

PRESCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTION ABOUT PARENT
INVOLVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

PRESCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTION ABOUT PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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The aim of this study was to identify the perception of administrators regarding parent involvement activities; to define home-based, school-based and home-school conferencing activities of parent involvement that are practiced by private preschools; and to show how administrators define their own leadership in the parent involvement process. The study was conducted during the 2015-2016 academic year in Ankara with 16 preschool administrators working at the private preschools that are regulated by the Ministry of Education. The data of the study was collected by using semi-structured interviews that were developed and analyzed using the thematic analysis method by the researcher. The results showed that participating administrators have positive perceptions about parent involvement. In spite of schools practicing parent involvement by using most of the home-based, school-based and home-school conferencing activities, the administrators do not use certain types of activities like home visits, parent volunteered school trips and decision-making with parents. Thus, the activities are restricted in terms of variety. Also, the practice of leadership differs regarding the participants' understanding of their roles. They take either active or passive leadership roles in the process of involving parents in education.

Keywords: School Administrator, Parent Involvement, Administrators' Perception, Preschool, Early Childhood Education

ÖZ

OKUL ÖNCESİ YÖNETİCİLERİNİN AİLE KATILIMINA DAİR ALGILARI

Karaduman, Tuğçe

Yüksek Lisans, Eğitim Yönetimi ve Planlaması

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Bu araştırmanın amacı, okul yöneticilerinin aile katılımına ilişkin algılarını ortaya koymak; ev, okul temelli ve ev-okul işbirliği ile ilgili gerçekleştirilen aile katılım etkinliklerini belirlemek; ve okul yöneticilerinin aile katılımı sürecinde liderlik rollerini nasıl tanımladıklarını göstermektir. Bu çalışma, 2015-2016 eğitim öğretim yılında Ankara ilindeki Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'na bağlı özel anaokullarında görev yapan 16 özel okul öncesi yöneticisi ile yürütülmüştür. Araştırma verileri “yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formları” aracılığıyla toplanarak tematik analiz yöntemi ile çözümlenmiştir. Analizler sonucunda, araştırmaya katılan yöneticilerin aile katılımı hakkında olumlu algılarının olduğu sonucu ortaya çıkmıştır. Buna ek olarak, katılımcıların, okul, ev temelli ve okul-ev iletişimi adına yapılan etkinlikler göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, okulların bazı etkinlikleri sınırlı biçimde uyguladıkları görülmüştür. Yapılan analizler sonucunda, aile katılımı etkinliklerinin çeşidinde sınırlılıklar olduğu görülmüştür. Ayrıca, okul yöneticileri liderlik tanımlarında etkin veya etkin olmayan görevler aldıklarını belirterek aile katılımı sürecindeki sorumluluklarını tanımlamışlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul Yöneticisi, Aile katılımı, Yöneticilerin Algısı, Anaokulu, Okul Öncesi Eğitimi

To Nil,
my dear, lovely daughter

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL	ii
PLAGIARISM	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZ.....	v
DEDICATION.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xiv
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Background of the Study	1
1.2. Purpose of the Study.....	6
1.3. Significance of the Study.....	7
1.4. Operational Definitions	10
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1. Theoretical Framework	12
2.1.1. Parent Involvement.....	12

2.2. Parent Involvement Theories.....	22
2.2.1. Benefits of Parent Involvement	24
2.2.2. Barriers to Parent Involvement.....	27
2.3. School Administration.....	29
2.3.1. School Climate	33
2.3.2. Decision-making with Parents.....	37
2.4. Review of Literature.....	41
2.4.1. Parent Involvement in the World.....	41
2.4.2. Parent Involvement in Turkey	44
2.4.3. Parent Involvement and School Administration.....	45
2.5. Summary of Literature Review	51
3. METHODS	53
3.1. Research Design.....	54
3.2. Research Participants	57
3.3. Data Collection Methods.....	61
3.3.1. Interview Protocol	61
3.3.2. Development of the Interview Protocol.....	63
3.3.3. Written Documents.....	66
3.4. Data Collection Procedures	67
3.5. Data Analysis.....	69
3.6. Trustworthiness	70

4. FINDINGS	75
4.1. Demographic Information	76
4.2. Perception of School Administrators on Parent Involvement	77
4.3. Practices of School Administrators in Parent Involvement.....	81
4.3.2. Leadership.....	92
4.4. Summary of Interview Findings.....	107
4.5. Document Analysis.....	107
4.5.1. Early Childhood Education Program of Ministry of National Education	108
4.5.2. The Documents of the Preschools' Parent Involvement Practices	115
4.6. Summary of Findings	120
5. CONCLUSIONS	122
5.1. Discussion.....	122
5.1.1. The Perception of Administrators about Parent Involvement.....	123
5.1.2. The Practices of Parent Involvement Activities.....	124
5.1.3. Leadership Practices	128
5.2. Implications for Early Childhood Education.....	138
5.3. Considerations for Future Research	141
5.4. Limitations.....	141
5.5. Summary.....	142
REFERENCES.....	144
APPENDICES	

A: OKUL ÖNCESİ KURUM YÖNETİCİLERİNİN AİLE KATILIMINA DAİR ALGILARININ İNCELENMESİ GÖRÜŞME FORMU	162
B: OKUL ÖNCESİ KURUM YÖNETİCİLERİNİN AİLE KATILIMINA DAİR ALGILARININ İNCELENMESİ GÖRÜŞME FORMU	165
C: TURKISH SUMMARY	167
D: TEZ FOTOKOPISI İZİN FORMU	180

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES

Table 3.1 Districts of Schools	59
Table 3.2 Preschool Administrators' Demographic Information.....	60
Table 4.1 Preschools' implementation of the activities defined by MoNE	117

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES

Figure 4.1 Types of communication used by preschools	91
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PI	Parent Involvement
ECE	Early Childhood Education
MONE	Ministry of National Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
TEEP	Turkish Early Enrichment Project
MEP	Mother Enrichment Project
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
AÇEV	Anne Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the study with the purpose of the study, significance of the study, limitations and definition of terms. The following section explains the background of the study, mentioning relevant research and theories about the issue.

1.1. Background of the Study

Preschool is the first place where the child meets formal education, however, learning starts before formal education. Often, if not always, parents represent the first essential system and source to promote children's learning and development (Henderson & Mapp, 2002) and keep serving as a lifelong resource for children after formal education starts. So, education is a cooperative process that requires all the stakeholders to gather around a common goal, which is to ensure healthy development and education. It is necessary for all of them to participate in children's education effectively; teachers, school administrators, especially parents (Gestwicki, 2007). A wide range of theoretical and empirical research claims that parent involvement in preschool education has many positive effects on children's school competence (Arnold et al., 2008; Fantuzzo et al., 2004; Marcon, 1999).

Research indicates that parent involvement and school competence are positively related (Arnold et al., 2008; Epstein, 2011; Fantuzzo et al., 2004;

Kağıtçıbaşı, 1990) and being aware of the importance of parent involvement, policy makers spend time to find an effective way for cooperation between home and school. The approaches to parent involvement differentiates according to countries and their regulations about education. For instance, the parent-school partnerships in the USA are regulated by governmental legislations, recommended by professional organizations such as the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC). American preschools are also obliged to provide training for parents to enhance the involvement of parents and coordinate parent involvement activities with other programs such as Head Start (Gestwicki, 2007). In Australia, school-family cooperation in preschool education is a priority topic for the Ministry. The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) established in 1993, is a non-profit organization based in Sydney. In 1994, the government prepared a program called Quality Improvement and Accreditation Scheme (QIAS) that aims for constant cooperation between school and home (Hughes & Macnaughton, 2001).

Whereas in Turkey, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) points out the importance of implementing parent involvement programs, by providing a good source of information and involvement strategies with examples for the teachers and school administrators. The program covers family involvement in a particular topic and is comprehensive. The “Integrated Family Support Program for Early Childhood Education” is a practical booklet prepared for this situation. It explains not only family involvement strategies and techniques but also in-school and out-of-school parent involvement activities. The integrated family support

program includes three parts; family education, family involvement, and teacher guide (MoNE, 2013).

Additionally, there are non-governmental organizations like the Mother-Child Education Foundation (AÇEV), UNICEF, and also those that individually refer to parent education and parent involvement to raise awareness of these issues. For example; on behalf of the Turkish Early Enrichment Project (TEEP) researchers developed the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters and the Mother Enrichment Program (MEP). It provided guidance to mothers on how to use cognitive materials such as toys, puzzles, and books effectively for their children's benefit. (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1990).

Despite these projects and the time spent on research, insufficient or ineffective parent involvement is a major problem in most preschools even today. Research demonstrates that most parents want to get involved in education to help their children to be successful in school (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Lareau et. al., 2003). However, they have some restrictions, such as longer working hours, time constraints, and schools' unwillingness towards parent involvement, that prevents them from getting involved in their child's education (Flynn & Nolan, 2008).

School administrators have great roles in the process of parent involvement. They are seen as the process leaders since they organize, plan and practice the strategies for collaborating with parents and involving them with the school. The importance of the administrators' leadership style in developing strong partnership programs to involve families has been consistently identified in research (Sanders & Simon, 2002; Sheldon, 2003; Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004;

Westmoreland, Rosenberg, Lopez, & Weiss, 2009). Thus, the perception they have, the leadership strategies that they practice, and the leadership approach that they follow are crucial. Various leadership styles can result in a variety of work experience for teachers in a program (Marzano et al., 2005). Rotherham and Mead (2003) supported that as greater accountability demands are imposed upon administrators, additional leadership strategies are needed to succeed in securing highly qualified teachers. Moreover, if administrators are able to exhibit the proper leadership strategies, the likelihood of assembling and maintaining a highly qualified parent involvement practice will increase.

Budunç (2007) claims that most of the preschool teachers in Turkey believe that school administrators are successful in making a contribution in implementing parent involvement strategies. The results are important since the recent studies link positive motivational beliefs with effective involvement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005) but most importantly, it results in the positive development of children (Epstein, 2011).

Research also demonstrates that not only parents but also administrators struggle. Parent involvement is the most common problem according to administrators. Aside from parents, school leaders face challenges with time constraints and other responsibilities in school (Bouffard & Weiss, 2008; Epstein, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, & Reed, 2002). Another challenge school administrators face, is that they do not feel they are adequately prepared to implement parent involvement programs (Johnson, Rochkind, & Doble, 2008; LaPointe, Meyerson, & Darling-Hammond, 2006; Orr, 2006; Westmoreland,

2009). Not only international research studies but also national studies show that introducing parent involvement activities does not fulfil the needs because there is a lack of school staff training on how to implement the activities (Ünüvar, 2010). Doubtless, the study carried out with 240 teachers who took the parent education course shows a difference in terms of having effective relations with parents (Atabey & Tezel Şahin, 2009).

As a result, schools' efforts for increasing parent involvement turn into insufficient and inconvenient endeavors due to lack of practice (Ünüvar, 2010). On the other hand, the school administrators' negative perception about parent involvement creates major problems in the process of involving parents. The study clarifies the factors that hinder parent involvement at Turkish schools as follows, administrators' negative attitudes (according to parents), parents' reluctance to collaborate (according to administrators), inadequate time, economic circumstances, miscommunication (Ensari & Zembat, 1999).

Additionally, to provide a well-integrated home and school program, all of the schools' stakeholders (teacher, student, administrators, and parents) must have a say in decisions that they care about and should be involved in the decision-making process (Karaman-Kepenekçi, 2003). If parents were involved, they would become a good resource for the school while increasing the standards of the school (Comer & Haynes, 1991). Parent involvement should be issued with the understanding that parents are an important variable in children's development. Defining the factors that influence involvement should be considered by school administrators (Feuerstein, 2000).

The literature has shown that there is adequate research on parent involvement at each level of school. However, there is a lack of studies about parent involvement in early childhood education and particularly from the administration's point of view. As we know preschool education institutions differ from the other levels of educational settings regarding goals and objectives, and the age characteristics of the students. Accordingly, to overcome these problems, the issue should be investigated more and in the light of these investigations the researchers should come up with practical solutions (Erdoğan & Kasımoğlu, 2010). In order to improve parent involvement in Turkey, in which education is governed by a national system, some institutions or respondents are expected to take conscious steps to overcome the problems concerning parent involvement and school administrators. These steps should turn into more organized actions, and these actions are needed to be guided by governmental organizations like MoNE (Şahin & Ünver, 2005). For this reason, this study corresponds to administrators' perceptions about parent involvement, the activities that they implement and their leadership role in the process of parent involvement. In this way, the insufficiencies and inefficiencies in the involvement process will be clearer and it will be easier to develop them.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

In the light of the above mentioned research, the main purpose of this study is to inquire into preschool administrators' perception about parent involvement in private preschools in Ankara. Additionally, the second question is what are the home based, school based and home-school conferencing parent

involvement practices used by these administrators. Finally, the study is to explore these administrators' definitions about their own leadership in the process of parent involvement.

In the frame of the broad statement of the purpose of this study, the research questions are demonstrated in this section. These are:

1. What is the perception of preschool administrators about parent involvement?
2. What are the home based, school based and home-school conferencing practices of the preschools?
3. How do preschool administrators define their practice of leadership in regards to parent involvement?

1.3. Significance of the Study

Although there is plenty of research on parent involvement in preschool because it is a hot topic, there are few studies on administrators' perceptions. Research indicates that schools struggle to ensure family-school collaboration (Bouffard & Weiss, 2008; Epstein, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, & Reed, 2002; Lopez, Kreider, & Caspe, 2004) since school administrators face challenges with time constraints and other responsibilities as they attempt to find ways to build partnerships with families and sustain meaningful parent involvement. And it is obvious that parent involvement is mostly shaped by the manner of school's administrators. Consequently, to determine and analyze the administrators' perception about parent involvement may provide a greater understanding of obstacles before effective parent involvement.

Recent studies in Turkey show that the school administrators have some problems about parent involvement. The perception that “parents are troublemakers” is not helpful for the process of education (Fege, 2000). Moreover, parent involvement is limited in terms of the types of activities that are carried out and strategies that are used to collaborate with parents (Sabancı, 2009) since there is no well-structured and systematically followed program. Another problem that needs to be addressed is that the administrators’ traditional and centralized management style ignores teachers and parents in the decision-making process. (Karaman-Kepenekçi, 2003). It is said that some administrators are reluctant to involve parents since they think parents are interfering with their jobs. To prevent parent complications, school’ administrators tend to alienate the parents and maybe unconsciously they hinder their involvement with the school (Karaman-Kepenekçi, 2003).

The point is that school administrators cannot deny the importance of acknowledging parents as partners in education. Therefore, it is inevitable that school administrators need to have a positive understanding that encourages more family participation. Moreover, it is important for administrators to enable families to gain more experience in school situations, which will be possible by multiplying involvement in activities by giving them responsibilities. School administrators have the role of creating a school environment that welcomes families and establishes effective strategies. Ferguson (2005) states that the most important responsibility is to develop a school culture that embraces parents.

Moreover, researchers have acknowledged that administrators set the climate for parent involvement in schools (Desimone, Finn-Stevenson, & Henrich, 2000; Hiatt-Michael, 2006; Sanders & Sheldon, 2009; Van Voorhis & Sheldon, 2003). In addition, teachers depict the school climate and administrator support as important features of parent involvement (Becker & Epstein, 1982). The importance of the administrator's leadership approach in developing strong partnership programs to involve families has been consistently identified in research (Sanders & Simon, 2002; Sheldon, 2003; Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004; Westmoreland, Rosenberg, Lopez, & Weiss, 2009).

In parent involvement activities, shared decision-making is at the core of a collaborative approach related to the active participation of all stakeholders in education. When the school staff, parents, and/or community members have a say in the decision-making process, the quality of the school will improve (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). It is said that another important responsibility for school administrators is to acknowledge and apply such a parent involvement approach. If the schools have parents involved, who have a say on the issues that interest them, they would become the first and the most important part of the work that is done in the school. Consequently, it would bring positive outcomes like increasing the academic standards of the school (Desforges, & Abouchaar, 2003). In addition to this information, in the literature the researchers studied parent involvement with the teachers or parents. The lack of studies that look at the issue from the administrative point of view is another reason why this study is about school administration and parent involvement.

In relation to these highlighted issues, this study points out the findings about administrators' perceptions and school activities regarding parent involvement. It might be helpful to understand what the schools need in the process of including parents in education. Additionally, learning about the administrators' leadership practices towards parent involvement would help in developing strategies for other preschool administrators. For this reason, this study corresponds to administrators' perceptions about parent involvement and the activities that they implement in their schools. In this way, the insufficiencies and inefficiencies in the involvement process will be clearer and it will be easier to develop them.

1.4. Operational Definitions

Parental Involvement/Family Involvement: "The participation of parents in every facet of children's education and development from birth to adulthood, recognizing that parents are the primary influence in children's lives." (PTA, n.d.)

School Based Family Involvement: Family involvement programs that takes place at school

Home Based Family Involvement: Family involvement programs that are done out of the school by the family and child

Home School Conferencing: The activities that include both family and school staff with the purpose of interacting and sharing information

School Administrator: "Any educational official responsible for the management or direction of some part of an educational establishment or system." (Good, 1945)

Leadership: The supervising and guiding a group of people who get together for a purpose (Chemers, 1997).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review chapter is divided into two subtopics, namely the theoretical framework and the review of literature from the recent studies that refer to the issue of parent involvement and school administration. Firstly, in the theoretical framework section, the core theories about parent involvement and the school administration are discussed. Secondly, the review of the studies from both national and international literature are represented in this chapter.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Parent Involvement

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defines the period of 0 to 8 years as early childhood (Bredekamp & Coople, 1997) and it is suggested that children's experiences in this period are vital for the rest of their lives (Berk, 2005). Thus, to support children's development, it is necessary for the stakeholders to participate in children's educational process effectively; teachers, school administrators and especially parents (Gestwicki, 2007).

Various researchers have depicted the term "Parent Involvement" widely. The term of parent involvement refers to different phrases like "participation", "collaboration", "cooperation". It is basically described by researchers in history as the process of interacting and collaborating with families in various programs of policy making, educating parents, fundraising, and exchanging information

(Epstein, 2011, Moorman Kim et al., 2012; Shirvani, 2007). It is a proven fact that the in early development levels, children need support from their parents in order to get maximum benefit from education, which is officially called parent involvement (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Shaw, 2008).

2.1.1.1. *Historical Development of Parent Involvement*

In order to look beyond the term of parent involvement, it is important to demonstrate how parent involvement evolved and developed through years. The historical development of parent involvement lies in the basic theories of early childhood education. Ziegler who is one of the important contributors to the Head Start program did research about the educational achievement and motivation of children from low income families. It was understood that if children gain insufficient attention from their family in the early years of childhood, they would more likely to have cognitive problems. Whereas the child, who gained enough attention in their early years of life, achieved more at school (Ziegler, 1970).

The developmental experiences of children are shaped by the environmental systems that interact with each other. Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines the theory of ecological systems as a human being's experiences affected by five systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. *Microsystem* involves the context in which the person directly relationships between interacts like; parents or teachers. *Mesosystem* includes the contexts and how those relationships affect individuals such as; the home-school relationship. *Exosystem* composed of the contexts that may affect the individual indirectly. For example, the parents' work place might have an effect on an

individual's life. *Macrosystem* is the fourth system framed by the ideologies, beliefs, social structures that are shared within a culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The ecological system theory suggests that events and people that occur in a child's life affect a child's process of development. When the child gets older they begin to select their settings and experiences (Berk, 2012). This theory provides a significant basis for the parent involvement in education since it clarifies the school and home structure systems that each preschooler interacts with. The ecological system theory shows educators, researchers, and parents the process of understanding the effects of the child's environment and analyzing how to handle the environment in order to foster the development of the child.

Gordon (1979) reviewed the ecological system approach and he defined three kinds of parent involvement; the Parent Impact Model, the School Impact Model, the Community Impact Model. It describes the types of parent involvement and the activities that will bring families and schools together. Moreover, Berger's Role Categories suggest that parents have six roles in their involvement with their child's education (Berger, 2008). These roles are defined as; parents as teachers of their own children, parents as spectators, parents as employed resources, parents as temporary volunteers, parents as volunteer resources, parents as policy makers.

Honig (1979) is another researcher who has mentioned the importance of parent involvement in the early years of childhood. The education model for infants and toddlers was created to give information about child development and parenting to families. The program was designed as longitudinal study. Honig

(1979) hired professional staff for this project and trained them in order to work with families from low socio-economic status. It is argued that the program was so successful because it was flexible in each and every situation. Moreover, parents' reviews are so satisfactory and it shows the success of the program. They stated they built an enduring relationship with the staff since they gained respect, concern and friendship from the staff (Honig, 1979).

Moreover, Fullan (1982) who is another researcher of parent involvement studied change processes and school improvements. He stated that as parent involvement in the child's education increases, the effect of the child development and education improves. In the theory that Fullan (1982) suggested, parent involvement is divided into four categories: instruction at school, instruction at home, school governance, and community service.

Considering PI in early childhood education, it is appropriate to conceptualize it based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory (1989). Based on Bronfenbrenner's ideas, Epstein (1995; 2001) develops a typology for PI that involves six types like; parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. Epstein et al. (2002) stated that increased parental involvement is beneficial because parental involvement brings some advantages as; more open climate of schools, higher performance of students, more motivated teachers and more openness of parents to collaborate with the school. According to Henderson and Berla "...the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status" (p.160) but the extent to which that student's family is able to create a

stimulating learning environment at home, express high but realistic expectations and be actively involved in their children's education (Henderson & Berla, 1994).

The typology defined by Epstein (1995; 2001) was modified by Fantuzzo, McWayne, Perry and Childs (2004) and they frame a new typology for early childhood education (Fantuzzo et al., 2004). This typology defines parent involvement in early childhood education as three types of practices; school-based involvement, home-based involvement and home-school conferencing (Fantuzzo et al. 2004).

2.1.1.2 Historical Development of Parent Involvement in Turkey

Years after these theories, were founded by various researchers from around the world, there have been some movements about involving parents in education in Turkey. The development of parent involvement programs in Turkey needs to be pointed out in this study. Since the study corresponds to private preschools in Turkey, what has been done by NGOs and the National Educational System will be discussed in the following section.

Turkey has its own National Education System meaning that there are certain regulations and obligations concerning the process of education. The Turkish National Education System involves two main types of education; formal and informal education. The education is supervised by the Ministry of National Education. The formal education aims to give regular education to individuals who are at the certain level of development or of the same age group. Formal education includes the institutions of early childhood, elementary, secondary, high school and university education. Moreover; there are four types of early childhood

education institutions namely preschool, nursery school, daycare and experimental preschools. In Turkey, the Ministry of Education (MoNE) regulates the early childhood educational settings, programs, and activities.

On October 6th, 1913, the preschool education regulations commenced for the provisional elementary education legislation. (Akyüz, 2004). However, the first reference to parents and their involvement in preschool education occurs in the MoNE program that was introduced in 1952. The first program of MoNE mentioned the importance of raising healthy children, the necessity of parent and teacher communication and the teacher's role with suggestions for parents about involvement.

In Turkey, the strategies of parent involvement are described by legislations of MoNE. According to fifth article of MoNE's regulation of Parent-School Association, "The schools regulated by Ministry of National Education are responsible for establishing Parent-School Association to develop collaboration between these two counterparts" (MoNE, 1995). As it can be understood from this sentence, it is obvious that our national education system puts great importance on parents' involvement. Besides, 15th National Educational Advisory Board, it was stated that in early childhood educators teach not only children but also their families. Also, it was decided that it is urgent to develop "Parent Involvement Programs" and widespreading "Mother-Father School" in Turkey (MoNE, 1996). The program had stayed almost the same in terms of parent involvement until 2002. MoNE's 2002 Early Childhood Education Program pointed out principles

that focus on the necessity to involve parents in the process of education (MoNE, 2006; Yazar, Çelik, & Kök, 2008).

It is acknowledged that building effective parent involvement strategies enables children to develop intended behaviors. Also, it is said that environmental factors like parenting style, consistent home environment, effective and constructive educational approach of parents, communication between child and parent, need to be considered while planning an educational process with parent involvement (Desforjes & Abouchaar, 2003). However, this program was inadequate for educators who needed assistance with involving parents in early childhood education. For example, there is no explanation about parent involvement types, techniques, and activities. Although there are parent involvement activities and meetings that are scheduled in yearly education plans, there is no explanation about the aim of the activity nor is there any detailed information about the implementation part. Because of such deficiencies in the program, MoNE developed a new early childhood education program in 2006. The importance of parent involvement is addressed and described in this program just like the previous one.

Most importantly, in this program parent involvement is addressed in a separate subtopic that makes this differ from the previous program. The subtopic is called Parent Involvement, it describes the strategies for effective parent involvement. It is stated that to ensure families' active and continuous involvement in both planning and implementing educational activities, families should be informed about what is going on at school. Also, it provides examples

of two questionnaire formats in order to determine what the school wants from the parents and what parents expect from the school. One is a “Parent Involvement Form” and the other one is a “Needs Assessment Form for Family Training”.

