Effective Children's Rights Education from the Perspectives of Expert Teachers in Children's Rights Education: A Turkish Sample

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This study is based on master's thesis titled "Effective children's rights education from the perspectives of classroom teachers: understandings and practices".

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate Effective Children's Rights Education (ECRE) from the perspectives of classroom teachers who are experts in children's rights education (TECR). The data were collected through focus group interview method in this research designed as a case study. The sample of the study consists of six qualified primary school teachers for children's rights education selected by critical case sampling method. The data were interpreted with the help of content analysis method. Five different understandings have been proposed related to effective children's rights education. In the light of these understandings, detailed information has been obtained in reference to proposed ways for the administration of effective children's rights education and where and with whom the process should take place. Furthermore, information has been obtained about the arrangements that TECR have made at class and school levels for an effective children's rights education. The research is important in terms of providing information on the insights into ECRE and its practices at schools in Turkey.

Keywords: children's rights, children's rights education, expert teachers, primary school education

1. Introduction

Today, children are subjected to violence, abuse, and neglect in many countries. The fight against child labor is still ongoing (Hammarberg, 2011; Hodgkin & Newell, 1998). This demonstrates that violations of children's rights are still widespread in the world (Covell, Howe, & McNeil, 2010) and it is important to make regulations for children's rights. Children's rights, which constitute a special part of human rights, aim to protect children against any kind of abuse at an international level (Shumba, 2003). These rights serve primarily the protection and development of children with respect to their physical, mental, emotional, social, moral and economic care (Akyüz, 2000). A school culture movement based on children's rights is necessary in order for these rights to be fully implemented (Lansdown, Jimerson, & Shahroozi, 2014). In this context, it has been observed in recent years that there is a great deal of interest in the education of children about their rights and responsibilities in school programs (Howe & Covell, 2010; Covell, Howe, & Polegate, 2011). This educational process aiming to educate children about their rights and responsibilities is also a basis for human rights education (Covell et al., 2010). The purpose of children's right education is to inform children about the special rights that they have, the nature of the rights, and to raise awareness about values and attitudes, which are necessary for a democratic life and global citizenship, such as respect for the rights of others, social responsibility, justice and equality (Tibbitts, 1997; Flowers, 2007). This educational process includes training in accordance with the children's rights convention (Howe & Covell, 2005; Howe & Covell, 2007; cited in Covell et al., 2010). In this direction, schools should be made into democratic environments where children learn their rights and apply values of citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2002; Covell et al., 2010). In addition, these values need to be reflected in the curriculum for all classes and subjects, in school policies and practices, mission and codes of conduct (Covell et al., 2010). In other words, schools should not be places where the students only use their educational rights but where they learn and exercise their rights (Osler & Starkey, 1998). It is observed in the related literature that various studies have been conducted in this direction (Covell et al., 2010; Covell, 2007; Covell et al., 2011; Reynaert,

