

## PAPER DETAILS

TITLE: SOSYAL BİLGİLER ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN ÇOCUK HAKLARINI ALGILAMALARI

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PAGES: 106-124

ORIGINAL PDF URL: <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/63300>



# CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

(SOSYAL BİLGİLER ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN ÇOCUK HAKLARINI ALGILAMALARI)

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## ABSTRACT

Today, one of the matters in the world agenda is definitely human rights. Awareness on human rights, willingness to use and to protect them voluntarily, be conscious about the necessity of the protection of those rights and also understanding to protect what, why and how accrue just through education. So, education is very important for human rights. Especially, the social studies and citizenship and human rights lessons form the base of this kind of education. In this context, the aim of this study is to determinate the perceptions of social studies teachers about “children's rights” and to describe the position of Turkey for children's rights. The descriptive method was used in this study. Social studies teachers who worked at schools in Istanbul formed the universe of this study. And, 400 social studies teachers were selected among the social studies teachers who worked at schools in Istanbul through random sampling method formed the sample group. An inquiry form about the perceptions on children's rights is applied to whole group and researchers interviewed with 30 of them. The data that acquired through interviews and inquiry forms are analyzed in descriptive process. Descriptive analyze means summarization and interpretation of the data according to themes and the interview questions which were determined before the analyze process. At the end of the study, teachers stated that in reality, children are behind of the some aims of the Children's rights Contract in Turkey.

**Keywords:** Children's rights, human rights, social studies education.

## ÖZ

Günümüzde dünya gündemini ilgilendiren konulardan biri de şüphesiz insan hakları sorunudur. Kişilerin; insan haklarının farkında olmaları, onları kullanma ve korumayı içtenlikle istemeleri, bu hakların neden korunması gerektiğinin bilincine varmaları, aynı zamanda da neyin, niçin, nasıl korunabileceğini bilmeleri ancak alacakları eğitimle gerçekleşir. Demek ki, insan haklarının bilinmesi için eğitim ve öğretim büyük bir öneme sahiptir. Özellikle de sosyal bilgiler ile vatandaşlık ve insan hakları eğitimi dersleri bu eğitim ve öğretimin temelini oluşturur. Bu bağlamda araştırmanın amacı, sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin “çocuk hakları”nı nasıl algıladıklarını tespit etmek ve Türkiye’nin çocuk gerçeği açısından çocuk hakları konusundaki durumunu betimlemektir. Araştırmada yöntem olarak betimleme modeli kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın evrenini İstanbul ili ilköğretim okullarında görevli bulunan sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın örneklemini ise İstanbul ili ilköğretim okullarında görevli bulunan sosyal bilgiler öğretmenleri arasından tesadüfî örnekleme metodu ile seçilen 400 sosyal bilgiler dersi öğretmeni meydana getirmektedir. Araştırmaya katılan öğretmenlerin tamamına, çocuk haklarını algılamaları üzerine anket uygulanmış, 30’u ile de görüşme yapılmıştır. Araştırmada, görüşme ve anket ile elde edilen veriler betimsel analize tabi tutulmuştur. Betimsel analiz, elde edilen verilerin daha önceden belirlenen temalara/görüşme sürecinde kullanılan sorulara göre özetlenip yorumlanmasıdır. Sonuç olarak öğretmenler, Türk toplumunda çocuk gerçeğini Çocuk Hakları Sözleşmesi ile öngörülen bazı hedeflerin gerisinde olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir.

**Anahtar kelimeler;** Çocuk hakları, insan hakları, sosyal bilgiler eğitimi.

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## INTRODUCTION

Today, one matter in the world agenda is definitely human rights. Like democracy, the concept of human rights has an important place in societal life, but it is still one of the most controversial concepts. Besides, there is not a consensus about the definition and the content of this concept (Yeşil, 2002: 24). We can show the political character of the concept as one of the most important reason of this uncertainty and because of this, there are different point of views about its' content.

