

**EDUCATION OF GIRLS IN THE PROVINCE OF
THESSALONIKI DURING THE OTTOMAN
MODERNIZATION PROCESS***

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ABSTRACT

The education of girls in the Ottoman Empire was carried out in traditional primary schools until the Tanzimat period. There were no above-primary schools for girls. During the Tanzimat Period, the first girls' rüşdiye school (advanced primary) above primary schools was opened in Istanbul in 1859. With the Maârif-i Umûmiye Nizâmnamesi (Regulation on General Education) dated 1869, the education of girls was redesigned, and it was decided to open primary and rüşdiye schools for girls outside of Istanbul. The newly designed primary schools would have a different structure from the traditional ones.

In this study, the establishment and development of the schools opened for the education of girls in the province of Thessaloniki, the interest of the people of Thessaloniki in these institutions, and the problems encountered were evaluated. The study also reveals what kind of development took place in girls' education outside the capital Istanbul during the Ottoman modernization process.

Keywords: Thessaloniki, Education of Girls, Girls' Schools, Education of Girls in the Ottoman Empire, History of Education.

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OSMANLI MODERNLEŞMESİ SÜRECİNDE SELANİK VİLAYETİNDE KIZLARIN EĞİTİMİ

ÖZ

Osmanlı Devleti'nde kızların eğitimi, Tanzimat dönemine kadar, geleneksel ilkokullarda gerçekleştirilmiştir. Kızlar için daha üst bir eğitim kurumu mevcut değildi. Tanzimat Dönemi'nde ilkokullar üzerinde ilk kız rüşdiye okulu 1859 yılında, İstanbul'da açılmıştır. 1869 tarihli Maârif-i Umûmiye Nizâmname'si ile kız çocuklarının eğitimi yeniden tasarlanmış ve İstanbul dışında da kız çocukları için ilkokul ve rüşdiye mektepleri açılması kararlaştırılmıştır. Tasarlanan yeni ilkokullar geleneksel olanlardan farklı bir yapıya sahip olacaktı.

Bu çalışmada Selanik vilayetinde kız çocuklarının eğitimi için açılan okulların kuruluşu, gelişimi, Selanik halkının bu kurumlara ilgisi, karşılaşılan problemler, değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışma, aynı zamanda Osmanlı modernleşmesi sürecinde başkent İstanbul dışında kız çocuklarının eğitimi konusunda nasıl bir gelişim yaşandığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Selanik, Kızların Eğitimi, Kız Okulları, Osmanlı'da Kızların Eğitimi, Eğitim Tarihi.

Introduction

The education of Muslim girls in the Ottoman Empire remained at the primary school level until the Tanzimat Period. Those schools provided primary religious education where girls and boys went together. For women who desired to receive further instruction from primary education, there was an opportunity to take lessons from private teachers¹ or to attend a religious dervish lodge.² The situation was also similar among non-Muslims.

After the declaration of the Tanzimat Edict, there were significant developments regarding girls' education. The school opened to train midwives within the *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye* (School of Medicine) in 1842 and provided girls with an education opportunity after primary school.³ There were opinions on the need for girls to have more education during the first

¹ This, of course, required the social status and financial income of the family to be high.

² Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Osmanlı Modernleşme Döneminde Kız Eğitimi", *Kebikeç*, 10, 2000, p. 223-238.

³ Osman Ergin, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi*, I-II, Eser Matbaası, İstanbul 1977, p. 540-542.

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decade of the Tanzimat period. For instance, Sadık Rıfat Pasha expressed his views on the education that should be provided to girls in the late 1840s.⁴

Rüşdiye schools were the first modern civil education institutions, and the first of them was opened in 1839. They were designed as secondary education institutions during the Tanzimat Period. Rüşdiye schools, the number of which was first increased in the capital Istanbul, started to be opened in the provinces later on. Until the end of the 1850s, rüşdiye schools were exclusively for male students.⁵ With the decision to transform the Cevri Usta School into a girls' rüşdiye school in 1858, the first step was also taken to make the institutions providing further education than primary school more widespread for girls.⁶ However, due to the reluctance of families to send their girls to school after they become adults, girls' rüşdiye schools did not become widespread rapidly. In 1869, the number of girls' rüşdiye schools in Istanbul was eight.⁷