Bouverne-De Bie, & Vandevelde, 2010). However, creating a school culture based on children's rights is a difficult and complicated process that may sometimes result in problems (Berends et al., 2002; Elmore, 1995; Fullen, 2007; Hargreaves, 2001; cited in Covell et al., 2010). One of the most significant elements of this process is the teachers who are the practitioners of the programs. Understanding and beliefs of the teachers related to ECRE shape their practices. In this respect, the practices they implement play a crucial role in the quality of children's rights education. Moreover, teachers may be reluctant to teach children their rights because of lack of knowledge related to children's rights, and they can view children's rights as a threat to classroom management (Howe & Covell, 2007; cited in Covell et al., 2010). In addition, teachers are lacking in helping the students for their learning needs and respecting their rights to participation (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). Therefore, teachers need to be experts in children's rights education for effective children's rights education. However, when primary and secondary teacher training programs in Turkey are examined, it can be seen that there are no courses defined by Council of Higher Education related to children's rights and teaching them. This situation brings with it the questions of what teachers actually understand from children's rights education and what type of practices they implement. The answers to these questions are important in order to observe the situation about the children's rights education in Turkey. It is observed in the literature on children's rights that various studies have been carried out to determine the understandings for children's rights education which include understanding and practices related to children's rights (Alderson, 1999; Tibbitts, 2002). In this context, investigations into effective children's rights education from the perspectives of qualified teachers in children's rights education are of particular importance. The results obtained through an assessment on an expert group formed by critical sampling will allow making inferences about other teacher groups (Patton, 2002). Such an investigation will provide detailed information on the best understandings possessed by teachers for ECRE and the best practices in this context. The fact that beginning to work in the education of rights at a young age is crucial for the acquisition of these values (Starkey, 1991; Anglin, 1992) and that there are several courses covering children's rights education in primary schools in Turkey makes it important to conduct research, particularly on classroom teachers. There seems to be no study in Turkey which evaluates effective children's rights education from the perspectives of expert teachers considering the resources available in the related literature. Such a study will contribute to filling the gap in the related literature in the national context and will serve as an important source for the following studies to be conducted in order to increase the quality of children's rights education in Turkey. In the international context, it is thought that it will contribute to the development of theoretical knowledge about understandings for children's rights education and provide information for comparative evaluations to be made for the development of children's rights education in different countries. In line with the stated reasons, this study has investigated the understanding and practices of classroom teachers qualified in children's rights education related to effective children's rights education.

2. Method

2.1 Research Model

This research, in which TECR's insights and practices related to effective children's rights education are examined, is designed as a case study (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009). Case studies allow obtaining holistic and meaningful characteristics related to real life events (Yin, 2009). The purpose of this study was to analyze in depth the understanding and practices related to ECRE at primary school level in Turkey from the perspectives of TECR and to develop a holistic understanding. Focus group interview was used in the study as the data collection method.

2.2 Study Group of the Research

The study group was formed through critical case sampling, one of purposive sampling methods. This sampling allows making logical conclusions that any event or problem about a situation is likely to occur anywhere if it occurs in the conditions of the critical case, or vice versa, that any event or problem about a situation is not likely to occur anywhere if it does not occur in the conditions of the critical case (Patton, 2002). In this study, it was aimed to make logical inferences about the functioning of children's right education in Turkey by collecting information on the quality of children's rights education from the perspectives of TECR. Six criteria were sought for expert teachers in the process of forming the study group. The teachers were supposed to:

• have a master's degree on children's rights,

• be writing or have written his/her master's thesis on children's rights,

• have given lessons on children's rights for at least three years at primary school level,

• have at least one academic work on children's rights education,

• have been involved in projects on children's rights education,

• be carrying out or have carried out studies at the class or school level for children's rights education.

In this direction, the characteristics and letter codes of the teachers who constituted the study group are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of TECR (the study group)

T1	Gender: Female Experience: 4 years
	Postgraduate education: continues to work on her thesis about raising awareness of children's rights
	Number of academic studies: 2 Number of projects: 3
	Effective children's rights education practices: At class and school level
T2	Gender: Female Experience: 7 years
	Postgraduate education: continues to work on her thesis about teacher factor in children's rights education
	Number of academic studies: 1 Number of projects: 1
	Effective children's rights education practices: At class level
T3	Gender: Female Experience: 8 years
	Postgraduate education: continues to work on her thesis on the creation of classroom climate based on children's rights
	Number of academic studies: 1 Number of projects: 2
	Effective children's rights education practices: At school and class levels
T4	Gender: Male Experience: 6 years
	Postgraduate education: continues to work on his thesis about children's rights education in stories and tales
	Number of academic studies: 1 Number of projects: 3
	Effective children's rights education practices: At school and class levels
T5	Gender: Male Experience: 6 years
	Postgraduate education: continues to work on his thesis about the right to education in rural areas
	Number of academic studies: 2 Number of projects: 2
	Effective children's rights education practices: At class and school levels
T6	Gender: Male Experience: 11 years
	Postgraduate education: continues to work on his thesis about the right to participation
	Number of academic studies: 2 Number of projects: 3
	Effective children's rights education practices: At class and school levels

