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# SITUATIONS IN WHICH MAINSTREAMING STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM SOCIAL CLUBS

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#### **Abstract:**

Mainstream education for individuals with special needs is accepted to be applied in the curriculum by National Ministry of Education in 2010 and made systematic in 2009. The aim of this study is to determine the situations in which mainstreaming students benefit from social club activities in the scope of social activities. The research is qualitative and case-study enabling a deep investigation about a restricted subject. The study group of the research consists of 200 individuals in mainstream education with special needs who are educated in the classes of 180 teachers from different branches at elementary and secondary schools of National Ministry Education in the city of Bartin and its districts in the fall term of 2015-2016 education year. 110 ones of the study group are male and 90 ones are female. Semi-structured interview with the questions "Which club is an inclusive student in?" and "What is the role of inclusive student in the club?" are fulfilled with teachers having inclusive students in the research. While the obtained data is analyzed, content-analysis method from descriptive methods is used. As a result of the study, 132 of 200 inclusive students become member of various clubs and 42 ones from these are active in their school clubs and in the schools of other 68 inclusive students, clubs studies are not be able to carried out actively or it is only noted down which club an inclusive student is in.

Keywords: mainstream education, social clubs, elementary school, secondary school

## 1. Introduction

When the concepts such as human rights, equal opportunity in education, modern education, democratic concepts, and community are considered, how much importance the education of individuals with special needs carries stands out more. Each child

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owns unique physical structure and functionality, learning features and speed in various fields, emotional features. Children can benefit from these general education services when these differences are within the certain limits. However, when children have the larger sizes of differences, general education services are inadequate and special education services are required (Özdemir, 2010). The view that individuals with special needs can have the same education as those individuals indicating normal development, they can be provided to get educated in the same environment with their peers and also this can be achieved through Mainstream Education is currently seen as accepted in education policies and implementations.

In the Regulation of Ministry of Special Education Services, Mainstream education is expressed as the least restricted education environment, and through mainstreams education individuals with special needs are provided support education services in order to make them gain social, self-care and communicative behaviors for their integration with society and academic and professional knowledge and skills and it is the most suitable education environment with their peers who do not have inabilities as much as possible (MEB, 2013). Mainstream education, creates the key pillars of the training system for individuals with special needs and it is the environment where inabilities have the minimum effects and individuals with special need benefit from the education at the most and differences are tolerated (Baldiris, Zervas, Fabregat and Sampson, 2016). Mainstream education represents the whole integration of individuals with inabilities with general education classes and schools and the belief and philosophy in which their education is based on their talents not their inabilities. Mainstream education include educational mainstreaming based on students' basic needs not pre-programmed standards and social integration in which their relationship with their peers and adults is supported and physical mainstreaming in which students are placed in the same class as their peers who do not have any disabilities (Eripek, 2012).

When mainstream education is applied appropriately, individual differences of each student appears and an education environment in which all students including students of mainstream education are valuable is prepared. In this kind of environments, students are equal. All students can consider that they have a right to attend classroom activities and lessons and make a contribution into the classroom atmosphere and in this kind of classroom; everybody respects each of the contributions. If individuals with special needs are able to see themselves as a member of the class where they are raised, and if this case is accepted by the teachers and regarded as social club by their classmates, so these students can be said to be integrated (Batu, 2008). Children with the mainstream education facilitating more constructive relationships with their peers gain many positive behaviors which make their integration into the social life easier by affecting themselves in different ways and catching an opportunity to improve themselves in academic and social fields (Ahmetoğlu, 2015). Whereas mainstream education contributes individuals with special needs, it also helps individuals indicating normal development gain positive attitude and behaviors

towards living with disabled individuals. This gain considerably affects social integration and mainstream (Kılıç, 2010).

Mainstream education is divided into two groups as academic and social and defined that general education classes are formed so as to meet students' educational requirements in academic studies and inclusive student is provided to comply with their peers in the classroom in social activities (Gürgür, 2005). In schools, the social skills of students are fulfilled through social activities. With the help of social activities basing the principle "learning by experience", students are provided natural environment and opportunity for studying and with this way their academic and practical education are contributed (Canbay, 2007). National Education Ministry published Social Activities Instruction in 2005; and with this regulation, social activities previously carried out in the centre of educational branches have given way to implementation "student clubs". In the related regulation, students club is defined as activities carried out with groups so as to provide students to take part in scientific, social, cultural, artistic and sportive fields and intramural and extra scholastic activities. The general aims of student clubs are to improve students' self-confidence, their sense of responsibility and guide them for new interest fields and skills. Moreover, student clubs are aimed to fulfill community service through social activities. Students clubs determined in the scope of "National Education Ministry Elementary and Secondary Schools Social Activities Regulation" are presented in the Table 1.