The *Maârif-i Umûmiye Nizâmnâmesi* (Regulation on General Education) dated 1869 regulated the civil education system in the Ottoman Empire. The education of girls was also included in the regulation. According to the law, if there were two primary schools in the district or village, one would be for girls, and the other would be for boys. If there were a single school, boys and girls would use the same building until the second one was built. It was made compulsory for girls to attend primary school for four years. The girls would start school at the age of 6 and would graduate from school at the age of 10. The difference between these schools from the previous ones with the same status was that they would be affiliated with the Ministry of Education.⁸

The girls' rüşdiye schools were organized by a regulation. According to the law, girls' rüşdiye schools would be opened in big cities. The education period of the girls' rüşdiye schools was determined as four years. Girls'

⁴ Somel, *op.cit.*, p. 225.

⁵ Muammer Demirel, "Türk Eğitiminin Modernleşmesinde Rüşdiye Mektepleri", *Türkler*, XV, Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, Ankara 2002, p. 44-60.

⁶ Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı, Osmanlı Arşivi, (Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives, İstanbul, hereafter BOA), *İ. DH*, 417/27616 (Hijri [hereafter H] 9 Rabiulâhir 1275/November 16, 1858).

⁷ Yasemin Tümer Erdem, *II. Meşrutiyet'ten Cumhuriyete Kızların Eğitimi*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2013, p. 168.

⁸ *Maârif-i Umûmiye Nizâmnâmesidir*, İstanbul, H. 1286 (1869), p. 5-7. (Articles 9 and 15).

rüşdiye schools would be opened as two separate schools for Muslims and Christians in cities with mixed populations.⁹ The regulation also decided to open a female teacher training school (Dârümuallimât) to train teachers for female primary and rüşdiye schools.¹⁰

Only three girls' rüşdiye schools could be opened outside Istanbul until the end of the Tanzimat Period. They were in Thessaloniki, Larissa (Tırhala Sanjak), and Chania (Creta).¹¹ The number of modern girls' primary and rüşdiye schools could be increased only during the Sultan Abdülhamid II period.¹²

Education of Girls in the Province of Thessaloniki¹³

1. Girls' Schools

The education of girls in the province of Thessaloniki began to develop taken after the *Maârif-i Umûmiye Nizâmnâmesi*. The issue of *Zaman* newspaper, dated September 6, 1874, reported a visit to a girls' school in Thessaloniki. In the news, a 4-5-year-old girl's error-free reading was written as a source of happiness.¹⁴ This information shows us that the schools at the primary level began to be opened for girls even at the beginning of the 1870s in Thessaloniki. The development of girls' schools in the province of Thessaloniki, as well as throughout the country, took place during the Sultan Abdülhamid II period.

Sultan Abdülhamid II was able to start education reforms after the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian war. At the end of the 1880s, the number of schools in the province of Thessaloniki was 1354.¹⁵ While 7 of those schools were high schools, 48 were rüşdiye schools, and the rest were primary

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11. (Article 27)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23-26. (Articles 68-78)

¹¹ Somel, *op.cit.*, p. 228.

¹² Tümer Erdem, *op.cit.*, p. 94-100, 166-171.

¹³ After the second half of the 19th century, the province of Thessaloniki generally consisted of the center of Thessaloniki, Siroz, and Dırama sanjaks, although there were some changes in the historical process.

¹⁴ *Zaman* (newspaper), H. 25 Receb 1291/ September 6, 1874. (The name of the Rumeli newspaper was changed to *Zaman* since the 77th issue.)

¹⁵ It could also be in 1353. There is an error in the table used in the source.

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schools. While 13 of the rüşdiye schools were girls' schools,¹⁶ 83 of the primary schools were girls' schools. Although there are various inconsistencies and errors in the data in the provincial yearbook, Table 1 provides an opportunity to evaluate the situation of girls' schools in the province of Thessaloniki.¹⁷

Table 1. Distribution of Schools to Millets According to Selanik Vilayet Salnamesi (Yearbook of the Thessaloniki) dated H. 1307 (1889).¹⁸

Millet Name	Number of Boys Schools	Number of Students	Number of Girls Schools ¹⁹	Number of Students
Islam	821	30,339	41	2,929
Greek	338	16,344	29	1,498
Bulgarian	84	3,656	8	181
Jewish	23	2,449	3	521
Catholic	4	325	2	120
Total	1,270 ²⁰	53,113	83	5,249