One of the more primary right of a person is the right of to know his/her rights/human rights. Respect for human rights not accrues spontaneously with abstract statements and only writing this rights in documents. But, if everyone know the human rights and if people have consciousness about using and saving them, respect can occur (Gündüz and Gündüz, 2007: 197-200; Tepe, 2006: 23; Doğan, 2002: 6). Also, knowing the concepts, principles and values which take place in the documents about the human rights improves the respect for human rights.

Respect for human rights, freedom, social justice, pluralism and participation are the basic indicators of the culture of democracy. Democracy and human rights culture actualizes in governmental structure, in societal system and in human relations with variety forms. Development of democratic values, attitudes and behaviors in all areas, freedom and happiness of people, societal organizations and education of qualified citizens form the dynamic of the democracy and human rights culture (Cılga, 2001).

Awareness on human rights, willingness to use and to protect them voluntarily, be conscious about the necessity of the protection of those rights and also understanding to protect what, why and how accrue just through education. So education is very important for human rights.

Because of the importance of this issue, education of this subject gains importance too. A lot of international organizations, first of all the United Nations and the European Council start to deal with human rights education. In other words, in 20<sup>th</sup> century the concept of human rights pass national boundaries and universalize (Kıncal, 2002: 41; Akyüz: 11-12).

In this context, "human rights education" in its' outgeneral definition is, an education through appropriate content, material and methods, for the aim of the development of consciousness to respect for human rights, to save these rights and to use them (Kepenekçi, 2000a: 10). Thus, it was understood that the route of the respect to people pass from education A person who, does not know the rights and freedoms and is not conscious about them cannot protect them too (Ulusavaş, 1992: 50). Sameness of democratic rights and responsibilities for everyone, not considering the ethnic and economic differences and treat with tolerance to these differences are necessary to not construct an environment like this (Dilek, 1999: 1; Kıncal, 2002: 36-37).

When we talk about human rights education, it is appropriate to talk about “multi cultural” citizenship education that based on different backgrounds of individuals and groups which formed a society in a global world in the context of language, religion, ethnic, history and geography. We can classify their positive effects as follows (Branson and Purta, 1982: 4; Kepenekçi, 2000b: 38; Erkal, 2001):

- 1) Studying about human rights in a broad content ensure to consciousness of students about cultural differences and to correct the wrong perceptions.
- 2) Studying to human rights extensively provides to development of citizens who make decisions consciously.
- 3) The documents about human rights in international arena prevent students’ selfishness and their racist emotions and provide their understandings’ towards human rights.

Among the negative aspects of the multi culturalism in human rights education, prominent ones may be classified as follows: structural difficulties, the values about human rights background position and impiousness towards the universal effectiveness of these values. Besides, there is a deficiency between the ideals of multi culturalism and the assertions about the universalism of human rights. Because of these reasons, we may talk about the necessity of the interpretations towards relativity of about human rights which are in conflict with the values like against to violence and multi culturalisms’ universalism beliefs (Kuyurtar, 2006: 67-70; Dilek, 1999: 13-15).

### **Definition of the child**

A child who shows parallelism with the society’s’ happiness and welfare is an innocent, sensible and dependent presence. Besides, s/he is curious, active and lively. If s/he get through this period cheerful, peaceful, with learning new things and with improve herself/himself s/he will be happy and contributes to societal happiness and welfare (Akyüz, 2000: 1).

So, who is a child? United Nations answered this question different from psychology, like this: “Expect to the situations that children reach lawful age in early stages of their lives, every person is a child until her/his 18<sup>th</sup> age”. The concept of child is used in two meanings in daily language. In its’ first meaning it is used to distinguish children from adults. We cannot determinate the childhood periods’ end and adulthood periods beginning through this definition. This situation differs according to area, environment, religious views and age. The second meaning of child is used to the aim of determination of the family relations. The person always remains as a child of his/her parents in his/her whole life. Eventually, the concept of child is used

for the aim of to determinate youngness in societal language (DİE and UNICEF, 1999: 1; Cengiz, 2002).

### **Children's rights**

Children's rights are the cases that are saved through laws about children's' intellectual, social, emotional and moral development. These rights are not independent from human rights but they are parts of them. Differently, children's rights are gathered as welfare rights, protectionist rights and adult rights (Akyüz, 2000: 4).

