RESEARCH ARTICLE

Evaluation of Address-Based School Enrollment Policy in the Context of Equal Opportunity

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to evaluate school enrollment based on address in primary schools in the context of equal opportunity from the perspective of parents. The phenomenological research design, one of the qualitative research approaches, was used in the study, and the data were collected through a semi-structured interview form and analyzed by descriptive and content analysis. According to the results of the study, the criteria that parents considered important in choosing a primary school were as follows: suitability of physical conditions, quality of the classroom teacher, variety of social activities, ease of transportation, class size, quality of education, cleanliness and hygiene, quality of school administration, use of technology, school safety, having familiar friends, characteristics of the canteen, quality of the guidance service, effective communication with parents and qualified personnel. While seven of the parents evaluate the address-based school enrollment policy negatively, five of them evaluate it positively. The address-based school enrollment policy was criticized by parents for depriving parents of their right to choose a school, being open to violations, and forcing parents to attend private schools. Most of the parents evaluated the primary school where they were enrolled based on address as unequal in terms of equality of opportunity and opportunity compared to other schools in their district. It was found that the address-based enrollment policy has advantages such as ease of transportation to school, proximity of the school to home, and balanced distribution of students to schools, as well as disadvantages such as the system being open to violations, parents not having the right to choose a school, unequal situations may arise, and being forced to attend private schools.

Keywords: *Address-based school enrollment, equal opportunity.*

Introduction

In our age of rapidly developing information and communication technologies, transformations are taking place in many different fields such as education, health, transportation, agriculture, etc. Developments in information and communication technologies have led to innovations in the execution of public services as in all fields. Today, many public services are provided using various electronic tools.

The widespread use of public services provided through electronic means has made it necessary to know where people live in order to provide these services. The elimination of problems such as failure to report or misrepresentation of residential addresses when necessary and the lack of a mechanism to check the accuracy of these reports necessitated the establishment of a realistic population registration system. With this necessity, the Address Based Population Registration System (ABPRS) project was initiated (Naralan, 2008). The Address Based Population Registration System (ABPRS) eliminated problems such as duplicate registration or non-registration in censuses (Sincar & Özbek, 2011), led to the establishment of an address standard within the borders of our country and instant and up-to-date access to population-related information, and enabled many public institutions to process population-related transactions in a single center (Ünal, 2016). The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) is one of the institutions that utilizes ABPRS for its operations.

According to the MoNE Regulation on Preschool Education and Primary Education Institutions (2014), the registration process of students is carried out through the e-School system based on the residential address information in the national address database established in accordance with the provisions of the Population Services Law No. 5490 dated 25/4/2006, and no documents are requested from the parents during the registration process. Therefore, the school enrollment of students who have reached primary school age is made systematically to the school associated with the address of residence, and parents do not have any right of choice at this point.

The main purpose of address-based school registration is to prevent chaos and disorder and to balance the student enrollment in schools (Yücel, Boyacı, Demirhan, & Karataş, 2013). In the literature, both positive and negative results of address-based school enrollment are mentioned. Positive results can be listed as follows: enrollment in the primary school closest to the house of residence reduces school bus fees, students are less tired and save time during transportation to school, traffic problems are reduced, there is a balanced distribution of the number of students in schools, schools have the opportunity to compete under more equal conditions, irregular donations are prevented since there is no school preference, pressure on school administration is reduced, and student follow-up and planning of educational services are facilitated. However, in addition to all these positive results, there are also negative results such as depriving parents of the right to choose a school and the consequent unlawful change of address (Sincar and Özbek, 2011). The fact that people living in a certain region can only send their children to certain schools means that individuals' right to choose is prevented (Yücel et al., 2013). Address-based school enrollment, which aims for a homogeneous school structure in terms of students, plays a role in disrupting equality of opportunity in education as different schools in the city and their students are not offered the same opportunities (Çimen, 2021). Although address-based school registration has been shown

to have many benefits, depriving parents of the right to choose a school is a result that can be characterized as negative when evaluated in the context of equality of opportunity in education.

All schools, especially public schools, are obliged to provide equal education and learning opportunities all over the country, based on the principles of social justice and equal opportunity (Şişman, 2020). Although all public primary schools affiliated to the MoNE have the same curriculum, distribute the same books, and provide similar services and conditions, it is a fact that there are schools that are considered "better" by parents for various reasons. It can be seen that parents resort to various methods such as moving house in order to be close to schools that are considered "better", and having their residency illegally changed even though they do not live at an address associated with the school they consider to be "better".

It can be seen that families can violate the practice in various ways and send their children to the schools they want. In addition, families with high socio-economic status have the opportunity to prefer private schools that are exempt from the registration area practice. The children caught in the filter of this administrative practice, which basically aims to prevent overcrowding in some schools, are mostly the children of families with low socio-economic status. In this respect, this practice is considered to be contrary to the principles of equality and accessibility, which are fundamental to all public services provided to citizens. As a result, this practice can be characterized as dysfunctional as it can be easily violated by some segments of the society (Yücel et al., 2013).

In this study, it was aimed to evaluate school enrollment based on ABPRS in the context of equal opportunity from the perspective of parents. In line with this main objective, the following questions were sought to be answered:

Parents with primary school-age students;

1. What are the criteria that parents think are important in choosing a primary school?

2. What are their views on address-based school registration?

3. How do they evaluate the school where their children are enrolled according to ABPRS in terms of equality of opportunity and opportunity compared to other schools in the district?

