



EFFECTS OF FAMILY SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS ON CHILD PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOL: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE NETHERLANDS¹

(AİLENİN SOSYO- DEMOGRAFİK ÖZELLİKLERİNİN ÇOCUĞUN OKULDAKİ SOSYAL ETKİNLİKLERE KATILIMI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ: TÜRKİYE VE HOLLANDA ARASINDA KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR ÇALIŞMA)

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ABSTRACT

The study focuses on investigating whether family socio-demographic characteristics affect a child's participation in leisure and social activities at school from a cross-cultural perspective. The findings indicate that being members of an individualistic society, Dutch parents' and teachers' attitudes significantly explained the priority in valuing leisure in a child's socialization and education. In contrast, a child in Turkish society is socialized within a collectivist culture where individual needs, interests, autonomy and self-sufficiency are ignored. Therefore, the data on Turkish parents' and teachers' attitudes revealed that academic success had priority in a child's socialization and education.

Keywords: family; primary school teachers and children; leisure and social activity; culture.

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, ailenin sosyo-demografik özelliklerinin çocuğun okuldaki sosyal etkinliklere katılımı üzerinde etkisinin olup olmadığını belirlemeye odaklanmıştır. Bulgular, bireyci toplum özelliği taşıyan Hollanda'da ebeveynlerin ve öğretmenlerin çocuğun toplumsallaşmasında ve eğitiminde boş zaman değerlendirmenin öncelikli bir değer taşıdığını göstermiştir. Buna karşın, Türk toplumunda kolektivist değerlerle toplumsallaşan çocuk, bireysel gereksinimlerin, ilgilerin, özerkliğin ve öz yeterliğin fazla önemsenmediği sosyal çevrede yetişmektedir. Bu bağlamda veriler; Türk ebeveynler ve öğretmenlerin, çocuğun toplumsallaşması ve eğitiminde akademik başarıyı boş zaman değerlendirmeden çok daha fazla önemsediklerini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: aile; ilköğretim öğretmenleri ve öğrencileri; boş zaman değerlendirme ve sosyal etkinlik; kültür.

¹ The study was presented in ETEN (European Teacher Education Network) Annual Conferance in 24-27 April 2008, in Liverpool, England

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INTRODUCTION

A general assumption regarding human relations and the family in the world is that the diverse human and family patterns are bound to change with urbanization and industrialization to eventually converge on the Western pattern. In most non-Western societies, the family is a system of interdependent relations, where family integrity needs cooperative interconnectedness. It is the case not only in Turkey as a developing country but also in Japan, Taiwan, and Korea, which are economically developed. Research from many societies shows that despite socio-economic development, urbanization, etc., the expected individuation/separation in human/family relations is not taking place in non-Western collectivistic cultural contexts (Lin & Fu, 1990; Phalet & Schonpflug, 2001). Kağıtçıbaşı (1990, 1996a) states that despite increased urbanization and industrialization in collectivist cultures, closely-knit interaction patterns continue. In such cultures, material interdependencies weaken with increased affluence and urban life styles, but emotional interdependencies continue because they are not incompatible with changing life styles. Although autonomy seems to be valued and complete obedience and loyalty of the child is no longer needed, there is still firm control because separation is not desired. In contrast with the non-Western societies, the ideal of independence characterizes the Western families where individual's interests and needs have priority. In Western families, the autonomy, privacy, self sufficiency and self actualization of the individual members are thought to be important starting from childhood. Thus, a child's social and intellectual development starts within the family circle and continues in the school environment. Besides, norms and values related with family and education in society have been the products of the culture.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Effects of Family and Culture on a Child's Leisure Socialization