In this program, parent involvement techniques are explained clearly in early childhood education. Parent-school communication activities, including educational activities that can be practiced with parents are determined as ‘visits to homes, supportive home activities, personal meetings, general meetings, phone calls, written messages’ (MoNE, 2006, p.78). Also, the frequency of such practices and their importance were explained. For example; general parent meetings should be carried out at least once a semester. Individual teacher-parent meetings should be done whenever required by a teacher or parent. Home visits should be carried out at least once a semester. In the 2006 program, it is stated the teacher may vary the involvement techniques as required” (MoNE, 2006, p.17). Moreover, in the program it is suggested that teachers are responsible for deciding which involvement activities will be applied throughout the education year (MoNE, 2006; Yazar et al., 2008).

The last revision of the early childhood education program was carried out by MoNE in 2013. After the pilot project had been practiced in 2012, the program was found to be sufficient and accepted. When the program was examined, the evolution in the parent involvement comprehension was noticed as well as the developments in daily and monthly education plans, observation forms, and the classroom environment. This comprehensive program covers family involvement in a particular topic. A practical manual was prepared for this context, namely the

“Integrated Family Support Program for Early Childhood Education” manual. It explains not only parent involvement strategies and techniques but also in-school and out-of-school parent involvement activities. The integrated family support program indicates three parts; family education, family involvement, and a teacher guide.

The program covers the details of the involvement process from when the child enters the school until she/he finishes their preschool education. For example, at the very beginning, when the parents decided to send their child to the school, the school administration have to give an identification form to parents. The parents must fill the “Family and Child Identification” form in order to introduce both themselves and their child’s past school experiences, developmental needs, health and self-care conditions, and personal requirements.

Moreover, in early childhood education the first days of school are the hardest times for children, parents and teachers. For this reason, in this program an adaptation program is prepared to cope with the first day stress. The program generally includes activities that can actively involve both parents and children. The adaptation activities are planned to help parents and children get used to the teachers, the school staff, other children, parents and the classroom environment.

In addition to this, there are some forms to get information from parents about how can they contribute to the educational processes and also what subjects that they need to learn about their children. For this aim, the “Family Education Needs Assessment” and “Family Involvement Preference” forms were developed. The new program demonstrates and gives a comprehensive point of view

regarding the issue of parent involvement. The essential part of effective early childhood education, which is family, is considered to be important in the program. Although MoNE programs are guides for the schools, there are no descriptions about the administrators' roles and responsibilities in any of the MoNE programs (MoNE, 2002, 2006, 2013).

Besides such programs, MoNE predominantly controlled the parent involvement programs and mandated every school's formation of a school-family association (SFA). Parent involvement in Turkish schools through SFAs includes assisting in school, volunteering, parent education, parent-teacher conferences, organizing events for parents and students, parent-to-parent communication and training activities, fund raising activities, collaborating with the other agencies to improve the opportunities in schools, communicating with the alumni.

Instead of, the MoNE's regulations, the Mother-Child Education Foundation (MCEF) was developed as an example of non-governmental organizations in 1993. The MCEF has a working relationship with the Turkish government and with institutions like the World Bank and UNICEF. Mother and child education programs are developed by the MCEF in order to raise awareness about education and parenting (Tekin, 2011). Another effort that included the involvement of parents in Turkey was the Turkish Early Enrichment Project (TEEP). The TEEP project put emphasis on the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters and the Mother Enrichment Program (MEP). It provides guidance to mothers on how to use cognitive materials such as toys, puzzles, and books effectively for the benefit of their children. Moreover; the project

enlightens mothers about the importance of the early years, mother and child interactions, the mother's role, child development. The results of this project show positive results for children's overall development and school achievement regarding the cognitive tests and school records (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1991). As mentioned before, due the government developments, some schools have parents who are included in the process of supporting their children's development and school education. Consequently, the partnership philosophy is leading policy makers and NGOs to take steps to develop programs that involve parents in the ways that positively benefit educational and social outcomes (Tekin, 2011).

2.2. Parent Involvement Theories

Besides, the researchers that have contributed to the field of parent involvement, there are some theorists who developed models for establishing appropriate and effective parent involvement in schools. Epstein (1995) took the theory of parent involvement and transformed it into a more comprehensive model by describing the following six types of parent involvement: (1) Parenting, (2) Communicating, (3) Volunteering, (4) Learning at home, (5) Decision making, and (6) Collaborating with the community. Actually, Epstein (2001) argues that the terminology of parent involvement does not refer to what the theory aims to do. It is claimed that the term of "parent involvement" is limiting. Because she says "Families come to school with their children. Even though they do not come in person, families come in children's minds and hearts and in their hopes and dreams" (p.4). So that, it should be changed to the term of "school, family and community partnership" (Epstein, 2001).

The theory of six typologies demonstrates various practices of partnership for families, schools and communities. It is said that each type of involvement has its own challenges, redefinitions, and results. So that, schools have the chance to select the best practices for them in order to reach their goal (Epstein et al., 2002). Moreover, it is suggested that effective family, school and community partnerships depend on the culture and community that the school belongs to (Epstein, 2001). Similarly, the results of a longitudinal study about home school partnership at two urban schools in New York and Boston city showed that each school has a culture and it directs the school to use various methods for partnership (Swap, 1990).

Fantuzzo et al. (2000) reviewed Epstein's six types of parent involvement according to the needs of preschool, kindergarten and the first level of education. Fantuzzo and colleagues (2000) revised Epstein's typology of parent involvement and divided the process of involvement into three categories; Home-based Involvement, School-based Involvement, and Home-School Conferencing.

Home-based Involvement: The category of involvement identifies active learning in the home environment. Home based involvement demonstrates the practices of creating home spaces for activities, allowing effective time and space for children to develop their skills at home.

School-based Involvement: It involves activities carried out at school. Having parents active at school by volunteering in the classroom, going on school trips, attending school activities or celebrations with other parents are examples of school based involvement activities.

Home-school conferencing: This type of involvement is demonstrated when the family and the school communicate with each other in order to give or get information about the child's educational experiences, development and progress at the school. A good example for this category may be meeting with the child's educators to talk about how the child is progressing in school.

The Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ) was developed to analyze the dimensions of family involvement with preschool to elementary school education levels. (Fantuzzo, Tighe & Childs, 2000). There have been many researchers who use the scale of FIQ for instrumentation for their studies (Ingram, Wolfe & Lieberman, 2007; LaForett & Mendez, 2010; Wanders, Mendez & Downer, 2007). Since this categorization of parent involvement is accepted as the most accurate theory with significant correlations, the research is based on the theory of Fantuzzo's Family Involvement (2000). There are many theories that have guided the research and practice of parent involvement in education (Comer, 1995; Epstein, 1995; Fullan, 1982; Gordon, 1979; Honig, 1979; Ziegler, 1970). Each of these theories conceptualizes parent involvement as it has various dimensions that involve the home and school relationship.

2.2.1. Benefits of Parent Involvement

Parent involvement has many benefits for all the counterparts of education; students, parents, teacher and administrators (Epstein et al. 2002). It is stated that working together is essential for the aim of educating the next generation successfully. Despite the lack of consensus on the parents' needs, there is a common belief that the community and family should provide families with

the time, resources, and support that children need. Each educational issue concerns the child's family. (Berger, 2008). If home and school acknowledge the benefits of parent involvement and they become meaningfully connected through the children, the partnership will promote the effectiveness of the school (Kochhar-Bryant, 2008). School based involvement includes parents volunteering in the classroom, going on field trips, or taking their child to school (Epstein, 1995; Fantuzzo et al., 2000).

The empirical literature has shown that school involvement gives academic and social advantages to children. The children of parents that show high levels of involvement demonstrate greater levels of social competency (Parker et al., 1987), more adaptive behavior and early basic school skills (Marcon, 1999). Also these children have certain academic achievements in math and reading (Griffith, 1996, Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996). Moreover, the research shows that the children whose parents are effectively involved, have higher rates of school completion (Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, & Mann, 2001).

Parent involvement differs according to grade level. The meaning of parent involvement and its implementation varies between preschool, elementary school and high school. Research results show that over half of the intervention studies about parent involvement were conducted with elementary age students. A small percentage of studies were carried out with students in preschool. The percentage of studies about parent involvement at preschool level is 22.6 percent, which is still very little (Moorman-Kim et. al, 2012). Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, & Sandler (2005) pointed out that parent involvement has many benefits that can

never be linked with a certain level of education. Actually, it is a requirement that all schools should provide education to children since each child has the right to access qualified education with effective and appropriate parent involvement.

Studies show that the relationship between parent activities at school and children's emotional development when the parents communicate with the school in terms of the child's progress at school, results in increased-motivation of the children in school. (Warner, 2012). In addition, other research shows that high social skills were found to be related to the positive and strong relationships between parents and teachers (Iruka, Winn, Kingsley, & Orthodoxou, 2011).

Although, the parents might have some questions about parent involvement, the research shows that they are ready to work with schools to build collaborative relationships between home and school (Knopf & Swick, 2007). Moorman-Kim et al. (2012) argues that the parents are minded to collaborate with the school, show self-reliance for involving and become more satisfied from school as they get involved in the educational process (Shirvani, 2007; Walberg, 2004).

Gestwicki (2004) stated that families can benefit from their involvement in three ways. Firstly, the development of communication with schools makes parents experience the feeling of parenting support. Furthermore, families have a chance to introduce new child rearing skills. Lastly, when families receive positive comments about their children's progress at school, it fosters their self-esteem. There are several benefits of parent involvement for schools that are stated by various researchers. Walberg (2004) stated that increased parent

involvement is beneficial because parent involvement brings some advantages like; a more open school climate, higher student performance, more motivated teachers and more developed effectiveness of schools.

Yıldırım and Dönmez (2008) conducted a study about teacher's beliefs about the parent-school partnership. The teachers stated that the parent-school partnership makes their job easier as it makes children more successful, it gives the school various resources and it supports the learning community. In addition to these benefits, Gestwicki (2004) argued that parent involvement gives certain advantages to the teachers. For example; with the help of parent involvement teachers gain a certain amount of knowledge about the child's family life and this helps teachers to take the right steps for the child. Moreover, with parent involvement activities, teachers become more effective in teaching and teachers have parents as a resource. Feeling efficacy and competent about their job is another advantage for teachers when they have effective parent involvement in their schools.

2.2.2. Barriers to Parent Involvement

Parent involvement processes could be defined as the process of parents' willingness to be actively involved in their children's education (Heynes, 2005). It is important, but in schools there are still some problems due to the lack of parent involvement. The effective partnership between home and school is hindered by some barriers.

The barriers that disrupt having effective parent involvement are described as roadblocks between parents and teachers. There are certain roadblocks both

parents and schools develop. Parental roadblocks are “protector role, inadequate me role, avoidance role, indifferent parent role, don’t make waves role, club waving advocate role” (Berger, 2008, p.180). Also, there are some examples of roadblocks that schools bring ‘authority figure role, sympathizing counselor role, pass the buck role, protect the empire role, busy teacher role’ (Berger, 2008, p.181).

If the school staff are untrained, school staff or families behave inappropriately, families take indifferent roles in education, communication systems are insufficient, families and schools have interaction with limited facilities. (Christenson, 1999; Parker et al., 2001). Adelman (1991) categorized barriers in a different manner, institutional, personal or impersonal parts. It was stated that institutional barriers can be restrictions of time, money and space or the institutional vision and mission may not correspond with parent involvement or the staff may have a lack of skills for collaboration with families. Examples of personal barriers refer to parents’ negative perceptions or a lack of information about involvement or time restrictions. Impersonal aspect barriers include parents’ negative perceptions about rearing their child, busy work life and school transportation problems.

Most of the parents acknowledge the importance of their involvement, however, they misunderstand the goal and the requirements of their involvement (Quadri, 2012). Although, they can actively come to school and participate in involvement activities like signing report cards, reading newsletters, chaperoning holiday parties, including activities such as participating in the school decision-

making process, providing input to teachers about how to assist their child (Kochhar-Bryant, 2008), there are still some parents who see parent involvement as helping them with their homework. It is claimed that schools have to transform the traditional notions of parent involvement and the preconceptions of parents (Quadri, 2012).

Hornby (2000) examines the issue of barriers from a different point of view. It is claimed that barriers that hinder effective involvement derive from family demographic factors (parents' socio economic level, educational level, and age), the culture of the community (cultural attitudes or beliefs) or the school culture (ideas and beliefs of the school) (Hornby, 2000). Moreover, the research that was conducted in the context of Turkey reveals that the parent-school partnership is hindered by some barriers derived from teacher's beliefs. Teachers state that the workload of parents, parent's gossiping about the teaching practices, some parents' unwillingness to attend school activities, and negative attitudes towards school because of bad school experiences are the most important barriers derived from parents (Yıldırım & Dönmez, 2008).

2.3. School Administration

School administration is the other core subject of this study. The role of administrators in parent involvement has great importance. In a school, since the administrators are the leaders of the educational process, they guide, shape, and provide the appropriate environment for parent involvement. For schools, it is crucial to have administrators who are conscious of the parent involvement process and provide effective leadership to support education. There are many

roles and responsibilities for administrators to make sure that there is a proper climate for involving parents (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009). The administrators' strategies, educational philosophies, organizational visions and missions affect the practice of parent involvement activities. Thus, in this section, the importance of the school administration is described. Moreover, the fundamental concepts related to parent involvement like leadership, school climate, trust and decision-making are discussed in the following section.

School administration is a social science and management field that has been developed over the last 40 years (Bush, 1999). It is shaped with the help of the theories that are declaring the context of educational organizations (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). Educational administrators inevitably feel the need for theories to guide them in making choices. Understanding, predicting, and controlling behavior in organizations can be analyzed by the theories. There are many theories explaining administrative processes in educational organizations; some are categorized as historical organizational theories, some are current theories.

The role of leadership in parent involvement is crucial. Management and leadership differs according to how administrators practice the organizational skills. For example; the aim of the school, description of their self-perception communication style with the staff, parents, and students, and transformative or not (Weber, 1996). Leadership must be built on relationships of respect and regard by modeling, demonstrating, making positive interactions. If the administrators have effective leadership skills, they put importance on children and their families, and their thoughts, also the parents participate and have a say in school

activities. The administrator should have a desire to involve parents in the partnership of the school. There are many leadership styles in the field. Ferguson (2005) states that strong leaders can create a collaborative partnership among the school stakeholders that includes home and other communities. While participatory leadership as described by Workman (2006) allows leadership to empower people to believe in themselves. Participatory leadership builds self-esteem and self-awareness in the employees. The participatory leadership style is about “power with” not “power over” (Workman, 2006). According to Kapur (2007), visionary leadership must be self-trained to perceive the future societal needs from a business perspective. Collaborative leadership entails the ability of several leaders to make decisions while maintaining control of subordinates. Situational leadership is derived from the notion that leaders adapt their leadership behavior to their follower’s maturity level, based on the willingness and ability of employees to perform a specific task (Marzano et al., 2005). Transactional leadership is defined as “trading one thing for another (quid pro quo), and transformational leadership emphasizes change” (p. 14).

Among all of these leadership styles, the instructional leadership style has become increasingly important in developing the school’s effectiveness and to impact teaching and learning. There are many types of instructional leadership; however, in the research studies about instructional leadership, researchers mainly use the theory of Weber’s (1996) Model of Instructional Leadership. Weber (1996) defines the instructional leadership as the shared leadership and site-based management which does not correspond with the title of “administrator” and the

school organizational structure. In this model, Weber discusses the elements of an instructional leadership. The elements are stated as defining the school's mission, managing the curriculum and instruction, promoting a positive learning climate, observing and improving instruction, assessing the instructional program.

Firstly, the instructional leaders are expected to create a vision for the school to reach the educational aim and this vision needs to be developed collaboratively with all the stakeholders of the school. Next, the instructional leaders monitor, guide and support the classroom activities to see what is going on in the process of instruction, does it corresponds with the vision, are there any problems or missing educational resources. Thirdly, the leaders are responsible for supporting the positive climate by providing an open learning environment and establishing good communication. Another important role of instructional leaders is to keep the instructional process alive by continuous observation and improving. Last but not least the role of instructional leaders is the curriculum evaluations regarding the plan, design and analysis of the assessment.

The instructional leaders are expected to show three fundamental roles, effective communication, provision of resources, and service as an instructional resource (Locke & Latham, 2002). These roles are defined as the goal-setting theory that is the basic version of Weber's Model. This model captures all of the elements of other theories by highlighting the most crucial roles and responsibilities of instructional leaders. The instructional leaders are expected to show three types of responsibilities, effective communication, provision of resources, and service as an instructional resource (Locke & Latham, 2002).

The importance of the leadership style of the administrators in developing strong partnership programs to involve families has been consistently identified in research (Sanders & Simon, 2002; Sheldon, 2003; Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004; Westmorelan, Rosenberg, Lopez, & Weiss, 2009). Various leadership styles can result in a variety of work experience for teachers in a program (Marzano et al., 2005). Rotherham and Mead (2003) supported that as greater accountability demands are imposed upon administrators, additional leadership strategies are needed to succeed in securing highly qualified teachers. Moreover, if administrators are able to exhibit the proper leadership strategies, the likelihood of assembling and maintaining a highly qualified parent involvement practice will increase. Among these leadership strategies, establishing school climate and having shared decision-making will be explored in this study.

2.3.1. School Climate

One of the most critical issues for school administration that impacts parent involvement is the school climate. People's behavior, interests, thoughts, demands and points of view in a current workplace give shape to the climate of the organization. In schools, teachers, administration, and the other school staff and the relationship among them have an effect on the school climate (Bloom, Hentschel, & Bella, 2010). Studies show that there is a strong connection between parent involvement and the school climate (Dixon, 2008; Henderson & Berla, 1994). Researchers have acknowledged that administrators set the climate for parent involvement in schools (Desimone, Finn-Stevenson, & Henrich, 2000; Hiatt-Michael, 2006; Sanders & Sheldon, 2009; Van Voorhis & Sheldon, 2004).

But, this kind of climate does not come up instantly, it requires a great amount of work, time and being dedicated for building partnerships. (Fiese, Eckert & Spagnola, 2006). It is suggested that creating a positive school climate can be possible by developing partnerships and communication with parents (Henderson & Berla, 1994).

The school administrators need to ensure that they are treating all stakeholders equally regardless of their background ethnicity, race, gender, or socio-economic status. Moreover, it is important to create opportunities for parents to participate in leadership and decision-making roles and engaging in conversations about the school climate. In order to support a positive school climate, it is also important to set the environment for explicit learning and teaching, modeling, and enforce the school rules with consistency. In developing supportive relationships in the school it is crucial to make people feel they are connected to each other, in a safe, and trusting school environment. (Bloom, Hentschel, & Bella, 2010). Furthermore, it is stated that using strategies that enhance social, emotional, and academic learning, and collaborating with school staff and parents to address students' development is another necessity for having a positive school climate.

It is pointed out that trust is defined as a potential factor affecting a school's effectiveness and school climate (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991). In addition, teachers characterize the school climate and administrator support as important features of parent involvement (Becker & Epstein, 1982). Moreover, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) argued that 'a mutual trust has been shown to

be one of the most critical factors facilitating the coordination of activities and home-school collaboration' (p.783). Educational institutions that are defined as trusting are the places where educational leadership and management skills are demonstrated effectively. If the parents and school staff feel autonomy and enough confidence about having their say about an issue, then it can be said that there is trust. If they know that the administrators trust them about completing their duties in a standard way, this shows that the school culture is built on trust meaning that they are not strictly controlled or supervised. However, in distrustful environments the administrator shows power by regulating strict rules or responsibilities for the staff (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001).

Furthermore, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) state that trust happens when a person has the confidence that the other side is vulnerable. Trust relies on confidence, being safe, dependable, and faithful. Three components of trust are investigated, trust in colleagues, trust in the administrator, and trust in parents and students in different studies (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The components of trust are described in the following section.

Vulnerability: Interdependence is needed to develop trust. Individuals' demands and interests cannot be met without having the vulnerability. It would be pointless to expect trusting relationships when vulnerability, in different terms interdependence, did not exist (Hoy & Tarter, 2004).

Benevolence: One of the most important aspects of trust is benevolence, that is, reliability on a person's or a thing's wellbeing. In another words, it is the assurance of no harm in trusted parts (Cummings & Bromily 1996).

Reliability: It is the credibility of actions that take—place and the continuous assurance of trusting (Hoy & Tarter, 2004).

Competence: This is related to the performance of consistent and relevant tasks to a certain standard. Also it is one of the most critical components of trust (Hoy & Tarter, 2004).

Honesty: It is about openness to the truth. The expression of true thoughts, ideas and facts are essential for integrity (Hoy & Tarter, 2004).

Openness: Openness is an important component for organizational trust. It is about acting with integrity regarding relations among staff. Being compassionate and making sure that relevant information is shared and people are treated in the right manner is the key ingredient of this (Hoy & Tarter, 2004).

Trust: According to Hoy and Tarter (2004) in school organizations, the crucial part is to build an open and positive environment. If the parent and the school do not develop a trusting relationship, the effectiveness of cooperating, the intimacy of communication, the meaning of the meetings, and opportunities to build a partnership will turn to a pointless endeavor. Studies shows that an inviting school climate, and welcoming teacher actions results in higher student reading skills. - (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

It is stated that there is a positive relationship between trust and parent involvement. When the trust level decreases, the school automatically drops the parents and community out from school administration (Forsyth et al., 2006). A certain level of trust is needed in order to have parents as partners in education.

Moreover, Bryk and Schneider (2002) argued that trust in teachers is another significant issue, in fact the nature of their interaction, the relationship between the teachers and the parents has a significant influence on the quality of their partnership. Likewise, it has been found that parents are more willing to participate in their children's education if schools have organizations to understand the needs of parents (Hoover-Dempsey & Sander, 1997).

2.3.2. Decision-making with Parents

In education, shared decision-making is related to the active participation of all counterparts of education, consequently it is one of the core parts of parent involvement. When the school staff, parents, or community members are included in the decision-making process, school performance improves (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). There is a belief that both parents and teachers included in decision-making would be more dedicated to the decision when it is made together. Also, they become more collaborative with the ownership of the schools (Goldring & Greenfield, 2002).

It is said that the school administrator must acknowledge and apply parent involvement approaches. Because, when school includes the various groups and an informal communication structure exists, it plays a very crucial part in assisting cooperation. To ensure cooperation, the essential point is to become integrated within. (Bursalıoğlu, 1987). Having a school with democratic principles, the most important circumstance is that each component of the educational institutions, teacher, students and family, need to be involved in the decision-making process. (Karaman-Kepenekçi, 2003). If the schools get parents involved and they have a

say on the issues that interest them, the parents become the main resource. In addition, it would bring positive outcomes like increasing the academic standards of the school (Desforges, & Abouchaar, 2003).

Establishing and maintaining the participation of families in education is a process. In this process, parents have the primary responsibility since they are the first social system that children have experienced (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). The responsibilities about involvement take place at home first. The educational process should include family responsibilities and roles that must be taken for building effective parent school collaboration. Firstly, the research says that the characteristics of the family are an important issue to support the educational process of children (Dauber & Epstein, 1993). Each parent has his or her own experiences of school whether it is good or not. In addition to this, they all want to get not only the education service, they also want to get the attention that they and their children deserve during the educational process. Another important characteristic that parents need to consider is some concerns about trust when getting involved can develop. This affects the relationship between schools and parents (Davis, 2000). Thus, they should trust themselves and build self-efficacy about getting involved in the educational processes. The parents need to be aware that they are the most effective resource to remember and recognize the practice of what the child learns at school and it makes a real difference. By having parents welcomed in, they will become equal partners in schools. So that, it is crucial for parents to become active at school. They can become either a volunteer, a collaborator, or a decision maker.

The perception of parents about their role in relation to their involvement in education is another important issue that affects the family-school partnership. Responsibilities of families can be explained by three different concepts, namely; parent focused, school focused, and partnership focused. The parent focused concept refers to the parents believing that they are the first people who are responsible for educating their children. However, school focused parents thought that that is one of the school's duties. Despite these two concepts the most appropriate one is partnership focused parents since it fosters a sense of community, because parents thought that both families and school have an equal role, they must collaborate with each other (Reed, Jones, Walker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2000). This study shows that the parent involvement issue differs according to their perception about the roles and responsibilities of education. Thus, parents need to take into consideration this issue and have to acknowledge that they have duties towards their children's education.

One of the most important key points for a school's success is the shared commitment to and the belief in every child's ability to learn and reach their full potential. In a school, administrators, teachers, school staff, and parents collectively share the responsibility of supporting every child to reach their potential. For this aim, school administrators have essential responsibilities and roles. One of the most important responsibilities is to include parent involvement strategies and practices in educational activities. For this reason, this study is basically designed to find out the perception of preschool administrators about parent involvement.

To conclude, in order to analyze the administrators' parent involvement strategies, The Family Involvement Theory and to identify the roles of administrators in parent involvement, the Model of Instructional Leadership is used as the theoretical framework of this study (Fantuzzo et al., 2000; Weber, 1996).

The School environment is the first place where parent involvement happens. So that, the school administrators have the role of creating a school environment that welcomes families and establishes effective strategies for involving parents. School administrators have primary liability for determining how parents can get involved, when they can get involved and how much support they need to become more involved. Ferguson (2005) states that the most important responsibility is to develop a school culture that embraces parents. In addition, teachers suggest that the school climate and administrator support are important features of parent involvement (Becker & Epstein, 1982). There are many researchers who have acknowledged that administrators set the climate for parent involvement in schools (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009; Hiatt-Michael, 2006; Van Voorhis & Sheldon, 2003; Desimone, Finn Stevenson, & Henrich, 2000).