To manipulate these child centered rights healthfully, statement of the national vision, strategies and aims, determination of principles and policies clearly, putting standards about education and achievement, giving place to qualified work force in projects, stimulating the resources, increasing public sensitivity and constructing an active control mechanism are important in this process. When we provide all of these conditions, children's rights will gain a necessity for lastingness of real democracy (Cılga, 2001).

### **The History of children's rights**

Spanish Vives talked about the principles of child in 15<sup>th</sup> century initially, although Pestalozzi from Sweden mentioned the childrens' education and poverty problems in 18<sup>th</sup> century (Akyüz, 2000: 11). The opinion about the construction of an international organization is suggested by J. Vune (Cengiz, 2002).

The world wars in the first period of XX. century and various social and psychological problems which were originated after these wars reasoned for rapid and active studies in international arena about the protection of children. The first circle for children's rights is the Geneva Declaration in 1924. When the Nations' Association turned to Unites Nations Organization, this declaration becomes a more modern form and in 20 November 1959 "The Children's rights Contract" was accepted (Akyüz, 2000: 13-15, 494-495; Cengiz, 2002). These declarations accepted by governments but there is not any enforcement for the governments which do not apply these rules, because of this if we want to prevent these delinquencies and misappropriations, we must translate these declarations to contract. Because, declarations are the legal texts and they attach the participant states (Tiryakioğlu, 1991: 50). Towards this aim, Children's rights Contract was accepted with consensus in 20 November 1989, by United Nations General Council (Akyüz, 1999: 495; Yeşil, 2002: 30-31). After this acceptance, it was approved in 26 January 1990 and became operative in 2 September 1990 (Doğan, 2001: 282).

1989 Children's rights Contract tells that a child has rights and it aims to increase world children's' life quality to ideal level. This contract was accepted by almost all countries in the world, in Turkey the Council of Ministers signed it in 1990 and in 1995 and became operative. 54 topics

formed the contract (Şahin and Beyazova, 2001; DIE and UNICEF, 1999:1). This contract about children's rights is the most extensive document, it regulates the children's rights and all participant governments obliged to inform children about these rights (Kepenekçi, 2000a: 26).

Children's rights Contract is important for many reasons. First of all it is the appearance that the world children exhibit. Today, the world children's deficiencies that arise in international level are heartbreaking and their effects are more terrible. All of them base on children's exploiting in variety forms. Children's rights Contract forbids all exploiting (Doğan, 2001: 283-284). Because of this, there is a committee which is formed with ten experts. This committee present reports to Unites Nations and announce the results of these reports to public opinion (Akyüz, 2000: 21; Cengiz, 2002).

When we examine the items of the contract we see that there are some items not only interested with children, also there are lots of items important for human history. Some of them follow (Müftü, 2001: (1):

- ✓ Children have not leave from their parents except different situations related with official offices.
- ✓ Special education must be applied to disabled children.
- ✓ Children have right to reach to the highest level of the health standard.
- ✓ Elementary education is compulsory and free.
- ✓ All children must be equal in every art activities.
- ✓ Execution and life imprisonment punishments are not given for the crimes that are committed before 18<sup>th</sup> age.
- ✓ Guilty children dispense from adults and they are subjected to good treatment especially.
- ✓ Children younger than 15<sup>th</sup> age must never take place in battles.

We can increase the number of the items but, even though their quantity is increased, today everyone knows and sees that children under 15 participate in wars, their education right deprived form them or they cannot go to school because of impossibilities and they may die hungrily and needy, unfortunately. In this context, these rights must not be remaining on papers and they must become true. So, everyone must work for this aim by their main force.

### **Children's rights in Turkey**

26 September 1924 Geneva Children's rights Contract was signed in 1928, by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. But, Ataturk goes beyond only signing it and he gives 23<sup>rd</sup> of April to children. It is an evidence of the sensitivity of Ataturk and the Republic of Turkey to new developments (Doğan, 2001: 287).