Being role models for the child, parents contribute to the child's mental and physical development providing his emotional, social and intellectual needs to become a self-confident individual (Aslan, 1996; Giddens, 2000). Thus, within the family functioning, parents are considered to be one of the main socializing agents in the life of a child (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000; Steinberg, 2000), and they have both direct and indirect influence not only on the child's intellectual and physical development but also on how leisure time is spent (Hutchinson, 2003). Family plays the most important role in a child's leisure socialization, which is described as a process through

which individuals acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and motives about leisure. From this perspective, socialization into leisure is a continuous pattern of change beginning with the earliest interactions of childhood, continuing through adolescence and young adulthood, and through maturity (Hoff & Ellis, 1992). Parents' socio-demographic characteristics, such as education and income, are also important in modelling attitudes regarding the value of leisure (Aslan, 2000). Specifically, a family's education level is an important discriminant on a child's development of leisure behavior. It was found that college-educated parents limited their children's time spent watching TV and encouraged them to read and study more than less educated parents (Bianchi & Robinson, 1997). In addition,, family cohesion and the help and support that family members provide each other (Moos & Moos, 1986) is linked to positive child outcomes such as self-esteem (Cooper, Holman, & Braithwaite, 1983; Kawash & Kozeluk, 1990) and rule compliance (Kurdek & Sinclair, 1988b). Family environment and family functioning also have been connected to child competencies. Cohesive, expressive, well-organised families that have active recreational and cultural activities positively affect children's self-concept and self- esteem (Burt, Cohen, & Bjorck, 1988; DuBois, Eitel, & Felner, 1994) and goal directedness (Kurdek & Sinclair, 1988a). Moreover, it was found that family leisure increases family satisfaction and cohesion (Aslan, 2009; Zabriskie & McCormick 2003). It was also stated that more socially active parents have more successful children, in part because the interpersonal relationships established in these activities constitute a social capital that parents or their children may draw on when needed (Büchel & Duncan, 1998).

Family gatherings are often used to introduce a child to activities the parents enjoy. It is evident that parents are transmitting their cultural values to their child during leisure as well. Thus, child-rearing values and also leisure values of the family will differ in various cultural contexts, such as Turkish and Dutch societies. During the socialization process, the Dutch parents' efforts are to improve their child's talents and interest while becoming an independent self. Thus, leisure is valued very much both by the family and school. Not only in the family circle but also in school environment, these values dominate the child-rearing and educational processes.

However, in Turkish society structured by traditional values and norms, the child in the family is socialized into interdependent/collectivist relationships where individual needs, interests, autonomy and self-sufficiency are ignored. Even in urban nuclear families, authoritarian and obedience-oriented parenting contributes to the development of the related self that lacks autonomy. The child commonly is not guided to develop his skills, talents or interests which would

contribute to expressing himself and developing a self-confident individual. However, only in families with highly educated parents is there a combined autonomy and control orientation in parenting which leads to the development of the autonomous-related self (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2002). The child's guidance in developing talents and interests are valued only in family circles. However, within the schooling system, education both academically and socially is structured by collectivist values. Thus leisure, neither in the family nor at school, is considered to be an important issue in contributing to the child's socialization.

Effects of School Environment on a Child's Leisure Participation

During the socialization process, school is the second most important environment in a child's life. Communicating and interacting with his classmates, he develops the feeling of belonging to a group, and gets some responsibilities related with the school subjects. Besides achieving academic knowledge, the child improves his talents, skills and interests by participating in social activities at school. However, parent-child interaction at home may influence his success and the participation in social activities at school. Parental behaviors, support and pressure have been identified as important influences on social competence (Ketsetzis, Ryan, & Adams, 1998). Morgan and Alwin (1980) found that the size of the school and its facilities for leisure affected the students' participation in social activities.

However, social activities in the schooling system in Turkey have been rather problematic. Some researchers (Arslantaş, 1989; Karaköy, 1995) who studied the problems in social activities in primary schools in Turkey found that in programs which were expected to encourage students to participate effectively, they were not structured as student-centered, the social activities were not valued, and schools did not have enough facilities for such activities. Gündüz (1997) focused on primary school teachers and administrators' attitudes towards social activities and found that size of school and lack of leisure facilities were the chief barriers to social activities. Moreover, another important barrier was found to be the teachers' and administrators' lack of awareness of the importance of leisure in child education. The lack of awareness of the importance of social and leisure activities has been a problem not only in schools but of Turkish society, where leisure is not valued as it has been in Western societies. Thus, the teachers neither make any efforts to cooperate with the school administration to obtain leisure necessities and organization, nor are involved in any collaboration with the parents in encouraging and guiding their children to develop leisure attitudes. Considering the importance of family circle and school environment on a child's

socialization into leisure, this study was designed within the perspectives of the Personal Community Theory (Burch, 1969).

