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The Views of Kazakh Teacher Candidates on Children's Rights

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This research aims to examine the awareness of child rights among students at a state university in Kazakhstan. The study aims to measure the level of knowledge future educators have on child rights. Qualitative research methods were used in the study, and semi-structured interviews were conducted for comprehensive data collection. The interview form used was a semi-structured interview form called "Preschool Teachers' Awareness of Child Rights Form", developed by the researchers. The research was conducted on a sample of 20 students from the university's preschool education department, and interviews were conducted specifically on child rights awareness. Descriptive analysis, a method of qualitative data analysis, was used to interpret the collected data. The results of the research showed that the students' levels of awareness varied, and a significant percentage had in-depth knowledge about the international child rights frameworks established by UNICEF. However, deficiencies were identified in their understanding of how these rights are applied in educational settings. The study emphasized the role of the curriculum in increasing awareness and suggested areas for improvement. In light of the findings, various recommendations were presented, such as

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incorporating comprehensive modules on child rights into teacher education curricula and organizing continuous professional development sessions for in-service teachers. Additionally, it was emphasized that workshops and seminars at the university level should be organized to address the identified knowledge gaps.

Introduction

In the Turkish Language Association dictionary, a child is defined as "a boy or girl of young age", "a son or daughter in terms of lineage", and "a boy or girl in the development period between infancy and adulthood, lad" (TDK, 2022). In another definition, a child is referred to as a human offspring during the time from birth until being accepted as an adult individual. Child development is holistic and aims to anticipate and identify examples in cognitive, linguistic, physical, sensory-behavioral, and social development (Uçuş, 2009). In another definition, in law, those under a certain age are considered children, and even if they become adults at an earlier age, a person who has not reached the age of 18 is defined as a child (Akyüz, 2018). Postman (1995) described a child as an individual under the age of 18, without a profession, and in need of special care and protection. In this sense, all individuals under the age of 18 are referred to as children. This situation has been stated and protected with the child rights convention.

Given these definitions and understandings, it becomes pivotal to consider how societies and governments implement policies and practices to support children's rights and development effectively. The role of policy makers, educators, and parents is crucial in crafting environments that are conducive to the optimal growth of every child. Children's rights are not just a legal obligation but a moral and social imperative, integral to the fostering of a just, equitable, and progressive society. Furthermore, the dynamism of children's developmental needs requires adaptive and flexible approaches to ensure that support structures evolve in tandem with the rapidly changing global landscape (Student, 2019). Technological advancements, societal changes, and emerging challenges necessitate innovative solutions to uphold and promote children's rights and well-being (Nava, ad., 2005).

Throughout history, the concept of a child has always been expressed as the future, and every society has sought to protect children, on whom they base their future. In the 21st century, the level of development of countries is measured by the value and importance given to children (Kamau, 2013). Struggling for children to live in happiness and welfare, reminding and teaching them their fundamental rights and freedoms, is one of the most crucial necessities of our age. It is necessary for children, who form the future of societies, to know and learn their rights in order to grow up with democratic values and within the framework of human rights; to be democratic, confident, open to change and development, contemporary, respectful of rights and freedoms. Children should be nurtured with respect for their rights, potential, and freedoms, as it's indicative of sustainable development within societies. Therefore, investing in children, valuing their education, and fostering their physical, mental, and emotional development is paramount. They must be equipped with the tools, resources, and opportunities necessary to explore and realize their full potential (Ejeh and Akinola, 2009).

In a world increasingly defined by rapid technological advances, environmental challenges, and globalization, children need to be prepared with the skills and knowledge to navigate and adapt to these complex landscapes. Education systems should be robust, inclusive, and holistic, focusing not just on academic achievements but also on the development of



character, ethical values, and social responsibility.

Children are not just passive recipients of knowledge but active contributors to society. Recognizing and valuing their perspectives enriches our communities and brings innovative solutions to the challenges we face. Every child, regardless of their background, should have the opportunity to voice their opinions, be heard, and actively participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives (Bhargava and Ahamad, 2015).

Child protection and well-being is a collective responsibility that involves families, communities, governments, and international bodies. By working collaboratively, sharing resources, knowledge, and expertise, we can create an environment where every child is safe, healthy, and empowered to contribute meaningfully to our shared future. As we move forward, let us recommit ourselves to the universal principles of child rights, equity, and justice. By doing so, we harness the transformative power of children and youth, unlocking unprecedented innovations, solutions, and opportunities for generations to come (Kumar, 2016).

