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PERCEPTION OF TEACHER OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PARENTS

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to determine the perceptions of teacher of primary school students' parents. In the study, 'phenomenology', which is a sort of 'qualitative research methodology' was used. The participants of the study consisted of fifty students' parents in 2009-2010 academic year. Data was gathered via 'semi structured interview form'. Data was analyzed through the results, different categories were found related to the parents' perceptions. It was found out that parents have four different categories of description regarding to the notion of teacher.

Keywords: Primary school, Teacher, Parent, Perception, Content Analysis

İLKÖĞRETİM ÖĞRENCİ VELİLERİNİN ÖĞRETMEN ALGISI

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı, ilköğretim öğrenci velilerinin öğretmen algısını tespit etmektir. Bu çalışmada, nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan fenomenoloji kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın katılımcılarını 2009- 2010 eğitim öğretim yılında görüşülen 50 öğrenci velisi oluşturmaktadır. Veriler, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Elde edilen verilerin değerlendirilmesi sonucunda öğrenci velilerinin algılarıyla ilgili olarak farklı kategorilere ulaşılmıştır. Öğrenci velilerinin öğretmen algısına ilişkin tanımlamalarının dört farklı kategoride olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İlköğretim, Öğretmen, Veli, Algı, Kavram Analizi

1. INTRODUCTION (GİRİŞ)

21st century is named as 'Information Age (IA)'. Society of IA is society of science. The most important factor in the process of continuation and transition into Information Society (IS) is education. The basic factor in the education of IS is a leader teacher, who improves himself in his profession and is an expert at his field. A leader teacher is a teacher who follows, learns and applies the latest innovations of pedagogy and education technology [1]. Profession of teaching has been addressed as an important profession with its duties and responsibilities in each society. In the establishment of a new society, an important role has been given to teachers and his status in the society has been defined [2].

Every behavior of teacher forms a model for students and may be reflected to students' behavior [3]. Brophy (1981) sorts out the features that a teacher should have as follows: treating open-mindedly and objectively towards students, keeping students' expectations and needs in mind, searching the education-related problems using scientific methods, taking individual differences into account, developing themselves by being open to changes and innovations, perceiving and interpreting societal changes, following the developments in education technology, having a feature of research spirit, and high success expectation from students [4].

Başar shows (1996: 70), among the features of a good teacher, features as follows: treating students as human beings, calling them by their names, keeping their souls nice with a few jokes, understanding and listening to students, being friendly and accepting that students can make mistakes [5].

People load many meanings to the notion of 'teacher'. Some meanings reflect rather people who play the role of being a teacher, unemotional and linear descriptions and technical descriptions which are expected from them to be fulfilled. The other loaded meanings are based on those people who call themselves as 'teachers' and their tasks being handled with more actively, sincerely and multidimensionally [6].

Vital changes have been noticed in the mutual expectations of those who play an important role in the production and consumption of education services [7]. To expect successful outcomes from education is mostly dependent on consistent and regular cooperation of teachers, students and parents [8]. In this context, to search of primary students' parents' a perception of 'teacher', being one of the sides, has been considered meaningful.

2. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE (ÇALIŞMANIN ÖNEMİ)

The main factor of a country's development, becoming modernized, strengthening and living in peace and welfare of its public is human and education which is given to him. The main factor in education is the teacher. A child crowns the basic information which is acquired in a family with his school life. The teacher is the best role model for the students. In literature search, it has been stated that it hasn't been done a qualitative research about perceptions of teacher of primary school students' parents previously. Therefore, in this study, perceptions of teacher of primary school students' parents are analyzed in three different residential units and compared with each other in identification categories.

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY (ÇALIŞMANIN AMACI)

The general aim of this study is to find out primary students' parents' perception of 'teacher'. Answers were sought to the following questions within the scope of this general aim.

- What are the personal characteristics of parents of primary school students who took part in the study?
- Under which categories can perceptions of primary school students' parents towards the term 'teacher' be collected?
- Is there a difference among the parents living in villages, towns and cities in terms of perception of 'teacher'?

4. METHOD (YÖNTEM)

4.1. Research Model (Araştırma Modeli)

The research is conducted within the framework of phenomenology which has its place in the qualitative research methods. The purpose of phenomenology is to find out experiences, perceptions and uploaded meaning to them by people [9]. In this study, teacher has been identified as phenomenon to be investigated. It was completed using semi-structured interviews, a qualitative research technique. During semi-structured interviews, each participant was questioned systematically and appropriately, but also given freedom to move out of the frame of questioning if desired [10].