2.3 Data Collection Tool and Process

This study, which was designed as a case study, utilized focus group interview from qualitative data collection methods (Patton, 2002). Focus group interview is an interview on a specific topic with a small group of participants. Groups usually consist of 6-10 people and last 1-2 hours in duration (Patton, 2002). In the study, relevant literature findings were followed in the planning of focus group interviews and its implementation process (Patton, 2002; Kruger, 1998; Krueger & Casey, 2000). In this context, a group of six people with similar characteristics was formed before interviews. An Effective Children's Rights Education Interview Form (ECEIF) consisting of five open-ended questions was prepared. The semi-structured ECEIF was prepared in line with the expert opinions, and a pilot study was carried out before the implementation. The location and date of the interviews were determined, a two-person research team for moderation and recording was established, and a camera and an audio recorder were prepared to record the process. It was noted that the moderator was an experienced person in focus group interviews and the related field. In addition, a pilot study was conducted on a different group of teachers before the focus group interview. In the implementation process, the first part was for the welcoming, introduction and information about the interview. Subsequently, the presentation question was asked in order to warm up the participants for the topic to be discussed (Kruger, 1998). Then, four previously prepared research questions were addressed in sequence. During the interviews, the moderator was careful not to express opinions and not to be controlling the ideas. Thus, it was aimed to prevent the researcher's biases. All participants were provided with the opportunity to express their views, and measures were taken for participants who were dominant or out of the subject. In addition, during the focus group interview process, opinions were received for each question from all participants. One hour and thirty-six minutes recording was taken for the entire implementation process.

2.4 Data Analysis

A 31-page transcript was created for the recorded focus group interview during the analysis process of the research data. In the analysis process, explicitly and selectively (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), the first steps of content analysis was followed. The data was examined line-by-line in line with the purpose of the research. Codes related to effective children's rights education were established by means of direct or indirect meanings. From these codes, those which serve similar tasks and purposes were grouped together. In this direction, five understandings have been determined to reflect the insights related to how effective children's rights education should be. At the same time, themes related to the practices at school and classroom levels for ECRE have been determined.

2.5 Reliability and Validity Studies of Data Analysis

The following studies were carried out for the validity and reliability of the research results:

The interview data were recorded to prevent data loss. The research sample and its processes were described in detail. Quotations were included in the study in order to visualize the inferences made in the reader's mind. Expert opinion was sought for the reliability of the research results. In this context, a faculty member qualified in the field was asked to analyze the transcript. The coding which was created by the independent coder qualified in the field in the direction of the research purpose was compared with the coding created by the researchers, and agreements and disagreements were determined. Intercoder reliability was calculated as 94.38% (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The disagreements were resolved as a result of the discussions with the expert on differences of opinions related to coding. Afterwards, expert opinion was sought for ECRE understanding created through codes and themes of the practices at school and class levels for ECRE. Disagreements were resolved by having discussions with the experts, and an agreement was reached about the analysis.

3. Results

The research findings are presented under three headings: "Understandings for ECRE" and "Practices for ECRE at classroom level" and "Practices for ECRE at school level".

