

EXAMINATION OF PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF MOTHERHOOD AND FATHERHOOD AMONG PARENTS WITH PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Tolga SARICA¹, Özlem DÖNMEZ²

ABSTRACT

The preschool period is a critical time for a child's development and education. During this period, the interaction between the child and their parents affects the child's holistic development, especially their social-emotional development. Research in the literature shows that this interaction tends to favor mothers while being disadvantageous to fathers. To uncover the reasons behind, this study examines the parenting roles of parents with preschool-aged children, comparing the attitudes towards socio-cultural phenomena and the perceptions of the ideal situations between spouses. The research is designed using the phenomenological design of qualitative research methods. The study group consists of 28 parents (14 mothers, 14 fathers) with children aged 49-60 months attending a public preschool in the Havsa district of Edirne province. Data obtained through a semi-structured interview form created by the researchers (including demographic information, descriptive and defining questions) are interpreted through content analysis of coding and themes derived from participants' expressions. According to the research findings, there is a contradiction between mothers and fathers who express their opinions on whose role should be more dominant during the preschool period. While mothers believe that both sides should participate equally, fathers emphasize that the mother's participation should be higher to the contrary. The results reveal that, at the factual level, culture surpasses the perceptual dimension for parents, loading all childcare and preschool educational responsibilities on the mother's shoulders. However, contrary to cultural phenomena, there is a trend among some parents that parental involvement in preschool education should not be limited to mothers only, indicating a readiness for a potential societal perception change over time if supported by various policies.

Keywords: Preschool period, parental roles, parental perception, cultural phenomena

OKUL ÖNCESİ DÖNEMDE ÇOCUĞU OLAN EBEVEYNLERİN ANNE-BABALIK ALGILARININ İNCELENMESİ

ÖZET

Okul öncesi dönem çocuğun gelişimi ve eğitiminde kritik bir dönemdir. Bu dönemde çocuğun ebeveynleri ile etkileşimi çocuğun sosyal-duygusal gelişimi başta olmak üzere bütüncül gelişimini etkiler. Literatürdeki araştırmalar bu etkileşimin annelerin lehine babaların da aleyhine olduğunu göstermektedir. Bunun sebeplerini ortaya çıkarmak amacıyla bu araştırma okul öncesi dönemde çocuğu bulunan ebeveynlerin, ebeveynlik rollerini, sosyo-kültürel olgulara karşı tuttukları tavır ve olması gereken durumlara karşı var olan algılarını eşler arasında karşılaştırmalı olarak incelemektedir. Çalışma nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden fenomenoloji deseni ile tasarlanmıştır. Araştırma çalışma grubunu Edirne ili Havsa ilçesindeki bir devlet anaokulunda (49-60 aylık) çocuğu bulunan 28 veli (14 anne, 14 baba) oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmacılar tarafından oluşturulan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu (demografik bilgilerin, betimleyici ve tanımlayıcı soruların olduğu) aracılığıyla elde edilmiş verilerin kodlama ve katılımcıların ifadelerinden elde edilen temaların içerik analizi yöntemiyle yorumlanmasına dayanmaktadır. Araştırma bulgularına göre, okul öncesi dönemde kimin rolünün daha baskın olması gerektiği konusunda fikirlerini beyan eden anneler ile babalar arasında bir çelişki söz konusu olmuştur. Anneler bu süreçte her iki tarafın da eşit şartlarda katılmaları gerektiğini düşünürken babalar ise bunun aksine annenin katılımının daha yüksek olması gerektiğini vurgulamıştır. Sonuçlar olgusal boyutta kültürün (olan durumun), ebeveynler açısından algısal boyutun (olması gereken durumun) önüne geçerek çocuğun tüm bakımı ve okul öncesi dönemde eğitimsel sorumluluğunu annenin omuzlarına yüklediği gerçeğini gözler önüne sermiştir. Buna rağmen kültürel olgulardan farklı olarak ebeveynlerin okul öncesi eğitime katılmalarının anneler ve babaların bazıları açısından sadece annelerden ibaret olmaması gerektiği yönünde bir eğilim olduğunu ve bu eğilimin çeşitli politikalarla desteklenirse süreç içerisinde gerçekleşebilecek olan toplumsal bir algı değişikliği için bir hazırbulunuşluk teşkil ettiğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Okul öncesi dönem, ebeveyn rolleri, anne-babalık algısı

Suggested Citation:

Sarıca, T. & Dönmez, Ö. (2024). "Comparative Examination of Parental Perceptions of Motherhood and Fatherhood Among Parents with Preschool-Aged Children". *Uluslararası Liderlik Eğitimi Dergisi (ULED)/ International Journal of Leadership Training (IJOLT)*, 8 (2), 1-11. TrDoi: <https://trdoi.org/10.26023458/uled.1516521>

¹ Tolga Sarıca, Trakya University, Social Sciences Institution, Department of Basic Education/Preschool Education Program, t.sarica22@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0003-4503-2156

² Özlem Dönmez, Trakya University, Education Faculty/Preschool Education, ozlemdonmez@trakya.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0003-3881-3448

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Turkish Culture and The Mother's Role in Child Development

The family, playing a critical role in a child's educational journey, particularly during the preschool period, holds a decisive influence on the child's development. The family serves as an informal institution where the child socializes and experiences initial encounters. It is within this institution, the family, where a child's education first begins (Koşar, 2022). Additionally, this institution prepares the child for formal education. Subsequently, for this education to be carried out effectively, it is essential for the family to actively participate in the process concurrently with the child's schooling. This participation, in line with the principle of educational continuity, is a crucial element that needs to extend beyond the school, enriching the child's experiences comprehensively (Zembat & Unutkan, 2001).

Undoubtedly, in Turkish culture, the mother holds a significant role in a child's education. In Turkish society, the mother is generally considered the child's first teacher and one of the closest and most influential individuals in the child's life. The mother attends to both the emotional and physical needs of the child and supports their development. Within the Turkish family structure, the mother is a central figure in the child's education and upbringing. Typically, the mother takes on the daily care of the children, imparts fundamental values and cultural norms, and often exhibits a more emotional approach to the children's education. Besides meeting the child's daily needs, the mother also provides education at home. During this process, the mother contributes to activities such as reading books, playing games, and supporting the development of basic skills (Fletcher & Reese, 2005). Language development and communication are significant contributions made by the mother to her child's education during the preschool period. In Turkey, mothers generally engage in various interactions to enhance their child's language skills. These interactions strengthen the child's language abilities and improve their communication skills. Furthermore, social and emotional development constitutes another significant area where the mother contributes to her child's education. The mother shows love, trust, and empathy towards her child and meets their emotional needs. This closeness and support contribute to the child's development of emotional skills and building social relationships (Zins, 2001). Additionally, it helps the child grow and contribute better to their education (Farrer, 2004). The mother holds great importance in teaching children fundamental skills and supporting their social and emotional development during the preschool period. Moreover, the Turkish mother generally collaborates with teachers to contribute to their child's education and endeavors to support the child's academic success.

In recent years, along with the changes observed in the societal roles of women in Turkey, the role of mothers in children's education has also evolved. In modern Turkish families, mothers often participate in the workforce and contribute to the family income. However, despite their efforts to balance work and family life and to allocate time for their children, this situation may sometimes weaken the bond between the mother and child. Razon (1983) conducted research with 9-year-old children, forming experimental and control groups based on whether their mothers worked. The study revealed that children with working mothers showed weaker communication with adults, weaker family relationships, and weaker social connections compared to those whose mothers did not work. Tezcan (1986) demonstrated that elementary school children with working mothers exhibited shy and passive behaviors in the classroom and had lower academic achievements. However, it is essential to consider other positive factors alongside these findings (such as the financial resources available to provide opportunities for the child and thereby create a rich stimulating environment, as well as the mother's education and perspective on education) rather than solely evaluating them as negative indicators. When considering all these roles of the mother in the child's development, it is evident that the mother contributes to the child's learning process and prepares them for preschool education, which positively impacts the child's future academic success.

1.2 Turkish Culture and The Father's Role in Child Development

In traditional Turkish society, fathers are generally defined as individuals who provide for the family income and work outside the home. This limits the time spent with their children and their contributions to their education. This traditional division of roles is a significant factor negatively affecting fathers' involvement in their children's education and academic activities (Kuzucu, 2011). However, with the globalization, changes have occurred in many areas of the world, from social structure to the economy and education (Göksoy, 2020). This inevitably led to significant changes in family dynamics which have been observed in Turkey in recent years. These changes, accompanied by the increasing rate of mothers participating in the workforce, support a tendency for fathers to share traditionally female-assigned roles such as household chores and childcare (Arat, 2020). These changing norms create a positive environment for increasing fathers' involvement in their children's lives. The profile of the father is as crucial as that of the mother. Fathers can serve as good role models for their children by displaying positive behaviors, showing empathy, and taking responsibility.

In addition to mothers, fathers can also establish a strong emotional bond with their children and create a sense of security. This contributes to the child feeling safe, thus supporting their emotional development. The father's attention and time spent with the child help them feel loved and valued, ultimately fostering a sense of self-confidence and initiative. From a cognitive perspective, fathers can support their children by spending time with them, telling stories, and offering solutions to various problems (providing different perspectives on solutions compared to mothers), thus providing support. Children who communicate more with their fathers have access to a richer social environment. As they engage with their fathers, children are exposed to a variety of linguistic elements (such as vocabulary choices, sentence structures, etc.), leading to greater language development. Additionally, fathers can establish boundaries and guide their child's behavior through a consistent discipline approach. However, this discipline is successful when applied with love and understanding. For these reasons, the role of fathers in early childhood education is as important as that of mothers.

1.3 The Importance of Family Involvement in The Preschool Period

The roles of both mothers and fathers during this period deeply influence the child's cognitive, emotional, and social development. Families working collaboratively in structured formal education programs contribute significantly to the child's development. As Göksoy (2018) states, institutions established to achieve certain objectives can reach their goals as long as they fulfill these objectives. These objectives in early childhood education cannot be thought without the participation of the families. Therefore, family involvement in early childhood education encompasses planned processes and activities to support children's education and development. This process involves informing families about what is happening at school, how the education provided at school can be continued and supported at home, and how parents can systematically contribute to their children's social and cognitive development, thereby keeping the family within the process and helping them involve actively in making joint decisions in their education (Evans, 1996). Studies in the field have shown that programs involving family involvement have led to increased and lasting academic achievements for children (Aydoğan, 2021). Similarly, it has been observed that the academic achievements of children whose parents show little or no interest in their academic process remain lower compared to others (Keçeli Kaysılı, 2008). While research has provided evidence for the importance of parental involvement in education and the contributions of both parents have been proven in various contexts, any dominance or passivity of one parent over the other for various reasons will adversely affect all areas of the child's development, rich stimulating environments, collaborative approaches, and perceptions of democratic attitudes. In Turkey, various programs and activities aim to increase parental involvement in early childhood education. These initiatives aim to engage families more in their children's education, strengthen family-school collaboration, and support children's development. Parent education programs, preschool education institutions, and parent education programs aimed at families provide information and support on child development, educational methods, discipline, and communication skills (James & Ponzetti, 2016).

The data obtained from the research questions formulated to examine in depth the roles and perceptions of parents during the preschool education period, and to reveal how various cultural, social, and economic factors affect these roles, are compared with existing research in the literature (to ensure reliability) and synthesized (reinterpreted from different perspectives) to assist in designing more effective family-focused education policies and practices, thereby better identifying and meeting the educational and developmental needs of children during this critical period. The following questions were addressed to understand the parental roles and perceptions of these roles in the preschool period with socio-cultural justifications:

1. What is the role and importance of the family in preschool education according to parental views?
2. What is the role of the father in preschool education according to parental views?
3. What is the role of the mother in preschool education according to parental views?

4. According to parental views, which parent is more dominant in the preschool education period in Turkey?
5. According to parental views, which parent should be more dominant during the preschool period?

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

In this study, the phenomenology design, which is one of the qualitative research designs, was employed. Qualitative research methods allow participants' thoughts, ideas, and perspectives to be brought to light, providing an opportunity to deeply interpret and understand concepts and meanings (Yalçın, 2022). This approach aims to explore phenomena in depth, interpret underlying perceptions, and bring to light aspects that may not be initially noticed or considered. The phenomenology design used in qualitative research aims to reveal the meaning of experiences related to a phenomenon or a specific concept. The goal of phenomenology is to examine and understand the essence of an existing phenomenon in detail (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Another aim of this design is to examine various phenomena that we encounter in daily life, such as experiences, perceptions, attitudes, or situations, which we are familiar with but may not fully understand their meaning or cause (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

2.2 Participants

The study included 14 married and cohabiting mothers and 14 fathers who have children aged 4 (49-60 months) attending a state preschool, and volunteering to participate. Researchers conducted individual interviews with each participant and ensured that both parents separately answered the same questions. Thus, the responses of both parents were compared in terms of their perceptions. The demographic characteristics of the participating mothers and fathers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Parents in the Study Group

		Mother (f)	Father (f)	Total (f)
Age	25-29	4	4	8
	30-34	5	5	10
	35-39	3	3	6
	40-44	2	2	4
Education Level	Highschool	7	12	19
	Associate Degree	3	2	5
	Bachelor's	4	0	4
Total		14	14	28

When the distribution of ages of parents in the study group is examined according to Table 1, it can be seen that the majority of both mothers and fathers fall into the age range of 30-34 years. The average age of mothers is 33, while it is 35.5 for fathers.

While the majority of participating fathers are high school graduates, with only 2 having an associate degree, among mothers, there are more bachelor's and associate degree holders. This indicates that the educational levels of participating mothers are higher compared to fathers. However, there is a relatively balanced proportion in terms of graduation degrees among spouses. Consequently, it is observed that the distribution of educational levels within the family is similarly distributed.

2.3 Instrumentation and Data Collection

Within the scope of the validity and reliability of the qualitative study, principles such as objectivity, trustworthiness, transparency, open communication, and internal consistency were emphasized in data collection and analysis to ensure validity and reliability. During the interviews, descriptive and interpretive validity were maintained by taking direct quotes with permission when necessary. For theoretical validity, care was taken to ensure that the categories created from the obtained data aligned with the literature. In terms of external reliability of the qualitative study, the study group, data collection, and analysis processes were described in

detail. To ensure internal reliability, the data were presented without interpretation, collected by a single researcher, and another researcher's views and approvals were obtained for the analyses, which were conducted within the conceptual framework (Cresswell, 2017a; Cresswell, 2017b; Patton, 2014). Interviews with parents were conducted on a voluntary basis. The qualitative data gathered via a semi-structured interview form created by the researcher were analyzed using descriptive and content analysis methods. The obtained data were summarized within the framework of predetermined themes and codes through descriptive analysis. In content analysis, the aim was to reach concepts and relationships that could explain the data. The data summarized by descriptive analysis were subjected to deeper processing through content analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018; Glesne, 2012). Within the scope of descriptive analysis, themes and codes were created and explained with tables. In content analysis, points that could not be reflected in the descriptive analysis but were significant for the research were explained through quotations.

2.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive and content analysis methods were used for data analysis. Participants' responses were classified based on codes and themes, and their frequencies were provided, supported by quotations. Quotations related to mothers were coded as M1, ..., M14; quotations related to fathers were coded as F1, ..., F14.

3. FINDINGS

Table 2. Parental Views on the Question "What do you think is the role and importance of the family in early childhood education?"

The Concepts Regarding the Role of the Family	Mother (f)	Father (f)	Total (f)	Explanations About the Role of the Family
Family is the first place of education	4	1	5	M3: Education begins in the family. M9: A child's first world is family F6: The first place where education begins is the family.
School-family cooperation is important	3	1	4	M7: The family should cooperate with the school. M8: School and family should be in constant cooperation. F6: The family cooperates with the teacher.
The family supports the child's developmental areas	3	6	9	M2: Supporting age-expected skills M6: The family should understand and support the child F3: It should support all development areas F6: The family should prepare the child psychologically and socially for life
Family prepares the child for school	4	6	10	M1: The family should prepare the child for the school environment M12: The family should motivate and create desire and interest for school. F1: Family is the institution that prepares students for the school environment.
Total	14	14	28	

Participants who comprised 5 (17.9%) perceive the family as the starting point of education. 4 (14.3%) participants emphasize the importance of school-family collaboration. 9 (32.1%) participants see the family as a unit providing support for all aspects of child development, while 10 (35.7%) participants highlight the significant role of the family in motivating and fostering a love for school in preparing the child for school. Descriptive analysis reveals that male and female participants make different emphases on the concepts related to the family role. For instance, under the concept of "Family is the first place of education," 4 (14.3%) female participants emphasize this idea, whereas only 1 (7.1%) male participant supports this view. Additionally, among female participants, 3 (21.4%) express support for the idea of the importance of school-family collaboration, while among male participants, only 1 (7.1%) person supports this notion. Thus, female participants emphasize the importance of collaboration between school and family more, while male participants exhibit a more reserved

attitude in this regard. While 19 (67.8%) participants emphasized the importance of the family supporting the child in all areas of development and preparing them for school, men expressed more views with 12 (85.8%) participants. However, other findings of the research suggest that these expectations are expected to be fulfilled not by fathers themselves but through mothers, indicating a passive stance among fathers.

Table 3. Parental Views on the Question "What do you think is the role of father in early childhood education?"

Concepts Regarding the Role of Father	Mother (f)	Father (f)	Total (f)	Explanations About the Role of Father
Financial support	2	2	4	M10: The father should support the family financially. M13: The father should do shopping for school and transportation F6: Providing opportunities for the child to receive education F12: Takes care of transportation and school expenses
Support for child's development	4	9	13	M2: Those who spend time with their fathers become self-confident and social. M8: The father should be with him as much as possible M11: The father should take care of the homework and make him love school. F2: He should support the child's development. F3: Must play an active role in the child's development. F4: He should be with you in difficulties. F10: Gives respect, education, and rules. F14: Provides psychological support.
Being a role model	6	1	7	M3: It depends on gender. He means support for girls and a role model for boys. M4: The father should be a role model. M5: .The Father is the one who sets an example for his children. M7: The man takes the role of the father. The girl's perceptions of the opposite sex are shaped. F9: Fathers are role models for their children.
Collaboration with mother	2	2	4	M: The father must cooperate with the mother. M14: The father should prepare the child for school and life with the mother F1: He should support the mother. They must act together. F13: The father should support the mother and the mother should be one step ahead.
Total	14	14	28	

Two (14.3%) mothers and two (14.3%) fathers emphasized equally that the father should provide financial support, while 13 (46.4%) participants stated that he should provide developmental support. Of the 4 participants who emphasized the need for financial support from the father, 3 (M13:25, F6:27, M10:30) are in the age range of 25-30. Seven participants (25%) highlighted that fathers serve as role models for children (especially boys mimic them while girls' perceptions of the opposite sex are shaped). Notably, while 9 (64.3%) fathers emphasized the significant role of the father in the child's development, only 4 (28.6%) mothers emphasized this issue. Regarding the father as a role model, 6 (42.9%) mothers expressed their views, while only 1 (7.1%) father

supported this view. Thus, according to mothers, fathers are seen more as role models for children rather than supporting their development. In terms of development, while mothers mentioned that fathers should support them more academically, fathers talked about supporting them morally, characteristically, and psychologically. Only 4 (28.6%) participants emphasized the importance of fathers collaborating with mothers. Of these participants, 3 (F1 and M14) have an associate degree, and M1 has a bachelor's degree. Participants other than these expressed opinions about their roles or their spouses' roles.

Table 4. Parental Views on the Question "What do you think is the role of mother in early childhood education?"

Concepts Regarding the Role of Mother	Mother (f)	Father (f)	Total (f)	Explanations About the Role of Mother
Responsibility	2	5	7	M1: Since the father works hard, all the responsibility falls on the mother. M9: The biggest responsibility lies with the mother. F1: Since the caregiver is the one who raises the child, all responsibility lies with the mother. F3: Leading by example and taking care. F8: Meeting the child's needs.
Developmental support	9	6	15	M3: The Mother is the one who supports in education and social areas. M8: The mother contributes to the development of all aspects of life. M13: To provide students with all areas of development and the behaviors expected from society. F2: Reinforcing positive behaviors and guiding the face of problems. F7: Responsible for the entire development of the child.
Attention and care	3	3	6	M6: A mother is the one who cares, and shows compassion and patience. M11: The mother is responsible for nutrition and transportation. It also creates an emotional connection F3: The mother's duty is to take care of the child. F12: The Mother is the one who has a lot of responsibility in terms of clothing, eating and drinking, etc.
Total	14	14	28	

When examining the concepts related to the mother's role, it is observed that there are different perspectives among the participants. Out of a total of 28 participants, 7 (25%), including 5 fathers (35.7%) and 2 mothers (14.3%), expressed the view that the mother is the one who takes on more responsibility. The reason for this is often attributed to the father's busy work life. Of the participants, 15 (53.6%), including 9 mothers (64.3%), stated that just as in all aspects of life, the mother is responsible for the child's development areas rather than the father, especially attributing this to the father's busy work schedule and cultural reasons. 6 participants (21.4%) indicated that the mother is the one who takes care of the child and assumes all care responsibilities. Consequently, the father's busy work life and cultural reasons impose more burden on the mother's shoulders in terms of supporting all developmental areas of the child, from care to clothing, from feeding to transportation, compared to the father. As can be understood from the table, 9 fathers (64.3%) also acknowledged and expressed the fact that mothers have roles in providing developmental support to the child, along with responsibilities related to care and attention.

When examining the parental views regarding the question "Who do you think is more dominant in early childhood education in our country?" it is seen that all participants answered "Mother." Among the reasons cited are cultural and social structure, the perception that women are more effective in education, better

communication skills, being more emotional, affectionate, and attentive towards their children, and the fact that fathers are busy with work.

Table 5. Parents' Opinions on the Question “Whose role do you think should be more dominant in the preschool period?”

	Mother (f)	Father (f)	Total (f)
The mother must be dominant	5	8	13
The father must be dominant	0	0	0
Parents must be equal	9	6	15
Total	14	14	28

There is a contradiction between mothers and fathers regarding whose role should be more dominant in the preschool period. When the graphs are examined, it is apparent that mothers believe that both parents should participate equally in this process, while fathers emphasize that the mother's participation should be higher. The reasons we deduce from the statements of fathers include mothers having stronger communication skills, being more successful in providing instant solutions to problems and issues, approaching the child with more sensitivity, affection, and emotional support, and attaching more importance to education. The educational degrees of mothers also support this view.

4. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Based on the findings of the study, it can be inferred that 17.9% of the participants consider the family as the starting point of education, while 14.3% emphasize the importance of school-family cooperation. Furthermore, 32.1% of the parents evaluate the family as a unit that provides support for all areas of a child's development, while 35.7% highlight the importance of motivating the child and making them fond of school in preparing them for school. However, when we analyze the responses to the research questions in detail, significant differences in role perceptions between female and male participants are observed. While 14.3% of female participants emphasize the concept of "Family is the first place of education", this rate is 7.1% among males. Similarly, in the concept of "School-family cooperation is important", 21.4% of females and 7.1% of males support this idea. Mothers tend to emphasize the importance of cooperation between school and family more, while fathers exhibit a more reserved attitude in this regard, often assigning responsibility to mothers.

Other findings of the study indicate that the expectation of supporting all areas of a child's development and preparing them for school lies not with fathers, but generally with mothers. The opinions and perceptions expressed by fathers regarding the development areas of children primarily focus on providing moral, ethical, and psychological support rather than academic or personal development. 28.6% of participants believe that fathers only need to provide financial support (stationery, transportation, clothing), and 75% of them fall within the 25-30 age range. Those aged 35 and over, on the other hand, emphasize the responsibility of mothers rather than financial support, highlighting their impact on the child's development. While 46.4% of parents think that fathers should support their child's development, this rate is particularly high due to fathers feeling inadequate in this area. Therefore, it is necessary to provide fathers with the knowledge and skills to contribute to their children's development and education.

All parents (25%) stated that male children look up to their fathers as role models, shaping the relationships of female children with the opposite sex. The importance of the father's role in development is emphasized more by fathers (64.3%) compared to mothers (28.6%), whereas mothers tend to emphasize the role of the mother in developmental support (64.3% of females vs. 42.9% of males). Thus, while mothers perceive the importance of the mother's role in development, fathers emphasize the importance of the father's role in development, but the perception of each gender towards the expectations of the other is different. For example, while 42.9% of mothers believe that fathers should serve as an example for the child's development, only 7.1% of fathers share this view. This indicates that mothers believe fathers should serve as role models for children in terms of behavior and culture rather than academic education. Fathers support children's moral development through their characters and attitudes (Ozensel, 2004). While most participating mothers emphasize the importance of fathers being strong models for children, especially in moral, ethical, and psychological aspects, they mostly focus on academic support. Only 28.6% of parents emphasized the need for fathers to collaborate with mothers, which corresponds to 4 participants, and it seems that these participants have higher education levels. As education levels increase, there is a developing consensus between men and women for equal and collaborative views on

all aspects of child education and care. Other participants generally expressed their opinions about their roles or their spouses' roles.

In addition to the differences in perceptions of parents' roles in all questions, differences in perspectives regarding the role of the mother are also observed. Of the total 28 participants, 25% believe that the mother takes on more responsibility. Within this group, the percentage of fathers is 35.7% while the percentage of mothers is 14.3%. This situation is often attributed to the busy work schedule of fathers. However, 53.6% of the participants believe that the mother is responsible for all areas of the child's development. Within this group, the percentage of mothers is 64.3%, while the percentage of fathers is lower. A group of 21.4% of participants stated that the mother is the one who takes care of the child and assumes all care responsibilities. As a result, the majority of participants believe and accept that mothers take on greater responsibility for supporting and caring for the child's development. A similar finding has been obtained by Dönmez (2022) and Dönmez (2019). Another finding related to fathers is that 64.3% of fathers acknowledge and accept the role of mothers in the child's development, attention, and care-related responsibilities, considering it as a necessary condition. In parallel with the findings of the study, we can say the following: in traditional societies like Turkey, where women generally take on more responsibility, especially in areas such as housework and childcare, while men play a more active role in the business world, traditional gender roles lead mothers to be more involved in the education and care of children and marginalize fathers. Sancar (2009) has stated that this situation leads to internal and external conflicts, emotional distances, and deficiencies in father-child relationships. In addition, the insufficient emotional connection established results in the suppression of courage and initiative in male children's development (because the father means this to them) and the suppression of feelings of trust and loyalty in female children. Also, socially accepted gender roles are an important factor affecting participation in education. In this case, while women spend more time on housework and childcare, men generally focus more on work-life (Yoleri, 2022). This means that the parent who contributes less economically generally spends more time on housework and childcare. The relationship between the mother and the child enables mothers to better understand their children's needs and thus be more effective in the education process. Mothers usually establish a closer bond with their children, which allows them to contribute more to their children's education. The education system and social norms encourage mothers to be more involved in their children's education. The norms accepted by Turkish society generally require mothers to be more involved with their children and contribute more to their education. Ergun (2018) has stated that culturally, mothers are generally considered the first teachers of children. Therefore, mothers play a more effective role in their children's education. In addition to these existing facts, a contradiction has emerged between mothers and fathers who express their opinions about whose role should be more dominant in the preschool period to determine the perceptions of parents. When the graphics are examined, it is seen that while mothers think that both sides should participate in the process on equal terms, fathers emphasize that the mother's participation should be higher. The reasons we derive from the statements of fathers are that mothers have stronger communication skills, are more successful in producing instant solutions to problems, are more sensitive, compassionate, and emotional towards children, and attach more importance to education (this is also supported by the mothers' graduation degrees). As a result, it has been revealed that the place of the father in the child's developmental support remains incomplete for various reasons. The reason for this is not only the busy work schedule but also the perception that some fathers have that mothers should be responsible for all care and development of the child and the societal perception that assigns such a role to mothers. In addition, some mothers also argue that the father is only a person who meets the child's needs financially, and some argue that the father should be a role model with his character rather than activities that contribute to the child's development. Fathers think that they should stay in the background by arguing that their communication skills are weak and that mothers are more compassionate, emotional, and solution-oriented. Only 4 participants (2 mothers, and 2 fathers) emphasized that both parents should be actively involved and coordinated, indicating that they should work in harmony. Among these 4 participants, it is noteworthy that 3 have higher education levels. According to these results, as the level of education increases, the perception of equality also increases. In addition, Simsıkı (2011) has shown that as the father's level of education increases, the level of participation in the child's education also increases. On the other hand, one participant stated that parents should participate actively in the process with different tasks and responsibilities, indirectly stating that they do not need to be in harmony. All these results not only answer the research questions but also enable us to look at the perceptions of parents from different perspectives. In light of the findings obtained, there is a need for more programs and education for fathers to increase their participation in their children's education and to positively shape their perceptions shaped by cultural norms.