In light of this, the inclusion of children's voices in the dialogues that shape their futures is indispensable. Empowering children to articulate their experiences, aspirations, and challenges fosters a sense of agency and participation. It enhances their capacity to contribute meaningfully to society and nurtures a generation of informed, engaged, and responsible citizens. Educational curricula should be refined to embed the principles of child rights, ethical citizenship, and global solidarity (Akiri, 2013). Beyond the conventional academic learning, children should be exposed to experiential and participatory learning methodologies that accentuate critical thinking, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving (Payalyoolu and Içduygu, 1999). Global cooperation and solidarity are paramount to the realization of children's rights universally. Nations should collaborate, sharing insights, innovations, and best practices to overcome shared challenges and build a world where every child is afforded the opportunities and support to thrive. In sum, upholding children's rights is a shared responsibility that transcends geographical, cultural, and political boundaries. It demands collective action, informed by the diverse and dynamic definitions and understandings of childhood, to nurture a world that is just, equitable, and hospitable for all children, today and for generations to come (Arsenovic, ad., 2004).

The concept of a child in the 21st century is not only referred to as a biological being. The child appears as an entity that is valued in every aspect. From this perspective, the first thing that comes to mind is child rights. In the 21st century, child and child rights are taken more seriously and addressed in all their aspects. Without a doubt, the most affected by wars occurring in some regions of the world, climate change, and other developments are the children. This vulnerability of children necessitates the importance of securing child rights. Looking at the literature, child rights have been expressed as the benefits protected by legal rules for the child to develop healthy and normal in terms of physical, mental, emotional, social, and moral aspects, within the realms of freedom and dignity, referred to as "Child Rights" (Öztürk, 2017:432).

With the emergence of humanity, the use of the concept of rights, the conjunction of the history of humanity with the history of childhood, and therefore, the changes occurring in society have influenced the emergence of child rights and the value given to the child (Çarıkçı, 2019: 31). Significant steps have been taken regarding child rights in the historical process, and efforts have been made to secure these steps with documents. These documents

are:

- 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child
- 1959 United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child
- 1963 Turkish Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

In the historical process regarding child rights, steps have been taken as follows: 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Akyüz, 2018; Merey, 2016; Erbay, 2013; Doğan, 2000). These steps have been adopted by many member countries and efforts are being made to implement them. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Turkey accepted in 1994 and enacted as a law in 1995, has been approved by a total of 193 states (Akyüz, 2013:39). The convention, organized internationally and accepted by participating countries on November 20, 1989, draws attention to four fundamental rights and protections concerning the child (UNICEF, 2022). These are as follows:

Right to Survival: It represents the child's right to life and the basic needs necessary for survival. Nutrition, shelter, adequate living standards, and benefiting from health services are included in this group. **Right to Development:** It summarizes the things children need to realize their potentials. Education, rest, cultural activities, and freedom of thought, religion, and conscience are included in this group. **Right to Protection:** These are the rights emphasizing that children should be protected from all kinds of neglect, abuse, and exploitation. It covers issues such as special security for refugee children, and the protection and rehabilitation of neglected and abused children. **Right to Participation:** It refers to the active role of children in the society and community they belong to. These rights include having a say in matters affecting their lives and expressing their own opinions.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has created awareness all over the world, has started to establish a unity on child rights all over the world due to being the only universal document. In this sense, children of the 21st century are considered more fortunate than the children of past periods, being recognized and approved by society with established rights (Doek, 2008). This situation has also reflected on scientific studies regarding children's rights. When the literature in the field is examined, it is seen that studies have been conducted by Dere (2022), Dönmez (2022), Kormezer (2021), Atik (2019), Munongi and Pillay (2018), Durualp, Kadan and Durualp (2017), Bilir Seyhan, Arslan Canseveri (2016), Topsakal and Akyürek (2012), Quennerstedt and Quennerstedt (2013), Deb and Mathews (2012), Cherney (2010), Uçuş (2009), Tragard (2009), Rizzini and Thapliyal (2007), Aktürk (2006), Tunç (2008), Кобегенова, and Ахметова, (2023), Akimzhanova, et al., (2018), Малгаждарова, and Ахметжанова, (2023). and Alderson (1999). Based on this context, the purpose of the research is to investigate the perspectives of teacher candidates at a state university in Kazakhstan on various aspects of child rights. It examines their views on the concept of a child, their general understanding of rights, and more specifically, their perceptions of children's rights. Additionally, the study explores their opinions on the importance of these rights and the ways to increase awareness about them. An important aspect of this research also involves examining the teacher candidates' views on the emotional connections children establish with their environment. This comprehensive investigation aims to inform and potentially enhance teacher education curricula and professional development programs, focusing on the integration and emphasis of children's rights within educational settings. In this context, the following research questions were sought answers to:

- How are the views of teacher candidates regarding the concept of a child?



- How are the views of teacher candidates on the concept of rights?
- How are the views of teacher candidates regarding children's rights?
- How are the views of teacher candidates on increasing awareness about children's rights?
 - How are the opinions of teacher candidates regarding the importance of children's rights?
- How are the views of teacher candidates concerning a child's affection towards any entity in the environment?

Method

Research Model

The phenomenological design in qualitative research primarily aims to understand and describe lived experiences of individuals about a specific phenomenon. In our research, the phenomenon under investigation is the "awareness of university students regarding children's rights." By using the phenomenological approach, we intend to gain deep insights into the students' perceptions, feelings, and understanding about children's rights, considering their personal experiences and viewpoints.

The choice of the purposive sampling method aligns with the goals of phenomenological research. Purposive sampling allows researchers to deliberately select participants who have rich and relevant information about the phenomenon in question. In our study, university students are chosen as they are on the verge of becoming professionals and their understanding of children's rights will have significant implications in their future roles, especially for those who will venture into sectors impacting children directly, like education, social work, and policy-making.

As Creswell (2013) notes, "In qualitative research, the idea behind purposive sampling is to concentrate on specific characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable you to answer your research questions." In our study, the specific characteristic of interest is the awareness and understanding of children's rights, making purposive sampling an apt choice.

Study Group

The participants of this study consist of 20 teachers studying in the preschool department of a university in Kazakhstan. Students were selected through purposive sampling, a non-random sampling method. According to Patton (2018), purposive sampling is a method that allows for a rich understanding of phenomena and events through in-depth research. Looking at the genders of the teacher candidates participating in the study, 18 of the participants are female and 2 are male. The age range of the participants is between 18-24 years old. The class levels are made up of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-year teacher candidates.

Data Collection Tools

The data for the research was collected in the fall semester of 2022-2023 using the "Pre-Service Teachers' Awareness Form on Children's Rights," a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher. Initially, the interview form comprised 7 questions. After receiving feedback from 3 field experts, 2 questions were revised for clarity, and 1 was removed due to redundancy, resulting in a final tally of 6 questions. The feedback primarily

focused on ensuring that the questions were unambiguous and directly related to the topic of children's rights. Semi-structured interviews consist of questions predetermined by the researcher. Ensuring the usability and reliability of the interview form was paramount; hence, the questions were finalized and implemented in their refined form following these stages of feedback and testing.

Data Collection and Analysis

To explain the collected data and to reach concepts and relationships that can interpret them, the descriptive analysis method, one of the qualitative data analysis methods, has been employed. In descriptive analysis, direct quotations are frequently included to vividly reflect the opinions of the interviewees (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). Semi-structured questions were distributed to pre-service teachers, and they were requested to answer them. The answers were gathered, and participants were assigned codes like K-1, K-2, K-3. Due to the responses of the teacher candidates being in Kazakh and the researchers not knowing the Kazakh dialect, it was translated into Turkish by expert translators. The researchers deeply analyzed the data and determined the coding's based on the concepts obtained. Subsequently, the themes and coding's generated by the researchers were compared amongst each other, and common coding's were established and interpreted by the researchers. Findings related to each research question were supported with direct quotations from participant responses within the context of reliability. Moreover, tables and frequencies were prepared to exhibit the distribution of opinions of the teacher candidates. To ensure the research's reliability, the findings were reviewed by not only the researchers but also by two experts in the field. In this study, various measures have been implemented to ensure internal validity by enhancing the reliability of the research findings. Participants were provided opportunities to review and confirm the interpretations made from their answers. This iterative process not only bolstered the data's reliability but also encouraged the participants' engagement in the research process. The application of detailed and structured protocols for data collection and analysis further fortified internal validity. Each step in the process was meticulously documented, ensuring consistency and reliability in processing, and interpreting the data. Efforts to ensure the external validity or generalizability of the study's findings were equally rigorous. A diverse and representative sample was diligently selected to encompass a broad range of perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds. This heterogeneity ensured that the findings were not specific to a particular group but remained relevant in various contexts.