Along with the 80<sup>th</sup> item of 1924 Constitution, freedom of education and with the 87<sup>th</sup> item free and compulsory primary education are judged and thus, a legal partisanship was done to children's rights. Especially, the 35<sup>th</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> items of 1961 Constitution are the decisions which are made for stand the pace of the changing world conditions and modern information. Through this, equal opportunities are provided and poor children may have a chance to come the level that they want (Akyüz, 1999: 496-497).

Existing rights are intensified with the 10, 17, 41, 42, 50, 58 and 61. items of the 1982 Constitution and there are some regulations about children and children's rights, like 1739 numbered National Education Basic Act, 2828 numbered Social Services and Child Protection Organization Act, Turkish Civil Law, 222 numbered Primary Education Act, the Child Courts Act, Population Law, Turkish Citizenship Act, Primary Health Act and Work Act (Cengiz 2002). But, in our country although these regulations, children continue to work or are worked in streets, fields and industry etc.

Children's rights Contract which was accepted by United Nations in 1989 was approved by the Council of Ministers in Turkey, in 1995, after the 1982 Constitution (Doğan, 2001: 287-288). But, our country has drawbacks about the 17, 29 and 30th items of the contract and these items are interpretable through the Constitution and 24 July 1923 Lausanne Acts' provisions. These risky items are like this; countries must attach special importance to the minority group children's language necessities, a respect must be developed to the child's cultural identity, language and values, children who are the members of a minority group must not deprive to benefit from their culture and to use their language (Cengiz, 2002).

Our government signed these manifesto and contracts both for its' national policy and because of current condition and also for its' essential importance in international platform and there is a necessity to obey them and to constitute a system related with children law.

According to Cengiz (2002), for the practices about children's rights in Turkey, an action plan must be done as follows:

- ✓ The definition of child must developed in terms of qualitative and quantitative in Turkey,
- ✓ The civil rights of child must be developed,
- ✓ The child must be prepared for life and his/her utilization to social, cultural and judicial rights must be provided,
- ✓ Including disabled children, all children's life standards and health services must be improved,
- ✓ For the aim of children's nurture as qualified individuals through education, they must attain a qualified education system in the framework of envisioned purposes,

- ✓ There must be special precautions for the children in urgent situations and for the children who are exploited and the service area related with children must take place among the practical aims.

Through this plan, a transition process will be headed towards the children's rights standards, in Turkey.

Besides, the claim of Children's rights Contract intended for the children's high quality education rights, constitutes the impetus for the innovations about education in Turkey, as the other countries of the world. For this reason, Total Quality Management Implementation Prescription and Project is put into action in 19. 10. 1999 by the Ministry of National Education and a modern management concept is developed in central and provincial organizations (Cilga, 2001). In this case, teachers also do not think that the aims and behaviors of the "Citizenship and Human Rights Education" course eventuate merely in the course process, they must associated with the other courses like history, geography, Turkish, arts, music and even science and mathematics (Kepenekçi, 2000a: 88-93).

This important and extensive issue may be investigated in different aspects. The research problem of this study which is based on an extensive problematic ground is, "*how do the social studies teachers perceive the "children's rights"?*"

### **Aim**

Parallel with the research problem, the aim of this study is to determine the perceptions of social studies teachers about "children's rights" and to describe the position of Turkey for children's rights.

### **Limitations**

1. This study is restricted with the 400 social studies teachers who worked in primary schools in Istanbul in 2005-2006 term.
2. This study is restricted with an inquiry which have 20 questions and an interview form which consist of 15 semi-structured questions.

### **Assumptions**

In this study following assumptions are considered:

1. Data collection instruments and methods are valuable and reliable to collect proper data for the aims of the study.
2. It was thought that, teachers in the sample group answered the questions faithfully.

## **METHOD**

### **Research model**



The descriptive method was used in this study. These studies are examples of practical research to determinate the reality, to examine the existent situation and generally to resolve the contemporary problems (Punch, 2005: 16-17; Ural and Kılıç, 2005: 18). In this study it was aimed to investigate the current situation, because of this descriptive method was seen as consistent with this aim.