As it is understood from the data in Table 1, approximately 5% of Muslim-owned schools, 10% of Greek, Bulgarian, and Jewish schools, and 35% of few Catholic schools were girls' schools. It should not be forgotten that girls of primary school age used the existing primary schools together with male students until the school was opened for them in accordance with the decision of the Maârif-i Umûmiye Nizâmnameşi. Therefore, the boys' schools given in Table 1 were also used as teaching places for girls.²¹

The first girls' rüşdiye school in Thessaloniki was opened at a time that can be considered relatively early, just like the girls' primary school. The

¹⁶ Although it is given as 9 in the source, it is understood from the later data of the same source that it is 13.

¹⁷ *Selanik Vilayet Salnamesi* (Yearbook of Thessaloniki, hereafter SVS] Selanik, H. 2 Rabiülevvel 1307/October 27, 1889, p. 251.

¹⁸ SVS, H. 1307, p. 253.

¹⁹ While it should be 96 with the girls' rüşdiye schools, it is given as 83 in the table. Girls' rüşdiye schools were probably not included in the table. As it will be given below, the fact that 2 girls are shown here while there are 4 girls' rüşdiye schools belonging to Catholics indicates it.

²⁰ A total of 1.271 is given in the source. Either the total or one of the school numbers is incorrect.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

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girls' rüşdiye school opened in Thessaloniki in 1874 and was one of the first examples of girls' rüşdiye schools outside of Istanbul.²² Opening the first girls' rüşdiye school in Thessaloniki was not easy. According to the news of the *Rumeli* newspaper published in Thessaloniki, although a girls' rüşdiye school building for girls was built in Thessaloniki, education, and training could not start at the school, which was criticized by the newspaper, and various suggestions were offered for the start of education and training activities. The recommendations were related to how the school's financial expenses would be met and how the teachers would be found. While it was recommended that Hüseyin Efendi and his mother be transferred to the girls' rüşdiye school with their female students and continue their teaching there, Anita, who was known for her skill and ladyship, was offered to be assigned to sewing and art classes.²³ A few months after the news in the *Rumeli* newspaper, teachers were appointed to the Thessaloniki girls' rüşdiye school.²⁴ While all suggestions in the newspaper were not considered, Anita, recommended as a needlecraft teacher, was assigned to the school. In this respect, it is understood that the *Rumeli* newspaper was influential in starting the school's education.

After this first example, a public school, many girls' rüşdiye schools were opened in the province by Muslims, non-Muslims, and foreign states. The data on rüşdiye schools opened for boys and girls in the late 1880s will be presented in Table 2, showing the distribution of the girls' and boys' rüşdiye schools in the province of Thessaloniki to millets and the number of students.

²² BOA, *İ. DH.*, 694/48527. (H. 21 Zilkade 1291/December 31, 1874).

²³ *Rumeli* (newspaper), H. 22 Cemâziyelevvel 1291/July 6, 1874.

²⁴ BOA, *İ. DH.*, 694/48527. (H. 21 Zilkade 1291/December 31, 1874).

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Table 2. Distribution of Rüşdiye Schools to millets According to Selanik Vilayet Salnamesi (Yearbook of the Thessaloniki) dated H. 1307 (1889).²⁵

Millet Name	Number of Boys' Rüşdiye Schools	Number of Students	Number of Girls' Rüşdiye Schools	Number of Students
Islam	22	1,850	4	350
Greek	7	750	3	280
Bulgarian	1	120	1	150
Jewish	2	300	1	170
Catholic	3	400	4	520
Total	35	3,420	13	1.470

When Table 2 is examined, it is understood that there were girls' rüşdiye schools, approximately one-third of boys' rüşdiye schools in the province of Thessaloniki. The increase in the number of rüşdiye schools opened for girls in a short period can be evaluated in two ways. The first is an interest in girls' education in the Thessaloniki society. The second is that this interest of the community was not ignored. Table 2 shows that there were more female students in Bulgarian girls' rüşdiye schools than male students in boys' rüşdiye schools. Although the numbers could be wrong, it's important to highlight that Bulgarians place a high value on girls' education. For example, 3.732 girls graduated from high school in Bulgaria between 1907/1908 and 1911/1912. Two thousand fifty-two of them were university students the following year.²⁶ As mentioned below, Bulgarians even opened a high school for girls in Thessaloniki.

