

TALLINNA ÜLIKOO  
SOTSIAALTEADUSTE DISSERTATSIOONID

TALLINN UNIVERSITY  
DISSERTATIONS ON SOCIAL SCIENCES

24

**Inga Mutso**

**POSSIBILITIES OF FURTHER STUDIES FOR STUDENTS  
OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS IN VOCATIONAL  
SCHOOLS IN ESTONIA**

Abstract

 **TLÜ KIRJASTUS**

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IN VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS IN ESTONIA**

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## INTRODUCTION

Since Estonia re-gaining its independence at the beginning of 1990s, the country's educational policy has been systematically reformed.

**Equal opportunities to education** – this principle or we could even say imperative in the educational policy has been taken as a starting point of including people with special needs in the educational system (Rose 2003: 32).

Interpretations and realisation of the principle describe the educational trends dominating in the society. It is especially clear when the question is about meeting the educational needs of people with special needs (Gustavsson 1996: 45).

The same principle has been the starting point of the present dissertation. The thesis considers people with minor mental hypo genesis as the target group of the people with special needs. There are two similar terms used – special needs students and students with special educational needs. A student has special educational needs (SEN) when s/he acquires extra help or different treatment from others while studying because of his/her individuality (Kõrgessaar 1996: 34).

Including SEN students into education and creating them equal possibilities have been one of the priorities of educational policy, school planning, educational theory and special education. The main idea is to notice a SEN student and his/her abilities as well as to emphasise positive personality traits and create a studying environment necessary for the maximum development of those (Skogen & Holmberg 2004: 32).

According to that, in education everybody is equal regardless of one's age, sex, nationality, social condition, political beliefs, and health. People with special needs are as any other with the same rights and possibilities (Gray & Jackson 2001: 84–85).

Therefore, all members of the society have to be guaranteed with equal opportunities to education, participating in studies according to their needs, interests and abilities, because it has indirect impact on increasing unity and employment and decreasing social problems in the society (Puuetega inimestele võrdsete võimaluste loomise standardreeglid 1996: 37).

Thus, students should be guaranteed with different options to avoid dead-end choices and with education according to their abilities, and hence, also the opportunity to realise the options regardless of one's mental and physical health, social condition and place of residence. The opportunity to realise the options is nevertheless limited by one's individual and social background (Tekste karjäärinõustamisest 2001: 46).

The European Social Charter is an active party in the Human rights convention in social and economic human rights, which was signed October 18, 1961 in Torino and entered into force February 26, 1965 after being ratified by five countries. Among other fundamental rights, the charter guarantees the enjoyment, without discrimination of career guidance, vocational studies and employment. The right to vocational guidance provides that ensuring the effective exercise of the right to vocational guidance, the contracting parties undertake to provide or promote, as necessary, a service which will assist all persons, including the handicapped, to solve problems related to occupational choice and progress, with due regard to the individual's characteristics and their relation to occupational opportunity (Euroopa sotsiaalharta 1991, article 9).

The main question is how the educational system of Estonia can guarantee the enjoyment of education as an individual and social benefit to the people with special needs as well (Eesti Vabariigi invapoliitika üldkontseptsioon 1995: 55–56).

Answering that question and discussing the opportunities created with the decisions in the educational policy as well as in the educational system in order to meet the needs of the SEN students are the basis for the dissertation, which considers the educational opportunities and needs of the students with minor mental hypo genesis. Students with minor mental hypo genesis finish a special education school according to the simplified state curriculum and they have the opportunity to continue their education in a vocational education system. In vocational schools the aforementioned students are taught general subjects on the basis of the simplified curriculum. The specialized subjects are taught on the basis of vocational standards approved by the vocational council that specifies requirements stretching from the vocational qualification (Kutseõppeasutuse seadus 1998).

The dissertation **researches** possibilities of further studies for students of special education schools in vocational schools in Estonia.

The **main research problem** is: how does the Republic of Estonia provide students with minor mental hypo genesis with their right to equal opportunities in education?

The following **sub-problems** result from the main research problem.

- Which are the possibilities of further studies for students with minor mental hypo genesis and how do these ensure meeting the students' needs in the present educational system in Estonia?
- Which should the opportunities of students with minor mental hypo genesis be to meet the students' needs and what should be done for that?

To answer the problem set, the **objectives** of the thesis are as follows.

1. Describe and analyse educational opportunities of students with minor mental hypo genesis in the Republic of Estonia.
2. Propose solutions to improve satisfaction of educational needs of students with minor mental hypo genesis, relying on the theoretical approach and empirical research.

To realise the objectives set, the **aims** of the thesis are as follows.

1. Analyse the present possibilities of further studies for students with minor mental hypo genesis in Estonian schooling system.
2. Describe different opportunities to improve the educational needs of students with minor mental hypo genesis, relying on the theoretical analysis.
3. Conduct an empirical research to find out which opportunities have been created for students with minor mental hypo genesis in our special education and vocational schools to meet their educational needs.
4. Plan political and practical steps to improve the possibilities of further studies of students with minor mental hypo genesis in transformation from special education to vocational education, relying on the theoretical analysis and empirical research.

The **research area** of the dissertation is the possibilities of further studies for students of special education schools in vocational schools in our educational system and possible solutions to improve the educational needs of such students.

The dissertation addresses the notion of educational needs in two different ways: opportunities on one hand and possibility of realising the opportunities created for students with minor mental hypo genesis. Meeting the educational needs shows the matching of decisions in educational policy to the main principles of democracy and humanism, expresses the moral and political will of the society as well as the economic and mental resources in the country's usage (Skogen & Holmberg 2004: 65).

Students, including SEN students, need a rational module of career guidance, which would help them make decisions and choices about their future. As a result, we can guarantee meeting the educational needs that ensure SEN students the opportunities to acquire a speciality according to one's interests, wishes and opportunities, and give them a chance to enter the labour market after finishing a vocational school (Tekste karjäärinõustamisest 2001: 36).

## 1. THEORETICAL STARTING POINTS

The dissertation is the first to discuss the educational opportunities and possibilities of the ninth-formers with minor mental hypo genesis and satisfaction and coping of the aforementioned youth in the vocational schools of Estonia.

As the topic has not been discussed in Estonia before, the first chapter of the thesis *Theoretical starting points* gives a general description of a SEN student. The dissertation includes a survey research which maps the educational opportunities, possibilities, and coping of SEN students in the educational system of Estonia 2002–2004. The second chapter *Educational legislation and opportunities created with the educational system* looks at the legislation in force during the period of analysis. As there are constantly changes taking place in legislation, the educational opportunities and possibilities of SEN students can be

understood knowing the legislation during the period of analysis. The third chapter *SEN student in the formal education system of Estonia* provides an overview of how meeting the needs of those students have been guaranteed during the period of analysis in the formal education system of Estonia and of a description of a SEN student in a vocational system. The fourth chapter *Theoretical approaches of an educational career of a SEN student* examines the theoretical approaches of an education of a SEN student. According to the aim of the paper, the theoretical context of career planning is discussed, the connection between a vocational choice and career planning is analysed the theoretical perspectives of an educational choice are brought out, an overview of a rational choice and a rational decision-making process is given, and the theoretical explanations of indecisiveness are presented. The fifth chapter provides the methodological stages of carrying out an empirical research, which form the design or plan of the research. The sub-chapters give an overview of the problem, stages, sample and methodology of the research. Carrying out of the research and analysis of the data are introduced and the analysis of the research results is presented. This is followed by a discussion, conclusion, references and seven appendices. Subsequently, a more thorough overview of the fifth chapter with the empirical research and its analysis, discussion and conclusion follows.

