

Obtaining the Perception of Prospective Teachers Regarding Family Education and Communication: A Comparison of The USA and Turkey

Lutfu Ilgar

*Istanbul University, Hasan Ali Yucel Education Faculty, Department of Primary Education
Division of Preschool Education, Turkey
E-mail: lutfulgar@hotmail.com*

KEYWORDS Family Education. Family Communication. Parent Involvement

ABSTRACT The purpose of this study is to investigate whether prospective teachers who are undergoing training in the Elementary School and Early Child Education Department in state universities both in Turkey (Istanbul), and in the USA (West Chester, PA) response differently, or similarly to the survey, taking the country they live into consideration. Total sampling of this study is 214; 113 of which are from the USA, and 101 of which are from Turkey. This sampling is chosen from the research population by way of cluster sampling method. In general, it can be said that prospective students do not think school principal as the most effective person in actualizing family education and communication. From the vintage point of country variable, there is no meaningful relation between variables; yet prospective teachers in both countries view that family communication is salient in student success and achievement. In fact, the rate of how prospective teachers behave in parents meeting/ conference appears high. Thence, prospective teachers during their training should be educated both theoretically and practically in acting parents meeting, which can be highly important with respect to school-family communication.

INTRODUCTION

Both families and parents want to create a better learning environment for children, so enabling collaboration between families and schools with taking opportunities of school and environment will contribute to become a richer learning environment (Oktay 2000). Participating in family involvement increase parents' knowledge and skills, help them to contribute their children development with enabling them to recognize their children better (Temel 2001). By attending functions, activities, and meetings at school, school-involved parents may signal their children that school matters for identity and that current effort in school is an investment in their future (Grolnick and Slowiaczek 1994; Hill et al. 2004).

Child development is affected by various factors with different ecological levels, such as family, school, and neighborhood as well as by the community itself (Aber et al. 1997). Over the years, researchers on the development of children have examined separately the effects of family, and of school; later on studies on this subject turned to link these two factors in the success of children (Epstein 1996; Grolnick and Slowiaczek 1994). To Kessler-Sklar and Baker (2000), if parents are not satisfied with the school and they have less tendency to interact with the

school, teachers need the guidance of school administrators, counselors, and school psychologists.

In the Turkish education system, one of the diminishing factors in the quality of education is the inability to establish cooperation between school and family, both of which play salient role, and have significant importance in the preparation of child to life. School-family unions and school preservation clubs are not organized well. Except parent meeting days, there is no organizational coordination with the families (Aytac 2000).

Principals can recognize teachers who have relationships with parents, teachers who invite parents to participate in their children's education not only in official ways but also directly, with children in classrooms. This can be done in a staff newsletter or at faculty meetings they can encourage sessions in which teachers share with one another ideas about parent participation (Strieb 2010:162).

A key way for schools to develop these kinds of relationship is for staff to understand and relate to the needs of families. How parents are invited to participate in the life of the school, and into what roles, is a question schools need to ask themselves. The responsibility for children's educational development is a collaborative enterprise among parents, school staff, and

community members (Ferlazzo and Hammond 2009). As one examines the development of parental involvement researching retrospect, it seems only logical that these two other types of academic inquiry would be the ones to yield parental engagement research. This is true because it is probable that family structure and functioning are the two primary contributors that determine the level of involvement that exists in a given family (Jeynes 2011: 19).

It is important for educators to assist families in establishing such an environment through vehicles such as parent education, family support programs, and home visits, if possible when the child transitions from one educational setting to another. Communication that effectively conveys children's educational performance through conferencing, useful notes, memos, telephone calls, and newsletters on a regular basis needs to be developed and maintained. Parents should be taught how to become involved in academic activities such as helping with homework and other curriculum-related decisions (Harpin 2011: 6-7).

The teacher can make adult feel more comfortable visiting the classroom by providing a couple of adult-sized chairs, posting a bulletin board with information especially for families, offering a small library of parenting books and magazines to lend to families, displaying children's work for their review or specific times, such as the end of the day, when parents are encouraged to join their children for a shared reading time (Puckett and Diffily 2004:186).