4. What are their views on the advantages of address-based school registration?

5. What are their views on the disadvantages of address-based school enrollment?

6. What are their suggestions for improving the address-based school enrollment policy?

Method

Research Model

This study was conducted to evaluate the address-based school enrollment policy in the context of equality of opportunity and opportunity from the perspective of parents. The study was based on qualitative research approach and phenomenological research design, one of the types of qualitative research approach, was used. Qualitative research has become widespread with an understanding that science is not only the process of producing objective, generalizable and universal knowledge and emphasizes the importance of subjective knowledge (Baltacı, 2019). Phenomenological research design is used to examine and explain events, situations, experiences and concepts (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2019).

Working Group

Since quantitative research is based on generalizations, it needs samples large enough to represent the universe, while qualitative research does not need samples since it is based on observations and interviews. Because observations and interviews begin to repeat themselves after a certain stage (Shenton, 2004). Since the aim of this research, which is based on qualitative research approach, is not to generalize the results to the universe but to examine the phenomenon in depth, a study group that meets the objectives of the research and will provide qualified data is needed rather than a large sample. For this reason, purposeful sampling method was used in the study. In the 2022-2023 academic year, a total of 12 parents, three parents each from four primary schools in Çaycuma district center of Zonguldak province, were included in the study group. Demographic information about the parents participating in the study is given in Table 1.

Table 1. *Demographic information about the parents who participated in the study*

Code	Gender	School of Parent	Education Level
V1	Female	School 1	middle school
V2	Female	School 1	high school
V3	Male	School 2	license
V4	Female	School 3	associate degree
V5	Female	School 4	high school
V6	Female	School 2	middle school
V7	Male	School 2	license
V8	Male	School 3	high school
V9	Female	School 3	high school
V10	Male	School 4	license
V11	Female	School 1	license
V12	Female	School 4	license

According to Table 1, eight of the parents who participated in the study were female and four were male. Two of the parents with different levels of education graduated from secondary school, four from high school, one from associate's degree and five from bachelor's degree.

Data Collection Tool and Collection of Data

In the study, a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher to be directed to the parents of students in primary schools was used to collect data. Before the preparation of the interview form, a literature review was conducted, and after the review, the questions to be included in the interview form were determined, presented to three researchers who are experts in the field of educational sciences, and feedback was received. In line with the expert opinions, the interview form was finalized and a pilot study was conducted with parents who were not included in the study. After confirming the comprehensibility of the questions in the pilot application, the actual application was started.

Prior to the implementation of the data collection tool, the volunteer participants were given preliminary information and it was stated that participation was voluntary and personal information would remain confidential. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews between 01.03.2023-01.04.2023. Each interview lasted an average of 15-20 minutes. Data were collected through voice recordings and note-taking. All recordings were organized as written texts in a computer environment and confirmed by reading them back to the participants.

Data Analysis - Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, the concepts of credibility for internal validity and transferability for external validity are used instead of the concept of validity, while the concepts of consistency for internal reliability and confirmability for external reliability are used instead of the concept of reliability (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2019; Creswell, 2017; Glesne, 2012; Punch, 2011). In this study, the researcher tried to collect in-depth data by avoiding prejudices and personal value judgments in order to increase credibility (internal validity), which means that what is obtained at the end of the research is clear, understandable, consistent and verifiable by other researchers, and presented the analysis of the data they obtained for expert review. In this direction, in order to ensure transferability (external validity), which means that the research results are applicable in the research, the researcher determined the study group by using the purposeful sampling method, and the findings were given by direct quotation without comment. In order to increase consistency (internal reliability), which means determining whether a qualitative research is conducted in accordance with the rules within itself and whether the method is used appropriately, the participant statements were used as direct quotations, and themes were formed by first bringing together similar and different statements. The opinions of three researchers working in the field of educational sciences were also consulted in determining the themes. The forms of the parents whose opinions were consulted in the analysis of the data were given code numbers as V1, V2. In order for the collected data to be verifiable (external reliability), the researcher collected the data himself, tried to gain the trust of the participants during data collection, descriptive and content analysis techniques were used in the analysis of the data, the opinion of another expert was consulted in the analysis of the data, and the research data and the themes obtained were compared with the findings of the literature. Examining and interpreting the same research by different researchers increases the consistency and comprehensibility of the study (Yıldırım, 2010).

Findings

The findings of the study were divided into relevant headings in line with the sub-objectives and presented under these headings.