As of the end of the 1880s, new ones were added to girls' schools, the statistical data of which we shared in Table 2, in the later years, and their number gradually increased. As it was stated previously, girls' schools in the province were opened by the Ministry of Education, non-Muslims, and foreigners in the area. Moreover, girls' branches of private schools established by Muslim individuals were also opened.

²⁵ SVS, H. 1307, p. 253.

²⁶ Ali Haydar, *Bulgaristan Maarifi*, Devlet Matbaası, İstanbul 1931, p. 170.

Thessaloniki Jews opened their first girls' school with the support of Alliance on September 5, 1874. However, it would be appropriate to mention the private Jewish Girls School, which the Polish Countess Farnetti opened in 1867.²⁷ Various primary and vocational schools continued to be opened for Jewish girls in the following years. Vocational School for Girls opened in 1887, Popular schools opened in 1897, Nouvelle opened in 1910, and Public School opened in 1904 were the schools opened for the education of Jewish girls.²⁸

In Thessaloniki, Greeks and Bulgarians took a further step and opened schools at the high school level for girls. In 1909, a total of 700 students attended the Greek girls' high school, which also had a rüşdiye branch in the Ayatnaş district. Seven male and 15 female teachers worked in the school where the first and second principals were female.²⁹ In the following year, the number of students at school increased to 810, and 45 male students were also admitted.³⁰ The fact that the school with 231 students in 1903³¹ nearly quadrupled the number of students over seven years indicates the interest in girls' education at the high school level. Bulgarian girls' high school was a boarding school. In 1909, there were 183 pupils enrolled. 114 students received scholarships; therefore, they did not have to pay tuition.³²

There were also schools for girls opened by foreigners in Thessaloniki. American Protestant schools were opened in Thessaloniki and various districts of the province. Most American schools were the schools where boys and girls attended together. Bulgarian Protestant children were mainly sent to schools at the primary level. However, 25 Greek Orthodox, Greek Protestant, Bulgarian Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, and Jewish female students attended the school that opened in Thessaloniki. Students from Muslim families were not sent to American Protestant schools.³³ Two of

²⁷ Rena Molho, *Salonica and Istanbul: Social, Political and Cultural Aspects of Jewish Life*, The İsis Press, İstanbul 2005, p. 146.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 137; See also for Jewish schools in Thessaloniki, Fatih Demirel, "Selanik Vilayetinde Gayrimüslimlerin Eğitim Faaliyetleri", F. Demirel (ed.), *Osmanlı Modernleşmesi Sürecinde Selanik Vilayetinde Eğitim*, İdeal Kültür Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2009, p. 136-147.

²⁹ SVS, H. 1324/1906, p. 278, 279.

³⁰ SVS, H. 1325/1907, p. 507, 508.

³¹ *Salnâme-i Nezâret-i Maârif-i Umûmiye*, (Yearbook of the Ministry of Education), İstanbul, H. 1321/1903, p. 524.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 512.

³³ Gülbadi Alan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Amerikan Protestan Okulları*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2015, p. 338-342.

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the Italian schools were for girls.³⁴ The Italian Commercial School had a girls' branch administered by a female principal. In 1909, 180 students were studying in the department with five female and two male teachers.³⁵ The German school opened in 1885/1886 and was at the rüşdiye school level. The school called Sörlers administered by French nuns was also at the rüşdiye school level. Both schools provided education opportunities for male and female students.³⁶ The number of students in the two schools between 1897 and 1903 is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Foreign Secondary Schools and the Numbers of Students in the Province of Thessaloniki between 1897 and 1903³⁷

School Name	Nation, it belongs to	Number of Students by Academic Year									
		1897-1898		1898-1899		1899-1900		1900-1901		1902-1903	
German School	German	M* 13 3	F** 50	M 13 7	F 45	M 132	F 51	M 139	F 56	M 143	F 61
Sirs	French	F 190		F 185		M 29	F 185	M 33	F 189	F 182	

*Male

**Female

Private schools opened by Muslims in Thessaloniki also offered educational opportunities for girls.³⁸ While its foundation dates back to 1873, the girl's branch of the Terakki School, which was established in 1877, was opened in 1893.³⁹ On that date, a female principal and three female teachers were working in the branch. The branch also had a kindergarten with a female teacher.⁴⁰ By 1906, the school had seven classes at the primary school and

³⁴ Meropi Anastassiadou, *Tanzimat Çağında Bir Osmanlı Şehri Selanik 1830-1912*, Translated by Işık Ergüden, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 2001, p. 167.