Parents tend to like having this heads-up. They seem more able to support their children through the challenging issues attending certain ages when they know about them ahead of time (Davis and Yang 2005). All school family meetings are a vehicle for discussion about issues in the school or education general. Whether led by outside 'experts' or representatives of the school staff, meetings about educational issues can serve as forums for ongoing discussion of the school's philosophy, values, and practice (Falk 2009: 152).

Some parents may not be at ease with a teacher visiting their home if they think their home does not measure up to the teacher's expectations. Both teachers and parents will feel more at ease with each other if the meeting focuses on the child (Beaty 2000: 270). Home visit allows the teacher to observe the child and his or her family in familiar surroundings. It can cer-

tainly help forge the beginnings of relationship between the teacher and the family as well. Collaboration requires both parties to make commitments to the relationship (Puckett and Diffily 2004: 185).

A corner in the classrooms can be set up for family members to visit and observe the lesson and activities in the classroom. Observing the classroom helps the parents to understand what the children are learning and how they are being taught (Lueder 2011: 78).

If only children and their families benefited from family involvement in the class, the investment of a teacher's time would be worth it. However, that is not the case.

Teaching is often an isolating experience. One benefit of family involvement is the reduction of this isolation. The teacher is still responsible for all educational decisions and curriculum planning, but having other adults in the classroom offers opportunities for collaboration (Diffily 2004: 60).

In the literature, several studies suggested family/school partnership as a key component for improving students' achievement and increasing families' self-confidence (Ferlazzo and Hammond 2009; Read et al. 1993; Lueder 2011). Harpin (2011) concluded that family involvement not only provide higher students achievement but also it provide students to less likely to engage in drug and alcohol use or violent behaviors. According to Read et al. (1993), increased family self-confidence in family involvement makes families enjoy engaging with their children and make them gain insights about their children's development; therefore, in turn families help children improve achievement.

Home/classroom visits and field trips have fundamental role on improving family/ school partnership (Puckett and Diffily 2004). Home visits allow teachers to observe children and their family in their own environment; classroom visits allow parents to join and observe students' classroom activities. On the other hand, some parents may not be comfortable with teachers' home visit and classroom visits. In those cases, field trips provide more informal environments which can be preferred to share information about children and to observe how children learn in very casual settings. Moreover, use of websites to share information with parents was suggested in several studies; since parents can access to information about both school activities and student's academic programs; websites im-

prove not only family/school partnership but also family involvement (Lopez 2005; Tobalka 2006). The use of technology such as e-mail, faxes, telephone call and voice message was considered as a powerful way of improving relationship between school and families; it provides contributions for teachers to share information about students development with families (Lueder 2011); therefore, families with time constraints benefits from these opportunities. Several studies concluded that family meeting have essential role to share information about students, to make decision about students, to improve development students (Lueder 2011; Wright and Steglin 2003; Puckett and Diffily 2004). Lueder (2011) said suggested several ways for face to face communication of families and teachers to improve family/school partnership such as parent-teacher conference, family corner, meetings with teachers, interaction contact points, significant person, and neighborhood walks.

METHODOLOGY

Aims and Method of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether prospective teachers who are undergoing training in the Elementary School and Early Child Education Department in state universities both in Turkey (Istanbul), and in the USA (West Chester, PA) response differently, or similarly to the survey, taking the country they live into consideration. With the data obtained from this research, this study aims at:

1. Investigating the responses (difference, or similarity) of prospective teachers, who are undergoing training in elementary school and early child education department, to the survey according to their country, and emphasizing different aspects of these responses;
2. Directing the attention of prospective teachers and educators to family communication and family education;
3. Forming further understanding and recognition in the subject of family communication during the educational processes of prospective teachers.

Model of the Study

This study is based on relational scanning model. In this research, the responses given to the poll questions by prospective teachers who

are undergoing training in the Elementary School and Early Child Education Department in state universities both in Turkey (Istanbul), and the USA (West Chester, PA) are compared and contrasted. The research is conducted with 113 (52.8 %) from the USA, and of 101 (47.2 %) from Turkey; totaling 214 prospective teacher. This sampling is chosen from the research population by way of cluster sampling method.