Findings and Interpretation

In this section, we delve into the intricate perspectives and insights provided by the teacher candidates concerning the conceptualization of a child, grounded in their inherent rights. The findings, encapsulated in Table 1, unveil the nuances and diversity in understanding, offering a comprehensive landscape of the candidates' viewpoints and their alignment with established children's rights norms. The interpretations are meticulously crafted to echo the depth and breadth of the responses, casting light on the intricate balance between individual perceptions and collective norms.

Table 1 Views of pre-service teachers on the concept of child

Child Rights	Frequency	Percentage of Responses
Right to life	8	40
Right to development	5	25
Right to protection	4	20
Right to Participation	3	15
Total	20	100

Upon examining Table 1, it is observed that 40% of the teacher candidates referred to the right to life while explaining the concept of a child. K-3 expressed, "Children are angels; they should always live," while K-19 stated, "Children are beings who are born healthy and hold onto a healthy life," and K-8 described, "They are beings who say hello to life and want to live." These findings indicate that the teacher candidates defined the concept of a child with its vital dimension.

25% of the teacher candidates explained the concept of a child by mentioning the right to development. K-1 noted, "Like every born living being, a child is a being that needs to develop in this world," while K-9 expressed, "Children are miracles that need to develop in a healthy way." It is seen that 20% of the teacher candidates referred to the right to protection. K-11 shared the opinion, "A child is a being that comes into the world unprotected," while K-15 stated, "A child is the smallest and the most unprotected miracle of beings."

15% of the teacher candidates expressed their opinions by referring to the right to participation. K-7 stated, "They should not be seen as a small being they are beings whose opinions should be taken," while K-18 expressed, "They are the smallest members of the family who need to participate in the decisions made."

Table 2 Views of pre-service teachers on the concept of rights

Aspect of Children's Rights	Specific Right	Frequency	Response Rate
Children's nutrition, having a home, having a family, having living spaces	Right to life	7	35
Child's being healthy, receiving respect, playing games, receiving education, receiving love, being happy	Right to development	6	30
Child not being employed, protection from external events, protection from abuse, protection from violence, protection from war	Right to protection	4	20
Child being able to express their opinions, being able to make their own decisions, being able to make decisions in their own living space	Right to participation	3	15
Total		20	100

Upon reviewing Table 2, it is seen that 35% of the teacher candidates expressed views indicating the right to life in response to the question "what is referred to as a right?". The teacher candidates made the following statements about the right to life: K-8 stated, "Children need to be well-fed for them to live, and this is a right," while K-17 expressed, "It is a child's right to have a family, and it has been this way since the existence of the world."

30% of the teacher candidates evaluated the concept of rights within the scope of the right to development. K-14 noted, "It is the most natural and humane right for children to live healthily," and K-6 mentioned, "Having a family, being happy, and receiving love is a right for the child."

20% of the teacher candidates evaluated the concept of rights in the context of the right to protection. K-18 articulated, "It is a right for the child to live without being employed," and K-20 mentioned, "It is a right for children to be protected from wars and violence occurring in the world."

Lastly, 15% of the teacher candidates expressed the concept of rights within the scope of the right to participation. K-14 claimed, "It is a child's right to have a happy family and a room, and to make decisions in their room," while K-3 conveyed, "It is a right to seek a child's opinion on matters concerning the home, and this makes the child valuable."

