

Parent Involvement in Education in Terms of Their Socio-Economic Status

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Abstract

Problem Statement: Increasing the quality of education and educating well-qualified students is one of the most important objectives of formal education. Informal resources are as important as formal resources in improving this efficiency and productivity. In this respect, it can be said that family is the most important informal structure affecting the education of the child. In order to evaluate the involvement of family in education, various ways of categorizing have been implemented. One of these systems provides six categories in parental involvement, which are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community. Whilst the meaning and significance of parental involvement is the starting point of this study, determining the level of involvement of the families in the educational activities at schools in terms of their socio-economic status is the main purpose of this study. Considering the fact that research on parental involvement in schools in terms of the socio-economic status of parents is scarce, the present study may serve as an important data source for researchers and policy makers in regard to comparing the effects of this involvement.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to examine the viewpoints of administrators, teachers and parents on involvement of the

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families in the process of education in terms of socio-economic status in public and private primary and secondary schools.

Method: Interview and document analysis methods, which are both qualitative research methods, were used in the study. The study group was 11 teachers, four administrators working at public and private primary and secondary schools in Mugla and six parents. The data were collected through semi-structured interview methods. In addition, the documents related to the involvement of parents to education were analysed – school newspapers, the announcements, news and the activities section of the schools' Web pages. In analysing the data collected in this study, the NVivo8 package program and the descriptive analysis technique were used. The findings are presented with a descriptive analysis method.

Findings: The results of the study indicate that parents from different socio-economic backgrounds do not have very different ideas about the process of involvement in the process of education. However, because school-family interaction in public schools and the trainings on parenting are not very systematic even if socio-economic status is high, the interaction is not at a desired level. The reasons parents communicate with the schools were found to be to evaluate student's academic success and personal development. Both in public and private schools, involvement of parents in the decisions was in the form of asking parents their ideas. It was found that parents having a good socio-economic status were more willing and active in the procedure of participating in the process of education.

Conclusion and Recommendations: In order to increase parent involvement in education, the guidance services at schools should be used more functionally. For example, needs analysis towards determining the needs of the parents and the students in their school life should be made, and based on the results of the analysis, programmes to support parent involvement in education should be prepared.

Keywords: family-school relationships, academic achievement, low-income, socio-economic rank.

Introduction

Involvement of parents in education is considered among the most important factors in increasing the efficiency and quality of education because both home and school environments affect a child's development. Therefore, it can be said that family is an important component of the school environment.

Researchers who realize that family is an important factor in the process of education conducted many scientific studies on this topic. One of the most

outstanding studies among these researches is the one Coleman et al. carried out in 1966 (As cited in Tural, 2002). In their study, it was found that the family factor was as efficient as the school in student achievement. In addition to the aforementioned study, there are many other studies on the significance and effect of family in the process of education. In the studies, it was found that parental involvement increased student's learning and academic success (Thompson et al. 1997; Eccles & Harold 1996; Lawson 2003; Jeynes 2015; Castro et al. 2015). In addition, there are studies stating that socio-economic levels of the families affect their involvement in education. According to these studies, the socio-economic levels of the families affect student enrolment in school, their involvement and academic success (Lindberg & Demircan 2013; Cooper et al 2009; Lee & Bowen 2006; Hair et al. 2015).

The concept of parental involvement is defined as a systematic approach which not only involves supporting and educating families and ensuring their participation in education, increasing children's educational and academic experiences, establishing, sustaining and improving the communication between students' homes and educational institutions, but also enriching the curriculum with the involvement and contribution of parents (Bower & Griffin 2011; Lindberg & Demircan 2013). Epstein (1995; 2008), who has been involved in many studies on the involvement of family in education and who has become an important name in this field, provides six categories in parental involvement, which are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with community. Parenting involves the activities that help families in issues such as creating a warm home environment to increase school achievement of the student; and helping families in their responsibilities such as health, nutrition and education. Communication means two-way communication between home and school that enables the transfer of knowledge about the curriculum and the child. According to this, teachers and administrators provide knowledge to the parents about the progress of the student at school in a systematic way. Regular meetings at schools, sending forms to the homes, and informing parents through the internet or telephone could be counted among these activities. Volunteering means organizing and recruiting the parents to help and support the activities in the classroom or at school. Learning at home is to inform parents to help their children at home with doing their homework, course activities and plans; organizing seminars, conferences and reading activities for parents at school. Decision making could be defined as administrators and teachers enabling parents to participate in the decision-making process at school at the highest level. To do this, involving parents in the decisions made at school and improving the parents' ability to be representatives and leaders at the school is a responsibility of the administration and the teachers. Collaborating with community involves transferring the information on strengthening curriculum and the health and culture of the society with the help of the community. Consequently, students could carry out community service practices (such as recycling, drawing, music and drama, etc.). In addition, activities to be carried out in cooperation with alumni could be counted in this theme.