## 2. RESEARCH PROBLEM, METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

The researcher conducted an empirical research collecting and analysing data by both qualitative and quantitative methods. Using several methods for collecting data allows for a more precise and broader picture of the main problems and helps increasing the credibility of the research.

The empirical part of the dissertation is based on two researches.

**Research I:** The opportunities and possibilities of continuing education among the ninth-formers with special educational needs in special education schools in Estonia. The strategy is the cross section research. A special education school in the present paper is seen as a school with students with minor mental hypo genesis studying according to the simplified state curriculum of the compulsory education.

The main problem: How have the vocational pre-training, career planning and career counselling programmes helped in preparation of the ninth-formers in special education schools for vocational schooling and/or entering the labour market?

Vocational pre-training is seen as manual training classes, conditions and life training classes and hobby schooling.

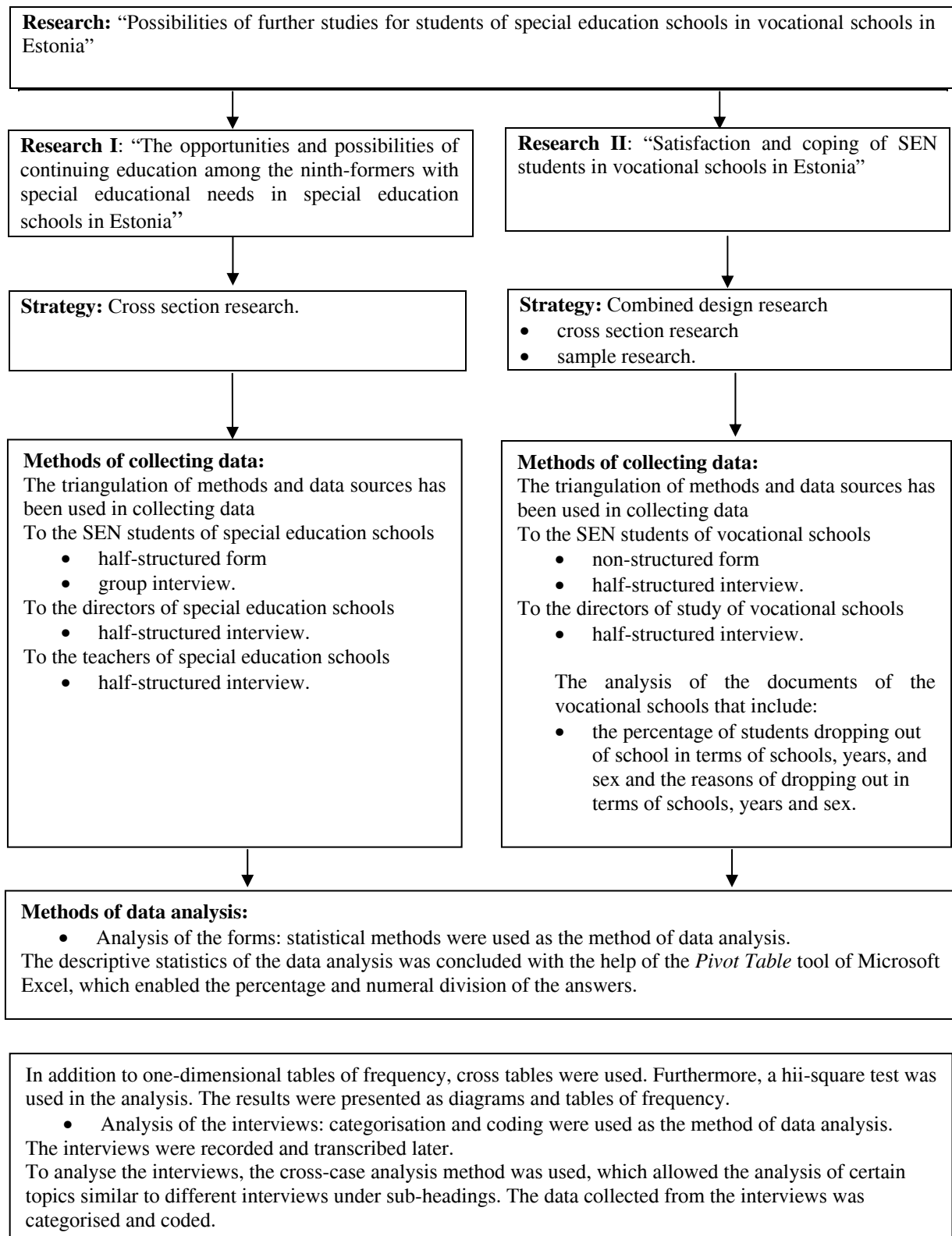
**Research II:** Satisfaction and coping of SEN students in vocational schools in Estonia.

The strategy is a combined design research which consists of a cross section and a sample research.

The main problem: How do SEN students explain their choice of education and their educational and social success in vocational schools?

The empirical part of the dissertation is based on two researches that together map the opportunities created in our special education and vocational schools for meeting the needs of students with minor mental hypo genesis.

## The structure of the research





## Sample

**The first research** was conducted in each of the 18 special education schools in Estonia, where students with minor mental hypo genesis are taught according to the simplified state curriculum. The sample consisted of 204 ninth-formers with minor mental hypo genesis, 18 principals and 21 teachers doing career planning with the ninth-formers in special education schools. **The second research** was conducted in 15 vocational schools in Estonia, where students with minor mental hypo genesis are taught either in a common group or in a special group. Data from the school year of 2002/2003 are taken into account, as the collection of data in vocational schools took place during that period. The sample consisted of 310 first, second, or third-year students with minor mental hypo genesis and 15 directors of studies.

The empirical part of the dissertation is based on two researches, which included the collection and analysis of the data both with qualitative and quantitative methods.

**The quantitative method** consisted of collecting data with a questionnaire that was conducted among the ninth-formers of special education schools and first, second, and third-year students with special education needs in vocational schools. The analysis of the documents of vocational schools consisted of a formal factual statistics from primary sources. The data came from the formal documents of the vocational schools of Estonia, which documented the percentage of students dropping out of school and reasons fro dropping out analysed according to schools, years (1997–2003) and sex.

**The qualitative method** consisted of half-structured interviews with the principals and teachers of special education schools and the directors of studies of vocational schools.

Group interviews were conducted among the ninth-formers of special education schools and half-structured interviews were conducted among forty students of vocational schools. What people said was the main source for collecting the quantitative data.