### **Universe and sample**

Social studies teachers who are worked at schools in Istanbul formed the universe of this study. And, 400 social studies teachers who were selected by random sampling method among the social studies teachers who worked at schools in Istanbul formed the sample group. The socio-economic structure of Istanbul was taken into account in this process and teachers in the sample group are chosen randomly from upper, middle and low socio-economic level towns. The number of sample group was determined according to 5% specificity level. Namely, if the sample group is chosen 100 times, at least 95 of them represent the features of the universe (Altunışık et.al. 2004: 125). In this situation, when we consider, in Istanbul, there is 1979 social studies teachers who work permanently (MEB, 2005), to generalize the results of this study, 317 was determined as the representative number. Returns and empties are taken into account and this number was rounded as 400. An inquiry form about the perceptions of teachers about children's rights applied to the whole group and researchers interviewed with 30 of them.

### **Data collection tools**

In this study an inquiry form was used in the data collection process. An inquiry form can be described as a data collection method which is developed through answers of questions that are formed in a particular order and structure (Altunışık et.al. 2004: 68). In this study, questions/propositions in the inquiry form are developed to be in use of original text of Children's rights Contract. This inquiry form is applied to 400 social studies teachers. During the application process, researchers practice on pre-service teachers who worked in schools as trainee. In this study, 195 participants are male and 205 are female teachers.

The study is designed with semi-structured interview form. Stewart and Cash described interview as; “a mutual and interactive communication process based on questions and answers and be done for a given and critical aim (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2004: 105). In semi-structured interview technique, the researcher prepares an interview protocol which contains questions. But, the researcher may affect the interview process through different or sub-questions and then answers may be deepened and detailed (Türnüklü, 2000).

Interviews are carried out with 30 social studies teachers and about their perceptions related with “children's rights”. 16 of the teachers who had

interviewed were male and 14 of them were female; their ages were changed between 21 and 31 and they were in first decade of their service process. 15 of the sample group teachers were graduated from history/geography departments and other 15 teachers were graduated from social studies department. All of the teachers work as social studies teacher now.

### Analysis of the data

The data that acquired through interviews and inquiry forms are analyzed in descriptive process. Descriptive analyze means summarization and interpretation of the data according to themes and the interview questions which were determined before the analyze process (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2004: 171). In this study, descriptive analyze was done based on questions/propositions in inquiry form and semi-structured interview form. Besides, as Ekiz (2003, p.113) emphasizes, in presentation process, construction of an appropriate and clear level is important, instead of quantitative or statistical statements or verbal expressions. Because of this, in this study researchers try to provide this.

## FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

### Findings which are obtained from inquiry form

According to the findings that are obtained from questions in the inquiry form, the opinions of the participant teachers are summarized in Table 1 and 2.

**Table 1. Findings Which Are Obtained From Inquiry Form About Children's rights (1st Section)**

	Questions	Yes		No		Indecisive	
		%	f	%	f	%	f
1	Have you ever read the Children's rights Contract?	70	280	25	100	5	20
2	Do you think that Children's rights Contract is effective in Turkey?	-	-	30	120	70	280
3	Does the child reality of Turkey attain to the aims of Children's rights Contract?	-	-	80	320	20	80
4	According to you, is there any injustice towards children, in Turkey?	80	320	-	-	20	80
5	Is there any necessity about theory and practice of children's rights, in Turkey?	60	240	-	-	40	160

6	Do you consider as sufficient to the general precautions and activities in Turkey related with Children's rights Contract?	-	-	80	320	20	80
7	Along with the increase of the primary school period to 8 years, does the government secure the children's education rights?	10	40	50	200	40	160
8	According to you, does the school discipline in Turkey give value to children as a human and does it appropriate with the children's rights?	10	40	70	280	20	80
9	Do you think that the media affect to the societal, psychological, and intellectual and ethic development of the child negatively?	50	200	30	120	20	80
10	Do the children's rights are controlled by adults in Turkey?	100	400	-	-	-	-

According to the Table 1, 70% of the teachers who are participants of this study read the whole of the Children's rights Contract and 5% of them read some parts. It was indicated that, the important part of the teachers are aware of the Children's rights Contract. Besides, important part of the participants think that, the Children's rights Contract is partly effective in Turkey. There is no teacher who thinks that, the Children's rights Contract is fully effective in Turkey. 80% of them think that, the child reality in Turkish society do not reach the aims of the Children's rights Contract, in this context this opinions are natural.

