newborn hearing and vision screening programs.
- **Education Programs:** Healthcare professionals receive ongoing education to improve service delivery for child health.

Conclusion

Türkiye's child health policies and achievements reflect a strong commitment to meeting international standards, particularly in reducing mortality rates and improving access to free healthcare services. The focus on prenatal care, comprehensive birth services, and postnatal support has contributed significantly to Türkiye's progress. However, challenges remain, particularly concerning nutrition and obesity rates, which have shown a slight increase among children.

The country's efforts to provide a holistic approach that supports the biological, cognitive, emotional, and social health of children and families align with the goals of the SDGs, ensuring a sustainable and healthy future generation.

In Türkiye, children represent a significant portion of the population, comprising one-fourth of the total. Türkiye has made notable strides in reducing under-five and infant mortality rates and increasing breastfeeding rates in the early months of infancy. Ensuring society's health involves protecting children from harm starting in the prenatal period and continuing into adulthood. This requires quality birth services, supportive family structures, and comprehensive health and education services. A holistic approach that meets the physical, mental, and emotional needs of children and families is crucial for a thriving society.

Children are not miniature adults but unique individuals with specific needs. Therefore, protecting and promoting child health is essential for raising a healthy, resilient generation and building a sustainable future.

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Assessing Children Development across Different Cultures

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Introduction

The role of culture in shaping developmental norms and milestones is profound, as cultural expectations vary significantly regarding when children should achieve specific developmental goals. For instance, while walking and talking are seen as essential early achievements across most cultures, the timing and emphasis on these skills can differ. In some Western cultures, children are expected to exhibit early autonomy, such as self-feeding and emotional self-regulation, while other societies may focus more on group harmony and collective responsibilities (Rogoff, 2003; Bornstein, 1995). These cultural expectations are embedded in broader societal structures, influencing not only developmental timelines but also the values instilled in children from infancy (Whiting et al., 1988; Kagitcibasi, 2017).

The Impact of Normative Imperialism

Normative imperialism—where Western societies impose their developmental standards on non-Western cultures—affects how childhood development is assessed globally. Standardized developmental tools, such as cognitive, language, and social-emotional assessments, often reflect Western ideals, emphasizing individual achievement, independence, and cognitive reasoning (Berry, 1989; Greenfield, 1997). However, these standards may not align with the developmental priorities of non-Western cultures that emphasize interdependence and social responsibility, leading to biased assessments that inaccurately portray children as “deficient” simply due to differing cultural values (Kagitcibasi, 2017). This imposition can reinforce stereotypes, disregarding the diverse pathways to healthy development that exist across societies and potentially affecting children’s self-perception and family dynamics.

Parenting Practices and Development

Parenting practices also vary widely across cultures, influencing early cognitive and social development in ways that reflect cultural goals. Western cultures, for example, often emphasize individual autonomy and independent problem-solving, whereas Eastern and African cultures may prioritize interdependence and communal obligations (Super & Harkness, 2002; Greenfield & Suzuki, 1998). These differing emphases shape children's approach to learning and social interactions, affecting their sense of self in relation to others (Bornstein, 1991; Triandis, 1995). However, Western assessments may undervalue the adaptive strengths fostered by non-Western practices, such as social responsibility and collective engagement, instead emphasizing early autonomy and individual self-expression as markers of success (Rogoff, 2003). Consequently, Western developmental tools applied across cultures may overlook essential social competencies valued in other societies, creating a one-size-fits-all model that fails to capture alternative developmental pathways.

Socialization Goals and Educational Approaches

Socialization goals are another aspect of culture that profoundly shapes childhood development, with Western cultures generally emphasizing autonomy and personal achievement, while interdependence and group harmony are often prioritized in Eastern and African societies (Triandis, 1995; Kagitcibasi, 2017). Early childhood education approaches reflect these goals, as Western systems tend to formalize early education with a focus on structured learning, whereas many non-Western cultures adopt community-based learning that fosters social bonds and prepares children for collective responsibilities (Greenfield & Suzuki, 1998; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These educational approaches illustrate how culture not only influences developmental milestones but also contributes to shaping lifelong attitudes toward learning.