Table 3 Views of pre-service teachers on children's rights

Expressed children's rights	Children's rights	Frequency	Response rate
Right to life	Family Food acquisition Health Clothing Cleanliness	7	35
Right to development	Education Love Happiness	7	35
Right to protection	Protection from dangers Protection from violence Protection from war Protection from migration	4	20
Right to participation	Right not to be interfered with in their living space Right to participate in family decisions	2	10
Total		20	100

Upon examining Table 3, it is seen that the teacher candidates responded to the question "What rights do you think children have?" with 35% citing the right to life and another 35% citing the right to development. Teacher candidates expressed the rights included in the right to life as the right to a family, the right to food acquisition, the right to health, the right to clothing, and the right to cleanliness. K-10 articulated, "I think children have the right to a healthy life, the right to have a family, and the right to live in a clean world." Meanwhile, K-7 stated, "I can say that children have rights such as the right to life, the right to healthy growth, the right to clothing and shelter, and the right to healthy food acquisition."

Regarding the right to development, teacher candidates gave the following answers. K-13 said, "Children have the most basic right to education, along with the right to love and a life where they can be happy." K-12 also noted, "Children have the right to live happily in a peaceful and loving home, and no one can take that away from them."

Teacher candidates emphasized that under the right to protection, children have the right to protection from dangers, violence, war, and migration. K-2 expressed, "Today, there are wars and children are the biggest victims of these wars, and children have the right to protection from wars and migration." K-5 shared the view that, "Children have the right to protection from dangers and violence in today's dangerous world. Children should definitely not be deprived of these rights."

In terms of the right to participation, teacher candidates voiced opinions such as the right not to be interfered with in their living space and the right to participate in family decisions. K-16 stated, "Children, especially in their rooms, should not be interfered with in their living space, and children must definitely be included in the decisions made in their families."

Table 4 Views of pre-service teachers on the importance of children's rights

Child rights	f
Right to life	20
Right to development	18
Right to protection	18
Right to participation	17
Right to health	17
Right to education	17
Right to family	15
Right to be loved	14
Right to play	14
Right to protection from violence	14
Right to protection from migration	10
Right to housing	10
Right to cleanliness	9

In Table 4, the child rights that teacher candidates regard as important are listed. The right to life is seen as the most important right for children by teacher candidates. K-3 stated, "In my opinion, the most important is the child's right to life. Just like every living being, a child's right to life is the most important." Teacher candidates have indicated the right to development as the second most important right. K-11 expressed, "I see the right to be born and the right to development as the most important right."

Eighteen teacher candidates also shared opinions on the right to protection. K-18 said, "I think the right of children to be protected from external dangers and abuse is more important than anything." In regards to the right to participation, 17 teacher candidates shared their opinions. K-8 noted, "For children to feel valued, they must definitely participate in the decisions taken at home, and the child feels happy."

Seventeen teacher candidates pointed out the importance of the right to health. K-15 stated, "The right to a healthy and happy life is the most important right for children. We see many unhealthy children in Africa. Therefore, the right to health is important." Seventeen teacher candidates said that the most important right is the right to education for children. K-5 expressed, "In my opinion, the most important right for children is the right to education. Getting education is important for both the child and the society."

Fifteen teacher candidates emphasized the importance of the right to family for children. K-13 mentioned, "Family is an important right for a child. It should be a place where they belong and bear a family name." Fourteen teacher candidates highlighted the right to be loved as the most important right for children. K-9 noted, "Knowing that every living being, including children, has the right to love and be loved is the most important right."

Fourteen teacher candidates affirmed that the most important right for children is the right to play. K-6 said, "If the first thing that comes to mind when you say child is play, then the most important right is, in my opinion, the right to play." Fourteen teacher candidates expressed that the most vital right is the right to be protected from violence. K-2 stated, "It is sad to see children being forced to work at young ages and being subjected to violence in these environments. Therefore, the right to be protected from violence is the breath of every child."

Ten teacher candidates declared that the most important right for children is the right to be protected from migration. K-16 voiced, "There are wars in the world and children are exposed to migration; the right to be protected from migration is the most important right." Ten teacher candidates highlighted the right to housing as the most essential right. K-12 said, "The

right to housing is the most important right for children. Having a family and a place to stay is important for a child."

Nine teacher candidates emphasized that the right to a clean environment is the most sacred right. K-14 declared, "The most important right for children, or rather all living beings, is to lead a healthy life in a clean environment and in clean surroundings."