**Table 1:** Student Clubs in the scope of Social Activities Regulation

1. Culture and Literature Club	17. Aviation Club	
2. Publication and Communication Club	18. Science and Technology Club	
3. Music Club	19. Photography Club	
4. Art / Visual Arts Club	20. Traffic Safety and First-aid Club	
5. Information and Internet Club	21. Culture and Protecting Natural Assets and	
3. Information and internet Club	School Museum Club	
6. Folk Dances Club	22. Tracing Club	
7. Theatre Club	23. Conscious Consumer Club	
8. Library Club	24. Cooperation Club	
9. Civil Defense Club	25. Introducing Occupations Club	
10 Travelling and Tourism Club	26. Democracy, Human Rights and Citizenship	
10. Travelling and Tourism Club	Club	
11. Protecting Environment Club	27. Cooperation with Disables Individuals Club	
12. Chess Club	28. Protecting the Green Club	
13. Protecting and Loving Animals Club	29. Children Rights Club	
14. Social Cooperation and Welfare, Child Welfare,	30. Philosophy and Training Thinking Club	
The Red Crescent Clubs		
15. Health, Cleaning and The Green Crescent Club	31. Naval Club	
16. Sport Club	32. Stamp Collection Club	

There are some studies in which the situations of normal students and individual with special needs are handled and evaluated together in the body of literature and mainstream education implementations. Orhan (2010), indicates in his study that there

is statistically significant difference between students indicating normal development and individuals with special needs in terms of their social skills and problematic behaviors; individuals with special needs displays less social relationships than students with normal development and they have more problems. According to study results of Çulhaoğlu-İmrak (2009), it is viewed that normal students finds individuals with special needs sufficient and they accept these individuals in each activity and they cooperate with each other. Karamanlı (1998) states that children with normal development have more positive attitude towards social behaviors of mentally retarded students and there is not a statistically significant difference between girls and boys. Seçer, Sarı and Çetin (2010) reach these conclusions in their studies that normal students have positive opinions about the education with their physically handicapped peers in the classroom in which mainstream education is applied.

There are other studies with regard to teachers' opinions, point of views and evaluations in the field of mainstream education. Kaya (2005), points out that teachers can meet children's needs partially although pre-school teachers have knowledge about features and improvements of individuals with special needs, they do not see themselves sufficient enough to start a conversation between students indicating normal development and individuals with special needs, and they do not have sufficient knowledge about legal regulations related to education and they are not able to communicate with experts at the expected level while they can cooperate with their families. Özen, Ergenekon, Kürkçüoğlu and Genç (2013) state that pre-school teachers fulfill their education by placing natural teaching opportunities in which games, routines and passing are used; however, more systematic implementations should be included in order for these implementations to work for individuals with special needs. In the studies related to teachers' attitude in the field of mainstream education, Batu and Kırcaali-İftar (2009) conclude that satisfying the needs of inclusive students in the class, making contact mutually and keeping in touch, social acceptance of the individuals with special needs in the school and even in the community largely depend on teachers. Willbrant, Aydoğan and Kılınç (2008) reach in their studies that the desire of teachers to mainstream students and their acceptable attitude towards individuals with special needs carry great importance for carrying out mainstream education successfully.

It cannot be said that social activities are completely fulfilled at schools. Studies related to social activities are not sufficient enough even though student clubs are established and because of the regulation some processes are carried out such as making preferences, keeping notebooks perfunctorily (Tetik, 2008).