Criteria that Parents Consider Important in Primary School Selection

The findings regarding the criteria that participant parents consider important in the selection of primary schools are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Opinions on the Criteria that Parents Consider Important in Primary School Selection*

Criteria	n	Participants
Physical conditions	8	V2, V6, V7, V8, V9, V10, V11, V12
Classroom teacher	8	V1, V2, V4, V7, V9, V10, V11, V12
Social activities	7	V2, V4, V5, V6 V7, V8, V10
Ease of transportation	6	V3, V4, V5, V6, V11, V12
Class size	6	V4, V5, V7, V8, V11, V12
Quality of education	6	V1, V3, V5, V8, V10, V12
Cleanliness-hygiene	3	V7, V9, V10
School Management	2	V7, V11
Technology Use	2	V7, V10
School Safety	2	V10, V12
Familiar friends	1	V7
Features of the canteen	1	V1
The quality of the guidance service	1	V3
Effective communication with parents	1	V7
Qualified personnel	1	V9

As seen in Table 2, the criteria that the participant parents considered important in choosing a primary school were classified as the suitability of the physical conditions, the quality of the classroom teacher, the variety of social activities, ease of transportation, class size, the quality of education, cleanliness and hygiene, the quality of the school administration, the use of technology, school safety, familiar friends, the characteristics of the canteen, the quality of the guidance service, effective communication with parents and qualified personnel. The majority of the participant parents stated that they attach importance to the physical conditions of the school, the quality of the classroom teacher, and the availability of social activities inside and outside the school. In addition, half of the participant parents emphasized the importance of easy transportation to the school, appropriate class sizes and quality education. Regarding the Physical Conditions theme, V8: "*The school garden, playgrounds, and the height of the primary school (single storey if possible) are other features that I attach importance to.*"; V10: "*The physical equipment of the school building and classrooms are also important. I think that there should be facilities such as multi-purpose hall, library, laboratories, activity classes.*"; V12: "*The physical conditions of the school, its heating, the fact that it is not multi-storey, the width of the garden and the availability of playgrounds are also very important.*"

Regarding the teacher theme, V2: "*It is very important which teacher my child will have in the school I choose.*"; V9: "*I think the most important criterion in choosing a primary school is to choose a teacher who will be suitable for the child's personality, structure and energy and who will understand him/her.*"; V11: "*You can make a choice even just by looking at the teacher. For me, the most important criterion in a primary*

school is the quality of my child's classroom teacher."; V4: "*I care about social activities even before academic activities in primary school. I want children to learn by having fun in accordance with their nature.*"; V5: "*I do not want a school where children never leave the classroom. We should give importance to excursions, sportive and artistic activities. I would like our children's social side to be strengthened.*"

Regarding the theme of ease of transportation, V3: "*I care that the school is close to our home and that transportation is easy.*"; V5: "*First of all, the proximity of the school to home is important for me.* Regarding the theme of class size, V4: "*I do not want the class to be too crowded. I think it is not good when there are more than thirty students.*" and V11: "*It is also an advantage to have a small class size.*" V8: "*I want quality education*"; V10: "*It is also very important to provide a good academic education. The basic education received in primary school affects children for a lifetime. We should lay the foundation carefully to make the building strong.*"

Regarding the theme of cleanliness and hygiene; V9: "*It is important to have a healthy and hygienic environment. For this, everything from toilets to classrooms, from the canteen to the garden should be regularly cleaned and even disinfected.*"; regarding the theme of the quality of management; V7: "*I even care that there is at least one woman in the school management. Mothers are more interested in children. I attach importance to this criterion both for parents to communicate more easily and because women are more sensitive to children.*"; V11: "*Although it is the classroom teacher who determines classroom activities, the school administration is also very important in this sense. I would like to have school administrators who are supportive of the teacher and understanding of the students.*"; V10 regarding the use of technology: "*It should be a school where technology is closely monitored and used in the classrooms....*" and V12 regarding school safety: "*It is very important that it is a safe school, knowing that our children are safe from all kinds of dangers.*"

Regarding the theme of familiar friends, V7: "*I think it is best to talk and decide which primary school the parents and students I trust from the kindergarten will attend and take steps in that direction. Because he will overcome the difficulties and differences he will encounter in primary school, where he takes his first step out of his mother's lap and takes his first step into life and socialization, more easily with his friends.*"; V1: "*The location and condition of the canteen, reasonable prices and clean and decent product content...*" regarding the canteen features, V1: "*The location and condition of the canteen, reasonable prices and clean and decent product content...*" and V12: "*It is very important to know that our children are safe from any kind of danger...*" regarding the quality of the guidance service.*"; V3 on the quality of the guidance service: "*Having an active guidance service in the school...*"; V7 on the theme of relations with parents: "*I also find it important that both the teacher and the administration establish good relations with the parents.*"; and finally V9 on the quality of the staff: "*I think it is necessary to have staff who know pedagogical principles, not only teachers, but also cleaning staff, staff working in the canteen, etc., that is, staff who understand the language of the child.*"

Parents' Opinions on the Primary School Enrollment According to ABPRS

The findings regarding the opinions of the participant parents regarding the primary school enrollment based on ABPRS are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. *Parents' Opinions on Primary School Enrollment According to the National Registration System (ABPRS)*

Opinion	Lower Opinion	n	Participants
I Find Negative	No preference	7	V2, V3, V7, V8, V9,
	The system is not functional	5	V10, V12
	Compulsion to move	3	
	Conviction to private school	3	
	Different school criteria	2	
	Problems of working families	1	
I Find Positive	Proximity to address	5	V1, V4, V5, V6, V11
	The child provides his/her own transportation	4	
	Preventing pile-ups	4	

