

REVIEW

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Green social work and transition processes for individuals with special needs: a review study

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Abstract

Introduction The concepts of globalization and human rights have led to significant changes in the education of individuals with special needs. Thanks to advocacy efforts, the number of individuals participating in inclusive education has increased, and these individuals' opportunities for quality education, employment, and participation in social life have expanded. It is important for individuals with special needs to acquire socially adaptive behaviors to increase their independence and quality of life. In line with the concept of the social state, the goal is for everyone to receive equal services based on human rights. In this process, the concept of "transition" plays a critical role.

Objective The objective of this study is to examine the effects of green social services on the social participation and transition to independent living of individuals with special needs. In particular, it investigated how environmentally friendly social service practices contribute to the education, employment, and social life processes of individuals with disabilities. The study aimed to analyze the strategies offered by green social services and how these strategies contribute to individuals gaining independence and integrating into social life.

Method This study was conducted based on a literature review method. Within the scope of the research, peer-reviewed academic articles, national and international reports, and current studies were carefully evaluated in order to conceptually examine the effects of green social services on individuals with special needs. The selected sources were analyzed considering their methodological validity, timeliness, and contribution to the subject. In this context, the literature review provided an opportunity to address the effects of environmental sustainability on increasing individuals' social participation and strengthening their independent living skills from a holistic perspective.

Conclusion Green social work is a notable approach that facilitates the social participation and transition to independent living of individuals with special needs. The implementation of environmental practices, the provision of accessible living spaces, and the facilitation of green employment opportunities have been demonstrated to enhance individuals' social integration and independence. The research was conducted using examples from Turkey, and the lack of empirical data is considered a limitation. It is recommended that subsequent studies incorporate cross-cultural comparisons



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and empirical validations. The innovative contribution of this study is its systematic examination of the “green job transition processes” of individuals with special needs, thereby filling a gap in the literature. In this context, green social services play a critical role in strengthening social equality and individual well-being.

Keywords Green social work, Individuals with special needs, Transition processes, Social participation, Sustainability

1 Introduction

Green social work, recognized as a subfield of social work and also referred to as ecological social work, focuses on the systemic and symbiotic relationships between all living organisms and ecological systems [1]. In this context, the nature of social work being closely related to the concepts of sustainability, environmental inequality, and eco-social justice requires green social work, like other areas of the profession, to focus on improving the well-being and quality of life of both individuals and their environment [2]. Concepts such as human rights, freedoms, and globalization have led to significant changes in social, political, economic, and educational fields both globally and in our country, and these changes have also had a marked impact on the field of special education. These developments continue to affect education and support services for individuals with special needs, the ways in which these services are provided, the programs implemented, the environments in which services are provided, and the personnel working in these environments [3].

In this context, advocacy efforts have also enabled many legal and educational regulations for individuals with special needs, and the most important reflection of these developments in the field of education has been the daily increase in the number of individuals benefiting from inclusive education [4]. This increase has enabled individuals with special needs to benefit from opportunities such as receiving quality education, transitioning to different environments appropriate to their needs, obtaining necessary employment for independence, gaining economic freedom, and participating in social life.

However, recent studies have shown that social work is important not only in the field of education but also in the context of environmental issues and ecological risks. Social work plays critical roles in supporting the well-being of individuals affected by environmental degradation, improving their quality of life, and strengthening environmental justice [5]. In this regard, fostering socially compatible behaviors to ensure the successful participation of individuals with special needs in social life, as with all individuals, is a fundamental requirement. Achieving this goal is important in terms of increasing the independence of individuals with special needs and their families, improving their quality of life, and facilitating their transition into social life.

Ensuring the effective participation of individuals with special needs in all areas of social life forms the basis of the social state concept. In this context, current approaches worldwide emphasize that every individual should be able to benefit equally from all services without being subjected to any discrimination, based on human rights. Today, one of the fundamental concepts used to ensure the successful transition and full participation of individuals with special needs into social life is “transition” [6].