According to the justice towards children in Turkey, while 80% of the teachers said "Yes", and 20% of them answered as "Partly". Besides, the question of "*Do you consider as sufficient to the general precautions and activities in Turkey related with Children's rights Contract?*" answered as "No" by the 80% of the teachers. On the other hand, the question of "*Is there any necessity about theory and practice of children's rights, in Turkey?*" answered as "Yes" by the 60% of the teachers and 40% of the teachers answered this question as "Partly". It was indicated that, majority of the teachers in the study think that, there are injustices towards children in Turkey and activities related with children's rights are not adequate, although same majority of the teachers think that there is not any necessity towards changes about children's rights in theory and practice.

50 % of the teachers stated that, along with the increase of the primary school period to 8 years, government does not secure the childrens' education rights exactly, but 40% of them interpreted this proposition as "Partly" and 10% interpreted as "No". In this situation, half of the teachers look to the

increase of the primary school period to 8 years positively and they hope that there will be good changes in childrens' life with this.

70% of the teachers think that, the school discipline does not give value to children as a human and it is not appropriate with the children's rights. It was indicated that, rules about school discipline differs in practice.

The question of “*do you think that, the media affects the societal, psychological, intellectual and ethic development of the child negatively?*” was answered as “Yes” by 50% of the teachers and 30% of them answered it as “Partly”. It was indicated that, majority of the teachers believed to the negative effects of the media on child development.

100 % of the teachers answered the question of “*do the children's rights are controlled by adults in Turkey?*” as “Yes”. When we consider this situations' relevance with Turkish family structure, this result is not amazing. In Turkish family structure, whatever the child's age, s/he is controlled by his/her parents.

**Table 2. Findings Which Are Obtained Form Inquiry Form About Children's rights (2nd Section)**

Propositions						
		I completely agree	Sometimes I agree	I am uncertain	I do not agree	I never agree
1	Children have a different world and they have some rights related with this world.	f 320 % 80	80 20	- -	- -	- -
2	Children's rights are gained inborn.	f 200 % 50	160 40	40 10	- -	- -
3	Children's rights must be protected in terms of the states' future.	f 360 % 90	40 10	- -	- -	- -
4	Children must state their opinions in subjects that related with them.	f 360 % 90	- -	40 10	- -	- -
5	The framework of the Childs' private life must be drawn by the guidance of adults.	f 160 % 40	160 40	80 20	- -	- -
6	The private life of the child must not been intervened.	f 40 % 10	80 20	80 20	120 30	80 20
7	One of the basic rights of every child is the education right.	f 400 % 100	- -	- -	- -	- -
8	The state must secure the Childs' education right.	f 320 % 80	80 20	- -	- -	- -
9	School discipline must develop the Childs' self-control.	f 320 % 80	40 10	40 10	- -	- -
10	The Children's rights Contract reached its aims in real life.	f 80 % 20	- -	- -	160 40	160 40

According to findings in Table 2, 90% of the participant teachers believe that the children's rights are gained inborn and the majority of the teachers stated that, children's rights must be protected in terms of the states' future. This situation is an indicator of the natural continuum of the children's rights and their relevancy with states' survival.

All of the participant teachers suggested that children have a different world and they have some rights related with this world. Also, 90% of the teachers think that, children must express their opinions about the issues related with them. In the context of the Childs' private life, 80% of the teachers stated that, this private life must have a framework which is drawn with the guidance of the adults and 20% of them explained their uncertainty about this issue. The contradiction between this expression and the approvals towards the proposition of "the private life of the child must not been intervened" draws the attention. While the 50% of the teachers approved this statement with their answers as "Never agree" and "Do not agree", 20% of them explained their uncertainty like the previous one. But, 30% of them who approved this statement with their answers as "Completely agree" and "Sometimes agree" conflicted with their previous statements. When they said that "the private life of the child must not been intervened", perhaps we understood that after drawing the private life in guidance of the adults, there may be intervenes in this frame work?