Data Collection and Analysis

In this research, the survey named "Obtaining the Perception of Family Education and Communication Survey Regarding Prospective Teachers" developed by the researcher has been used. This survey is used in order to obtain and compare the perception of prospective teachers who are trained both in Turkey and in the USA in terms of family education and communication. Subtracting the value of the frequency of each problem, the chi-square independency test has been used in the aim to determine whether any variable is dependent upon country variable. And in the statistics at least $p < 0.5$ level of significance has been sought.

FINDINGS

Data obtained from 214 prospective teachers are evaluated and the following results are achieved: Frequencies and percentages of answers given to the questions are following:

Do you think one of the responsibilities of a teacher is to establish communication with the families of the students? : 207 (96.7 %) students response "yes"; 7 (3.3 %) give "no" answer.

Do you think the principal would be the most effective person in establishing family education and communication programs? : 80 (37.4 %) students response "yes"; 134 (62.6%) give "no" answer. In general, it can be said that prospective students do not think school principal as the most effective person in actualizing family education and communication.

Do you believe communication between the teacher and the family will raise their child's (student's) success rates? : 204 (95.8 %) students response "yes"; 9 (4.2 %) give "no" answer. From the vintage point of country variable, there is no meaningful relation between variables; yet prospective teachers in both countries view that family communication is salient in student success and achievement.

Do you think that families need to be educated in ways that will help their child’s academic development? : 187 (87.4%) students response “yes”; 27 (12.6%) give “no” answer.

Do you think that family education will increase communication between the family and the school? : 159 (74.3%) students response “yes”; 55 (25.7%) give “no” answer.

Do you think that parent/teacher conferences are sufficient for teacher/family communication? : 60 (28 %) students response “yes”; 154 (72 %) give “no” answer.

Do you feel that you know how to hold a parent/teacher conference appropriately? : 100 (46.9 %) students response “yes”; 113 (53.1 %) give “no” answer. In fact, the rate of how prospective teachers behave in parents meeting/conference appears high. Thence, prospective teachers during their training should be educated both theoretically and practically in acting parents meeting, which can be highly important with respect to school-family communication. Epstein (1985) emphasizes that the vast majority of teachers have negligible training in participation of parents in classroom education. Many teachers lack of necessary skills and knowledge about how to work effectively with families.

As seen in the Table 1, the result of the Chi-Square Test investigating whether the variable question “do you think one of the responsibilities of a teacher is to establish communication

with the families of the students?” is dependent upon country variable (on country) variable has been found statistically meaningful. ($\chi^2=4.308$; $p<0.5$). The rate of the “no” answer given to this question is 0.9 % in the USA; whereas in Turkey the rate is 5.9 %.

The reason why prospective teachers in the USA see communication with the family as one of their duties might be that in the USA, communicative tools are used in schools much more than those in Turkey. By virtue of this fact, it could be claimed that the reason why this rate is higher is due to the fact that in Turkey the duty of teacher, as thought, is solely in the classroom, and to only teach the curriculum within this classroom setting.

As seen in the Table 2, the result of the Chi-Square Test investigating whether the variable question “do you think the principal would be the most effective person in establishing/family education and communication (outreach) programs?” is dependent upon country variable has been found statistically meaningful. ($\chi^2=19.888$; $p<0.5$).The rate of the “no” answer given to this question is 48.7 % in the USA; whereas in Turkey the rate is 78.2 %.

