

An Evaluation of the Interviews between Teachers and Parents about School and Family Cooperation in Preschool Education Institutions

Okul Öncesi Eğitim Kurumlarındaki Okul Aile İşbirliği Hakkında Öğretmenler ve Ailelerin Görüşlerinin Değerlendirilmesi

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Abstract

The primary aim of this study is to determine teachers and parents' views about school-family cooperation at the first level of early childhood education. To this end, 180 parents and 35 teachers from 9 early childhood education schools in Çanakkale city centre were included in the study. Questionnaires, designed especially for this study were used for data collection. The reliability (The Cronbach's Alpha) of the questionnaire was 0.82 and 0.76 for teachers and parents respectively. Data were analyzed by means of a frequency and percentage analysis. As a result, it has been indicated that teacher-parent meetings are carried out accordingly.

Keywords: Preschool education, School-family relationship, School-family Corporation

Öz

Bu araştırmanın temel amacı, okul öncesi eğitimde, okul-aile işbirliği hakkında aile ve ailelerin görüşlerini belirlemektir. Araştırmaya, Çanakkale merkezde bulunan ve 9 okul öncesi eğitim kurumunda görev yapan 35 öğretmen ile 180 ebeveyn alınmıştır. Verileri toplamak amacıyla, özellikle bu çalışma için bir anket formu geliştirilmiştir. Geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışması yapılan anketin Cronbach Alpha'sı öğretmen anketi için 0.82 ,ebeveyn anketi için de 0.76 olarak bulunmuştur. Veriler analiz edilmiş, frekans ve yüzdeleri dikkate alınarak yorumlanmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda, okul-aile toplantılarının düzenli olarak yapıldığı belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Okul öncesi eğitim, okul-aile ilişkisi, okul-aile işbirliği.

Introduction

Preschool education is a vital process which affects the child's future. Academic research findings and practices in modern education reveal that it is necessary to start education in early ages in order to have healthy and qualified generations. With an increase in the importance of child education, people have become conscious about home schooling for children (Seçkin & Koç, 1997, p.5).

The communication between family and school is an essential part of early childhood

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education centres. Research conducted on this subject reveals that high level of communication between family and school influences children's success positively and helps the school curriculum to be more efficient. According to researchers, a good communication is a necessary precondition in child nursing and education. Moreover, a high-class communication between school and family assists children to develop better relationship with their peers and educators as well. Researchers claim that it is an opportunity for the families to involve in education programs in order to support their children's improvement and to understand the programs developed for preschool education. Furthermore, there is a progress in children's academic improvement especially in their language learning. Once there is cooperation between families and educators, families learn about modern teaching approaches as well as traditional teaching approaches. Thus, children's level of learning and success gets higher (Hughes & Macnaughton, 2001).

Nowadays the cooperation between school and family in early childhood education is frequently talked about, and related studies have revealed that the main problem is the lack of communication. Particularly in preschool education programs, family has an indispensable importance and it is necessary to have a family cooperation in order to improve the quality of education. While talking about School-Family Cooperation, the cooperation within each side is mentioned. It is known that the problems related to School family cooperation differ from country to country. When the related studies in Turkey are examined, it is seen that the topic of School-Family cooperation has mostly been discussed in theory. In addition, this topic is rarely mentioned in the studies about preschool education. The studies about this topic are mostly related to primary school education. Similar studies in different countries as in Greece (Laloumi, Vidali, 1997), Australia (Ebbeck & Glover, 1998), England (Moore & Klass, 1995), and The USA (Rescorla, 1991) have revealed that the problems are all different from each other. For example, the Greek sample indicates that teachers and other school staff believe that their education about school and family cooperation is not sufficient (Laloumi, Vidali, 1997).

School-Family Cooperation in preschool education in Australia is a precondition issued by the Ministry, which is responsible for early childhood education. Family's contribution to an educational program is very essential to the ministry. Australian government's program of Quality Improvement and Accreditation Scheme (QIAS) requires families to have a constant cooperation with schools, join educational programs, even prepare their own educational program, and apply it. Nevertheless, the cooperation of families with schools is organized by teachers (Hughes & Macnaughton, 2001).