The qualitative evaluation was carried out combined with the presentation of the quantitative data and the approach is the basis in interpreting the results of the first and the second research. In order to come up with a diverse approach, the so-called triangulation method is used in collecting and analysing the data. The research used the triangulation method as follows:

- **triangulation of methods** (questionnaire, interview, analysis of the documents);
- **triangulation of sources** (SEN students in special education and vocational schools, principals and teachers of special education schools, directors of studies of vocational schools).

## 3. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION OF THE RESEARCH

This chapter presents the discussion, where the research problems and sub-problems are viewed and an overview of the situation of educational opportunities for SEN students in the present educational system in Estonia is given. The discussion focuses on the following questions: how is meeting the educational needs guaranteed, which should the opportunities of SEN students be to meet their educational needs, and what has to be done for that.

### 3.1. SEN STUDENTS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN ESTONIA

**Describing the educational opportunities of SEN students** in the present educational system in Estonia, taking into account the approach and classifications of the notions of special needs and mental hypo genesis, it can be said.

The research showed that since 1997 SEN students are being taught according to the common educational levels of the new International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), which are approved by the UNESCO. Students with minor mental hypo genesis acquire compulsory education in a regular or special education school according to the simplified state curriculum.

Organising vocational studies for SEN students, the principle of creating equal possibilities is taken into account: availability and efficiency of education (Tegevuskava kutseharidussüsteemi arendamiseks Eestis aastatel 2001–2004: 36). Kutseõppeasutuste seadus (RT I, 1998, 64/65, 1007) and Government regulation no 265 of November 25, 1998 (RT I, 1998, 194, 1729) provide the conditions and policies for education of SEN students. It allows students with minor mental hypo genesis continue their studies after compulsory education in a vocational school for a vocational secondary education. According to Kusteõppeasutuse seadus (RT I, 1998, 64/65, 1007 § 10, 11, 13) vocational training consists of a professional and general secondary schooling (Kutseõppeasutuse kontseptuaalsed lähtekohad 1998: 32).

The first, second, and third-year students of vocational schools, who were in the sample of the second research of this study, received their compulsory education in a special education school and continued their studies in vocational schools on special professions.

**Describing the psychological processes** like attention, sense, memory, thinking, and speech of SEN students, the following can be said: SEN students have an impaired higher nerve activity, especially the movement of nerve processes and active internal deceleration (Perova 1989: 16–17).

Noticeable kinetic disorder of nerve processes lead to a situation where temporary connections become inert and changing or reorganisation of those in forming new connections is complicated (Thomas & Woods 2003: 72).

It can, therefore, be concluded that a primary damage in the central nervous system influences all components of the development of a child (Oliver 1996: 103).

In case of mental hypo genesis, there are various disorders in cognitive action, which is why those students fall behind of children of their age without the disability in all fields of achievement (Hallahan & Kauffman 1991: 98).

The research showed that SEN students had difficulties with making educational choices, continuing their studies at a vocational school, especially with general subjects and coping socially. It turned out from the results of the questionnaire among the students of special education schools that the age difference of the ninth-formers was relatively wide. The interviews with the principals of special education schools proved that because of the age difference, the students were at different levels in their cognitive and social development, which could cause differences in their values, interests as well as readiness for vocational studies and vocational pre-training, which in the present thesis is seen as manual training classes, conditions and life training classes and hobby schooling. According to the research results, which support the theoretical starting point, it can be concluded that in dealing with the possibilities of continuing education and coping in vocational schools of the ninth-formers with minor mental hypo genesis in special education schools, it is important to consider the individuality of the psychological processes of the group. At the same time, it can be said relying on the theoretical material that knowing the psychological processes of students with minor mental hypo genesis allows us to explain and analyse the difficulties that they face in the studies (Kanter 1977: 167).

**The results of the research showed** that none of the special education school students wished to continue their studies in a regular school. The reasons for that were no experiences of success, some mental and physical violence, negative attitude of the teachers, and lack of friends. In special education schools students felt themselves braver, also smarter because of the experience of success, and they had made new friends. The research results support the theoretical approaches because despite their originality, people with special needs are similar to all people with their needs of belonging, sense of security and self-realisation.

**Analysing the professional experience of SEN students, it turned out** that more than half of the students had gone to work during their compulsory studies and had therefore acquired some professional experience. The group interviews with the ninth-formers of special education schools showed that SEN students like to work, although they face difficulties in finding a job as employers do not wish to employ them. One of the causes could be that most employers do not have the knowledge to communicate and work with people with special needs. The attitude towards special needs is the indicator of democracy and tolerance in a society (Herman & Swiss 2000: 146).

However, the group interviews with the ninth-formers of special education schools and the interviews with the principals indicated that the students like to work. They are conscientious and are not afraid of hard or routine work. Due to their disability, they are willing to do routine work as their studying and professional

skills are connected to their abilities. Based on the previous, it can be claimed that the society could not provide SEN students with the opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills needed, which later caused difficulties in choosing a profession.

**Analysing the vocational pre-training at vocational schools, it appeared** that students have had vocational pre-training in special education schools, but it turned out to be too unilateral – manual training classes only (woodwork, sewing and handicraft). It can therefore be drawn that youngsters had little knowledge and experience of employment. The amount of professional experience, which would help the student, is, however, crucial in making educational choices.

In conclusion, the research results support the theoretical starting points, which emphasise that a skill to lead your career, to set career-oriented goals, to acquire the knowledge to develop and work experience are becoming one of the most important strategic skills. The gap between the knowledge, skills, and experience needed in the labour market acquired in a regular and vocational school has become wider. More importantly, a professional training is often a skill to lead your studies: set goals and make the right decisions (Karjäärinõustamine – Kuidas edasi? 2000: 18–19).

It can be said according to the research results that a right profession does not only set one's material situation, but it is also the starting point of one's identity and development. That is why the process of career planning, especially choosing a profession as one of its crucial components, is important. A career should be viewed as a road that begins in childhood already and that cannot be planned in whole during a short period of time, but that needs constant attention being a long-term process (Jamnes & Savisaar 1998: 5–6).

**Based on the analysis of the interviews among the teachers of vocational schools who carried out career counselling among the ninth-formers, it can be claimed** that teachers do not have enough motivation to do career counselling work, because they are not prepared enough for that, needing more information about vocational schools, fields of study and labour market prognosis. Instead of concentrating on one narrow field that might not be there in ten years' time, purposeful self-development, decisiveness, flexibility and adaptability are more valuable nowadays. Guiding youngsters this way helps them find an educational path that suits them best (Vernon 1993: 129–130).

**The analysis of the results showed** that SEN students of special education schools were highly motivated to acquire a speciality, but not in the field where they had received vocational pre-training in. The analysis of the questionnaire indicated that the reason was the choice of specialities being too weak and unpopular among students, and that students did not receive enough knowledge and skills about various specialities. The theoretical material showed that one must act on one's interests on choosing a speciality, but the interests should still be in concordance with one's abilities (Bates 1993: 24).

One of the possibilities to get experience about the specialities, studying and housing conditions was to visit a vocational school. Almost half the respondents had not visited a single vocational school and most of them had only visited one school. Therefore, the SEN students of special education schools had not received enough knowledge and experience about vocational schools and the specialities taught.