100% of the teachers agreed that the education right is the primary right of all children. Besides, the majority of the teachers agree that the government must secure the Childs' education right. So, when we think about the necessity of the protection of the children's rights in terms of the states' future, we must expect secure of the education right by state.

90% of the teachers shared the preposition that "school discipline must develop the Childs' self-control" and 10% of them stated their uncertainty about it. This situation indicate that, the majority of the teachers adopt the methods which develop the self-control", instead of the traditional discipline methods.

### **Findings which are obtained from interviews**

According to the findings that are obtained from interviews, we can summarize the opinions of the participant teachers as follows:

At first, when we say "children's rights" teachers express that, children have a privat life and they have some rights related with this world but according to teachers, childrens' rights are not known by children and even by the adults. Also, the teachers see this rights as universal and they think that they are gained inborn and they must protected by states for the continuity of these states.

According to teachers, children have right to express their opinions about all issues related with them and this right is one of the primary rights which

are important for acceptance and understanding of the democracy. We must ask childrens' opinions about the issues related with them; otherwise it is not impossible to separate the force of feudality to medieval people from the stress which is done by adults to children, now.

Teachers think that, every child is another world. Children belong to a world that is sometimes not understood by adults and generally this is an imaginary world. Because of this, the framework of the childrens' private life may be drawn by the guidance of adults. But, when child becomes older the framework of the private life begins to be influenced from external factors. To protect this private life from negative factors it must be controlled by adults, stealthily. Of course, in Turkey adults intervene to childrens' private life so much. Because of this, different children are grown up and these children who are always dependent and cannot stand on their own feet become individuals who have same features, in the future. Because of this, teachers stated that, we must not intervene to childrens' private life but they think that if they make decisions which may cause to negative results we give them a lead. We ensure to their demands toward our help –not with advises and not use force- and present them the alternative ways, but we do not go out of the guidance character of our intervene.

Depending on the childrens' private life, teachers believe that children have rights towards forming associations and meeting peacefully and they achieve it naturally. Children get together with their friends who have similar opinions with them and they can intervene to something. For example, children whose parents divorced form an association naturally and they represent cooperation. They can form associations for some aims officially and they can organize some activities but, we must control whether they are used for various aims by adults or not.

All of the participant teachers think that, media has positive and also negative effects on childrens' development. But, they think that, nowadays media has a negative role. They stated that, the general appearance of the broadcastings do not support the ethical values of Turkish society, especially the ethical frame in the foreigners' movies cause to a complicity, they present sex unconsciously and they constitute a negative environment for children in this context. Besides, teachers emphasized that, children comprehend everything which they see on television or newspaper as good and right and especially in development process children often learn through models, so this negative effect gains more importance. Funny, exciting and profit oriented programs are made for children and because of this a screen person is created. When the teachers evaluated this case in positive aspect, they think that the editions which are appropriate for the childrens' societal structure make contribution to the development of them. Also, the information contests –but not ones with big prizes, because they instigate the money ambition-

discussion programs, discoveries, especially the usage of Internet with control provide the rise of new horizons for children.

Teachers suggest that, one of the primary rights of children is education right but the children of lower economic level families cannot use this right. In this situation governments must secure the childrens' education right but states cannot provide this implicitly. So, we must eliminate the reasons which avoid their education process.

Teachers think that, along with the increase of the primary school period to 8 years and its' obligation, government secures childrens' education rights especially who live in the eastern part of the country. At least, continuous education increases the literacy level in the country and after eight year even if the children do not continue to their education there is an option towards improving themselves. Also, eight year school period is important for gaining a discipline in childrens' life.

Teachers stated that, school discipline rules are consistent with the children's rights but there are some differences in practice informally. They express their opinions that, discipline rules are put into practice in primary school and if we do not use the discipline rules there will be an anomaly environment. But, the discipline rules must develop self-control. Thus, the child whose self-discipline is developed do not need for external control.