3.1 Understandings for ECRE

Five different understandings for ECRE were identified within the scope of the research. Information on these understandings with their content is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Understandings for ECRE

Understandings	Content of the Understandings
Teach-make them experience-keep it alive understanding	Emphasized place for development: School
	Proposed method of implementation: Teaching rights and responsibilities, making the students experience them and developing environments where students will exercise their rights
	Individuals/Institutions actively involved in the implementation: School administration and staff, teachers, students
Make them feel the need, keep it alive at home and school understanding	Emphasized place for development: School and home
	Proposed method of implementation: Making the students feel rights and responsibilities as a necessity, teaching rights and responsibilities by participatory activities, turning school and home into environments where students exercise their rights
	Individuals/Institutions actively involved in the implementation: School administration and staff, teachers, students, families
Learn through experience with the cooperation of school, parents and university understanding	Emphasized place for development: School and home
	Proposed method of implementation: This approach, which emphasizes education of children's rights through cooperation with the university, school, and family, proposes to teach rights and responsibilities through participatory activities and turn school and home into places where students exercise their rights. This understanding especially emphasizes that universities should take an active role in the child rights education process.
	Individuals/Institutions actively involved in the implementation: School management and staff, teachers, students, parents, ministry of education, universities

Structured school-based curriculum understanding*	Emphasized place for development: School and home
	Proposed method of implementation: Adoption of a school-based curriculum approach, teaching rights and responsibilities through participatory activities, establishing a school and class culture sensitive to children's rights; training the teachers, integrating the practices into educational programs and making school and home convenient places for rights
	Individuals/Institutions actively involved in the implementation: School administration and staff, teachers, students, parents, ministry of national education
School-parents-society cooperation understanding	Emphasized place for development: School, home, society
	Proposed method of implementation: Teaching rights and responsibilities through participatory activities, turning school, home and the society in which students live into places where they exercise their rights
	Individuals/Institutions actively involved in the implementation: School management and staff, teachers, students, parents, ministry of education, media, society, non-governmental organizations

* Understanding adopted by two teachers.

"Teach-make them experience-keep it alive understanding" indicates that ECRE will be achieved at school. It advocates teaching pupils their rights and responsibilities through participatory activities and making the school a place where they exercise their rights. In this understanding, active roles are defined for school administration and its staff, teachers, and students. In this process, the task of teaching rights and responsibilities through experiences is defined for school administration, its staff, and teachers; the task of active learning by experience is defined for the students. "Make them feel the need, keep it alive at school and home understanding" draws attention to the importance of making children feel that they need to learn their rights and responsibilities and exercise them. The basic argument of this understanding is that people are more willing to learn only what they need. The participant (T5) expresses this situation as "*children develop awareness and appreciation of what they need, like all people. This also applies to ECRE. Children should first be made aware of the need to learn their rights and responsibilities…*" In addition, T5 argues that education about rights should be extended not only to school but also to the home environment. In this direction, the school and home are expected to be suitable places for children's rights for students to experience their rights both at home and at school. This understanding expects school administrators, school staff, teachers as well as families to take responsibility in this process. In this context, it is necessary for the teacher to carry out activities in order to make the students feel the need, to teach and to keep it alive; it is also necessary for the school administration and its staff to provide necessary support and to make the school a suitable place for children's rights. At the same time, teachers and school administrators are required to inform parents about giving children their rights and maintaining it at home. "Learn by experience with the cooperation of school, parents and university understanding", similar to previous understandings proposes that rights and responsibilities should be learned by experience in family and school environments. In addition to this, academicians at universities are expected to be involved and contribute to the process of children's rights education through school-based provincial projects. In this understanding, similar roles to other approaches have been defined for school administration, school staff, teachers, students, families, and ministry of national education. It has been emphasized that universities should be involved in the process with their projects in order to actively use the information they acquire theoretically. "Structured school-based curriculum understanding" emphasizes for ECRE that school and home should be places where children exercise their rights. This understanding proposes a wide range of arrangements in teacher training and education programs. In this context, there are a lot of highlighted variables such as adopting a school-based approach to children's rights education as all schools have different cultures and needs, and development of curriculum for this purpose, making physical arrangements, training the teachers, conducting projects at class and school levels, integrating families into the process and preparing programs to teach children their rights and responsibilities by experience in a fun way. The participant (T1) expresses this situation as "*learning by doing and experience should be provided with the cooperation of school and parents… teachers should be trained in children's rights education, effective materials and programs should be prepared for learning processes… a school and class culture, which is sensitive to children's rights, should be established… physical arrangements of the school and class should be made appropriate in accordance with children's rights… children learn better by having fun so programs should be developed to teach their rights and responsibilities in a fun and active way through activities such as drama, painting, games… families should be involved in the process...*". The understanding states that