Prospective teachers in Turkey think that the school principal is not very effective in school-family communication and education; however prospective teachers in the USA view that school principal do make an impact on both com-

Table 1: Results of the Chi-square test investigating whether the variable question “Do you think one of the responsibilities of a teacher is to establish communication with the families of the students?” is dependent (on country) variable

<i>Groups</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>	χ^2	<i>Sd</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Country</i>	USA	112	1	113	4.308	1	.038
	%-Rate	99.1	.9	100.0			
	Turkey	95	6	101			
	%-Rate	94.1	5.9	100.0			
	Total	207	7	214			
	%-Rate	96.7	3.3	100.0			

Table 2: Results of the Chi-square test investigating whether the variable question “Do you think the principal would be the most effective person in establishing (family education and communication (outreach) programs?” is dependent (on country) variable

<i>Groups</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>	χ^2	<i>Sd</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Country</i>	USA	58	55	113	19.888	1	.000
	%-Rate	51.3	48.7	100.0			
	Turkey	22	79	101			
	%-Rate	21.8	78.2	100.0			
	Total	80	134	214			
	%-Rate	37.4	62.6	100.0			

munication and education. Revealingly, the school principal is an educational leader. His directives and practices as well as his wants and expectations guide the students. School principals in the USA use very different vehicles to communicate with the family. It could be said that their belief in the importance of cooperation, and their being the head of the organization could have affected this result.

As seen in the Table 3, the result of the Chi-Square Test investigating whether the variable question "Do you think families of students are not very willing to establish communication with the school?" is dependent upon country variable has been found statistically meaningful. ($\chi^2=31.199$; $p<0.5$). The rate of the "no" answer given to this question is 68.1 % in the USA; whereas in Turkey the rate is 29.6 %.

Varying living standards and cultural level of each country may have led to these results.

In Turkey, once families register their children in school, they do not have an interest in involving in their children's school activities. They may only communicate with the school if a problem occurs regarding their children. As for the USA, this outcome may have been reached because a child's school life and school activities carry much importance within the family setting.

As seen in the Table 4, the result of the Chi-Square Test investigating whether the variable question "Do you think teachers are not very willing to establish communication with the families of students?" is dependent upon country variable has been found statistically meaningful. ($\chi^2=49.104$; $p<0.5$).

The rate of the "no" answer given to this question is 95.6 % in the USA; whereas in Turkey the rate is 56.4 %.

This result could have been reached due to the following rationales: In Turkey, teachers give greater importance to academic achievement; give priority to academic teaching; nonetheless, they do not strive to communicate with the family. At the same time, the families in Turkey showing a lack of interest in establishing communication with the school may bring about these results.

As seen in the Table 5, according to the results obtained from the Cross-Table between the variable questioning "Do you believe the establishment of communication with the family will lead to the development of interest and capabilities of the student?" and country variable, in the USA, no prospective teacher answers "no"; yet in Turkey 8 prospective students say "no".

The following results are agreed by all prospective teachers in the USA: Getting acquaint-

Table 3: Results of the Chi-square test investigating whether the variable question "Do you think families of students are not very willing to establish communication with the school?" is dependent (on country) variable

Groups		Yes	No	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
Country	USA	36	77	113	31.199	1	.000
	%-Rate	31.9	68.1	100.0			
	Turkey	69	29	101			
	%-Rate	70.4	29.6	100.0			
	Total	105	106	211			
	%-Rate	49.8	50.2	100.0			

Table 4: Results of the Chi-square test investigating whether the variable question "Do you think teachers are not very willing to establish communication with the families of students?" is dependent (on country) variable.

Groups		Yes	No	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
Country	USA	4	109	113	49.104	1	.000
	%-Rate	3.5	96.5	100.0			
	Turkey	44	57	101			
	%-Rate	43.6	56.4	100.0			
	Total	48	166	214			
	%-Rate	22.4	77.6	100.0			

Table 5: Results of the Cross-Table for the variable questioning “Do you believe the establishment of communication with the family will lead to the development of interest and capabilities of the student?” and country variable

Groups		Yes	No	Total
Country	USA	113	0	113
	%-Rate	100.0	.0	100.0
	Turkey	92	8	101
	%-Rate	92.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	205	8	214
	%-Rate	96.2	3.8	100.0

Table 6: Results of the Chi-square test investigating whether the variable question “Do you think that families need to be educated in ways that will help their child’s academic development?” is dependent upon country variable