In this context, the aim of the study is to conceptually examine the effects of the green social work approach on the social participation and transition to independent living

of individuals with special needs. In particular, the contribution potential of environmentally friendly social work practices to the education, employment, and social life processes of individuals with disabilities has been addressed. Within this framework, strategies such as sustainable and accessible living spaces, green schools, and environmentally friendly employment opportunities are evaluated as ways to support the social integration of individuals with special needs. By analyzing the opportunities offered by green social services, the study aims to emphasize the importance of a service model supported by sustainable social policies.

This study was designed within the framework of a qualitative research approach, and a literature review was used as the method. The literature review was chosen to conceptually examine the contributions of environmentally friendly social service practices to the social participation and transition to independent living of individuals with special needs. Within the scope of the research, national and international academic articles, reports, policy documents, and field studies related to the subject were examined in detail. The selection of these sources was based on the fundamental criterion that they be directly related to environmental sustainability, green social service strategies, the social participation of individuals with special needs, and independent living processes.

Various academic databases, electronic libraries, and official institutional reports were utilized during the literature review process. The selected studies were classified according to their content and focused on findings that could reveal the effects of environmentally friendly social service practices on individuals' living conditions. The literature obtained was evaluated using the conceptual framework analysis method. In this context, environmental sustainability was considered not only in the context of improving the physical environment but also as a multidimensional element that increases individuals' opportunities and strengthens their independence in the areas of education, employment, accessibility, and social life. In addition, the effectiveness of green social service strategies and the importance of sustainable social policies were examined comparatively in light of different perspectives in the literature. This method provides an analytical framework for revealing the theoretical foundations of environmentally friendly social service practices, identifying gaps in the existing literature, and comprehensively conceptualizing the contribution of the sustainability perspective to the independent living processes of individuals with special needs.

2 Conceptual framework

2.1 Definition and scope of green social work

Green social work can be defined as an approach in social work practice that is based on environmentally friendly, sustainable approaches and environmental responsibility. This concept involves shaping social work practices while considering environmental sustainability and ecological balance. It embraces a service approach that is sensitive to individuals' environmental interactions and their relationship with nature [7].

Green social work aims to reduce the impact of ecological problems on disadvantaged groups, empower individuals against adverse environmental conditions, and protect social welfare. In this regard, protective and preventive practices play critical roles in areas such as identifying environmental risks, imparting sustainable living skills, encouraging environmentally conscious behavior in communities, and ensuring the equitable use of resources. Another fundamental goal of green social work is to mitigate the effects

of environmental crises and climate change and to make individuals more resilient in these processes. Thus, green social work offers a holistic approach that supports ecological and social justice at both the individual and societal levels [8, 9]. Environmental sustainability is at the heart of green social work, and this approach aims to protect the environment and promote the efficient use of natural resources. Green social work aims to ensure that communities that are more vulnerable to environmental risks, such as low-income groups, the elderly, and people with disabilities, benefit more effectively from social services. In this regard, social work professionals strive to solve individual and social problems by raising awareness among individuals and communities about environmental impacts and guiding them towards environmentally friendly practices [10].

Furthermore, green social work considers the impact of factors such as gender, ethnicity, and age on environmental inequalities. From this perspective, it emphasizes that services must be provided equally and fairly to all individuals in society to ensure environmental justice. Social service professionals aim to understand the needs of disadvantaged groups most affected by environmental crises and develop strategies to improve the living conditions of these individuals [11].

The inclusion of green social work in social work practice plays an important role at the intersection of social justice and environmental justice. This approach addresses the effects of environmental destruction on communities while guiding communities' adaptation processes to climate change; thus, green social work goes beyond the traditional understanding of social work and directly links environmental issues to social work practice [12]. In this context, green social work highlights the interaction between the social environment and nature, and access to green spaces and their effective use contribute to individuals developing a shared social identity, thereby supporting bio-psycho-social well-being [13].