Whilst the meaning and significance of parental involvement is the starting point of this study, determining the level of involvement of the families in the educational activities at schools in terms of their socio-economic status is the main purpose. Whether there is a difference among involvement of parents in the process of education in public and private schools is one of the areas that will be studied. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to examine the viewpoints of administrators, teachers and parents on involvement of the families in educational processes in terms of socio-economic status in public and private primary and secondary schools. Based on this overall objective, answers to the following research questions are sought for:

- a) Parenting
- b) Communicating
- c) Volunteering
- d) Learning at home
- e) Decision making, and
- f) Collaborating with the society themes.

Method

Research Design

Phenomenological design, a qualitative research design that applies to the nature of the study, was used. In this design, the aim is to reveal and interpret individual perceptions or viewpoints towards a certain phenomenon (Patton, 2002; Yildirim & Simsek, 2008). The data collection techniques used in the study were document analysis and interview. In the study, the "involvement of parents in the process of education in terms of their socio-economic status" was examined via interviews and document analysis.

The e-newspapers, forums, news on the Web pages and announcements used in the study are documents. As for Krippendorff (2004), document analysis is a research method used to make valid and reliable inferences from the texts. The second data collection technique used in this study was interviewing. In phenomenology, the interviewing method is considered a useful method in terms of collecting precise and correct data on the research topic (Judd et al. 1991).

Research Sample

The study group in this research involved seven teachers, three administrators working at seven public primary and secondary schools in the Mentese district of Mugla and six parents whose children study in these schools; and four teachers, one administrator working at two private primary and secondary schools in Mugla province and three parents whose children study in these schools. The study group was determined through maximum variation sampling, one of the purposeful

sampling methods. The aim of this is to create a relatively small sample. In addition, this sampling is used to find out whether there are common or shared phenomena and differences among varying cases and depending on variation, the aim is to reveal different dimensions of the problem (Yildirim & Simsek 2005). Purposeful sampling was used to reach the teachers, administrators and parents in the study. The aim of using purposeful sampling (Yildirim & Simsek 2005; Aziz 2008) is to choose the individuals who would serve the research objectives in the most convenient way.

Research Instruments and Procedure

The data in the study were collected through semi-structured interviews and the document analysis method. Semi-structured interviews were administered in this study and in doing so, the aim was to collect detailed data on the involvement of parents in the education process within the scope of certain topics. To this end, semi-structured interview forms including six questions were developed for teachers, administrators and parents. Interview forms are among the data collection tools of the qualitative research. These forms are the best way we have of getting the meaning of how people understand reality, the meaning they attach to reality, and how they define and establish the reality (Punch 2005). The semi-structured interview forms were prepared based on the studies in the literature that define the involvement of parents in the education process and based on the factors that Epstein (1995) defined. The prepared questions were sent for expert opinion¹ and the final version of the form was prepared.

The interviews, which were carried out with administrators and teachers and which took almost 15-20 minutes each, were recorded.

In interpreting the opinions of the participants, their own statements/expressions were used. The documents analysed in this study were published on the Web pages of the private schools and on the Web pages of public schools which they are obliged to prepare as suggested by the Ministry of National Education, during the 2014-2015 academic year. Accordingly, while analysing the e-newspapers, forums, news and announcements on the Web pages, key words were listed and the collected data were analysed. While choosing the key words, Epstein's classification was employed and the collected data were used to support the interviews.

Table-1 shows the documents related to the involvement of parents in education. According to this, there are school newspapers (e-newspaper) in only three schools. The rest of the documents were taken from the announcements, news and activities section of the schools' Web pages.

Table 1.

Analysed Documents

Documents	Public schools	Private schools
School newspaper (e-newspaper)	2	1

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Announcements	5	-
News	20	15
Activities ²	14	15

Data Analysis

In analysing the data collected in this study, the NVivo8 package program and descriptive analysis technique were used. The main aim in descriptive analysis is to summarize and interpret the data based on pre-set themes (Yildirim and Simsek, 2008, 224). Based on the repetition of the answers in terms of their meaning, the themes were classified. The voice recordings from the semi-structured interviews were directly written down without making any changes and each interview was read and evaluated.

Based on the sub-objectives and Epstein's classification, the themes in this study are set as "parenting," "communicating," "volunteering," "learning at home," "decision making" and "collaborating with society." Using deductive methods, these themes were set at the beginning of the study, and sub-categories were set using an inductive method during the analyses.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure internal reliability in this study, the reliability between the coders of the pre-set themes were checked. Themes were separately coded by the researchers and the consistency of the coding was compared.

