

THE VIEWS OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS ABOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS IN THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT PROCESS

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Abstract: This research about the views of school administrators and teachers in relation to the participation of parents in the school management process was conducted in the Ministry of Education Schools and reveals their suggestions. A qualitative study that consisted of a question form with 7 open-ended questions was applied to administrators and teachers who worked in state schools.

Survey responses were analyzed through content analysis and indicated the expression patterns of the participants with the percentage frequency of the data. These results are the views of school administrators and teachers regarding the parents in the light of data obtained from research on participation in school administration process. Parents are not involved enough in the management process. Parental involvement in school management processes positively affects student achievement and increases the academic achievement. Factors that prevent the participation of parents in the school management process; environmental impacts, social structure, culture, education, economic status family running the busy schedule, parents living environment is in the form of failure in school management and teachers' attitudes and the impact of the parental behavior and legislation. Parental visits to school varies according to the working hours and socio-economic status. Parents' participation in the administration process affects the desired goals in school education process. School management to increase the participation of parents in the management process should arrange parent conferences, seminars, talks and guided activities, parent meetings, organize, pulls parents into the educational and social activities, and should make joint efforts to support the visual and written media. Of parents attending parent-teacher associations and school management regulations that apply in decision-making were found to be inadequate. Teachers and administrators cannot plan their workload because of its parent interviews, it was observed that as a result the parents are in the tendency of abstaining from visits to school and participation in the management process.

Keywords: Parents, Administrators, Teachers, Parents and Teachers Association.

Introduction:

Being social and open systems the education institutions in order to realize their education and training activities successfully have to develop regular relations with their environment in which they operate. The reason for this is that the educational process does not just only take place in schools. Besides the school in this process the family is one of the most important and effective environment of the education activities.

The family, being an environment having a great role in shaping the personality of the student and gaining his/her social experiences, must be seen as the most important partner of the school in the educational process of children. (Yavuzer, 1993; Argon ve Kızılcı, 2012)

In general the school accepts the family as a partner in controlling the discipline problems of the students and the family sees the school as an institution to realize the education and training activities. In this process the family does not consider itself as a partner who can take much role in education. This situation makes the process of school and family relations only an artificial process and the two institutions see themselves as two separate institutions with separate functions and that should not interfere in one another's affairs. (Erdoğan, 2000)

In addition to their management duties school administrators have directly to take part in the planning and application of educational and training activities. (WEB 1)

The school administrators have to ensure that the teachers effectively take part in the teaching process and increase student achievement. School administrators have also to support and stimulate teachers in establishing effective school-family relations. Teachers play the most important and critical role in the establishment and development of school-family collaboration. Because teachers are in direct contact with students and they can observe the needs and interests of the students closely their role is of great importance. (WEB1)

To establish the school-family union, to establish the parent and school interaction and collaboration, to support the activities that can increase education and training and to support the school and the poor students financially some unions are established in the structure of the school. (WEB 2)

What are the views of the school administrators and teachers as regards to the parents taking part in the school administration process? (Tekirdağ sample)

In the light of the main aim of the study the following questions (variables) have been determined:

- 1 - What are the school administrators' and teachers' views regarding the parents'

taking part in the school management process?

2 - According to school administrators and teachers to what extent do parents take part in the education process?

3 - What are the factors that prevent parents from taking part in the school management according to school administrators and teachers?

4 - According to school administrators and teachers what kind of effort does the school make to promote the parents' to take part in the school management?

According to Grolnick and Slowiaczek parent participation in general means the parents' to devote all their resources for the sake of their children. However, they tried to find answers about what kind of resources parents can devote by explaining the dimensions of parent participation. They maintained that the child will gain experiences from such incidents and categorized parent participation into three dimensions.

Behavioral Dimension: The family can realize its participation by directly going to school and taking part in the school activities. From this behavior of the parent the student gets some inferences. The family is seen as a model by the student. Because such a participation gives the family the chance to obtain information about the students and their education. This can help in increasing the family's help to the student about school related matters. Moreover, the teachers will see the parents' direct involvement and its positive effects will be started to be seen; for example the teachers concern for the student will increase.