As seen in Table 3, seven of the participant parents evaluated the address-based school enrollment policy negatively, while five of them stated that they evaluated it positively. Those who found the school enrollment policy negative generally criticized the fact that parents do not have the right to choose. In addition, they criticized the system for not being functional, forcing parents to move or attend private schools, the different qualifications of schools and the problems of working families. V3: "*Families should have the right to choose in such an important decision that will affect the future of our children.*"; V7: "*I see it as a very wrong practice that puts families in a difficult situation. Parents are forced to move or to private schools.*"; V8: "*The school near my address may not have the criteria I am looking for, which will affect my child's educational life. Especially considering that primary school is the cornerstone of educational life, as a parent I would like to have the right to choose a school.*"; V10: "*Yes, it prevents clustering in certain schools, but I think the disadvantages are more. The physical conditions of each school, the quality of education, the number of students in classes are very different. In such a situation, why wouldn't parents want better for their children. This also creates problems for working parents. Parents should be able to send their children to the school of their choice.*"

Even among those who expressed a positive view of the implementation, there were some who criticized the system for not being functional. It is characterized as an unequal practice because the system can be easily circumvented. Parent V1: "*I think it is a practice that should be implemented. I wish it could be implemented correctly. I don't think we can say that there is no freedom to choose a school-teacher in our country. No matter how many rules are put in place, parents change their addresses a year in advance, and it is not monitored that they declare correctly. In other words, the system remains only on paper and is not applied to everyone.*" However, there were also parents who stated that they found the system positive for reasons such as the school being close to the address, the child providing transportation himself/herself and preventing overcrowding. V4: "*I find it appropriate because the school is close to my address, the child provides his/her own transportation, and it is in a close neighborhood that he/she knows.*"; V5: "*I find it appropriate because it prevents overcrowding in certain schools and prevents transportation problems by allowing children to attend the schools closest to their homes.*"; V11: "*Of course, everyone wants their children to be educated in the school with the best conditions and in the classroom of the most qualified teacher. However, if this job is left to the parents, how can overcrowding be prevented. For this reason, I find this practice positive.*"

Opinions Regarding Parents' Evaluation of the School Where Their Children Are Enrolled According to ABPRS in Terms of Equality of Opportunity and Opportunity Compared to Other Schools in the Neighborhood

The findings regarding the opinions of the participant parents on the evaluation of the primary school where their children were enrolled on the basis of ABPRS in terms of equality of opportunity and opportunity compared to other primary schools in the neighborhood are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Opinions Regarding Parents' Evaluation of the School Where Their Children Are Enrolled According to ABPRS in Terms of Equality of Opportunity and Opportunity Compared to Other Schools in the Neighborhood*

Opinion	n	Lower Opinion	n	Participants
I Think It's Not Equal	8	Parent and student profile	5	V1, V2, V5, V6, V8, V9, V11, V12
		Social facilities	5	
		Class size	4	
		Staff attitude	3	
		Workload differences	2	
I think it is equal	4	Equal opportunities and impossibilities	4	V3, V4, V7, V10

As seen in Table 4, eight of the participant parents evaluated the primary school where they were enrolled based on address as not equal in terms of equal opportunities and facilities compared to other schools in their district, while four of them evaluated it as having equal opportunities and facilities. Although the majority of the parents think that all schools have equal opportunities in terms of physical facilities, they stated that there are differences in terms of factors such as parent-student profile, social activities, class size, staff attitudes and behaviors, and workload differences, which lead to inequalities. V1, one of the parents who found their school unequal compared to the surrounding schools, said: "*Although the physical facilities are close to each other in all schools in my district, I think that the social facilities are different in some schools due to the irregular registration process. There are many unequal situations such as the parent profile being selected, the student population being high in some schools for some teachers because the address-based registration system is not agreed upon, and the attitude of the administrative staff being different.*"; V6: "*The school where we are enrolled according to the address-based system is one of the successful schools in the region where I live in terms of education quality. However, due to this reason, the class size is very high, with over 40 students studying in tiny classrooms. Unfortunately, its physical facilities are also inadequate compared to many schools.*"; V8: "*The school we have to enroll in based on the address-based system is inadequate in terms of classrooms, which increases the class size. I also think that not enough time and effort is spent on social and cultural activities. But we see that many different activities are carried out in other schools and class sizes are more reasonable.*"; V11: "*It is definitely not equal. First of all, the school where we are automatically enrolled is a transportation center school. It also has a kindergarten class. The school 200 meters away from us is not a transportation center and does not have a kindergarten class. It means that there is a serious difference in terms of the workload of teachers and school administration, and perhaps for this reason, we see that much more social activities and projects are carried out in the other school.*"

In addition to this, there were also participants who stated that the possibilities and impossibilities of the school where their children were systematically enrolled were equal or close

to each other. In this regard, one of the participant parents, V3: "*We have acquaintances who go to other schools in the district. When we talk to them, we see that our opportunities and impossibilities are the same.*"; V4: "*After all, they are all public schools. The state offers the same opportunities to all of them. I did not see any difference.*"; V7: *"I think the school where we are enrolled based on address is equal and sufficient with the surrounding schools in terms of all kinds of facilities. I think there is only a little inadequacy in terms of cleaning staff, but this is a problem that is common in most public schools across the country."*

Parents' Views on the Advantages and Disadvantages of Address-Based School Enrollment Policy