The research results coincide with the theoretical material where Elster (1983) presents three levels of the decision process model, one of which is being informed. At the same time it is difficult to say which the optimal amount of information to choose education is. Even with an endless search for information no-one can foresee all outcomes of the decisions about education. The information one has only shows the present moment and not future events (Elster 1983: 114–116).

Thinking in the context of the educational choice, ignorance is probably the biggest problem for the majority of students. Students choose a speciality which they do not have profound information about. A typical example is students who in the early stage of their vocational studies find out that the speciality they have chosen does not meet their expectations (Savolainen & Turunen 1988: 254–257).

**The research showed that** SEN students received information from different sources but it was not systematised nor enough. Career counselling did take place, but it did not have much influence on students. Therefore, it can be said that most students did not have the possibility to use the help of a career counsellor, which is why there is still a gap between the theory and practice in the education system, as different theoretical and vocational literature puts more and more emphasis on people with special needs as a separate target group.

**Analysing the attainability of information to make educational choices**, the results of the group interviews among the ninth-formers of special education schools showed that one of the major obstacles in finding information about further studies was the inability to use the reference books of vocational schools, which in their structure were too complicated for SEN students. The attainability of information was also hindered by the insufficient ability to use computers and the structure of the web pages of vocational schools being too complicated and different. Based on the model of subjective usefulness hoped for, it can be said that SEN students cannot collect and connect information to their own values and results hoped for (Janis & Mann 1977: 88–89).

**Analysing the difficulties of making further educational choices, the research findings cleared a number of circumstances.** Making the choices was difficult because of the narrow selection of specialities in vocational schools. In the year 2002/2003, SEN students had the possibility of choice between 12 specialities, which does not consider students' rights to have a free choice for a speciality that would meet his/her wishes and interests most. Therefore, the opportunities of people with special needs decreased and they were in an unequal situation in terms of limited professional choices (Harren 1979: 129).

Analysing the findings from the questionnaires among the ninth-formers with special education needs in special education schools it became clear that the role of a career counsellor in finding out a student's abilities and giving vocational guidance was of least importance. As a result, it can be claimed that more than half (77%) of the students had professional preferences by the end of form nine, but during the group interview it still turned out that most of them had doubts about the choice being the best. From the theoretical point of view, the decision-making process is influenced by the number of people included in the process, their prestige, responsibility, values, experience, but also the activities of pressure groups, public opinion and mass communication (Hodkinson & Sparker 1997: 29–30).

Some students (17%) did not have the possibility, because of their disability, to start studies in the field they preferred. Less than half of the students questioned (23%) had not been able to make any choices. Few students wished to become doctors, captains, business managers, beauticians and models. Drawn from the questionnaires and group interviews among the students in special education schools, on one hand the reasons were a higher self-evaluation and on the other hand ignorance of what the professions is really about.

The decision-making process should consider both factual opportunities and how the choice fits one's personality (Ford 1992: 103–106).

**Analysing the difficulties with coping in the decision-making process, the research showed** that there is no uniform way of explaining educational choices. The theoretical starting points indicate that educational choices should be considered as the common outcome of the three processes, which are the structure of one's opportunities and options and the structural power. The structures of opportunities are definitely important for people, but limit their options. At the same time, it is important to understand how the structural powers influence education (Cambetta 1987: 168–172).

In conclusion, it can be said that the educational choices of SEN students are influenced by all types of the independent variables: structural, conjunctive and individual level variables.

SEN students have a damaged intellect and psychical process and that is why each person is at a different physical, cognitive and social level. The lack of the maturity of choice was also an important obstacle to SEN students in making their choices. Therefore, they have to start making important decisions when there is not enough knowledge, analytical skills nor experience to make the choice (Karlsson 1987: 86).

The research indicated that SEN students face different difficulties, which are connected to both internal and external factors, in coping in the educational choice process. Firstly, it turned out that the insufficient level of vocational pre-training and career counselling in compulsory education influenced making educational choices to continue studies at vocational schools. Therefore, the level at which students had to start making decisions was insufficient. Secondly, it became clear that SEN students were in an unequal position as their possibilities for a choice of profession was limited. As a result it can be said that a person who had to make a decision, could not be free and independent in his/her choices. The research analysis showed that the age difference between the students at vocational schools is even bigger than that among the ninth-formers. The research supports the theoretical approaches which allow for a conclusion that vagueness in the educational choice process caused tension in students and resulted in choosing a defensive strategy among a few students (Janis & Mann 1977: 52–53).

**Analysing the choice criteria of vocational schools and specialities, references and sources of information, the research indicated** that both internal and external factors influenced the choice of vocational schools and specialities. The choice of a certain school was influenced by the location near home most.

The research findings confirm the theoretical aspect which believes that home is a place where attitudes towards choosing a speciality are formed. The values of parents influence the youngsters' attitude to anything that is directly or indirectly connected to career and professional choices. Besides suggestions of parent being determinant, their lifestyle and experience are also the factors that influence a young person and help/guide him/her in the decision-making process (Epstein 1980: 112).

Firstly, SEN students wished to continue their studies at a school close to home where the support and help of parents and acquaintances was easily reached. Secondly, it was a compulsory choice where students had to choose a school near home because of the socio-economical background of the family and the unemployment status of the parents.

Based on different research material (Patton & Noller 1990: 247–249; Winefield & Tiggemann 1990: 98–101; Heubeck et al. 1995: 104–106), it can be claimed that socio-economic difficulties and unemployment of parents reveal themselves as a negative experience on the youngsters; they feel more depressed and negative, behave badly and lose emotional control. In addition, many researches (Hammarstrom 1994: 79–82; Fergusson et al. 1997: 86–88; Meeus et al. 1997: 112–114) explain that socio-economic difficulties and unemployment of parents increase the risk of psychological disorders among the youngsters.

The choice of profession was mostly made upon the wishes and preferences of the students, but nevertheless, some students had had to make a compulsory choice. The research findings support the theoretical material where the most important factors on making educational choices were the individual level variables – educational ability, intelligence, educational and professional ambitions (Drudy 1991: 69).

The aforementioned variables cause educational inequality as students with minor mental hypo genesis finish compulsory education according to the simplified state curriculum and can continue their studies in vocational schools only on specialities meant for them.

The suggestions of parents and friends were taken into account when choosing a profession. Guiding a student in making a choice presumes considering his/her social background, the factors influencing him/her and his/her individual characteristics (Slovic 1990: 87–88).

The research findings support the theoretical approaches that the families where there is a harmonic home environment, acceptance of others' needs and wishes and good communication offer the youngsters better conditions (Epstein 1980: 112).

The researches (Baumrind 1991: 167–169; Gaoni 1994: 79–82) prove that children who have supportive, encouraging and communicative parents have a higher self-esteem and cope better in different situations (Eskilson & Wiley 1987: 124–127).

Based on the analysis of the questionnaires among SEN students it can be said that parents acted upon the family's general interests and needs, and not the student's interests and wishes, while making professional suggestions.