school administration, school staff, teachers, students, parents and the ministry of national education should take an active role in this process. "School-parents-society cooperation understanding" emphasizes the importance of making arrangements for ECRE in school, at home, and in the social structure. This understanding proposes that students should be taught their rights and responsibilities and, in addition, schools, home environment and the society in which the children live should be places where they exercise their rights. It is indicated that this is the only way to prevent children from having a conflict. Unlike the others, this approach, which emphasizes the change in the social structure as well, states that school administration, teachers, students, families, the ministry of education, the media, non-governmental organizations and the community should take active roles in this process. Unlike the roles in the other understandings, media and non-governmental organizations as well are expected to take active roles to inform the society. The society is expected to give the children the rights and value that they deserve, and the necessary culture should be established for the survival of rights and responsibilities and to ensure the appropriate life standards.

When the understanding findings of ECRE are evaluated in general, attention has been paid to the fact that children should learn their rights and responsibilities by experience, and a school culture should be established, which is the common point of the five understandings. In addition, it can be noted that family is seen as a part of the educational process in four understandings while society is seen as a part of it in one understanding.

3.2 Practices for ECRE at Classroom Level

Findings of what kind of practices TECR carry out in their classrooms for effective children's rights education are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Practices for effective children's rights education at classroom level

Categories	Codes
Teaching activities for children's rights and responsibilities	Teaching rights and responsibilities with drama and creating awareness for their importance
	Carrying out activities to teach rights and responsibilities and their importance through tales and stories
	Teaching rights and responsibilities through games and creating awareness for their importance
	Carrying out activities to teach rights and responsibilities as well as their importance through case studies
	Teaching rights and responsibilities through movies and creating awareness for their importance
	Making the students carry out collaborative research work
	Creating awareness through artistic actives such as painting
	Organizing creative thinking activities such as story writing or completion
	Creating information and awareness through course book activities
	Organizing participatory activities for rights and responsibilities education
	Arranging critical thinking skills-based activities for teaching rights and responsibilities
Practices for children to learn their rights and responsibilities by experience	Building skills to solve their own problems under the guidance of the teacher
	Creating opportunities for the children to gain peaceful reconciliation skills in conflict
	Taking measures to prevent physical and psychological violence in the class
	Providing additional learning support for refugees and children in need of special education
	Taking precautions to avoid discrimination in class
	Ensuring the continuity of children who have problems with attendance
	Including the children in the decision process for the preparation of the daily course schedules
	Ensuring participation in the decision-making process while setting classroom rules
	Ensuring that all students express their opinions freely
	Ensuring that students participate and take responsibilities for sustainable environment and development

Ensuring that the students can claim and defend their rights

Avoiding punishments that involve physical and psychological violence

Arranging the physical arrangement of the class in a way that they can communicate freely

Hanging articles and visuals on bulletin boards in the classroom

Taking time for play, entertainment and recreation activities

Taking students' choices into consideration for games, entertainment and recreation activities

Giving the students right to choose for homework

Ensuring participation in the decision process for activity selection during free event hours