The findings regarding the views of the participant parents on the advantages and disadvantages of the address-based school enrollment policy are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *Parents' Views on the Advantages and Disadvantages of Address-Based School Enrollment Policy*

Advantages	n	Participants	Disadvantages	n	Participants
Ease of Transportation	5	V1, V4, V5, V6, V11	Vulnerability of the System to Breach	5	V1, V6, V10, V11, V12
Proximity to Home	4	V2, V3, V4, V9,	No Right to Choose a School	5	V2, V3, V5, V6, V9
Student Distribution	4	V8, V10, V11, V12	The Emergence of Unequal Situations	4	V8, V9, V10, V11
			Forced to Private Schools	1	V7

As seen in Table 5, participant parents categorized the advantages of the address-based school enrollment policy into three categories: Ease of transportation, proximity to home and student distribution. The ease of transportation facilitated by automatic school enrollment to the school closest to the address of residence according to the ABPRS is considered an advantage by the parents for reasons such as not needing shuttles, allowing students to provide their own transportation, and preventing loss of time. V1, one of the parents who expressed opinions on ease of transportation, said: "*It can be convenient for the student and the parents. They do not have to use the shuttle service, they can reach their schools on foot or they have to use the shuttle service for the shortest distance.*"; V4: *"I think it is advantageous for the child to be able to provide their own transportation."*; V5: "*Easy transportation, accessibility is a positive aspect...*"; V6: *"I see it as an advantage for children to receive education in close proximity in terms of not wasting time in the shuttle services."*

The fact that the school is close to home is seen as an advantage for reasons such as ease of transportation, receiving education with familiar students in the same neighborhood, and the opportunity to go home for lunch during lunch breaks. V3, one of the participant parents, said: "*I consider it an advantage that the student goes to the school closest to home. My child comes home to eat at lunchtime and can eat healthy food. Also, all his friends in the neighborhood go to the same school. They reinforce their friendships in the neighborhood at school.*" V2: "*Going to the school closest to home is important in terms of security as it means going to school with a group of friends they know and being in a familiar environment.*"; V4: "*Having the school close to home is an advantage not only in terms of transportation but also in many other aspects. As a parent, I can go to the school whenever my child needs it during the day. My child fell and hurt his arm in the previous weeks. For example, I was at the school within 5 minutes as soon as the teacher called.*"; V9: "*A positive aspect may be that it is close to people's homes, but I do not see any other positive aspect."*

According to participant parents, another advantage of the address-based school enrollment policy is the distribution of students. According to the ABPRS data, each residence address is associated with a school and students are distributed to schools in a balanced manner, thus balancing school and class sizes. Thus, crowding into certain schools is prevented and balanced student distribution is ensured. Regarding this sub-theme, V8: "*It only prevents overcrowding in certain schools.*"; V11: "*Since the allocation of schools to students is done automatically, it provides a balanced distribution of students.*"; V12: "*It makes it possible for students to be placed equally in schools numerically. This system seems to be the only way to balance class sizes.*"

Again, as seen in Table 5, according to parents' opinions, the disadvantages of the address-based school enrollment policy are grouped under four categories: The vulnerability of the system to violations, the lack of the right to choose a school, the emergence of unequal situations, and being forced to attend private schools. The most common categories of disadvantages of address-based school enrollment are the vulnerability of the system and the deprivation of parents' right to choose a school. The term "vulnerability" refers to the possibility of being exempted from the system through irregular address changes. According to parents' views, families who can make temporary address changes to addresses where they do not actually reside can ensure that their children are enrolled in the schools they want. The fact that parents do not have the right to choose a school is characterized as an unfair and undemocratic practice by the participating parents. Among the themes related to the disadvantages of the address-based school enrollment policy, V1: "*The system is not implemented fairly. With a temporary change of address, anyone can enroll in any school they want. These address changes are not monitored and penalties are not imposed.*"; V10: "*People can resort to unreasonable methods to enroll their children in the schools they want. They find ways to circumvent the practice through irregular address changes.*"; V11: "*Although this practice has its advantages, the fact that it can be easily circumvented makes it dysfunctional. People find a way to enroll in the school of their choice. What happens is only to honest citizens.*" Regarding the theme of not having the right to choose a school, V2: "*I think the negative aspect is not being able to choose a school. This situation affects student and parent motivation.*" V3: "*We have the chance to choose in many services of the state. We can choose the hospital we go to or even the doctor. Why can't we choose the school where our child will receive education for at least 4 years?*"; V6: "*I cannot decide which school to send my child to. First of all, this is not democratic.*"

V8: "*I think that students with high capacity cannot reveal their capacities in schools with a narrower vision and more limited opportunities. The existing capacity of the student can only be developed to the extent of the teacher's abilities and the vision of the school.*"; V10: "*There is a situation against the students studying in disadvantaged schools, so I think it is a disadvantage that it is not fair.*"; V7: "*I think it is a system that obliges parents to go to different ways and searches, to private schools when they come across a school that is incompatible with their expectations.*".

