



Faculty of
Psychology and
Educational Sciences
"Ovidius" University
of Constanta, Romania



BLACK SEA JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY



www.bspsychology.ro



9 772068 464001



Particularities of the inclusion of schoolchildren with disabilities in Constanta County

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Abstract. Our objective is to conduct a research to highlight the compensatory educational value of a tiflopsychopedagogy in Constanta County, which provides services to students with visual disabilities who learn in mainstream and special schools. Out of a total of 15 students with visual disabilities in our county (cf. School and Vocational Evaluation and Guidance Service), 5 learn in special schools in Constanta County and 10 learn in mainstream schools in our county. In order to achieve our objectives and verify our hypotheses, a questionnaire measuring the level of school and social inclusion was designed. It was administered to a group of 10 students attending mainstream schools in Constanta county. The interpretation of the results of the questionnaire was carried out by combining the quantitative and qualitative information obtained through the method of conversations with support teachers and the psycho-pedagogical teacher.

Keywords. Impaired, visually impaired, typhopsychopedagogy, amblyopia, blindness.

1. Theoretical presentation of constructs.

1.1. Visual impairment

The term deficiency signifies "the loss, alteration, or absence of a structure or function from an anatomical, physiological, or psychological perspective. It can result from a disease, an accident, etc., but also from negative environmental developmental factors, especially affective deficiencies" (Guttman, 2008, p.14).

The concept of deficiency differs from the concept of disease as it carries different meanings. "Disease involves the functional and/or structural alteration of the organism from a somatic, mental, or psychosomatic perspective," with its characteristic being suffering or pain.



Deficiency and disability have in common with disease the state of abnormality. Deficiency can occur as a result of a disability through the loss or absence of a specific ability that other individuals possess (Enachescu, 2004, p.321-323).

Visual deficiency represents a sensory disorder that affects a person's ability to see and perceive the surrounding world normally. This condition is characterized by varying degrees of visual acuity reduction, from partial reduction to complete loss of vision. Depending on severity, different aspects of vision can be affected, such as clarity, contrast, color perception, visual field, or it can involve impairment of all these aspects leading to blindness. Visual deficiency can be temporary or permanent, progressive or stable, and can have multiple causes, including ocular conditions, diseases, injuries, or congenital causes.

Anca Rozorea defines visual deficiency as "all cases of partial or total loss of visual capacity, regardless of etiology and severity, equivalent to a deviation from normal development" (Rozorea, A., 2003).

Adrian Roşan considers that visual disabilities are defined by a certain degree of visual capacity loss. These occur due to trauma, diseases, congenital or degenerative conditions that cannot be corrected through classical techniques (Roşan, 2015, p.153).

1.2. Typhlopsychopedagogy

Tiflopedagogy is a branch of pedagogy that deals with the education and development of the visually impaired.

The main objective of tiflopedagogy is to provide equal access to education and help visually impaired people develop skills and competences in an appropriate way. Tiflopedagogues are specialists who have training in education for visually impaired people and work with visually impaired students and/or adults to provide support and guidance in learning, identify their educational needs and develop appropriate strategies and techniques to meet these needs. Typhidlopagogues use various strategies and techniques to help the visually impaired understand and assimilate information, such as using Braille, assistive technology, and other coping techniques. In addition, typholopagogues help visually impaired schoolchildren or adults develop social and emotional skills. They encourage them to develop self-confidence and take responsibility, provide emotional support, and help them develop positive social relationships with others.

1.3 Amblyopia and blindness

Visual impairment (amblyopia and blindness) refers to all cases of partial or total loss of visual ability, regardless of etiology and severity, this is equivalent to a "deviation" from typical development.

Etymologically, the term "**amblyopia**" *comes from the Greek words "amblys" - weak, dull and "ops" - vision, designating, therefore, weakened vision, low vision, partial vision, poor vision (Rozorea, 1997, p.193).*

"In a broad sense, the term *amblyopia* designates all cases of diminished visual capacity, regardless of etiology and severity, or that decrease in vision that is maintained even after appropriate correction has been made" (Stephen, 1981, p. 9).