Groups		Yes	No	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
Country	USA	90	23	113	13.000	1	.000
	%-Rate	79.6	20.4	100.0			
	Turkey	97	4	101			
	%-Rate	96.0	4.0	100.0			
	Total	187	27	214			
	%-Rate	87.4	12.6	100.0			

Table 7: Results of the Chi-square test investigating whether the variable question “Do you think that family education will increase communication between the family and the school?” is dependent upon country variable

Groups		Yes	No	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
Country	USA	67	46	113	28.238	1	.000
	%-Rate	59.3	40.7	100.0			
	Turkey	92	9	101			
	%-Rate	91.1	8.9	100.0			
	Total	65	148	213			
	%-Rate	30.5	69.5	100.0			

ed with the interests and talents of child/student; having well-established awareness in the USA that family is the most trusted source for a child outside of school; having an understanding of education which focuses on developing the interests and talents of every student.

By being involved in their child’s class, families also learn about child development issues. Through interactions with teachers, they benefit from the knowledge teachers gain during their early childhood education training and what they continue to learn by staying current on research relating to young children’s learning (Diffily 2004: 58).

As seen in the Table 6, the result of the Chi-Square Test investigating whether the variable question “Do you think that families need to be educated in ways that will help their child’s academic development?” is dependent upon country variable has been found statistically meaningful. ($\chi^2=13.000$; $p<0.5$).

The rate of the “no” answer given to this question is 20.4% in the USA; whereas in Turkey the rate is 4%. The opinions of prospective teachers in Turkey regarding the need of education for families are higher than those of prospective teachers in the USA. It could be said that prospective teachers in the USA put less emphasis on the thought that families need to be educated. This is due to more widespread and effective usage of family educational programs in the USA, and participation of families in various developmental programs. Additionally, socio-economic and cultural levels of families in the USA may bring about this result, too.

As seen in the Table 7, the result of the Chi-Square Test investigating whether the variable question “Do you think that family education will increase communication between the family and the school?” is dependent on country variable has been found statistically meaningful. (χ^2

Table 8: Results of the Chi-square test investigating whether the variable question “Do you think families should be more involved with school board decisions?” is dependent upon country variable

Groups		Yes	No	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
Country	USA	111	2	113	63.118	1	.000
	%-Rate	98.2	1.8	100.0			
	Turkey	52	48	101			
	%-Rate	52.0	48.0	100.0			
	Total	163	50	213			
	%-Rate	76.5	23.5	100.0			

Table 9: Results of the Chi-square test investigating whether the variable question “Do you think that parent/teacher conferences are sufficient for teacher/family communication?” is dependent upon country variable

Groups		Yes	No	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
Country	USA	47	66	113	21.805	1	.000
	%-Rate	41.6	58.4	100.0			
	Turkey	13	88	101			
	%-Rate	12.9	87.1	100.0			
	Total	60	154	214			
	%-Rate	28.0	72.0	100.0			

=28.238; $p < 0.5$). The rate of the “no” answer given to this question is 40.7 % in the USA; whereas in Turkey the rate is 8.9 %.

It could be said that prospective teachers in Turkey see family education as a means for communicating with the family. It may be thought that the family can be closer to the school using this means. Whereas in the USA there are other communicative vehicles used more effectively in communicating with school. It can be said that these are the reasons why this result is reached.

As seen in the Table 8, the result of the Chi-Square Test investigating whether the variable question “Do you think families should be more involved with school board decisions?” is dependent upon country variable has been found statistically meaningful. ($\chi^2=63.118$; $p < 0.5$). The rate of the “no” answer given to this question is 1.8 % in the USA; whereas in Turkey the rate is 48 %.

Cultural differences and participatory democracy in the USA could have led to this result. Just as the individual in the USA. Has rights and the right to speak up in many areas, s/he has the right in the sphere of education to express her/his views in educational district development, to promote the educational budget, and to actively participate in school boards. This situation, it would seem, may shape the viewpoints of prospective students in the USA.