There are some approaches to set up school-family cooperation in preschool education institutions in Turkey. Teachers should pay attention to welcoming and greeting the families while they are leaving their children at school in the morning and taking them back in the evening (Yılmaz, 1999, p. 185). Parents' meetings are important in terms of providing a bridge between families and school, having closer relationship with families, being aware of the complaints and their solutions (Eryorulmaz, 1993, p.93). These meetings provide an opportunity for both families and school staff to learn about the expectations of the both sides and try to discuss these expectations in a period. Additionally, these meetings can be held regularly to improve the quality of preschool education. In the first meeting, generally, the education facilities of that year are planned and responsibilities of the school staff, administrators, teachers, and parents are highlighted. For the following meetings, these facilities are evaluated (Yılmaz 1999, p.185). Parents' meetings should be held at least two times within an academic term (MEB, 2002, p.21). Parents' meetings should be considered in three phases as "General Parents' Meetings", "Class Parents' Meetings," and "Individual Interviews" (MEB; 2003, p.2).

In the Individual Interviews, the talks should be started with the successful areas of the child and then the weak areas of the child are expressed. Next, the things that can be done at

home, at school can be discussed in order to strengthen the weak points of the child, and families are required to join these planning and practice phases (MEB; 2002, p.21).

Parents who have disabled children and those divorced parents, single parents etc. should be supported and consoled. They ought to be informed how to guide their children. Meetings only with fathers can be done in order to involve them in their children's education (Aral, Kandır & Can Yaşar, 2002, p.174).

Besides, approaches such as briefings (Aral, Kandır & Can Yaşar, 2002, p.174), semester-end reports and (Dikmen, 1991, p.56), bulletins can be used to inform parents.

Objectives of the Study

The basic aim of the study was to evaluate the interviews between teachers and parents about school and family cooperation in preschool education institutions. In this sense, the researchers tried to answer the following questions.

1. What are teachers' opinions on "Teachers-Parents Interviews" concerning the school-family cooperation?
2. What are teachers' opinions on "Parents Meetings" concerning the school-family cooperation?
3. What are teachers' opinions on "School-Family Union" concerning the school-family cooperation?
4. What are teachers' opinions on "Teachers-Parents Interviews" concerning the school-family cooperation?
5. What are teachers' opinions on "Parents Meetings" concerning the school-family cooperation?
6. What are teachers' opinions on "School-Family Union" concerning the school-family cooperation?

Limitations of the Study

This study,

- was limited to the preschool institutions in Çanakkale city centre in 2007-2008 academic year,
- was limited to the 35 teachers working in the preschool institutions in Çanakkale city centre and 180 parents of the students studying in these schools in 2007-2008 academic year,
- was limited to the inventory including 18 statements for both parents and teachers prepared to find out parents and teachers' opinions about the school-family cooperation in preschool education institutions.

Methodology

Setting: The setting of the study was preschool institutions in Çanakkale.

Participants: The inventory was administered to the 35 teachers of 9 preschool institutions in Çanakkale City Centre and to 180 randomly selected parents of the students studying in these schools.

Table 1.
Qualities of the Teachers and Parents

TEACHERS		f	%	PARENTS		f	%	
Sex	Female	34	97.1	Sex of the parent filled the inventory	Female	105	58.3	
	Male	1	2.9		Male	75	41.7	
	Total	35	100.0		Total	180	100.0	
Age	22-26	9	25.7	Salary	Lower than 450 TL	8	4.4	
	27-31	9	25.7		Between 450-1000 TL	50	27.8	
	32-36	4	11.4		Between 1000-1500 TL	52	28.9	
	37-42	5	14.3		Between 1500-2000 TL	45	25.0	
	Over 42	8	22.9		Higher than 2000 TL	25	13.9	
	Total	35	100.0		Total	180	100.0	
Length of service in his/her job	1-5 years	7	20.0	Education Status	Illiterate	6	3.3	
	6-10 years	9	25.7		Primary School	43	23.9	
	11-15 years	8	22.9		Secondary School	14	7.8	
	16-20 years	1	2.9		High School	64	35.6	
	Over 21 years	10	28.6		University	53	29.4	
	Total	35	100.0		Total	180	100.0	
Status of your school	Dependent on Social Security Board	12	34.3	Number of the children that you have	1 Child	72	40.0	
	Dependent on Ministry of education (Private)				2	5.7	2 Children	94
	Dependent on Ministry of education (State)	21	60.0		3 Children	14	7.8	
	Total	35	100.0		4 Children	-	-	
	Number of the student in your class	10-20 students	16		45.7	Total	180	100.0
		20-30 students	18		51.4			
30-40 students		1	2.9					
Total		35	100.0					
The age of the students in your class	3 years	3	8.6					
	4 years	4	11.4					
	5 years	8	22.9					
	6 years	20	57.1					
	Total	35	100.0					