Parents' Suggestions for Improving the Address-Based School Enrollment Policy

The findings regarding the views of the participant parents on the improvement of the address-based school enrollment policy are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. *Parents' Views on Improving the Address-Based School Enrollment Policy*

Opinion	n	Examples of Opinions	Participants
Follow-up of Irregular Address Changes	4	V1: "If this system is to be implemented, it should be fair. If there is a rule, it should be applied to everyone. It should be followed up correctly. The accuracy of the statements regarding addresses should be investigated."; V2: "This system should be continued to protect school and class quotas, because if the demand exceeds the quotas, how will the placement be? But if there are fake address changes, these must be checked. Elements such as favoritism should be eliminated. If these are not taken into consideration, there will continue to be friction between school administrations and parents."; V11: "The first thing to do to improve the implementation is to prevent irregular address changes so that it is applied fairly to everyone."	V1, V2, V6, V11
Equalizing the Opportunities of All Schools	4	V5: "If the activities of all schools are the same and the criteria of parents are met in all schools, parents will not need to choose a school and the system will be improved."; V8: "For the system to improve, all people need to be satisfied with the school they are enrolled in. The only way to do this is to equalize all schools."; V11: "The application was actually created to prevent important problems. Of course, it is more democratic to have the right to choose, but how will the confusion be solved when everyone goes to the school they want. Therefore, this system should continue to be implemented, but schools should have equal opportunities and facilities."	V5, V8, V11, V12
Providing Flexibility in Some Situations	3	V6: "A different application can be made for successful and talented children above a certain level. It is very unfair to force successful children to study in schools with limited opportunities."; V7: "Although this practice is compulsory in big cities, a more flexible system should be applied in small places. In other words, the system can be flexed according to population density."; V9: "At least flexibility can be provided for working parents. Life can sometimes be very difficult for working parents. At least they can enroll their children in the school of their choice."	V6, V7, V9
Providing options for families	2	V3: "If parents are given the chance to choose one of the 2 or 3 schools closest to their homes, motivation can be increased by satisfying everyone."; "V7: "Even if they are not given the right to choose, they should at least be given the chance to choose among a few schools, saying that these and these schools are suitable for you. Since teacher selection is at the forefront among parents, administrations should be ready for this, take bold steps when necessary, and be clear and decisive."	V3, V7

As seen in Table 6, according to parents' opinions, suggestions for improving the address-based school enrollment policy are grouped under four categories: Monitoring irregular address changes, equalizing the opportunities of all schools, providing flexibility in some cases, and offering options to families. According to parent opinions, preventing the vulnerability of the system, which is one of the disadvantages of the address-based school enrollment policy, is one of the most common suggestions for improving the policy. Four parents expressed their opinions on this issue and stated

that the improvement of the policy is to eliminate injustice by putting an end to irregular address changes. V6: "*There is a policy, but it exists for some. Because there are people who have found a way to bend the policy. Somehow, they can enroll in the school they want by showing the address of the house they do not live in. Some even luckier people can give their children to the teacher they want. These injustices must be prevented and people's shaken trust must be restored. It should be inspected whether or not they live at the declared address.*"

The suggestion to improve the policy by "equalizing the opportunities of all schools" was also made by four parents. In this study, the existence of disadvantages such as the lack of the right to choose a school, the emergence of unequal situations, and the condemnation of parents to private schools were revealed. In this context, it can be said that the suggestion of equalizing the facilities of all schools is a suggestion that can remedy all the criticisms against the policy. It is thought that by equalizing the facilities of all schools, the need for parents to choose a school will be prevented, unequal situations will be eliminated, and parents will stop being condemned to private schools. In this regard, V12, one of the participant parents, said: "*In our country, many problems related to schools are experienced because the conditions of schools are not equal. If I believed that the conditions of all our schools were equal, of course I would want my child to go to the school closest to my home. Therefore, I think the way to improve this policy is to bring the facilities of schools closer to each other.*"

Three participant parents expressed the view that flexibility could be provided for three different situations to improve the policy. One of the participants stated that the policy could be improved by providing flexibility in the system for gifted students, one for regions where the population is not dense, and one for working parents. Finally, two parents expressed the view that families should be given the right to choose from several schools instead of being forced to attend a single school. It was suggested that the closest school to the address or several schools that are deemed most suitable for parents for various reasons should be offered and parents should choose one of these options.

Conclusions, Interpretation, Discussion and Recommendations

This study was conducted to reveal the views of parents of primary school students on the address-based school enrollment policy. Firstly, the findings regarding the criteria that parents consider important in choosing a primary school were presented. Accordingly, the criteria that parents consider important in choosing a primary school are; suitability of physical conditions, quality of the classroom teacher, variety of social activities, ease of transportation, class size, quality of education, cleanliness and hygiene, quality of school administration, use of technology, school safety, having familiar friends, characteristics of the canteen, quality of the guidance service, effective communication with parents and qualified personnel. Considering that the effects of school buildings and physical environmental conditions on learning and teaching processes cannot be underestimated (Aydoğan, 2012), it is an understandable finding that parents want a school with suitable physical conditions. The fact that the quality of the classroom teacher is considered important can be explained by the fact that the classroom teacher has the role of helping students to realize themselves by ensuring their affective, kinesthetic, social, psychological and personality development as well as their cognitive development (Can, 2011). It is thought that the contribution of social activities to student development can explain the reason for this criterion. Taking part in