In topics where researchers were undecided, they discussed the topic and came to an agreement. While doing so, the topics in which the two researchers have a "consensus" and "dissensus" for the themes and categories were discussed and relevant changes were made. Later, to calculate the reliability, the reliability formula suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used. And as a result, the reliability of the study was found to be 91,25 %. To ensure the reliability of the study, short and direct citations were included and without making any comment, the collected data were grouped and offered to the readers. Interpretations of the findings are given in the discussion section.

Results

Results on the Involvement of Parents in the Process of Education in Public and Private Schools based on the Opinions of Teachers, Administrators and Parents

In the study, participants were asked questions about what kinds of activities for parent involvement were employed in the process of education in the schools where teachers and administrators work and parents sent their children. The answers were analysed through Epstein's (1995) themes, which are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the society and are given below (Figure 1).

² Parent-teacher meetings, trips, charity sales, visits to the homes, sports activities etc.

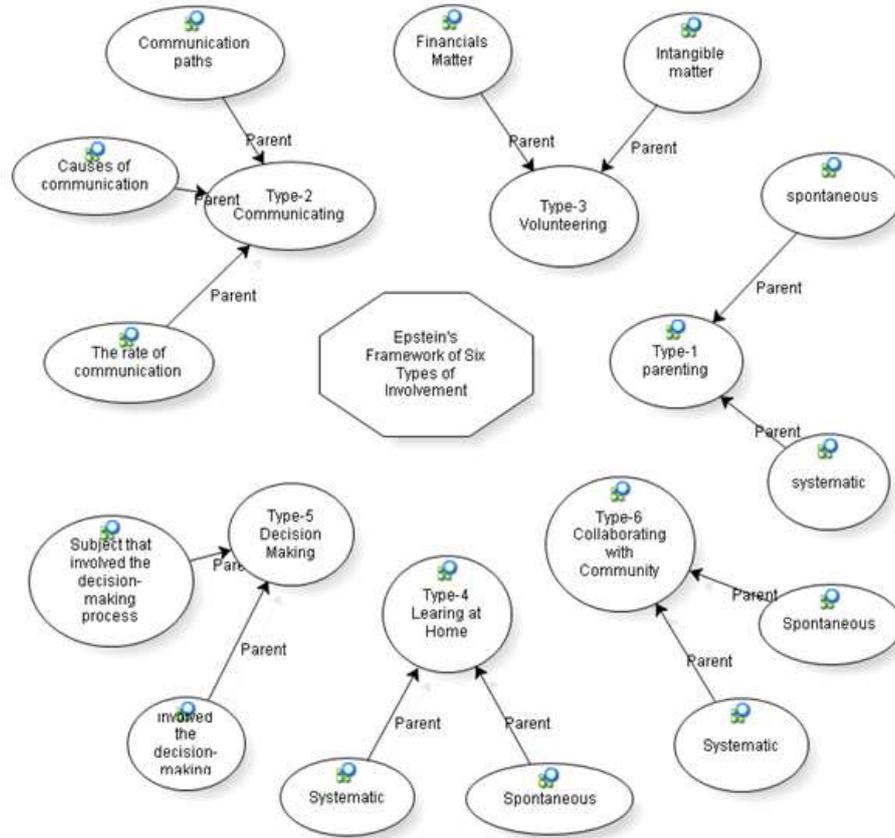


Figure 1. The Model formed by the researchers in the Nvivo Program

1. Theme: Parenting. When the participants’ opinions are analysed, it is understood that the activities that could be grouped under the parenting theme are done in a “systematic” way or “spontaneously.” What is meant by “systematic” activities is the *ad hoc* educational activities which are carried out by the guidance unit in the school—if there is one—or by the authorities sent by Directorates of National Education or Ministry of Family and Social Policies or by the public education units opened in the school building for the families.

As P3T³ stated: “As of the 1st semester, an activity under the parental school was organized. We provided parents with a training over 20 hours. And we also invited three experts who wrote a book on open guidance and organized seminars and sessions for the parents.” Private schools which are in the high socio-economic group prefer to invite

³ Note: Abbreviations in the study represent: T: Teacher in public schools; PT: Teacher in private schools; P: Parent in public school; PP: Parent in private schools; A: Administrator in public schools; PA: Administrator in Private Schools.

experts and offer seminars. (P3T, T7, T8, T10, P4A, A3, P1P, P3). What is meant by “spontaneous” activities are the one-time activities which are organized in the schools based on the needs of the teachers, administrators or parents. For example, T2 explains this as “...when we see a concern with the child, we warn the parents and talk to them about what we can do or what they can do.” (T2, A1, P2)

Both the systematic and spontaneous activities carried out in the schools seem to be related to physical and mental development rather than the personal care of the child. In this study, it was found that parents were mostly informed about what kind of problems they might face with their children throughout adolescence and how they can manage these problems. As P3 expressed: “They informed us about the early adolescence of the children. The seminar was about what families can do, what they should do, what kind of changes are seen a child goes through.” The main starting point of the activities is communication during adolescence (T2, P3).