Collection of the Data

The data were collected by means of the survey technique developed by Genç (2005). The questionnaire for teachers consisted of two sections. The first section comprised of demographic questions including their gender, age, teaching careers, school structures, class sizes, and information about their students. The second section consisted of statements about school-family cooperation, which were designed to get teachers' opinions about the topic. The questionnaire for parents also consisted of two sections. The first section comprised of demographic information of the parents including their gender, monthly income, education status, the number of children that they have. The second section of the parents' questionnaire again consisted of statements about school-family cooperation, which were designed to get parents' opinions about the topic. The content validity of the questionnaires was checked by discussing the statements with experts in the field, the questionnaires were also applied to 20 parents, and 20 teachers and necessary corrections were made according to the recommendations of the experts and the results of the implementation. For the reliability of the questionnaire, internal consistency reliability was checked by means of the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient which was found to be .82 for the teachers' questionnaire and .76 for the parents' questionnaire.

Analysis of the Data

The obtained data were analysed by using the SPSS program. In this process, the results about each subtopic related with the opinions of the teachers and parents about the cooperation of the school and families were given with their frequencies (f) and percentages (%) in the tables and necessary comments were done.

Findings and Discussion

The obtained data were shown in tables into six categories.

Table 2.

Opinions of the Teachers on "Teachers-Parents Interviews" About the School-Family Cooperation

		f	%
Do the parents come to school in order to meet you about their children?	Yes	35	100.0
	No	-	-
	Total	35	100.0
If your answer is YES, how often do they come?	Frequently(3 or 2 times in month)	12	34.3
	Sometimes (3 or 2 times in year)	23	65.7
	Never	-	-
	Total	35	100.0
	Me (Teacher)	16	45.7
Who wants to have a meeting?	Students' parents	18	51.4
	School Director	1	2.9
	Total	35	100.0
		f	%
What kind of students' parents asks for a private meeting?	Parents addicted to their child	5	14.3
	Parents whose child has adaptability problems	11	31.4
	Parents whose child adapts school	2	5.7
	Parents whose child has social and psychological problems	5	14.3
	Parents whose child has discipline problems	9	25.7
	Parents whose child has developmental problems	3	8.6
	Total	35	100.0
		f	%
Under which circumstances do you invite parents for a meeting?	When the student is reluctant to join the activities	7	20.0
	When the student has discipline problems	9	25.7
	When the student has problems with his friends	5	14.3
	When the student has problems in psycho-motor skills	2	5.7
	When the student has physical problems	-	-
	When the student has aggressive behaviours	6	17.1
	When the student has communication problems	6	17.1
	Total	35	100.0

In table II, findings of the teachers' inventory are given depending on the "teachers-parents interviews". When the table is analysed, it can be seen that all parents (100%) visited the school to have meetings with teachers about their children, however, the frequency of these visits was 65.7 %, and the percentage of the meeting demand from parents was 51.4 % whereas the percentage of the meeting demand from teachers was 45.7 %. It was striking to find out that the meeting demand was mostly asked by parents. When the parents' visits in relation to their children were examined, the most frequent visitors were the ones whose children had adaptability problems (31.4%), then the ones whose children had discipline problems (25.7%), next the parents who were addicted to their children (14.3%), and the rest were the parents of the children who had problems with their friends. When the teachers' invitations were analysed, it was noticed that mostly the invited parents were the ones whose children were reluctant to join the activities

(32.5%); then, the parents whose children had discipline problems (25.7%), next the parents whose children displayed aggressive behaviours (17.1%), lastly the parents whose children had communication problems (17.1%).

The study that was carried out in Greece demonstrated that teachers had different opinions about the needs of parents in assisting their children and this was seen as one of the conflicts with families (Laloumi Vidali, 1997).

Table 3.