Emotional Dimension: The parents' personality features, the positive attitude of the parents towards the students' school will help the student to form a positive attitude towards his/her school.

Cognitive/Mentalistic Dimension:

The parents' providing the student with mentally stimulating Environment comprises the parents' providing the student with materials that will increase the students' mental capacity. The family being aware of the importance of mentally nourishing activities will be in close contact with the school and provide the student more significant resources.

In the latest regulation that was published in the Official Journal (number 28999) by the Ministry of Education in 2012 it is maintained that:

“In order to establish the school-family union, to establish parent-school interaction and

collaboration, to support activities that will foster education and training, to provide the school and the poor students financial aid in the structure of schools informal unions can be established.” (WEB 7)

Method:

In this study a qualitative research method has been used and open-ended questions have been developed for the data collection procedure. To determine the views of the teachers and administrators regarding the participation of the families in the education process in accordance with the open-ended questions technique an interview consisting of 7 questions was applied.

The data collection instrument included 7 open-ended questions and was divided into two main parts.

The first part consisted of gender, age, seniority, title and educational status.

The second part consisted of questions to find out the views of the school administrators and teachers regarding the parental participation in the school management process.

The data collection instrument was applied to 235 school administrators and teachers in 33 primary schools in Tekirdağ city center and Muratlı county. In the research in the analyses of the qualitative data content analysis based on codification was used.

General idea obtained from the study is;” The parents’ participation in the school management process” is %61, 21 positive. The sub-categories of this general idea are: ‘parents’ involvement in the management process’, ‘efficiency’, ‘school success’, ‘school support’, ‘contribution to the school culture’, ‘student achievement’, ‘participation in the decisions’, ‘school policy determination’, and ‘contribution to the labor’.

Negative statements of the school administrators and teachers about the parents’ participation in the school management process was found to be % 38,79. According to the study % 38,79 of the subjects stated that the school administrators inhibited parental participation in the school administration.

Moreover, even in the case of parental participation parents are said to be passive position because of the lack of management consciousness. This may be due to environmental factors, social structure, culture, education and economic status.

As regards to what extent the parents should participate in the school administration process the general idea is; “Parents’ visit frequency to the school during the education process is important”. The sub-categories about this idea are : ‘the parents’ visit frequency to the school’, ‘student achievement’, ‘contribution to the student and school related issues’,

and ‘bureaucracy’. The study revealed that the visits of the parents to the school of their child had a positive effect on student achievement. It was also observed that at times when the parental visits increased the students’ achievement was also affected positively.

As regards to the question whether the frequency of visits by the parents had any effect on the education process the following sub-categories have been determined ; ‘contribution to the education process’, ‘parents’ school visit frequency’, ‘efficacy’, ‘parental behavior’, ‘school support’, ‘support to the institutional culture’, and ‘student achievement’.

When the answers to this question were analyzed it was determined that the parents’ did not have enough participation in the school administration. This is because as the student age is low the parental visits are more frequent and as the student gets older the visits of the parents decreases in amount. It was also determined that the frequency of visits did not have much direct contribution to education, it has no effect on efficiency, it would be better if the parents visited the school when they need information or when they give information; it would be better for the parents to visit the school 1 or 2 days per week instead of every week day; just visiting the school will not have any contribution, the parents will have a contribution only if they consciously know their limits and have an objective judgement. It is erroneous for the parents to back their students unnecessarily; instead of frequent visits it is more important to do what is told at the visits. The parents should not visit the school just for the sake of a visit, not every parent who visits the school has a positive contribution to the education process.

Here it is more important that the parents have a positive contribution to the school culture in collaboration with the school. But it is clear from the statement that the parents have not enough contribution because they visit the school during the class hours and this affects the students’ attention for the lesson negatively.