As seen in the Table 9, the result of the Chi-Square Test investigating whether the variable question “Do you think that parent/teacher conferences are sufficient for teacher/ family communication?” is dependent upon country variable has been found statistically meaningful. ($\chi^2=21.805$; $p < 0.5$). The rate of the “no” answer given to this question is 58.4 % in the USA; whereas in Turkey the rate is 87.1 %.

In reaching this conclusion, the make-up of parent conferences in each country may play a role. In the USA, parent conferences are conducted face to face, and all aspects of the student are discussed during these gatherings. In Turkey, parent conferences are generally held in groups, and in these gatherings only student grades are discussed. Therefore, it can be said that unlike prospective teachers in the USA, prospective teachers in Turkey see parent conferences as insufficient for communicating with the family.

Meetings between a class teacher and his or her students’ family members are a useful way for members of the classroom community to get acquainted with each other and to have an opportunity to address their questions and concerns. Most schools hold such gatherings at least once during the year (Falk 2009: 149).

In terms of frequency and percentage rates, the following ratio can be given: The number of the prospective teachers have given “yes” an-

Table 10: Results of the Chi-square test investigating whether the variable question “Do you think that activities such as a concert or play are sufficient for family communication?” is dependent upon country variable

<i>Groups</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>	χ^2	<i>Sd</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Country</i>	USA	66	47	113	33.067	1	.000
	%-Rate	58.4	41.6	100.0			
	Turkey	20	81	101			
	%-Rate	19.8	80.2	100.0			
	Total	86	128	214			
	%-Rate	40.2	59.8	100.0			

Table 11: Results of the Chi-square Ttest investigating whether the variable question “Do you think the school newspaper, magazines, e-mail, telephone messages are sufficient for family communication?” is dependent upon country variable

<i>Groups</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>	χ^2	<i>Sd</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Country</i>	USA	73	40	113	19.135	1	.000
	%-Rate	64.6	35.4	100.0			
	Turkey	35	66	101			
	%-Rate	34.7	65.3	100.0			
	Total	108	106	214			
	%-Rate	50.5	49.5	100.0			

swer to this question is 86 (40.2 %); and “no” responses to this question is 128 (59.8 %).

As seen in the Table 10, the result of the Chi-Square Test investigating whether the variable question “Do you think that activities such as a concert or play are sufficient for family communication?” is dependent upon country variable has been found statistically meaningful. ($\chi^2=33.067$; $p<0.5$). The rate of the “no” answer given to this question is 4.6 % in the USA; whereas in Turkey the rate is 80.2 %.

In general, social and artistic activities, such as theater, concert, etc. are not performed enough at schools in Turkey. If so, families do not actively and populously participate in them. Therefore, prospective teachers in Turkey may not think that these types of activities as sufficient for communication with the family.

In terms of frequency and percentage rates regarding the answers given to the question “Do you think the school newspaper, magazines, e-mail, telephone messages are sufficient for family communication?”, the following ratio can be given: The number of the prospective teachers have given “yes” answer to this question is 108 (50.5 %); and “no” responses to this question is 106 (49.5 %).

On the other hand, pertaining to the same answers as seen in the Table 11, the result of the Chi-Square Test investigating whether the variable question “Do you think the school news-

paper, magazines, e-mail, telephone messages are sufficient for family communication?” is dependent upon country variable has been found statistically meaningful. ($\chi^2=19.135$; $p<0.5$). The rate of the “no” answer given to this question is 35.4 % in the USA; whereas in Turkey the rate is 65.3 %.

When we look at schools in Turkey, school newspapers or magazines are, by and large, not published very much. Furthermore, voice mails and e-mails are almost never used. However, in the USA these means of communication are broadly used in schools. Therefore, prospective teachers in the USA may be of the opinion that these communication vehicles are sufficient for communication with families.

Bittle’s (1975) innovative, groundbreaking experiment parents of first graders enrolled in a school serving families of low to middle socio-economic status were introduced to a telephone message service. Comeron and Lee (1997) studied communication and parental involvement using a different telephone technological method voice mail messages left by the teacher to the families/parents of two classes in one school serving families with middle socio-economic status in Canadian city. These voice mail messages were often intended to inform either a group of parents or individual parents of classroom events. According to Comeron and Lee (1997), in general parents and teachers were receptive to, and accepting of the methodology.