Another way school administrators and teachers demonstrate an awareness of the significance of parent involvement is by making an effort to learn about students' families and reach out in a culturally responsive manner, which promotes respect, acceptance, and support (Sanders et al., 2009). Recognizing that parents are important sources of information and having a great amount of influence on their children's development is beneficial for all involved

stakeholders (Walker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2006; Domina, 2005). Also, administrators have the responsibility to organize education for school staff. As, Swick and McNight (1989) mentioned a program for educating the school workers causes that they become more open and clear to parents. It is a fact that school staff are more likely to encourage parent involvement when they receive adequate professional development to learn the skills necessary to encourage partnerships. Schools can create a climate that welcomes families with the administrator playing a significant role in developing this kind of participatory environment (Swick, 2004; Walker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2006).

2.4. Review of Literature

2.4.1. Parent Involvement in the World

Several researchers have acknowledged the importance of parent involvement (Auerbach; 2009; Epstein; 1995; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Shaw, 2008). As Henderson and Berla (1994) summarized the literature on the positive relationship between parent involvement and school achievement of children by saying that “The family makes critical contributions to student achievement from earliest childhood through high school. When parents are involved at school, not just at home, children do better in school and they stay at school longer” (p. 160).

Actually even before research about parent involvement was developed and extended, the need of parents in education had been noticed. For example, at the beginning of the 20th century, parents had started to get involved with nursery schools in the United States of America (USA). Most of the parents started to

collaborate with nursery schools at the beginning of the 1920's (Tekin, 2011). At the beginning of the 1920's, parent involvement was only for parents who wished to learn about their children (Gestwicki, 2007).

In the USA, the moves that have been taken for involving parents in education are research studies to support parent-school partnerships, regulations by governmental legislations, recommendations by professional organizations such as the NAEYC. It can be seen that parent involvement in ECE has become more valued in the USA. Unique regulations for parent involvement programs occurred in USA. Introducing the legislation of No Child Left Behind in 2001, parent information and resource centers (PIRC) were established. This platform provides resources to assist parents of children identified for improvement to reach the objectives of the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S.A. Department of Education, 2003); however, this project was mostly related to elementary and secondary education. American preschools were also directed to provide training for parents to enhance the involvement of other parents and coordinate parent involvement activities with other programs such as Head Start (Gestwicki, 2007).

In the following section, there are some examples of parent involvement practices from developing countries that resemble Turkey. These countries were especially chosen for the study since it would give appropriate information about what the current situation is in other developing countries and what can be done in Turkey. The project named 'School open to parents' has been implemented since 2007, in Croatia (Doolan, 2010) in response to the low level of parent involvement. The main purpose of this project is to stimulate the active

participation of parents in their children's education. Under the Law on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools (National Gazette of Croatia, 2008), schools are required to maintain a Parents' Council with a representative for each class and one member in the school board. Although the Parents' Council does not have the right to direct participation in the schooling process, they are required to be a part of the decision-making process by giving recommendations on curriculum and extracurricular activities (Corkalo Biruski & Ajduković, 2009). Parents' Councils create opportunities for parent involvement in schools.

In Denmark, parents have the right to be involved in their children's schooling. They are accepted as partners of the school and are encouraged to provide home-based educational activities for their children and they take part in annual meetings to discuss the curriculum and year-long informal activities (Ravn, 2003). Every school in Denmark has a school board which is responsible for ensuring accountability, defining the goals and objectives of the school and the community, etc. Each board is required to have at least 5 representatives from parents and parent representatives must have the majority. Besides, teachers are required to maintain informal communication with parents (Ravn, 2003).

The level of parent involvement is still not at the desired level in France, despite the recent reforms of the French Ministry of National Education (Blanpain, 2006). They try hard to empower parents as authorities however the nature of the French education system limits their efforts since it is supremely centralized like Turkey (Castles, 1993). Likewise, they support parent involvement but they do not involve them in the decision-making process. In

Australia, school-family cooperation in preschool education is an urgent topic. The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC), established in 1993, is a non-profit organization based in Sydney. In 1994, the government prepared a program called Quality Improvement and Accreditation Scheme (QIAS) that aims constant cooperation between school and home. The program enables families to share their ideas about educational programs, prepare their own program and even gives an opportunity to practice it (Hughes & Macnaughton, 2001).

In the world parent involvement has been studied and discussed. As we can observe many of different countries take steps and carry out studies in order to increase parent involvement in their countries. The common issue regarding school-home cooperation; is that effective parent involvement is a must for effective education.

2.4.2. Parent Involvement in Turkey

As well as the projects for developing parent involvement in Turkey, there are various types of research studies that show the importance, the necessities and the problems regarding parent involvement that Turkish educators face. It is stated that parent involvement in early childhood education aims to ensure the continuous and whole education of children. Establishing effective ways of communicating with parents, supporting home education at school and school education at home are necessary for healthy parent involvement (Köksal Eğmez, 2008). The study shows that the significance of parent involvement is acknowledged. However, in Turkey regardless of the projects that have been carried out by both MoNE and non-governmental organizations and widely

documented advantages of parent involvement on the process of child development and early childhood education, there are still many schools that have the problem of inadequate parent involvement (Erdoğan & Kasımoğlu, 2010). The study from Turkey suggests that family type and life style have a great effect on parent involvement activities. Teachers, parent and administrators stated that the factors that limit the practice of home based involvement are time restrictions, busy schedules, tiredness, derived from harsh work hours (Yaşar Ekici, 2016).

Another study has shown that parents with a low socio-economic status are less likely to attend parent involvement activities (Zembat & Haktanır, 2005). In addition, according to the results, the factors that hinder the involvement process are teachers, administrators and parents who do not know exactly what parent involvement is. Also, parents shared responsibility in the educational process is not possible. They think they would have all the responsibility for their child's learning and they would be expected to spend a lot of money because of some administrative duties at school (Zembat & Haktanır, 2005). In the light of the result of these studies, it can be said that whether it is about school or home, in Turkey there are great problems that prevent parents from getting involved in education.

2.4.3. Parent Involvement and School Administration

The early childhood education school administrators are in charge of various responsibilities (Mandell & Murray, 2009). Leadership in early childhood institutions is a multi-dimensional subject. Larkin (1999) shows the distinct point between the preschools' structure and the interpersonal relationships in preschool

settings. It is also claimed that in most of the early childhood education settings the organizational structure is horizontal. Horizontal decentralization is one of the three basic dimensional types of an organization that enables shared authority, easy accessibility to administrators and involvement of all staff in the decision-making processes. (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). Larkin (1999) argues that since there are a small number of students and school staff in preschools, it is easier to build close relationship with parents. Such distinctive features of preschools assign different roles and responsibilities to the administrators of early childhood education institutions, to teachers, and supervisors (Larkin, 1999). Thus, preschool administrators need to admit that there are distinctive requirements for ensuring parent involvement in preschools.

Jones (2007) states that preschool education administration is mostly derived from interpersonal skills, which rely on developing positive relationships and motivating people around them. Leaders who display consideration for their followers are considered to be people oriented. They express mutual trust, warmth and respect among organization members. Such leaders typically expend great effort to establish and maintain satisfying and positive relationships with group members. These leaders will attempt to collaborate with subordinates before making important decisions. These would seem to be important characteristics of preschool administrators indicating that an increased focus on hiring program administrators with these leadership skills or providing training for them to develop these skills is warranted (Jones, 2007).

Preschool programs administrators may use the findings of the research study to improve their own understanding of leadership style and teacher job satisfaction within preschool programs, and to develop training and professional development opportunities for preschool administrators and teachers (Vandegrift & Greene, 1992). The characteristics of the schools to encourage the parents to get involved in their children's education can change the effect of parent involvement that will end up with positive consequences in children's lives. It is shown that when the school workers are educated in a professional manner, they are not affected by the parents compared with non-educated ones (Joffe, 1977). The results from numerous studies confirm that administrators are not adequately prepared to implement parent involvement programs (LaPointe, Meyerson, & Darling-Hammond, 2006; Orr, 2006; Westmoreland, Rosenberg, Lopez, & Weiss, 2009, Johnson, Rochkind, & Doble, 2008). The study shows that administrators think that parent involvement is a struggle for them. The parents look for the administrators' leadership and if they do not see a good strategy, they do not participate in education (Johnson et al., 2008). In addition, Westmoreland et al. (2009) points out that in many schools even though parents are ready to take steps for their children's education, there is a low level of parent involvement. Because parents cannot have enough information and support from the school. It is stated that systematic parent involvement and shared responsibility is only possible with district leadership and capacity building. LaPointe et al. (2006) Administrators are responsible for the needs and demands of all stakeholders of education; students, parents, teachers, state agencies, officers. In addition, the requirements of this job

are getting complicated since the public school administrators' have traditional approaches that do not fit the recent leadership challenges. Thus, it is suggested that leadership education in universities must be revised since they are referring to the role of leadership not only for school improvement but also supporting a positive, honest and open school climate. The programs should reflect new understandings about how leadership can be an educational tool for developing and supporting staff and creating school conditions that enhance students' learning (Orr, 2006).

In a study conducted in Turkey, the school administrators say that the most common handicap is parents refusing to admit when their children have a problem (Büte & Balcı, 2010). To avoid such situations, the schools must have some techniques and strategies. There are some strategies that are used to ensure that parents get information about their children, continuously and regularly. As mentioned before, this includes personal meetings, group meetings, phone calls, notes, seminars etc. It is shown that, 96.9% of preschools use personal meetings, 80% of schools use meetings and seminars, 90.8% of schools use education settings in order to inform parents. 3.8% of schools use parent bulletins, 3.1% of schools share information notes with parents, 0.8% of schools make home visits. According to this study, it can be concluded that the most commonly used technique is personal meetings and home visits are rarely practiced (Budunç, 2007).

Moreover, it is said that the school staff including administrators are reluctant to interfere with the administrators' jobs. To prevent this, they start to

alienate the parents and maybe unconsciously they hinder their involvement in school. Reports demonstrate that the importance of appropriate involvement should be realized by both the school staff and parents (Kartal, 2008). In the preschools, teachers and administrators are concerned about the unconscious behaviors of parents when they need to be involved in the educational processes. The teachers and administrators feel uncomfortable when parents try to intervene in their profession, control their decisions and put pressure on what to do and how to do it. It is pointed out that in the involvement process most of the school workers are complaining that the parents are unaware of how they could become involved. The research shows that most teachers and administrators are reluctant about parents' involvement. Because they feel annoyed when a parent comes and interferes with the teaching process and burdens them. (Erdoğan & Demirkasımoğlu, 2010). Hence, the school staff may develop a negative perception about the involvement of parents in the educational process.

Regarding the study carried out in Turkey, teachers and administrators think that home-based school activities are insufficient. Teachers, parent and administrators shared the factors that limit the practice of home based involvement. These are time restrictions, busy schedules, exhausting work hours (Yaşar Ekici, 2016). Besides, Erdoğan and Kasımoğlu (2010) suggested that although teachers acknowledge the importance of building partnerships with families, somehow they do not. Teachers argued that parents restrict them with negative attitudes like trying to teach teachers and administrators what and how to educate their children, acting like they know teaching better than teachers do.

Another important result of this study is that since the teachers and administrators believe that parent involvement is time consuming and tiring, they do not make sufficient effort to involve parents in the educational process.

School-based activities are mostly sufficient according to administrators, whereas teachers think that they are not. According to teachers and administrators, the reason for this is the same: busy work schedules. However, the parents do not share the same opinion. They stated that the school does not place enough importance on parent involvement activities in the educational program and that is why school based practices are limited (Yaşar-Ekici, 2016).

In addition, parents stated that they are reluctant to attend meetings because they think that they will only receive negative feedback or the requests for financial support from the school. (Yıldırım & Dönmez, 2008). Similarly, in another study conducted in Turkey, it is suggested that parents require school administrators to prepare activities that are school related and want to be active in the decision-making for school. Yet, school administrators and teachers want parents to take facilitator and volunteer roles (Gökçe, 2000).

Furthermore, a recent study about parent beliefs on barriers to family-school partnerships show that teachers' negative attitudes is one of the limitations. The results indicate that teachers prevent collaboration with parents by keeping them at a distance, treating them as if they do not know about children and school, showing negative and dominant attitudes (Yıldırım & Dönmez, 2008).

2.5. Summary of Literature Review

As we can see from the research that has been carried out until now, it shows that Turkish parents think positively about involvement in their children's education. It is said that the parents admit that they have to take an active role and take responsibility for the education of their own child. Furthermore, a study indicated that parents in Turkey feel confident themselves in guiding their children. In other words, they think that are comparably effective when it is about educating their children, also when they get involved in school education, their involvement causes positive outcomes (Tekin, 2011).

On the other hand, the school administrators' negative perception about parent involvement creates great problems in the process of involving parents. To overcome these problems, the issue should be investigated more and in the light of these investigations the researchers should come up with practical solutions (Erdoğan & Kasımoğlu, 2010).

Budunç (2007) claims that in Turkey, most of the preschool teachers believe that school administrators are successful in making a contribution to parent involvement implementations. The results are important since the recent studies link positive motivational beliefs with effective involvement. (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001). But most importantly, it results in the positive development of children (Epstein, 2011).

Parent involvement should be issued with the understanding that parents are an important variable of children's development, defining the factors that influence involvement should be a consideration of school administrators

(Feuerstein, 2000). For this reason, this study corresponds to the administrators' perceptions about parent involvement and the activities that they implement in their schools. In this way, the insufficiencies and inefficiencies in the involvement process will be clearer and it will be easier to develop them.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter describes the methodology of the study with details of the design, sampling, data collection tools and procedures, data analyses of the study. It is demonstrated that school administrators have many critical responsibilities, but most importantly they have to first build a partnership between family and school and then foster this partnership (Auerbach, 2009). In addition to this, the research has shown that the school administration's approach to the issue of parent involvement makes a difference in parent involvement (FERGUSON, 2005). The idea of studying this research is derived from this fact. Preschool administrators' understanding of parent involvement is an essential part of this study. This study aims to investigate parent involvement activities in preschool education from the administrators' point of view. The main purpose of this study is to provide some evidence about the perception and practices of administrators regarding parent involvement in the types of home based, school based and home-school conferencing activities that they implement to maintain parent involvement in the school. Besides, the aim is to demonstrate the administrators' definition of their leadership in the involvement process and their suggestions about how to progress in establishing effective parent involvement.

Within the framework of the broad statement of the purpose of this study, the research questions are shown in this section.

1. What is the perception of preschool administrators regarding parent involvement?
2. What are the home based, school based and home-school conferencing based practices of the preschools?
3. How do preschool administrators define the practice of leadership in regards to parent involvement?

3.1. Research Design

The design choice of the study was shaped by the nature of the research questions. The study aimed to show administrators' perceptions about the issue of the parent involvement activities at preschool level, the researcher included the key participants of the education, the administrators. To investigate this topic, the qualitative method was chosen because this method includes the importance of process, tends to analyze the data inductively, demonstrates words and pictures, and supports the source of data gathered from a natural setting (Creswell, 2012). By selecting qualitative research, it is possible for the researcher to understand more, analyze and resolve the situations and cases of parent involvement that are affected by personal opinions, beliefs, impression of school administrators.

Thus, the researcher had chosen the qualitative approach to contribute to this aim of the study. Another difference between qualitative methods from the other research methods is the results of qualitative studies are demonstrated without using numbers. This study's central premise is of the perception of administrators about parent involvement, so the qualitative method design is more suitable for the current study because it is almost impossible to refer to personal

thoughts and ideas with numbers. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2011) “the aim of the qualitative studies is to present the readers with a descriptive and realistic picture about the topic.” (p.41). For this reason, the study was done as a qualitative research study. Because the nature of the study requires more detailed or deeper information about the issue to answer the research questions, this leads us to use certain tools and procedures with the qualitative approach that meets the holistic design requirements. (Creswell, 2012). There are various types of qualitative research, used by several studies.

For the data collection, the interview method was used. Because interviewing is described as the most important technique among the other data collection techniques used by qualitative researchers (Fetterman, 1989). There are various types of interview, however, a semi-structured interview was used in this study. The reason for choosing a semi-structured interview is that it gives many opportunities to the interviewee and the researcher eventually. Firstly, semi-structured interviews are not restricted with certain categories of answers. Rather in semi-structured interviews, the interviewee has more chance to share more of his/her thoughts, ideas and feelings about an issue which the researcher can analyze. It is argued that while implementing a semi-structured interview, “although the general structure is the same for all participants, the researcher has a chance to vary the questions as the situation demands” (Lichtman, 2006, p.121). Kvale (1996) has noted how, in semi or unstructured interviews, people use stories to answer questions, often in the form of self-disclosure.

Kvale (1996) claims that the effectiveness of the interview is affected by the nature of the communication by saying:

“The conversation in a research interview is not the reciprocal interaction of two equal partners. There is definite symmetry of power. The interviewer defines the situation, introduces the topics of the conversation, and through further questions steers the course of the interview” (p.126).

The semi-structured interviews were developed and applied by the researcher and it was conducted with each participant individually. The interview protocol was developed by the researcher. The development and the implementation process of the administration interview are mentioned in the methods section comprehensively.

As the researcher of the study, I have been working as a teacher in a private preschool for six years. While teaching, I have experienced many parent involvement activities. In my school as a teacher, I have a lot of responsibilities to ensure parent-school collaboration. Also administrators have many roles in order to make sure that the families are satisfied with the school program, class activities, and children’s physical and mental health. In addition to this, as a teacher in a private school I have experienced that in private preschools parents are very demanding and schools should have a strategy to cope with this problem. Thus, the only reason to choose this topic is to see what the administrators do for parent involvement strategies and activities. I think that as educators we need to recall what the requirements of administrators are to provide the link between

home and preschools. What matters is the responsibility of educators for both having parents trust to school and keeping the educational process qualified.

3.2. Research Participants

The participants of this study are identified by confirming that they are a good fit for the aim of the study. (Creswell, 2012). The participants are administrators who are working in private preschools that are located in Ankara. For this study, private preschool administrators were selected. Although both private and public schools are regulated by MoNE, the practice of their educational process differs. The difference between public and private schools can be considered in terms of the program and organization. Because private preschools have more resources compared to public schools. Thus, in this research, the basic reason for choosing only private schools for sampling is to see what their parent involvement activities and strategies are. Also whether these activities and strategies correspond with the MoNE program.

For this study, purposive sampling, one of the non-random sampling methods, is preferred, in which a sample was identified as individuals that are representative of the population and have the necessary information about the subject of the study (Creswell, 2012). According to Gay and Airasian (2000), “qualitative researchers generally link with small, purposefully selected samples that could provide the perception and articulateness that must reflect a source of information about the research issue” (p. 141). Despite there being some guidelines for the minimum number of samples for different studies, there is not any exact number for qualitative studies (Creswell, 2012).

Sample sizes, which are fixed according to the data collection method, depend on the resources and time available, as well as the study's objectives. Creswell (2012) suggests that the researcher firstly must narrow the sample down into groups, and then determine the identity of individuals in the groups like they are the candidates of the research sample, and finally discover the similarities and differences of the participants. In addition to this, the required size of sample is related to the process of the study. When the researcher identified commonalities in interview data, the data was thought to be saturated. Thus, the sample size was developed according to the process and nature of the study. In the study, the sample includes 16 administrative staff from different private preschools in Ankara. Public school administrators were included at the beginning of the data collection procedures. However, the researcher decided not to include this data in the current study because on this occasion the study would require a comparison of the differences between private and public preschool administrators. It is another research question that should be studied comprehensively. For this reason the study involves only private preschools.

There are a total of 228 preschools in Ankara. 163 of them are private preschools and 16 preschool administrators were included as participants in the study. Two specific criteria were taken into consideration for preschool selection. Firstly, the preschools should be private schools in Ankara. Secondly, the schools that have same administrator for both preschool and elementary school were not included in this study. In other words, the study group includes administrators that work only at the preschool level. Many preschools in Ankara fit the

aforementioned criteria. The participating schools were chosen based on whether they fit the participant school criteria and their availability at that time. Criteria for participating schools, defined as being private preschools, having at least 50 students enrolled in the school, having administrative staff and controlled by the Ministry of Education.

Table 3.1
Districts of Schools

District	Frequency (n)	# of children	# of classes
Çankaya	4	254	12
School 1		74	5
School 2		60	4
School 3		54	3
School 4		66	4
Çayyolu/Ümitköy	5	324	17
School 5		100	5
School 6		44	3
School 7		61	3
School 8		52	3
School 9		67	3
Eryaman	2	135	8
School 10		88	5
School 11		57	3
Etimesgut	1	109	11
School 12		109	11
İncek	2	163	8
School 13		80	4
School 14		83	4
Yenimahalle	2	179	11
School 15		102	7
School 16		77	4

The participants have diverse educational backgrounds with varying years of age and experience in educational administration. The participants of this study comprised of 16 administrators from preschools in Ankara. Their age range was from 28 to 51 years old; 15 of the participants were female and one of them is

male. On average, participants had 1 to 18 years' experience in administration. Eleven participants reported that they had fewer than 5 years of administrative experience and one administrator had 18 years of experience.

All the administrators had previous teaching experience. On average, the participants had from 2 to 15 years of teaching experience. In addition, participants reported having graduated from Early Childhood Education, Child Development and Education, Business Administration, Psychology, Domestic Economy, Sociology and Guidance and Psychological Counseling departments.

Table 3.2
Preschool Administrators' Demographic Information

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	15	93%
Male	1	7%
Administrative Experience		
Less than 5 years	5	31%
6-10 years	8	50%
11-15 years	2	13%
15+ years	1	6%
Teaching Experience		
Less than 1 year	9	56%
1-5 years	6	38%
6-10 years	1	6%
11-15 years	0	0%
Graduation		
Business Adm.	2	13%
Child Development	3	19%
Domestic Econ.	1	6%
ECE	6	37%
Psychology	3	19%
Sociology	1	6%

3.3. Data Collection Methods

In the current study, the data was collected using the interview protocol. The next section presents the qualitative methods used in the study.

3.3.1. Interview Protocol

In this study, qualitative methodology was used. According to Creswell (2003), there are three basic types of data collection procedures. These are observation, interview, and document analysis. The plan was to collect data by interviewing private preschool administrators in Ankara. An interview can be defined as the process of having face to face communication in order to establish a person's or a group of people's thoughts, attitudes, comments, points of view, behavior and knowledge about certain subjects (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011).

Interviewing is described as the most important data collection technique used by qualitative researchers (Fetterman, 1989). Moreover, Silverman (2000) emphasized the purpose of the interview is to see what the participants' perceptions are and he indicated that through observation, the researcher cannot notice the feelings, thoughts of people and how they organize the world. Therefore, questions related to this have to be answered by these people. The semi-structured interview will be used in this study because although the general structure is the same for all participants, the researcher has chance to adapt the questions as the situation demands (Lichtman, 2006). The semi-structured interview is developed and applied by the researcher.

As the main research method, the interviews were conducted with participants to analyze the organizational strategies of the school regarding parent

involvement and investigate the contributions of parent involvement with the administrative process. Thus, interviews were designed with the goal of clarifying the organizational structure, nature of their administrator perceptions and organizational strategies of the school when dealing with parents.

The questions basically involve not only the types of parent involvement strategies at school based, home based and home school conferencing levels, but also the participants' backgrounds, participants' thoughts about their leadership, parent involvement level, utilization of the MoNE program, the participants' evaluation of the parent involvement effect on students, parents, and families. First, the researcher asked the participants to share information about their background and preparation for their current position. The researcher continued the interview by discussing the participants' own thoughts based on their experiences regarding parent involvement. As much information as possible was collected in order to understand the participants' perception as the leaders of the preschools they are currently working at. Also, the researcher aimed to see how administrators describe the involvement process.

To get a clear and concise picture of the administrators' understanding of their own leadership, questions about their prior experiences were included in the third part of the interview. Then the parent involvement activities that are currently used in the school was the focus at that point of the interview. In that section, the researcher used probes that seek answers for the questions about the parent involvement level, why some parents are reluctant to get involved, and what can be done for those parents. After that the question of home based family

involvement activities was discussed. The next question discussed that whether the school works collaboratively with parents by using home school conferencing techniques. In ascertaining the special characteristics of their parent population, the researcher asked this question to the leaders to discuss how, if at all, they made specific choices to meet their needs.

This topic was discussed then to interpret the administrators' conceptions about what can be done to develop family involvement in preschools, which would shed light on the leaders', the school structure and the perception that fosters parent involvement. In the following question the leaders shared their strategies and implementation of the MoNE Early Childhood Education program. At the end, the researcher asked participants to evaluate the effects of parent involvement, regarding children, teachers, family and the school according to their own experience.

3.3.2. Development of the Interview Protocol

In the process of the interview protocol development, the aim of this study was taken into consideration and the interview was developed by the researcher as appropriate regarding the semi-structured interview requirements. There were some criteria suggested while preparing the interview form. Thus, the researcher followed these suggestions; write apparent and clear cut questions, prepare questions that have focus points, use open ended questions rather than closed questions, avoid redirecting questions, refrain from multidimensional questions, use alternative questions and probes, write different types of questions, arrange

the questions in logical manner, develop the questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011).