Therefore, the youngsters can influence the factors that determine the choice, but not completely. When making a professional choice, one has to bear in mind interests, but these have to coincide with one's abilities. The structures of opportunities are important, but in certain situation they can limit the free choice of a youngster. Despite that, they do make their choices (Ruonavaara 1985: 63–64).

In conclusion, in most cases the choice of a speciality has to be made too early when the student is not mature enough. That is one of the paradoxes of career choices – one has to start making important decisions when one does not have enough knowledge, analytical skills nor experience for that (Gladding 1991: 146–149).

**Analysing the satisfaction rate with the speciality chosen among SEN students, it turned out** that those who wanted to start working in the chosen field, did not wish to change their speciality. The analysis brought out a situation where students were not satisfied with the speciality chosen, but continued their studies and hoped to get a job in the field, as well. The decision made was not optimal for them, but good enough from the point of view of the decision-maker at the time and situation given (Drudy 1991: 69–72).

**Analysing how SEN students cope with their studies and practical work, the results showed** that SEN students had more difficulties with the general than specialised subjects. The situation was caused by a number of reasons. Firstly, SEN students were more oriented to acquiring a speciality than studying general subjects in vocational schools. Secondly, studying methods that were not suitable for SEN students were used in the study process and within general subjects there was no printed study material in concordance with the simplified state curriculum. In connection with difficulties in studying, SEN students required guidance from the teacher, which they did not receive enough, although they expressed their wish for that.

The analysis of the study process showed that factors that upset students most in studying are difficulties with their studies that were analysed before. In addition to these, students were also upset about classes being cancelled, being late to classes, negative attitude of teachers and being accused of a slow work process.

The research findings let us believe that teachers did not pay enough attention to helping and guiding SEN students. Based on the analysis of the interviews with the directors of studies of vocational schools it can be said that teachers have not had sufficient training to work with students with minor mental hypo genesis, there is a lack of necessary study materials and support systems, which could cause students the aforementioned problems in coping with their studies. Although, it has to be mentioned that based on the questionnaires and interviews among students in vocational schools, a few teachers of vocational schools missed to fulfil their work duties in a correct manner.

Based on the research, it can be claimed that SEN students considered their health to be in a good condition and that the problems mentioned do not generally keep them from studying specialised subjects and coping with the practical work. Students with health problems had difficulties in all aspects: studying general and specialised subjects as well as doing practical work.

**Analysing the social problems of SEN students, the research showed** that social problems existing in the society affect also SEN students, which in some cases results in dropping out of school. Youngsters can be under stress because of the following environments and situations like family, school, and work environment, changing relationships and socio-economic hardship and unemployment. SEN students find it difficult to be in control over these factors (Garralda 1992: 125).

It can be drawn from the research findings that students were worried about being short of money the most, which was on one hand caused by the economic situation of the family and on the other hand because SEN students do not know how to plan using money purposefully. There were problems with drinking alcohol, smoking and doing drugs among the students. It came out from the research that it was possible to get cigarettes, alcohol and drugs without leaving the school property, and the personnel also knew about it but nothing has been done to solve the situation. Getting drugs is, therefore, easy for students and that is why they need more money that is cadged from the younger and physically weaker students. The research showed that bullying could have been both malicious as well as a joke. There were also cases of serious violence being used where the rejected and physically weaker students suffered most. Inside school, there was more violence among boys than girls. Students were also concerned about the careless attitude of parents.

Relationships between a youngster and his/her parents need changing with the development of his/her resistance and parents have to start ceding responsibility. Many parents find ceding responsibility a problem and they might, consciously or subconsciously, wish to maintain control over their children (White 1996: 79). When the family supports the youngster's independence and accepts his/her individuality, the youngsters use their own age group as an emotional support and do not have the need to be subordinate to the group. It is crucial for the parents to understand that changes have been caused by the group pressure and the need for acceptance by the age group, which is concordance with the youngster searching for his/her individuality and identity (Shulman 1995: 167-169).

### 3.2. POSSIBILITIES CREATED FOR SEN STUDENTS BY EDUCATIONAL LEGISLATION

Based on the theoretical analysis and the research about alternative possibilities to meet the needs of SEN students better, it can be said that the educational system has been built up based on the educational legislation of the European Union and of Estonia, and on international and Estonian regulations in this field. The research findings lead to believe that things that have been done have not proceeded from the uniform and socially accepted vision about the educational system of Estonia.

### 3.3. POSSIBILITIES CREATED FOR SEN STUDENTS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The research showed that there have been possibilities created to meet the educational needs of SEN students in the special education and vocational schools in Estonia. As on October 1, 2002 students with minor mental hypo genesis had the possibility to study at 16 vocational schools in 10 different fields and the schools accepted all applicants (Haridusministeerium 2002: 16).

In the 2003/2004 school year students with minor mental hypo genesis had a chance to study at 13 vocational schools in 15 different fields (the Ministry of Education 2003: 15).

There were most possibilities to choose between the fields of sewing and joinery work, four of the schools offered the fields of domestic science, farming, cleaning services and cooking, three of the schools offered general construction, two of the schools offered interior finishing and only three of the vocational schools offered a new speciality (car and tractor mechanic, wood processing and vehicle and machinery repairs) in addition to the old ones of the previous years. Therefore, compared to the year 2002/2003 three new specialities were offered (car and tractor mechanic, wood processing and vehicle and machinery repairs). The research findings showed that the new specialities were the most popular among SEN students. The new specialities also had a better reputation and were of interest to SEN students.

**Based on the research findings, it can be claimed** that the number of boys and girls starting in form one was almost equal. According to that, a stabile and systematic teaching/studying on the basis of the simplified state curriculum was provided to the first-formers. Their teaching and studying also included career guidance in different subjects. Yet, after changing schools, students faced lower motivation and self-evaluation. That is why further educational choices were influenced by starting/continuing studies in a special education school. The research findings support the theoretical approaches that in teenage years, students become especially sensitive about the decisions about themselves (Gerald, K. & Gerald, D. 2004; Comings, D. 1997; Scott & Dryden 1996; Mangs & Martelli 1995 etc).

In conclusion, a career must be considered as a road that starts in childhood and which requires constant attention being a long-term process.

**Analysing the opinions of SEN students in connection with studying in a vocational school, it turned out** from the research that students had positive thoughts about their future, although some were a little insecure, as well. The reputation of vocational schools according to SEN students is not bad and most of them felt themselves better than those who have not studied in vocational schools. At the same time, SEN students had realistic perceptions that a profession does not guarantee a job. It can be expected that in the future, the county needs a lot of skilled workers. Therefore, we can say that students who finish a vocational school, SEN students included, will have an advantage at the labour market (Kask 2000: 35).