In addition, social workers should identify avenues for collaboration and coordination with other professional groups addressing environmental issues, identify necessary resources, and utilize these resources effectively. This approach enables social work to operate within a multidisciplinary framework, playing a critical role in improving the well-being of individuals and communities affected by environmental risks [14, 15]. Therefore, before implementing a social work intervention, the source of the problems must first be correctly understood so that the intervention can be environmentally focused. In this regard, social service professionals should assess who the clients and communities affected by environmental problems are, the clients' level of awareness regarding the environment, what work is necessary to reduce or eliminate the effects of environmental problems, which institutions these efforts should be carried out in collaboration with, and at what level professional interventions should be implemented. In light of these assessments, appropriate social work practices should be planned and implemented [16].

Considering all this, green social work stands out as an approach that aims to create an environmentally compatible and sustainable society; it aims to reduce social inequalities by producing nature-compatible solutions and to ensure that individuals live in a society that is more robust in environmental and social terms. Therefore, the application of green social work as a variable in social work theories in broader areas in the future

will make it possible to meet the environmental and social needs of societies in a holistic manner.

2.2 Social participation of individuals with special needs

2.3 Explanation of the concept of transition

Transition is an inevitable process that individuals experience in different ways throughout their lives and is defined in various ways in the literature. This concept encompasses the process individuals experience as they transition between different stages of life, from infancy to adulthood [17]. It is also expressed as “points of change in services and in the personnel providing these services” [18]. Therefore, transition is a lifelong process that involves changes in the environment, roles, and interactions individuals encounter in their academic and social lives.

Especially for individuals with special needs, transition refers to a multidimensional process ranging from education to employment and from social services to independent living. It encompasses not only physical mobility but also active participation in social life and overcoming obstacles [19]. This process involves individuals receiving education in non-restrictive environments, gaining independence in social life, and participating in the workforce. However, the successful realization of transition depends not only on the education of individuals but also on the adaptation of the social environment. In this context, in addition to inclusion education and integration, providing employment opportunities, social services, and community-based support that facilitate social participation is of critical importance [4]. The failure to provide sufficient employment opportunities can lead to problems such as economic hardship, creating uncertainty and stress among individuals. This situation can negatively affect the emotional well-being of children, especially in communities affected by environmental risks [20].

However, when examining the fundamental principles of transition, it is seen that individuals experience this process from an early age and face a continuous process of change throughout their lives. This process requires individuals to adapt to environmental dynamics and adjust to different roles [21]. While transition offers new opportunities to individuals, it is also generally considered a source of stress. The transition process can be particularly challenging and anxiety-provoking for children with special needs and their families. In one study [22], the anxiety levels of families of children with special needs and typically developing children transitioning to the preschool period were examined; it was found that parents of children with special needs had more concerns in areas such as toilet training, personal care, behavior management, academic preparation, peer relationships, and following instructions. Therefore, it can be said that during the transition process, families and children face issues such as new rules and regulations, choosing appropriate educational environments, financial planning, and lifestyle changes [23]. In addition, one of the important factors that complicates the transition process for individuals with special needs is the lack of information about the programs, educational environments, and attitudes of individuals in the surrounding environment to which the transition will take place; this situation makes it difficult for individuals to adapt to the process and creates additional difficulties [24]. In this regard, individualized transition plans (ITPs) can serve as a bridge between educational programs for children

with special needs and their families, providing a roadmap that guides the individual in preparing for the next educational environment.

One of the significant challenges that individuals with special needs face during transition processes is social acceptance and awareness. Negative attitudes in society, discrimination, and prejudices related to disability can hinder individuals' participation in social life. Therefore, the transition process should not be limited to developing individuals' skills but should also aim to transform society's attitudes toward accepting individuals with special needs. In this context, regulations in the areas of education, employment, and social participation enable individuals to acquire independent living skills, achieve economic independence, and participate effectively in social life. At the same time, it is crucial to respect the rights of individuals with special needs and ensure they benefit from equal services [4, 6].