REFERENCES

- Arat, Y. (2020). *Toplumsal cinsiyet ve toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği nedir, ne değildir?* Retrieved May 01, 2023, from Sarkac.org. <https://sarkac.org/2020/02/toplumsal-cinsiyet-nedir-ne-degildir/>.
- Aydoğan, Y. (2021). Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programlarında Aile Katılımı. T. G. Yıldız (Ed.), *Aile Eğitimi ve Katılımı*. Pegem Akademi Yayıncılık.
- Cresswell, J. (2017). *Karma Yöntem Araştırmalarına Giriş (1. Baskı)*. (M. Sözbilir, Dü.) Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayıncılık.
- Cresswell, J. (2017). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches (Araştırma Deseni: Nitel, Nicel ve Karma Yöntem Yaklaşımları) (3. Baskı)*. (S. Demir, Dü., E. Bukova Güzel, İ. Erdoğan, Y. Dede, G. Hacıömeroğlu, H. Ercan, F. Bilican, ... S. Demir, Çev.) Ankara: Eğiten Kitap Yayıncılık.
- Creswell, John W. & J. David, Creswell. 2018. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Los Angeles, SAGE.
- Dönmez, Ö. (2019). *Babasavar Annelik Ölçeği'nin geliştirilmesi ve okul öncesi çağda çocuğu olan anne-babaların etkileşim davranışlarının incelenmesi*. [Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi]. İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi.
- Dönmez, Ö. (2022). *Erken çocukluk döneminde Fırsat Verici Ebeveynlik Programı'nın etkililiğinin incelenmesi*. [Yayımlanmamış doktora tezi]. İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi.
- Ergun, P. (2018). Hayat Boyu Eğitimde Annenin Rolü. *Motif Akademi Halkbilimi Dergisi*, 11(22), 162-170.
- Evans, C. (1996). *Düşük sosyo-ekonomik örneklemlerli Türk babaların rollerine yönelik tutumları ve katılımları*. [Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi]. İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi.
- Farrer, S. (2004). The school-based program promotes positive behaviour, reduces risk factors for drug use and other problems. *Nida Notes*, 18(6), 1-6.
- Fletcher, K. L., & Reese, E. (2005). Picture book reading with young children: A conceptual framework. *Developmental Review*, 25, 64-103.
- Glesne, C. (2012). *Nitel Araştırmaya Giriş*. (A. Ersoy, & P. Yalçınoglu, Çev.) Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık.
- Göksoy, S. (2020). Küreselleşme ve Eğitime Yansımaları. *Uluslararası Liderlik Eğitimi Dergisi*, 1(1), 1-10.
- Göksoy, S. (2018). Eğitimde Etkililiğin Artırılabilirliği İçin Sistem Modelinin Okul ve Öğrenme Ortamına Uyarlanabilirliği. *Uluslararası Liderlik Eğitimi Dergisi*, 3(3), 1-15.
- James, J., & Ponzetti, J. (2016). *Evidence-based Parenting Education- A Global Perspective*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Keçeli Kaysılı, B. (2008). Akademik başarının arttırılmasında aile katılımı. *Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi Özel Eğitim Dergisi*, 9(1), 69-83.
- Koşar, D. (2022). Okul ve Aile Arasında Yaşanan Sorunlara ve Bu Sorunların Çözümüne İlişkin Öğretmen Görüşleri. *Üçüncü Sektör Sosyal Ekonomi Dergisi*, 57(4), 2890-2902.
- Kuzucu, Y. (2011). Değişen Babalık Rolü ve Çocuk Gelişimine Etkisi. *Türk Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Dergisi*, 4(35), 79-91.
- Razon, N. (1983). *Çalışan Anne ve Çocuk*. İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları.
- Ozensel, E. (2004). Türk toplumunda çocuğun yetiştirilmesinde annenin rolü: Konya ili örneği. *Değerler eğitimi Dergisi*, 2(6), 77-96
- Patton, M. (2014) *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. 4th Edition, Sage, Thousand Oaks
- Sancar, S. (2009). *Erkeklik: İmkansız İktidar (2. baskı)*. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları.
- Simsıki, H. (2011). *Baba katılımının ebeveyn tutumu, bağlanma stili ve çift uyumu açısından incelenmesi*. [Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi]. İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İstanbul.
- Tezcan, M. (1986). Ülkemizde toplumsal değişmelerin ailede çocuk eğitimine yansması. *Aile ve Çocuk Dergisi*, 5.
- Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2006). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri (6. Baskı)*. Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.
- Yıldırım, A., ve Şimşek, H. (2018). *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri*. Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.

- Yolcu, S. (2022). Okul Öncesi Dönemde Baba Katılımını Etkileyen Değişkenlerin İncelenmesi. *Uşak Üniversitesi Eğitim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 8(2), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.29065/usakead.1099707>
- Zembat, R., & Unutkan, P. Ö. (2001). *Okul Öncesi Dönemde Çocuğun Sosyalleşmesinde Ailenin Yeri (Aile Katılım Programı Uygulama Örnekleriyle)*. İstanbul: Ya-pa.
- Zins, J. E. (2001). Social-emotional learning and social success. *The Ceic Review*, 10, 1-6.