³⁵ SVS, H. 1324/1906, p. 282.

³⁶ *Salnâme-i Nezâret-i Maârif-i Umûmiye*, *op.cit.*, p. 525.

³⁷ Fatih Demirel, "Foreign Schools in Thessaloniki from the Perspective of the Ottoman State (1850-1912)", *History of Education & Children's Literature*, XIII (2), 2018, p. 299.

³⁸ See for Private Islamic schools opened in Thessaloniki, Çetin Aykurt, "Selanik'te Özel İslam Okulları", F. Demirel (ed.), *Osmanlı Modernleşmesi Sürecinde Selanik Vilayetinde Eğitim*, İdeal Kültür Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2009, p. 263-286.

³⁹ Mehmet Ö. Alkan, *İmparatorluk'tan Cumhuriyet'e Selanik'ten İstanbul'a Terakki Vakfı ve Terakki Okulları 1877-2000*, Terakki Vakfı, İstanbul 2003, p. 54-62.

⁴⁰ SVS, H. 1312/1894-1895, p. 139.

rüşdiye school level allocated for girls. Three hundred female students attended those classes.⁴¹ Another indication of the importance given to girls' education by the Terakki School administrators was their decision to open a girls' branch in the Yalılar district of Thessaloniki in 1905.⁴² When there was great interest in the department, which started education at the primary school level, it was decided to build a school building for the branch by spending 600 or 700 liras.⁴³ The construction of the school building was completed in 1908.⁴⁴ Another private school opened by Muslims in Thessaloniki was Feyziye School. This school, which was established at the primary school level in 1885, developed quickly and opened rüşdiye classes. In 1890, the girls' school branch was opened to educate girls.⁴⁵ In this branch, primary school and rüşdiye classes were established for girls. Thirty-one students graduated from the girls' branch until 1900.⁴⁶ In 1906, there were 270 students in the school's girls' classes. Within six years, 46 more students graduated, and the number of girls graduating from the school reached 77 as of 1906.⁴⁷ Feyziye School also opened a branch in Yalılar in 1905. Classes were also opened for girls when a large building was rented for the department that initially admitted the boys.⁴⁸ Both of the schools mentioned above charged their students. However, a certain percentage of poor students were admitted to the school free of charge. Nevertheless, both schools were non-profit institutions. Their main goal was to train qualified people. Since the wages they received were not enough for the administration of the schools, they continued their activities with donations from the school boards and other benefactors.⁴⁹ As it can be understood, both schools significantly contributed to the education of girls in Thessaloniki. In Thessaloniki, there were also other private schools for girls' education, such as Ravza-i Sibyan, that were opened at the primary level.⁵⁰

⁴¹ SVS, H. 1324/1906, p. 260, 261.

⁴² Alkan, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

⁴³ SVS, H. 1324/1906, p. 261.

⁴⁴ Alkan, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

⁴⁵ SVS, H. 1311/1893-1894, p. 152, 153.

⁴⁶ SVS, H. 1318/1900-1901, p. 337, 338,

⁴⁷ SVS, H. 1324/1906, p. 252, 253.

⁴⁸ Mert Sandalcı, *Feyz-i Sibyan'dan Işık'a Feyziye Mektepleri*, Feyziye Mektepleri Vakfı, İstanbul 2005, p. 98.

⁴⁹ SVS, H. 1325/1907, p. 486, 494.

⁵⁰ BOA. *TFR.I. ŞKT.*, 75/7425. (Rumi [hereafter R] 29 Teşrin-i evvel 1321/November 11, 1905).

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2. The Thessaloniki Society's Approach to Girls' Education

The increase in the number of girls' schools and female students in the province of Thessaloniki in the historical process can be considered an indicator that the Thessaloniki society had a positive approach to the education of girls. The positive attitude of the community can also be understood from different forms of aids made to provide educational opportunities for girls. The aids were sometimes in the form of cash, sometimes in the form of building donations, and sometimes in the form of lottery drawings. In cases where the aids were insufficient, the Directorate of Education was consulted. In line with the budgetary possibilities, some demands were met. However, many applications were answered negatively. The following examples explain the subject in various aspects.