Table 5 Views of pre-service teachers on enhancing awareness of children's rights

Actions to be taken for awareness	Number of opinions
Educating parents	15
Awareness activities with children	15
Utilizing social media	14
Child rights conferences	11
Television programs	9

In Table 5, the prospective teachers' responses to the question, "What can be done to better understand child rights by society, in your opinion?" are listed. The highest number of responses favoured the education of parents. Participant K-7 noted, "It would be good for child rights if education sessions could be arranged to raise the awareness of the children's parents about child rights." Similarly, participant K-17 expressed, "Child rights can achieve success and create awareness in society through the education of parents."

Next in line, prospective teachers emphasized the need for child rights awareness activities with children. Participant K-10 said, "Awareness activities with children regarding child rights should be conducted," while participant K-19 suggested, "Work can be done according to their ages to make them know their rights."

Prospective teachers also highlighted the potential role of social media, with 14 individuals favouring this approach. Participant K-1 stated, "In today's world, social media is being used effectively; spots regarding the subject can be shared on social media." Participant K-20 echoed this, emphasizing, "The power of social media should be used for child rights awareness."

The respondents also recommended organizing conferences on child rights, with 11 individuals suggesting this. Participant K-9 believed that "Conferences enlightening society about child rights can be organized, which in turn creates awareness." Participant K-15 similarly noted, "Child rights conferences can be effective in raising awareness in society."

Lastly, prospective teachers suggested the creation of television programs focused on child rights, with nine individuals supporting this idea. Participant K-5 shared, "TV channels can create programs regarding child rights," and participant K-6 added, "Television is still an effective media tool in rural areas; this power of television can be utilized."

Table 6 Views of pre-service teachers on children's affection towards any entity in the environment

Entity likened	Number of likenesses
Paper	5
Angel	4
Flower	4
Earth	2
Tree	2
Soil	2
Sun	1
Total	20

In Table 6, prospective teachers were asked the question, "If you were to liken your child to any entity around you, what would it be?" According to the data obtained, the number of likenesses to paper was higher while the number of likenesses to the sun was lower. It was also seen that there were likenesses to an angel, flower, earth, tree, and soil. Participant K-3 stated, "I would liken my child to paper because the moves he/she makes at home surprise us a lot," while participant K-9 mentioned, "My child constantly asks me about the world or stars they see on TV."

Participant K-11, who likened to an angel, expressed, "Children have pure hearts and do not harbor evil, that's why I would liken my child to an angel." Participant K-1 articulated, "Children are like a sapling, you nurture and grow them, and they turn into a big tree, thinking this way, I would liken my child to a tree."

Conclusion and Recommendations

The awareness of university students on children's rights can vary depending on the field of education they are receiving, their social environment, and personal experiences. Children's rights are a part of the concept of fundamental human rights that are accepted worldwide. It particularly encompasses the rights that children have in areas such as life, education, health, family, culture, and language. In this regard, this research aimed to determine the awareness of the students studying at Kazakhstan Pavlodar Pedagogical University regarding children's rights.

In the research, the question "What are the views of pre-service teachers regarding the concept of a child?" was posed to the students studying at Kazakhstan Pavlodar Pedagogical University. According to the data obtained, 40% of the teacher candidates mentioned the right to life as one of the fundamental elements of children's rights. This demonstrates that the candidates understand the importance of meeting the basic needs necessary for children to sustain their lives. The right to life encompasses meeting the children's basic needs such as health, nutrition, and shelter. In light of the findings that 40% of teacher candidates acknowledged the right to life as a fundamental aspect of children's rights, it is pertinent to align this with existing literature and studies. For instance, Alderson (1999) emphasized the intrinsic link between human rights and the holistic wellbeing of the child, asserting the non-negotiable necessity of ensuring every child's right to life, survival, and development. Similarly, Cherney (2010) explored the intricate dynamics between children's and parents' perspectives on rights, accentuating the universal consensus on the quintessence of life and basic needs as irrefutable rights of every child. These insights corroborate the understanding exhibited by the teacher candidates at Kazakhstan Pavlodar Pedagogical University, underscoring a globally resonant acknowledgment of the right to life as foundational in the discourse on children's rights (Alderson, 1999; Cherney, 2010).

25% of the teacher candidates emphasized the children's right to development. The right to development refers to providing the conditions necessary for children to grow healthily in physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects. This shows that the teacher candidates understand the need to support children in areas such as education, play, and recreation.

