

Study upon the postgraduate dissertations, the subject of which are family involvement in pre-school education in Turkey

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Suggested Citation:

Celik, N. D. & Birand, A. (2018). Study upon the postgraduate dissertations, the subject of which are family involvement in pre-school education in Turkey. *Global Journal of Guidance and Counseling in Schools: Current Perspectives*, 8(3), 149-156.

Received from March 28, 2018; revised from August 11, 2018; accepted from November 2, 2018.

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Kobus Maree, University of Pretoria South Africa.

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Abstract

Planning and implementation of services which shall make the family a part of the process in the construction of pre-school education services which were provided during early childhood that is one of the most critical periods of life are highly important in terms of child's healthy development. Within this frame, study upon the dissertations about family involvement and family education in pre-school has become necessary. For this purpose, "family involvement" and "family education" indexes in the departments of Pre-school Education, Pre-School Teaching, Child Development and Education; and Primary School which have been carried out in the Institute of Educational Sciences and Institute of Social Sciences at Council of Higher Education Dissertation Centre have been scanned. As a result of this scan, 47 postgraduate dissertations have been found out. These dissertations have been analysed by content analysis. This content analysis has been carried out according to specific criteria. These criteria include the year in which the dissertation was made; the level, paradigm, research design, target group, group size, data collection tools and the subject of the dissertation. The data obtained from the dissertations which were examined with content analysis were analysed. 38 of these dissertations are postgraduate dissertations and 9 of them are doctoral dissertations. One of the remarkable findings of the research is that the percentage of the dissertations upon "investigation of the opinions". The findings of the research have been discussed within the frame of literature and recommendations have been made for pre-school teachers.

Keywords: Family involvement, family education, pre-school education, content analysis.

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1. Introduction

Education of the children is one of the important subjects throughout the history. Education is not a process which is only realized at school (Argon & Kiyıcı, 2012). The child obtains his/her first education in the family and families are the first educators of their children (Arabacı & Aksoy, 2005). Providing the services which shall make the family a part of education process in the configuration of the education that is given during early childhood period is important for the development of the child (Gürşimşek, Konuk, & Onur, 2010). Family is important for each field of the child and little children are integrally depended on their families (Arabacı & Aksoy, 2005). Thus, when the children start pre-school education, the bond between the child and family must be continued. Partnership between family and school is effective in the development of positive behaviors such as motivation and increasing the success of student and self-confidence as well as helps the students to develop positive attitudes towards school and teacher (Argon & Kiyıcı, 2012).

Children begin to receive their first education in the family, but formal and systematic learning begins in school. Family involvement effects child's social development, language development, self-respect and academic achievement in preschool education. This involvement can positively affect the child's education life in the future. Therefore, good communication between the family and the school is essential. Teachers should also include activities in which they can provide family involvement in their weekly or monthly plans. These activities help the family and the child spend quality time as well as provide strong communication and cooperation between the teacher and family (Kurtulmuş, 2016).

The family has an important position until the child starts school. The information the children learn at home can closely affect their education at school. Therefore, teachers need to maintain the connection between the school and the family. Supporting parents is the primary task of the school. The motivation of the child increases with the involvement of parents in the school activities. In addition, it is one of the duties of the school to explain with trainings to parents that why family involvement is so important (Neslitürk, Çakmak & Asar, 2014).

With the healthy communication, family can know their children with every aspect. In this regard, schools also provide the opportunity to family to know their child's many developmental aspects closely. When school-family cooperation is considered, the family has a passive structure. The healthy communication between the family and the school is ensured by the delivery of legal and managerial responsibilities while the families show the necessary importance and fulfilled. For healthy education, it is suggested in many studies that families need to be educated before child (Ozbaş, 2013).

Three important elements of education can be listed as family-teacher-students. The cooperation of these three elements affects the success of the student. With the cooperation of the school and the family, it affects the psychological and educational development of the child and a this could be efficient as a result of the joint work. Therefore, encouraging parents to cooperate with the teacher should be one of the primary responsibilities of the school. As day pass, the importance of the family in education is recognized and for this purpose, motivating the parents in the education process, taking an active role in education and directing them are among the primary task of the school and teachers (Bacanlı & Kaya, 2016).