Opinions of the Teachers on "Parents Meetings" about the School-Family Cooperation

		f	%
Do you plan the topics for the parents meetings beforehand?	Yes	31	88.6
	No	4	11.5
	Total	35	100.0
How many parents meetings were done in your school within this academic year?	None	5	14.3
	Only once	7	20.0
	Twice	14	40.0
	Three times	7	20.0
How many of the parents attended the meetings this year?	Four times and over	2	5.7
	Total	35	100.0
	Few of them	7	20.0
	Half of them	23	65.7
Who attended the parents meetings?	More than half	5	14.3
	All of them	-	-
	Total	35	100.0
	Mothers	27	77.1
What are the favourite topics that the parents want to learn about their children?	Fathers	4	11.4
	Mothers and Father together	4	11.4
	Brothers - Sisters	-	-
	Grandmothers - Grandfathers	-	-
	Total	35	100.0
What do you want to learn about your students from their parents in the parents meetings?	Their speaking-listening-comprehension-expressing attitudes	1	2.9
	Their general performance	28	80.0
	Their relationship with their classmates	5	14.3
	To join the game activities or not	-	-
	Attitudes towards their teachers	-	-
	Practice of psycho-motor skills	1	2.9
What are the positive effects of the parents meetings on students?	Total	35	100.0
	Practice of self-nursing skills	5	14.3
	Students' developmental features	10	28.6
	Friend relationship	1	2.9
	Opportunities at home (Room-Book-Toy, etc)	8	22.9
	Is his physical hunger satisfied by himself or by his/her family?	3	8.6
What are the positive effects of the parents meetings on students?	Does he spend time on creative skills at home?	1	2.9
	Does he play games at home or not?	1	2.9
	His relationship with the family members	6	17.1
	Total	35	100.0
	Improves his Listening- Comprehension - Speaking	9	25.7
	Tidy up his room and toys	2	5.7
What are the positive effects of the parents meetings on students?	Eat his meals by himself and move freely	4	11.4
	Have good relationship with the guest children	7	20.0
	To be cooperative and to join groups	10	28.6
	Express himself freely	2	5.7
	Nothing has changed	1	2.9
	Total	35	100.0

When the opinions of the teachers on "Parents Meetings" about the school-family cooperation were examined, it appeared that 88.6 % of the teachers planned their meeting topics before the parents' meeting. On the other hand, as for the number of the parents' meetings held within an academic year, 40% of the teachers claimed that they had twice, 20% of them asserted that they held only one meeting and another 20% reported that they had three parents' meetings. It is salient that most of the parents participated in the meetings; and 77.1 % of the participant parents were mothers, and more than half of them (65.7%) agreed with the opinions that the teachers expressed during the meeting.

An analysis of the results of the question about parents and teachers' discussion during parents' meetings revealed that 80% of the parents asked about their child's general performance, 14.3% of them requested for their relationship with their classmates, 2.9% of them wanted to learn about the child's performance in speaking-listening-comprehension-expression and another 2.9% inquired the child's practice of psycho-motor skills. Teachers also required information about their students from their parents and it was about the "students' developmental features" (28.6%), "opportunities at home (Room-Book-Toy, etc)" (22.9%), "their relationship with the family members" (17.1%), and "practice of self-nursing skills" (14.3%). According to teachers, parents' meetings resulted in positive effects on students' behaviours such as "being cooperative and joining groups" (28.6%), "improving their listening - comprehension - speaking" (25.7%), and "having a good relationship with guests' children" (20%).

In a study by Laloumi Vidali, (1997), teachers were enthusiastic about the school-family cooperation in preschool education. However, they had doubts about their sufficiency concerning parents' affairs, because the enquiry in these affairs was not only a child's education but also effective communication with people, which was necessarily taught in the education period of the teachers.

According to a study by McBride and Rane (1997), several significant relationships among levels of father involvement, perceptions of paternal role, and perceived role investments were revealed. Multiple regression procedures indicated that mothers' perceptions of their partners' investments in parent, spouse, and worker roles were the best predictors of total father involvement.

The teachers stated that most of the questions they asked parents were about their children's progress, and the parents verified this.

Table 4.

Opinions of the Teachers Related with "School-Family Union" about the School-Family Cooperation

	f	%	
Is there a School-family Union in your school?	Yes	15	53.6
	No	13	46.4
	Total	28	100.0
How many School-Family Union meeting was done in your school in this academic year?	Never	5	25.0
	Once	10	50.0
	Twice	3	15.0
	Three times	-	-
	For times and over	2	10.0
Total	20	100.0	
What are the most discussed topics in School-Family Union meetings?	Students' health and developmental situation	-	-
	Assist of parents to the school's expenses	5	33.3
	The needs of the school	3	20.0
	Socio-cultural activities to be held	6	40.0
	Activities to be held in order to provide income for school	-	-
	Means demanded from parents	-	-
	Students' attendance case	1	6.7
	Students' problems in class	-	-
Total	15	100.0	