Another finding related to the activities on parenting is that the factor that turned a spontaneous activity into a systematic one to which professionals attend is the presence of a guidance unit (T7, T8, T10). In other words, if there is no guidance service in the school, teachers only make one-on-one meetings with the parents. However; if there is a guidance service in the school, detailed and planned activities are offered. In this case, since financing activities in private schools is easier, it is obvious that they could find external professional support (P3T, P4A).

It was found that 15 documents analysed through the Web pages of the schools within the scope of the study contained information on parenting. Ten of these documents were activities carried out in private schools whilst the remaining five were activities carried out in the schools where the parents are from a high socio-economic status. Especially in two private schools where the data were collected, it was seen that there were parental trainings. In addition to that, it was also seen that there were interactive systems through which parents could access information about their child.

II. Theme: Communicating. The participants’ opinions on the communicating theme were categorized as “the rate of communication,” “communication paths,” and “causes of communication.”

In participant statements, there are expressions stating that there were regular meetings (for instance, at least twice a year, and once every month) for parents in all schools during the semester. Apart from that, as T8 stated: “parents could communicate with us when they feel they need to.” It was found that parents meet with teachers or school administrators apart from the meetings (T2, T8, T9, T11).

When the communication ways of the parents with the school are examined, the parents’ meetings stand out as the first path (T1, T2, P3T, P4T, P5T, T6, T9, T10, T11, P2, P3, P4, P5). In addition, as P3T stated: “we visit at least one parent each week;” teachers organize visits to the residences of the students to see their families and to closely study the home environment (T2, P3T, P4T, P5T, T6). In addition, it is understood from the statements of P3T, P5T, T6, T8, T9, T10 that using the advanced

technological means of telephone and the internet (SMS, Facebook, WhatsApp and such), the communication ways are diversified.

Finally, it is possible to say that the reasons that parents communicate are to evaluate the academic achievement of the student (T1, P4T, T10, A1) and for his/her personal development (T8) and for both evaluating the academic achievement of the student and his/her personal development (T2, P3T, P5T, T6, T7, T9, T11, A3, P3, P4, P5).

It was found that 20 documents analysed within the scope of the study included information on communication. Sixteen of the activities in these documents were activities that were carried out in private schools whilst the remaining four activities were those carried out in public school where the socio-economic status of the families was high. In one of the private schools where data was collected, it was seen that one of the best examples of school-parent communication was the student follow-up system. The parents have access to all information about the student on this system. In addition, it was seen that there was also a separate information system through which parents were given student reports every week.

III. Theme: Volunteering. The data collected within the scope of volunteering theme in the study were categorized as “financial matters” or “intangible matters.” What is meant with “financial matters” is direct financial support provided to the school or providing movable/immovable goods to the school. For instance, with such “Intangible matters” as constructing buildings (T2), supplying such equipment as scanners and stationary (T8), classroom motherhood (P3, P4), monetary aid (A3), what is meant is the activities and aids carried out to generate income for the school. For example, in all of the schools within the scope of the study, parents voluntarily work in such activities as charity sales, trips and theatre productions (T2, P4T, P5T, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10). Apart from what is mentioned above, it is seen that parents organized activities to meet with other parents (such as brunch) (T9), and delivered seminars depending on their occupation (P5T).

The findings collected from the interview are supported by the documents analysed within the scope of document analysis. All of the documents related to volunteering include the aids during such activities as charity sales and contests. In particular, it was seen that 14 of the news items in three e-newspapers were about the charity sales organized. It was seen that activities during such special days as Mother’s Day and the Day of the Elderly were organized and that parents voluntarily and actively work in those activities.

VI. Theme: Learning at home. It was found that participant opinions in the study focused on how parents were encouraged about learning at home and what kind of support was provided for parents on this issue. In other words, when teachers’, administrators’ and parents’ opinions were analysed, the learning at home theme was categorized as “systematic” and “spontaneous.”