**The research showed** that both boys and girls terminated their studies mostly because the speciality did not suit them and the reasons for that were the same according to the schools and years. Girls terminated their studies mostly because of the speciality did not suit them and least because of social problems outside school. Boys terminated their studies mostly because the speciality did not suit them and of social problems in school and least because of family problems. Therefore, the most frequent reason for the termination of studies was because of the speciality did not suit the students.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Analysing the transfer of SEN students from special education schools to vocational schools in Estonia, it can be concluded from the research results that special education and vocational schools have created opportunities to meet the needs of SEN students and thanks to the reorganisation of the vocational system, studying possibilities and the choice of specialities have improved. Nevertheless, the results also indicate that although there have been laws passed to incorporate people with special needs to the educational system, the measures do not unfortunately proceed from a unified and socially accepted vision of the educational system of Estonia.

Based on the theoretical approach and the empirical research, **a summary of suggestions can be made to meet the needs of SEN students better in Estonia.**

### Suggestions:

- put up a framework between the administration of special education and vocational schools, personnel, employers and parents in order to guarantee students with a more flexible transformation from a compulsory school to a vocational school;
- create a career counselling system where the administration and teachers of special education schools in co-operation with the administration and teachers of vocational schools organise career planning in compulsory schools;
- special education and vocational schools should hire a certified career planning co-ordinator, a career planning specialist, and a career counsellor;
- career planning work and career counselling should constantly be up-dated according to the labour force prospects and changes at the labour market;
- establish a subject “Career and its planning”, draft and approve the curriculum, which would guarantee a systematic preparation of SEN students to continue their education after basic school;
- incite SEN students to participate in various hobby schools to sort out their preferences and abilities, practice having different jobs through role-plays, and in co-operation with employers, find opportunities for SEN students to get a practical experience before choosing a profession;
- compile reference books of vocational schools which would help to receive information that could not be misunderstood: for SEN students the information about vocational schools and professions should be gathered together into a single reference books or a leaflet which could be supplemented when necessary and given out to the target group;
- work out a unified and simple structure of web pages of vocational schools for SEN students with a training to the IT specialists;
- inform SEN students of the Information and Counselling Centres in Estonia;
- improve co-operation between SEN students, career planning specialists, and career counsellors;
- organise vocational school and information fair visits, meeting with employers and visits to different institutions for SEN students in basic schools;
- organise meetings with employers and visits to different institutions for SEN students in vocational schools;
- organise in-service training for career planning co-ordinators, career planning specialists and career counsellors of special education schools;
- in-service training for the pedagogical personnel, career counsellors, career planning specialists and practical work teachers of vocational schools;
- organise training for parents of SEN students;
- enable a post of a support person both in basic and vocational schools;
- guarantee more independence for SEN students in their choice of education through a systematically organised career planning and career counselling;
- create more possibilities for SEN students to continue their studies in a vocational school close to home and offer a wider range of professions to study through a reform in vocational schools;
- compile and publish study materials of general subjects which meet the requirements of the simplified curriculum;
- apply modern teaching methodology suitable for SEN students in vocational schools;
- create a systematic teaching aid in vocational schools;
- encourage positive attitudes and values of the personnel and students of vocational schools towards SEN students.



The dissertation holds both theoretical and practical value, as for the first time a research has been carried out, which maps the opportunities, possibilities and coping of SEN students in Estonia 2002–2004. The thesis is the first to point out the percentage and reasons of students terminating their studies based on the analysis of the documents of vocational schools in terms of schools, years (1997–2003) and gender of the students. Until now, no statistical data on SEN students has been collected. As a researcher I was interested in the subject because I have been in close contact with teaching SEN students and the problems the field has for 23 years. The research findings, conclusions, suggestions, and the statistical data based on the documentation are all of interest to the department of vocational education of the Ministry of Education and the departments of the Ministry of Social Affairs that work on analysing the coping and employment of people with special needs.

## ERIVAJADUSTEGA ÕPILASTE ÜLEMINEK ERIKOOList KUTSEÕPPEASUTUSSE EESTI VABARIIGIS

### Kokkuvõte

Väitekiri käsitleb kerge vaimse alaarenguga noorukite haridusvõimalusi ja võimalikkust, rahulolu ning toimetulekut Eesti Vabariigi haridussüsteemis. Väitekiri koosneb teoreetilisest osast, empiirilise uurimusest ning tulemuste analüüsist.

Käesolevas doktoritöös käsitletakse erivajadustega inimeste all sihtgrupina kerge vaimse alaarenguga isikuid. Mõiste *erivajadustega õpilane* kõrval kasutatakse ka mõistet *hariduslike erivajadustega õpilane*. Hariduslike erivajadustega (HEVga) on õpilane siis, kui ta vajab oma omapära tõttu õppimisel lisaabi või teistest erinevat kohtlemist. Hariduslike erivajadustega õpilastel on hariduslikud erivajadused. Need on vajadused, mida rahuldamata ei suudeta tagada erivajadustega õppuritele õigust ja võimalust võimetekohasele haridusele (Kõrgessaar 1996: 34).

Teoreetilises osas käsitletakse erivajadusega õppija üleminekut erikoolist kutseõppeasutusse, kus läbivaks mõisteks on haridusvõimalused kontekstis võrdsed võimalused haridusele. Antakse erivajadusega õppija üldiseloostus, vaimse alaarengu mõiste käsitus vaimse alaarengu klassifikatsiooni RHK-10 järgi ning vaimse alaarenguga õppija psüühiliste protsesside iseloostus. Tutvustatakse haridusseadusandluse ja -süsteemiga loodavaid võimalusi ning antakse ülevaade kaasava hariduse alusdokumentidest. Käsitletakse hariduslike erivajadustega õppijat Eesti formaalharidussüsteemis ning esitatakse ülevaade erivajadusega õppijast kutseharidussüsteemis. Antakse ülevaade erivajadusega õppija haridusliku karjääri teoreetilistest käsitlustest ning tutvustatakse karjääri selle planeerimise teoreetilises kontekstis, haridustee valiku teoreetilisi perspektiive, ratsionaalset valikut, ratsionaalsust otsustamistoorias ja selgusetust haridustee valikul.

Seega on doktoritöö **uurimisobjektiks** kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilaste võimalused haridusele Eesti Vabariigis.

Dokoritöö **põhiprobleemi** saab sõnastada järgmiselt: kuidas on Eesti Vabariigis tagatud kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilastele nende õigus võrdsetele võimalustele hariduses?

Põhiprobleemist on tuletatud järgmised **alaprobleemid**.

- Missugused on Eesti Vabariigi praeguses haridussüsteemis hariduslikud võimalused kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilastele ja kuidas nad tagavad nende haridusvajaduste rahuldamise?
- Missugused peaksid olema kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilaste võimalused hariduslike vajaduste rahuldamiseks ja mida tuleb selleks teha?

Esitatud probleemi lahendamiseks on doktoritööle seatud järgmised **eesmärgid**.

1. Kirjeldada ja analüüsida kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilaste võimalusi haridusele Eesti Vabariigis.
2. Toetudes teoreetilistele käsitlustele ja empiirilisele uurimusele, esitada ettepanekud kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilaste haridusvajaduste paremaks rahuldamiseks.

Nende eesmärkide realiseerimiseks on doktoritööle püstitatud järgmised **ülesanded**.