Giving the right to vote and to be elected in student representatives election

Conducting projects for children's rights education at the class level

Ensuring respect for the rights of others

Ensuring that the students take responsibilities for keeping the classroom clean

Protecting from neglect and abuse and creating awareness

Considering the data provided in Table 3, it can be seen that the arrangements for achieving ECRE are gathered into two categories which are "Teaching activities for children's rights and responsibilities" and "Practices for children to learn their rights and responsibilities by experience". The category of "Teaching activities for children's rights and responsibilities" include activity-based practices aimed at providing direct instruction and developing awareness related to rights and responsibilities. In this direction, activities are carried out for the purposes of providing information about children's rights and creating awareness of their importance through drama, sample events, games, stories, tales and artistic activities such as painting; collaborative research works, creative thinking activities such as story writing or completion, tasks based on critical thinking skills and course book activities. The category of "Practices for children to learn their rights and responsibilities by experience" includes activities that the teachers carry out in order for the students to experience their rights and responsibilities. The teachers state that they carry out activities focusing on right to participation, right to peace, right to education, prohibition of discrimination, respect for human dignity, the right to play, entertain and rest, the right to protection from abuse and neglect, informing families and building skills for children to defend and demand their rights, and to think critically, all of which aim to create a children's rights based classroom environment. It has been determined that activities related to the right to participation are more than the activities for the other rights. Expert teachers stated, in reference to this right, that they enable the students to express their opinions freely and participate in the process by using their right to choose in the formation of classroom rules, in the preparation of daily course schedules, in tasks and activities such as homework or games; in the organization of classroom bulletin boards and in the selection of student representatives. The following is what one of the teachers (T6) does for the right to participation in the selection of a class representative: "*I do same with the actual elections. We determine the candidates first. Everyone can be a candidate. I make a paper ballot box. I print papers where the candidates are named. The election is held by secret ballot. Then, we count the votes*". T6 also emphasized the importance of such activities for democracy consciousness. On the participation in the preparation of daily course schedules, one of the teachers (T4) stated "*…the students should be able to change the program by taking decisions on an equal basis with their peers… I say this because I apply it in my class, students participate more in class when they select the courses to take themselves…and they entertain more in these classes because it is a right that they've earned by having discussions*". In the context of the right to peace, TECR point out that they work on building skills for students to solve problems with teacher guidance and to acquire the sense of peaceful reconciliation in conflict situations. They state that these activities also play a supporting role for students to seek and defend their rights. One of the teachers (T4) elaborates on this saying "*students have to face not only the best but also the worst as it is in real life so we need to allow them to act freely. Children should sometimes be given the opportunity to solve their own problems because if children succeed in solving their own problems they have among each other, they will not need to be trained in these matters… a peaceful reconciliation environment is ensured in the class…my students have learned to seek for their rights and to respect rights of others as they have taken rights by experience…*". The teachers indicate that they organize various activities for the right to play entertain and rest and that they carry out activities for the benefit of all students in order to enable them to exercise their rights to choose. They also point out that they are

working on several issues to prevent the students from psychological and physical violence, neglect and abuse. Teachers, who state that they encourage all students to express their opinions freely, indicate that they have also taken measures against discrimination based on gender, race or religion in the class. Within the scope of the right to education, the teachers state that the students have solved their school attendance problems, and they also support the education of the students who are refugees and need special education. They indicate that they are working on the physical arrangement of the classroom considering children's rights. They also state that they regularly make the students clean the classroom and encourage them to keep it clean so that they are educated in a healthy environment. In addition, they state that they are carrying out activities related to a sustainable environment and development. One of the teachers gives the example of an activity in which they accumulated waste papers for a certain period of time and they made a tree from them together with the students and put it in the class. He notes that this activity has created awareness about how trees are wasted on the pages that they use unnecessarily or they do not put into recycle bin. After this activity, the teacher states that there has been a visible change in the students and this has increased their awareness of responsibility.