different social activities will increase students' social sensitivity and play an important role in discovering their own interests and talents. Ease of transportation, another criterion that parents consider important in primary school selection, reveals the importance of enrolling children in schools close to their homes. Students enrolled in schools close to their homes will reach school in less time, with less expense and less energy. In the literature, there are studies on the expectations of parents of primary school students from primary school. In the literature, the expectations of parents regarding primary school are related to educational, social and political areas (Can, 2010); teacher, physical, administrative activities and administrative attitude (Akbulut, 2013); general expectations, expectations from the teacher and expectations from the administration (Nartgün & Kaya, 2016); courses and activities, books, school structure, homework, students, teachers, education system and programs (Yıldız & Kılıç, 2020); social activities, personal/social development of students, physical equipment of the school, academic development of students, teachers and administration (Şahin, Çoban, Aydın, & Sarı, 2022). Similar to this study, the research also reveals that parents of students have many expectations regarding primary school, but it is noteworthy that there are similarities as well as differences in expectations. It is thought that many social and environmental factors such as the conditions of schools and parents' view of education differentiate parents' expectations.

The findings of the study reveal the views of the participant parents regarding the primary school enrollment policy based on ABPRS. While seven of the parents evaluated the address-based school enrollment policy negatively, five of them stated that they evaluated it positively. The address-based school enrollment policy was criticized by the parents for depriving parents of the right to choose a school, being open to violations, and forcing parents to attend private schools. In the literature, there is no study evaluating the views of parents on address-based school enrollment. However, there are studies (Sincar & Özbek, 2011; Yücel, Boyacı, Demirhan, & Karataş, 2013) in which the views of school administrators on the address-based registration system were evaluated. In Yücel, Boyacı, Demirhan, and Karataş's (2013) study, it was revealed that six of the participant administrators found the address-based school registration system positive, six of them thought that it had shortcomings although they found it positive, and six of them evaluated it negatively because it created inequality. It is thought that the reason for the higher number of negative opinions about address-based school enrollment in this study is the difference in the study group. The fact that the study group in this study was parents may have caused the negative opinion to be more dominant because they were directly affected by the lack of the right to choose a school.

In the study, the views of the participant parents on the evaluation of the primary school where they were enrolled based on address in terms of equality of opportunity and opportunity compared to other schools in their district were revealed. While most of the participant parents evaluated the primary school where they were enrolled based on address as not equal in terms of equal opportunities and facilities compared to other schools in their district, a few of them evaluated it as having equal opportunities and facilities. Although the majority of parents thought that all schools had equal opportunities in terms of physical facilities, they stated that there were differences in terms of factors such as social activities, class size, staff attitudes and behaviors, which led to inequalities. Based on the previous findings of this study, considering the importance of criteria such as physical conditions, classroom teacher and social activities for parents in choosing a primary school, it is thought that the differentiation of these criteria in different primary schools in the same

district is a very important finding. A significant portion of the participant parents think that the opportunities and facilities of the schools in their enrollment area and the surrounding schools are not equal. This perception of inequality will either push parents to look for ways to enroll in the school they think is "the best" or cause them to be dissatisfied with their current school, leading to loss of morale and motivation. According to Hoy and Miskel (2013), since schools are structures that are influenced by their environment, there may be a situation of not benefiting from equal opportunities in education between schools located in different environments. When the studies in the literature examining the relationship between the characteristics of schools and student achievement are examined, it is seen that there is a relationship between various variables related to schools and student achievement. Various variables related to schools such as class sizes (Altinok & Kingdon, 2012), different tools and equipment in schools (Agasisti & Longobardi, 2017; Savascı & Tomul, 2013, p. 119), and equipment in schools (Agasisti & Longobardi, 2017) can be effective on equality of opportunity in education. Çimen (2021), in his study conducted to reveal the variables that can explain student achievement based on equality of opportunity in education in Turkey, pointed out that Turkey is among the countries with the highest variance of differentiation between schools, that every student has difficulty in benefiting from the same educational opportunities, and that almost half of disadvantaged children study in disadvantaged schools. He stated that one of the reasons for this is the implementation of a placement system called the enrollment area, which takes the proximity of the area of residence of the family to the school as the main indicator in the school placement of students, especially in primary education. This is explained by the fact that schools perpetuate the social stratification that already exists in their surroundings.

In the study, findings regarding the views of the participant parents on the advantages of the address-based enrollment policy were also revealed. In this context, the benefits of the address-based registration policy such as the convenience of transportation to school, the proximity of the school to the home and the balanced distribution of students to schools were revealed. In Sincar and Özbek's (2011) study, which aimed to reveal the views of school principals on the positive and negative aspects of the address-based registration system, the positive aspects of the address-based registration system were evaluated under the themes of transportation to school, academic structure, school revenues, bureaucracy and equal opportunity. Similar to the findings of this study, similar to the findings of this study, in addition to the advantages such as the decrease in service costs as a result of the school being close to home and easy transportation to school, the increase in students' fitness, saving time, balancing the distribution of students, unlike this study, advantages such as balancing the achievement status of schools, accelerating the transition from dual education to regular education, reduction in paperwork, ease in student follow-up and ease in planning were also revealed. These differences are thought to be due to the different study groups.