While developing the interview questions the researcher used the Family Involvement Questionnaire that was developed by Fantuzzo, Tighe and Childs (2000). This questionnaire is about how parent involvement activities demonstrate the effective parent involvement in preschools. The theory of Family Involvement comes from the questionnaire that is a Likert scale called The Family Involvement Questionnaire, (FIQ) developed to analyze the dimensions of family involvement in the preschool to elementary school educational levels, indicates the activities that are suggested for early childhood education institutions (Fantuzzo, Tighe & Childs, 2000). The scale of FIQ is a commonly used tool for parent involvement research studies (Ingram, Wolfe & Lieberman, 2007; LaForett & Mendez, 2010; Wanders, Mendez & Downer, 2007). Thus, the researcher was inspired by the FIQ in the current study. The second reason of referring to the Family Involvement Questionnaire is that the theory focuses on family involvement in early childhood education. Since the researcher aims to put some evidence about parent involvement in preschools, this questionnaire was a good guide in terms of shaping the questions of interview.

In addition to this, Bogdan and Biklen (2006) state an important point for the researchers. It is important to refrain from using closed questions with certain answers like yes and no. For this reason, the interview questions were developed as open and semi structured. Ten open-ended questions were constructed in order to look at the issue from a holistic point of view about the participant's thoughts,

perceptions, beliefs, knowledge, and feelings about the topic. As mentioned before, the interview questions were linked with types of Family Involvement, home based involvement, school based involvement and home-school conferencing.

Before beginning the interviews, the three experts' opinions about the interview protocol were received. The experts read and reviewed the interview form regarding their knowledge from the Educational Sciences and Elementary Education Department. They checked the interview questions to see whether they covered the research questions or not. In order to test the questions effectiveness, a pilot study was carried out. In the interview development process, Oppenheim (1992) noticed the necessity of piloting, and based on the pilot study the researcher gets ideas about making changes in the order of questions, clarifying unclear items or eliminating questions that are not answered. Thus, the researcher tested the clarity and consistency of each question.

The pilot study was conducted with two participants who are preschool administrators. The administrators that the researcher could reach easily were chosen as samples for the as pilot study, as it was achievable for the researcher. The pilot study interviews were used to analyze whether the questions were clear and definite. The samples were informed about the aim of the study. The consent forms were completed by the participants to ensure that they were volunteered to be involved in the study. The interview took approximately 40 minutes to conduct. All the interviews were recorded by a sound recorder. After the researcher completed the interview, the data set was listened to by the researcher and

transmitted to the computer. The items needed to be evaluated with the help of the feedback from the participants. At that point the researcher and the one educational administration and planning expert, repeated the revision of the interview questions based on the data from pilot study.

The result of the study demonstrated that the interview was found to be appropriate regarding its content, clarity and coherence. In addition to this, with expert approval, the data gathered from the pilot study was used in the actual study in order to prevent loss of data. The interview questions are shown in Appendix A.

3.3.3. Written Documents

Another resource was written documents like forms, booklets, handbooks, newsletters etc. reflecting parent involvement activities in the schools. They were reviewed to provide information about the types of parent involvement programs schools practice. Documents were collected from the participants and then categorized according to the institutions they were belonged to. Moreover, field notes were taken. The following files were reviewed; the Early Childhood Education Program from the Ministry of National Education, the MoNE's official web site and preschool documents about parent involvement. The documents were collected from the schools' parent-information handbooks, parent-school meeting forms, student information papers, parent needs assessment forms, education seminar questionnaires, and school evaluation forms.

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

The interviews were conducted during the academic year of 2015- 2016. At the very beginning, the necessary permission was gathered from the school administration. After the ethical permission was received from Middle East Technical University Human Subjects Ethics Committee, and from the MoNE, the data collection procedure began. In the first part of the study, the collection of the consent forms, the explanation of the aims and study procedure the data collection involving the administration of interview protocols were implemented. Then the data gathering procedures began.

In order to conduct interviews in a planned manner, the time schedule was prepared based on the participants' own time schedule. Before the interviewer began to conduct the interviews, the purpose of the study was explained simply to the participants. Additionally, participants in the study were asked to sign an informed consent form identifying their willingness to participate (Appendix B). The informed consent fully informed participants about the purpose of the study and the benefits of their participation. The consent form shows that they were taking part in the study voluntarily, so they could quit whenever they want. Moreover, it is a must for the researcher to get the permission to use tape recorder during the interview session to prevent missing any data. The interviews took nearly 40 minutes for each participant. The recordings helped to collect every opinion of the interviewees.

In addition to this, the identity of the participants as well as the data sets would remain confidential. Confidentiality was maintained by keeping all data,

including transcripts and identities in a secured place. Also, the names of the schools, where the participants work, were hidden to protect their identities. It is said that the questions are structured to uncover meaning (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995). During the interview, the focus was on building rapport with the participants and gathering information to answer the central research questions of the study. The process of phenomenological studies includes the interviews where the interviewer and interviewee both participate. It said that the questions are structured to uncover meaning (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995). The most commonly used probes are “what does this mean to you?” “How do you choose to act in this situation as a leader of the school?” “Can you give any examples of your own experiences?” “What do you think about the reasons/results of this action?” “What are your personal thoughts about this issue?” that links with the aim of the study which is gathering the personal approach as a leader about parent involvement. So that, such questions would give the answers that the researcher expected. Building rapport was important to help the participants feel comfortable with the interview process.

Finally, while the researcher was conducting the interviews, it was discovered that the answers of the interviewees began to repeat themselves. In order to find the unique information and a different point of view, the researcher continued to conduct interviews, after three more interviews, the data was found to be saturated. As a result, interviews with 16 samples were found to be very effective and referable for giving in-depth information about administrators’ perceptions of parent involvement activities, the types of the activities’ they apply,

their understanding of parents' involvement level, and their personal thoughts about the effects of parent involvement and suggestions about the future involvement strategies.

3.5. Data Analysis

The qualitative data was analyzed using certain techniques for the qualitative data set. For the analysis of the study, first, the audiotaped interviews were literally transcribed. To get familiar with different aspects of the data, and simplify the data analysis procedure, all of the recordings were transcribed by the same researcher. The interview transcripts and documents were analyzed in terms of Fantuzzo, Tighe and Childs (2000) Family Involvement Questionnaire. After the data collection procedure was completed, the researcher initially read the transcripts. After that, an initial coding was used to understand how the school administrators perceived parent involvement. In order to reduce any data analysis bias and to increase the reliability of the results, the data was coded and analyzed by a research assistant from the Early Childhood Education department. The second coder had also studied various research about parent involvement and preschool education. Thus, it was decided that the researcher was an appropriate candidate to be the coder for the study. It turned out to be too time consuming to test the complete coding process. So that, two of the interview data results were recorded by a second coder. After the analysis by the second coder, a more detailed analysis was performed by the first researcher. The researcher compared, analyzed and collated the data, and checked whether they were consistent with each other.

In the interview data analysis procedure, the three Cs of analysis that is Coding, Categorizing, and identifying Concepts were applied. The six step process of; initial coding, revisiting initial coding, initial list of categories, modifying the initial list, revising categories, from categories to concepts was implemented. In the coding process, a combination of the predetermined and emerging codes was used (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Additionally, content analysis that helps researchers to investigate human behavior in an indirect way was used to understand and show findings about the issue (Creswell, 2012). It is a data analysis method, used by researching and analyzing various information resources like books, articles, essays, interviews, discussions, historical documents, conversations, videos, pictures and websites.

3.6. Trustworthiness

The terms of validity and reliability are essentials for both qualitative and quantitative studies. In order to conduct high quality research these components must be received. The researchers claimed that it was used in a limited way to check the consistency of patterns among others and reliability has a minor role in a qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2012). However, the crucial part of the qualitative research is the validity of it. In a study, if the researcher makes a meaningful, appropriate, correct and useful interpretation from the gathered data, it is a valid study (Creswell, 2012).

Credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability are the essential criteria for quality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is suggested that the term “credibility” can be used in qualitative studies rather than validity. (Creswell,

2012, p.198) Lincoln and Guba (1985) used “dependability” rather than reliability, in qualitative research that closely corresponds to the notion of “reliability” in quantitative research (p. 300). To sustain reliability in qualitative research examination of trustworthiness is important. Seale (1999) explains the qualified studies in qualitative research by saying “trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability” (p. 266).

According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2011) the researcher should apply supplementary techniques to confirm the results derived from the data set and to bring out a holistic view of the research. The techniques used in this study were “triangulation, iterative questioning, frequent debriefing sessions, peer scrutiny of the research project, the researcher’s reflective commentary, thick description of the phenomenon under scrutiny, examination of previous research findings” (Shenton, 2004, p.64-69). For the purpose of having triangulation in administrators’ strategies in the parent involvement processes, the qualitative investigator requires the documents and field notes of parent involvement activities and their statements about their educational philosophy (Creswell, 2003).

It is argued that for transferability rich, thick descriptions must be included in the study (Creswell, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). So, the detailed descriptions are given to the readers in order to give the opportunity to apply the findings to other settings and see whether they can be transferred to any other settings. In the study such thick descriptions are provided at every phase. Moreover, Creswell (2012) suggested that to assuring construct validity, member check is a must.

Member checks refer to taking the narrative report back to the participants to confirm the accuracy of the findings and interpretation (Creswell, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1984). After the interviews were conducted, the researcher sent the transcripts back to the informants and checked whether they agreed with the findings or not. It is an important procedure in order to confirm the accuracy of the findings and interpretation.

In addition, the sample size is another important for the validity of the study, according to Miles and Huberman (1984). By having a purposeful sample, the researcher was able to identify key informants in Ankara and suggest that these informants were interviewed. Most of the informants had responded positively to the researcher's requests. However, since the study was conducted with private preschool administrators, when the researcher asked them to engage in the study, most of the administrators seemed to be reluctant to share their own personal ideas and thoughts. They thought that parent-school relationships are confidential to the school. Thus, some candidates from the sample refused to contribute to the research.

Because of its nature this study required intensive resources and time. The logic and the rationale of this study were to gain an in depth understanding about private preschool's administrative perceptions about parent involvement. There were some concerns about internal validity threats that are "the subject characteristics, data collector bias, location, history, and attitude of subjects" (Maxwell, 1992, p.282-283).

In order to guarantee the validity of the study, the quotations from the interviews were used in the process of data analysis. To reduce the risk of data collector bias in this study the strategy of peer scrutiny was applied because the data collector was the researcher. It is suggested that peer scrutiny is a useful technique practiced by appealing to a colleague to confirm the findings of the study (Merriam, 1998).

Yin (1994) mentioned triangulation as one way of assuring the construct validity. The triangulation was achieved in this study by using different sources for data collection: interviews and written documents. The sample was 16 schools which is good number for differentiating data sources. In other saying, it reduced the effect of particular local factors that is special to one school. A sample of administrators from different preschools were interviewed to gain an understanding of diverse backgrounds. When similar results emerged from different sites, the findings gained greater credibility.

The obligations and interview rules were known by the interviewees. So, this reduces the risk of data collector bias. In addition to this risk, the location threat that the settings of the interviews could cause in some differences in the study results (Creswell, 2012). In order to avoid these issues, the participants were asked to schedule an appropriate time and the researcher designed an interview schedule for each participant for each interview session. Each interview with the administrators took place in a constant place at school, mostly in their private rooms. Besides the setting, the subject characteristics can be thought as another risk, the researcher noticed the possible differences and attempted to detect and

control them during the interview to reduce this risk. Throughout the study, the researcher triangulated different data sources, interviews, therefore rich descriptions were easily done and possible subject characteristics and maturation risks were reduced (Creswell, 2012).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter represents the results of the study in order to describe and explore the nature of the preschool administrators regarding parent involvement. The purpose is to collect and analyze data, and to demonstrate the perceptions of those administrators based on their experiences regarding parent involvement. During the in-depth interviews, participants described their perception and experience of parent involvement and exposed the strategies and techniques that they use. The research findings are based on the analysis of the following data sources: semi-structured interviews, and documents, which were provided by participated preschools in Ankara.

Consequently, this study aims to investigate parent involvement in preschool education from the administrators the point of view. The main purpose of this study is to provide some evidence to show the administrators' perception regarding parent involvement according to the types defined by Fantuzzo et al (2000); which are home based, school based and home-school conferencing. Another purpose of the study is to demonstrate their thoughts about the involvement of families and their suggestions to increase their involvement. Defining the administrators' leadership practice is the final aim of this study.

Within the framework of this study, the researcher highlighted the research questions are;

1. What is the preschool administrators' perception of parent involvement?
2. What are the home based, school based and home-school conferencing based practices of the preschools?
3. How do preschool administrators define the practice of leadership in regards to parent involvement?

4.1. Demographic Information

The participants of this study comprised of 16 administrators from private preschools in Ankara. The participants work as school administrators who have diverse educational backgrounds, with varying years of age and experience in educational administration. All of the participants were female except for one. The participants had from 1 to 18 years' experience in administration. Eleven participants reported that they had fewer than 5 years of administrative experience and one administrator had 18 years of experience. All the administrators had previous teaching experience. The participants had a range of 2 to 15 years of teaching experience.

The data was gathered and interpreted according to the research questions. While the categories are reported as being discrete, there is a considerable overlap among them. Furthermore, the participants' responses to interview questions often addressed more than one category. The data is described from a holistic perspective. This study was organized as an interpretive study that was used to represent the 'concepts' and 'phenomena' of parent involvement. The aim is to understand the complex relationships between parents and schools, then

demonstrate the personal thoughts of the administrators. Thus, the diversity of responses is valuable.

4.2. Perception of School Administrators on Parent Involvement

There are six themes that came from the interviews. These are *PI is a must, tripod, the positive effect of PI on student, teacher, parents and school environment*. According to the themes of the interview data, it can be said that administrators have a positive understanding about parent involvement.

The administrators all think that *PI* is necessary and without parents education is pointless. They shared the importance of *PI* in different statements. Here are two examples of those statements;

“Without parent involvement, education is a pointless endeavor” (Admin 12).

Likewise, another administrator said,

“Parent involvement is like an obligation or a regulation” (Admin 5).

The second theme that comes from the administrators’ perception is “*tripod*”. Almost the half of the participants used the term, “*tripod*” to describe their perception of parent involvement. Six of the administrators claimed that if education is a tripod; child, school and family are the three legs of that tripod.

“If there is a missing leg in the tripod it does not work. If we don’t involve the family in the education we cannot make a positive change on children’s lives” (Admin 8).

Another administrator verifies that,

“Early childhood education without parents could not be effective. It is a triangle that stands with three edges. Education away from parents resembles a cake without baking powder (Admin 13).”

A confirming statement from Admin 11 says that,

“Our school advocates school-home cooperation. If any part of those three components (school-home-student) is missing there is no balance, which means no good education for children. It is a must. When we share this with families, they would like to *get involved with* the process. Then they realize parent involvement is their savior. When they come to school for presentations with their kids, they have a chance to observe their children’s communication with teachers and their friends during activities. They can perceive the process of how their child’s learning and development occurs in the school environment. For example, parents see their child while talking in public or they have chance to observe little details first hand” (Admin 11).

In the interview the participants pointed out the third theme which is *the positive effects of parent involvement on student, teacher, parents and the school environment*. All of the administrators have common shared opinions that parent involvement results in the effective learning of *students*. Moreover, two of the participants stated that it enhances the student’s self-confidence. Also, one of the administrators mentions that “when parent involvement is on point, the development improves” (Admin 12). Another participant adds that involvement increases positive attitudes towards school, adaptation gets easier, emotional satisfaction develops.

“It enhances a child’s self-confidence. Students see what sharing means and why it is so important to spend time with family and have so much fun at the same time. Interacting and connecting in an effective way happens with the help of involvement activities” (Admin 11).

Other participant remarks that support the idea of what other participants say.

“The children experience a feeling of trust and balance when there is meaningful parental involvement. Knowing that the

school and home collaborate and communicate will make the student feel sure and secure. I don't know if it is right to use that term but the student won't be able to use his/her parents and teachers. And most importantly, it would be possible to follow the development of the student regularly. Then, it would be possible to take more purposeful actions to encourage their improvement" (Admin 6).

Teachers are another component of education that are positively affected by involvement. Regarding the citations of the participants there is a common perception demonstrating that "parent involvement eases teacher's work". It is said that because it makes teachers "more productive, professionalism increases, it helps them to solve problems with families, and know the family and child more precisely".

A confirmative statement from Admin 12 shares,

"It would be so easy to get to know the child, which is the first and the most important thing in the educational process. Regulating the activities and scheduling the program according to their needs would be advantageous. The information taken from the family would help the teacher to refer to all of the child's developmental needs. Additionally, when there are any unexpected demands and requests, teachers feel the necessity to improve their teaching skills".

The effect of parent involvement on *parents* is explained by administrators. Among the participating preschool administrators, thirteen of them expressed that parent involvement activities make parents develop empathy with the school workers.

An administrator's argument confirms this finding,

"During the activity parents have fun and enjoy the moment they're sharing with their children. After the activity they say it was hard because this job requires a lot of energy and patience. Interestingly after attending involvement activities, they don't create problems about little things like they did

before. This is the most visible positive result of involvement” (Admin 1).

Another participant adds that,

“Through involvement activities families become more closely acquainted with the school and the educational environment. Parents are more willing to collaborate with the school, and when faced with negative incidents like the other parents, the difference is that they know how to deal with them. They learn how to solve them. Most importantly they know how to experience the progress of education more effectively and beneficially with their child” (Admin 14).

Also half of the samples assert that parents get to know the school and the teacher very well because of parent involvement activities. Among those who have used that argument one of the participants says,

“The Family get to know the teacher. They see how teachers both carry out the classroom activities and satisfy the needs and demands of each and every child in the class. They have chance to observe how teachers solve problems in class with good classroom management. They start to think “I only have one child and I struggle with one. How does the teacher do that with 20 students?” They understand our job is not so easy and they appreciate our efforts and are respectful” (Admin 9).

The School environment is also affected by parent involvement in a good way say administrators. 56.25 % of the participating administrators argued that parent involvement results in a positive school climate. Also the other administrators stated that it helps schools work more easily.

“The operation of school work gets much easier. I mean it makes parents empathize with us. When I explain things to them and I am clear and true, this makes things a lot easier. I know how the job is done what should and should not be in the school, both as the child development specialist and as the authority of the school. But if I don’t work with them accordingly, the work would pile up and slow down. When both parents and educators do what should we do, we work in sync. They need to acknowledge that we do run an

educational program for children from 8 am to until 6 pm. If we can understand each other and accept it, this helps our school program. And this ends up with children making incredible progress” (Admin 5).

“I don’t know if there is anybody who thinks like with me but I think parent involvement is basically crucial for the school. Firstly, we cannot do anything without knowing the parents. Secondly, if we don’t know them and give them responsibility we cannot be sure of the effectiveness of it. It is like a butterfly effect. If there is something wrong, anything and everything can go wrong. We set some regulations after the parent education meetings. It works for us a lot, because we observe their needs and serve those needs. We revise our strategy, so that it is beneficial for our school not just for the family” (Admin 15).

4.3. Practices of School Administrators in Parent Involvement

The Practices of Parent Involvement category reveals the administrators’ thoughts about the PI activities. Having a positive perception and knowledge about the involvement procedures is the first and maybe the most important step for establishing effective parent involvement.

According to administrators, the themes of the practices that preschools use for parent involvement are categorized in three parts as *home-based*, *school-based* and *home-school conferencing* as in Fantuzzo’s classification of Parent Involvement.

4.3.1.1. Home-Based Parent Involvement Activities

Supporting an appropriate home environment is an important part of sustaining effective parent involvement. Parents represent the first essential system and source of support for children’s learning and development and serve as a lifelong resource to children (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Parenting, nutrition, educational activities, health care requirements appropriate with the age and

developmental level of children should be met by the parents. In this study since the researcher included administrators as participants, the aim of this section is to draw a picture of what kind of home based activities administrators encourage families to do. Then, it is discussed how these activities are integrated into the educational process at school.

First of all, home-based activities includes three themes: *homework*, *the importance of home-based activities* and *other activities*. All of the participants stated that they choose to give *homework* as home-based involvement. And also six of the participants highlighted that homework is the best way to make students recall what they have learned. One of the participants used the term “reinforcement of learning” referring to work and activities that are sent home. Moreover, it is said that “homework increases the students’ responsibility” (Admin 16).

When asked whether it is a useful involvement activity or not most of the participants say that it is highly important but the parents should really be involved in it. “Sometimes they only do it because they know that they should do it” (Admin 9). Another participant shared her confirming experience:

“For example, we have a back and front conception activity in our daily educational program. We also prepare and give homework about this subject on that day. For instance, we want students to draw a picture of their dining room with details of the objects in the room showing what they have on the front and back. Then, the next day, we want them to bring the picture to school. But sometimes, parents may forget the homework” (Admin 1).

At that point, the researcher asked what they do to solve this problem. And the participant shared that “We send it again. If they don’t do it, we send it again. It continues like this until we have the parents involved in the work” (Admin 1).

They were asked what the main reason is for this insistence. The answer was very clear,

The homework is not the issue in this situation. The thing is getting the parents to actively share and learn together with their children, as they do their homework. Sharing is the key here. Thus, we always check the homework and we have backups. In this way, parents realize that they have to do it (Admin 1).

Moreover, another participant confirmed the importance of home-based involvement by stating that,

“As a school, having information about what is going on at home and being there when it is needed is important for us when observing the child’s educational process. Our teachers, counselors, other branch teachers and of course myself, as an administrator need to follow the child’s progress at home.” (Admin 4).

The administrators also shared *other activities* for engaging with families in home-based involvement practices. One of the administrators (Admin 14) *said* that “we call these activities ‘...family is in charge of something’”. It is said that the school uses monthly bulletins to suggest some home activities to parents that they can easily-do with their children.

“In addition to homework we use different activities with families in our involvement program, and make suggestions according to each child’s developmental needs. The suggestions include books, research and articles for parents to read. For example, if a student struggling in terms of motor development, let’s say she or he has problems with cutting papers. We prepare a suggested reading list and give it to the parents. Then of course certain activities to develop

the child's skills (which is called homework in basic terms). Then we ask parents if they read the suggestions and we observe the child to see if there is any progress with the problem" (Admin 2).

As the results show, there are a variety of home-based parent involvement activities but the most commonly used one is homework. School administrators involve families in education by supporting them, although parents are too busy with their jobs.

4.3.1.2. School-Based Parent Involvement Activities

The four themes about school-based parent involvement practices are *volunteering, parent education (lack of father involvement), social activities in the school, open and welcoming school environment*. When the interviewer asked the participants what types of school based involvement activities they use, the first thing they all mentioned were presentations by parents as an example of *volunteering* activities. They said they have parents in classes as a presenter, talking about their profession, a hobby or a talent if they have any. After that they talked about other activities held in school. Four of these administrators' stated that they also have parents for book reading. But results show that the participants place importance on parents volunteering in school activities. This shows that the parent presentation is the first and the most commonly used school based activity among all of the participating schools.

One of the participants highlights that not parents, but school decides the type of *volunteering* activity and organizes it.

"These activities are created upon the understanding that they are voluntary. Most of our parents work for long hours. So, we arrange the time and the date of the activity according

to their schedule. We plan the activity and then inform the parents. If they agree, they come and join the activity.” (Admin 1).

Another participant stated that "volunteering" is obligatory in their school.

Even if some of the parents do not want to spare time for it, we encourage them by saying it is a rule. For example, in the 6 year- old group program, they present a subject that the child is interested in. It could be dinosaurs; it could be anything. The child and the parents prepare the presentation together. Then it is presented in the school (Admin 10).

Another administrator verifies the importance of volunteering activities but adds another dimension of children’s developmental needs.

In the 5-year old’s class, parents do a presentation about their field of interest or their own profession. For example, if they know how to play the lute, they show us how to play the lute. Sometimes the parent and teacher collaborate to decide upon and organize an activity. Then, the parents come to school and share the activity with the children in the class. But, we cannot accept the parents of 4-year old’s for such activities. When they see their mothers and fathers in the classroom, they have adaptation problems because they are too young. They intrinsically desire to leave the school with their parents. That’s why we choose not to apply parent presentation activities with the 4-year old’s classes (Admin 5).

It can be interpreted that voluntary parent presentations are the first and the most frequent involvement activity in the participating preschools.

Despite this, all of the participants stated that they have school trips in the educational program but only one of them said that parents help during the trip. It is called “parents are our guides when students are on a trip” (Admin 3). The interviewer asked the other participants, “What is the reason for not having parents as volunteers on the trips?” Seven of them said that they do not include

parents on trips because “parents are too busy” One of these seven participants said,

“Since they are busy we want them to suggest the places to have a school trip. In this way, they are involved in this process” (Admin 2).

Three of them stated that they prefer not to have parents with them while visiting a place with students. One of the participants highlights this claim by saying “they do not make our job easy. It becomes more complicated, so we don’t want to have them on our trips” (Admin 11).