In a narrow sense, amblyopia is defined as "diminished vision without organic lesion or with organic lesion, the importance of which is not proportional to the decrease in vision". (Stephen, 1981, p. 9). This definition refers primarily to functional amblyopias.

Amblyopia is delineated by blindness, which, broadly defined, means lack of vision; in a narrow sense, blindness designates "loss of vision, the eye cannot perceive the sensation of light. Bourdier regards absolute blindness as the total suppression of vision." (Rozorea, 1997, p. 193).

2. Purpose, objectives and hypotheses of research.

The purpose of this paper is aimed at the peculiarities of the inclusion of visually impaired students in mass education.

2.1. Research objectives.

Objective 1: Identification of students with visual disabilities who study in schools in Constanta County;

Objective 2: Highlighting the level of adaptation to family and community life of students with visual disabilities in Constanta County;

Objective 3: Establishing the level of school and social inclusion of students with visual disabilities in Constanta County;

Objective 4: Establish the level of access and satisfaction with services supporting school and social inclusion;

Objective 5: To highlight the level of satisfaction with tiflopsycho pedagogical services.

2.2. Research hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: We assume that students with visual disabilities in Constanta County study mainly in integrative schools, benefiting from complementary support services;

Hypothesis 2: We assume that the level of adaptation to family and community life is limited;

Hypothesis 3: We assume that the level of school inclusion and participation in social life is limited;

Hypothesis 4: We assume that most students with visual disabilities access compensatory educational services and use assistive technologies;

Hypothesis 5: We assume that tiflopsycho pedagogical services are appreciated by both primary and secondary beneficiaries.

3. Research participants and tools.

3.1. Research participants

Out of the total of 15 students with visual disabilities in our county (cf. School and Vocational Assessment and Guidance Service), 5 are in special schools in Constanta County and 10 are in mainstream schools in our county.

In order to achieve our objectives and verify our hypotheses, a questionnaire measuring the level of school and social inclusion was designed. It was administered to a group of 10 students attending mainstream schools in Constanta county.



The interpretation of the results of the questionnaire was carried out by combining the quantitative and qualitative information obtained through the method of conversations with support teachers and the psycho-pedagogical teacher.

For the use of personal data we used a unique code assigned to each participant, consisting of the initials of the first and last name, followed by age and gender (e.g. PR40F). In the first section of the form we informed each participant about the instructions for completing the answers, the purpose for which this questionnaire is used, and about the confidentiality of the data. By completing the questionnaire, respondents gave their consent to the processing of this data for the purpose of the research.

Table 1. The situation of visually impaired students in Constanta County

Nr. Crt	Name and First name	Class	Origin environment	Medical diagnostic	Form of education	Services proposed by CJRAE
1	SCD18M	X	Urban	H54, H33	Mass education with SEN	Curricular adaptation, support teacher, psycho-pedagogical counseling, specific compensation and recovery therapies within the cab. typhopsychopedagogy, CSEI Delfinul Constanța, one day a week
2	MMC8F	I	Urban	H52, H54	Mass education with SEN	Curricular adaptation, support teacher, classroom facilitator, psycho-pedagogical counseling, specific compensation and recovery therapies within the cab. typhopsychopedagogy, CSEI Delfinul Constanța, two days a week
3	SEM12F	IV	Rural	H52, H33	Mass education with SEN	Curricular adaptation, support teacher, psycho-pedagogical counseling, specific compensation and recovery therapies within the cab. typhopsychopedagogy, CSEI Delfinul Constanța, one day a week.