When the opinions of the teachers on “school-family union” related to the school-family cooperation were assessed, 53.6% of the teachers mentioned that there was a School-Family Union in their schools whereas 46.4 % of them stated that there was not a School-Family Union in their schools. Related with the number of the School-Family Union meetings in one academic year, 50% of the teachers claimed that there was at least one meeting and 15% of them said that two meetings were done during one academic year. Moreover, teachers stated that the most discussed topics in those meetings were, “Socio-cultural activities to be held” (40%), “Assist of parents to the school’s expenses” (33.3%), and “The needs of the school” (20%). It is remarkable that the needs of the school were one of the most discussed topics in the school-family union meetings.

A study in Turkey revealed that 79.3 % of the parents were willing to the factor of establishing cooperation between parents and school (Poyraz & Dere, 2001:100).

Table 5.

Opinions of the Parents on “Teachers-Parents Interviews” about the School-Family Cooperation

		f	%
How do you learn your child's performance in school?	I ask my child	83	46.1
	I have a private meeting with class teacher	89	49.4
	I have a meeting with the administration	3	1.7
	I have a meeting with my child's friends	5	2.8
	Total	180	100.0
How many private meetings did you have about your child's performance this year?	Never	4	2.2
	Once	29	16.1
	Twice	33	18.3
	Three times	45	25.0
	Four times and over	69	38.3
	Total	180	100.0
Who demands the meeting?	Me	138	76.7
	His/Her teacher	31	17.2
	School administration	11	6.1
	Total	180	100.0
Under which circumstances do you want to have a private meeting with his/her teacher?	When s/he has eating problems	30	16.7
	When s/he has problems in practice of self-nursing skills	51	28.3
	When s/he has aggressive behaviours	22	12.2
	When s/he has social and psychological problems	53	29.4
	When s/he has listening and comprehension problems	19	10.6
	When s/he brings toys from school without asking for permission to his/her teacher	5	2.8
	Total	180	100.0
Under which circumstances does the teacher invite you to have a meeting?	When s/he has eating problems	37	20.6
	When s/he has discipline problems	26	14.4
	When s/he has social and psychological problems	32	17.8
	When s/he has problems in practice of self-nursing skills	22	12.2
	When s/he has listening and comprehension problems	28	15.6
	When s/he has problems with his/her friends	28	15.6
	When s/he is reluctant to join the class activities	7	3.9
	Total	180	100.0

Table V presented that 49.4 % of the parents preferred to have a meeting with the class teacher about their child's school performance and 46.1% of them favoured to ask it to their child. Nearly half of the participants (38.3%) stated that they had four or more meetings with teachers about their child's school performance and mostly parents (76.7%) demanded the meeting from teachers.

Parents expressed that they had a meeting with their children's teachers when their child had social and psychological problems (29.4%), problems in practice of self-nursing skills (28.3%), and eating problems (16.7%). Furthermore, teachers asked for a private meeting to the parents when their child had eating problems (20.6%), social and psychological problems (17.8%), listening and comprehension problems (15.6%), and problems with his/her friends (15.6%). Here both parents' and teachers' opinions are overlapped.

In a study carried out by Laloumi (1997) in Greek, it was revealed that parents needed pedagogical information in order to deal with their child's problems and to support their education life as well.

Previous studies indicated that formal communication (documents, formal meetings etc.), as well as informal communication, supported the relationship between family and educator, and increased the responsibility of the educator. On the contrary, the study completed by Hughes and Macnaughton (2001), pointed that frequency of formal communication decreased the student's success and lead divergences and discussions about the "truths" between families and educators. Parents could easily show the tendency of rejecting educators' opinions.

Table 6.