Similarly, another administrator states (Admin 7),

“Once our school organized a visit to Ataturk’s Mausoleum. We required permission for each student. We did it because we cannot go without their permission, but parents don’t join our trips in person. Think about it for just a second; we are already so anxious about being outside with small kids. What happens if we have parents? Things get complicated if we go on school trips with parents”.

Another theme that comes from most commonly used parent involvement activities in school is *parent education*. The education of parents is continuous and limitless. The important thing is when parents are being educated in certain areas, their parenting skills and support should increase. Among the 16 administrators, 14 of them plan and organize education for parents in the school. Except for two admins, all administrators shared that they use parent education involvement as a parent involvement technique. The theme of parent education includes a sub-theme, namely *the lack of father involvement*.

One of the administrators stated that “we observed that mothers usually attend this kind of education. The fathers who attend the parent education

activities are very few” (Admin 2). However, after stating this, the administrator criticized this issue and suggested a solution by saying “in the future we could design and provide education just for fathers to get their attention and encourage their involvement”.

Moreover, one of the administrators highlights *the lack of father involvement in parent education activities*.

“Especially in parent education activities, mothers are the only participants. Fathers tend to avoid any type of parent involvement activity, you know. I think it is because fathers work hard and they are busy most of the time” (Admin 15).

Although most of the parents mentioned that their school has parent education activities, two of the administrators stated that they do not. One of them stated that their school doesn’t organize educational activities unless parents request one. Also, they mentioned that it very rare for this to happen. The other administrator stated that they don’t organize parent education activities because there is lack of involvement by saying, “three or five parents attend the parent seminars at school, so we prefer not to do them. Instead we spend our time on more useful activities” (Admin 3).

Another school-based involvement strategy theme is engaging families in *school’s social activities*. All of the administrators pointed out the importance of having parents inside the school in their statements.

For example Admin 12 states that,

“During our birthday celebrations, mothers, fathers and even grandparents can come but we usually try to keep the group as small and simple as possible. On mothers’ day we organize a special event for them. They play games and have fun together with their children. On New Year’s Eve, we

shared cookies that the children cooked and gave gifts that they made. After that the parents watched a video about new year”

Another participant emphasized the importance of an *open and welcoming school environment* by saying,

“By coming to the school activities, parents have a chance to observe why this school exists, who are the people working at this school; how they educate the students; how they contribute to the children’s development; what children do at the school. Additionally, the design of this school helps us to offer opportunities for parents to see what is going on at the school since we have an observation room with mirrored walls. ...We do not want parents to have doubts about what is going on at school. We would like to maintain trust between the school and the parents. So we create opportunities for them. If they would like to come and visit the school in order to observe what is going on; they can for sure. We need to make decisions and take actions together to enhance the development of their children. This is why we use every opportunity to involve parents. This is our strategy” (Admin 4).

Likewise, another administrator stressed the importance of an open and welcoming school environment.

“First of all, it is crucial to encourage parents to be a part of the school. So, we encourage parents to feel better when they are at school. I always say ‘be our guest’ to mothers and fathers” (Admin 10).

However, one of the administrators stated that they limit the parent involvement to the in-class activities. By saying,

“One of the most important aims of the Early Childhood Education program is to have children practice different kinds of classroom activities. That’s why we plan and apply special day and week activities for whole school participation. All the classes attend and present their shows. However we don’t want parents in class during these activities. We prefer children to present it to their school friends since it is better this way. As a result, we only have

parents in on Mothers' Day. Mothers celebrate the day by doing art activities with their children" (Admin 2).

4.3.1.3. Home School Conferencing

Additionally, the theme developed from home-school conferencing based practices are communication techniques like *meetings and other conferencing techniques (notebooks, notes, phone calls, email, bulletin, home visiting)*. Building a collaborative relationship with families is one of the most important duties of the administrators. Keeping in touch; informing families constantly and periodically; facing problems and finding solutions together; meeting face to face are only a few examples of how to sustain balanced communication with parents. Thus, home school conferencing is necessary in the process of parent involvement. The conference strategies that are used by preschools are meetings, phone calls, notebooks or notes, website, e-mail, bulletin, phone messages, the WhatsApp application, as demonstrated in the table.

The findings show that the themes derived from the interviews are *meeting (the types of meeting), importance of meeting*. The meetings practiced by administrators can be scheduled or not scheduled as either individual or group meetings. All of the participating school administrators stated that individual meetings are the most frequent strategy that they use. Among all administrators nine of them said that their school system has a program rule, that they have two structured meetings in a year. Despite this, additional meetings also arise according to the needs or requests by parents or school staff.

"For sure whenever parents want to meet with us, they are free to ask. Despite these spontaneous meetings we schedule

at least two meetings in an educational year. One is during the semester holiday and the other one is at the end of the year. It is like a regulation. We should do that. After the meetings have been completed, we prepare our meeting reports” (Admin 1).

Another participant states that meetings are scheduled at least twice.

“Parent meetings are a must for our school. The notes that are taken from these meetings are documented and preserved. Each semester our teachers schedule two parent-teacher meetings” (Admin 2).

The other seven administrators claim that they do not have scheduled meetings. They carry out meetings only “when it is needed”. Admin 4 says;

“We always keep our eyes on parents’ and children’s needs. Sometimes parents want to meet with us, sometimes we require them to come to school. For example; after the adaptation process is completed, we make observations with the teachers about the children’s progress at school. How the child acts in class, is she/he getting along with their classmates, how she/he participates in activities, is anything different shown in his/her paintings... These are the clues that we consider when we schedule a meeting. Such meetings are fruitful for reviewing the development of the child”

Another participant’s opinion about *the importance of meetings* for increasing the collaboration between home and school.

“During meetings we have a chance say how things can affect children’s lives by giving certain examples. We have routine meetings but the most important one is the first meeting. The thing is when you speak with mother or father face to face you have the opportunity to see their gestures and reactions. Their facial impressions, actions, body language says a lot. I always read those clues and interpret them and see what is going on with the family and what they require. Misunderstandings or anxieties all come to light and we see the signs, because the more parents trust us, feel comfortable and happy, the happier the child feels. ...At the beginning of the year we make parents fill out the child information forms, but sometimes they miss out some important issues. Not only I, as an administrator, but also

parents see the effectiveness of the meetings. Thus, they always like to attend” (Admin 4).

Likewise, the importance of meetings was discussed by another administrator, since it’s the best way to support trust and transparency. Admin 6 argues,

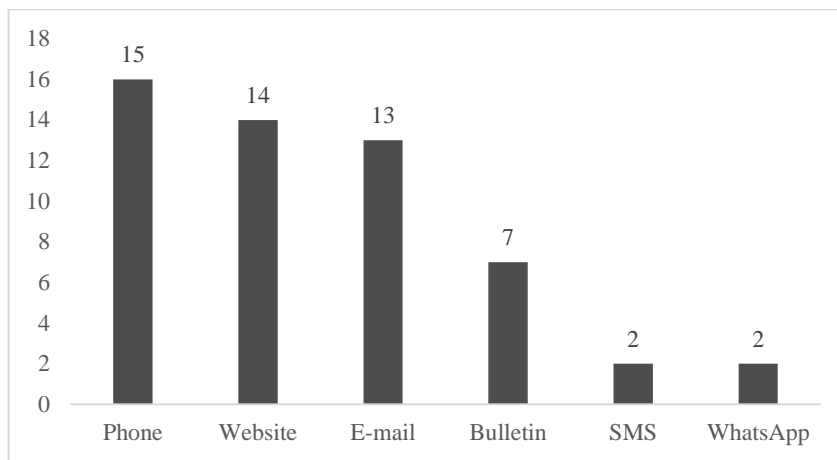
“What has happened in school must be shared with the family with an unbiased attitude. The first meeting with the family is to introduce our school system. It is important for us to show our trustworthy and transparent approach. Then, during the semester we continue to keep in touch with parents. Our target is to have at least one individual and face to face meeting with parents in a semester. This means we do not only meet with parents when a problem arises. If it is needed and possible our psychology and counseling staff or I attend the meeting”.

On the contrary, one administrator states that the school staff do not have enough time to meet with each family.

“Firstly, the parents fill out the information form before the child starts the school. It is a long form and it takes one hour to fill out. As you can understand, this form includes detailed information about both family and child. It is about everything. Our teachers have to read and analyze the child’s family life with the light of those information. Unfortunately, we do not have time to schedule face to face meetings. We do meet if there is a serious issue to discuss” (Admin 5).

Along with meetings the participating schools’ administrators quoted *other conferencing techniques* that they use to communicate with the families. To interact with parents, 16 of the participating schools use the phone, 15 of them notebooks or notes, 14 of them use a web-site, 13 of them use e-mail, 7 of them use bulletins, 2 of them use phone messages, 2 of them use the WhatsApp application. With the help of these methods, the participants stated that parents have easy access to both teachers and administrative staff.

Figure 4.1



Types of communication used by preschools

Despite these home-school conferencing techniques, *home visiting* is also expected to be used in schools. However, only two schools are using home visits in their school program. The other participating school administrators stated that they do not have home visiting activities for family involvement.

4.3.2. Leadership

According to the administrators' definition of their own about leadership, two themes are demonstrated. These themes are *active role in PI process and other elements related to leadership*.

As mentioned in the literature chapter, active role in parent involvement process by the school administrators are important for the effectiveness of parent involvement activities. Their tasks are certain, but it differs in practice. The themes derived from the administrator's statements, and their roles can be either *active or passive*. Also, administrators describe their responsibilities as *leading, directing, controlling, and guiding* which are other themes that are related to this

topic. According to their leadership style, the school's philosophy of education, the program of the school, the strategies that they use to collaborate with families can differ. This study aims to show their thoughts about their leadership strategies in the process of involvement. When asked directly, the administrators tend to answer the questions, "As a leader what is your responsibility? Where do you see yourself in the process of involvement?" in general terms. However, their response to the other questions shows their approach towards the involvement process. Most of the administrators take an *active role and engage in activities with parents* in the involvement process.

The following statements confirm this finding.

"I spend so much time with families. I am close to both students and parents in each and every moment. I don't break up with them" (Admin 1).

Another administrator clarifies the critical responsibility of an administrator during the interview by emphasizing the "*leading*" theme.

"The duty of the administrator is to see the big picture. Administrators need to have a holistic perception as well as being actively and truly in it. This means that I have to be with students when they are active in class, but also have an opinion that goes one step further. I don't separate parent involvement from the other administrator's responsibilities. Managing is correct, but it must include leadership. Administrators should be leaders, because each school has its own culture. The culture consists of each person's efforts in the school. Together with my staff, we built this school and developed the culture. We did not think that this is your job or that is my responsibility. We get together and make decisions together for our school. I think I have been guiding and leading the group. I did my job well. I do not have any doubt about that. Being active and being a good role model is significant. If you don't teachers, educators and school staff differ in terms of actions that they take. Communication with children, talks with parents, activities that are selected

to do with families must not change because of the teacher if we say we have a strong culture. If this happens it will cause disruption. I mean to offset this chaos, so from time to time we prepare the yearly educational program together, find games and play together. We share each moment and each step together. In this way we have built this school's culture" (Admin 4).

A statement that supports the findings by one of the participants says,

"I wish families would ask for guidance from us. Indeed, as an administrator my responsibility is family counseling and guidance. I wish they would all ask me about everything. Ask me "how I am going to fix this? How I will figure this out?" We would be so happy to show ways to solve problems with the help of our experience—and educational background. I would love to do that. It might be an extra responsibility but I can do it without expecting a thing" (Admin 5).

Another participant confirms and highlights the importance of the administrators' role;

"I make decisions while dealing with problematic situations. If there is a parent who does not tend to cooperate with us, teachers share it with me and I take action. I communicate and collaborate with them, but sometimes I don't. I only observe. Actually, it works like a domino effect. When the others see you strong willed, they also become determined too. But if that communication chain among us does not work effectively everything collapses. So that, administrators have a critical role, they have to take part in each stage of the process. And they should be as active as can be during the whole period" (Admin 14).

Unlike the other participants, two of the administrators mentioned that they do not have active roles in the process of involvement. They said "*Directing*" "*Helping*" "*Controlling*" are their responsibilities. Admin 3 distinctively shares their own role and responsibilities in the process of involvement.

“In fact I can say that I am not so into this parent involvement thing. Our school is very crowded and managerial duties takes a lot of time. There is always a lot of paper work to do. But when parents ask me to help in person for a special reason, I give educational suggestions and give direction about what they should do. Moreover, teachers do the involvement activities. After that they give me information about the process.”

Another participant’s statement summarizes her/his passive role in the involvement program. The statement affirms this finding,

“In council meetings I want teachers to plan the days *when* parent involvement activities will be done. I *check and approve* the prepared plans. My teachers plan the activities according to parents’ requests” (Admin 2).

The results of the leadership perception of most of the administrators shows that they are engaging in the involvement process. Their statements demonstrate that they know their roles and responsibilities and they acknowledge the importance of it.

The second theme represents the main elements of instructional leadership and these are school culture and climate, transparency, trust and decision-making. The participants have similar perceptions about these issues, stating that these components have a great influence on the involvement experiences of parents. Two of the participants remarked that the “*school culture*” has an effect on parental involvement strategies.

“The teachers who work in this school all come from different schools and have different backgrounds. At the beginning of the semester I said forget what you have known and have experienced. This is a new school and it has its own culture. You will learn everything again. One of the new teachers told me that she had thought that she knew everything, but she didn’t. She realized that when her adaptation education was completed. The adaptation

education included all of the areas especially parent involvement” (Admin 15).

Another participant quotes a relevant statement;

“...each school has its own culture. The culture consists of each individual’s efforts at the school. Together with my staff, we built this school and developed the culture together. We did not think separately from each other ...Communication with children, talks with parents, activities that are chosen to do with families must not change because of the teacher if we say we have a strong culture. If this happens it will cause disorder. I mean to offset this chaos, so from time to time we prepare the yearly educational program together, find games and play together we share each moment and each step together. In this way we have built this school’s culture” (Admin 4).

One of the preschool administrators highlighted *the school climate* is shaped by a trustworthy relationship between family and school, which would be possible with involvement activities.

“First of all, engaging into activities with parents makes them trust the school. They tend to fulfil the requirements of school ... If parents trust the teacher, she/he carries out her responsibility, resulting in a positive school climate. Parents’ trust in schools is an issue and parent involvement activities have a great influence on that issue” (Admin 2).

Among the participants, there are administrators who confirm that transparency is important for trustworthy relationship and positive school climate.

An administrator who argues that claim says,

“We do meet with parents in the first days of the school. We inform them about the procedures in the school. Branch lessons, extra activities, and their prices ... We get permission for seminars, trips and other social activities. Then we write down these decisions, and keep a record of them. We never ever work without a systematic approach and use official papers. After a while some parents come to us and say the opposite of what she/he said before. At that point they understand it is impossible to change the decision that has been made before. This precaution prevents

misunderstandings and problems. It shows our transparency” (Admin 5).

Another administrator shares a supporting argument,

“In the involvement process somehow not only misunderstandings in communication but also parents’ fears and worries all come to light. As we get in touch with parent, if there is somethings wrong we see its signs. Then we take action to overcome the problem and develop their trust. Because the more parents feel comfortable, happy, and the more they trust in school, the happier child feels. In some cases, we learn important information about the child like allergy, illnesses or moving to another house, having a sibling during parent-teacher meetings. At the beginning of the year we made parents fill out the Child Information Forms, but sometimes they do not include these important issues” (Admin 4).

The following statement is about transparency and being clear to parents which confirms the same argument.

“Our first and main aim is to be clear and transparent in our job. In class and the school environment we use unbiased and non-discriminative statements in our talks with parents ... meetings that are scheduled twice a year enhance the relationship of trust between us. To encourage transparent communication, we use a notebook to share the daily events. In addition to this, parents have an opportunity to contact us by e-mail or phone and follow school routines and our activities from the school’s website that is revised each month” (Admin 6).

Another participant brought a different point to the issue by saying that transparency can be developed if parents are genuine.

“The thing is that whether parents are true and clear to us or not, if parents were actively involved in the educational program with sincerity, we can move forward together. Most of the time, let’s say 70% of the parents are genuine towards us. Usually they come to school looking for some help. They usually can’t find a way to go or can’t solve their problems with the children. We guide and support them to find out solutions” (Admin 4).

This section shows whether the schools cooperate with families when the school makes a decision. All participating administrators explained their ideas and perception about *decision-making with parents*. All of the administrators mentioned having a positive perception of making decisions with families. Some administrators' claim that it works very well and helps the communication with parents.

“Making decisions together helps us to get over any negative circumstances. Building positive connections, and parents knowing the school systems and mechanics helps us to run our school and operate easily. When they are involved in the decision-making process, they feel special and they are more likely to volunteer” (Admin 3).

Another participant's statement summarizes this by mentioning that parents have the right to say something about education. The statement affirms the finding,

“Parents have to be inside the education of their own children. And they should have a say on this. When parents become active in the process, they begin to get more involved and benefit more and more” (Admin 13).

Although other administrators stated that they know it is important to make decisions with parents, it turns out that practically they do not make decisions about the educational program or school improvement. They only take their suggestions about family education activities and volunteering practices and they use the suggestions when it is appropriate for them. A supportive statement from a participant,

“They give suggestions to us and we analyze their suggestions. If what they said is logical and practical for us we take it into consideration” (Admin 2).

Another administrator claims that they use parents' suggestions from needs assessment forms on collaboration in decision-making.

"The needs assessment forms for parent education shows us where to go. It enhances our collaboration. We decide the subjects of our education activities together and we schedule it. This gives us chance to have more parents involved and more program activities, because they get information about what they want to learn and we are happy to collaborate" (Admin 6).

Similarly, another administrator says that the school staff are the ones who are responsible for making decisions, but they make decisions about parent education with the parents.

"My school workers and I are educated in child development. They are parents so they can have a say, they can contribute to education - but in the way that we want. For example, we consider their needs and ask their requirements for the seminar subjects for parents. We send questionnaires and make a list of the subjects that they want to learn. After that we call academicians to educate our parents" (Admin 14).

One of the participants stated that decisions are needed to be taken by the school not by the parents. An affirming statement from a participant says that,

"We sometimes become the opposite of parents consciously. In the Private Preschool Sector, there might be schools that have profit oriented strategies for not having drop outs. Even sometimes making concessions to have families, but it is not our strategy. If you are not decided and consistent that school system will never ever work. Administrators must not leave the pathway that they draw to follow for education. If you change the decisions according to a mother's demand, things will get complicated. You will dash through the wind" (Admin 5).

The administrator was the participant who put emphasis on keeping a record of the decision that was made with the parents about involvement activities. It is believed that possible problems may be handled by this strategy.

According to the school's strategy, this gives an opportunity for future issues to be foreseen by the administrators and teacher, with the help of some precautions.

“We inform them about the procedures in the school. Branch lessons, extra activities, and their prices ... We get permission about seminars, trips and other social activities. Then we write down these decisions, keeping a record of them. We never ever work without a systematic approach and use official papers. After a while some parents come to us and say the opposite of what she/he said before. At that point they understand it is impossible to change the decision that was made before. This precaution prevents misunderstandings and problems” (Admin 5).

Although most of the administrators shared that decision-making is important and they practice it. The sample statements show its implementation is very limited.

4.4. Suggestions to Stakeholders

Besides their perception and their practices of parent involvement and leadership the findings included a set of suggestions for parent involvement activities. The administrators' suggestions about parent involvement in preschools can be defined with in two themes; *suggestions for leaders and parents*.

4.4.1. *Suggestions for Leaders*

In the first category; fourteen of the administrators suggested that their own preschool program needs to include a “*variety of involvement activities*”. Administrators state that picnics, sharing information on bulletin boards, out of school visits with parents, workshops and seminars for families are the activities that can be useful for including families into education. Different activities that take the attention of the family and child should be carried out. For example; there were fourteen participants who stated that they do not carry out home visits. Two

of them stated that it would be better if they could conduct home visits precisely.

One participant says,

“When the student is resting at home while they are sick, we can visit the house. Home visiting is a good idea for such occasions” (Admin 1).

Another administrator confirms that while adding a different by saying,

“I would like to conduct home visits to see my students’. I would like to observe their home environment; see their personal places; and spend time with them in their rooms. Unfortunately, we cannot do this because of parents’ working hours. They are busy all the time” (Admin 8).

One of the participants, who does not offer a suggestion, said that

“We need to spare more time for involvement activities” (Admin 6). Unlikely, “We have already spent more than enough time on parent involvement activities. There is no need for any extra activities” (Admin 5).

In addition, another participant also argues that the program must be developed but it is the teacher’s responsibility to manage it.

“I think using weekly planned activities that will help children to recall what they have learned in school would be good. If they have learned yellow at school, an activity about yellow may be sent home. For instance, maybe they can be asked to find the colors inside their home with their parents. This is all about the teacher’s programing and planning skills, preparing activities in a good manner and effectively collaborating with the family. There are teachers who work as I said and those who do not. The important thing is a teacher’s professionalism and ethics - that comes from inside” (Admin 16).

Admin 3 adds a different point to such activity suggestions by saying;

“Parents can attend many of the activities in school. They can either just observe or assist the class teacher”.

4.4.2. *Suggestions for Parents*

Secondly, in the Suggestions for Parents category, administrators highlight “*parent education*” to explain the effects of parent involvement and how its importance may work to increase involvement.

Admin 15 shares that if there is lack of involvement they need to insist parents are active and remind them that their role is crucial by “*recalling parents’ responsibilities*” in the educational process. Likewise, another participant said that,

“Parents need to feel the support of the school. They want to know what the importance of parent involvement is. And they want to feel confident about getting involved. Our responsibility as a school is to tell parents “you can do it” (Admin 16).

A supportive statement from Admin 7 says that,

“Most of the mothers and fathers have time-management issues. They have jobs, routine home related responsibilities like cooking, cleaning etc... Spending time with the children in an effective and qualified manner is crucial.They know it. It is important to remind parents of this fact. It is important to guide them to spend effective time together”

Moreover another administrator states,

“Reluctant parents require more attention and care to have them in school. Some families do not have the opportunity to come. They do not have time. In spite of having such issues, some parents know the importance of being involved in their child’s education and they push their boundaries to be involved. In other cases, shy or less confident parents are other important issues. At that point we support and guide the family. For example; we explain in detail and give examples about the activity that they will be involved with. Then they start to get into it actively and it changes the quality of involvement” (Admin 5).

The other administrators stated that in order to increase the involvement there is a need to raise awareness. The following statement of a participant verifies the findings. Administrator 8, who suggests implementing home visits, which are already expected to be in their program. Then she/he adds,

“We cannot do home visits. Parents are too busy. Parents needed to be informed about the emergency and importance of parent involvement”.

As it can be interpreted having “*busy parents*” is a common problem that all the participants stressed in their statements. This school administrator wants to solve the time restrictions of families by increasing the parents’ understanding about engaging in school activities.

“First of all sometimes the more you want that family to be involved, the more they become reluctant to get involved. But before this we try to control such situations with parent education, which is also mentioned in the MoNE program for family involvement. Families should gain education about the program of preschool education. They need to know why parent involvement matters, why we are insisting on this issue, how the social and emotional wellbeing of their children relates to it. Parents have to be in the process of their own child’s education. And they should have a say on this. When parents see themselves as a part of this system, they begin to get more involved and benefit more and more” (Admin 3).

Another one adds that,

“There is a group of families who don’t take involvement seriously. For such parents we organize a meeting or sometimes with a sample activity to explain the reasons why the involvement activities are important in our program. If there are still parents who don’t care, and if their children struggle at school, we explain that if you had attended our involvement activities, your child would not experience such problems. We say if you don’t come to school, you may face problems like this or that by giving certain examples. Of course we use a kind and gentle language. Some parents are

so sensitive but some are not. And sometimes, surprisingly, parents affect each other and that directly changes the attitudes of parents. Parents go and tell others about their good experience and share what they have learned about what they have done with their children. Suddenly, the parents who hear this, feel motivated in a way we couldn't motivate them, and want to attend the involvement activities. We have a parent who prepares articles for other parents to read. When parents hear about this, they also want to do the same with their own area of research. We used this situation to our advantage and it helped us a lot" (Admin 4).

Another one states,

"Firstly and most importantly, parents need to adapt to the school. They should get used to the school atmosphere. We invite them to the school because we want them to adapt to the school more quickly. We say be our guest and just attend an activity for 5 minutes, the children will be so happy to see you. We say this to encourage them and to make them feel motivated. Just to involve families we organize birthday parties. We create a group in smart phone application called WhatsApp. Every day we share photos and videos on there. And we add a note like; "hope to see you soon", "we are waiting for you to come to our class" We wait for parents to get our real message and get involved in school activities" (Admin 10).

"We thought a lot about this issue. Like I said before I think about it all night and day. When I see a parent who struggles with her/his child, I suggest to him/her that he/she attends our involvement activities and seminars. I explain their positive effects, I highlight the good experiences that the other parents had before...For parent education seminars, we do not expect only our parents to attend. Other parents from the neighborhood can also come and get involved with the education" (Admin 5).

On the contrary another administrator highlighted that the parents in their school are very willing to get involved and collaborate, but similarly mentions that explaining the importance will cause a change in their motivation to get involved.