In conclusion, the concept of transition is a critical process that enables individuals with special needs to participate fully and effectively in social life. This process requires not only the development of individual skills but also the transformation of social attitudes, policies, and support systems. Successful transition not only improves the quality of life for individuals with special needs, but also contributes to the creation of a more inclusive and equitable structure throughout society.

2.4 The importance and processes of transition to social life

Transition to community living is a critical process that enables individuals with special needs to actively participate in education, the workforce, and social life. This process is not limited to individuals developing their own skills and abilities; it also encompasses ensuring all the social, economic, and cultural conditions necessary for them to exist in society with equal rights. The goal of transition is to enable individuals to gain independence and participate effectively in social life [3]. In this context, the importance of transition to social life has a powerful impact at both the individual and societal levels. Transition to social life encompasses many areas, from education to employment, independent living to social participation. This process creates critical opportunities for individuals with special needs to participate in various social contexts and contribute to society. The transition process begins with education and generally involves the transition of individuals with special needs from their educational life at school to broader interaction with society. However, for this transition to be successful, it is necessary not only to develop the skills of individuals but also to change the attitudes of society towards accepting individuals with special needs [19].

Therefore, it can be said that one of the most fundamental components of transition to social life is social integration. This refers to individuals being able to coexist with others on equal terms at school, in the workplace, and in social life. Social integration involves not only the physical presence of individuals with disabilities, but also their active role in participating in social life. This applies not only to educational processes, but also to participation in the workforce [4].

Transitioning into the workforce is a critical step for individuals with special needs to gain economic independence and earn a respectable place in society. In this process, it is necessary to change attitudes toward disability in the workplace and provide suitable job opportunities for individuals with disabilities. At the same time, the transition process

also involves strengthening social services, policies, and infrastructure that enable individuals to participate in social life [6].

Another important component of transition to social life is psycho-social adaptation. This involves individuals being psychologically prepared for transition to social life and being able to adapt to their environment. Social integration refers to the process of individuals with disabilities understanding not only their physical environment but also social norms and values and adapting to these norms. This adaptation enables individuals to play a more active role in social life by increasing their self-confidence. Transition to social life is an important process that has the potential to transform not only the lives of individuals with special needs but also the structure of society. To be successful in this process, it is necessary to improve attitudes towards disability throughout society through creative education and policies that raise social awareness, in addition to developing individual skills. Transition to social life is of vital importance for individuals with special needs to be able to live their lives with equal opportunities and contributes to the creation of a more inclusive living space not only for individuals but for the whole society [25].

3 Basic principles and applications of green social services

3.1 The effects of environmentally friendly social service approaches on individuals with special needs

Environmentally friendly social service approaches represent an understanding that aims to improve individuals' quality of life by placing social services within an ecological and sustainable perspective. These approaches aim to develop strategies to reduce social inequalities and environmental injustices by considering the effects of environmental factors on social service practices. For individuals with special needs, environmentally friendly social services aim to develop their social, psychological, and economic well-being in harmony with their physical environment. Environmentally friendly approaches play a critical role in combating environmental impacts and improving individuals' living conditions [7].

The primary goal of environmentally friendly social services for individuals with special needs is to facilitate their adaptation to their physical and social environments. The environment in which individuals with special needs live directly affects their daily life activities. Therefore, environmentally friendly social service practices aim to ensure that these individuals live in more accessible and compatible environments. Incorporating the principles of environmental sustainability into social service practices supports individuals with special needs in living in healthier and safer environments [9].

Individuals with special needs are often more affected by environmental factors. Environmental changes, such as the climate crisis and natural disasters, pose greater risks, especially for vulnerable groups. Environmentally friendly social service approaches focus on developing specific strategies to protect these groups. For example, social service professionals enable individuals with special needs to become more resilient to environmental changes through environmental protection training and community projects [10]. Furthermore, green social services can strengthen the social participation of these individuals by encouraging them to develop environmentally conscious behaviors. Addressing environmental inequalities enables individuals with disabilities to participate more actively in social life. Environmentally friendly approaches aim to transform both

the physical environment and social norms to help individuals with special needs integrate into society in a more equitable manner. This process improves individuals' quality of life while also strengthening their social participation. Furthermore, environmentally friendly social service approaches facilitate access to resources that can help protect these individuals from environmental threats [11].