The Personal Community Theory: This theory suggests that “transactions with and socialization by one’s parents, spouse, friends and workmates will shape the nature of one’s leisure style” (Burch, 1969, p.138). Besides the norms and values of society, an individual achieves and develops leisure values in the family as well. Family members’ leisure attitudes and preferences guide the individual to develop leisure behaviour not only during childhood but also into adulthood (Collins et al., 2000; Kelly, 1974; Rapaport and Rapaport, 1976; Steinberg, 2000). The family’s sub-culture and socio-demographic characteristics are important factors in this process (Burch, 1969; Hoff & Ellis, 1992; Howard and Madrigal, 1990; Kelly, 1974; Rapaport and Rapaport, 1976). Family and friends’ encouragement and guidance shape the individuals’ leisure (Yoesting and Burkhead, 1973). While individuals’ leisure behaviour is structured by the family, the settings and environments in school; in future years occupation is an important determinant in their leisure behaviour.

In contemporary societies, the family is expected to give children an opportunity to express themselves by social activities as well as encouraging them to participate in academic studies. If the family is inadequate in guiding the child through social activities and leisure, the teacher may be important in taking over this responsibility at school. The school maintains a child’s social development by providing sports and club activities, and play and entertainment opportunities. Specifically, primary schooling is the process during which the child learns collaboration with peers, and is being prepared for life. Social activities, therefore, are designed to prepare the students to apply their academic knowledge to real life situations (Karaköy, 1995).

This research was designed to find out whether the family’s socio-demographic characteristics affected a child’s participation in social activities in primary school by examining two countries, Turkey and the Netherlands. It was expected that differences would be found between these countries in terms of the child’s participation in social activities in primary schooling being affected by their cultural characteristics. Thus, it was hypothesized that:

- The child’s participation in social activities at school tends to differ significantly according to the family structure, to parents’ socio-cultural characteristics, and to school facilities for leisure.
- There is a significant relationship between the parents’ guidance of their child at home in leisure and the child’s participation in social activities at school.

- There is also a significant relationship between parents-teacher and teacher- child interaction on the child's participation in social activities at school.

METHOD

Sample

The data of the research were gathered by three different questionnaires applied to the students, their parents and the teachers. The questionnaires were given to the students and the teachers by the researcher, and the parents received them through the students. The research sample in Turkey constituted 82 students who were eleven years old, 82 parents and 23 teachers working in primary schools in a large city, Izmir. The Dutch sample covered 50 students of 11 years old, 50 parents and 15 teachers working in primary schools in a large city, the Hague. Two Turkish primary schools and three Dutch primary schools were selected in these cities. All participant students and teachers responded to the questionnaires (100 %). The parents responded the questionnaire in a week and returned them to the researcher by their children. Only one of the parents (mother or father) was expected to respond to the questionnaire. In Turkey 72.5 % of mothers and 27.5 % of fathers, and in Netherlands 58.2 % of mothers and 41.8 % of fathers responded to the questionnaire.

In this study, the majority (81.3 % in Turkey and 87.5 % in Netherlands) were nuclear families (parents and children only, in the same household), 11.1 % in Turkey and 6.2 % in Netherlands were extended families (parents, children and some relatives), and 7.6 % in Turkey and 7.3 % in Netherlands were single parent families.

Participant parents in both countries ranged from 30 to 48 years of age. The household income of Turkish families ranged from 500 TL (204.24 pounds) to 4000 TL (1633.98 pounds) per month. The household income of Dutch families ranged from 1000 € (781.25 pounds) to 5000 € (3906.25 pounds).

31.6 % of Turkish mothers had elementary education or less; 15.2 % of the mothers had middle school education; 30.4 % of them had high school education; and 22.8 % of the mothers had university education (4 year education). However, 2.4 % of the Dutch mothers had elementary school education; 58.5 % of the mothers had middle school education or high school education and 39.1 % of them had university education.