The opinions analysed under the “systematic” category are in the form of informing parents by the guidance service of the school on how they can help their

children with their homework in a planned way and within the scope of a programme. This information providing is through the daily and weekly follow-up programme (P3T), homework programmes specially prepared by the school counsellor for each student, coaching system (A3) and through the guidance provided by the school counsellor to the teachers and the parents (P4A). However, it was determined that in some schools, because there were no guidance services or because the classroom teacher had close relations with the parents through meetings, the parents were also “spontaneously” informed by the teachers (T2, P5T, T6, T7, T10, A1, A2, P1P, P4, P5). What is meant by “spontaneous” here is that teachers or school administrators hold a face-to-face meeting with the parent and inform the parent on how the child should do his/her homework in an unsystematic and unplanned manner.

During the document analysis, under this category only five documents on activities to learn at home were found on the Web pages of two schools. Some of these documents were in the form of a summer homework workbook (from 5th to 7th grade), summer homework, and how to do homework at home (guidance service document) brochures. Of these two schools, one was a private school and the other was a public school.

V. Theme: Decision making. The categories of decision making were formed as “subjects in which parents are involved in the decision-making process” and “subjects in which parents are not involved in the decision-making process.” The statements of the participants indicate that parents participate in the activities to be organized at school (charity sales, trips) (T2, A1, P1P, P3), dressing (T8, P5, P6), and basic requirements at school (monetary and physical) (A1, A3, P1P, P3, P4, P5). In addition, parents believe that due to the hierarchical structure of the Turkish Educational System, their involvement is limited to only monetary contributions. We see criticism towards this structure in the statements of P1P and P3: “*Informing parents includes only the expenses*” and “*We are only involved in decisions about financial matters,*” respectively.

Parallel to the statements of the participants, no data were found in the documents analysed on the participation of parents in the decisions made at school. Finally, participants indicated that they participated in the decision-making process mostly through parent-teacher association meetings (T6, T8, T9, T10, T11, A3, P1P, P5). There are no documents found relevant to this category.

VI. Theme: Collaboration with community. Activities that could be included within the scope of collaboration with a community theme were grouped as “systematic” and “spontaneous” as in the parenting theme. When the “systematic” category is examined, it is seen that schools organize some activities or regularly share information about the activities that other institutions organize with the students and parents. For example, in T3T’s statement: “*We always organize annual summer camps. And parents are informed about these camps*” (P3T, P4T, T7, A3, P3). However, in the “spontaneous” category, schools share information on activities with students and parents in case they are informed of these activities. An example of this category is

P4A "We inform children about all the relevant activities that the municipality, social services or youth and sports directorate organize" (P5T, T6, T8, T9, T10, A1, P1P).

Of the three e-newspapers, five announcements, 35 news and 32 activities analysed within the scope of this study, it was seen that 10 of them included information on collaborating with community. Seven of these documents were activities carried out in private schools whilst the remaining three were activities carried out in the schools where the parents are from a high socio-economic status.

Discussion and Conclusions

Within the scope of the literature and based on the opinions of teachers and administrators working at public and private schools as well as the opinions of parents whose children study at these schools, this study aimed at explaining and interpreting the involvement of parents in education based on their socio-economic status.

While Epstein indicates that activities based on the responsibilities of parents could be organized within the scope of the parenting theme, it was found that in the schools in this study, activities related to the physical and mental development of children during adolescence were organized. The reason for this could be that the school management might be willing to find solutions to concrete problems. In addition, the findings in this study differ from the findings of Erdogan and Demirkasimoglu (2010). In the mentioned study, the activities within the scope of parenting were found to be related to health, first aid and dental health. The reason for that could be that the studies were carried out based on different approaches. On the other hand, it is possible to say that in public schools, even if the socio-economic status of the family is high, school-parent interaction is not that (informal) systematic or at the desired level, particularly in terms of parenting. In public schools, particularly in schools where the socio-economic status of the parents is not high, it is necessary to explain to parents how and why they should be involved in the process of education and to offer them opportunities for parent involvement. In addition, it was found that for the parenting category to be effective at the schools, the activities organized by the guidance service at the schools have a significant role. In their study, Camadan and Sezgin (2012) stated that the guidance services at schools organized some informative seminars for parents and these events had positive results.

Regarding the communicating theme, it was found that parents meet with teachers or school administrators regularly during the semester and whenever they need to. It can be said that this finding is similar to the findings of Erdogan and Demirkasimoglu (2010) in which they found that parents came to the school frequently or at certain intervals. On the other hand, it was found that in private schools, certain activities were organized to fill communication gaps and to explain to parents the importance of parental involvement (parenting education; home visits etc.), and that there were more activities towards increasing parent involvement. With awareness raising studies on this issue, parents from a low socio-economic

status could be supported to cooperate with the school. In their studies, Derrick-Lewis (2001); Epstein (2008); Hill (2009); Kotaman (2008); Singh et al. (1995); Wirthwein; McElvany and Steinmayr (2015) especially emphasize this point.

