

An Investigation into the Role of School Social Workers and Psychologists with Children Experiencing Special Educational Needs in Libya

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Abstract : This study explores the function of schools' psychosocial services within Libyan mainstream schools in relation to children's special educational needs (SEN). This is with the aim to examine the role of school social workers and psychologists in the assessment procedure of children with special educational needs. A semi-structured interview was used in this study, with 21 professionals working in the schools' psychosocial services, of whom thirteen were school social workers (SSWs) and eight were school psychologists (SPs). The results of the interviews with SSWs and SPs provided insights into how SEN children are identified, assessed, and dealt with by school professionals. It appears from the results that what constitutes a problem has not changed significantly, and the link between learning difficulties and behavioral difficulties is also evident from this study. Children with behavior difficulties are more likely to be referred to school psychosocial services than children with learning difficulties. Yet, it is not clear from the interviews with SSWs and SPs whether children are excluded merely because of their behavior problems. Instead, they would surely be expelled from the school if they failed academically. Furthermore, the interviews with SSWs and SPs yield a rather unusual source accountable for children's SEN; school-related difficulties were a major factor in which almost all participants attributed children's learning and behavior problems to teachers' deficiencies, followed by school lack of resources.

Keywords : psychologist, school, social workers, special education

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