The majority of the Turkish mothers were housewives (72.2 %), with some (11.4 %) civil servants, (10.2 %) were doctors, lawyers, etc., (3.8 %) labourers and some (2.4 %) retired. However, most of the Dutch mothers were civil

servants (61.2 %), (30.9 %) were doctors, lawyers, etc., (4.8 %) labourers and few (2.4 %) were housewives.

One fourth (25.2 %) of the Turkish fathers had elementary school education or less, 21.5 % of the fathers had middle school education, 24.1 % of the fathers had a high school education, and 39.2 % of them had university education. In comparison, 2.2 % of the Dutch fathers were elementary school graduates. 17.1 % of the fathers were middle school graduates, 29,3 % high school graduates, and 51.3 % of them were university graduates.

Turkish fathers' occupations varied with 23.8 % being labourers, 22.5 % tradesmen, 17.5 % civil servants, 23.8 % doctors and engineers, 3.8 % technicians, 2.5 % jobless and 6.1 % were retired. Most of the Dutch fathers (66.7 %) had a profession such as doctor or lawyer, with some (12.8 %) labourers, (7.7 %) civil servants, (7.7 %) tradesmen, and (5.1 %) jobless.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument was developed by the researchers. In the process of developing the questionnaire forms, the literature review concerning 'social activities' was done in Turkey and the Netherlands. The term "social activities" used in the education system includes social, cultural, arts and sports activities. The students' questionnaire consisted of 25 questions, the parents' questionnaire consisted of 28 questions and the teachers' questionnaire consisted of 26 questions. The rest of the 6 questions were about the families' socio-demographic characteristics. In the developmental process, a panel of experts was consulted about the survey (two academicians in sociology, and three teachers in primary school) and necessary corrections were made. In order to check the validity of the survey instrument, a pilot study was applied to three state primary schools in the first semester of 2005-2006, in Turkey. 57 of the fifth grade students, and their parents, and also 26 teachers in these primary schools, responded to the survey instrument. Thus, these groups gave a positive feedback following the pilot study.

The questionnaire forms which were prepared in Turkey were adapted for the Dutch family structure by consulting two primary school teachers and one specialist in the Netherlands. In order to ensure the language validity, the questionnaires were evaluated by Dutch linguists (three experts). As a pilot study in the Netherlands, the questionnaire forms were applied to a group of students, to their parents and the teachers in a Dutch primary school in 2005–2006.

Analysis

The analyses of data were conducted by using SPSS 13.0 Statistical Package for Social Sciences programme. In order to examine the differences

between the Turkish and Dutch samples, frequency and percentage values were calculated.

FINDINGS

The findings of the study were examined in order to test the hypothesis and discover the effects of a family's socio-demographic characteristics on a child's participation in social activities at school.

The Family Structure: It was found that the size of the family did affect the child's participation in social activities at schools. 31.5 % of the students in Turkey and 74.8 % of the students in the Netherlands who belonged to a two-parent nuclear family participated in social activities regularly. 20.0 % of the students who belonged to nuclear families and 21.3 % of the students who belonged to extended families in Turkey participated in social activities occasionally. However, in the Netherlands, the occasional participation rate was 18.0 % for the students who belonged to single parent families. 10.0 % of the Turkish students who belonged to extended families participated in school activities rarely. In Turkey 8.3 % of the students who belonged to single-parent families never participated in school activities. In the Netherlands, all the students participated in school activities. It is reasonable to conclude that the Turkish and the Dutch students who belonged to nuclear families participated in social activities at school more than other students who had different family compositions. According to the data, the child in nuclear families attended social activities more than the child in extended families or single parent families.

The Parents' Socio-Cultural Characteristics: Examining the relationship of the educational status of the family and the child's participation in leisure activities in both countries, it was found that the educational status of Turkish parents did not have any meaningful effects on the child's participation in leisure activities. While 68.5 % of Turkish families only made suggestions regarding the leisure activities in which their children might participate, 31.5 % of the Dutch families encouraged their children in leisure activities and accompanied them (Table I). However, in Dutch families, the child's participation in leisure activities increased according to the father's educational status: 80.4 % of the Dutch families encouraged their children in the activities and accompanied them, and 19.4 % of the Dutch families only made suggestions regarding the leisure activities in which their children might participate (Table 1).