It is seen that the responsibility of the family is also affected when children take a student identity outside their own identity with the beginning of the school years. In addition to the role of parents, the role of being a guardian is added. In order to raise healthy and happy children, the family and the teacher should be in cooperation. That is why the necessity of being part of the family education is emphasized more and more every day (Biber & Ural, 2016).

All families want that their children to enjoy the school and to be successful (Arabacı & Aksoy, 2005). Family and community partnership is seen as the involvement of the child to the education and as the determinant of the child's academic success in his/her future life (Qureshi & Nair, 2015). When the researches are examined, it is seen that the success of the child in the class increases and it affects

the school life of the child in the period when the family is a part of the education. The families who take part in the education can get information about their children and have the opportunity to get to know their children in the social environment. In this way, families start to feel confident. In particular, families have the opportunity to meet each other and have the opportunity to share their problems and experiences with the family and exchange information with the family. The teacher has the opportunity to learn more about the needs of the child and the family and can also change the program when necessary Bayraktar, Güven & Temel, 2016).

Family involvement is a communication and cooperation process between families and Professional educationalists which is established for supporting the development and education of the child (Gürşimşek, 2010). It is seen that with the participation of the families to family involvement activities, families' belief upon the fact that knowledge and skills of the families about raising a child have increased and their positive contribution to the development of the child has also increased as they know their child well has developed (Gürşimşek, 2010). The family has the opportunity to see the strengths and weaknesses of their children and share this knowledge with the teacher during the period they participate in the training. The teacher's responsibility is to plan activities that will actively involve the family in education (Konokman & Yokuş, 2016).

It also contributes to the finding of solutions to the disciplinary problems in the schools with the involvement of the family in education. While disciplinary problems are minimized with family involvement, it helps development of social skills. As a part of the family education, it is of great benefit to solve the problems of adaptation and behavior in the school as well as prevent these problems from occurring. Teachers who care about family involvement also have more activities related to parental involvement. Through these activities, the teacher acquires the socioeconomic and sociocultural knowledge related to the parent and has the opportunity to support their education according to these conditions (Lindberg, 2017).

Father involvement affects the child in a positive way and also the mother. When the father involves, the mother's quality of parenthood increases. In addition to these studies, while father's involvement contributes positively in the development of the child and behavior problems and in many fields and it is suggested that this contribution continues in child's future. The positive effects of father involvement on the child are not only in the social emotional field but also in their academic life as well as their physical, cognitive development (Uludağlı, 2017).

Involvement of families whose child is in pre-school period in school activities is related to the child's readiness and adaptation to primary school education (Mendez, 2010). It was determined in the researches that family involvement during education period of the children positively affects the child's academic success and showing social-emotional competence in school environment (Fantuzzo et al., 2013). The history of researches which emphasize the importance of family in education process goes back more than 40 years in USA (Fantuzzo et al., 2013). Since 1960 when fight against poverty started, family involvement in education process has been an important part of national programs whose goal is to support children from low income levels (Fantuzzo et al., 2013). There are studies upon family involvement in pre-school education in Turkey, too. But, researches upon family involvement have been carried out for 15 years. Investigation of the studies upon the effect of family which is so important in terms of child education is significant for determining the tendencies in this field. Therefore, in this study investigation of postgraduate dissertations upon family Education and family Involvement in Pre-school teaching in Turkey is aimed.

2. Method

Content analysis which is one of the qualitative research methods was used in this research. Dissertations upon family involvement and family education in pre-school which are kept in the Council of Higher Education's Dissertation Centre were investigated.

2.1. Sample

'Family involvement' and 'family education' index were scanned in the Departments of Pre-school Education, Pre-school Teaching, Child Development and Education, Primary School at the Institute of Educational Sciences and Institute of Social Sciences in Dissertations Centre of the Council of Higher Education. As a result of this scan, a total of 35 dissertations were founded.