In this study, the reasons for parents to communicate with the schools were found as evaluating student's academic success and personal development and evaluating both student's personal development and academic success. Similarly, in their study, Erdogan and Demirkasimoglu (2010) concluded that the most frequent reason for parents to contact the school and the teachers was to learn the scores of the students and their success in the course.

Findings on the volunteering theme indicate that even families from low socio-economic status participate in voluntary activities that are particularly catered to supplying the requirements of the schools. This could be interpreted as the finding that people in Turkey attach importance to the schools and that the expectation from education is high. The findings in this study comply with the findings of Erdogan and Demirkasimoglu (2010) in terms of the fact that parents most often organize and attend charity sales.

Regarding the learning at home theme, Eccles and Harold (1996) assert that parent involvement reveals itself most in this category. And indeed, in their study, Derick-Lewis (2001) found that 93,5 % of the parents control whether their child did their homework or not, and 85,5% of the parents helped their children with their homework and tests. However, Eccles and Harold (1996) state that the parent involvement under this category is mostly through the efforts of the parents. According to them, both teachers and other school staff should encourage and support parents to collaborate as much as they can. In this study, it was determined that parents are informed by the guidance service of the schools on how they can help their children with their homework in a planned way and within the scope of a programme, but because some schools did not have guidance services or classroom teachers had closer relations with the parents through meetings, parents were also informed spontaneously by the teacher. However, it is understood from the data collected that schools are inadequately stating how they can help parents prepare an environment for learning at home and on how parents can help students' learning.

As Eccles and Harold (1996) indicate, additional education programmes intended for parents will not only help parents but also will equip parents with the self-confidence they need to help with their children's homework.

It is possible to say that in both public and private schools, participation in the decision-making process theme is not at a desired level due to the fact that parents are only involved when their opinion is asked for. It is seen that although people in education consider parents' involvement important, this involvement is only limited to such issues as charity sales, trips and dressing. Epstein (1995), on the other hand, exemplifies and explains decision making as parent leadership and participation in such issues as curriculum, security and staff. This difference revealed with the participant opinions is because parent involvement is not allowed due to the centralized structure of Turkey's educational system and the fact that schools are not

autonomous. The study conducted by Erdogan and Demirkasimoglu (2010) supports this view. In their study, it was indicated that participants did not have opportunities to participate in the process of education due to the centralized structure of the educational system and that parents were mostly invited to the schools for such reasons as providing supplies. In their study, Kartal (2008) found that, based on the legislation on education, the issues that parents have a say in are limited to committee jobs related to student quotas and transfers. This result indicates the hierarchical structure that schools have.

Finally, different from what Epstein (1995) meant with collaboration with community, it was found that participants consider this theme only as being involved in the activities to be carried out during the summer holidays. However, what Epstein meant with this theme is various activities carried out for the community. This result could be considered as a Turkey-specific result. Because whilst in Erdogan and Demirkasimoglu's (2010) study, activities towards collaborating with community are considered to include "earthquake drills, health scans, training and seminar supports from universities, free literacy courses for families, examination preparation courses, aids from municipalities and social welfare institutions for poor families," it was found that such practices were very limited and that collaboration with community cannot be established. In addition, parallel to the studies conducted (Cooper et al. 2009; Lee & Bowen 2006), it was found that in schools with high socio-economic status, parent involvement in the process of education was higher.

When the findings are considered, it is understood that there are differences in parent involvement in the educational process between public and private schools. Private schools organize more activities on the themes that determine parent involvement in education. The reason behind the fact that public schools organize fewer activities for parents compared to private schools could be that teachers and school management are required to spend more time and effort to involve parents in the process. Particularly, it was found that the parents of the students in private schools could communicate with the teachers more easily compared to the parents of the students in public schools. The reason behind this could be that in addition to the financial support from the government, parents in private schools pay for the educational activities these schools provide.

In order to increase parent involvement in education, the guidance services at schools should be used more functionally. For example, needs analysis towards determining the needs of the parents and the students in their school life should be made, and based on the results of the analysis, programmes to support parent involvement in education should be prepared. It is observed that there are deficiencies in the involvement of parents with socio-economic disadvantages in the process of education. It is believed that informative meetings to be organized for the parents of the students coming from such families should contribute to their involvement in education. In these meetings, parents should be informed of the importance of family in academic success with examples. In addition, to ensure more parental involvement in the decision-making process, school management should

encourage participation and carry out studies towards making decisions together with families.