Opinions of the Parents Related with "Parents Meetings" about the School-Family Cooperation

		f	%
How many parent's meeting was held in your child's school in this academic year?	Never	8	4.4
	I do not know if it is done	7	3.9
	Once	55	30.6
	Twice	61	33.9
	Three times	27	15.0
	Four times and over	22	12.2
	Total	180	100.0
How many of the parent's meetings did you participate in your child's school in this academic year?	Never	21	11.3
	Once	63	35.0
	Twice	65	36.4
	Three times	18	10.0
	For times	13	7.3
	Total	180	100.0
Mostly who attends the parent's meetings as a parent?	Mother	146	81.1
	Father	16	8.9
	Mother-father together	17	9.1
	Brother-Sister	1	0.6
	Grandmother-Grandfather	-	-
	Total	180	100.0
About which topics do you usually ask questions to the teacher about your child?	About activities	23	12.8
	About performing of self-nursing skills	71	39.4
	About his/her relationships with his/her class friends	42	23.3
	About participating in game activities	9	5.0
	About His/her performance out of the school	13	7.2
	About Attitudes towards teachers	4	2.2
	About his/her relationship with his/her other friends	18	10.0
	Total	180	100.0
About which topics does the teacher ask questions to you about your child?	About self-nursing skills	30	16.7
	About his/her developmental features	51	28.3
	About friend relationship	12	6.7
	About opportunities that s/he has at home	26	14.4
	About abilities and creativity	9	10.6
	Whether s/he is prepared for his/her lessons at home or not	7	3.9
	Whether s/he leaves time to play games at home or not	9	5.0
	Whether you spend time to listen him/her and to play with him/her	26	14.4
	About his/her relationships with family members	-	-
Total	180	100.0	
What are the positive effects of the parents meetings on students?	Improves his Listening - Comprehension - Speaking	47	26.1
	Tidy up his room and toys	17	9.4
	Eat his meals by himself and move freely	17	9.4
	Have good relationship with the guest children	34	18.9
	To be cooperative and to join groups	30	16.7
	Express himself freely	23	12.8
	Nothing has changed	12	6.7
	Total	180	100.0

Table VI shows the opinions of the parents depending on parents' meetings about the school-family cooperation. When it was analysed, mainly two parent's meetings (33.9%) was held in the schools of the participants in this academic year, and majority of the parents (98.5%) participated in those meetings, but 36,4% of them claimed that they only participated in two of the parents meetings. Most of the parents participated those meetings was mothers (81.1%).

When the results of the topics that the parents asked concerning their child to the teachers were analysed, the first question was about performing of self-nursing skills (39.4%), second one was about relationships with their class friends (23.3%), and third one was about activities (12.8%). On the contrary, the results of the topics that the teachers enquired from parents concerning their child asserted that mostly favoured topic was about students' developmental features (28.3%). The next was about self-nursing skills (16.7%), other one was about students' opportunities at home (14.4%), and the last favoured one was about whether parents spend time on listening and playing with their child or not (14.4%). When the opinions' of the parents regarding the positive effects of the parents meeting on students were examined, the first improvement was on students' listening - comprehension - speaking performance (26.1%), second one was about having good relationship with the guests' children (18.9%), third one was about being cooperative and joining groups (16.7%).

According to the results of research studies conducted in England and Australia stated that different way of thinking might cause conflicts between parents and educators depending on cultural differences (Coleman & Churchill, 1997; Ebbeck & Glover, 1998).

Another study carried out by Bridge (2001) in England indicated that chiefly mothers had the connection with preschool institutions rather than fathers. Besides, mothers were more enthusiastic to meet with teachers in their child's educational and social development.

It was emphasized that parents should participate in class activities to gain another dimension to children's interaction (Oktay et al., 2006). Teachers stated that parents were principally curious about the overall performance of the children whereas parents asserted that they were predominantly concerned about the capacity of their children self-care abilities. Both parents and teachers indicated that meetings particularly improved children's Listening - Comprehension - Speaking abilities.

Table 7.

Opinions of the Parents Related with "School-Family Union" about the School-Family Cooperation

		f	%
Is there a School-Family Union in your child's school?	Yes	132	73.3
	No	8	5.1
	I do not know	39	21.6
	Total	180	100.0
How many School-Family Union meeting was done in your child's school in this academic year?	I do not know	91	57.6
	Never	7	4.4
	Once	32	20.3
	Twice	19	12.0
	Three times	2	1.3
	Four times and over	7	4.5
How many times did you participate in the School-Family Union meetings in your child's school in this academic year?	Total	158	100.0
	Never	103	63.6
	Once	25	15.4
	Twice	15	9.3
	Three times	13	8.0
	Four times and over	6	3.7
What are the most discussed topics in the School-Family Union meetings?	Total	162	100.0
	Students' health and developmental situation	17	16.7
	Assist of parents to the school's expenses	31	30.4
	The needs of the school	18	17.6
	Socio-cultural activities to be held	14	13.7
	Activities to be held in order to provide income for school	3	2.9
	Means demanded from parents	4	3.9
	Students' attendance case	15	14.7
	Students' problems in class	-	-
	Total	102	100.0