4.2. Participants (Örneklem)

The participants of this study consist of totally 50 primary school student parents, 11 of whom are student parents living in Kökez, a village of Burdur, 19 student parents from Büğdüz area and 20 student parents from the city center. 20 of student parents participating in the study were females while 30 of them were males. As the research is a qualitative study, the way of aimed sampling was used during the study period on limited number of people and for the aim of searching situations thought to have rich knowledge [9 and 11].

4.3. Data Collection (Veri Toplama)

The interview form used in the study was examined by field experts in order to check for content reliability. Later on, a pilot interview was conducted with a student's parent to see if any necessary alterations were needed. In order to find out perceptions of 'teacher' of primary school students, taking part in the study, each of them was asked to complement the sentences: 'For me the teacher is', or 'I consider teacher as'. This study was carried out with forms of interviews pre-prepared by researchers in December and copied with photocopy in 2009-2010 academic year. After obtaining necessary permissions, these forms were applied to participants with face-to-face interviews firstly in the village of Kökez, then, in the area of Büğdüz and finally in the city center of Burdur. After the explanations about the study were made to the participants, one of the researchers asked the questions on the form while the other wrote down the answers upon the form. Information, saved on the interview forms at the end of the interviews made with the participants, constituted the main source of data of this research.

4.4. Data Analysis (Veri Analizi)

The descriptive analysis technique was used to analyze obtained data. Afterwards, descriptive data was converted into numbers. All data was determined after the descriptive analysis was summarized and interpreted according to themes decided beforehand [9]. After this, by numbering the interview forms incorporated into the research, each answer given to the questions on the interview forms were categorized by way of content analysis. Defining categories represent main meanings of notions which find out sense of similarities and dissimilarities, and present the main lines of how a phenomenon can be defined, analyzed and perceived in many

different ways qualitatively [12]. Frequencies of answers appeared in the same category were calculated.

5. FINDINGS AND RESULTS (BULGULAR VE SONUÇLAR)

In this section, findings are presented as frequency tables. Furthermore, direct citations of primary school students' parents are included.

5.1. Primary School Students' Parents Demographic Information (İlköğretim Öğrenci Velilerinin Demografik Bilgileri)

When the distribution of age range of participants was examined, it was found out that 8 of them were between 20-30, 25 of them between 31-40, 14 of them between 41-50, 2 of them between 51-60 and finally one of the over 60+. It was found out that 27 of primary school students' parents are primary school graduates, 2 of them secondary school graduates, 11 of them high school graduates, 4 of them upper school graduates, and 6 of them university graduates. It was stated that 10 of participants in the village of Kökez were graduates of primary school, and 1 high school graduate (imam of the village). It was found out that 14 of participants in the area of Büğdüz were graduates of primary school, 1 secondary school graduate, and 4 high school graduates. It was determined that 3 participants were graduates of primary school, 1 secondary school graduate, 4 upper school graduates and 6 university graduates.

When the distribution of participants was examined according to the occupational branches, it was seen that 13 of them were farmers, 4 housewives, 15 civil servants, 16 workers, 1 pensioner and 1 freelance worker. 6 participants in the village of Kökez were farmers, 4 housewives, and 1 civil servant. 8 participants in the area of Büğdüz were workers, 7 farmers, pensioner. 12 participants in the city of Burdur were civil servants and 8 workers.

10 of primary school students' parents had one child, 28 had two children, 9 had three children and three of them had four children. 1 of participants in the Kökez village had one child, 6 had two children, 2 had four children. 3 participants in the area of Büğdüz had 1 child, 10 of them had 2 children, 6 of them had 3 children. 6 participants in the city center of Burdur had 1 child, 12 of them had 2 children, 1 had 3 children, and 1 had 4 children.

5.2. Primary School Students' Parents Opinions Regarding Teacher (İlköğretim Öğrenci Velilerinin Öğretmene İlişkin Görüşleri)

When primary school students' parents' definitions of 'teacher' were examined, four different categories were obtained. These defining categories were placed from the simplest (notion 1) to the most complicated one (notion 4) in hierarchical order. At the same time, this scheme puts forward the most important qualitative difference among the categories. The first perception of students' parents is function of teaching, which is seen as the top responsibility of teacher while the other perceptions, in addition to function of teaching, are leading people who become a role model for students and educate them. 5 of parents defined the term 'teacher' 'as a person who teaches', 18 of them said 'a person who educates students', 15 of them said 'a person who teaches, educates and guides them', and 12 said 'a far-sighted person whom students can take as a role model'.