3.3 Practices for ECRE at School Level

Findings of what kind of practices TECR carry out at their schools for effective children's rights education are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Practices for effective children's rights education at school level

Categories	Codes
Teaching activities for children's rights and responsibilities	Conducting projects for informing families
	Conducting projects for children's rights education at school level
Practices for children to learn their rights and responsibilities by experience	Making the school canteen a healthy place for children to feed
	Taking preventive measures against peer bullying
	Carrying out activities for children to ensure respect for rights of others
	Supporting the education rights of poor students
	Ensuring that there is no discrimination for reasons of religion, ethnicity, and race, etc.
	Conducting activities to protect students from neglect and abuse
	Creating awareness of drug addiction and their harmful effects and carrying out activities for protection against them
Practices for children's participation rights	Carrying out activities for children to express their opinions freely
	Giving the right to vote and to be elected to school council
	Ensuring that all students benefit from paid social activities at school
	Guiding the students to work on school newspaper

Considering the data provided in Table 4, it can be seen that the arrangements for achieving ECRE are gathered under three categories which are "Teaching activities for children's rights and responsibilities" and "Practices for children to learn their rights and responsibilities by experience" and "Practices for children's participation rights".

Teachers indicate that they have carried out activities to inform both the students and their parents within the scope of "Teaching activities for children's rights and responsibilities". In this direction, they state that they organize meetings and seminars at school, and visit parents' homes. A teacher working in a disadvantaged school state that they are visiting families who do not send their daughters to school and inform them that it is a legal obligation. Thus, they express that they intend to provide the right of girls to education. Other teachers indicate that they visit homes of the students who have problems such as not being able to express their opinions, resorting to violence against their friends and being exposed to violence from their parents. Thus, they note that they both observe the children in the home environment and include their families in the solution process. They also point out that they organize projects at school level with the purpose of giving information. In the context of "Practices for children to learn their rights and responsibilities by experience", TECR state that they carry out preventive activities to protect the children from peer bullying and physical violence. The teachers also point out

that they carry out supportive activities together with school administration in order to prohibit discrimination, prevent the students from drug addiction, neglect, and abuse, make the school canteen a healthy place for children to feed and support right of poor students to education. In the context of "Practices for children's participation rights", TECR state that they carry out various activities. Considering the right to participation, they underline that the students can freely express their opinions, participate in social activities and carry out activities related to school council and the school newspaper. However, TECR indicate that they sometimes can not receive adequate support from the school administration for activities other than those mandated by the ministry of national education (Ensuring that girls continue to attend the school, providing supportive education for students who are refugees and need help, and issues about school council, etc.). They also state that the other teachers at the school are reluctant to participate in work for children's rights education. In this respect, they indicate that they are experiencing very serious problems in creating a school culture based on children's rights.

4. Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The results of the research show that TECR have offered five different understandings for effective education of children's rights. In these understandings, the common points have been found to be the idea of teaching the students their rights and responsibilities through activities involving active participation, and through establishing a school culture. The understanding that has been reported and described as the most advanced one also proposes that children's rights education should be provided through activities in which they participate actively, and a school culture should be established accordingly (Alderson, 1999; Save the Children, 2006; Howe & Covell, 2005). It is also important to note that in ECRE understanding s, children are taught not only the rights but also their responsibilities. Because, when children are not taught their responsibilities together with their rights, they only develop insights into freedom. For this reason, it is proposed that the roles, rights, and responsibilities that children will acquire as the citizens of the future should be taught together (Howe & Covell, 2010). On the other hand, the importance of the home environment and family factor has been pointed out in these four proposed ECRE understandings. The Convention on the Rights of the Child also states that parents have responsibilities to their children (Hodgkin & Newell, 1998). As a matter of fact, it is likely that there will be a conflict if there are discrepancies between what the children have learned at the school and the house. In addition, children's using their right to participation in the family supports their self-determination skills (Peterson-Badali, Morine, Ruck, & Slonim, 2004; Day, Peterson-Badali, & Ruck, 2006). On the other hand, the family (Brown, Cohen, Johnson, & Salzinger, 1998), which is among the risk factors for child abuse and neglect, can expose the children to emotional abuse with humiliating comments, even if they provide the child adequate care, protection and education (Horton & Cruise, 2001). In this context, it is an important finding that family and home environment is included in the ECRE understandings. In one of the ECRE understandings, attention is paid to the active participation of the society in this process. The society is expected to be a driving force with NGOs for ECRE and to establish a culture for children where their rights are given and sustained. This is necessary to ensure consistency between the attitudes and values that the children acquire in family and school and those of the society where they live. This is also necessary to provide the children with the value and life standards that they deserve and to meet the requirements of a social structure that would protect the rights of the children (Humphreys, 1999). In this understanding, asking the media to participate in the process by using its effective power of creating values and opinions (Ornstein & Hunkinks, 2004) is an important condition for collective movement.