Gender Roles and Language Development

Gender roles are also heavily influenced by cultural norms, shaping the behaviors encouraged or discouraged in children. In Western cultures, greater flexibility in gender roles may support both boys and girls in exploring a variety of activities, while other cultures may promote specific behaviors based on traditional gender expectations (Whiting et al., 1988; Triandis, 1995). These

norms affect children's play activities, emotional expression, and subsequent developmental trajectories (Bornstein, 1995). Additionally, language development, including bilingualism or dialect use, reflects cultural expectations, affecting cognitive and linguistic growth. The timing and methods of language introduction vary with some cultures encouraging early bilingualism, which research shows can enhance cognitive flexibility (Bialystok, 2001; Rogoff, 2003).

Parenting Styles and Family Structures

Parenting styles also differ across cultures, with authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles having different prevalence and impacts on child development. For example, Western cultures may emphasize independence through an authoritative style balancing warmth and discipline, whereas Eastern cultures might stress obedience and respect for elders through a more authoritarian approach (Chao, 1994; Kagitcibasi, 2017). Family structure plays a role in these developmental outcomes, as collectivist cultures, such as those in Africa and Asia, often involve extended family in caregiving, providing broader emotional and social networks compared to the nuclear family model typical of Western contexts (Rogoff, 2003; Whiting *et al.*, 1988). This extended family involvement not only enhances socialization but also reflects broader cultural values.

The Role of Religion and Socioeconomic Context

Religious and ethical values further guide developmental trajectories by shaping moral standards and a sense of community responsibility. In some cultures, religious instruction is integrated into daily routines from an early age, significantly impacting social and moral development (Boyatzis, 2005; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Attitudes toward education also vary with East Asian cultures, for instance, emphasizing early academic success, which influences cognitive development and creates distinct learning environments compared to Western countries, where education may focus more holistically on life skills (Triandis, 1995). Socioeconomic and geopolitical factors, such as access to education and healthcare, also play a critical role, as children in conflict zones or economically disadvantaged areas may experience delays in emotional and cognitive development due to limited resources and instability (Super & Harkness, 2002; Bornstein, 1995). This demonstrates that cultural norms and socioeconomic contexts deeply affect children's

development, highlighting the importance of considering cultural diversity when evaluating developmental milestones globally.

The International Study of Parents, Children, and Schools

The *International Study of Parents, Children, and Schools*, jointly led by Charles Super and Sara Harkness from the *Center for the Study of Culture, Health, and Human Development* at the University of Connecticut, has been ongoing for nearly 30 years. This project systematically gathers and analyzes data on child development and parenting practices from an original set of seven countries: the United States, Australia, Italy, Sweden, Spain, Poland, and the Netherlands. By focusing on diverse cultural contexts, the program aims to understand how local beliefs, values, and practices influence developmental pathways for children, offering a cross-cultural perspective on early childhood, socialization, and education. The project collects a wide range of data types, including interviews, questionnaires, and even medical information, to achieve a comprehensive view of family and school environments across different societies (Harkness et al., 2006).

Over the years, findings from this extensive research have been shared at major academic venues, including consecutive conferences of the *International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development* (ISSBD), with presentations dating back to the 1996 conference in Quebec City. These presentations have allowed the research team to communicate their insights on cross-cultural parenting and educational practices to a broad academic audience, as well as to continuously update and refine their understanding of how different cultural environments shape child development. The project has become a respected resource for researchers and practitioners interested in how family and educational settings support child growth worldwide, making it a benchmark for long-term, international research in developmental psychology (Harkness & Super, 2013).

There are several factors that contribute to the success and longevity of the research project described above, which has been ongoing for nearly 30 years. While some of these factors are not specific to the measurement of children's and families' functioning, they are still worth mentioning:

1. The characteristics of the leaders and team relationships
2. Acceptable conceptual frameworks
3. An adapted research methodology
4. Adequate funding