5.2.1. Category: Teacher is a Person who Teaches the Children (Öğretmen, Çocuklara Öğreten Kişidir)

In this category, cognitive dimension was focused by stressing the teacher's function of teaching. Vocational knowledge of teachers, which makes them experts in their profession, compromises cognitive dimension of profession of teaching [13]. In the present days, parents expect teachers to transfer information to students so that they can be successful at high school entrance exams in the exam-oriented Turkish education system. Participants stressed teacher's function of teaching by using different expressions. Some thoughts placed in this category as follows:

Table 1. Expressions towards the defining category 'Teacher is a person who teaches children'.

(Tablo 1. "Öğretmen çocuklara öğreten kişidir." kategorisine ilişkin ifadeler.)

| Locations | Frequency | Sample Expressions |
|-------------------|-----------|---|
| Centrum of Burdur | 7 | Today's teacher teach, not train/education. They distribute knowledge/information to our children. They teach our children and support them subjects which aren't known well. |
| Büğdüz | 4 | They are educators, teach, they teach in the best way. They teach our children. A good tutorial. They give information, and train the children. |
| Kökez | 7 | They are instructors and trainers. We are not sufficient for our children as parents. That's why, they are prominent. They are people who teach children. They teach, educate and give courses. |

Parents in this category defined 'teacher' as person teaching, educating and distributing information to children in general. Participants emphasized the same outcome, that is, the teacher is one who is an educator by using different expressions. Açıkalın (1989) in a research done on the expectations of parents from teachers, sorts out the most important roles as follows, which parents think a good teacher should have: (1) knowledgeable in his/her field, (2) the capability of transferring his/her knowledge, (3) tolerant towards parents and students, (4) having love of profession and (5) kind but firm [7]. Expressions placed in category 1 showed parallelism to the finding of Açıkalın in his research that teacher is knowledgeable about his/her field and can transform his/her knowledge to students.

In the village of Kökez, parents stressed teacher's educational mission rather than function of teaching. Parents, regarding themselves as inadequate in terms of education, expect teachers to fulfill this role.

Parents, living in the area of Büğdüz and in the city center of Burdur, expect teachers to lead their children to the success and prepare them to get higher scores in their exams.

5.2.2. Category: Teacher is a Person Who Educate the Children (Öğretmen, Çocukları Eğiten Kişidir)

Parents of primary school students emphasized teacher's educative role. In this category, parents living in three different settlements defined teacher's educative role in a different way.

Table 2. Expressions towards the defining category 'Teacher is a person who educates children'

(Tablo 2. "Öğretmen çocukları eğiten kişidir" kategorisine ilişkin ifadeler)

| Locations | Frequency | Sample Expressions |
|-------------------|-----------|---|
| Centrum of Burdur | 8 | Educator is more important for children than the family. Educative, complementary of training. Second family of the children. Very good educator. Educate children. |
| Büğdüz | 4 | Educate children, very good, very concerned with children. They are concerned with the development of students. They are try to give the best possible education. Educators teach and teach in the best way. They are educate children show children how to grow as a good people. |
| Kökez | 6 | People educators children beter, combine them with communitis. My child bases teacher referrals on his/her daily life. |

While parents in Kökez and Büğdüz expect teachers to correct wrong behaviors in the community in a positive way, parents in the city center of Burdur want teachers to be good friends for their children and in this way, help them achieve a high success in the examinations.

5.2.3. Category: Teacher is a Leading Person who Educate and Teach the Children (Öğretmen Çocukları Eğiten ve Öğreten Önder Kişidir)

Parents of primary school students highlighted both the teacher's educational and teaching dimensions.