The opinions of the parents related with "School-Family Union" about the school-family cooperation were shown in table VII. According to the table, 73.3% of the parents were aware of the presence of School-Family Union in their children's school. However, 57.6% of them had no idea about the number of the School-Family Union meetings organised in this year. In addition, majority of the parents expressed that they did not participate in School-Family Union meetings and even 63.6% of them claimed that they had never attended in School-Family Union Meetings. On the other hand, parents asserted that the most discussed topic was the assistance of parents to the school's expenses (30.4%). Second one was, the needs of the school (17.6%) and the third one was students' health and developmental situation (16.7%).

Berger (cited in Güler, 2008) asserted that teachers could be more successful in convincing parents to participate in school-family cooperation if they were aware of parents' cultural and social background and respected to them.

According to Beaty (cited in Güler, 2008), the more the parents participated in school activities the more the children were eager to attend the school and enthusiastic to take part in the school activities and their problems related with discipline were decreased.

Teachers indicated that principally cultural activities were discussed in school-family union meetings while parents stated that parents' assistance to the expenses of the school was the most discussed topic.

Conclusions

The study revealed the following conclusions,

1. According to the teachers' opinions related to "Teachers-Parents Interviews, parents visited schools in order to have interviews with teachers concerning their children's performance whereas they occasionally did these visits, and mostly parents demanded the meetings. Firstly, the parents whose children had adaptability problems and then the parents whose children had discipline problems visited the schools. Teachers mostly invited the parents to school in order to have an interview when their child had discipline problems and when their child was reluctant to take part in activities.

2. According to the teachers' responses, teachers planned the topics before the parents meeting. Furthermore, most of the teachers held at least two parents meeting in their school in this academic year. There was a high level of participation to those meetings. Depending on teachers' words, at least half of the parents participated in these meetings and it was remarkable that most of the participants consisted of mothers.

In the "Parents Meetings", parents asked questions mostly related with their child's general performance and the relationship with their classmates. At the same time, there were points that the teachers sought about their students such as students' developmental features, opportunities that the student had at home (Room-Books-Toys, etc). Teachers stated that positive changes occurred in students' behaviours after the Parents' Meetings especially in the behaviour of being cooperative and joining groups, then in their Listening - Comprehension - Speaking abilities and next in having good relationship with the guests' children.

3. Teachers indicated that at least half of the schools participated in this study had a "School-Family Union". Besides, they had one meeting in this academic year and in those meetings; the mostly discussed topic was the socio-cultural activities to be held in that academic year.

4. According to the parents' opinions related with "Teachers-Parents Interviews", parents preferred to learn their child's school performance by having an interview with the class teacher and by asking their child. Almost half of the parents involved in the study claimed that they had

a meeting concerning their child's performance and the demand of meeting mostly came from the parents.

5. According to the parents' responses, in most of the schools, two parents meetings were held in this academic year and majority of the parents participated in these meetings. Most of the participants were mothers. In these meetings, the most popular question was about students' performance in self-nursing skills and the following one was about students' relationships with their class friends. On the other hand, the topics that teachers wanted to learn about their students from their parents were about their developmental features, about their self-nursing skills and about their opportunities at home. After the parents meetings, firstly students' listening-comprehension- speaking skills, second the behaviour of the having relationship with the guests' children were improved.

6. According to the parents' responses, there was a "School-Family Union" in their children's school but it was salient that majority of the parents had no idea of the number of the School-Family Union meetings held in their children's school. Besides, most of the parents expressed that they had never participated in School-Family Union and the ones participated in School-family Union meetings asserted that the mostly discussed topic was the assist of the parents in school's expenses.

Implications

It is assumed that the level of the preschool education and nursing is not at the international standards in Turkey. Furthermore, most of the educators, who have the most responsibility in the improvement of the existing relationship between family and school, hold only high school diplomas. When these findings and conclusions are considered;

The school administration and teachers are required to do an appropriate planning in order to hold regular and extensive teachers-parents interviews.

Teachers should be informed to leave time not only the parents of the problematic students but al the parents as well.

It is necessary that the teachers should be taught about this subject in their education life and later in-service trainings should be held in order to make the Teachers-Parents interviews efficient.

It is essential that the school administrations work seriously to organize School- Family Union meetings more frequently and to inform all the parents about these meetings.

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