4	NLG19M	VIII	Urban	H54, H35.7	Mass education with SEN	Curricular adaptation, support teacher, psychopedagogic counseling, specific compensation and recovery therapies within the cab. typhopsychopedagogy, CSEI Delfinul Constanța, one day a week.
5	IE17M	X	Urban	H54	Mass education with SEN	Curricular adaptation, support teacher, psychopedagogic counseling, specific compensation and recovery therapies within the cab. typhopsychopedagogy, CSEI Delfinul Constanța, one day per week.
6	CC15M	VI	Rural	H52, H47, H54	Special education	Special education for visually impaired people
7	DAN16M	VIII	Urban	H52, H53, F70	Special education	Special education for visually impaired people
8	FAM12F	V	Urban	H35.1	Mass education with SEN	Adaptare curriculară, profesor de sprijin, consiliere psihopedagogică, terapii specifice de compensare și recuperare în cadrul cab. de tiflopsihopedagogie, CSEI Delfinul Constanța, o zi pe săptămână
9	HCC13F	V	Urban	H33, H35	Mass education with SEN	Curricular adaptation, support teacher, psychopedagogical counseling, specific compensation and recovery therapies within the cab. typhopsychopedagogy, CSEI Delfinul Constanța, 1/week.



10	TAS12F	III	Urban	H52, H53, F81	Special education	Special education for visually impaired people
11	SLAM7M	CL 0	Urban	H54, H35	Mass education with SEN	Curricular adaptation, facilitator presence in class, support teacher, psycho-pedagogical counseling, specific compensation and recovery therapies within the cab. typhopsychopedagogy, CSEI Delfinul Constanța, two days a week
12	RSP12F	IV	Urban	H53, H50, H47,2	Mass education with SEN	Curricular adaptation, support teacher, psycho- pedagogical counseling, specific compensation and recovery therapies within the cab. typhopsychopedagogy, CSEI Delfinul Constanța, one day a week
13	PIE8F	I	Urban	H54, H35	Mass education with SEN	Curricular adaptation, facilitator presence in class, support teacher, psycho-pedagogical counseling, specific compensation and recovery therapies within the cab. typhopsychopedagogy, CSEI Delfinul Constanța, two days a week
14	RI10F	II	Urban	H54, H52, H40, F80	Special education	Special education for visually impaired people
15	DL8M	I	Urban	H54.4, H35.7	Special education	Special education for visually impaired people



3.2. Research tools

School Document Analysis is a research method used in the field of education to gather information about various aspects of the educational system, curriculum, teaching practices, and student outcomes. This method involves careful and systematic examination of official documents such as lesson plans, textbooks, school programs, evaluation reports, attendance records, and other relevant records.

In the context of this study, we adopted this method to identify supplementary support services provided to students, assess the utilization of these services, and understand their impact on academic performance or other relevant indicators.

Survey Method, Using the Questionnaire Technique

The questionnaire is one of the most commonly used methods in psychosocial research, especially in quantitative studies (according to Moscovici, 2007, p.65). Earl Babbie defines a questionnaire as "a method of data collection through (1) questions posed to individuals or (2) asking them whether they agree or disagree with statements representing different points of view."

Chelcea (2004) defines a questionnaire as "a technique and, correspondingly, an investigative tool consisting of a set of logically and psychologically ordered written questions and, possibly, graphical images. These questions, when administered by survey operators or through self-administration, elicit responses from the surveyed individuals, which are then recorded in writing" (Chelcea, 2004, p.105).

In this study, an opinion questionnaire was utilized (Grid for assessing the level of school and social inclusion of students with visual disabilities) to gather the opinions of students and their guardians regarding their school and social inclusion. The questionnaire consisted of 26 questions with multiple response options.

4. Presentation, analysis and interpretation of results.

4.1. Hypothesis 1

Table 2. Share of students with visual disabilities by type of educational institution

Access to school education	No. of participants
students integrated into mainstream education, in a regular classroom	10
students of a special education school	5

According to the School and Vocational Assessment and Guidance Service, we have identified 15 students with visual disabilities in Constanta County. As shown in Figure 2, regarding the proportion of students with visual impairment according to the type of educational institution, 5 of them attend special schools in Constanta county and 10 attend mainstream schools in our county, all of them coming from families, the latter representing the group of participants in our study.