Table 3. Expressions towards the defining category 'Teacher is a leading person who educate and teach the children'

(Tablo 3. "Öğretmen çocukları eğiten ve öğreten önder kişidir" kategorisine ilişkin ifadeler)

| Locations | Frequency | Sample Expressions |
|-------------------|-----------|--|
| Centrum of Burdur | 7 | Above all, he is the person who educate children completely in addition to teaching them. Raise, educate and teach children. Educator, trainer, instructor. Educator, teach something. Give students educational things, teach them. Educate, teach how to behave and prepare them for life. The future of my daughter, she learns everything from her. |
| Büğdüz | 6 | Teacher is an trainer, he should do teaching, guide students. Educator, like their parents. They learn everything from their teacher. Guiding. Plays an important role in students career developments towards future and in the formation of viewpoints related to life. I think he is the person who changes his/her perspective on life and moral values. The person who shapes child's viewpoint of life. |
| Kökez | 2 | Educator, instructor. Prepare children to fit in the existing age. Guidings, educator, communicating with children. Once we had a teacher, who helped us in every issue. |

Parents' teacher concepts are consistent with the result, made out in Çelikten, Şanal and Yeni's (2005) studies, that 'Our teacher has been guiding us to recover us from the stressful situation we have fallen into and behaving like a referee in the face problems we encountered' [6].

Parents, living in Kökez and Büğdüz, want teachers to change their children's perspectives on life and draw a career path to children. Parents in Burdur want teachers only to help their children be successful in the high school entrance exams.

5.2.4. Category: Teacher is the Person Whom Students can Take as a Role Model (Öğretmen, Öğrencilerin Örnek Aldığı Kişidir)

Parents of primary school students, in this category, emphasized the teacher's role of being a model for students. It is important for teacher to be a model so that students can show the desired behaviors [14].

Table 4. Expressions towards the defining category 'Teacher is the person whom students can take as a role model'

(Tablo 4. "Öğretmen, öğrencilerin örnek aldığı kişidir" kategorisine ilişkin ifadeler)

| Locations | Frequency | Sample Expressions |
|-------------------|-----------|---|
| Centrum of Burdur | 5 | They are models with every aspects. Philosophy of life, the person who determines the child's outlook on life. Play an important role in the personal development of children and in the formation of perspectives on life. Model person. They are continuation of parents. |
| Büğdüz | 7 | They are good models to our children. Model person. They have the power to alter the bad habits in the society. Educate children. A person who can be a good model for children. |
| Kökez | 1 | Teacher is a good model. |

In order to fulfill their duty of making students socialize and transfer social culture to students, teachers need to know the cultural characteristics of the society in which they live [15]. Some parents expect teachers to be respectful to the elements of local culture. Parents, participating in the study, defined the term 'teacher' as someone who will be a model for their children in every issue and gain perspectives to them.

The teacher should know the secrets of their students, keep their secrets and help them solve their problems. Advising in different situations, teachers need to endeavor to make students be a good member of the family and society [6].

Parents in each three settlement expressed that teachers need to be a good model for their children.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION (TARTIŞMA VE SONUÇ)

Findings obtained in this study showed that the application of phenomenological method was meaningful in the search of perceptions of primary school students' parents towards the term 'teacher'.

A positive interaction among students, parents and teachers can be achieved only by discussing the development of students, and specifying the problems and needs of students. The most important source of enabling this interaction is parent-teacher association meeting [16]. However, findings

of this study indicate that parent-teacher interviews are not healthy and functional. In a study of Genç (2005), in which views of teacher and parents concerning parent-teacher cooperation were handled, that parents generally visited teachers to learn the academic success of their children that teachers called parents when problems occurred with students emerged as a result. This case seems to support our findings [17].

According to Duman (2004) establishment of an effective communication between teachers and parents can be ensured by teachers' efforts towards getting to know parents [18]. For this purpose, teachers arrange meetings in groups or individual interviews. Private information about students in individual interviews can be attained. Socio-economic situation, negative or positive situations in the family can be detected.

Parents expect teachers to lead students into research for long-lasting learning instead of memorized knowledge, guide students to obtain information, and understanding of education which values students' opinions [16]. Findings obtained in this study support this view, too.

The attitudes of the teachers in class are also of great importance. Some teachers, knowingly or unknowingly, exhibit different behaviors to students according to the socio-economical status of students' parents. Teachers should definitely maintain their fair mindedness. The duty of teachers, regardless of what circumstances emerge, is to do their best considering each student's capacity. Self-esteem and respect in children, which they need in every period of their lives, are to be taken into consideration; parents should be included in training programs, and courses and seminars should be organized for them [19]. In this study, some parents expressed their discomforts in the interviews with parents due to different teacher behaviors to students.

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