DISCUSSION

In reencapsulating the general structure of this study, the following summations can be accentuated: This study targets at investigating whether the answers given to the survey questionnaire by the prospective teachers who are undergoing training in the Elementary School and Early Child Education Department in state universities both in Turkey (Istanbul), and the USA (West Chester, PA) are similar, or different. By doing so, the evaluation of communication between school and family through concentrating on differences regarding countries are made possible.

It can be claimed that differences in lifestyles, cultural levels, educational systems and perceptions affected the perceptions of prospective teachers in this regard. What is more, in both countries prospective students view that in student's success the communication between school and family is saliently important. Namely, the prospective teachers in the USA and in Turkey think that the interaction between teacher and parents raises student's success level. Consistently, cross-sectional (Grolnick and Slowiaczek 1994) and longitudinal (Miedel and Reynolds 1999) studies have demonstrated an association between higher levels of parental school involvement and greater academic success for children and adolescents.

Prospective teachers in both countries, in general, do not think that school principals is the most effective person in shaping and actualizing the programs of family education and communication.

Not to mention, in both countries the ratio of the prospective teachers who do not know how to behave in parents meetings becomes considerably high. As for the level of family education, the notion that families need education is of higher percentage among the prospective teachers in Turkey than those in the USA. Accordingly, the prospective teacher in Turkey view that family education may become possible via school-family communication whereas this view is shared less by the prospective teachers in the USA. This result can be explained with the finding that the prospective teachers in the USA consider communication with family as one of their educational duties; nonetheless those teachers in Turkey, by and large, do not think as such.

Furthermore, the prospective teachers in Turkey think that families are not very willing to establish communication with the school. In contrast with this, those teachers in the USA do think families wish to get in touch with the school administration and teachers. Parallel to this finding, the prospective teachers in the USA give more "yes" answers to the question whether families should have initiative in school administration than those teachers in Turkey.

What is more, the question whether parents meetings is enough in family communication is responded with the answer "no" in higher rate by the prospective teachers in Turkey than those in the USA.

Compared to the ratio set forth by the prospective teachers in Turkey, the ratio of the American teacher candidates regarding the view that activities at the school such as concert, theater, and so on are enough in family communication is considerably higher. In the same way, the latter view that school newspaper, magazines, e-mail, telephone messages are sufficient for family communication. The ratio of this view is higher among prospective teachers in the USA than those in Turkey.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to determine prospective teachers' views on family-school communication and education. In this study, prospective teachers' in Turkey, and the United States indicated that the communication with the families is important to children success. According to the prospective teachers' responses teacher-family communication increases the school success and school principal are not considered the most effective in providing family school communication and education. The percentage of prospective teachers who does not have any knowledge about how to behave in parents meeting at schools is rather high. Differences between countries were found in other outcomes, for example, the need of education for families, and when we educate families we may establish strong communication between school-family. Another out-comings were; prospective teachers' idea about whether accepting as a duty for school-family communication, and families are disposed to communicate with school. Moreover, when asked families whether taking position in the school's administration,

provided different results. In addition, varieties of family-school communication instruments were accepted in different ways and the lastly, whether or not family meetings provided sufficient communication between families-schools also came out with different results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to these results, first of all more effective studies should be done about on school-family communication and education and can be handled in different aspects. In addition, during educational processes, family communication and education can be set forth as required course to be taken by prospective teachers in all countries. Based on their salience, teacher candidates in both countries may take both theoretical and practical trainings and courses pertaining to the subject of how to communicate with parents and how to act parents meetings during their education. In the same vein, various communication means in the matter of school-family communication can be introduced to prospective teachers. And schools are to be supported in this regard through providing resources. More specifically in Turkey, in the aim to deconstruct the notion that the role of teacher is within the confines of classroom, and to teach curriculum only, the prospective teachers should be educated clearly and in a horizon-widening mode. Families must be advised to have the relations with the school anytime. The school administration and environment must not be regarded as a 'just in case' place to interact. By benefitting from technological innovations and various communicative means, school – family communication can be done more effectively and functionally. In the usage of technological innovations, the USA can be taken as model. Nevertheless, it would though to give the examples from a totally different country in traditions, environment and socio-economy, the associate teachers having the fresh power and enthusiasm may be quite effectively to provide new aspects to this issue.