1. Analüüsida, missuguseid võimalusi haridusele pakub praegune Eesti Vabariigi haridussüsteem kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilastele.
2. Toetudes teoreetilisele analüüsile, kirjeldada erinevaid võimalusi kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilaste haridusvajaduste paremaks rahuldamiseks.
3. Viia läbi empiiriline uurimus, et välja selgitada, missugused võimalused on loodud meie eri- ja kutsekoolides kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilastele nende haridusvajaduste rahuldamiseks.
4. Toetudes teoreetilisele analüüsile ja empiirilisele uurimusele kavandada hariduspoliitilised ja praktilised sammud kerge vaimse alaarenguga õppurite haridusvõimaluste parendamiseks üleminekul erikoolist kutseõppeasutusse.

Doktoriöö **uurimisaineks** on kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilaste võimalused haridusele meie haridussüsteemis ja nende õpilaste haridusvajaduste parema rahuldamise võimalikud teed.

I uurimus viidi läbi kõikides Eesti 18 erikoolis, kus õpetatakse kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilasi Põhihariduse lihtsustatud riikliku (abiõppe) õppekava alusel. Valimi moodustasid erikoolide üheksandate klasside 204 kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilast, 18 erikooli direktorit ning 21 erikooli üheksandates klassides kutseasuunitlustööd läbiviinud õpetajat.

II uurimus viidi läbi Eesti 15 kutseõppeasutuses, kus õpetatakse kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilasi kas tavarühmas või eraldi komplekteeritud rühmades. Lähtutud on 2002/2003 õppeaasta andmetest, sest sel perioodil viidi läbi uurimuse andmete kogumine kutseõppeasutustes. Valimi moodustasid 310 kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilast I, II ja III kursuselt ning 15 direktori asetäitjat õppe- ja kasvatustöö alal.

Dokoritöö empiiriline osa tugineb kahele uurimusele, mille käigus koguti ja analüüsiti andmeid nii kvantitatiivsete kui kvalitatiivsete meetoditega.

**I uurimus:** Erikoolide üheksandate klasside õpilaste haridustee jätkamise võimalused ja võimalikkus Eesti Vabariigis.

Käesolevas töös käsitletakse erikooli all kooli, kus õpivad kerge vaimse alaarenguga õpilased Põhihariduse lihtsustatud riikliku (abiõppe) õppekava alusel.

Põhiprobleem: Kuidas on kutsealase eelkoolituse, kutseasuunitluselase töö ja karjäärinõustamise programmid kaasa aidanud erikoolide üheksandate klasside õpilaste ettevalmistumisele kutseõppeks ja/või suundumiseks tööturule?

Kutsealase eelkoolituse all käsitletakse käesolevas töös tööõpetuse, elu- ja olustikuõpetuse tunde.

**II uurimus:** Hariduslike erivajadustega õpilaste rahulolu ja toimetulek Eesti Vabariigi kutseõppeasutustes.

Põhiprobleem: Kuidas hariduslike erivajadustega õpilased selgitavad oma haridustee valikut ning õppimisalast ja sotsiaalset toimetulekut kutseõppeasutuses?

Töö koosneb sissejuhatusest, viiest peatükist, arutelust, kokkuvõttest ja järeldustest, viiteallikatest ning üheksast lisast.

Uurimuse analüüsi tulemuste põhjal selgus, et erivajadustega õpilased olid kõrgelt motiveeritud kutse omandamiseks, kuid neil ilmnisid raskused eelkõige haridustee valikute tegemisel edasiste õpingute jätkamiseks. Mitte ükski erikooli suunatud õpilane ei soovinud uuesti asuda õppima tavakooli. Põhjusena toodi välja eduelamuse puudumist, vaimse ja füüsilise vägivalga ilminguid, õpetajate negatiivset suhtumist ning sõprade vähesust. Üle poole õpilastest oli käinud erikoolis õppimise perioodil tööl ning nad omasid seetõttu teatud tööalaseid kogemusi. Erivajadustega õpilastele meeldib tööd teha, kuid raskusi tekib töö leidmisel, sest tööandjad ei soovi neid tööle võtta. Samas väitsid erikoolide direktorid ja kutseõppeasutuste direktorite asetäitjad õppe- ja kasvatustöö alal, et nimetatud õpilased on kohusetundlikud, ega karda rasket ning rutiinset tööd.

Uurimistulemuste põhjal võib väita, et erivajadustega õpilased ei osale piisavalt oma haridustee planeerimises. See oli tingitud erinevatest põhjustest. Erikoolide üheksandate klasside õpilastel olid tööeluga seotud teadmised ning kogemused üpris vähesed, sest saadud kutsealane eelkoolitus osutus liialt ühekülgselt, piirdudes enamasti tööõpetuse tundidega. Küllaltki vähene oli õpetajate osatähtsus noorukite kutseõppe valikul. Põhjusena võib tuua asjaolu, et nad ei olnud hetkel piisavalt motiveeritud kutse-

suunitluselase töö läbiviimisest, sest ei omanud ise selleks küllaldast ettevalmistust. Erivajadustega õpilased said informatsiooni erinevatest allikatest, kuid see oli süstematiseerimata ja ebapiisavas mahus. Peaaegu pooled vastanutest ei olnud külastanud ühtegi kutseõppeasutust ning enamik oli käinud ainult ühes õppeasutuses. Seetõttu ei olnud õpilased saanud piisavalt teadmisi kutseõppeasutuste ja seal õpetatavate erialade kohta. Üheks oluliseks takistuseks informatsiooni leidmisel edasiõppimisvõimaluste kohta oli oskamatus kasutada kutseõppeasutuste teatmikku, interneti kodulehekülgi ning ebapiisav arvuti kasutamise oskus.

Valikute tegemist raskendas nii ebapiisav kutseuunitluslane töö erikoolis kui ka kutseõppeasutustes pakutavate erialade liiga ühekülgne valik ning viimaste ebapopulaarsus erivajadustega õpilaste hulgas. Konkreetse kooli valikul osutus kõige määravamaks kodulähedane asukoht, kus vanemate abi ja toetus on kergemini kättesaadavad. Sundvalikuga oli tegemist juhul, kui õpilastel tuli kodulähedase kooli valikul lähtuda perekonna sotsiaal-majanduslikust taustast ja vanemate töötuse staatusest. Eriala valikul osutusid määravamaks õpilaste endi soovid ja eelistused. Sundvalik tuli teha juhul kui soovitud eriala ei õpetatud kodulähedases kutseõppeasutuses ning vanemate ja sõprade soovitusel. Kõige enam lähtusid õpilased eriala valikul vanemate, õpetajate ja sõprade soovitustest. Kutseõppeasutustes tekitasid hariduslike erivajadustega õpilastele enam raskusi üld- kui erialaained, kuid raskuste ilmnemisel ei saanud nad piisavalt õpetajapoolset juhendamist. Õppeprotsessis tekkinud probleemid olid tingitud kutseõppeasutuste õpetajate ebapiisavast ettevalmistusest tööks nimetatud õpilastega ning tööülesannete ebakorrektselt täitmisest.