4 Transition theories and models: factors affecting transition processes for individuals with special needs and the effects of these processes on education, employment, and social participation

4.1 Transition theories and models

Transition theories explain how individuals, families, educators, and society should interact to ensure these processes occur more efficiently and healthily. Transition models, on the other hand, are approaches developed to help individuals overcome the obstacles they encounter as they progress through their developmental stages. The implementation of these models helps individuals navigate their transition processes more smoothly and successfully. Many transition models aim to facilitate the education, employment, and social participation of individuals with special needs. *The Targeted Transition Model* and *the Individualized Transition Planning Model* are among the most commonly used models for individuals with special needs. These models ensure that individuals receive education and support for both short- and long-term goals during the transition process [19].

5 Factors influencing transition processes

The transition processes of individuals with special needs have a multidimensional structure and are influenced by various factors. These factors can generally be examined under the headings of individual characteristics, environmental factors, and systemic barriers.

5.1 Individual characteristics

Individuals' strengths and weaknesses, abilities, motivations, and independent living skills play a significant role in the transition process. Psychological resilience, social skills, communication skills, and daily living skills are critical elements for success in the transition from education to working life. Special needs such as learning difficulties, intellectual disabilities, and autism spectrum disorders, in particular, make individuals' social participation and transition to employment more complex [4].

5.2 Environmental factors

Environmental conditions such as the educational environment, the labor market, transportation, and accommodation directly affect transition processes. In addition, society's attitudes toward disability can also limit individuals' participation in social life [26].

The success of the transition process is shaped by the interaction of different variables. Especially in the early stages, administrative arrangements, inter-agency cooperation, the child's individual characteristics, and the family's involvement in the process are key factors determining the effectiveness of the process [27]. Hanson (2005) summarizes the factors affecting the transition process under four main headings: characteristics of the

individual, family, and professionals; family–service provider collaboration; legal regulations; and the scope of support services [28].

In this context, the active participation of the child and family in the process is seen as the most decisive factor. Supporting families with the necessary knowledge and skills facilitates their preparation of their children for the transition process and their adaptation to new environments [24].

5.3 Systemic barriers (policies, laws, and regulations)

Legal regulations, social services, and equality policies also significantly affect transition processes. Inclusion education, workplace disability regulations, and support services provided by the state facilitate the process [29].

Although there is no direct legal regulation regarding transition processes in Turkey, there are various legal frameworks that support the education and employment of individuals with special needs. Guidance services are defined with the aim of directing individuals' educational lives and supporting their professional development [6].

Furthermore, regulations in force to support individuals' integration into society and their independent living encourage vocational training and employment processes [30]. However, the lack of a comprehensive and systematic legal framework for the transition process highlights the need for new regulations in this area.

6 Effects of transition processes on education, employment, and social participation

Transition processes have significant effects on the education, employment, and social participation of individuals with special needs. The difficulties experienced during these processes can hinder individuals' effective participation in social life, but these effects can be minimized with appropriate strategies [3].

6.1 Effects on education

Transition processes directly affect individuals' educational lives. The transition from education to the workforce increases individuals' capacity to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired during their education. Inclusion education and individualized teaching methods can improve the educational processes of individuals with special needs and raise their overall educational level. Individuals' transitions in education can mitigate the obstacles they will encounter in their subsequent transition to the workforce [3].

The ability of individuals with special needs to adapt smoothly to life after school is shaped by the interaction of various individual and environmental factors. This process depends on variables such as the student's level of development, readiness, the complexity of their individual needs, family and economic opportunities, and the availability of environmental support [31]. In order for students with special needs to successfully transition to post-school life, it is crucial that their abilities are developed throughout their education. In this context, it is necessary to establish support mechanisms that will reinforce the skills individuals possess or facilitate the use of these skills, and to provide opportunities for them to put these abilities into practice [32].