2.2. Data analysis

Content analysis of these 35 dissertations was made according to specific criteria. These criteria are the year in which dissertation was made, the level, model, target group, data collection tools and subject of the dissertation. Numeric data obtained from dissertations which were investigated with content analysis are provided as table and graphics.

3. Findings

Numeric distribution of the investigated dissertations according to the years is provided in Figure 1. According to this, it is seen that dissertations whose subject is family involvement and family education were mostly made in years 2010, 2011 and 2012.

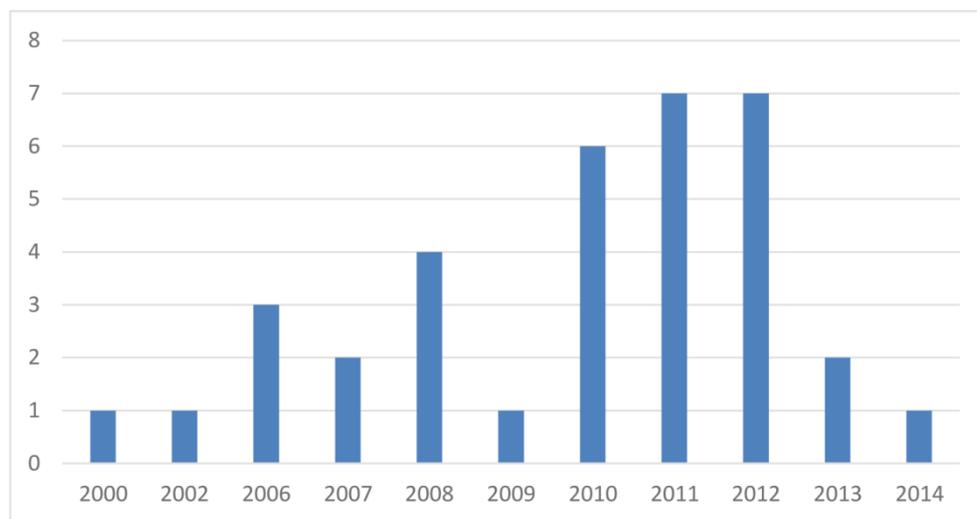


Figure 1. Distribution of postgraduate dissertations upon family involvement and education according to years

Information upon the postgraduate level of investigated dissertations is provided in Figure 2. According to this, 27 of those dissertations upon family involvement and education are master dissertations and 8 of them are doctorate dissertations.

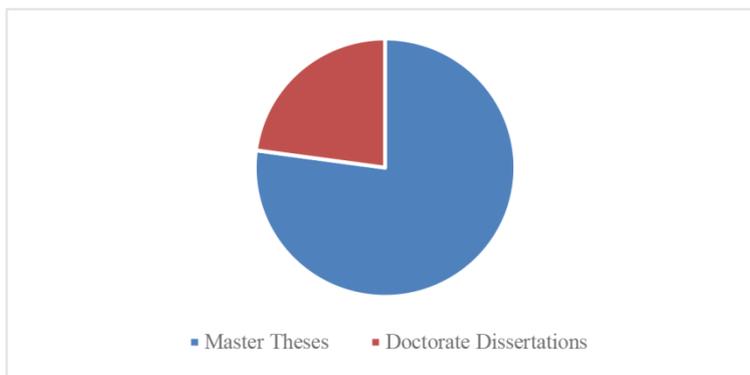


Figure 2. Distribution of the dissertations according to postgraduate level

Paradigms and research models of the investigated thesis are provided in Table 1. According to this, it is seen that quantitative paradigm is preferred more upon family involvement and education subject.

Table 1. Base research paradigms

Paradigm	Number of dissertations
Quantitative dissertations	24
Descriptive model	13
Experimental model	11
Qualitative dissertations	7
Interview	6
Observations	1
Mixed (quantitative + qualitative) dissertations	4
Descriptive-interview	3
Experimental-interview	1

Target groups of investigated dissertations are provided in Table 2. According to this, it is seen that most part of the dissertations were realised with mothers and fathers.