Characteristics of Leaders and Team Relationships

The team has leaders—Sara Harkness and Charles Super from the University of Connecticut—who are not only world-renowned experts in developmental psychology and cultural anthropology but also exhibit a nearly parental care toward team members. At this point, they feel like extended family to me. We visit each other's homes and have a need for occasional in-person meetings in real life. This style of leadership may not be necessary for success in international projects, but it significantly supports long-term team cohesion, especially during periods when joint activities decrease or disappear. Both researchers also have a fundamental respect for the autotelic cultural values of other societies beyond the American context. This goes beyond mere tolerance, which would imply a polite acceptance of differences without offense. Likely shaped by values from their own upbringings and extended stays in Asia and particularly in Africa (Kenya), both show profound respect and curiosity toward other cultures. They possess deeply internalized ethical principles while remaining flexible and open to local specifics, ensuring they do not stifle the project by rigidly enforcing American standards. It is crucial, for instance, to accept that the understanding of concepts like “just in time” differs radically between Sweden and Mexico. Despite not being, or perhaps because they are not, traditional managers, Sara and Charles excel at mobilizing and motivating our international team in conducting waves of research, analyzing data, and participating in the publication process. I am one of those who strives to fulfil their requests regardless of how occupied I may be with other demanding professional responsibilities. Because of their specific dedication, project tasks can easily encroach on time, we would typically reserve for personal activities. Some might argue this is unacceptable, especially for Generation Z, who prioritize keeping personal life superior to work life. However, within this project, the work is both a professional duty and a personal passion for many participants, as well as a part of personal relationships. The boundaries blur, which may not be an ideal situation for all researchers, but it is undoubtedly a factor that fosters team cohesion

over time. Additionally, relationships among most team members are deep-rooted, based on genuine respect and openness to helping each other, even beyond the project's scope.

Acceptable Concepts

In cross-cultural research on children, it is crucial that theoretical constructs are applicable to diverse cultural contexts. This challenge is evident in a different field of research and practice, where Western concepts of coaching, grounded in individualistic thinking, are mechanically applied to people from collectivist cultures. For instance, at a coaching conference, an African representative commented, “If you are coaching the chieftain of a traditional African community, you are coaching the entire community at the same time.” (Żylicz, 2014). This illustrates the potential misalignment between certain Western categories and the developmental needs of children in non-Western local cultures. Returning to the project discussed here, it is worth mentioning a conceptualization that, besides its pure research merits, is inherently highly ecologically valid in cross-cultural settings (Żylicz, 2014, 2015).

The concept of the developmental niche, created by Charles Super and Sara Harkness, provides a framework for understanding how cultural contexts shape child development by focusing on three interrelated subsystems. These subsystems include (1) the physical and social settings in which a child lives, (2) culturally regulated customs of childcare and child-rearing, and (3) the psychology of the caregivers, including their ethnotheories, or beliefs and expectations about children's needs and behaviors (Super & Harkness, 1986). Each component of the developmental niche interacts to create a unique environment for each child, which is crucial in shaping developmental trajectories. For example, in societies where independence is highly valued, child-rearing practices may emphasize self-reliance and autonomy, which in turn influence children's emerging self-concepts and social behaviors (Super & Harkness, 1986; Weisner, 2002).

The developmental niche model is particularly useful in cross-cultural research because it highlights the adaptive function of cultural practices in response to specific environmental conditions. Super and Harkness (2002) argue that this framework enables researchers to account for the diversity in developmental pathways across different cultures by focusing on the contextual elements that support child growth and learning. This approach has also been applied to understand how parental ethnotheories vary across cultures and how these beliefs impact

children's socialization and educational outcomes. By examining how culture-specific beliefs and practices interface with universal developmental needs, the developmental niche framework offers a comprehensive perspective on cultural influences in child development (Harkness & Super, 2013; Super & Harkness, 2002).

An adapted research methodology

Let me take the liberty to discuss the appropriately selected research methodology through the lens of an article developed as part of the Harkness and Super research program under discussion. "The article *"Mixed Methods in International Collaborative Research: The Experiences of the International Study of Parents, Children, and Schools"* by Harkness, Super, Moscardino, Zylicz, and colleagues (2006) explores the benefits of using a mixed-methods approach to investigate child development across cultures. By integrating psychological and anthropological methods, this approach allows for a deeper understanding of how cultural contexts influence parenting beliefs, practices, and environments. Using the "developmental niche" framework, the authors examine how culture acts as a directive force, shaping a child's physical and social settings, daily practices, and caregiver beliefs (Harkness & Super, 2013; Super & Harkness, 2002). This framework also highlights how specific cultural values are embedded within family practices, guiding the interaction between children and their caregivers. By comparing data from seven countries—Australia, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United States—the study provides insights into diverse pathways that support children's growth within their unique cultural environments (Harkness et al., 2006).