“The families that we have in school are very eager to get involved in activities. We have families who are ready to work and do what is best for their children. They look into our teacher’s eyes to get each and every detail about their child’s educational process. I think the schools who do not have parents like ours, must have to explain the process of involvement. The benefits, the advantages, the things that involvement changes for both children and family should be expressed to parents. And this must be when they start school” (Admin 6).

In brief, the administrators’ common suggestion to increase the level of involvement are having various kinds of involvement activities and making sure that parents acknowledge the importance and need of their involvement in education.

4.5. Other findings

As a result of interview analysis, *the application of MoNE’s Parent Involvement Program* appeared as a significant finding about parent involvement practices. The participating schools are all private schools that are regulated by the Ministry of Education which means that they basically use the MoNE educational program within their own school program. The following statements verify how the preschools use the Parent Involvement activities that are suggested by the MoNE program. Regarding the school administrators’ statements, they either have no idea about the program or they didn’t revise their parent involvement activities according to the early childhood educational program that was developed in 2013. When asked why they are not informed about the program, one of the administrators said that she/he has no idea. Another administrator says that their school was the pilot school for the new Early

Childhood Educational Program and has a member of staff who is responsible for the program and deals with such details.

“I don’t know the program. Like I said before we have an employee who is in charge of the new program, since our school was the pilot preschool for the new program. But as far as I know, I can say that we didn’t change the involvement program much” (Admin 4).

A participant affirms the finding by saying that she started to work at the school that year.

“I had just started to work at this school during that year. I understood from what they said that they didn’t give parents’ any education at the beginning of the year. Before I was taking a look at the documents, they didn’t use the activities and suggestions in the program very much. If you ask what we do, you know it I have already mentioned it before” (Admin 3).

Only one participant stated that they knew the MoNE program but the school already had a greater variety of activities so they didn’t need suggestions.

“I know and have looked at the program. But I must say that we don’t need suggestions from there. We already do what we should do about involvement. But I have to admit that our precious professors and teachers prepared the MoNE program. I appreciate it” says (Admin 9).

As it can be interpreted from the interview quotations, school administrators have either little or no idea about the Ministry of National Education’s program and the implementations that the educators use in those schools are restricted to parent education, meeting, volunteered parent presentation activities, homework. There is no school that does parent involvement activities on the school adaptation process and home visits. However, these implementations are the involvement activities which the program offers to schools to effectively collaborate with families.

4.4. Summary of Interview Findings

To summarize, the findings shows that the participating administrators have positive perceptions about parent involvement. They all agreed with the idea that without parents, education is possible. Whereas, the findings regarding the themes of home based, school based and home school conferencing activities, show that schools do practice a limited variety of activities and the activities that the schools choose to use are common. Moreover, almost all of the schools do not practice home visiting, parent education in the adaptation process and school visits with parents. In addition to this, the practice of leadership differs according to the participants. While some administrators stated that they are hands-on when it is about parent involvement, some other administrators say that they have other school staff to take care of the involvement activities. Another important finding is that trust, transparency, positive climate, decision-making are important components for developing positive involvement strategies and practices. For the school roles and responsibilities, most of the administrators highlighted these themes in their statements.

4.5. Document Analysis

This chapter providing the document analysis review will provide an answer for the research questions of the study. The Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program documents, and parent involvement practice documents collected from the participating preschools are analyzed in this section. While the MoNE documents will reveal the expectations of the early childhood

education authorities from schools, the documents of the particular preschools will show the specific practices that are actually and currently used.

4.5.1. Early Childhood Education Program of Ministry of National Education

The Turkish Ministry of National Education's (MoNE) Early Childhood Education Program highlights the necessity to involve parents with the education process (MoNE, 2006). Since there are some limitations in the 2006 program, the 2013 program suggested parent involvement strategies and practices linked with the program. It is stated that there are roles and responsibilities for educators and families that are important for collaboration (MoNE, 2013).

When the program was examined, the evolution in the parent involvement comprehension is noticed as well as the developments in daily and monthly lesson plans, observation forms, and classroom environment. The new program includes three major program booklets; the parent involvement guide integrated with educational program of 0-36-months old children, the parent involvement guide integrated with early childhood education program, and the early childhood education activity program.

The 2013 program covers family involvement in a particular topic and is fully comprehensive. A practical manual, prepared for this context, namely the "Family Support Guide Integrated with Early Childhood Education Program" t explains not only family involvement strategies and techniques but also in-school and out-of-school parent involvement activities. The integrated family support program covers three parts: family support education, family involvement, and

teacher guide. Remarkable points and ethical rules should be considered in the process.

4.7.1.1. Parent Education

Firstly, the parent education section covers the explanation about educational support for parents, its aim and importance, administrators and family education practices. Also, in this part of the program, family education practices, the process and the practical evaluation, the preparation of parent involvement are described. Moreover, the methods and techniques of parent involvement are defined as follows;

- situation analysis example,
- demonstrations,
- role play,
- question-answer,
- group work,
- brainstorming,
- sentence completion,
- adhesive note papers,
- train,
- guessing the rule,
- brick wall,
- seven...someone.

The Family education workshops compose of six sessions. These are the importance, the aim of the early childhood and expectations from families,

attitudes of parents, positive discipline, effective communication, play and toys, pictured books. Also, there are six types of parent involvement practices defined as;

- communication techniques,
- family involvement in education,
- examples of family involvement in educational activities,
- individual meetings,
- home visiting,
- developing the special needs children awareness for families.

It is stated that keeping in touch, informing and sharing positive feedback frequently or periodically might be done to develop good relationships with parents (MoNE, 2013).

4.5.1.2. Home-School Conferencing Activities

The argument shows that when a problem situation occurs sometimes meeting with parents face to face and explaining the situation individually is more helpful than writing a note about it. It is crucial to decide when the subject matter is appropriate (Davern, 2004). Because, it is claimed that traditional communication techniques like personal meetings become more beneficial when the situation links with a sensitive issue (Decker & Decker, 2003). Also, the importance of face to face meetings is mentioned in the program by saying that when first communicating with families, the educator should use a face to face meeting with the parents. If it is not possible then he or she should use other

techniques such as a phone call (MoNE, 2013). The communication techniques include 14 types of communication styles;

- phone call,
- SMS,
- bookshelves,
- visual and audio records,
- announcement boards,
- bulletins,
- newsletters,
- notebooks and notes,
- portfolios or development folders,
- meetings,
- arriving and leaving the school,
- internet based applications,
- suggestion box.

The Home visiting activity contains detailed explanations and documents to record the process of visiting the family at home. The aim of the home visit, the examples of it and the Home Visit Observation Form are included in this chapter. Moreover there are some attachments at the end of the booklet. The attachments are the school and the family introduction booklet, video record CD, presentation CD. The activity specifications for the program's parent involvement process, key points and practice examples are clearly defined (MoNE, 2013).

4.5.1.3. School Based Parent Involvement Activities

School based PI activities are the most effective techniques for collaborating with the parents (MoNE, 2013). At the beginning of the year the program suggests that school staff give parents the “Family Involvement Preferences” form after receiving the feedback from these forms, the program of family involvement activities need to be organized and planned. All of the family involvement activities should include the process of preparation, implementation, and evaluation of the activities. The 2013 program offers a large variety of practices that can be practiced with the parents in the educational activities at school. The types of family involvement includes having parents as observers in the school, taking a role in developing and fixing materials, having responsibilities as guides in social activities like field trips, out of school activities, arranging in class activities based on the parents’ talents, preparing food with children, engaging in play, storytelling, science, art, and music activities with children, joining the activity that is organized by the teacher. Moreover, the most important thing included in the 2013 program. is that there are specific examples for the activities that will guide school staff towards understanding how to plan, organize and apply the school based involvement practices. This helps the school staff control the process of the practice comprehensively. There are five themes that are derived from the content of school based activities, namely; *the adaptation process, special needs children awareness for parents, ECE institution application forms, need assessment forms, field trips.*

The Adaptation to School Process is another theme that is considered and described in a detailed way in the program. The necessities of school staff, parents, and students are considered in this section. Practical and exemplified practices are mentioned to make the adaptation process easier. There are adaptation week activities for parents and adaptation week activities for students with examples of activity plans.

Developing *the special needs children awareness for parents*; increases the awareness of special needs children, inclusive education, inclusive education in early childhood education, the implications of inclusive education and examples of inclusive education. The school and family introduction booklet shows general information about the school and information about the educational program of the school. In addition, this section gives samples of the early childhood education institutions appeals form, emergency contact form, school-family contract, child and family introduction form, family education needs assessment form, family involvement preference form.

The early childhood education institution application form should be filled out before the child starts school and it gives personal information about the child and family that the school need. The Emergency Contact form is important because it is stated that when there is an urgent situation like the child has an accident or illness, it is crucial to have the contact information of a third person instead of the mother and father. The sample contact form is for the registration of the child as a student. The sample given in the program is said to be an example but if the school administration needs to make changes it can be done without

contradicting the MoNE regulations. The child and family introduction form gives school staff detailed knowledge about the family and child's personal information, from birth to present, family habits, and developmental characteristics of the child. This information is very important for educators since it enables them to support the process of adaptation to school, the educational process and the development of the student.

The aim of the Family Education needs assessment form is to reveal the needs and interests about child development and provide the required education for parents. This form also mentions the importance of prioritizing certain subjects, timing and dates. The parent involvement activity preferences form suggests that parents need to attend a planned parent involvement activity at least four times in an educational year. Before the activities are implemented they must be organized effectively and sensitively. Since some family structures might be unique, the activity preferences should be presented to the family and they have a right to choose the most appropriate ones to get involved with.

Parent's involvement in *field trips* means that during the trip the parent is responsible for cooperating with the teacher to support the children who need help. This practice enables families to experience out of school activities with the teachers and students and observe the children's learning processes. Home visits are another parent involvement activity that is suggested for preschools. This activity aims to convert the dynamics of the teacher-parent relationship. It helps teachers to get to know the child's family in person and build a trusting relationship. Since the teacher does not have responsibilities anymore, the parents

share and talk about their feelings freely which will maintain a good relationship. Although the involvement activities are clearly defined and exemplified by the program, there is a lack of administrators' roles and responsibilities (MoNE, 2013).

4.5.2. The Documents of the Preschools' Parent Involvement Practices

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the commonly used and preferred parent involvement techniques are based on Fantuzzo's study of parent involvement for early childhood education, developed and based on Epstein's theory. Epstein explains parent involvement as a process of interaction and collaboration of schools with families in various programs, like policy making and volunteering. According to her theory, there are six types of parent involvement, parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, collaborating with the community. Furthermore, Fantuzzo and his colleagues (2000) revised Epstein's types of involvement into three categories which are home-based, school based and home-school conferencing.

However, in Turkey, the Ministry of National Education supplies a divergent system of parent involvement. The 2013 program includes the family education program, integrated with the early childhood education curriculum. This comprehensive, detailed and tangible parent involvement program is submitted to preschools.

In Turkey, at all educational levels the education system is centralized and regulated by the national curriculum. Thus, the situation is the same for early

childhood education. The last Early Childhood Education Program was issued in 2013. Adversely, the new program presents a distinctive family involvement program guide. The documents that are collected from the participating schools are interpreted and analyzed according to this MoNE program guide. The findings of the Document Analysis are represented as follows.

The documents were gathered to analyze what kind of activities are practiced in private preschools. Then the activities were compared with the MoNE family involvement program. The documents show that there are forms, booklets and materials shared with the family in the process of their involvement with education. These documents are;

- family education need assessment forms,
- family involvement preference forms,
- social activities and celebration participation forms,
- parent advice notes,
- family involvement activity assessment forms,
- school regulation handbooks,
- teacher-parent meeting forms,
- family and child information forms and booklets,
- early childhood education institutions' appeals form,
- emergency contact form,
- school contract.

The documents taken from the schools shows their choice of the activities. The following table shows that the difference among family involvement practices

are demonstrated according to the MoNE program, the preschool documents and administrator's interviews (See Table 4.1). This table also allows readers to compare the school documents and the school administrators' interview answers about parent involvement. In the table, the first column shows parent involvement activities that MoNE suggests, the second column demonstrates how many administrators quoted the MoNE activities in the interviews, the third column shows how many administrators documented these activities. As it can be interpreted from the table, there are a missing number of documents that are taken from preschools. The reason for the difference between the MoNE activities and the administrators' interview answers is that the preschools do not use some of the activities that the MoNE suggest. In addition, the reason why there is a variation between the interview answers and documents is that the administrators do not document all of the parent activities. Moreover, some of the administrators stated that some of the documents include parents' private information. Therefore, they preferred not to share the parent involvement activity documents because of confidentiality issues.

Table 4.1
Preschools' implementation of the activities defined by MoNE.

MoNE Activities	Interviews	Documents
Family Education	14	5
case study	-	-
demonstrations	-	-
role playing	-	-
question-answer	-	-
group works	-	-
Communication Techniques	16	16
phone call	16	-
SMS	2	-
Bookshelves	-	-
visual and audio records	1	-
announcement boards	-	-
Bulletins	7	5
Newsletters	-	-
notebooks and notes	15	9
portfolios/development folders	14	-
Meetings	16	-
school visits	-	-
arriving and leaving the school	-	-
internet based applications	14	14
suggestion box	-	-
Individual Meetings	16	-
Home Visits	1	-

The sample documents show that participating preschools parent involvement practices correspond with the activities that the MoNE family involvement program offers. However, none of the schools are implementing the whole program. The documents collected from the schools demonstrate that each school follows a different program in the process of parent involvement. The schools actually don't have a distinctive program - the parent involvement practices are integrated with the educational activities just like the MoNE program offers. But the schools do use some of the activities that are suggested by the Ministry of Education. As the table shows there are a lack of variety in parent involvement activities. The types of parent involvement activities are limited.

Moreover, when the interviews and the documents are matched with the schools it can be inferred that there are some missing documents. For example; there is only one preschool that practices home visiting. Since there is not an existing document for such kind of activities, the researcher was not able to document them. Although, Ministry of Education's integrated curriculum suggests, the schools need to evaluate each activity that is done with parents, the evaluation of the activity can only be seen in one preschool's activity - that is the parent presentation at school. If the school were able to do the evaluations, they would be able to document each step of the involvement process.

In conclusion, there is a difference between the MoNE program and the preschools' program. The preschools' parent involvement program needs to be aligned by simply following the guidelines that the program offers. Most importantly, home visits, field trips, the types of in class family activities must be increased. In

addition, the evaluation part of these activities must be carried out and the documents should be filed in student folders.

4.6. Summary of Findings

The results demonstrate that all of the participating administrators have a positive perception of parent involvement. They acknowledge the importance and effectiveness of the involvement on children, teachers, parents and school. It is stated that parent involvement positively affects all of the partners who play a role in the child's educational process.

Regarding the findings of this research, it showed that the administrators practice similar parent involvement activities. They use certain types of parent involvement activities. For example; parent presentations in class, parent school meeting, parent education, invitation for celebrations are used in participating preschools. Nonetheless, they choose not to use; home visiting, parent volunteered school trips and decision-making with parents. The participating administrators stated that they prefer not to go on school trips and home visiting activities because they either think "it is complicated" or "not useful". In addition; although all of the administrators shared their positive understanding of making decisions with parents, the results show that the decision-making practices are restricted in participating preschools. Actually, the administrators stated that even when they give parents the opportunity to make decisions about the school, they limit it. They stated that that they are the education professionals, so it would harm their school. Moreover, the administrators stated that they either plan, organize, direct, help control or lead the parent involvement process. But they mostly share common idea of administrators claim to be active in the process.

In addition to this, when the activities are compared with the MoNE program, that gives guidelines and examples of a good variety of activities; it is observed that preschools are partly implementing the program. When the researcher compared the administrators' statements, collected documents about involvement activities, and the MoNE program booklet, there is a gap between the activities that schools practice and the MoNE program suggestions.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions chapter brings light to the findings of the study, with a particular emphasis on the interpretations of the results. Aside from the discussion of the findings, the overview of the study, the procedures used, and the presentation of the results are determined. Additionally, in this section the researcher addresses considerations for future research, suggestions for early childhood education and limitations of the study.

5.1. Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the administrators and gather some evidence about their perception of parent involvement, according to the types of home based, school based and home-school conferencing activities that they implement to maintain parents' involvement in their school. The purpose of this examination was to help identify and better comprehend the administrators' perceptions about their leadership in the involvement process and their suggestions about how to progress in establishing effective parent involvement.

The present study examined the administrators' perception of parent involvement, to the extent of leadership practice. The first task was to determine the administrators' perception of parent involvement (Research Question 1). Furthermore, of particular interest, were the administrators' thoughts about leadership in the parent involvement process in schools (Research Question 2). The results of the research questions have collectively shed light on parent involvement

as well as the critical leadership role of administrators in parent involvement. The present study adds fresh information and contribution to the existing literature by incorporating documents and additional qualitative information to help better understand administrators' perceptions of parent involvement.

1. What is the preschool administrators' perception of parent involvement?
2. What are the home based, school based and home-school conferencing based practices of the preschools?
3. How do preschool administrators define the practice of leadership with regards to parent involvement?

5.1.1. The Perception of Administrators about Parent Involvement

Firstly, this study aimed to draw a picture of *private preschool administrators' perception on parent involvement activities*. The findings help us to take a look at the current situation of private preschools in Ankara in terms of the parent involvement activities and administrators' management strategies that are used to establish relationships with families.

Parent involvement and administration research studies conducted in Turkey, argue that most teachers and administrators are reluctant about parents' involvement, since they feel annoyed when a parent comes and interferes with the teaching process and burdens them (Erdoğan & Demirkasımoğlu, 2010). Besides, Erdoğan and Kasımoğlu (2010) suggested that although teachers acknowledge the importance of building partnership with families, they may not work towards parent involvement. The study shows that since the teachers and administrators believe that parent involvement is time consuming and tiring, they do not give enough provision to involve parents in the educational process. Luckily, the current study demonstrates

that administrators have a positive understanding of parent involvement. The administrators have a shared term that “parent involvement is necessary” when sharing their thoughts about parent involvement in early childhood education. So, the findings of the current study do not support the literature, since administrators stated that parent involvement is important and they work towards increasing parent involvement.

Also there are administrators who have stated the importance of parent involvement in unique ways. For example; administrator 13 said that “education away from parents resembles a cake without baking powder”. Hilado, Kallemeyn, and Phillips (2013) stated that administrators who explain parent involvement in a different way are more likely to have positive views of parents and get higher levels of involvement. Although this study does not measure the involvement level of parents in the participating schools, in the interview, an administrator stated that they have all the parents involved in the process of education. Based on the administrator’s statements, the findings confirm the study. Moreover, the document analysis showed evidence that there are a wide variety of parent involvement activities offered and also according to the responses of the administrators, they are willing to have parents involved in education.

5.1.2. The Practices of Parent Involvement Activities

Secondly, this study points out *the home-based, school-based and home school conferencing* that are currently being used in the participating schools. According to a study, it is suggested that to have wide range of involvement activities is the only way to enable families and engage them in their child’s educational process (Bornfreund, 2014). Regarding the administrator’s statements

about the involvement activities that are currently applied in private preschools and the documents that were gathered from these schools (volunteer parent involvement activity assessment papers, parent education needs assessment forms, notebooks, activity suggestions forms and parent handbooks) the variety of family-school collaboration activities are limited when it is compared with the MoNE program and literature. However, Budunç (2007) verifies the current study's results with research showing that in Turkey, approximately 97% of the preschools use individual meetings and 80% of the preschools use meetings and seminars. The number of the preschools that practice home visits is the least among the other commonly used communication techniques like; phone calls, bulletins and information notes (Budunç, 2007). This study shows similar results with the literature in Turkey demonstrating that voluntary involvement through parent presentations, parent-teacher-administrator meetings, special days, homework or supportive activities, communication and parent education are examples of strategies commonly used in preschools.

Moreover, other studies about parent involvement verify that teachers rarely do home visiting (Abbak, 2000, Kaya, 2002, Şahin & Turla, 2003). Similarly, in this study home visiting is the least frequent technique that is utilized because of its "usability" according to the administrator's statement. Although, home visiting is practiced in only one preschool, in the international literature there are many studies that clarify the importance of this practice (Raikes et al., 2006). Also, effective parent and school partnerships should include ongoing, individualized communication for sharing children's educational process and learning; home visits, and multiple opportunities for families to be involved at the center and classroom levels

(Bornfreund, 2014). In addition to this the 2013 MoNE program, requires the professionals to use home visiting. Thus, it is evaluated that the home visit practice needs to be included and developed in Turkey. In addition to this, the literature suggests that school based involvement includes going on field trips (Epstein, 1995; Fantuzzo et al., 2000), parent guided school trips are implemented by only one preschool. Since the other participants choose not to practice it because of its complications.

While this study puts emphasis on parent involvement at schools, parent involvement with students at home impacts student learning as well. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) suggested that when parent involvement happens in the home, it has a great effect on the student's development. It is stated that home influences are the strongest indicator for school success. Most schools are involving parents in school-based activities in a variety of ways, but the evidence shows that there is little, if any on parent efficacy and the subsequent learning and achievement of preschool children. However, the current study demonstrates that most of the schools have home based activities limited to homework. Although there is limited home based involvement, administrators' share that it is very hard to get parents involved because of their busy schedules. Regarding the comparison between the MoNE program, and the school's document and interview analysis, the schools have their own program of parent involvement although they are regulated by the Ministry of Education. Participating schools seem to be insufficient in terms of strategies for collaborating with families and inadequate in terms of the variety of activities available.

Parent education is described as a systematic learning process that is given by professional caregivers of children to their raise consciousness for supporting children's development (Hoard & Shepart, 2005). Firstly, it is found that parent education enhances the desired behaviors and attitudes of children and increases communication between parents and children, by guiding parents in the process of child raising (Mann et. al. 2004). There are many research studies that argue that it is important to supply the help to parents while children are growing physically, cognitively, socially and emotionally (Üstünoğlu 1990, Öztop & Telsiz 1996, Tezel-Şahin & Ersoy 1999). Similarly, in this study the findings show that administrators have a positive understanding of parent education. All of the participants highlighted the importance of it when they talked about the implementations of parent involvement. Moreover, they shared that to increase the involvement level in schools, parents should be educated about its importance. However, one of the administrators expressed that the participants of the parent education seminars or meetings are mostly mothers. It is stated that fathers rarely attend education seminars or meetings. Similarly, Ünlü Çetin and Olgan (2012) confirm this finding by demonstrating that in Turkey, fathers are reluctant to get involved and the importance of parent involvement needs to be taught urgently to fathers, mothers or even to children.

As mentioned, the current research also details the parents' level of involvement in participating schools. In the past several decades, there are more single parents, mothers working outside the home, and an increasing number of hours spent at the workplace (Flynn & Nolan, 2008). Thus, the amount of time that parents spend helping children is decreased. In addition, families have less time to

participate in school activities (Epstein, 2011). In participating preschools, the administrators argued that the involvement of the parents of children who are enrolled in their schools is good. However, like the previous studies, in this study administrators stated that the first and the most accurate reason for some parents' lack of involvement is their harsh working hours. The administrators shared that the parents' willingness to get involved is high but their time is very limited. Yet without parent support, schools cannot make any difference (Epstein, 2011). So, it is recommended that parents' time restrictions can be solved by offering flexible timetables for the sake of not losing the eagerness of the Parents' to cooperate with the school.

5.1.3. Leadership Practices

Thirdly, the current study aims to show the administrators' definitions of *the practice of leadership*. Leadership style is a component that has an influence on the majority of the schools' educational systems. The early childhood institution administrators are in charge of various responsibilities (Mandell & Murray, 2009). Leadership in early childhood institutions is a multi-dimensional subject. Jones (2007), states that preschool education administration is mostly derived from interpersonal skills. In addition, it relies on developing positive relationships and motivating people around them. It is a proven fact that not only parents, but also the other educational stakeholders play an important role in the early childhood programs (Van Voorhis et al. 2013). Similarly, Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) states that parents must have not only the responsibility of supporting the development of their children, but also the responsibility of the success in the school, in which there is an effective and positive climate. Lareau (2003) argues that the

administrators' approach needs to be based on conscious strategies that allow schools to form effective parent-school partnerships respecting different cultures and considering the individuality of all students.

What needed to be argued in this study is the type of leadership approaches that administrators follow in the process of parent involvement. There are leadership styles that are characterized by how administrators take actions at the school. Some examples for the types of leadership are participatory, instructional, contingency, collaborative, situational, transactional, and transformational styles. Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) argue that the instructional leadership approach is one of the most commonly used in the field of educational leadership. Thus, in order to reveal and understand how the administrators lead the process of parent involvement, the researcher collected and interpreted the findings regarding the Weber's (1996) Model of Instructional Leadership. The participants' utilization of leadership is interpreted from the comprehension of the answers from the different interview questions. Regarding the findings some critical points about administrative practices can be summarized.

The administrators in this study have a positive perception about parent involvement. They stated that they know the positive effects of involvement on children, parents, teachers and school. They take an active role, communicate and engage in activities with parents. However, they limit parents with regards to the decision-making process and do not practice shared governance or partnerships which would help maintain a close relationship between school and home. There is a lack of variety in involvement activities, but they have suggestions for various activities and a limited knowledge about the MoNE program.