A donation of 23,550 kuruş was collected to construct a building and start education for the girls' branch within the Thessaloniki Ali Pasha Primary School. When this aid was not enough for the construction of the girls' department and the repair needed for the boys' branch, the necessary 30 thousand kuruş was met from the tax (educational grant) for education.⁵¹

In the town of Demirhisar, Ahmed Pasha, one of the notables, donated a building with an acre of garden to be used as a girls' school. 3.000 kuruş was spent transforming the building, which consists of four rooms and a hall, into a school. The number of students in the existing girls' school reached ninety, and therefore, the building that was currently used led to many problems, which was shown as the reason for the new school building.⁵²

Hacı Ali Bey, one of the notables of the town of Doyran, donated a two-story building, consisting of 4 rooms and a sofa on the upper floor and two rooms on the lower floor, to the Ministry of Education to be used as a girls' primary school building. Furthermore, he also promised to donate another building for the girls' rüşdiye school. Hacı Ali Bey was awarded a medal for these aids.⁵³ A building was bought with the public's help and donated to the Ministry of Education to open a modern primary school for girls in Kavala.⁵⁴

⁵¹ BOA. *MF. MKT.*, 989/18. (R. 1 Nisan, 1323/ April 14, 1907).

⁵² BOA. *TFR.I.SL.*, 106/10544. (R. 9 Nisan 1322/ April 22, 1906).

⁵³ BOA. *MF. MKT.*, 313/39. (R. 14 Mart 1316/ March 27, 1900).

⁵⁴ BOA. *MF. MKT.*, 432/12. (R. 11 Teşrin-i sâni 1314/November 23, 1898).

Emine Dudu Telci Hanım built a school building for the girls' branch of the Terakki mentioned above School opened in the Yalılar district. Emine Hanım also continued her aids after the completion of the building.⁵⁵ Ottoman Sultan, Sultan Mehmed V (Mehmed Reşad) also donated 10 liras to the girls' section of Terakki School in Thessaloniki, where he stopped by during his trip to Rumelia.⁵⁶

The interest of the people of Thessaloniki in girls' schools was not limited to aids. The success of girls' education in the province was praised in the newspapers. In the girls' school visited in the center of Thessaloniki (September 6, 1874), a 4–5-year-old girl's error-free reading was reported as a source of happiness.⁵⁷

3. Problems Encountered in Girls' Education in Thessaloniki

Although state institutions and society supported girls' education in Thessaloniki, various problems were also encountered. School building problems, absence or shortage of teachers, deficiencies in teaching equipment, and issues among teachers can be examples.

Despite the administration's investments and the aid of the people of Thessaloniki, the girls' schools could not eliminate the building problem. In 1893, the number of branches of Thessaloniki Girls' Ruşdiyya School increased to 6, and the number of students increased to above 200, so the school building was inadequate. Therefore, it was decided to rent a building for 150 kuruş per month and move the 1st and 2nd classes to the leased building. Although permission was obtained from the Ministry of Education, a different solution was sought when an agreement could not be reached with the property owner.⁵⁸ It was intended to use the dilapidated building donated for the residence of female teachers in the school's garden for education and training repairing it. For the repair cost, fifty liras were borrowed from the municipal fund to be paid from the lottery arrangement planned to be organized using the handicrafts produced by the students in the lessons.⁵⁹ With the money provided, four new classrooms were created, the necessary repairs were made in the school's main building, and the essential furnishings

⁵⁵ Alkan, *op.cit.*, p. 78.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁵⁷ *Zaman*, H. 25 Receb 1291 (September 6, 1874).

⁵⁸ BOA, *MF. MKT.*, 198/50. (R. 5 Teşrin-i evvel 1309/ October 17, 1893).

⁵⁹ BOA, *MF. MKT.*, 198/50. (R. 15 Kânûn-ı evvel 1309/December 27, 1893).