Table 1. Relationship between Turkish and Dutch Father's Educational Status and Parents' Attitude towards Leisure (%)

| | | Turkish and Dutch father's educational status | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---|-----|---------------|------|-------------|------|----------------------|------|-------|------|
| | | Primary School | | Middle School | | High School | | University (Faculty) | | TOTAL | |
| | | T* | D* | T* | D* | T* | D* | T* | D* | T* | D* |
| PARENTS' ATTITUDE TO LEISURE | Encouraging and sharing leisure with child | 10 | 2,2 | 2,5 | 12,2 | 6,3 | 22,0 | 12,7 | 44 | 31,5 | 80,4 |
| | Only recommending child about leisure | 15,2 | - | 19,0 | 4,9 | 17,8 | 7,3 | 16,5 | 7,4 | 68,5 | 19,6 |
| | Parents are not interested in leisure | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| TOTAL | | 25,2 | 2,2 | 21,5 | 17,1 | 24,1 | 29,3 | 39,2 | 51,3 | 100 | 100 |

T*: Turkish, D*: Dutch

Concerning the important issue of the parents meeting the teacher at school, some significant differences were found between Turkish and Dutch parents. The most important reason for Turkish parents (56.8 %) to meet the teacher was to be informed about their children's academic success. The second important issue for 34.0 % of the parents was to be informed about their children's psychological and social problems. The third important reason to meet the teacher for 32.1 % parents was their children's discipline problems. Meeting the teacher to talk about their children's participation in social activities was not considered as an important issue for Turkish parents. However, for the Dutch families (84.6 %) the priority was their children's participation in social activities. For the Dutch families, the second issue which would lead them to see the teacher was discipline problems, with a rate of 69.2 %. The third important issue with a rate of 50.0 % was the academic success of their children at school.

School Facilities: When the teachers were asked to comment on their school facilities for leisure, some significant differences were found between the Turkish and Dutch schools. While only 17.6 % of the Turkish teachers stated that their schools had sufficient facilities for social activities, the ratio was 71.5 % for the Dutch teachers. Turkish teachers believed that although they were working in a school in a metropolitan city, their school had no facilities, e.g. sports hall, club offices, some other facilities and a garden large enough for social activities. Such statements supported the fact that in Turkish schools, facilities for social activities were very rare and inadequate. Moreover, 58.8 % of Turkish teachers and 28.5 %

of the Dutch teachers believed that their schools had 'limited' facilities. While 23.6 % of Turkish teachers stated their schools had almost no facilities for social activities, none of the Dutch teachers mentioned a lack of facilities in their schools. Turkish teachers added that in order to achieve the benefits of social activities, it was important to develop leisure opportunities and facilities at schools, otherwise it would be too difficult to encourage and motivate students to participate in social activities at schools.

The Parents' Guidance in Leisure at Home and Child's Participation in Social Activities at School: In order to guide their children better and learn more about pedagogy, 31.3 % of secondary or primary school graduates among Turkish parents, and 7.7 % of Dutch parents utilized TV or radio programs. As the education level gets higher, Turkish families consulted specialists with a rate of 35.8 %. However, this was twice as much for the Dutch families (78.3 %). It can be explained that the Dutch families have more awareness of the importance of specialists compared to Turkish families. For parents, another way of getting knowledge about child development and guidance was consulting the teacher. While 20.2 % of Turkish families used this way, only 1.3 % of the Dutch families did it. Both Turkish (2.7 %) and Dutch (12.7 %) families expressed that they also tried to find out more about their children's interests and skills by observing them closely, and trying to encourage them in whatever way they were talented.

The participant families in both countries were also asked which environments would be effective for children to improve their skills and interests. 49.8 % of the Turkish families believed that the school environment would be effective whereas only 6.3 % of Dutch families believed so. However, 18.9 % of Turkish families and 2.8 % of the Dutch families stated that the family environment would be effective in developing the child's skills and interests. The families who believed that both family and school environments would be equally effective had a rate of 21.3 % among Turkish families and 79.0 % among Dutch families. Moreover, 10.0 % of Turkish families and 12.1 % of the Dutch families believed that special courses would help their children to develop their social and the individual skills. Thus, the Turkish families considered that school activities were sufficient to develop their children's skills. Furthermore, these families believed that the teachers should take the responsibility to guide their children in social activities. The Dutch families, however, believed that in order to develop their children's individual and social skills, both school and family support would be necessary and important. They also added that in the family environment, they tried to find out their children's interests, and maintain opportunities and settings

for them for leisure activities. They encouraged their children to participate in leisure activities at school as well.