Similar to this study, the research demonstrates that there is a disparity between the administrators' beliefs and the parent involvement practices occurring in schools (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009). When early childhood professionals attempt to carry out traditional leadership roles at the same time as they implement family centered early care and education, they may find themselves in a quandary. A number of the assumptions associated with traditional leadership are not in harmony with family centered practices that include engaging families as partners with programs and teachers in their children's development and learning (Douglass & Gittell, 2012).

In their work with families, early childhood professionals often find themselves challenged by the need to be both leaders and parents. Also, the results from different studies confirm that administrators are not adequately prepared to implement some parent involvement programs (Epstein, 2011; Epstein et al. 2002). When policy makers put pressure on schools for a bureaucratic demand for teacher and school accountability, the teachers and programs may seek power because they presume that asserting their expertise is necessary to meet the standards or guidelines. It is a misconception in early childhood education leadership (Douglass & Gittell 2012; Kagan & Kauerz, 2007). But if early childhood programs put pressure on other people at school to show their power that is synonymous with traditional leadership, they limit their ability to demonstrate collaboration with families, children, and other professionals. According to these studies, it can be interpreted that two administrators who take passive roles in the process, are more likely to show traditional approaches rather than instructional or transformational leadership styles.

According to Weber's theory, the first responsibility of instructional leaders is to define the school mission. The theory suggests that leaders should collaboratively develop a common vision of goals with the stakeholders. In the current study, the administrators stated that they share their vision of their school. In addition, they commonly used the word "we" when they are sharing their school's goals and aims. For example; Admin 6 said "Our first and the main aim is to be clear and transparent in our job. In the class and school environment, we do use unbiased and non-discriminative statements in our talks with parents". Nonetheless, the participants are reluctant to share their responsibilities with parents. Thus, it is hard to say that they have a shared vision and work for developing it collaboratively.

Inadequately involving parents into the decision making processes is a barrier for a healthy relationship between school and home. According to the findings, the administrators' use of decision-making strategies is ineffective. The preschools in the current study restrict parents to making decisions regarding the school rules and their requirements. The administrators give no opportunity to parents to have a say on the educational program or the school's ongoing process. Parents' ideas are taken into consideration only for the parent education or parent presentation activities. However, this practice does not correspond with the decision-making description in the literature. Decision-making activities are good for parents to make them active contributors of the school. The decisions about the aims of school, curriculum, education of the school staff, financial management are taken together with the parents in effective decision-making programs (Dom & Verhoeven, 2006). All around the world, there are qualified institutions to manage the school systems and authorize schools to have parents actively take a role in a school team like the parent-

school association. These teams have parents who make decisions in different phases of the educational process. Also, there are parent involvement programs that enable parents to get together, take action about the curriculum and discuss the educational goals of the schools.

In Denmark, parents take part in annual meetings to discuss the curriculum and yearlong informal activities (Ravn, 2003). Nonetheless, the study argues that effective administrators embrace a philosophy of partnership in which they share power and responsibility with families. The importance of effectively involved parents in the school improvement processes is proven by studies and it is regulated by national standards including leadership (Epstein, 2011). Also, educational meetings are available to school staff on topics related to parent involvement in professional learning communities (Epstein, 2011, Med, 2010, Wright, Stegeline, & Hartle, 2007).

In Turkey, parents' engagement in the school improvement processes was not only a legal requirement but also an important part of the educational processes (MoNE, 2006) implying that activities of parent-school associations are mandatory in all of the MoNE regulated schools. However, according to the 2013 program, the new regulations, suggest that the Ministry of National Education does not require parent-school association in preschool, so, none of the schools are practicing it. The preschools and elementary schools have the same parent-school association group that represents both preschool and elementary school parents. This change affected the preschool parent-school collaboration. In preschools, it is harder to include parents in school development processes. Despite all of the research about working

with partners to improve the school, this study shows that administrators usually do not choose to make decisions with parents.

Research carried out in Turkey shows that when teachers, administrators, parents were asked about the school based parent involvement activities, none of them stated that the school is implementing a decision-making strategy or that parents are involved in school administration (Erkan, Uludağ, Dereli, 2006). Doubtless, the results of this current study show that private preschool administrators have a positive understanding of decision-making collaboratively with parents. But, they tend to only give parents the opportunity to make decisions about family education and parent volunteering activities. It is indicated that the school frequently made decisions with their school staff because the administrators describe themselves as job experts. Whereas the studies tell us there is a need for school administrators to build programs that enable families to partner with schools (Sanders et al., 2009). Likewise, the researchers argue that there is a clear difference between involving parents in school activities and engaging parents in learning (Harris, A., & Goodall, J. 2008). Although the teachers wish to give responsibility to the parents when taking decisions about schools, teachers still feel reluctant to work together with parents (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). Instructional leaders manage the curriculum and instruction, monitor classrooms practice, support the process, provide resource, demonstrate good practices, and give support for data to drive instruction. When it is compared with our participants' statements, they hardly manage to these duties.

Another role of the instructional leaders at school is promoting a positive learning climate, communicating effectively, establishing expectations and ordering

learning environment. In the interviews, participants often stated that it is vital to have a positive environment in the school. Moreover, to observe and improve instruction, the use of classroom observation and professional development opportunities is another responsibility for the administrators. According to the administrators, they know their insufficiencies and they suggest many activities for increasing the parent involvement level. Moreover, they share what they do not practice at their school. Thus, they do know what is missing in the current program which means that they observe the program and accept the fact that they should improve it. Additionally, Weber states that assessing the instructional program by contributing to the process of planning, design, administration and assessing the effectiveness of curriculum is one of the most important roles of the administrators. However, this is another lacking part since they do not evaluate their current involvement family program. We would have seen the documents, if there is an evaluation system of the activities applied in the schools. Although the MoNE recommends that the evaluation should be done for all of the PI activities to improve new and better techniques, none of the schools has the evaluation of their PI activities.

The current study shows that administrator's put emphasis on trust in the relationship between the school and family. Organizational culture refers to norms, values, assumptions, and shared meanings, and values about how the organization defines professionalism (Hemmelgarn et al., 2001). All of the preschool administrators highlighted the school climate is shaped by trustworthy relationships between family and school which would be possible with involvement activities. This fact shows us that there is no way to have an effective school system with only

having limited types of communication and involvement techniques. These study results show us that parent involvement does not only mean sending brochures, letters, and notes to parents. Hemmelgarn et al. (2001) provides evidence that supports a different assumption: that the culture of the organization is the key factor when determining the implementation of family centered care.

Although the research argues that the administrator's approach towards parent involvement matters, the results from numerous studies confirm that administrators are not adequately prepared to implement parent involvement programs (Westmoreland, 2009, Johnson, Rochkind & Doble, 2008). The analysis of the interviews and documents shine a light on the participants' knowledge about parent involvement programs. Unfortunately, the study findings confirm, the participating administrators have a lack of knowledge. Moreover, it can be interpreted from the results of the study, and participants shared insufficient knowledge and indifferent attitudes about the MoNE program. Almost all of them state either they didn't read it or our school has a member of staff who is in charge of it and knows our responsibilities regarding the program. The result puts emphasis on a critical point that is the education of administrators about the regulations of education. It is fact that there is a lack of information transferred between the MoNE and schools and between school administrators and school staff. For instance, one of the participating preschools was a pilot school for the recent ECE program. However, the administrator claimed that they had not been trained on parent involvement. It is thought that the MoNE does not entail the involvement program it just guides school staff and parents. However, it is an important finding that none of the participated administrators shared their thoughts and views about the

involvement program of MoNE. This shows that they do not need to know what is going on in or out of the country but also all around the world to collaborate with families.

Democratic organizations that share power and decision-making through participatory processes may be more likely to foster a staff willing to share power with parents (Douglass & Gittell, 2012). The participants know what is missing in their parent involvement program. It can be understood from the “suggestions part of the interview”. In that section, it asked administrators what can be done to increase the effectiveness of parent involvement. And they mentioned different activities that they do not practice in their school. This finding shows that they are aware of what the insufficiencies are in the family involvement program.

Similarly, the results show that administrators’ have limited decision-making, lack of variable involvement strategies, lack of knowledge about the regulated MoNE program. But they have taken active role in the process and they acknowledge the positive effects of PI, suggestions for increasing involvement. In addition to this, the preschools that are included in this study use their own program of involvement but the lack of variation in the involvement programs is observed when it is compared with international literature and the 2013 MoNE.

Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) stated that parents must have not only the responsibility of supporting the development of their children, but also the responsibility for the success in the school in which there is an effective and positive climate. But more importantly, the research suggests that school administrators influence student learning through school culture and climate. The studies show that students achieve higher scores with healthy cultures and climates (MacNeil, Prater

&Busch, 2009). With the understanding that parents are an important variable in student success, defining the factors that influence involvement should be of considerable interest to school administrators (Feuerstein, 2000).

In effective schools, community and family relationships are important. There is two-way communication between family, school and school staff to put emphasis on collaborating with parents. Parents can visit the school whenever they want and they can share their suggestions as well as engage in the decision-making process. Parents from effective schools have a willingness to make decisions about both school and the school environment and school is open to every kind of suggestion coming from parents. There is a mutual support between school staff and family while educating the child (Balci, 1993, Şişman & Turan, 2005). In effective schools, community and school relationships are fostered by parent support and involvement with the school administration. School community relationships had changed by the time of the 1990's. Local administrators in public schools tried to analyze the issues of education and because of this, an increase in sensitiveness to social and educational requests occurred. It was discovered, that there is a great impact upon administrator's roles in sustainable and permanent effective school components (Goble & Bomba, 1995). The studies place importance on why school leaders need to use effective analysis, planning, communication and evaluation skills and strategies to develop school effectiveness.

Furthermore, most of the administrators describe their role in the process of parent involvement as active. Two participants shared that they direct, help and control the process of the implementation that is done with parents. These attitudes and behaviors are linked with a more traditional approach for administering the

school. Alternative organizational approaches have been related to support and shared power between school professional and families. In contrast to Weber's theory, the theoretical 'post bureaucratic' organization is characterized by dialogue and consensus decision-making, rather than hierarchical control. Heckscher (1994) describes the post bureaucratic organization as the 'combination of control and flexibility'. This more flexible and responsive model, governed by trust, mission, principles, and consensus, appears to be a better fit for a supportive family partnership model in early childhood education.

5.2. Implications for Early Childhood Education

The literature about parent involvement and school administration shows that administrators' parent involvement efforts are linked to children's learning. Parent involvement helps families to understand what their children should know and be able to do. Simply inviting families to voluntary parent involvement activities, celebrations, arranging teacher parent meetings are not enough for the effective learning outcomes of children. In high quality programs, three strategies that school organizations use have been identified in parent involvement. Regarding these issues, it should be acknowledged that the most effective strategy is to have parents in schools by ensuring the quality of parent involvement. In the schools by raising awareness of the school staff and parents, identifying the problems, then planning an education or intervention program, the barriers of involvement can be compensated. The administrators are expected to implement strategies and practices that show sympathy to alternative family structures, involve parents in decisions relating to their children and regularly give parents feedback about the quality of their

children's experiences. Leadership must be built on relationships of respect and trust by modeling, demonstrating and making positive interactions.

When parent involvement can become the high priority of a school, the administrators actively search for parents' support and assistance and work to reduce barriers, such as parents' time restrictions. The results demonstrate that they are encouraged to practice these strategies, yet they show no action regarding these implementations. Thus, the administrators are expected to take active support from parents by giving them opportunities to raise their voice about the school's educational system and take an active role in the school responsibilities and also improve school based, home based and home school conferencing activities.

In addition, it is said that administrative training about family and community involvement in school programs is limited (Hiatt-Michael, 2006). In the interest of having schools increase the relationships with families, the need for administrators to have preservice training about parent involvement emerges. According to the participants' statements about their own demographic information, none of the school leaders have experienced any training or education about administration, although they came from different backgrounds like; English teaching, guidance counseling etc. In order to assist the children's educational process with parents, the gap between preservice education for administrators and the desired education should be compensated.

Although the administrators have shared common positive perceptions of parent involvement and a strong sense of the parent involvement strategies, they have problems with differentiating and increasing the involvement of parents. This study emphasizes the need for effective school leaders; administrators who knows

how to practice parent involvement techniques and improve them. Sachs (2003) states democratic educational professionals develop alliances with parents and others who are restrained, work professionally and collaborate with different stakeholders. Similarly, Moss (2006) suggests the educators aim should be researching, rather than dealing with bureaucratic or technique responsibilities. There is more than just academic or expert knowledge and the knowledge coming through relationships, dialogue, listening, values, and perceptions are vital (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001, Moss, 2006). Democratic or transformative professionalism provides a great opportunity, not for the knowledge and expertise of administrators but families.

If the approaches of transformational and instructional leadership in the school can be implemented effectively, it will enable the parents to be active collaborators of the school. Because transformational leadership enables a school environment that has components of involvement, engagement, and empowerment to reach the potential effective school. Instructional leadership would make parents develop through personal and interpersonal learning as well as their children (Mitchell & Sackney, 2002). In brief, the preschool professionals and researchers may use the findings of the research study to improve their own understandings of leadership style and parent involvement activities in the preschool programs, and to develop training and professional development opportunities for preschool administrators. These trainings can be organized by the educational faculties of universities. Moreover, in the departments of early childhood education, leadership lectures need to be given as a course. Also, the faculty of education needs to have parent involvement lectures for future educational administrators. Lastly, the key issue is that school leaders should be able to read, analyze, and practice the program

that the Ministry of Education offers. In other words, they have to know the program very precisely. Furthermore, it needs to be developed with alternative approaches based on the school's own educational vision and mission.

5.3. Considerations for Future Research

This research study aimed to highlight the importance of the administrator's approach towards parent involvement. Although the study shows that families express feelings of dissatisfaction about involvement programs that are lacking in structure and organization, there are a small group of parents who are interested in involvement activities (Sabancı, 2009). Therefore, it is thought that it would be a good follow up research subject to study parent's views about administrative strategies regarding parent involvement. Since the issue is about parents, their thoughts, experiences and observations about involvement strategies are crucial.

Another recommendation for a future study is that the relationship between the preschool's involvement practices and administrator's leadership style might be examined to show the development of the educational program effectiveness. Since the school administrators' attitudes and perception has a great effect on parent involvement process, it is urgent for them to put emphasis on PI and develop strategies for increasing PI.

5.4. Limitations

The present study allowed for the understanding of home-school relationships and parent involvement activities in preschools according to the administrators' point of view. Results of this study highlight the need for future studies that will address the needs and the demands of the parent involvement issue. This study might provide a basis for further studies about the issue. For future research, it is suggested that

parents and teachers might be included in order to get their perception about involvement practices. The further studies may be conducted in different settings like, public schools or different cities in Turkey.

5.5. Summary

In conclusion, the parent involvement issues that shed light on administrators' opinions have been previously discussed by numerous studies. Since all of the counterparts of education; parents, teachers, administrators have important responsibilities in educational process, this makes administrators' role is more critical since they are the ones who are authorized for organizing and leading the school. As it is demonstrated above with findings from the literature and the current study, the administrators acknowledge that parent involvement is a must. So that, if parent involvement is necessary in education, then administrators need to develop certain strategies for it. Although these issues still remain to be unresolved, the current study draws a picture of what can be done to move the parent involvement up to next level. In order improve the quality of early childhood education, the educators must follow the educational developments in the world and they need to take an action about the problems of parent involvement.

In the view of what has been said about parent involvement, it is important for schools to get organized and to follow a systemic approach that will foster parents to become effectively and actively involved in children's education. School administrators not only have a positive understanding but also take action with families in education, share the leadership and spend enough time and show afford to collaborate with families. Overall, what this study says to us is that the educators of future administrators have to lead them effectively in order to raise them as qualified

leaders for schools. It is crucial to support a new generation by seeing the leadership issue from the perception of early childhood professionals. As a new parent and as a preschool teacher, I expect schools to welcome parents more and give more chances for parents to stand up for their children.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Okul Öncesi Kurum Yöneticilerinin Aile Katılımına Dair Algılarının İncelenmesi Görüşme Formu

1. BÖLÜM

Katılımcı Bilgileri

1. Kaç yaşındasınız?
2. Cinsiyetiniz?
3. Hangi okuldan mezunsunuz?
4. Hangi bölümden mezunsunuz?
5. Kaç yıl öğretmenlik yaptınız?
6. Kaç yıldır yöneticilik yapıyorsunuz?
7. Kaç yıldır anaokulunda yöneticilik yapıyorsunuz?
8. Daha önce başka bir kurumda çalıştınız mı?
8. Hangi kurumda görev yapıyorsunuz?
9. Eğitim yönetimi bilimleri alanında herhangi bir sertifika veya eğitiminiz var mı?

2. BÖLÜM

Görüşme Soruları

1. Aile katılımı hakkındaki düşünceleriniz nelerdir?
2. Siz bir lider olarak kendinizi aile katılımı çalışmalarının neresinde görüyorsunuz?
3. Ailelerin okulunuzdaki eğitim süreçlerine katılımlarını sağlamak için yaptığınız uygulamalar nelerdir?
 - a. Gönüllü velilerle okulda yapılan çalışmalar, etkinlikler, projeler
 - b. Velilerin okul gezilerine katılımı
 - c. Sosyal etkinlikler (kutlama, tören, özel gün, vb.)
 - d. Veli katılımlı sınıf içi etkinlikleri
 - e. Aile eğitimleri
4. Okulunuzda düzenlenen aile katılım etkinliklerine ailelerin katılım durumu nasıldır?
 - a. Bu etkinliklere ailelerin katılım sıklığı ne seviyededir?
 - c. Bu etkinliklere katılım sağlamayan ailelerin gerekçeleri nelerdir?
 - d. Katılmayan aileler, etkinliklere nasıl dahil edilebilir?
5. Ailelerin evde sizin eğitim süreçlerinize katılımlarını sağlamak için yaptığınız uygulamalardan bahseder misiniz?
 - a. Ailelerin evde çocuklarıyla birlikte yapabilecekleri etkinlikler (matematik, okuma yazmaya hazırlık, yaratıcı sanat etkinlikleri vb.)
 - b. Okuldaki etkinlikleri destekleyici ev ödevleri
 - c. Ailelerin okuldakilere benzer kuralları evde de belirlemesi ve öğrencinin bu kurallara uymasına yardımcı olacak uygulamalar

e. Okulunuzda ailelerin öğrenci gelişimini takip etmesini sağlayan bir okul sistemi

6. Ailelerin okul-aile işbirliğine katılımlarını sağlamak için yaptığınız uygulamalardan bahseder misiniz?

a. Veli-Öğretmen-Yönetici görüşmeleri

b. Velileri öğrencinin okul yaşantısı (başarısı, günlük aktiviteleri, sosyal ilişkiler, uyumu, yaşadığı sıkıntılar vb.) hakkında bilgilendirme

c. Velileri bilgilendirmek için yöntemler (defter, telefon, e-mail, web sitesi)

8. Aile katılımı etkinliklerinin daha etkin bir şekilde uygulanması için önerileriniz nelerdir?

a. Okul temelli etkinlikler için önerileriniz nelerdir?

b. Ev temelli etkinlikler için önerileriniz nelerdir?

c. Ev-okul işbirliği temelli etkinlikler için önerileriniz nelerdir?

9. MEB.lığı tarafından 2013 yılında yayımlanan “Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programı ile Bütünleştirilmiş Aile Destek Eğitim Programı” ndan sonra uygulamaya yeni başladığınız veya mevcut uygulamanızı güncellediğiniz etkinliklerden bahseder misiniz?

10. Aile katılımı çalışmalarını aşağıdaki hususlar açısından değerlendir misiniz?

a. Öğrenciye etkisi nedir?

b. Öğretmene etkisi nedir?

c. Aileye etkisi nedir?

d. Okula etkisi nedir?

Appendix B: Okul Öncesi Kurum Yöneticilerinin Aile Katılımına Dair Algılarının İncelenmesi Görüşme Formu

Değerli katılımcı,

Bu çalışma ODTÜ Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü öğretim elemanlarından Yrd. Doç. Dr. Serap EMİL ve Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Tuğçe KARADUMAN tarafından yürütülmektedir. Çalışmanın amacı Türkiye'deki özel okul öncesi kurum yöneticilerinin aile katılımına dair algılarını incelemektir. Yöneticilerin çalıştıkları kurumlarda uygulanan aile katılımı etkinlikleri hakkında fikirlerini almak ve bu etkinlikler hakkındaki önerilerini öğrenmek amaçlanmaktadır. Bu kurumlarda çalışan yöneticilerin aile katılımının okul yöneticiliği ve liderlik anlayışları hakkında görüşlerini almak amaçlanmaktadır. Çalışma sonuçlarının, özel okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarındaki okul yöneticilerinin okul yönetimi anlayışına bağlı olarak ailelerin eğitime katılımı planlama ve stratejilerini ortaya koyması öngörülmektedir. Dolayısıyla çalışma sonucunda, okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında aile katılımının etkili bir düzeye taşınmasına katkı sağlaması hedeflenmektedir.

Bu formda, yukarıda belirtilen amaca yönelik ifadeleri içeren bir görüşme formu bulunmaktadır. Görüşmenin tamamının uygulanması yaklaşık 30 dakika sürmektedir. Görüşmenin her bir kısmındaki ifadeleri okuyup, kendi durumunuzu, gözlemlerinizi ve düşüncelerinizi göz önüne alarak sizi en iyi yansıtan ifadeleri kullanmanızı rica ederiz. Lütfen dilediğiniz kadar çok veya az konuşma hakkınız olduğunu unutmayınız. Eğer, soruların cevabı düşünmek isterseniz görüşmeyi durdurabilir, görüşmeciden zaman talebinde bulunabilirsiniz. Bütün soruların cevaplanması esastır.

Bu çalışmaya katılım gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır. Görüşmenin kayda alınmasını kabul ederseniz, görüşme sırasında kayıt cihazı kullanılacaktır. Görüşme sırasında kimliğinizi açık edecek herhangi bir bilgi dile getirmeniz gerekmemektedir. Katılımcıların sağladıkları bilgiler sadece araştırmacılar tarafından incelenecektir ve sadece bilimsel amaçla kullanılacaktır. Kayıtlar ve elde edilecek bilgiler başka hiçbir amaç için kullanılmayacak ve başka kişi ve kurumlarla paylaşılmayacaktır. Araştırmacılara sormak istediğiniz ek bilgiler için aşağıdaki iletişim adresini kullanabilirsiniz.

Çalışmaya sağladığınız katkı için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz.

Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda kesip çıkabileceğimi biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayınlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum. (Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

Adı Soyadı

Tarih

İmza

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.....

Proje Grubu

Yard. Doç Dr. Serap EMİL

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Appendix C: Turkish Summary

OKUL ÖNCESİ YÖNETİCİLERİNİN AİLE KATILIMINA DAİR ALGILARI

1. Giriş

Okul öncesi eğitim ortamı, çocuğun sistemli eğitime sürecine dahil olduğu ilk yerdir. Ancak eğitim, bu süreçten daha önce evde başlamaktadır. Çocukların birincil eğitim ve gelişim kaynağı ailedir. Eğitim süreci başladıktan sonra aile hayat boyu kaynak sağlamaya devam eder. Eğitim etkili olabilmesi, çocuğun hayatında ihtiyaç duyulan gelişimlerin gözlemlenebilmesi için eğitimde rolü olan bütün paydaşların; öğretmen, yönetici, ve en önemlisi de ailenin sürece dahil edilmesine bağlıdır.

Çalışmalar etkili aile katılımını çocuğun okul başarısını arttırdığını göstermektedir (Epstein, 2011, Fantuzzo et. al., 2004). Araştırmalar aileleri eğitime katılan öğrencilerin, aileleri katılamayan öğrencilere nazaran okulda daha az davranış bozukluğu gösterdikleri ve daha başarılı oldukları kanıtlamıştır (Warner, 2012). Aile katılımının bütün eğitim kademelerinde eğitim sürecine olumlu katkı sağladığı birçok çalışma verileri ile desteklenmiştir. Özellikle güncel bir meta-analiz çalışmasındaki veriler aile katılımı okul temelli aile katılımının olduğu okullardaki öğrenciler, sadece ev temelli katılım olarak ev ödevine yardım alan çocukların başarısından daha yüksek olduğu bulunmuştur.

Katılım ailelerin okul ve sınıf etkinliklerini gözlemlenmesi, öğretmen ile uyum içinde öğrencinin ihtiyaçlarına karşılanması, öğrenciye beklendik davranışın kazandırılması, akademik olarak kendi potansiyeline ulaşmasının sağlanması için oldukça önemlidir. Yüksek oranda katılım gösteren ailelerin çocukları öğretmenleri tarafından daha çok ilgiye maruz kalırken, öğrenmeyi geciktirici etkenlerin daha kolay ve çabuk teşhis edilmesine neden olmaktadır. Ayrıca, iyi bir aile katılımı programının olumlu aile-öğretmen iletişimini desteklediği ve öğretmenlerin öz

algılarını ve iş doyumlarını olumlu yönde etkilediği görülmüştür. Buna ek olarak, annelerin katılımının yanı sıra babaların da eğitime dahil olması, öğrencilerin okul performansını arttırmaktadır.