20% of the teacher candidates mentioned the children's right to protection. The right to protection includes protecting children from harmful situations such as abuse, exploitation, violence, and neglect. This illustrates that the candidates realize the necessity to take measures to ensure that children grow up in a safe and healthy environment.

15% of the teacher candidates emphasized the children's right to participation. The right to participation entails the right of children to be involved in and express their opinions on decisions affecting their lives and their communities. This indicates that the teacher candidates value allowing children to express themselves and have a say in decisions affecting their lives.

Furthermore, when evaluating the responses to the question "What are the opinions of teacher candidates regarding the concept of rights?" in relation to teacher candidates, the majority have given answers such as children having nourishment, a home, a family, and living spaces, primarily based on the right to life. The fundamental reason for this situation is that the teacher candidates are aware of the importance of these basic needs for sustaining the lives of children and for their healthy growth. Munongi and Pillay (2018) discussed the inclusion of children's rights and responsibilities in the school curriculum in South Africa, which could be aligned with the notion of understanding and acknowledging children's fundamental rights. Deb and Mathews (2012) explored parents' and teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and perceptions about children's rights in India, which can be associated with the awareness of children's basic needs and rights. Based on these findings, it can be inferred that cultural, societal, and educational factors in India may influence the perception and understanding of children's rights among educators and parents. Furthermore, the emphasis or lack thereof on children's rights in educational curricula might also play a significant role in shaping these attitudes. Comparing these results with similar studies in different cultural or geographical contexts could offer insights into the universal and context-specific elements of these perceptions.

In the research, it was observed that a large part of the responses given by the teacher candidates to the question "What are the opinions of teacher candidates regarding children's rights?" focused on the right to life and the right to development. This situation is fundamentally based on the fact that in educational processes, teacher candidates are initially conveyed knowledge and values related to the right to life and development, and that these rights meet the most fundamental and important needs for children. Cherney (2010) studied parents' and children's perceptions and reasoning about nurturance and self-determination rights, which can provide insights into the prioritization of the right to life and development in educational settings. Quennerstedt and Quennerstedt (2013) researched children's rights in education, which may offer a comparative perspective on the emphasis of the right to life and development in educational curricula.

In response to the question "What are the opinions of teacher candidates regarding increasing awareness of children's rights?" it was noted that the answers of the teacher candidates concentrated on raising awareness of parents and conducting awareness studies for children. Accordingly, to increase the society's awareness of children's rights, we can make the



following suggestions:

Emphasizing Fundamental Rights in Teacher Training Programs: Given that 40% of teacher candidates recognized the right to life as foundational and 25% emphasized the right to development, teacher training curricula should prioritize these rights. By reinforcing the significance of these rights, future teachers will be better equipped to emphasize and advocate for them in their classrooms.

Enhanced Training on Protective Rights: Considering 20% of the candidates acknowledged the children's right to protection, there is an evident need to further strengthen the training programs on this aspect. Teacher candidates should be provided with practical strategies and guidelines on how to safeguard children from abuse, neglect, and other harmful situations.

Promotion of Participatory Methods: With 15% of teacher candidates valuing the children's right to participation, pedagogical approaches that prioritize participatory methods should be encouraged. Children should be given opportunities to express their views, and these views should be taken into consideration in decision-making processes related to their education and well-being.

Awareness Campaigns for Parents and Society: Given the emphasis on the right to life by teacher candidates when questioned about the essence of children's rights, there is a need for broader societal awareness campaigns. These campaigns should educate parents and the wider community about the fundamental rights of children, especially focusing on the importance of meeting basic needs such as nutrition, shelter, and a loving family environment.

Integration of Children's Rights into School Curricula: With references like Munongi and Pillay (2018) highlighting the inclusion of children's rights in school curricula, it's evident that this is a potential strategy to enhance awareness. Educational authorities should consider integrating children's rights into the curriculum at various educational levels to ensure that both students and educators are well-informed.

Continual Research and Comparative Studies: The studies of Cherney (2010) and Quennerstedt & Quennerstedt (2013) offer invaluable insights. Therefore, it's crucial to continually research and compare the understanding and emphasis of children's rights in various educational settings globally.

Focused Awareness Campaigns: In response to understanding children's rights better, there should be concentrated efforts to raise awareness among parents and children. Workshops, seminars, and media campaigns can be organized at community levels to ensure a comprehensive understanding of children's rights.

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