Parents–Teacher and Teacher–Child Interaction on Child’s Participation in Social Activities at School: The most common way of communicating with the teacher for both Turkish and the Dutch families was face to face interaction with the teacher. 52.5 % of the Turkish and 24.2 % Dutch families preferred this way. Also, 23.2 % of the Turkish families, and 18.0 % of Dutch families preferred communicating with the teacher by telephone. Communication by writing letters to the teacher was another way with a rate of 13.3 % for Turkish families and 21.2 % for Dutch families. Moreover, 10.4 % of the Dutch families preferred to communicate with the teacher via the child. 6.3 % of Turkish families preferred this method. Although there was an option of e-mail, none of the families in either country preferred this way for communicating with the teacher.

In examining the data of parents’ attending meetings at school, 65.0 % of mothers and 10.0 % of fathers in Turkish families participated in school meetings. However, in the Netherlands, 20.0 % of the mothers and 10.0 % of the fathers participated in such meetings. The parents who participated in school meetings as a couple were 25.0 % in Turkey and 70.0 % in the Netherlands.

The frequency of communication with the teacher in meetings concerning social activities at schools was also analyzed. 26.3 % of the parents in Turkey and 76.9 % of the parents in the Netherlands joined the meetings “very often”. 63.7 % of the Turkish parents and 20.8 % of the Dutch parents “sometimes” attended them. However, 10.0 % of Turkish parents and 2.3 % of the Dutch parents “rarely” joined these meetings at school. Thus, it can be said that the Dutch parents are closely interested in their child’s social activities at school and valued them.

The families were also asked how much they were interested in their children’s success in the classes and in social activities. 91.3 % of Turkish families were ‘very much’ interested in their children’s academic success in classes. 67.5 % of the parents stated that they were very much interested in their children’s social activities at school. However, 81.3 % of the Dutch families were ‘very much’ interested in their children’s performance in social activities. 72.7 % of the Dutch parents stated that they were ‘very much’ interested in their children’s academic success in classes.

Lastly, the students were asked about the individuals who motivated them to participate in social activities at school. 22.5 % of Turkish students stated that it was their parents, 45.0 % their teachers, 22.5 % their friends, and 10.0 % of

them stated that their siblings and relatives encouraged them to participate in social activities. In the Netherlands, 47.0 % of the students stated that their parents motivated them to take part in social activities. 21.5 % of the Dutch students were motivated by their friends, 10.0 % by their teachers, and 5.5 % by their siblings and relatives. 16.0 % of the students explained that they already had their own motivation for those social activities at school.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicated a significant relationship between the child's participation in social activities at school and the family's socio-demographic characteristics.

In comparing families in the two countries, the Turkish families were less educated and had lower incomes than families in the Netherlands. As a developed country, the Netherlands seems to value education much more than Turkey as a developing country. Considering that socialization starts initially in the family circle, the parents' education will be an important factor in a child's physical and intellectual development, and also in acquisition of leisure behaviour. The parents' awareness of leisure values is related with their education, and also with the culture they belong to. Since the families in this study were members of two extremely different cultures, they are expected to have differences in leisure understanding and leisure values which will also be dominant on their child's socialization. As a child is born into a cultural setting, he is socialized by the cultural norms and values of that society. In this study, cultural differences between Turkish and Dutch participants were found to significantly reflect their family values, attitudes towards children and educational expectations. Being members of a developed country, the Dutch parents and teachers transmit the individualistic values of their culture in which an individual's needs, skills, and interests as well as self-sufficiency and autonomy are valued. All through the socialization process both in the family and school environment, parents and teachers guide the child and contribute to develop his intellectual and social abilities and interests to become an independent adult. Thus, in Dutch society, family and school functioning is structured by individualistic values.