However, the successful adaptation of individuals with special needs to social life, the workplace, and educational environments is directly related to the adaptation of existing

school programs to their needs. In this context, educational programs must be structured in a way that enables individuals to acquire the knowledge and skills they will need in social life [33].

When preparing an Individualized Education Program (IEP), the situations that students with special needs may encounter throughout their lives should be taken into account, and support should be planned to help them acquire the skills necessary to live independently in the future. In this regard, it is crucial to focus not only on academic achievements during the education process but also to include transition services in line with the student's needs. In this process, the potential difficulties students may encounter should be identified, and the goal should be to equip them with the skills to overcome these difficulties within the existing courses [34]. Thus, the post-school adaptation processes of individuals with special needs can be supported more effectively, and their participation in society as independent individuals can be encouraged.

6.2 Effects on employment

Various areas must be evaluated in transition plans to ensure that individuals can lead successful and independent lives during the transition to adulthood. Key elements to be addressed in this process include career choice and planning, development of professional knowledge and skills, evaluation of advanced education or training opportunities, acquisition of functional communication skills, and increasing the individual's capacity to manage their own life. Furthermore, it is important to support independent living skills, raise awareness about personal financial management, and ensure that individuals adapt to social and cultural traditions that encourage their active participation in social life. In addition to this, increasing participation in leisure activities, developing healthy lifestyle habits, and strengthening interpersonal relationships should also be an integral part of transition plans [30]. Addressing these elements with a holistic approach will support individuals' lifelong independence and social integration processes.

The transition process directly affects the employment opportunities of individuals with special needs. Individuals may encounter barriers such as discrimination and social prejudice in the workplace during their transition to employment. Regulations in the labor market can help individuals with disabilities gain more opportunities. The participation of individuals with special needs in the workforce is an important step towards gaining economic independence. Making appropriate adjustments in the workplace facilitates the successful transition of these individuals [4].

6.3 Effects on social participation

The transition process greatly affects the participation of individuals with special needs in social life. Positive changes in societal attitudes towards disability enable these individuals to participate more actively in social life. Furthermore, social participation helps them establish social connections and relationships, which enhances their mental and psychological well-being. Transition processes are also critical to ensuring that individuals with special needs succeed in the areas of education, employment, and social participation. Transition theories and models provide guidance for these processes to occur in a healthier and more efficient manner, while helping to develop appropriate strategies for overcoming the obstacles individuals face. The successful completion of these processes

enables individuals with special needs to participate in society with equal rights and gain independence [6].

7 The impact of green social work on the transition of individuals with special needs: social participation and independence

7.1 Social participation strategies supported by green social services

Social participation refers to individuals with special needs having equal rights in society and living independently. Green social services develop strategies that take environmental factors into account to support this participation and aim to ensure that individuals live in nature-friendly, accessible environments [25].

7.1.1 Creating accessible environments

One of the fundamental strategies of green social services is to strengthen environmental sustainability to facilitate access and participation for individuals with special needs. Accessible parks, public transportation systems, and public spaces increase individuals' participation in social life. Especially in large cities, the development of accessible parks and transportation options are important steps in strengthening the social bonds of individuals with disabilities [35].

7.1.2 Green schools and educational models

Education is one of the most important elements of social participation. Green schools offer more inclusive educational environments for individuals with special needs through their environmentally friendly and accessible structures. Natural light, green spaces, and sustainable designs provide a supportive environment both physically and psychologically. This approach contributes to individuals growing up to be environmentally conscious while also increasing their social interaction. Practices in London and other developed countries show that green school projects strengthen the education and social participation of students with disabilities [4].

7.1.3 Opportunities for participation in social projects

Green social services increase social interaction by encouraging individuals with special needs to participate in environment-focused projects. Such projects both create environmental awareness and ensure that individuals integrate more actively into society. In Turkey, environmentally friendly social responsibility projects stand out as one of the important strategies that support the participation of individuals with disabilities [36].

7.1.4 Transition to independent living

The transition to independent living is a critical stage for individuals with special needs in terms of being able to make their own decisions, sustain their lives, and participate in social life. Green social services facilitate this process through sustainable living spaces and supportive services. The proliferation of independent living spaces and the provision of home care services in Turkey are important developments that strengthen individuals' independence [37].

Furthermore, research shows that environmentally friendly industries offer economic independence opportunities for individuals with disabilities [38]. Such employment opportunities are considered a concrete example of the environmental and social

contribution of green social services. Sustaining independent living is made possible by living spaces and support services designed to meet individuals' physical, psychological, and social needs [39].

8 Sustainable living spaces, employment, and social participation strategies

Green social services focus on sustainable living spaces, employment opportunities, and environmental regulations to support the independent living of individuals with special needs and increase their social participation. This approach aims not only to meet individuals' physical needs but also to empower them socially, economically, and psychologically.

Sustainable living spaces are designed to facilitate the daily lives of individuals with disabilities and strengthen their independence. Independent living spaces and home care services created for individuals with disabilities in Turkey contribute significantly to this process. Furthermore, these environmentally friendly spaces promote the efficient use of natural resources, thereby improving individuals' quality of life and strengthening sustainability awareness [37].

Another fundamental element of the transition to independent living is employment. Green social services, recycling, organic farming, and environmentally friendly production create new job opportunities, supporting the economic independence of individuals with special needs. Regulations promoting an environmentally friendly workforce in Turkey create new opportunities for the employment of individuals with disabilities. In addition, ensuring appropriate working conditions contributes to overcoming barriers encountered in the employment process [38].

Social participation is also among the primary goals of green social services. Accessible parks, public transportation systems, and public spaces enable individuals with disabilities to participate more effectively in social life. Indeed, Alpar (2019) [40] emphasizes that increasing accessible environments in Turkey has a positive effect on social participation. In addition, green schools, with their environmentally friendly and accessible designs, enable students with disabilities to be in more inclusive educational environments and have a learning experience in close contact with nature [4].

In conclusion, the sustainable living spaces, employment opportunities, and social participation strategies offered by green social services provide a holistic approach that supports the independence and social integration of individuals with special needs.

9 Conclusion

The effects of green social services on the social participation and transition to independent living of individuals with special needs demonstrate that sustainable and environmentally friendly service approaches are gaining importance for all segments of society today. Green social services, taking environmental factors into account, make the environment in which individuals with special needs live more suitable in terms of social participation and independence. In this process, strategies such as green schools, accessible living spaces, and environmentally friendly employment opportunities support the participation of individuals with disabilities in social life while also contributing to their gaining independence.

This environmentally focused aspect of social services improves not only the physical environment but also social areas such as education and employment, accelerating

individuals' independent living processes. For green social service applications to be effective, it is important that sustainable environmental policies are adopted across society and that public-private sector collaborations are strengthened. Studies conducted worldwide and in Turkey reveal that green social services have significant potential to improve the quality of life of individuals with disabilities, ensure social equality, and reinforce their independence. In this context, promoting the opportunities offered by green social services will strengthen the social participation and independence of individuals with special needs.

The study is not without its limitations. The research was conducted using examples from Turkey; therefore, the generalizability of the practices to different country contexts may be limited. Moreover, due to an absence of empirical data, the effects of green social services could not be directly verified through field observations or experimental studies.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct cross-cultural comparisons, examine green social service practices in different socio-economic and environmental contexts, and measure their effects through empirical validation. Such studies will contribute to assessing the universal validity of the practices and testing their adaptability in different communities.

One of the innovative contributions of this study is the systematic examination of the “green job transition processes” of individuals with special needs. Filling a gap in the literature on this subject, the study brings an environment-focused perspective to both social service theory and practice. Therefore, increasing the opportunities that green social services offer to individuals with special needs and supporting them with sustainable social policies will make significant contributions to strengthening social equality and individual well-being in the future.

Author contributions

All authors contributed equally to the article.

Data availability

No datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

Declarations

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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