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were purchased. With the decision taken, a female teacher, who was residing for free in the building, which was used for education and training, had to move. The new rent payment of the female teacher was absorbed by increasing her salary.⁶⁰ Despite these temporary measures, the building problem of the Thessaloniki girls' rüşdiye could not be solved. Many ongoing correspondences between the Thessaloniki Directorate of Education and the Ministry of Education indicate it. It was decided to build another floor on the top of the school, and even though the building plan was drawn, the investment could not be allowed due to financial impossibilities.⁶¹

Another problem in girls' schools was the lack of teachers. Especially in the first years when girls' schools started to become widespread, male teachers were initially employed since a sufficient number of female teachers could not be trained. In the following years, as the number of female teachers increased, teachers who graduated from the Girls' teacher training schools (Dârülmualimât) were tried to be appointed to all girls' schools. Teacher appointment plans were sometimes made directly by the Ministry of Education. For instance, the Ministry of Education planned to nominate a female teacher to the Thessaloniki girls' school in 1881. However, because there was no news from the school for a year, no decision could be made for the appointment. Information about the school was requested to be delivered to the Ministry to decide on the appointment.⁶²

In cases where the graduates of the Girls Teacher Training School in Istanbul could not meet the needs, those who graduated from the girls' rüşdiye schools could be appointed teachers. It is possible to come across an example in the province of Thessaloniki. For instance, Atiye, a graduate of Thessaloniki girls' rüşdiye school, was appointed as a teacher at the girls' primary school established in 1891 in the town of Demirhisar.⁶³

Various official letters about the academic deficiencies of female teachers were occasionally sent from the Thessaloniki Directorate of Education to the Ministry of Education. The Thessaloniki Directorate of

⁶⁰ BOA, *MF. MKT.*, 198/50. (R. 26 Şubat 1309/March 10, 1894).

⁶¹ BOA, *ŞD.*, 220/62. (R. 28 Temmuz 1321/August 10, 1905); *ŞD.*, 221/13. (R. 20 Eylül 1321/October 3, 1905; R. 24 Kânûn-ı evvel 1321/November 6, 1905); *MF. MKT.*, 684/9. (R. 16 Teşrîn-i evvel 1318/October 29, 1902); *BEO.*, 2789/209158. (R. 28 Şubat 1321/March 13, 1906).

⁶² BOA, *MF. MKT.*, 73/73. (R. 19 Kânûn-ı evvel 1297/December 31, 1881).

⁶³ BOA, *MF. MKT.*, 117/70. (R. 11 Şubat 1306/February 23, 1891).

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Education reported to the Ministry of Education in 1893 that the female teachers of Thessaloniki girls' rüşdiye school did not have the knowledge to teach Turkish, Arabic, Persian, religion, and arithmetic as required. As a solution, a male teacher was requested to be appointed to educate the lessons mentioned. It was requested 400 kuruş per month from the Ministry to appoint teachers. The Ministry stated that the budget was unsuitable for new expenditure and informed the Thessaloniki province that the necessary action could be taken if it could be obtained a regional source for the salaries.⁶⁴

A similar situation occurred in 1899. The inadequacies of Remziye and Naciye, teachers of Thessaloniki girls' rüşdiye school, and the fact that they made students do different jobs apart from education and training were reported to the Ministry of Education by the Thessaloniki Directorate of Education. The directorate stated that failure to solve the problem would reduce the interest in the school and that it could not compete with the girls' branches of private schools such as Terakki and Feyz-i Sıbyan. In the letter sent to the Ministry, the appointment of talented female principals and teachers from Thessaloniki instead of the inadequate teachers was presented as a solution proposal. Qualified female teachers were requested to be appointed by the Ministry if this proposal was not considered appropriate.⁶⁵ The Ministry of Education reacted against the letter of the Thessaloniki Directorate of Education. In the letter sent from the Ministry to Thessaloniki, it was stated that Dârümuallimât, which trained teachers for girls' schools, renewed its programs in accordance with the requirements of the age under the supervision of the Ministry, and it was emphasized that Dârümuallimât graduates did not have any deficiencies in terms of profession. With regard to teachers' failure to fulfill their duties, it was explained that the curriculum for girls' rüşdiye schools was first determined, the handicraft course was also included in the program, and there was a needlecraft teacher for that lesson. After the explanation, it was stated that the administration's responsibility was for teachers to do their jobs. For these reasons, it was reported to the Thessaloniki Directorate of Education that education should be continued with the existing teachers. At the same time, it was requested to If a situation requires the legal dismissal of teachers, the issue should be reported to the Ministry.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ BOA, *MF. MKT.*, 193/47. (R. 28 Kânûn-ı evvel 1309/January 9, 1894).