REFERENCES

- Aber JL, Gephart MA, Brooks-Gunn J, Connell JP 1997. Development in context: Implications for studying neighborhood effects. In: J Brooks-Gunn, GJ Duncan, JL Aber (Eds.). *Neighborhood Poverty Context and Consequences for Children*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, pp. 44–61.
- Aytac T 2000. *Okul Merkezli Yonetim*. Ankara: Nobel Yayin Dagitim.
- Beaty J 2000. *Skills for Preschool Teachers*. New Jersey: Merrill an imprint of Prentice Hall.
- Bittle RG 1975. Improving parent-teacher communication through recorded telephone messages. *Journal of Educational Research*, 69: 87-95.
- Comeron CA, Lee K 1997. Bridging the gap between home and school with voice mail technology. *Journal of Educational Research*, 90(3): 182-190.
- Davis C, Yang A 2005. *Parents and Teachers Working Together*. Massachusetts: Northeast Foundation for Children.
- Diffily D 2004. *Teachers and Families Working Together*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Epstein JL 1985. Home and school connections in schools of the future: Implications of research on parent involvement. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 62: 18-41.
- Epstein JL 1996. Perspectives and previews on research and policy for school, family, and community partnerships. In: A Booth, JF Dunn (Eds.): *Family-School Links: How Do They Affect Educational Outcomes?* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. pp.209-246.
- Falk B 2009. *Teaching the Way Children Learn*. New York and London: Teacher College Pres.
- Ferlazzo L, Hammond L 2009. *Building Parent Engagement in Schools*. California: ABC- CLIO, LLC.
- Grolnick WS, Slowiaczek ML 1994. Parents' involvement in children's schooling: A multidimensional conceptualization and motivational model. *Child Development*, 65: 237-252.
- Harpin L 2011. *Promising Partnerships*. Lanham, New York, Toronto, Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Hill NE, Castellino DR, Lansford JE, Nowlin P, Dodge KA, Bates JE, Pettit GS 2004. Parent academic involvement as related to school behavior, achievement, and aspirations: Demographic variations across adolescence *Child Development*, 75: 1491-1509.
- Jeynes WH 2011. *Parental Involvement and Academic Success*. New York: Routledge Taylor Francis group.
- Kessler-Sklar SL, Baker AJL 2000. School district parent involvement policies and programs. *Elementary School Journal*, 1: 101-118.
- Lueder DC 2011. *Involving Hard to Reach Parents*. Lanham, New York, Toronto, Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Lopez C 2005. Southern California Catholic School, community praise web-based communication solution. *T.H.E.Journal*, 32: 7.
- Miedel WT, Reynolds AJ 1999. Parent involvement in early intervention for disadvantaged children: Does it matter? *Journal of School Psychology*, 37: 370-402.
- Oktay A 2000. *Yasamin Sihirli Yillari: Okul Oncesi Donem*. Istanbul: Epsilon Yay.

- Puckett M, Diffily D 2004. *Teaching Young Children*. New York: Thomson Delmar Learning, Inc.
- Read K, Gardner P, Mahler B 1993. *Early Childhood Programs*. Philadelphia: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.
- Strieb LY 2010. *Inviting Families into the Classroom: Learning from a Life in Teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Temel ZF 2001. *Okul Oncesi Egitime Aile Katilimi. Gazi Universitesi Anaokulu-Anasınıfı Öğretmen El Kitabı*. Istanbul: YA-PA Yay.
- Tobalka D 2006. Connecting teacher and parents through the internet. *Tech Directions*, 66: 24-26.
- Wright K, Stegeln D 2003. *Building School and Community Partnerships through Parent Involvement*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Prentice Hall.