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Sosyo-Ekonomik Durumları Bakımından Ailelerin Eğitime Katılımı

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Özet

Problem Durumu: Ailelerin eğitime katılımı, eğitimin niteliğini arttırmaya yönelik etkenler arasında en önemlilerinden biri olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Yapılan çalışmalarda aile katılımının çocuğun öğrenmesini ve akademik başarısını arttırdığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Türkiye’de 1739 sayılı Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu’nun 16. maddesi ile okul aile işbirliğinin hayata geçirilmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Diğer bir ifadeyle ailelerin eğitim sürecine katılımı yasal olarak da desteklenmektedir. Aile katılımı, ailelerin desteklenmesi, eğitilmesi ve eğitime katılımlarının sağlanması; çocukların eğitsel ve akademik deneyimlerinin artırılması, evleri ile eğitim kurumları arasındaki iletişimin kurulması ve sürdürülmesi yoluyla geliştirilmesi yanında, eğitim programlarının ailelerin katılım ve katkıları ile zenginleştirilmesi gibi uygulamaları kapsayan sistematik bir yaklaşımdır. Bu katılımı etkileyen etkenlerden biri de ailelerin sosyo-ekonomik düzeyleridir. Yapılan çeşitli çalışmalarda ailelerin sosyo-ekonomik düzeyleri öğrencilerin okula kaydolmasını, katılımını, akademik başarısını etkilediği sonuçlarına ulaşılmıştır. Günümüzde ailenin eğitime katılımı konusunda pek çok araştırması bulunan ve önemli bir isim haline gelmiş Epstein aile katılımı konusunda “ebeveynlik”, “iletişim”, “gönüllülük”, “evde öğrenme”, “karar alma”, “toplumla işbirliği” olmak üzere 6 tema sunmaktadır. “Ebeveynlik”, ailenin öğrencinin okul başarısını teşvik etmek için sıcak ev ortamı oluşturmasında, öğrencinin öğrenim seviyesi ve yaşına uygun sağlık, beslenme ve eğitim gibi ailenin yükümlülükleri arasında bulunan konularda aileye yardımcı olmaya yönelik etkinlikleri kapsamaktadır. “İletişim”, ev ve okul arasında, okul programı ve çocuğun gelişimi hakkında bilgi akışına olanak tanıyan bir iletişimdir. Buna göre öğretmen ve yöneticiler velilere öğrencilerin okuldaki gelişimleri hakkında sistemli biçimde bilgi sunmalıdır. Okulda düzenli yapılan toplantılar, evlere formların yollanması, internet ya da telefon yoluyla velilerin bilgilendirilmesi bu etkinlikler

içerisinde sayılabilir. “Gönüllülük” ailelerin okuldaki veya sınıftaki etkinliklere destek ve yardımcı olmaları için organize olmaları ve istihdam edilmeleri olarak tanımlanabilir. “Evde öğrenme” velilerin öğrencilerin ödevlerine, ders etkinliklerine, planlarına evde nasıl yardım edeceği konusunda ailelere bilgi verilmesi, seminerler, konferanslar hazırlanması, okulda aile okuma etkinliklerinin düzenlenmesidir. “Karar alma” yönetici ve öğretmenlerin, velilerin okulda alınan kararlara en üst seviyede katılmasını sağlamaları şeklinde tanımlanabilir. Bunun için okulda alınan kararlara aileyi katmak, okulda velinin temsilci ve lider olmasını geliştirmek yönetimin ve öğretmenin görevidir. “Toplumla İşbirliği” bu kategori okul programlarının toplumun yardımı ile güçlendirilmesine ve toplumun sağlığı ve kültürünün güçlendirilmesine yönelik bilgilerin öğrencilere aktarılmasına işaret etmektedir. Bunun gerçekleşmesi için öğrenciler, veliler ve okul yönetimiyle birlikte topluma hizmet (örneğin geri dönüşüm, resim, müzik, drama, gibi etkinlikler) etkinlikleri yapabilirler. Ayrıca mezunların işbirliği ile etkinlikler yapılması da bu tema kapsamında yapılabilecekler arasında sayılmaktadır.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Ailenin katılımının anlamı ve önemi konusu bu çalışmanın hareket noktasını oluşturmakla birlikte, ailelerin sosyo-ekonomik durumları bakımından okullardaki eğitim faaliyetlerine katılımlarının düzeyinin saptanması bu çalışmanın temel amacıdır. Devlet okullarıyla özel okullar arasında ailenin eğitim sürecine katılımı arasında fark olup olmadığı da araştırılan konulardan biridir. Buna göre, araştırmanın amacı, kamu ve özel ilköğretim ve ortaokullarda ailelerin sosyo-ekonomik durumları bakımından eğitim sürecine katılımlarına ilişkin yönetici, öğretmen ve veli görüşlerinin neler olduğunun incelenmesidir. Bu genel amaç doğrultusunda şu soruya yanıt aranmıştır: Öğretmen, yönetici ve veli görüşlerine göre kamu okullarında ve özel okullarda ailenin eğitim sürecine katılımları ebeveynlik, iletişim, gönüllülük, evde öğrenme, karar alma, toplumla işbirliği temalarında nasıldır?