In the study, the results related to the practices carried out by the TECR show that they have made various arrangements for the ECRE at school and class levels. It has been determined that TECR have organized various activities such as participatory drama, cooperative learning, and educational games for the teaching of children's rights education at the class level. In this respect, it can be claimed that TECR have used effective methods and techniques in human rights education in general, in children's rights education in particular (Flowers, 2007; Brander et al., 2002). It is also important to teach skills and values of problem solving, peaceful reconciliation, respect for the rights of others, critical thinking and seeking and defending rights (Holden, 1996; Starkey, 1991; Flowers, 2007) so that the classrooms become places where children exercise their rights. At the same time, it can be stated that it is important to carry out various practices for the right to participation, which is effective in the development of democratic values, self-confidence and sense of responsibility and, forms the basis of community involvement (Hodgkin & Newell, 1998; Koren, 2000). The arrangements made by TECR for the right to education of refugee children and students in need of special education, and for the protection of students from discrimination, abuse and violence include significant conditions highly emphasized by Convention on the Rights of the Child considering the responsibilities of the contracting countries (Hodgkin & Newell, 1998). It has been determined that TECR have worked on ensuring effective children's rights education at school level. In this

context, it has been noted that they conduct interviews, meetings and home visits to inform the parents. It has also been identified that they carry out informative activities through projects at the school level. These results show that the teachers have implemented consistent practices with the understandings they have proposed for ECRE. It can also be stated that they are trying to disseminate information about children's rights activities to family and school environments. Physical arrangements for the establishment of a school culture, supporting poor students, prevention of peer violence, the realization of the right to participation, and activities for ensuring that all students benefit from entertainment and social activities can be seen as indicative of attempts to implement Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is also noteworthy that several regulations have been made for the right to participation in the school environment, which is not sufficiently addressed in the preparation process of the curriculum (Smith, 2002), such as school newspaper activities, school council work and allowing students to freely express their views. At the same time, when we consider the scope of the school-level work and the understandings proposed for the ECRE together, it can be asserted that these teachers are aware of the need for a change which is to include a whole school culture for ECRE. It can be stated that these activities carried out at class and school levels are consistent with effective child rights education practices in the related field. As a matter of fact, in the Rights, Respect and Responsibilities (RRR) program, which is one of the best models in children's rights education, it has been taken as a basis to give this education through experiences in all class levels and in school policies (Covell et al., 2010). Nevertheless, it appears that the scope of the activities carried out at the school level is less than those at the class level. In addition, there is no situation, as also stated by the TECR, which indicates that all the educators and staff in the school act together, education policies for ECRE are adopted, and education programs are developed and applied at school level practices. This shows that at the schools where these teachers are working, a school culture based on children's rights has not been established in a real sense and that a large part of the regulations on children's rights education at school level are carried out by the individual efforts of these teachers.

When the results of the research are evaluated in general, it can be stated that TECR's understandings for effective children's rights education and the practices they perform are consistent with the literature findings. However, the research only includes evaluations from the perspectives of TECR. In this respect, there are limitations. In order to reveal the general picture in Turkey, it may be suggested to carry out studies on larger samples that will reflect the situation from the perspectives of teachers with different characteristics.

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