In order for Mainstream education to be successful, many elements such as normal students, inclusive students, school administration, the families of inclusive students, physical environment, the families of students indicating normal development, special education support services as well as club actions in the scope of social activities and materials are effective (Batu and Kırcaali-İftar, 2009). Social activities cover both intramural and extra scholastic educational activities within the

prepared programs. Some of these activities are fulfilled under the name of social service as social club. From this point of view, these studies performed with the guide of teachers carry great importance. As a result of scanning body of literature, it is detected that there are not enough studies about student clubs as social activities of individuals with special needs within the context of mainstream education implementations. Therefore, the activities of student clubs as social activities need to be evaluated so as to benefit from mainstream education expectedly and bring about changes and arrangements. In this research, whether social clubs in the scope of mainstream education implementations for individuals with special needs are fulfilled relevantly or not is aimed to be determined and in direction of these results it is purposed to set light to further studies related to National Education Ministry's implementations about mainstream education by indicating efficient and inadequate sides of social clubs. In this respect, it is aimed to determine beneficial sides of social clubs within social activities in the teaching environments of individuals with special needs in the process of mainstream education. In accordance with this aim, the research problem is decided as "How do individuals with special needs benefit from social club activities in mainstream education?"

## 2. Method

The research is qualitative and fulfilled by using case-study approach which enables deeper investigation about a limited a subject. Case-study is a design restricted by certain time and action analyzing a situation of the research, a program or an individual deeply in the event (Creswell and Clark, 2011; Yin, 2010).

## 2.1 Study Group

Research is carried out with 18 teachers and semi-structured interviews. 16.7% of the teachers are Science teacher, 15.0% of them Math teacher, 27.8% of them classroom teacher, 5.5% of culture of religion teacher and 35.0% of them are Social Sciences teacher. Purposive sampling method enabling researchers to choose target individuals is utilized while deciding the study group in accordance with the aim of the study (Cohen, Monion and Morrison, 2007). In the purposive sampling method, the most appropriate cases, individuals or objects are chosen for the research (Balcı, 2007). The study group of the research includes 200 students with special needs who are 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the process of mainstream education and educated by these 180 teachers working at elementary and secondary schools of National Education Ministry in Bartin and its districts in fall term of the education year 2015-2016. 110 of study group are male and 90 of them are female.

## 2.2 Data Collection Tool

Semi-structures interview with two questions "Which social club is inclusive student with special needs in?" and "What is the role of this student in the social club?" is implemented so

as to determine whether social clubs are carried out in accordance with the purpose of the study in the scope of mainstream education implementations of individuals with special needs and teachers in different branches.

## 2.3 Data Analysis

Content-analysis method from descriptive analysis methods is used while analyzing the data. The main aim in the analysis of content is to obtain concepts and relationships which will be able to explain collected data (Cresswell and Clark, 2011). In the content analysis of results of interviews, evaluations are coded separately in the written form by first and second writers who are expert in the field of education researches. For the reliability of codes, the Formula Reliability = Agreement / (Agreement + Divergence) X 100 is applied on the codes done by both researches (Miles and Huberman, 2002). The similarity percentage of codes is calculated as 95%. This percentage states that reliability is provided in terms of data analysis. Office-Excel program is used to digitize data of interviews carried out with teachers and to make a table.

## 3. Findings

In this study, it is aimed to confirm utilization case of individuals with special needs in the mainstream education in the scope of social activities. 200 students getting mainstream education in the study are divided into 9 groups. In the table 2, the classification of students is displayed in terms of their obstacles.

**Table 2:** Frequency and Percentage Values of Inclusive Students in Terms of Their Obstacle Groups

Obstacle Groups of Students	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Learning Disability	94	47.0
Mentally Retarded	58	29.0
Hearing Impaired	11	5.5
Emotion and Behavior Disorder	9	4.5
Speech and Language Disturbances	9	4.5
Physically Handicapped	6	3.0
Visually Impaired	4	2.0
Talented and Gifted	3	1.5
Other	6	3.0
Total	200	100

According to Table 2, 94 of students (47.0%) have learning disability, 58 of them (29.0%) are mentally retarded, 11 ones (5.5%) have hard of hearing, 9 of them (4.5%) have emotion and behavior disorder, speech and language disorder, 6 of them (3.0%) are physically handicapped, 4 ones (2.0%) are visually impaired, 3 of them (1.5%) are talented and gifted students and the rest 6 ones (3.0%) are included in the other groups.

In Table 3, the data related to inclusive students' membership of any social club and being active in a club are displayed.