After the analysis of school documents, as presented in Table 1 (Situation of visually impaired students in Constanta County), it appears that all students benefit from complementary support services, such as: curricular adaptation, assistance of a support teacher, presence of a facilitator in the classroom, psycho-pedagogical counselling, specific compensation and rehabilitation therapies in a tiflopsycho-pedagogy office located in the Delfinul School Centre for Inclusive Education in Constanta, under the guidance of psycho-pedagogical teacher Darie Viorel.



According to the research carried out, objective no.1 was achieved and hypothesis no.1 is confirmed. **Ipoteza 2**

Table 3. The weight of students depending on the degree of adaptation of the child inside the home

The degree of adaptation of the child inside the family home	No. of participants
the child is autonomous	7
The child needs support but can use the toilet on their own	2
The child constantly needs support	1

Table 4. Share of pupils who can use public transport

Regarding the use of public transport	No. of participants
may use at least one means of transport close to his home, with or without an attendant	9
cannot use any means of public transport	1

Table 5. Share of pupils participating in household activities

Participate in household activities (preparing a meal/cleaning):	No. of participants
Yes, alone or with help	7
Do not participate	3

Table 6. Share of students according to frequency of trips to the community

Average frequency of community trips	No. of participants
daily/more than 2 times per week	10
once a week or at least twice a month	0
once a month, less often or not at all	0

Table 7. Share of students according to their participation in shopping

Participating in shopping:	No. of participants
do small shopping yourself—at least sporadically	1
accompany their parents/teacher/personal assistant shopping, at least sporadically	8
Don't do/participate in shopping	1

From the analysis of the collected data, which includes the answers to the questionnaire questions and individual discussions, regarding the level of adaptation to family life and community activities, as shown in Table 3, it can be seen that out of the 10 students, 7 are self-sufficient in their own homes, 2 need support in certain situations and only one needs permanent support. According to Table 4, it can be seen that 7 of these pupils participate, with family support,



in household chores. Regarding activities outside the home, according to tables 6 and 7, it can be seen that all 10 pupils frequently go out into the community, one of them can do small shopping alone and 8 participate with the family in shopping,

Based on these data, we can conclude that most of the children show a high level of autonomy and involvement/participation within the family and community. They are involved in various household activities, actively participate in decision-making and responsibilities in the household. Thus, objective 2 has been achieved and hypothesis 2 is not confirmed.

4.2. Hypothesis 3

Table 8. The weight of students according to the relationship they have with the family

Relationship with family (parents, siblings, other extended family members):	No. of participants
The family is supportive and encourages the child's social integration	10
The family is supportive, but overprotective / does not make efforts to support social integration	0
The family is not supportive	0

Table 9. Share of pupils according to frequency of participation in social activities

The frequency of the child's participation in community activities (walks, trips to the confectionery, amusement park, celebrations, film, etc.):	No. of participants
participate at least once a month in community activities	8
participates sporadically in community activities	2
does not participate at all	0

Table 10. Share of students according to friendships

The existence of constant friendly and good-neighborly relations:	No. of participants
receives visits and visits to neighbors/friends at least 3 times a week	2
receives visits and visits to neighbors/friends at least 2 times a month	7
visits/visits sporadically or not at all	1

Table 11. Share of students according to friendships

Has friends at school/social service (day centre):	No. of participants
has at least one friend	10
Does not have	0

Table 12. Share of students according to the practice of activities

Carries out at least one cultural or artistic activity	No. of participants
Of	4
nu	6



Table 13. Share of pupils according to participation in cultural or artistic activities

Go to the cinema / theater / shows / concerts	No. of participants
Of	6
nu	4

Table 14. Share of students according to degree of satisfaction with social life

Degree of satisfaction with social life:	No. of participants
very satisfied	8
partially satisfied	2
dissatisfied	0