Table 2. Target group of the dissertations

Target group	Number of dissertations
Teacher	13
Child	9
Mother	7
Father	7
Family	20
Family and teacher	12

When the dissertations are investigated, it is seen that different measurement tools were used. Measurement tools used in dissertations except Personal Information Form are provided in Table 3. Family Involvement Scale, which is one of them, was used in six dissertations. Social Skills Evaluation Scale was used twice and the other measurement tools were used once.

Table 3. Scales used in dissertations

Measurement tools	Number of dissertations
Family Involvement Scale	13
Pre-School Social Skills Rating Scale	2

Evaluation Scale for School Readiness of Student	1
Self-regulation Skill Scale	1
Emotional Intelligence Scale	1
Hamel's Mother Attitude Test	1
Parental Modernity Scale	1
Father involvement Scale	1
The Spouse Support Scale	1
Portage Assessment Scale	1
Scale of Parents/Teachers Perception of Diverse Cultures	1
Parental Attitude Research Instrument	1
The Parenting Style Inventory	1
Fatherhood Role Scale	1
Family Assessment Scale	1
Ankara Developmental Screening Inventory	1
Child Parent Relationship Scale	1
Marmara Primary School Readiness Scale	1
Raven Progressive Matrix Test	1
Denver II Developmental Screening	1
Academic Self-Esteem Scale	1

Subjects of the dissertations which were investigated about family involvement and education are provided in Table 4. According to this, it is seen that mostly family opinions were studied upon in these tests.

Table 4. Subject of the dissertations

Subject of the research	Number of dissertations
Readiness to primary school	3
Family opinions	13
Child raising attitudes	3
Home visits	1
Mother–father–child communication	1
Portage early education program	1
Cultural point of view	1
Family concept	1
Emotional and social skills	1
Attitudes of pre-school teachers	2
Father involvement	3
Expectations of parents from pre-school institutions	2
Thoughts of parents upon music education	1
Abuse	1

4. Discussion and Conclusion

As a result of investigation of researches which were carried out between the years 2000-2017 upon family involvement and education, it was determined that 47 postgraduate dissertations were made in total during these years and 38 of them are post graduate dissertations and 9 of them are doctorate dissertations. It was determined that the themes such as readiness to primary education, social and emotional development in child, importance and benefits of family involvement, communication, father involvement, child abuse and family education were included and that opinions of teachers and parents were investigated upon above mentioned subjects and also there were scale adaptation studies in the researches. It was specified that mostly quantitative method was used in the dissertations and most of the dissertations were made between the years 2011- 2012. When the distribution of the dissertations according to their themes, there were more studies upon

the benefit and importance of family involvement and father involvement studies were not sufficient. Also, more studies are needed in the fields of family involvement and child development.

Family involvement gains importance for making the education more beneficial, effective and successful (Ekinci-Vural, 2012). Family involvement starts with including the family into the studies carried out at school (Ozcan, 2012). Involving the family in education starts the communication among teacher, father-mother and child. From the moment family is involved in education, families shall be informed upon their child's development and their child's features which they don't know before; and also family and teacher shall have the opportunity to know each other well (Ekinci-Vural, 2012). Besides, family involvement helps teachers to exchange information with mothers- fathers, to provide support to the parents in terms of social- emotional aspects, to strengthen the bound between family and child and to inform the family about how they will support the child at home environment (Ekinci-Vural, 2012).

As a result, it is thought that dissertations upon family involvement and education are not sufficient. It is a fact that dissertations upon this field shall be beneficial for educationalists, mothers-fathers and researchers. It can be recommended that other techniques such as observation, interview except quantitative methods may be used in the studies upon this subject and descriptive studies may be included in them, too. Also, researchers may be directed to father involvement subject as there are a few studies upon this subject. In service trainings can be provided to teachers upon family involvement. Seminars upon the importance and benefit of family involvement on child can be provided to the families and educational institutions can plan activities about his subject.

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