⁶⁵ BOA, *MF. MKT.*, 469/47. (R. 8 Temmuz 1315/ July 20, 1899).

⁶⁶ BOA, *MF. MKT.*, 469/47. (R. 20 Ağustos 1315/September 1, 1899).

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The disputes among teachers negatively affected the education process of girls' schools. The conflicts were sometimes in the form of insults and fights, despite a few examples. An exemplary case took place in the Thessaloniki girls' rüşdiye school. When the fact that the disputes between the school's teachers, Huriye and Necibe, were in the form of argument and reported to the Ministry of Education, it became harmful to education and training. The Thessaloniki Directorate of Education suggested the appointment of both teachers to other schools. The Ministry of Education reported that an appointment was impossible without determining which teacher caused the problem. The Governorate of Thessaloniki also exhibited a similar attitude. The Governorate made the same criticism as the Ministry and stated that Huriye did her duty without interruption; therefore, Naciye should be appointed.⁶⁷ As a result of the investigation conducted by the Thessaloniki Directorate of Education, it was found that the two teachers had not been able to get along and had argued for a long time; however, they had physically interfered with each other in the most recent incident. Moreover, it was found out that the students also witnessed and heard severe insults they expressed against each other. After these events, the Directorate of Education determined that two teachers had lost their prestige in front of the students and informed the Ministry that they should be appointed to other schools. The decision of the Ministry was for the appointment of Necibe.⁶⁸

Conclusion

Girls' rüşdiye school was opened in Istanbul, the first education institution above the primary school for girls in the Ottoman Empire. Thessaloniki was one of the first places where the decision to open modern primary schools for girls and girls' rüşdiye schools outside of Istanbul was implemented in the Ottoman Empire. The modern girls' primary school opened in Thessaloniki in the early 1870s, and the girls' rüşdiye school opened in 1874 indicates it. With the Tanzimat Period, non-Muslims started to open schools for girls in Thessaloniki. Of course, girls' schools opened by foreigners also contributed to girls' education.

The spread of schools opened for girls and the increase in the number

⁶⁷ BOA, *MF. MKT.*, 348/67. (R. 17 Kânûn-ı evvel 1316/December 30, 1900; R. 18 Kânûn-ı sâni 1316/January 30, 1901).

⁶⁸ BOA, *MF. MKT.*, 348/67. (R. 25 Kânûn-ı sâni 1316/February 7, 1901; R. 16 Şubat 1316/March 1, 1901).

of female students mainly took place during the Sultan Abdülhamid II period, which can be considered as the reflection of the development in the field of education in the period expressed in general to Thessaloniki. The effort to open a school for girls' education in the province of Thessaloniki is remarkable because the number of girls' schools in the province increased significantly quickly. Considering the reforms carried out since the second half of the 19th century for girls' education, especially in Western European countries,⁶⁹ it can be understood that the investments made for girls' education in Ottoman Thessaloniki were at a substantial level. The fact that significant deficiencies related to girls' education in Europe were mentioned even in 1923⁷⁰ shows that considerable success was achieved in girls' education in Ottoman Thessaloniki.

The schools opened for Muslim girls in the province were at the primary and secondary levels. It was also the case for the girls of non-Muslims. However, the Greeks and Bulgarians, perhaps due to the competition they entered with each other,⁷¹ opened two schools for girls at the high school level. The society of Thessaloniki's positive approach to girls' education is remarkable. The community of Thessaloniki made significant contributions both in the opening of girls' schools and in their development. Nevertheless, girls' education in Thessaloniki faced substantial problems. It can be stated that the most important of them is the lack of qualified teachers.

⁶⁹ In this regard, see, James C. Albisetti, Joyce Goodman and Rebecca Rogers, "Girls' Secondary Education in the Western World: A Historical Introduction", James C. Albisetti, Joyce Goodman and Rebecca Rogers (eds.), *Girls' Secondary Education in the Western World From the 18th to the 20th Century*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2010, p. 2-6.

⁷⁰ Sabri Becerikli, Zafer Tangülü, "Prag Uluslararası Öğretmenler Kongresi", *MSKU Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 7 (2) 2020, p. 119.

⁷¹ See Fatih Demirel, "Foreign Schools in Thessaloniki", *op.cit.*, p. 295-308.

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