**Table 3:** Frequency and Percentage Values of Inclusive Students in Social Clubs

Students' situation of being member of a club and	Frequency	Percentage
having active role	(f)	(%)
Students' situation of joining any social club	132	66
Students' active role in social clubs	42	21
Other	68	34
Total	200	100

The students who are active in social clubs are also member of any social club. According to the research carried out with regard to Table 3, 132 students (66%) from 200 inclusive students are member of various clubs and 42 ones from them (21%) attend club meetings/studies actively in their schools. Club meetings/studies are not carried out actively in the schools where Other 68 (34%) of inclusive students is included or which club these students are in is only noted down. In Table 4, data related to students' clubs is included.

Table 4: Frequency and Percentage Values of Inclusive Students' Clubs

Inclusive students' social clubs	Frequency	Percentage
inclusive students social clubs	(f)	(%)
Sport club	28	21.2
Art / Visual arts club	14	10.6
Culture and literature club	14	10.6
Protecting environment club	12	9.1
Health, cleaning, nourishment and the green crescent club	12	9.1
Theatre club	9	6.8
Travelling and tourism club	9	6.8
Social Cooperation and welfare, child welfare, the red crescent etc. clubs	9	6.8
Civil defense club	7	5.4
Music club	6	4.6
Chess club	4	3.0
Publication and communication club	2	1.5
Conscious consumer club	2	1.5
Other clubs	4	3.0
Total	132	100

As seen in Table 4, the clubs of which students are member are listed like this: Sport Club has 28 students (21.2%), Art/ visual arts Club and Culture and Literature Club include 14 students (10.6%), Protecting environment club and Health, Cleaning, Nourishment and the Green Crescent Club have 12 students (9.1%), Theatre Club, Travelling and Tourism Club and Social Cooperation and Welfare, Child Welfare, the Red Crescent Clubs have 9 students (6.8%), Civil Defense Club includes 7 students

(5.4%), Music Club consists of 6 students (4.6%), Chess Club has 4 students (3.0%), Publication and Communication Club and Conscious Consumer Club have 2 students (1.5%) and the other clubs include totally 4 students (3.0%).

In the research, only 42 of 132 inclusive students who are member of various clubs attend club meetings/studies actively in their schools. In table 5, data related to the clubs in which inclusive students are active is displayed.

**Table 5:** Frequency and Percentage Values of Clubs Where Inclusive Students Have an Active Role

Students' situations of being active	Frequency	Percentage
in their clubs	(f)	(%)
Sport club	10	23.8
Art / Visual arts club	6	14.3
Culture and literature club	3	7.1
Protecting environment club	3	7.1
Health, cleaning, nourishment and the green crescent club	3	7.1
Theatre club	2	4.8
Art / Visual arts club	2	4.8
Culture and literature club	3	7.1
Protecting environment club	2	4.8
Social Cooperation and welfare, child welfare, the red crescent etc. clubs	3	7.1
Other clubs	5	12.0
Total	42	100

As seen in Table 5, students' active situation is like this: 2 students are active in Sport Club (28.3%), 6 ones are in Art/Visual arts Club (14.3%), 3 students are in Culture and literature club, Protecting Environment Club, Theatre Club, Health, Cleaning, Nourishment and the Green Crescent Club as well as Social Cooperation and Welfare, Child Welfare, the Red Crescent etc. (7.1%) and 2 students are active in Travelling and Tourism Club, Civil Defense Club and Music Club (4.8%) and in other clubs, 5 students (12.%) have active roles in club activities.

## 4. Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

In the research, it is aimed to identify situation of individuals with special needs who benefit from social club activities in the mainstream education process.

It is stated by teachers in the research that 132 of 200 inclusive students are member of social clubs, and 42 of these students are active in their club meetings/studies. Other 68 inclusive students are able to carry out these club meetings/studies actively in their schools or which club each student is in is only noted down. Tetik (2008), claims that social activities are not completely applied, studies related to social activities are not sufficient enough except for studies of some principals and teachers knowing the importance of these social clubs even though student clubs are established just because of regulation and such processes as choosing clubs and keeping notebooks are managed. It can be said that the result of this research displays similarity

with conclusions of Tetik's study (2008) in the body of literature. Nonetheless, the reasons why there is little interest in social clubs in the scope of social activities in mainstream education are similar with the causes of Kaya's study (2005) in which teachers meet students' needs partially although they have knowledge about the features and developments of individuals with special needs; they do not regard themselves sufficient enough to start a communication between students with normal development and individuals with special needs; they do not have sufficient knowledge about legal regulations of mainstream education and they do not cooperate with experts expectedly while keeping in touch with families.