Araştırmanın Yöntemi. Araştırmada kullanılan veri toplama teknikleri doküman incelemesi ve görüşme yöntemidir. Çalışmada “sosyo-ekonomik durumları bakımından ailelerin eğitim sürecine katılımı” durumu, görüşme ve doküman incelemesi alt birimlerine ulaşılarak incelenmiştir. Araştırmada kullanılan e-gazeteler, forumlar, internet sitesinde yayımlanan haberler ve duyurular doküman niteliği taşımaktadır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunun, Muğla Menteşe ilçesinden seçilen toplam 7 kamu ilköğretim ve ortaokulunda görev yapan 7 öğretmen, 3 yönetici ve bu okullarda çocukları öğrenim gören 6 veli ve Muğla İli sınırları içinde bulunan 2 özel ilköğretim ve ortaokulda görev yapan 4 öğretmen, 1 yönetici ve bu okullarda çocukları öğrenim gören 3 veliden oluşmaktadır. Araştırmada çalışma grubu, amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden maksimum çeşitlilik örnekleme ile belirlenmiştir. Araştırmada elde edilen verilerinin çözümlenmesinde NVivo8 paket programı kullanılmış ve betimsel analiz tekniğinden yararlanılmıştır.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Bulgular, betimsel analiz yaklaşımı ile sunulmuştur. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre farklı sosyo-ekonomik yapıdan gelen velilerin eğitim sürecine katılımı konusunda farklı görüşleri olmadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bununla birlikte kamu okullarında ailelerin sosyo-ekonomik düzeyi yüksek olsa bile, okul aile

etkileşimi, özellikle ebeveynlik konusundaki eğitimlerin çok sistemli olmaması nedeniyle, istenilen düzeyde değildir. Velilerin okulla iletişim kurma nedenleri, öğrencinin akademik başarısını ve öğrencinin kişisel gelişimi değerlendirmek olarak belirlenmiştir. Hem kamu okullarında hem de özel okullarda, ailelerin kararlara katılımı ailelere sadece fikirlerinin sorulması şeklinde gerçekleştiği saptanmıştır. Özellikle sosyo-ekonomik durumu iyi olan velilerin eğitim sürecine katılım konusunda istekli ve aktif olduğu sonuçlarına ulaşılmıştır.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Öneriler: Özel okullar, ailelerin eğitim sürecine katılımlarını belirleyen temalar ile ilgili daha fazla etkinlik yapmaktadırlar. Özellikle özel okulda eğitim alan çocukların velilerinin kamu okullarında eğitim alan çocukların velilerine kıyasla öğretmenleri ile daha kolay iletişime geçtikleri belirlenmiştir. Ailelerin eğitim sürecine katılımını arttırmak için okullarda bulunan rehberlik servislerinin daha işlevsel olarak kullanılması gerekmektedir. Örneğin aile ve öğrencilerin okul yaşantılarına ilişkin ihtiyaçlarını saptayıcı analizler yapılmalı, analiz sonuçlarına göre de özellikle ailelerin eğitim sürecine katılmalarını destekleyen programlar düzenlenmelidir. Sosyo-ekonomik açıdan dezavantajlı olan ailelerin eğitim sürecine katılımlarında eksiklikler olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Bu ailelerden gelen öğrencilerin ailelerine eğitim sürecine katılım konusunda okul yönetiminin düzenleyeceği bilgilendirme toplantılarının ailelerin eğitim sürecine katılmaları konusunda katkı getireceği düşünülmektedir. Özellikle bu toplantılarda öğrencinin akademik başarısında ailenin önemi örneklerle açıklanarak anlatılmalıdır. Ayrıca, ailelerin kararlara katılımının daha fazla olabilmesi için okul yönetiminin katılımcılığı desteklemesi ve kararların veliler ile birlikte alınması için çalışmalar yapması gerekmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: aile-okul ilişkileri, akademik başarı, düşük gelir, sosyo ekonomik düzey.