In contrast with Dutch society, the child in Turkish society is socialized into an interdependent/collectivist culture in which obedience and loyalty is more valued than autonomy; and social prestige is more valued than self-sufficiency (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2002). Therefore, the child's academic success is considered to be more important than his social development. These values are transmitted to

children both by families and also by schools. Within this perspective, for Turkish parents the most important issue in their children's education is their academic success. However, for Dutch parents, the most important issue is their children's social development, which is strongly supported by social activities and leisure at school. These basic differences would explain the content of the reciprocal relationships of parent-child and parent-teacher in each culture. The lack of awareness of the value of leisure is an important factor in Turkish society (Aslan, 2009) that contributes to explaining the participant parents' attitudes towards their children in social activities as leisure, whether in the family circle or school environment. Related with this, Turkish parents value the child's academic success more than everything because the child should have a university education to gain prestige in society. Starting from the first grade of Primary School till the fourth grade of High school, the child is expected to be successful in exams. Therefore, Turkish parents generally do not want their children to participate in sports or cultural activities at school considering that this would disturb their children's academic success. Thus, a child's participation in leisure activities both in the family and school context is ignored.

Furthermore, according to our research, social, cultural, sports and arts as leisure activities only existed in Turkish schools on the curriculum, not in practice. Many club activities as leisure were replaced by maths and science classes by teachers to support success in these subjects. No one expressed opposition to this application, because for each side (parent, child, and teacher) academic success was considered to be the most important value. Being a developing country, the importance of leisure has not yet been internalized in Turkish society as it has in developed countries.

As a developed country in the Netherlands, leisure was found to be the most important value for parents during the socialization period of their child. This was also supported in the schooling process both by teachers and by the school administration maintaining the necessary facilities and opportunities for leisure in that environment. Turkish parents talked most of all about their children's academic success in meetings with the teacher and at home with their children, while the Dutch parents talked with the teacher mainly about their children's leisure activities at school, and also at home with their children. Furthermore, mothers in Turkey were found to be the ones who commonly joined the meetings and had communication with the teacher. Few fathers shared this responsibility. However, in the Netherlands, both parents had this responsibility. While only a few mothers were housewives in Netherlands, two-thirds of the mothers in Turkey were housewives, which may explain why it is considered the mothers' duty in Turkey to communicate with the teacher and also be interested in the

child's homework at home after school. Comparing the educational status of the mothers in both countries, the Turkish mothers would mostly be insufficient in guiding and training their children because of their inadequate education. However, in the Netherlands, as most of the mothers were working, their children were trained in kindergartens and also in some local centres after school by experts. Howard and Madrigal (1990) stated the important role of mothers in finding out the child's interests and talents and also in encouraging the child to participate in some recreation and leisure activities either at home or at school. It is obvious that the Turkish mothers were inadequate in this guidance.

Opportunities and facilities for leisure activities at school are important contributors to motivate the children to participate in social and sports activities (Aslan, 2000). From the Dutch teachers' perspective, their schools had sufficient facilities and opportunities to encourage the children to be involved in these activities; whereas, from the Turkish teachers' perspective, their schools had few opportunities and facilities for such activities. Therefore, the teachers could do almost nothing about these activities in the school context. Thus, even if the family encouraged the child to be involved in some activities, the child would find almost nothing to participate in at school. Therefore, schools in Turkey should be supported by the government not only from the academic perspective but also, most importantly, by the provision of leisure facilities and opportunities and by capable teachers. The teachers' awareness of leisure should be increased and they should be given in-service training courses about guidance of their students in leisure. If schools are considered to be institutions not only maintaining scientific knowledge but also contributing to the child developing his skills and interests and becoming a self-sufficient and autonomous individual by means of leisure opportunities; then the new generations could be expected to be mentally and physically healthy and self-sufficient, independent individuals in Turkish society.

This study is expected to make a contribution to social science literature by being the first in Turkey describing and analysing the relationships between parent-child and teacher concerning the child's participation in social activities at school compared with a developed country, the Netherlands. In order to observe changes in the social context in Turkey from being traditional to modern, with the country's prevailing norms and values, and also regarding an improvement in children's participation in social activities at school in Turkey, many qualitative and quantitative studies are recommended and expected to follow in the near future.

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