Table 15. Share of students according to degree of satisfaction with friendships

Satisfaction with friends	No. of participants
very satisfied	9
partially satisfied	1
dissatisfied	0

Table 16. Share of students according to degree of satisfaction with relationships with colleagues

You're happy with the way your colleagues treat you:	No. of participants
very satisfied	7
partially satisfied	2
dissatisfied	1

Table 17. Share of students according to degree of satisfaction with self-help relationships with peers

Colleagues help you if you encounter difficulties:	No. of participants
Yes, always	8
Yes, sometimes	2
No, never	0

Table 18. Share of students according to degree of satisfaction with relationships with teachers

You think teachers pay enough attention to you:	No. of participants
Yes, always	9
Yes, sometimes	1
No, never	0

In order to assess the level of school and social inclusion of students with visual disabilities in Constanța County, we administered a set of 11 questions. Analyzing the data from Table No. 8, it can be observed that all 10 participants in the study come from supportive families that encourage their integration into society. According to tables No. 9, No. 12, and No. 13, approximately half of them also engage in cultural and artistic activities. Regarding school inclusion, relationships with peers and teachers, according to tables No. 10, No. 11, No. 14, No. 15, No. 16, No. 17, No. 18, all participants have at least one friend, receive help from classmates when needed, and benefit from appropriate attention from the teaching staff.



Based on the collected data, it can be observed that a majority of the participating children demonstrate a satisfactory level of engagement in social life. They actively participate in various cultural events, develop friendships, and communicate effectively with their peers and teachers. Therefore, we conclude that Objective No. 3 has been achieved, and Hypothesis No. 3 is not confirmed.

4.3. Hypothesis 4

Table 19. Share of students according to degree of satisfaction with support services

Degree of access to support, empowerment, rehabilitation services	No. of participants
has access to the necessary services, according to the individualized service plan	9
has access to only 30-50% of the necessary services	1
has sporadic access to services or no access at all	0

Table 20. Share of students according to the degree of coverage of prosthetic needs or other technologies

Coverage of the needs of prostheses or other supporting technologies:	No. of participants
The coverage of needs is 80-100%, or does not need these technologies	3
The coverage of the needs of supporting technologies is 30-80%	5
The coverage of the needs of supporting technologies is below 30%	2

Table 21. Share of students according to the degree of access to information

Access to information:	No. of participants
has access to information materials in a format adapted to disability:	7
has access to few informative materials in a format adapted to disability	2
does not have access to information materials in a format adapted to disability	1

Table 22. Share of students according to the degree of access to modern technologies .

Access to modern technologies:	No. of participants
has permanent access to adapted IT equipment and knows how to use it	7
has sporadic access to adapted computer equipment and knows how to use it	1
has access but doesn't know how to use the PC	2

Following the analysis of the data collected in our study regarding the level of access and satisfaction regarding support services for the school inclusion of students with visual disabilities, we found, according to Table 19, that the proportion of students declaring a high level of satisfaction concerning the benefit of support services, enablement, and rehabilitation according to the individualized service plan is significantly high. Among the participants, 9 students mentioned



that they receive the necessary services to an extent of over 80%, while only one student stated receiving these services to an extent between 30% and 50%. As for the proportion of students benefiting from prosthetics and other assistive technologies, we observed, according to the data presented in Table No. 20, dissatisfaction and a decrease in the degree of benefit. Only 3 students benefit from these services to an extent of over 80%, while 5 students benefit to an extent between 30% and 80%, and 3 students benefit to a lesser extent of 30%. Regarding access to informative materials adapted to their needs, according to Table 21, 7 students mentioned having access to these materials, 2 students have limited access, and one of them has no access to these materials. Concerning access to modern technologies, according to Table 22, 7 students have permanent access to adapted computer equipment and are capable of using it, one student does not have access to this type of technology, and two students have access but do not use it properly.