As regards the question ; “What are the factors that hinder the parents’ participation in the school management?”, the sub-categories of the question have been determined as follows: ‘school administrators attitude’, ‘the working manner of school-family unions’, ‘parental attitude’, ‘economic structure’, ‘socio-cultural structure’, ‘teacher attitude’, ‘educational level’, ‘effective use of time’, ‘bureaucracy’, and ‘environmental factors’.

The school administrators do not want to share their decision making mechanism with others. In making the decisions the school administrators do not share this mechanism especially with parents because legally they are to account for all what happens in the school.

As regards to the question: “what kind of effort does the school show to promote the parents’ participation in the school management?”, the following sub-categories have been determined: ‘school administrators’ strategy decision’, ‘regulation’, ‘socio-cultural activities’, ‘meetings and education’, ‘collaboration with the teacher’, ‘collaboration with the administrators’, and ‘guidance’.

When the answers to this question were analyzed the following answers were obtained:

- some services about the benefits of participating in the school management may be given by mentors.
- some parents who have contributed to the school management may be rewarded.
- mentoring meetings may be held with the parents who have a role in increasing school-family interaction.
- some decisions may be taken in cooperation with teachers, parents and the school administrators.

The teachers’ and parents’ willingness to collaborate with each other and having a good interaction may increase parental participation.

It can be said that the school administrators should determine some strategies on parental participation like planning, programming, aims, purposes and activities. This process will also have a positive effect on the school culture.

Conclusion:

1. Parental participation in the school management process has a positive effect on the development and academic achievement of the students. But the parental participation in the school management is not at an adequate level.
2. The factors that have an effect on parental participation are determined as: environmental factors, social structure, culture, education, economic status, the busy working schedule of the parents, the environment in which the parents live, the school administrators’ and teachers’ attitude and behavior, the effect of the behavior on the parents and the lack of regulations.
3. The parents’ visits have a positive contribution on student achievement, when the frequency of visits increases the students achievement also increases. If the visit frequency of the parents is not at an adequate level the participation of parents is not enough. At lower ages the frequency is high but as the age gets higher the frequency of visits decreases and when education is taken as a whole entity a regular efficiency of the

student is not observed.

4. Instead of visiting the school very frequently the parents participation in school management in a more conscious way, supporting the school in application and using of the process effectively has a positive effect to the management process.
5. Whether the parents participate in the school management or not has an effect on the teachers' and school administrators' success in taking the school to the desired goals.
6. School administrators do not want others especially parents to interfere during the school decision taking procedure.
7. The members chosen to be a member of the school-family union try to rule the school, they do not stick to the regulations while doing their duties, they do not consult other parents in matters related to school, and some other problems about the running mechanism of the school-family union hinder parents coming to school. Especially the school administrators want people whom they can easily use their power on to be selected as the member of the school-family union. Because of this parents are reluctant in taking part in the union and do not want any such duty at all.
8. Having financial expectations from the parents, wanting to get money from the parents although it is not in the regulations hinder parents from participating in the school management.
9. Because of their busy schedule teachers and administrators cannot plan parental visits well and parents become reluctant to come to school and to participate in the school management process.
10. Some activities to increase parental participation in the school management process are:
 - the school administration should decide on some strategies about participation.
 - the school administration should overcome some problems about regulations.
 - some socio-cultural activities should be held like meetings, seminars, and educational activities to promote parental participation.
 - the collaboration of teachers and administrators should be increased and some mentoring services be given.

Suggestions:

- In order to benefit effectively from the school-family union the school administrators need to carefully plan the teacher-parent meetings according to their aims.

- The meeting hours and the agenda should be announced to the parents in advance.
- Appropriate place and environment should be provided for the meetings.
- Information about the school's mechanism should be given to the parents.
- The parents should be given guidance about parental participation in the school management and the regulations about the school.
- In order to establish a more effective interaction with the parents the school administration and teachers should visit parents and see their social, economic, cultural and intellectual conditions so as to know the students in their school better.
- Parallel to its vision the school should decide on some strategies about parental participation in the school management.
- Socio-cultural activities should be arranged by the school administration so as to foster parental participation in the school management process.

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