Ühiskonnas eksisteerivad sotsiaalsed probleemid ei jäta mõju avaldamata ka erivajadustega õpilastele, mis teatud olukorras viib koolist väljalangemiseni.

Kutseõppeasutuse maine ei ole hariduslike erivajadustega õpilaste arvates halb ning enamik tundis end paremini nendest, kes ei ole õppinud kutsekoolis. Samas olid hariduslike erivajadustega õpilased reaallikul seisukohal väites, et kutse omamine ei kindlusta veel töökohta.

Analüüsid erivajadustega õpilaste üleminekut erikoolist kutseõppeasutusse Eesti Vabariigis, võib uurimusele baseerudes kokkuvõtvalt öelda, et eri- ja kutsekoolides on loodud võimalused hariduslike erivajadustega õpilastele nende haridusvajaduste rahuldamiseks ning kutseõppeasutuste võrgu reorganiseerimise tulemusena on parenenud õppimisvõimalused ning laienenud erialade valik. Uurimistulemustele baseerudes võib öelda, et vaatamata vastuvõetud seadustele ja väljatöötatud kontseptsioonidele erivajadustega inimeste kaasamiseks haridussüsteemi, ei ole ettevõtet piisavalt lähtunud terviklikust ja ühiskonna poolt aktsepteeritud visioonist Eesti haridussüsteemi ülesehituse ning süsteemi toimimise kohta. Muutused ei ole olnud piisavalt järjekindlad ja tervikut arvestavad. Suurimaks puuduseks on Eesti haridussüsteemi suletus ning suutmatus paindlikult reageerida ühiskonna muutuvatele vajadustele. Liiga vähe on pööratud tähelepanu hariduse kvaliteedi kindlustamisele ning selle tulemusena ei vasta omandatava hariduse sisu õpilaste, sh ka erivajadustega õpilaste ja ühiskonna ootustele.

Toetudes teoreetilisele käsitlusele ja empiirilisele uurimusele, võib kokkuvõtvalt teha **ettepanekud erivajadustega õpilaste haridusvajaduste paremaks rahuldamiseks** Eesti Vabariigis.

#### **Ettepanekud on järgmised:**

- võrgustikutöö käivitamine erikoolide ja kutseõppeasutuste juhtkonna, personali, ettevõtete tööandjate ja lastevanemate vahel, et tagada õppuritele sujuvam üleminek erikoolist kutseõppeasutusse;
- karjäärinõustamissüsteemi loomine, kus erikoolide juhtkond ja õpetajad korraldavad koostöös kutseõppeasutuste juhtkonna ja õpetajatega kutseuunitlusalast tööd koolides;
- erikoolides ja kutseõppeasutustes töötavad professionaalse ettevalmistuse saanud kutseuunitlustöö koordinaator, kutseuunitleja ning karjäärinõustaja;
- pidevalt kaas- ajastada kutseuunitlusalast tööd ning karjäärinõustamist vastavalt tööjõuprognosidele ja toimuvatele muutustele tööturul;
- aine "Tööalane karjäär ja selle kujundamine" sisseviimine, vastava ainekava koostamine ja kinnitamine, mille kaudu tagada erivajadustega õpilastele süsteemne ettevalmistus haridustee jätkamiseks pärast erikooli;
- soodustada erivajadustega õpilastele oma eelistuste ja võimete väljaselgitamiseks osalemist erinevates huvialaringides, harjutada läbi rollimängude erinevate ametite "läbimängimist" ning leida neile võimalusi koostöös tööandjatega praktiliste töökogemuste omandamiseks;

- kutseõppeasutuste teatmike koostamine erivajadustega õpilastele, mille kaudu tagada informatsiooni parem kättesaadavus ning muuta see üheselt mõistetavaks: erivajadustega õpilastele koondada info kutseõppeasutuste ja erialade kohta ühte teatmikku või infovoldikusse, mida oleks kerge vajadusel täiendada ning sihtgrupile edastada;
- kutseõppeasutuste ühtse ja lihtsustatud kodulehekülgede struktuuri väljatöötamine erivajadustega õpilastele koos koolitusega IT juhtidele;
- teavitada erivajadustega õpilasi Eestis tegutsevatest teabe- ja nõustamiskeskustest;
- tõhustada koostööd erivajadusega õpilase, kutse-suunitleja ja karjäärinõustaja vahel;
- organiseerida erikooli õpilastele kutseõppeasutuste, infomesside külastust, kohtumisi tööandjatega ja erinevate asutuste külastusi;
- organiseerida kutseõppeasutuste erivajadustega õpilastele kohtumisi tööandjatega ja erinevate asutuste külastusi;
- täiendkoolituse organiseerimine erikoolide kutse-suunitlustöö koordinaatoritele, kutse-suunitlejatele ja karjäärinõustajatele;
- kutseõppeasutuste pedagoogilise personali täiendkoolitamine ning -koolituse organiseerimine ja läbiviimine karjäärinõustajatele, kutse-suunitlejatele ja praktikajuhendajatele;
- koolituse organiseerimine ja läbiviimine erivajadustega õppurite lastevanematele;
- tugiisiku teenuse võimaldamine nii erikoolis kui kutseõppeasutuses;
- tagada erivajadustega õppuritele suurim iseseisvus haridustee valikul läbi süsteemselt organiseeritud kutse-suunitlustöö ja karjäärinõustamise;
- kutseõppeasutuste reformimise käigus pakkuda erivajadustega õppuritele enim võimalust jätkata õpinguid kodulähedases kutseõppeasutuses ning laiendada neile pakutavate erialade valikut;
- lihtsustatud õppekavale vastavate üldainete õppematerjalide koostamine ja trükkimine;
- kaasaegsete, erivajadustega õpilastele sobivate õpetamismeetodite rakendamine kutseõppeasutustes;
- luua süsteemne õpiabi kättesaadavus kutseõppeasutustes;
- kutseõppeasutuste personali ja kaasõpilaste positiivsete hoiakute ja väärtushinnangute kujundamine erivajadustega õppurite suhtes.

Käesolev doktoritöö omab nii teoreetilist kui ka praktilist väärtust. Uurimuse uudsus seisneb selles, et käesolevas töös käsitletud probleemistikku ei ole varem Eestis uuritud ning uurimistulemused on praktilise väärtusega. Uurimistulemustele baseerudes võib väita, et eelpooltoodud ettepanekute arvestamine võimaldab parendada erivajadustega õpilaste üleminekut erikoolist kutseõppeasutusse Eesti Vabariigis.

Järgnevad uuringu suunad on:

- Erivajadustega õpilaste üleminek erikoolist kutseõppeasutusse analüüsituna võrgustikutöö tulemuslikkuse taustal erikoolide ja kutseõppeasutuste juhtkonna, personali, tööandjate ja lastevanemate vahel.
- Erivajadustega inimestele suunatud karjäärinõustamissüsteemi toimimise analüüs.

Uurijana olen huvitatud antud teemavaldkonnast, sest olen erivajadustega õpilaste õpetamise ning sellega seonduvate probleemidega tegelenud 23 aastat.

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