A core methodological innovation in this research is the use of both emic and etic perspectives, essential in cross-cultural studies for balancing culturally specific insights with universal frameworks. The emic perspective captures values, beliefs, and practices that are meaningful within a particular culture, while the etic perspective focuses on universal constructs that allow cross-cultural comparison (Berry, 1989). Harkness et al. (2006) employ a "derived etic" approach, which is essential for creating culturally sensitive yet comparable measures across diverse settings. According to Berry (1989), a derived etic approach involves starting with emic observations from each culture, and then developing frameworks and tools that allow for meaningful comparisons. This approach is especially relevant in psychological research where

cultural specificity is critical; however, creating universal benchmarks for comparison requires that cultural practices are respected rather than distorted by imposed external standards (Berry, 1989; Matsumoto & Yoo, 2006).

Standardized developmental tools, such as cognitive, language, and social-emotional assessments, are a case in point, as they often reflect the cultural norms of the societies in which they were developed. Generally created in Western contexts, these tools tend to emphasize individualistic values like independence and cognitive reasoning (Berry, 1989; Greenfield, 1997). Consequently, their use in cross-cultural settings can lead to biases, as they may not fully capture competencies valued in non-Western cultures, where social or familial interdependence might be more central (Matsumoto & Yoo, 2006). In many collectivist societies, qualities like social harmony, cooperation, and respect for family roles are highly valued, which standardized Western assessments may overlook or undervalue (Super & Harkness, 2002). Such limitations can result in a skewed understanding of a child's abilities, as strengths like social responsibility and family engagement are underrepresented in assessments focused primarily on individualistic skills (Rogoff, 2003). This cultural specificity in assessment underscores the need for locally adapted tools or new culturally congruent measures that better reflect the competencies valued within different settings.

The study applied mixed methods to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, such as through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and parental diaries, allowing the researchers to validate findings across multiple measures. For instance, Harkness and her team developed the "Padova List," a set of descriptors derived from each cultural site, which facilitated meaningful comparisons of child qualities across all seven countries (Harkness et al., 2006). In adapting the Behavioral Style Questionnaire (BSQ), developed by McDevitt and Carey (1978), for use across cultures, the team took particular care to retain the original structure while allowing for cultural relevance, such as modifying items about screen time to match local attitudes. This blend of methods not only ensures culturally sensitive analysis but also enables validation through the convergence of both qualitative and quantitative insights (Super & Harkness, 1999).

Emic insights proved critical in identifying unique cultural practices that might otherwise have remained hidden. For instance, Swedish parents' widespread practice of co-sleeping with their

children became apparent only through qualitative data collection, challenging the researchers' initial assumption of independent sleep arrangements typical of Western societies (Welles-Nyström, 1996). By allowing cultural perspectives to shape questions and interpretations, researchers discovered that co-sleeping in Sweden aligns with cultural values of family closeness and gender equality. This insight highlights how emic approaches can bring to light culturally specific practices, enriching the understanding of parenting and child-rearing across contexts (Harkness et al., 2006; Greenfield, 1997). In educational settings, the emic and etic distinction has similarly been applied to understand the impact of cultural values on parents' educational expectations, showing that emic findings about indigenous learning practices, for example, can inform broader etic frameworks in cross-cultural education research (Miller & Goodnow, 1995).

Integrating emic and etic methodologies across different cultures is not without its challenges, particularly in achieving cultural sensitivity while maintaining scientific rigor. In Harkness et al. (2006), researchers from various cultural and disciplinary backgrounds—psychologists often favoring quantitative methods and anthropologists preferring qualitative approaches—needed to reconcile these differences through the collaborative development of coding schemes and procedural standards. This interdisciplinary approach aligns with the work of Berry (1989) and Triandis (1994), who argue that effective cross-cultural research must merge psychological and anthropological perspectives to fully capture human behavior's cultural and universal aspects. By combining both qualitative and quantitative insights, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of the developmental processes and cultural factors influencing parenting practices, which has implications for policy and educational interventions (Triandis, 1994; Harkness & Super, 2002).

Adequate funding

Proper funding is crucial in long-term cross-cultural research, as it ensures the continuity, depth, and integrity of the project. Cross-cultural studies often require extensive resources for logistical coordination, such as travel to multiple field sites, employing local research teams, and adapting materials for cultural relevance and linguistic accuracy (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). Additionally, sufficient funding allows for longitudinal data collection, which is essential for observing developmental patterns over time and understanding the effects of cultural context on

behavior and growth. Funding also supports the sustained involvement of diverse researchers, facilitating the building of long-term collaborations and trust with local communities—elements vital to the quality and ethical standards of cross-cultural work (Evans & Benefield, 2001). Without adequate financial support, researchers may face interruptions, which compromise data quality and the potential for meaningful longitudinal analysis. Furthermore, well-funded projects are more likely to secure advanced technology and analytical tools, which enhance data processing and allow for more accurate and comprehensive insights. Ultimately, adequate funding is fundamental not only for the operational success of cross-cultural research but also for ensuring that findings are robust, culturally sensitive, and valuable for informing global understandings of human development.

Conclusions

Cultural Diversity in Child Development

Children’s developmental trajectories are profoundly influenced by the cultural environments in which they grow up. Cultural context shapes the expectations surrounding developmental milestones, preferred learning styles, and social behaviors, meaning that what is considered typical or advanced development varies widely across cultures. For instance, some societies prioritize early independence and self-expression, while others emphasize collective responsibilities and social harmony. These culturally embedded values guide the ways children interact with family, peers, and educational systems, ultimately influencing their cognitive, social, and emotional growth.

Balancing Emic and Etic Approaches

A balanced integration of emic (culture-specific) and etic (universal) approaches is essential to achieve a holistic understanding of child development in a global context. The emic perspective allows researchers to capture unique cultural insights, such as the communal focus in some African and Asian societies or the individualistic emphasis in many Western cultures. Meanwhile, etic frameworks provide universal principles that allow researchers to identify common developmental patterns across cultures. A derived etic approach, which adapts universal concepts based on emic insights, ensures that assessments and theories are both respectful of

cultural diversity and suitable for cross-cultural comparison. This synthesis enriches developmental psychology, providing a more inclusive view of how various cultural environments foster healthy growth.

Challenges and Future Directions

One of the major challenges in cross-cultural research on child development is the need for more culturally sensitive assessment tools and methodologies. Standardized tools often reflect the values of the societies in which they were created, which can lead to biases when applied in other cultural contexts. Addressing this gap involves developing assessments that are adaptable and relevant across diverse cultural settings. Additionally, as globalization and migration increasingly lead to multicultural environments, continued research is vital to understand how these dynamics impact child development in blended cultural contexts. This line of inquiry will help educators, parents, and policymakers create supportive environments that respect and integrate multiple cultural perspectives.

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Early Childhood Education in Kosovo

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Introduction

The Kosovo education system includes various educational institutions, including kindergartens, primary schools, middle schools and high schools. These institutions are managed by the Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MASHT) and have governance structures at central and local levels. Educational institutions are generally located in urban areas, but there are also schools in rural areas. There are some structural differences between institutions, but educational services are generally provided in buildings that meet modern educational standards (Babuna, 2023).

Educational institutions in Kosovo include kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, high schools and vocational training centers. Kindergartens generally serve children between the ages of 3-6, while primary schools provide education for students between the ages of 6-11, middle schools between the ages of 11-15, and high schools between the ages of 15-18. These institutions are generally funded by the government, and the language of instruction is usually Albanian or Serbian. There are also private schools, offering different educational programs.

The education system in Kosova must take into consideration the multicultural structure of the country and the existence of different ethnic groups. In the context of multiculturalism, educational institutions need to develop policies to embrace ethnic and linguistic diversity. At the same time, the concept of human rights should be at the center of the education system. In educational institutions, necessary actions should be taken to respect and protect the human rights of students, teachers, and other staff. Moreover, human rights education should be integrated into syllabus and activities should be designed to raise awareness for students. Kosovo's education system should be improved sensitively to multiculturalism and human rights.

In Kosovo, language policies are set with the aim of protecting the language rights of ethnic groups and ensuring their education. The right of education in the mother tongue was recognized

by constitutional amendment in 2001. With this amendment, ethnic groups were given the right to receive education in their own language and various mother language education programs were introduced across the country. Education in Kosovo is provided in Albanian, Turkish, Bosnian and Serbian.

Education Programs and Syllabus

Education programs and syllabuses in Kosovo are established and organized by MASHT. Programs are generally shaped according to national syllabus standards with a general education syllabus from early childhood to high school. In addition, vocational and technical education programs are also provided enabling students to specialize in different fields. Training programs and syllabuses are continuously reviewed and updated and are in compliance with international standards.

Early Childhood Period in Kosovo

Studies and strategies on early childhood education in Kosovo form an important issue. Early childhood education is a period that has a significant impact on children's progress. The studies discuss early childhood education in Kosovo, its historical development, policies and strategies, the importance of investment, quality standards, challenges and solutions, the relationship with family education, the role of technology, examples of good practice, the role of educators, multilingual and cultural approaches, future vision and recommendations (Gashi, 2023; Çelik, 2023).

The studies on early childhood education in Kosovo show important findings on reforming the education system and early childhood development. Beka's study (2014) titled "Reforming the Education System in Kosovo with the Start of the 9th Classes" emphasizes the need for restructuring the education system in Kosovo. It also implies that reforms should be carefully planned and implemented without being affected by rapid political developments. In this context, it is emphasized that all stakeholders who are involved in the change process should be informed and prepared before the change. This approach is essential for increasing the quality and sustainability of changes in the education system. Selçuk and Yavuz's review article (2018) on overview of Turkish findings on early childhood development summarizes the findings of

research on early childhood development in Türkiye. The authors show that the most studied elements in the child development literature are children's home environment and parenting behaviors. It emphasizes that secure attachment between mother and child is provided by responsive parenting and the critical effects of this relationship on child development. They also point out that research is descriptive of the effects of maternal behaviors and secure attachment on children, but the mechanisms of these connections need to be further examined.

Abalı Öztürk and Kaan Demir's study (2018) titled "An Analysis of Graduate Theses on Early Childhood Education: The Case of Turkey" shows an analysis of graduate theses on early childhood education. The authors emphasize that quality and compulsory early childhood education is a precondition for sustainable national development. They state that scientific research on early childhood education in Türkiye plays a crucial role in describing current conditions and determining future plans. They further claim that education policies should be based on scientific research to make early childhood education compulsory. In this respect, the increase in the number of academic studies studied on early childhood education helps policymakers to set their goals in this field.

Based on the studies, it extensively examines the need for reform of early childhood education in Kosovo, the factors affecting early childhood development in Türkiye, and the importance of studies on early childhood education.

Education System and Early Childhood Education in Kosovo

The education system in Kosovo has a complex structure and the importance of early childhood education is increasing in this structure. The country's education system has been influenced by a range of historical, cultural and political factors, and this is reflected in early childhood education. The challenges and changing requirements in Kosovo have also had an impact on the Kosovo's education system and improved strategies for early childhood education (Kurshumliu, 2021).

Early childhood period contains the time from birth to 8 years of age, and it is extremely important for cognitive, emotional, social and physical development. In this period, the brain develops rapidly, and children are highly affected by their environment. Early childhood

education helps children to acquire basic skills during this crucial period and supports their social and emotional improvement (Arslan, 2022). In this period, the provided education is the basis for children's success in their future lives and is of great importance for the improvement of society.

Policies and Strategies in Early Childhood Education

In Kosovo, early childhood education policies and strategies include nationally designated plans and policies which are focused on children's education and improvement. These policies seek to increase access to early childhood education, determine quality standards and aim to equality in education. It also focuses on policies and strategies, teacher training, and the provision of materials and resources in pre-school.

The importance of investing in early childhood education in Kosovo is significant. Education at an early age supports children's cognitive, emotional, language, and motor development. Additionally, early childhood education helps children succeed in preschool and positively impacts their future academic lives. This investment also plays a critical role in the overall welfare of society, economic growth, and social stability. Moreover, early investment in children's education can contribute to a reduction in social assistance needs and crime rates in the future (Üstünbaş, 2023).

Beka (2014) in her study titled "Reforming the Education System in Kosovo with the Start of the 9th Classes" presents important findings on the education reform process in Kosovo. She emphasizes that the Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) should prepare and align educational content within a strategic framework. Beka states that education reforms should be planned after a thorough analysis of previous system reforms. This highlights the need for effective consideration of fundamental educational stages such as early childhood education.

It is emphasized that changes in education should not be made hastily in response to rapid political developments. In this context, all stakeholders should be involved in the process of change in a timely manner, and the necessary planning and information should be provided to ensure their professional preparation. This suggests that a similar approach should be adopted in early childhood education as well. To ensure the quality and sustainability of reforms in the

education system, it is stated that changes should first be implemented on small groups, and the results should be evaluated to make necessary adjustments accordingly.

Quality Standards and Assessment in Early Childhood Education

Quality standards and assessment in early childhood education are crucial to ensure that educational institutions operate in compliance with specific standards. These standards encompass elements such as the content of educational programs, the physical conditions of the learning environment, the qualifications of teachers, educational materials, and student assessments. Through quality standards, the efficiency of educational institutions is enhanced, and a learning environment that meets the developmental needs of children is established.