After analyzing these research results, it was observed that the majority of participants have a high level of access to support services, enablement, and rehabilitation according to the individualized service plan. However, it is noticeable that a relatively small number of participants have a significant level (over 80%) of coverage for prosthetics and assistive technologies, indicating limited access to such facilities. Despite these aspects, we can say that Objective No. 4 has been achieved, and Hypothesis No. 4 is confirmed by the obtained results.

4.4. Hypothesis 5

Table 23. Share of students according to the degree of access to typhopsychopedagogy services

Access to typhopsychopedagogy services:	No. of participants
Yes, at least once a week	10
Yes, less often than once a week	0
does not have access	0

Table 24. The share of pupils according to the use of typhopsychopedagogy services in terms of facilitating access to modern technologies

Accessing typhopsychopedagogy services has facilitated your access to the use of modern technologies:	No. of participants
Of	9
partially	1
nu	0

Table 25. The share of students according to the usefulness of typhopsychopedagogy services in terms of facilitating access to information

Accessing typhopsychopedagogy services facilitated your access to information	No. of participants
Of	9
partially	1
nu	0



Table 26. Share of students according to the degree of satisfaction with typhopsychopedagogy services .

Degree of satisfaction with typhopsychopedagogy services	No. of participants
very satisfied	9
partially satisfied	1
dissatisfied	0

According to the analysis of the data presented in Table 23, we can observe that all participants in our study benefit from tiflopsychopedagogy services. Regarding the data presented in Tables 24, 25, and 26, it is highlighted that 9 out of 10 students express a very high level of satisfaction with these services.

The utility of tiflopsychopedagogy services has a considerable impact on their learning process, facilitating their access to modern assistive technology services. This allows students to access necessary information and contributes to the development of social skills, their integration, and inclusion in society and school.

Analyzing the research results, we observe that the level of satisfaction regarding access to tiflopsychopedagogy services is extremely high. These services play a significant role in acquiring essential skills to integrate into the digital society and leverage their potential in areas such as education, career, or communication. They provide personalized support and guidance for individuals facing difficulties in accessing information and using digital technologies.

Based on these findings, we can state that Objective No. 5 has been achieved, and Hypothesis No. 5 is confirmed.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the results of our research indicate that the proposed objectives have been successfully achieved. The majority of students with visual impairments in our county are integrated into mainstream schools and benefit from complementary support services, such as curriculum adaptation, support teacher assistance, and specific compensatory and rehabilitation therapies. Additionally, they demonstrate a high level of autonomy in family life and are active in the community, engaging in household activities together with their families.

Study participants come from supportive families that encourage their integration into society, and within the school environment, they enjoy positive relationships with peers and teachers. They exhibit a satisfactory level of social involvement, participating in various cultural events and maintaining healthy friendships.

Regarding access to support services for school inclusion, most students express a high degree of satisfaction. The level of meeting their needs according to the individualized service plan is significantly high, and access to adapted informative materials is generally ensured.

However, there is dissatisfaction and a decrease in the level of benefit concerning prosthetics and other assistive technologies, requiring additional efforts to ensure broader coverage of prosthetic and assistive technology needs.

Tiflopsychopedagogy services have a considerable impact on the learning process of these children, providing them with access to modern assistive technologies and contributing to the



development of social skills. These services are essential for the integration and inclusion of students with visual impairments in society and the school environment, enabling them to acquire the necessary skills to thrive in a digital society.

The high level of satisfaction recorded reflects the effectiveness and positive impact of these services on the users. By acquiring essential digital skills, they become capable of leveraging their potential in various aspects of their lives, including education, career, and communication. Access to information and online communication opens up new opportunities for learning, professional development, and social interaction. Thus, tiflopsychopedagogical services contribute to reducing inequalities and promoting social inclusion, providing support and eliminating barriers faced by individuals with visual impairments.

This finding can be considered a positive evolution in the development of these children, indicating that they are acquiring skills to manage responsibilities and feel valued and included in their community. It is crucial to continue encouraging and supporting this level of involvement and autonomy among children, as these traits can have a positive impact on their social and emotional development.

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