Only 42 of 132 inclusive students have active role in their club meetings/studies in their schools. When situations of inclusive students attending social clubs actively are investigated thoroughly, 10 of 28 sport club members take place in club activities actively. One of them with president role and other one with secretary role keep club files whereas three ones are responsible for protecting and maintaining materials of sport club. Other students carry out duties ordered by teacher and play with their peers. This result obtained from sport club activities matches up with the conclusion of Çulhaoğlu-İmrak's (2009) study in which normal students find individuals with special needs sufficient and they accept them in each activity and cooperate with each other.

6 of 14 Art/Visual Arts Club members participate into clubs actively. These students prepare pictures, posters, exhibitions, films and slides appropriate to goals of the club. Furthermore, active students in this club take place in club activities on certain days. One of active students does not attend clubs activities in the strict sense. The related teacher struggles to integrate this student with society by preparing activities and facilities appropriate to this students' level. The obtained result can be said to resemble Orhan's study (2009) in which individuals with special needs have less social relationships than students indicating normal development and they display more problematic behaviors.

It is seen that 3 of 14 Culture and Literature club join club activities actively. The role of inclusive students here is to arrange books and clean bookshelves. At the same time, they are responsible for counting the books. It is viewed that 3 of 12 Protecting Environment clubs members have active role in the club. One of these students takes part in the arrangement of a board on Animal Protection Day. The teacher states that it is beneficial for this student to take place in Protecting Environment Club since this can help this student socialize. Furthermore, another teacher indicates that the inclusive student collects garbage, attends nature trip and other activities as social activities and that student enjoy them a lot. The other inclusive student is said by teacher that the role of this student is to direct other students in Protecting Environment Club and besides, the student is provided to take responsibility of being president' assistant. 3 of 12 Health, Cleaning, Nourishment and the Green Crescent clubs are seen to have attended the clubs actively. One of the active students is given roles for classroom cleaning and warning the classmates about not to pollute classroom. One another student's role is to keep the desk, clothes and the environment clean. The other one is asked to paint the

pictures which will be hung on the board about the Green Crescent Week. These obtained results show similarity with the study of Seçer and et al., (2010) in which the students indicating normal developments have positive opinions about being educated with their physically handicapped peers.

It is viewed that 3 of 9 Theatre Club members attend the social club activities actively. 2 of these are active whereas one of them joins Theatre Club just to improve speaking skills. 2 of 9 Travelling and Tourism Club members participate into clubs actively. And inclusive students in this club have roles for planning travels, collecting money, reading poem etc. 3 of 9 Social Cooperation and Welfare, Child Welfare and the Red Crescent Club members have active role in the club. 2 of these students are responsible for boards prepared about human rights. In this club, the student is included in each kind of study and given roles with the classmates. For example, the active inclusive student in this club takes the role of reading poem in classroom activities in the week of Human Rights and Democracy. Also, the other student is active through helping needy-indigent people with the friends in the field of social cooperation and welfare. It is observed that 2 of 7 Civil Defense Club members attend the club actively. One of these inclusive students is responsible for being secretary and the other one's role is to be accountant. It is viewed that 2 of 6 Music Club members are active in club activities. Moreover, both of these students sing since they have a nice voice. 4 students in other clubs are all active in the clubs that they attend. One of these students is the leader of Tracing Club. The main reason why this student is included is to provide socialization with the teachers and peers by helping that student attend club meetings. One student takes part in Photography Club. The role in this club is to take photographs representing different perspectives and share them with the friends. Another student goes to Marbling course with the family as social club activity. These obtained results have similarity with the studies of Çulhaoğlu-İmrak (2009), Karamanlı (1998) and Seçer and et al., (2010) in which students indicating normal development have positive views about getting education with their physically handicapped peers, normal students regard individual with special needs sufficient and they accept them in each activity and cooperate with them.

In accordance with the conclusions of this research, these suggestions can be put forward; it is not possible for a program to be successful even if this program is included in Education Curriculum if operators of the program do not apprehend it thoroughly. In the process of mainstream education, necessity and importance of social club activities should be explained to the teachers through in-service courses in Education term. Furthermore, individuals with special needs ought to be encouraged to attend social club activities and given responsibilities for carrying out activities with their normal friends. At the same time, social activity programs with families can be arranged about integration of individual with special needs into society.

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