When we ask the "Children's rights Contracts" statute in real life condition, teachers said that it is not effective. As an evidence of this, participants indicated the injustices towards children, Young employees, opportunity inequality, violence and sex slavery are place among this injustice. This indicates that, in Turkish society the child reality do not reach to the aims that are envisioned with children's rights. Also, this attracts the attention on children and because of this it is important. But, they think that the state cannot accomplish its' duties about this subject.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Consequently, children's rights take part in our country's agenda, as an important matter. Because of this, as Akyüz (2001: 20) stated in her research, responsibilities of the adults about the children's rights are substantial in all international regulation. But, in this regulation, children's rights are seen as prevention and nutrition rights. However, these rights are not adequate to live and development. Because of this, Children's rights Contract is a regulation which gives some rights to child both as child and as an individual, on the other hand it aims to be brought up people who are independent, mindful, and creative and open to improvement. To trained children who stand the pace with modern world and develop Turkey as a model country, appropriate policies and their implementation are necessary. Because of this, there must be innovations towards children's rights in terms of theoric and practical aspects.



Also, Cılga (2001: 3) stated in his research that, innovations about children's rights take part among the indicators of modernity. In Turkey, to ensure innovations about this topic, we need some changes in mentality, structure and practice. So, the character of the studies in every field depends on these innovations. In this context, we must satisfy the information and education rights of the participants about children's rights.

Like Doğan's (2001: 9) findings in his study, participant teachers of this research stated that, child reality in Turkish society is behind the aims of the Children's rights Contract. Doğan said that, current troubles of the society about children are based on the incompetence related with education and lackness of a mature dialog with new generations and lackness of a social protection mechanism. In solving these problems, family, education, culture and policy corporations have important roles and responsibilities.

In this context, the findings that are gained from this study caused to these recommendations. At first, we must teach their rights to children and do some activities to allow them to consider their rights. We must provide to accommodate them to technological developments in the context of their cultural values and curriculums must be developed according to this. Teachers and media have an important role in this situation. In-service workshops must be given for teachers and they will be improved as person who can produce alternative solutions and especially courses must be given to teachers which develop their guidance property. Because, a teacher who has mistakes towards children is also a teacher who does not know how s/he solve the problems. If teachers' problem solving skills are developed, their point of views towards children's rights change. When a teacher cannot solve a problem, perhaps s/he see himself/herself in a chaos and to eliminate this problem s/he have recourse to stress and violence sometimes and s/he give up to see child as an individual. Because of this, teacher education is seen very important.

Besides, media have important responsibilities in this process. Media must contribute to the ethical, intellectual and psychological development of the children with publishings which are consistent with childrens' cultural values. Because of the future of the state, some sanctions have done for media which forgets its' responsibilities.

Beyond all of them, we do not forget that children are futures' adults. In this context, states' demands about the citizen and the society are important, too. If we aim a society that consists of individuals who stand on their feet and have self-control, we must give special importance to human rights and citizenship education.



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## **APPENDIX**

### **Interview Form**

#### **1. SECTION**

##### **INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION**

- 1) Gender:
- 2) Age
- 3) In Service Process:
- 4) The School Which You Were Graduated:
- 5) Specialty:

#### **2. SECTION**

- 1) What do you understand from the concept of “Children's rights”?
- 2) Have you ever read the whole text of the “Children's rights Contract”?
- 3) According to you, does a child have expression right about every topic related with him/her?
- 4) According to you, do the children have a private life? If s/he has, what is the framework of this life?
- 5) According to you, do the adults intervene to the Childs’ private life? What are the limitations of this intervention?
- 6) According to you, do the children have rights related with to form associations and meeting?
- 7) What do you understand from the Childs’ “education right”?
- 8) According to you, what do the children gain with the compulsory statute of the primary school education?
- 9) According to you, does the school discipline consistent with the prestige of human and does it appropriate with children's rights?

- 10) According to you, what do the media do towards childrens' societal, psychological, physical, intellectual and ethical development? (Positive and negative)
- 11) According to you, how does the "Children's rights Contract" influence the real life?
- 12) According to you, does the child reality of the Turkish society reach to the aims of the Children's rights Contract?
- 13) According to you, is there any injustice towards children, in Turkey?
- 14) What must be change in Turkey related with the children's rights?
- 15) Do you consider as sufficient to the general precautions and activities in Turkey related with Children's rights Contract?