Assessment processes play a significant role in determining the extent to which institutions adhere to these standards. These processes are carried out through observations by experts and the use of measurement, and evaluation tools ensuring the continuous improvement of educational quality (Biçer, 2021; Güler, 2024).

Challenges and Solutions in Early Childhood Education in Kosovo

One of the main challenges in early childhood education in Kosovo is the lack of sufficient resources and funding. Insufficient budget allocation for preschool education can negatively impact the quality of education. Additionally, inadequate educational programs, materials, and learning environments are among the significant issues faced.

To address these challenges, several solutions can be considered such as increasing budget allocations, improving educational programs and materials, enhancing the qualifications of educators, and upgrading learning environments (Babuna, 2023; Brina, 2022; Hajrullahu, 2022).

However, the new education program design and pilot implementations introduced in 2023 have highlighted the importance of early childhood education. The government has increased the budget allocated to early childhood education in an effort to address these issues. Consequently, pilot schools have seen enhanced teacher training, enriched learning environments, and strengthened collaboration with families.

The Relationship Between Family Education and Early Childhood Education

Family education is extremely important for early childhood education, as the family is the child's first and most crucial learning environment. Families should support their children's language development, strengthen their social interaction skills, and provide a suitable environment for healthy mental development.

Family education should guide parents on how to communicate effectively with their children and contribute to their education. Additionally, considering the cultural and socio-economic differences of families, supportive programs should be organized to help them contribute more consciously to early childhood education (Akkoyunlu & Pinar, 2024).

The Role of Technology in Early Childhood Education

The role of technology in early childhood education aims to enrich and enhance children's learning experiences through the integration of digital tools into the educational process. Tools such as interactive educational applications, educational games, and digital storybooks not only capture children's attention but also boost their motivation to learn.

Through the use of technology, children can grasp concepts more easily while also fostering their creativity. Additionally, technology plays an important role for educators, as digital tools can assist them in creating teaching materials and designing engaging educational content that captures children's interest (Kula, 2024).

Best Practices in Early Childhood Education in Kosovo

Preschool institutions that adopt a child-centered learning approach are among the best practices in early childhood education in Kosovo. Teachers are encouraged to undergo continuous professional development and stay updated on best practices in early childhood education.

Some schools implement programs that support children's development through creative methods such as play-based learning, art, and music activities. Additionally, there are several successful practices where families are actively involved in the education process, ensuring that children receive support at home as well (Uslu, 2022).

The Role and Training of Educators in Early Childhood Education

The role of educators in early childhood education is of great importance. Educators are responsible for supporting children's cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development. They also assist children in acquiring self-care skills, enhancing language development, and fostering creative thinking abilities.

The training of educators is equally critical, as qualified educators can design and implement programs tailored to the needs of children. Educators must stay updated on new approaches, research, and best practices in early childhood education. Furthermore, ongoing professional development and training are essential, enabling educators to deliver high-quality education by utilizing the latest methods and strategies (Demiral, 2022; Bayraktaoğlu & Fülger, 2020).

Multilingual and Cultural Approaches in Early Childhood Education

In Kosovo, multilingual and cultural approaches in early childhood education are developed by considering the country's ethnic and linguistic diversity. These approaches allow children to learn both their native language and other languages while celebrating cultural diversity. They also encourage children to respect different cultural traditions, values, and norms.

Multilingual and cultural educational approaches support children's cognitive, emotional, and social development, helping them express themselves and broaden their worldviews (Öncel, 2024; Ertekin Kaya & Güçlü, 2023). The effective implementation of these approaches enhances the quality of early childhood education in Kosovo and strengthens social cohesion.

Future Vision and Recommendations for Early Childhood Education in Kosovo

The future vision for early childhood education in Kosovo should emphasize the importance of focusing on children's education from an early age. This vision should include expanding access to quality education opportunities, supporting the continuous professional development of educators, and strengthening policies and strategies for early childhood education.

Furthermore, increasing investment in early childhood education and promoting the effective use of technology in education are crucial. Strengthening the relationship between family education

and early childhood education, supporting multilingual and cultural approaches, and regularly reviewing quality standards in education should also be key components of this vision.

Enhancing the quality of early childhood education and making it mandatory are considered critical steps for both national development and societal sustainability (Korumaz & Yavaş, 2023; Akkaya, 2021; Alzubi, 2021; Babuna, 2023).

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