The findings of the study also revealed the views of the participant parents on the disadvantages of the address-based enrollment policy. Disadvantages such as the system being open to violations, parents not having the right to choose a school, unequal situations may arise, and being forced to attend private schools were emphasized by the participant parents. Similar results were found in Sincar and Özbek's (2011) study. According to the opinions of school principals, the negative aspects of the address-based enrollment policy such as the lack of parental right to choose, contradiction to democracy, and irregular address changes overlap with the findings of this study. In addition, unlike the findings of this study, the negative aspects of the address-based school

enrollment policy, such as the decrease in donations to the school due to address-based school enrollment and thus loss of income, were also reported. The reason for these differences can also be considered as the different study groups. The fact that parents can only send their children to certain schools with the address-based school enrollment policy means that individuals' right to choose is prevented and social mobility opportunities are restricted, which divides society into classes and causes class differences to persist (Yücel, Boyacı, Demirhan, & Karataş, 2013).

Finally, the findings regarding parents' opinions on improving the address-based school enrollment policy are presented. The suggestions of the parents for improving the address-based school enrollment policy were listed as follows: monitoring of irregular address changes, equalizing the opportunities of all schools, providing flexibility in some cases and offering options to families. One of the most frequently cited disadvantages of the address-based school enrollment policy was that the system is open to violations, and that parents can enroll in any school they want through irregular address changes, which leads to inequalities. In this context, it can be said that in order to eliminate these disadvantages, it can be said that monitoring the irregular address changes and preventing unfair practices is seen as an important step to improve the system.

Another suggestion for improvement, equalizing the opportunities of all schools, is also considered to be a very important step. Based on the research findings, one of the serious criticisms of the address-based school registration policy is that parents are deprived of the right to choose a school. The most important reason for parents to choose a school is undoubtedly the existence of schools that are considered "better" compared to other schools in the neighborhood. The existence of qualities that make a school "better" than others may lead to the desire for the right to choose. It is thought that every parent would want the best for their child. When parents have a negative perception of the facilities of the school where they are enrolled due to their address, they may try to change this situation. Moving, changing the address illegally, turning to a private school are some of these. If they cannot change their school, it is thought that they will experience a loss of motivation. The most effective way to prevent this situation is to improve and equalize the facilities of schools. It is thought that physical facilities can be equalized by allocating funds to schools in proportion to the number of students. However, equalizing subjective characteristics such as the quality of teachers, administrators and other personnel may not be as easy as equalizing physical facilities. At this point, it may be recommended to increase the quality of pre-service and in-service trainings of all personnel and to provide effective solutions for performance evaluation. In order to equalize the social activities of schools, practices that encourage schools to engage in effective social activities can be developed.

Another parent suggestion for improvement was to provide flexibility for different situations. It was suggested that flexibility could be provided for gifted students, for regions where the population is not dense, and for working parents. In fact, there are flexibilities within the framework of the legislation for all the special cases mentioned. The MoNE Regulation on Preschool Education and Primary Education Institutions (2014) states that children of martyrs, war invalids and combat veterans and children in need of special education can be enrolled in the school of their choice regardless of their address in the national address database, provided that they document their transfer status. It is stated that if both parents work and if they wish, the student will be enrolled in the school in the registration area of the address where his/her mother or father works. The vacant quotas of schools with class sizes below thirty are announced on the e-School system on the first

working day of September and parents who wish to transfer their students from outside the registration area can apply to these schools. It is clear that the legislation guarantees flexibility for gifted students, students with working parents, and schools with class sizes below thirty, as stated in the parents' suggestions for improving the system. Nevertheless, the fact that suggestions were made on these issues could be interpreted as parents not being aware of some of their legal rights regarding school enrollment. It may be recommended to be more diligent in sharing different details of the address-based school enrollment policy with the public.

Finally, the last suggestion made to improve the address-based school enrollment policy is to give parents the right to choose from several schools instead of forcing them to attend a single school. Participant parents suggested that parents should be offered a few school options that are closest to the address or that are deemed most suitable for parents for various reasons, and that parents should choose one of these options. Considering the damaging effect of determining a single school associated with the parents' residence addresses and obliging them to this school, this suggestion may be somewhat more fair. It is thought that the perception of injustice towards the current school enrollment practices may be reduced by parents who choose a school by evaluating according to the criteria they deem important among the options offered to them.

In conclusion, it is obvious that the address-based registration policy, which was introduced to prevent chaos and disorder, has some disadvantages as well as advantages. It is seen that parents have certain expectations from schools, they want their children to receive education in a school that meets these expectations, and therefore they evaluate the address-based school enrollment policy as a negative policy in terms of equality of opportunity and opportunity. In addition, a significant portion of the parents evaluate the school where their children are enrolled based on address as unequal in terms of equality of opportunity and opportunity compared to other schools in their districts. According to the parents, the address-based school enrollment policy is rendered dysfunctional through various irregular means, this situation is not controlled and as a result, unfair situations occur. On the other hand, the address-based registration policy also has advantages such as ease of transportation, proximity to home, and balanced student distribution. It is an undeniable fact that address-based registration prevents irregularities and supports more realistic planning. Without giving up these advantages, it is recommended that the address-based registration policy should be improved, its faults should be corrected and the system should be modernized by minimizing the existing disadvantages. The address-based registration system policy should be based on the principles of equality and fairness, and should be based on a basis where the same quality of education services are provided for all students.

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