Türkiye’deki okullarda aile katılımı uygulamalarını arttırmak, geliştirmek ve güçlendirmek adına yapılan bir çok proje ve çalışma vardır. Bunlardan en önemlisi ve en günceli Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı’nın 2013 yılında hazırlamış olduğu Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programıdır. Bu program aile katılımı konusunda yapılması gereken ve beklenen etkinlikler ve uygulamalardan bahsetmenin yanı sıra, bazı etkinlik örneklerini de içermektedir. Program hem okul çalışanlarına hem de ailelere hitap etmektedir. Eğitim sürecine dahil olan bütün kişiler dikkate alınarak hazırlanmıştır. Buna ek olarak, programda aile katılımının önemi vurgulanarak uygulanma şekli ve zamanı konusunda öneriler de yer almaktadır.

Aile katılımı etkileyen birçok unsur vardır. Okul yöneticilerinin aile katılımı sürecine dahil olması da süreci etkileyen en önemli unsurlardan biridir. Okul yöneticileri aile katılımı sürecinde planlama, uygulama ve organizasyon gibi önemli stratejik görevleri vardır. Bu görevlerin yerine getirilmesi ev ve okul arasında güç bir bağ kurabilmesi için önemli rol oynamaktadır. Yöneticilerin görev ve sorumluluklarının bilincinde olmaları, hem öğretmenlere hem de ailelere gerektiği zaman destek aile katılımı etkinliklerin yürütülmesinde destek olmaları gerekmektedir. Buna ek olarak, yöneticilerin benimsedikleri liderlik anlayışının aileler ile güçlü ve etkili bağlar kurmada etkili olduğu birçok araştırmacı tarafından kanıtlanmıştır (Sanders & Simon, 2002; Sheldon, 2003; Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004; Westmoreland, Rosenberg, Lopez & Weiss, 2009). Bu sebeple, yöneticilerin liderlik anlayışları, yaklaşımları, stratejileri ve uygulamaları önem taşımaktadır. Aile

katılımını destekleyen ve işbirliğine dayalı bir liderlik yaklaşımı şüphesiz ki kaliteli ve etkili aile katılımı etkinlikleri uygulanmasına destek olacak ve sonucunda da öğrencilerin daha iyi eğitim almaları sağlanacaktır.

Budunç (2007) Türkiye’de yaptığı araştırmasında okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin okul yöneticilerinin aile katılımı uygulamalarına katkı sağladıklarını, bu konuda yöneticilerinin başarılı olduklarını düşündüklerini savunmuştur. Fakat bazı araştırmalar ise okulların aile katılımı uygulamalarının yetersizliğini, okul yöneticilerinin aile katılımı ile ilgili olumsuz algıları olduğunu, ailelerin kendilerini aile katılımı konusunda olumsuz tutumlar gösterdiklerini, zaman yetersizliği, ekonomik olanaksızlıklar ve iletişimsizlik sorunları olduğunu göstermektedir (Ünüvar, 2010; Atabey & Tezel Şahin, 2009). Aile katılımı ile ilgili sorunları aşabilmek için bu konu hakkında yapılan araştırmaların arttırılması, çalışmaların derinleştirilmesi, uygulanabilir ve etkili çözüm yöntemleri geliştirilmesi gerektiği düşünülmektedir (Erdoğan & Kasımoğlu, 2010). Bu sebeple bu çalışmada aile katılımı konusu ele alınmış ve konu ile ilgili olarak en önemli unsurlardan biri olan yönetici görüşlerine başvurulmuştur.

Yöntem

Bu araştırmanın amacı, okul yöneticilerinin aile katılımına ilişkin algılarını ortaya koymak; ev, okul temelli ve ev-okul işbirliği ile ilgili gerçekleştirilen aile katılımı etkinliklerini belirlemek ve okul yöneticilerinin aile katılımı sürecinde liderlik rollerini nasıl tanımladıklarını göstermektir. Araştırmanın amacı kapsamında oluşturulan araştırma soruları şöyledir:

Okul yöneticilerinin aile katılımı hakkındaki algıları nelerdir?

Okul temelli, ev temelli ve okul-ev işbirliği temelli aile katılım uygulamaları nelerdir?

Aile katılımı sürecinde okul yöneticileri ortaya koydukları liderlik uygulamalarını nasıl tanımlamaktadırlar?

Bu çalışmanın deseni çalışma konusuna paralel olarak seçilmiştir. Bu araştırma okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında çalışan yöneticilerin aile katılımı hakkındaki algılarını incelemeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu konuyu derinlemesine araştırabilmek, ayrıntılı açıklamalar yapabilmek, sayılar yerine kelimeler ve şekillerden yola çıkarak veriler elde edebilmek, bu veriler doğal ortamları göz önünde bulundurularak analizler yapabilmek için nitel çalışma şekli tercih edilmiştir (Creswell, 2012). Araştırmacı bu çalışmayı gerçekleştirmek için sebep sonuçları anlamlandırma, durumları analiz etme aile katılımı faktörlerini belirlemek için kişilerin bireysel fikir ve görüşlerine danışılmasının uygun olacağı kanaatine varmıştır. Yıldırım ve Şimşek (2011) nitel çalışmanın amacı “okuyucuya konu ile ilgili tanımlayıcı ve gerçekçi bir tablo ortaya koymaktır” şeklinde açıklamıştır (s.41).

Araştırmacı nitel çalışma çeşitlerinden basit nitel çalışma deseni ile belirlenen bu araştırma sorularını araştırmak hedeflenmiştir.

Evren ve Örneklem

Bu çalışma, 2015-2016 eğitim öğretim yılında Ankara ilindeki Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'na bağlı özel anaokullarında görev yapan 16 özel okul öncesi yöneticisi ile yürütülmüştür. Çalışmanın katılımcılarının belirlenmesinde kolay durum örnekleme tercih edilmiştir. Araştırmanın doğası gereği okul yöneticilerine ulaşılması gerekmektedir ve her anaokulda bir yönetici olduğu gerçeği göz önünde bulundurulduğunda çalışmasının örnekleme bu şekilde belirlenmiştir. Katılımcıların

farklı eğitim geçmişine sahip oldukları, yaş grubu, cinsiyet, iş tecrübesi gibi konularda değişkenlik gösterdikleri gözlemlenmiştir. Katılımcıların yaş aralığı 28-51 arasındadır. Katılımcıların 15 tanesi kadın, 1 tanesi erkektir. Katılımcıların tamamı üniversite eğitimi olup, Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği, Rehberlik Psikolojik Danışmanlık, Çocuk Gelişim ve Eğitimi, İşletme, Psikoloji, Ev Ekonomisi, Sosyoloji bölümlerinden mezun oldukları belirlenmiştir. Bütün katılımcılar daha önceden öğretmenlik tecrübesine sahip olduğunu söylerken, 11 katılımcı 5 yıldan az bir süre yöneticilik yaptığını paylaşmıştır. Çalışmanın yürütüldüğü 16 anaokulunun hepsi Milli Eğitime bağlı özel okullardır. Bu okullar 3-4-5 yaş gruplarına eğitim veren okullardır. Okullar Çankaya, Çayyolu/Ümitköy, Eryaman, Etimesgut, İncek ve Yenimahalle bölgelerinden seçilmiştir.

Verilerin Toplanması

Nitel çalışmalarda kullanılabilecek çeşitli veri toplama araçları bulunmaktadır. Veri toplama aracı olarak nitel çalışmaların en önemli aracı olan görüşme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Görüşmelerin yapılandırılmış, yapılandırılmamış ve yarı-yapılandırılmış olmak üzere üç çeşidi bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmada verileri “yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formları” aracılığıyla toplanarak elde edilmiştir. Yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme yönteminin seçilmesinin sebebi görüşülen kişiye kendini açıkça ve rahatça ifade etmesi ve buna bağlı olarak araştırmacının görüşmecinin düşünceleri, duyguları, fikirleri, inanışları, anlayışı hakkında ayrıntılı bir şekilde bilgi edinme ve değerlendirme ve analiz etme fırsatı tanınmasıdır.

Verilerin toplanmasında araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Formun ilk bölümünde “Katılımcı Bilgi Formu” bulunmaktadır. İkinci bölümde ise ve “Okul Öncesi Kurum

Yöneticilerinin Aile Katılımına Dair Algılarının İncelenmesi Görüşme Formu” kullanılmıştır. On maddeden oluşan form özel okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında çalışmakta olan yöneticilerin aile katılımını nasıl algıladıklarını, bu süreçte lider olarak hangi görevler yaptıklarını, okul içinde uyguladıkları aile katılım etkinliklerini, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından belirtilen Okul Öncesi Eğitim programındaki Aile Katılımı Kitapçığı hakkında bilgilerini ve uygulamalarını saptamak amacı ile, literatür çalışması ve alan uzmanlarının görüşleri doğrultusunda hazırlanmıştır. Form; okul öncesi eğitim sürecinde yapılan aile katılım etkinliklerini okul temelli, ev temelli ve okul-aile işbirliği etkinlikleri olmak üzere üç boyutu içermektedir. Bu boyutlar belirlenirken Fantuzzo, Tighe & Childs (2000) Aile Katılımı teorisinden esinlenilmiştir. Görüşme soruları, yöneticilerin bu üç boyuttaki etkinliklerin hangilerinin okullarda uygulandığını ölçmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Creswell (2003), nitel çalışmalarda kavramlar arası tutarlılığın belirlenmesinde geçerliliğin küçük bir rol oynadığını belirtirken, bu çalışma da nitel olarak uygulandığı için daha çok güvenilirlik kavramı üzerinde durulmuştur. Araştırmacı, bu çalışmada verilerin güvenilirliğini desteklemek amacıyla görüşme ve doküman incelemesi tekniklerini kullanarak çoklu veri kaynağı kullanmıştır.

Verilerin Analizi

Görüşmelerden elde edilen kayıtlar araştırmacı tarafından dinlenilip, yazıya aktarılmıştır. Daha sonra görüşme kayıtları yazılı olarak görüşmecilere gönderilmiştir. Görüşme kayıtlarının doğruluğundan ve gerçekliğinden emin olmak için ve görüşmecilerin eklemek istedikleri bilgiler olup olmadığını öğrenmek için görüşmecilere kayıtları kontrol etmesi ve araştırmacıya geri göndermesi sağlanmıştır. Ayrıca bu çalışmada güvenilirlik konusunun desteklenmesi için veri analiz sürecinde

ikinci bir kodlayıcı bulunmuştur. Bire bir yapılan görüşmelerin kayıtları deşifre edildikten sonra bu kayıtlar araştırmacı ve ikinci kodlayıcı tarafından bir kez daha okunmuştur. Çıkarılan kodlar karşılaştırılarak, kodlar arası uyumlara bakılmıştır.

Verilerin analizi sırasında araştırmacılar, katılımcıların ortak yanıtlarını belirlemeyi amaçlamışlardır. Deşifre edilen görüşme kayıtları incelenip, ortak kodlar belirlenmiştir. Benzer kodların birleştirilip kategoriler ve temalar belirlenmiştir. Araştırmanın cevaplamayı öngördüğü üç araştırma sorusu haricinde de farklı kategoriler ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu kategorilere kendi içerisinde değerlendirilmiş ve temaları incelenip analiz edilmiştir.

Bulgular ve Yorum

Bu bölümde araştırmanın sonuçları açıklanmıştır. Genel bir ifadeyle bu araştırmanın amacı aile katılımı kavramını yönetici bakış açısından bakarak araştırmaktır. Ayrıca okullarda uygulanan aile katılımı etkinliklerini Fantuzzo, Tighe & Chils (2000)'nin Aile Katılımı teorisini göz önünde bulundurarak ortaya çıkarmaktır. Araştırma sonuçları okul yöneticilerinin aile katılımı algıları, yapılan aile katılımı uygulamaları, liderlik, öneriler ve diğer sonuçlar olarak 5 kategoride ele alınmıştır. Okul yöneticilerinin aile katılımı algıları incelendiğinde araştırmaya katılan yöneticilerin aile katılımı hakkında olumlu düşüncelere sahip oldukları ortaya çıkmıştır. İfadelerinde aile katılımını “olmazsa olmaz” “şart” “eğitimin en önemli unsuru” olarak nitelendirmişlerdir. Buna ek olarak, birçok yönetici okul, çocuk ve aileyi bir saç ayağına veya üçgene benzetmiştir. Eğitimin ailenin katkısı olmadığı durumlarda mümkün olmayacağını dile getirmişlerdir. Ayrıca, bu başlık altında aile katılımının faydaları da tartışılmıştır. Yöneticilerin hepsi aile katılımının öğrenciye, öğretmene ve okul ortamına olumlu etkilerinden bahsetmişlerdir. Örnek olarak, bir

katılımcı; aile katılımı sayesinde öğrencinin daha etkili bir öğrenme süreci yaşayacağını ve öğrendiklerinin daha kalıcı olacağını dile getirmiştir. Başka bir katılımcı ise aile katılımının kaygılı veya olumsuz düşünen ailelerin bakış açısını değiştirdiğini, onlara okul ortamını, öğretmeni daha iyi tanıma ve anlama fırsatı tanıdığını paylaşmıştır. Aile katılımının okul ortamına etkilerinden bahseden katılımcılar çoğunluktadır. Katılımcıların birçoğu aile katılımının olumlu okul iklimine katkı sağladığını söylemiştir.

Aile katılımı uygulamaları kategorisinde üç ana tema belirmiştir. Bunlar ev temelli, okul temelli, okul-aile işbirliği uygulamaları başlıkları altında tartışılmıştır. Katılımcılar ev temelli aile katılım etkinlikleri uygulaması olarak en sıklıkla kullandıkları etkinliğin ev ödevi olduğunu paylaşmışlardır. Katılımcılardan bazıları ev ödevlerini öğrenmeyi kalıcı hale getirmek için önemli bir unsur olduğundan bahsederken, diğerleri de öğrenmeyi pekiştiren bir unsur olduğunu paylaşmışlardır. Araştırmanın bu bölümünde ortaya çıkan önemli paylaşımlardan bir tanesi de ödevin esas amacının aile ve çocuğun evde birlikte paylaşımda bulunup birlikte bir öğrenme sürecine dahil olmalarıdır. Başka bir katılımcı da ödevler sayesinde evde neler olup bittiğini öğrendiklerini, çocuğun gelişimsel sürecinin evdeki yansımalarını gördüklerini söylemiştir. Okul temelli katılım etkinlikleri ile ilgili örnek uygulamalarını bütün katılımcılar paylaşmıştır. En çok kullanılan okul temelli etkinliklerden biri gönüllülük esaslı veli sunumlarıdır. Aile eğitimleri ise katılımcıların bahsettiği başka bir etkinlik çeşididir. Yöneticiler bu eğitimlerin ailelerin ihtiyaç ve isteklerine göre planlandığını ve genellikle etkili olduğunu söylemişlerdir. Ancak, aile eğitimi kapsamında planlanan seminer, konferans, sunum gibi etkinliklere babalardan çok annelerin katılımının olduğu, babaların da eğitimlere

dahil edilmesi ve hatta onları bu konuda motive edici adımlar atılması gerekliliğini ortaya koymuşlardır.

Okul-aile iletişimi kategorisi içerisinde tartışılan temalar iletişim ile ilgili konulardan oluşmaktadır. Bu temalar, not gönderme, telefon etme, elektronik posta gönderme ve ev ziyareti gibi iletişim temelli konulara karşılık gelmektedir. Ailelerle etkili iletişim kurma, yöneticinin görevlerinden bir tanesidir. Dolayısıyla, etkili okul-aile iletişimin sağlanması için aile ile bağlantıyı koparmamak ve gerekli olması durumunda en kısa zamanda ve/veya dönem içinde belli aralıklarla düzenli olarak aileyi bilgilendirmek yöneticinin önemli görevlerindendir. Çalışmanın bulguları incelendiğinde özellikle toplantı çeşitleri ve toplantının önemi temalarının ön plana çıktığı anlaşılmaktadır. Çalışmaya katılan bütün yöneticiler bu kategori altında en sık kullandıkları temanın her çocuğun ailesiyle yapılan bireysel toplantılar olduğunu belirtmiştir. Dokuz katılımcı her yıl önceden belirlenmiş iki toplantıyı olduğundan bahsetmiştir. Ayrıca bu katılımcılar gerekli olması durumunda fazladan toplantı düzenlediklerini belirtmiştir. Diğer yedi katılımcı ise önceden belirlenmiş toplantıları olmadığını ve gerekmesi durumunda toplantı ayarladıklarını belirtmişlerdir.

Toplantıların önemi konulu temada da farklı görüşler ortaya atılmıştır. Mesela bir katılımcı toplantılar sayesinde okul ve ailenin birlikte çalışma kültürü geliştirdiğinden bahsederken; bir diğer katılımcı toplantıların okul ve aile arasında güven ortamı oluşturmak için kullanılabilecek en etkili yöntem olduğunu iddia etmiştir. Buna karşın katılımcılardan bir diğeri ise toplantıların zaman kaybı olduğunu belirtmiş ve öğretmenlerin ve yöneticilerin toplantı ayarlarken kaybedecekleri vakti çocuklarla ilgili konulara aktarmalarının çok daha verimli olacağını iddia etmişleridir.

Yöneticiler toplantı dışında yaptıkları okul-aile iletişimi etkinliklerinden de bahsetmişlerdir. Bu bağlamda katılımcıların tamamı iletişim aracı olarak telefonu kullandığını; on beş tanesi not defteri ya da not kâğıdını kullandığını; on dört tanesi okulun internet sayfasını kullandığını; on üç tanesi elektronik posta göndermeyi tercih ettiğini; yedi tanesi okul bülten, hazırladıklarını; iki tanesi ise SMS ya da WhatsApp programını kullandığını belirtmiştir. Fakat katılımcıların tamamı ev ziyareti yapmayı uygun bulmadıklarını ve böyle bir etkinlik yapmadıklarını açıklamışlardır.

Yöneticilerin kendi liderlik tanımları kategorisinde iki tema tartışılmıştır. Bunlar: yöneticinin aile katılımı süreçlerinde etkin bir şekilde rol alması ve liderlik ile ilgili diğer unsurlardır. Yöneticinin aile katılımı süreçlerinde aktif olarak rol alması sürecin etkinliğini artıran en önemli unsur olarak görülmektedir. Yöneticilerin üzerine düşenler tanımlanmış olmasına rağmen pratikte farklı uygulamaların görülmektedir. Bu çıkarım katılımcıların açıklamaları ile de desteklenmektedir. Katılımcılar kendi rollerini tanımlarken, aktif-pasif; kılavuzluk eden; yönlendiren; denetleyici; ya da yol gösteren gibi temalar kullanmışlardır. Yöneticilerin aileler ile iletişimi artırmak için kullandıkları yöntemlerin, yöneticinin liderlik tarzı, okulun eğitim felsefesi ya da okulun takip ettiği eğitim programına göre farklılık gösterdiği ortaya çıkmıştır. Katılımcıların çoğunluğu aktif bir şekilde sürece katıldıklarını belirtmiştir. Bazı katılımcılar liderlik becerilerinin önemine değinmiş ve yöneticinin okul-aile ilişkilerinin geliştirilmesi konusunda çok kritik bir role sahip olduğunu iddia etmiştir. Bazı katılımcılar ise yöneticinin bu süreçlere dahil olmaması gerektiğinin altını çizmiş ve yöneticinin asıl görevinin süreci yönlendirmek ve denetlemek olduğunu belirtmiştir. Katılımcıların liderlik anlayışlarını tanımlarken

aile katılımının açık, şeffaf ve dürüst iletişim için önemi vurgulanmış, bu durumun da okuldaki olumlu iklimini destekleyeceği ve okul ortamının daha huzurlu olacağı paylaşılmıştır.

Bunlara ek olarak, yöneticilere aile katılımını geliştirmek için önerileri sorulduğunda aile katılımın önemi ile ilgili anne-baba eğitimi en çok karşılaşılan cevap olmuştur. Katılımcılar liderler için de bazı öneriler sunmuşlardır. Yöneticilere aile katılımı etkinliklerini çeşitlendirmelerini önermişlerdir. Özellikle katılımcılardan biri ev ziyaretlerini uygulamanın önemli olduğunu fakat çoğu okulun bu uygulamayı yapmadıklarını söylemiştir. Ayrıca, bütün katılımcılar anne ve babaların çok yoğun çalışma saatleri olduğunu ve bu durumun onların eğitime katılımlarını sınırladığını paylaşmıştır. Bu konuda hakkında yöneticiler, aile katılımı etkinliklerini anne-babaların programlarına uygun zamanlarda planlanması gerektiğini ve anne-babalara aile katılımının önemini anlatmanın gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir.

Verilerden yola çıkılarak elde edilen kategorilerden biri de diğer sonuçlardır. Bu bölüm herhangi bir kategoriye dahil olmayan ancak oldukça önemli vurgulanması gereken bulgular içermektedir. Bu bölüm Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına bağlı özel okul yöneticilerinin Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın hazırlamış olduğu program içeriği hakkında bilgilerini öğrenmek ve de bu konuda okullarda ne gibi uygulamalar yapıldığını tespit etmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Sonuç ve Öneriler

Okul öncesi dönem yaşamındaki en önemli eğitim süreçlerinden biridir. Okul öncesi çağın önemi göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, çocuğa bu dönemde verilecek nitelikli bir eğitimin, onun ileriki yaşantısı için bir zemin hazırlayacaktır. Bu dönemde verilecek eğitimin kapsamı ve niteliği de oldukça önemli bir konudur. Hem

Türkiye’de hem yurtdışında yapılan çalışmalarda, okul öncesi eğitimde etkili öğrenmeleri sağlayabilmenin ancak aile ve okulun işbirliği ile mümkün olabileceği görüşü desteklenmektedir. Öğretmenlerin ve yöneticilerin anne-babaların katılımı uygulamakta isteksiz oldukları ve olumsuz tutumlarının olduğunu gösteren çalışmanın aksine, bu çalışmada yöneticilerin olumlu anlayışa sahip oldukları ortaya çıkmıştır (Erdoğan & Kasımoğlu, 2010). Diğer çalışmalara benzer olarak ev ziyaretleri gerçekleştirdiğini söyleyen yöneticilerin sayısı oldukça azdır (Budunç, 2007). Buna ek olarak, diğer çalışmalarda da belirtildiği gibi aile eğitimine bu çalışmadaki katılımcılar da önem vermekte, aile katılımı oranının artması için gerekliliğini vurgulamışlardır (Hoard & Shepart, 2005). Buna ek olarak, Ünlü Çetin & Olgan (2012), baba katılımı seviyesinin oldukça düşük olduğu, babaların çocuklarının eğitimine katılımı konusunda isteksiz olduklarını savunmuşlardır. Bu savunmaya benzer olarak, bu araştırmada da babaların aile eğitimlerine katılım oranının annelere oranla oldukça düşük olduğu paylaşılmıştır.

Çocuklarını herkesten iyi tanıyan ebeveynler ve çocuklarla deneyim sahibi olan öğretmenler, çocuğa uygun programların hazırlanmasında birlikte çalıştıklarında nitelikli bir eğitim ortamı yaratılmış olacaktır. Bu nedenle, ebeveynlerin aile katılımı etkinliklerine katılımlarının sağlanması okul öncesi eğitimde vazgeçilmez bir unsur olarak düşünülmeli, her ebeveynin bireysel ilgi ve yetenekleri doğrultusunda çocuğunun eğitimine katkı sağlayacak bir alanın olabileceği gerçeği göz ardı edilmemelidir.

Bu çalışmada bazı sınırlılıklar bulunmaktadır. Durum çalışması olarak 16 okul yönetici ile çalışmanın yürütülmesi ve Ankara’da yalnızca özel okullarda çalışmanın sürdürülmesi, çalışma için sınırlılık olarak kabul edilebilir. Bunun yansırı

aile katılımı konusu çalışılırken katılımcıların sadece yöneticilerden oluşmasından dolayı bazı sınırlılıklar söz konusudur. Bu sebeple bir devam çalışması olarak aynı konuyu aynı okullarda veli ve öğretmen bakış açısı ile çalışmak, onları da çalışmanın bir parçası haline getirmek etkili bir araştırma projesi ortaya çıkarmak bu alana büyük katkı sağlayacaktır.

Bu çalışmada, uygulanan katılım programının annelerin okul öncesi eğitime ilişkin bilgileri üzerindeki etkisi incelenmiştir. Yapılacak başka çalışmalarda; ebeveyn katılımının anne-çocuk arasındaki ilişkiler üzerindeki etkileri, annelerin duygusal ve davranışsal özellikleri üzerindeki etkileri, çocukların bilişsel ve duygusal gelişimi üzerindeki etkileri gibi farklı konular incelenebilir. Ayrıca, katılım programı ile sağlanan etkilerin sürekli olması bakımından, daha uzun süreli programlar uygulanabilir.

Appendix D: Tez Fotokopisi İzin Formu

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

☒

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü

☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Karaduman

Adı : Tuğçe

Bölümü : Department of Educational Administration and Planning

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce): Preschool administrators' perception about parent involvement

TEZİN TÜRÜ: Yüksek Lisans

☒

Doktora

☐

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

☐

2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

☐

3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

☒

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: