

FATHER INVOLVEMENT IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMS BASED ON TEACHERS' POINTS OF VIEW

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ABSTRACT

Family involvement activities are of a significant place in increasing the success in preschool education and maintaining the education. However, while mother involvement is obtained in the family involvement activities, father involvement is neglected. For that reason, the current study aims at determining the views of teachers with regard to father involvement in the preschool education programs. The working group of the study consisted of 23 preschool teachers. The study is a descriptive survey. The data were obtained through individual interviews. As a data collection instrument, "Teacher Interview Form" was used. The data were analysed through content analysis method. At the end of the research, a great majority of the teachers stated that they were proficient in applying family involvement studies. They also pointed out that they held more family meetings in order to obtain family involvement and then they implemented involvement activities both in the class and out of the class for parents. They expressed that they observed more mother involvement in these activities than fathers. Parents

expressed that the reasons why fathers involved in these activities less compared to mothers were the working conditions of fathers and that it was regarded as a task of mothers.

Keywords: *Preschool Education, Parent Involvement, Father Involvement, Teacher Views.*

ÖĞRETMENLERİN BAKIŞ AÇISINA DAYALI OKUL ÖNCESİ EĞİTİM PROGRAMLARINDA BABA KATILIMI

ÖZ

Okul öncesi eğitimde başarının artırılması ve eğitimin sürdürülmesinde aile katılım etkinlikleri önemli bir yere sahiptir. Ancak aile katılım etkinliklerinde baba katılımı istenilen düzeyde değildir. Bu nedenle mevcut araştırma, okul öncesi eğitim programlarında baba katılımına ilişkin öğretmenlerin görüşlerini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu 23 okul öncesi öğretmeninden oluşmuştur. Araştırma betimsel bir tarama araştırmasıdır. Veriler bireysel görüşmeler yoluyla elde edilmiştir. Veri toplama aracı olarak “Öğretmen Görüşme Formu” kullanılmıştır. Veriler içerik analizi yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma sonunda öğretmenlerin büyük çoğunluğu aile katılım çalışmalarını uygulamada yeterli olduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Ayrıca aile katılımını sağlamak amacıyla daha fazla aile toplantısı yaptıklarını ve daha sonra hem ders içinde hem de ders dışında velilere yönelik katılım etkinlikleri uyguladıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bu etkinliklerde babalardan daha fazla anne katılımı gördüklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Veliler, babaların annelere göre bu etkinliklere daha az katılmalarının nedenlerinin babaların çalışma koşulları ve çocukların okuluna ilişkin işlerin annelerin görevi olarak görülmesi olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Okul Öncesi Eğitim, Ebeveyn Katılımı, Baba Katılımı, Öğretmen Görüşleri.*

INTRODUCTION

The main institution that supplies the child with the opportunity to know the external environment and provides the child with various habits is the family. While the child is gaining the necessary experiences for basic learning in the family, he also finds the opportunity to improve and enrich these experiences in the pre-school education institutions he may attend based on affordability. In addition to the role of the teacher, the part of the family is also significant and effective in the pre-school period. This is because any kind of behavior by the parents affects the choice of the child about the person to be taken as the role model. Parents cannot be supportive in the educational life as long as they do not have knowledge about their child's developmental process and the academic status at the school (Shephard & Newland, 2012).

Parent involvement should be an important part of the pre-school education program. Achieving the continuity of the education provided in the institution, recognition of the child by the family, increasing the child's academic success and supporting the parenting skills of the parents should be planned in order for them to have knowledge about the program (Cömert & Erdem 2011; Oktay & Unutkan, 2003).

Parents are able to contribute to the education to the extent they know about the activities organized by the teacher at the school and the purpose of these activities. According to studies, parent involvement improves the social skills of the child and reduces problematic behavior. Parent involvement additionally improves socio-emotional skills of the children, as well as being effective in increasing their academic success (Epinosa, 1995; Cooksey & Fondell, 1996; Nokali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal, 2010).

It is known that family involvement has various positive effects for children, families, teachers and institutions. Cotton and Wikelund (1989) stated that there is a directly proportionate relationship between learning levels of children and family involvement. It has been seen that the strength of the positive effects of the education process is dependent on parent involvement.

Eliason and Jenkins (2003) listed the contributions of family involvement practices on children as improvement of academic skills, promotion of development of responsibility feelings, effectiveness in developments of positive attitudes towards school by children, increasing the communication between the school and the home, and providing opportunities for children to see their parents as important parts of their education (Eliason & Jenkins, 2003).

While the importance of family involvement is known, some studies have reported that there are some obstacles against this such economic problems of the family, education level, employment status, stress at home, attitudes of the family

towards school and family involvement, or cultural differences (Balcı & Tezel Şahin, 2016; Castro et al., 2004; Coley and Morris, 2002; Hornby, 2011; McBride et al., 2002; Rimm Kaufman et al., 2003; Thompson, 2012; Waanders, Mendez & Downer, 2007). Additionally, it is seen that mothers participate more than fathers (Coley & Morris, 2002; Laflamme, Pomerleau & Malcuit, 2002; Yeung et al., 2001). However, it is known according to these studies that involvement by not only the mother, but also the father has a significant effect on the child's development and education level (Tezel-Şahin & Özbey, 2009).

A structure where fathers were dominant at work and mothers were dominant in children's lives continued till the late twentieth century. It is seen that the interactions among the father, the father and the child started to be subjects of study towards the end of the last century. It may be stated that studies focus on the relationship of fathers with their spouses and children, the type of activities they carried out with them, and father involvement (Cabrera 2019; Day & Lamb, 2004).

It is seen that mostly mothers took care of their children's up-bringing and education in the past. However, the differentiations experiences in today's constantly and rapidly changing world have forced the roles of motherhood, and especially fatherhood. There are various factors that leads a change in the concept of being a father and an increase in the interest on the role of the father in the child's development and education (McBride & McBride, 1990; Tezel Şahin, 2003; Tutkun & Tezel Şahin, 2018a).

Working conditions of fathers, time issues, traditional approaches may be listed as the reasons for lack of involvement by father in their children's lives in comparison to mothers. On the other hand, fathers also started to take active part in bringing children up by inclusion of mothers in the work force, diminishing of the effects of traditional taboos in the developing and advancing world, fathers becoming more aware of this issue and researchers focusing attention on the involvement of fathers in children's lives.

Studies mention various benefits for children in the father-child interaction by active involvement of the father in the child's life (Tutkun & Tezel Şahin, 2018b). It is possible to list these benefits as increase in academic success (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Aydın Kılıç & Tezel Şahin, 2018; Cooksey and Fondell, 1996; Lazović, 2022), lower tendency of crime and reduction in substance abuse levels (Carlson, 2006), development of positive peer relationships (Updegraff et al., 2001), cognitive improvement, behavioral and emotional organization (Cabrera, 2019), social development, and language development (Lamb, 2010; Tutkun & Tezel Şahin, 2016). Additionally, it is seen that the child's psychosocial development is negatively affected by situations such as absence of a father and lack of presence of the father in the child's life (Flouri, 2005).

According to Allen and Daly (2002), when father involvement is achieved, the overall life satisfaction levels of children increase and children display fewer signs of depression. When their fathers participate in the activities at the school, children develop more positive attitudes towards the school, become happier, act more willing to satisfy their responsibilities, and are able to carry these attitudes into following years (Allen & Daly, 2002).

As the people who interact with the parents most frequently and directly during pre-school education, the attitudes and roles of the teachers are crucial for starting family involvement, continuation of it, and its success. Teachers are the people effective in organizing, planning and implementing father involvement (Tezel Şahin & Ünver, 2005).

In this sense, in terms of the points of view of teachers, it may be argued that it will contribute to the field to conduct a study regarding which parent participates in family involvement practices in the pre-school area the most, reasons for fathers to participate less, and the benefits of such practices for children, parents, teachers and school. Additionally, it is also thought that the study is important in terms of presenting the views of teachers on father involvement.

With this purpose, this study aimed to investigate the opinions of pre-school teachers on involvement of fathers in family involvement practices.

Method

This study aimed to investigate the opinions of pre-school teachers on involvement of fathers in family involvement practices. The study used a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is an approach that prioritizes research and understanding of social phenomena in connection to the environment they are related to. It allows understanding of the studied subject through the eyes of related people, and presentation of the social structure and processes that constitute these points of view (Yıldırım, 1999). The study used a descriptive (scanning – survey) model. This study, which is a descriptive one, used the method of interview. The ethical approval for this study was obtained during the 2024/10 meeting of the Ethics Committee of Istanbul Aydin University on 26.09.2024.

Sample

The sample consisted of 23 pre-school teachers employed at pre-school education institutions. The selection of the teachers to be interviewed was carried out by homogeneous sampling, which is a purposive sampling method. Homogeneous sampling is the formation of the sample from a homogeneous sub-set or a case within the population of the problem of the research (Büyüköztürk, 2012). The inclusion criteria for the teachers were an at least two years of experience, and graduation from departments of pre-school teaching and child development.

Among the pre-school teachers included in the study, 11 were employed at a state school, while 12 were employed at a primary school. 7 were in the age group of 20-30 years, 6 were in the age group of 36-40 and 10 were 41 years old or older. 9 had 1-10 years, 6 had 11-20 years and 8 had 21 years of more experience in the profession. 10 of the participants worked with 8-15 children, and 13 worked with 16-22 children.

Additionally, it was found that 11 of the participants had taken courses about family education, while 12 had not. Again, 16 participants participated in the in-service trainings or seminars about family education, while 7 did not. 18 of the teachers who participated in the study stated that they were willing to participate in in-service training or seminars regarding family education, while 4 stated that they were not.

Data Collection Tools

The data of the study were collected through the “Teacher Interview Form” prepared by the researchers. In preparation of the interview form, a literature review was conducted (McBride et al., 2002; Tezel Şahin & Özyürek, 2010; Tezel Şahin & Özyürek, 2016) and the semi-structured interview questions were formed. The interview form, prepared in order to determine the opinions of pre-school teachers on family involvement activities they implemented, consisted of two parts. In the first part, there are studies regarding the age, experience, level of education, number of students in their group. The second part consists of semi-structured questions about family involvement activities.

Data Collection and Analysis

While collecting the data, the teachers to be included in the study were provided with information regarding the topic, purpose and data collection tool in the study. The data were collected through face-to-face interviews conducted with the teachers. The interviews were conducted in a silent and physically comfortable environment in pre-schools and lasted approximately 30 minutes. The interviews were recorded using the notes taken by the researchers during the interview.

In order to interpret the data, firstly, descriptive statistics regarding the data obtained from the data collection tool were found. The obtained values were tabulated as frequency and percentage values. The responses obtained from the interview form were content-analyzed.

Content analysis is a scientific approach that studies a social phenomenon by objectively and systematically categorizing the message of verbal, written or other materials in terms of meaning and grammar, converting it to numbers and making inferences (Tavşancıl & Aslan, 2001). It is aimed to describe the and discover the facts that may be hidden in the data. The main operation in content analysis is to gather data that are similar to each other under the framework of certain concepts and themes, and interpretation by organization. The purpose is

to reach concepts and relationships that may explain the collected data. For this, the collected data should first be conceptualized, then organized in a logical way in terms of the concepts that arise, and therefore, the themes that explain the data should be determined (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The findings obtained as a result of the analysis of the data were shown in tables and the results were interpreted.

Findings

The opinions of the pre-school teachers who participated in the study on family involvement activities and involvement of fathers in these activities are given in the tables.

Table 1.

Teachers' Opinions of the Benefits of Family Involvement activities for Children, Families, Teachers and Schools

	Benefits of Family Involvement	Sample Statement
For the Child	Happiness (n=8)	* Children get socialized, their confidence and initiative skills are improved. (T-3)
	Confidence Boost (n=4)	
	Solving Problems (n=3)	
	Willingness to come to school (n=3)	* Children feel important. (T-11)
	Improving the Child's Communication with the Parents(n=3)	* They spend quality time with the mother and father. The family becomes aware of the child's skills and creativity. (T-5)
	Feeling of Importance (n=2)	
	Better Learning (n=2)	
For the Parents	Increase in Family Confidence (n=6)	* They know their child better. (T-7)
	Strengthening the Family's Communication with the Child (n=4)	* The family knows us and vice versa. Our sharing with the family is thus improved. (T-14)
	Improving Self About the Child (n=4)	
	Spending Quality Time with the Child (n=4)	
	Understanding the Importance of Pre-School (n=2)	*They see what pre-school is. They understand that it contributes to children. (T-12)
	Compliance of the Child with the Rules (n=2)	
	Relief for the Family (n=1)	*They become more conscious. They are able to more closely follow their children and their experiences at the school. (T-21)
	Increase in Sharing with the School (n=1)	

For the Teacher and the School	Easiness of Communication with the Family (n=7)	* It helps me know the parents. (T-17)
	Motivation (n=5)	* The child feels comfortable at the school. This way, the relationship between the parent and the teacher becomes positive. (T-21)
	Knowing the Child Better (n=4)	
	Gaining Experience (n=3)	
	Opportunities for Different Activities (n=2)	* Our relationship with the family is strengthened. I become more efficient and motivated. (T-23)
	The Job Gets Easier (n=2)	
	The Child's Academic Success (n=2)	
	Opportunity to Know the Family (n=1)	* I get to know the child better. (T-9)
	Appreciation of the Value of the Teacher (n=1)	
Achieving Order in the Classroom (n=1)		

Table 1 shows the benefits of organizing family involvement activities in the pre-school period. According to the teachers, family involvement activities provided benefits to the students in terms of happiness of children (n=8), confidence boost (n=4), willingness to come to school (n=3), being able to solve problems (n=3), feeling of importance (n=2).

According to the teachers, family involvement activities provided benefits to the families in terms of increase in the communication between the parents and the children (n=4), improving themselves about their child (n=4), spending quality time with their child (n=4).

Teacher also stated that they benefited from family involvement activities in terms of easy communication between the teacher and the family (n=7), motivation for the teacher (n=5), knowing the children better (n=4), increasing the child's academic success (n=2).

Table 2.

Teachers' Opinions on the Parent Involvement Activities Organized and the Parents Involvement in the Activities

Parent Involvement Activities	Occurrence		Mother Involvement	Father Involvement
	f	%	f	f
PTA meeting	17	73.9	16	7
In-class and outdoor activities for families	14	60.9	15	7
Invitation to the school in special times	10	43.5	9	5
Newsletters	9	39.1	8	6

Individual meetings	7	30.4	6	2
House visits	7	30.4	4	0
Development reports	5	21.7	3	2
End of year exhibitions	5	21.7	4	3
Daily conversations (arrival – departure times)	5	21.7	6	4
Photos	4	17.4	3	2
Phone calls	4	17.4	4	2
Written correspondence	4	17.4	3	1
Group documents	2	8.7	2	1
Suggestion box	2	8.7	0	0
Bulletin board	2	8.7	1	0
Conferences	2	8.7	3	1
Brochures	2	8.7	1	0
Tapes/Video recordings	2	8.7	1	0

Table 2 shows the opinions of the teachers on the family involvement activities they organized and the parents participating in the activities. It may be seen that teachers reported mothers participated more than fathers in the family involvement activities they organized. For example, the teachers stated that mothers participated (n=16) more than fathers did (n=7) in the PTA meetings they organized.

It is seen that the teachers, in order to achieve family involvement, organized PTA meetings the most (n=17), followed by in-class and outdoor activities for families (n=14). Additionally, they also organized invitations for families in special times (n=10), newsletters (n=9), individual meetings (n=7), house visits (n=7), development reports (n=5), conversations with the parents at times the child is brought to or picked up from the school (n=5), and end of the year exhibitions (n=5). It may be seen that the pre-school teachers referred less to family involvement activities such as phone calls (n=4), photos (n=4), written correspondence (n=4), conferences (n=2), brochures (n=2), tapes/video recordings (n=2), bulletin boards (n=2), group documents (n=2), suggestion boxes (n=2).

It was found that, in addition to these activities, the pre-school teachers also organized field trips, chose to give homework, gained support from the guidance counselor of the school, organized activities such as child of the week, breakfast and picnics, pave article box and project homework, celebrated the child's birthday, and achieved family involvement this way.

Table 3.

Teachers’ Opinions on the Parent that Participates in Family Involvement Activities More

Participating Parent	f	%
Mother	20	87.0
Father	0	0.0
Both Parents Based on Availability	3	13.0

As seen in Table 3, 20 teachers stated that mostly the mother participated in the activities, while 3 others stated that both parents participated when they were available.

Table 4.

Teachers’ Opinions on Why Fathers Participate Less in Family Involvement Activities

Reasons for lack of involvement by the fathers	Sample statement
Working conditions (n=7)	* Working hours are generally not suitable, they are busy. (T-13)
As they see it as the mother’s job (n=5)	* Fathers are not interested in the education of their children. (T-2)
They think they could not come down to the child’s level (n=3)	* They see it as the mother’s job and therefore, they do not participate. (T-8)
Assignment of the responsibility to the mother (n=2)	* Fathers are not able to come down to the child’s level much. (T-21)
Mothers being more interested (n=2)	* They are shy and they think they cannot do it. (T-5)
Mothers being more comfortable (n=2)	
Activities appeal more to mothers (n=2)	

Table 4 shows that teachers explained why fathers did not participate more in family involvement activities mostly by the working conditions of the fathers (n=7) and that they see the child-related issues as the mother’s job (n=5).

Table 5.

Teachers’ Organization of Activities for Involvement of the Fathers

Activity Organization	f	%	Reasons	Sample Statement
Yes	3	13.4		
No	20	86.9	Did not mind (n=5)	*I tried but failed. Involvement was very low even on fathers’ day. (G-14)
			Previous failure (n=5)	*They indicated they would not be able to participate in any activities in the PTA meeting. (G-1)

Did not think about it (n=4)	*I did not organize it because there was no involvement. (G-16)
Unwillingness of the fathers (n=4)	* They indicated they would not be able to participate in any activities in the PTA meeting. (G-7)
Shyness of the fathers (n=3)	
Because they are the ones who need to care (n=3)	

Table 5 shows that 3 of the pre-school teachers stated that they planned activities for the fathers' involvement. 20 stated that they did not. The participants who did not organize these activities, while they did not have a problem with involvement of the fathers, explained their reasons as that they tried before but the fathers did not attend (n=5), they did not think of it (n=4), the fathers were unwilling (n=4), the fathers were shy around the teacher and children (n=3) and the idea that the fathers should be the ones to be concerned about participating in family involvement activities (n=3).

Table 6.

Teachers' Opinions on Difficulties They Faced in Achieving Fathers' Involvement

Difficulties faced	f	%	Sample statement
Fathers participate less as they are busy	17	73.9	*I do not feel confident in working with fathers due to lack of experience. (T-11)
Teachers feel incompetent in working with fathers	4	17.4	*Fathers participate less as they are busy. (T-5) *Fathers do not believe in the need for family involvement. (T-13)
Fathers are not able to establish a positive relationship with the teacher	4	17.4	*Fathers are not interested in family involvement activities as they find it difficult to establish a positive relationship with the teacher. (T-17)
Fathers feel lack of confidence in participating in the child's life	3	13.0	*They feel lack of confidence as they do not know how to help the child, and because of this, they do not participate in the family events on the desired levels. (T-10)
Fathers do not believe in family involvement	3	13.0	*Fathers who experience problems with their spouses do not prefer to participate in the activities at the school. (T-9)
Fathers assign the responsibility to the mothers	2	8.6	*The do not participate because they transfer the responsibility to the mother. (T-14)
Fathers have a problem with their spouses	1	4.3	*They do not participate because we are not inviting them. (T-16)
Fathers have difficulty in reaching the school	1	4.3	
Fathers are not invited to the school	1	4.3	

Table 6 shows that the teachers explained the difficulties they experienced in involvement of fathers in family involvement activities mostly by the fathers being too busy to attend (n=17). They also provided reasons such as lack of confidence due to lack of experience (n=4), that fathers are not able to establish a positive relationship with the teacher (n=4), that fathers did not believe in involvement (n=3), that fathers felt lack of confidence in involvement with the child's life (n=3) and that they assigned the responsibility to the mothers (n=2).

Table 7.

Teachers' Opinions on Things They May Do to Increase Father Involvement

Options that may be used to increase father involvement	Sample statement
Organizing activities for fathers only (n=13)	* Meeting times should be decided upon based on the free times of the fathers. (T-12)
Encouraging/persuading fathers (n=5)	* Only the fathers may be invited to the classroom, and one day of the week may be declared a day for the fathers. (T-4)
Choosing times suitable for fathers (n=3)	* Fathers should be encouraged and persuaded. (T-9)
Raising awareness in fathers (n=2)	

Based on Table 7, teachers said, to increase fathers' involvement, father-only activities may be organized (n=13), fathers may be encouraged and persuaded (n=5), activities may be set at times suitable for the fathers (n=3) and awareness may be raised in fathers on the issue (n=2).

CONCLUSION

The study found that the teachers though family involvement activities are useful for children. In terms of the benefits provided by family involvement activities for the children, the teachers mentioned children's happiness, boosting of their confidence, improvement of their problem-solving skills, increases in their skills of taking responsibility, gaining of positive behaviors, willingness of coming to school, contributions in socializing of the children, and strengthening of children's communication with their parents. The relevant literature shows that family involvement activities affect children positively. In studies by Powell and his friends (2010) and Mcwayne, Campos and Owsianic (2004), it was found that the children of families who participated in family involvement activities had improved social skills, reduced problematic behaviors and these activities affected the children positively. Studies by Decker and Decker (2005) and Erdoğan and Demirkasımoğlu (2010) found that observation of the collaboration between their parents and their teacher by children will influence their attitudes towards the school positively. In another study by Rimm-Kaufman et al. (2003), pre-school teachers stated that children who participated in these activities with their families had higher values than those in children who did not participate with their parent in terms of academic skills, language and mathematics success

levels. Considering all these results obtained from previous studies and adding the results of this study, it may be suggested that making family involvement activities a part of education in the pre-school period will contribute to the development of children in various aspects.

According to the results, the teachers stated the families benefited from family involvement activities in terms of increase in their confidence in the school, establishing positive communication with their children and the school, improving themselves about their children, spending quality time with their children, and knowing their children and the school better. In relation to this, Eliason and Jenkins (2003) stated that families become aware of educational activities in the school with the help of family involvement activities, and hence, they understand the functions of both the school and the educational program better. Chrispeels and González (2004), as a result of the parent involvement program they implemented, stated that parents were more compassionate of their children, resorted to physical punishment less, and showed important changes in issues such as parenting practices, self-efficacy and parenting attitudes by spending more time in the educational activities of their children. Moreover, according to the result, the teachers most frequently stated the increase of confidence of the parents in the school and the teacher among the benefits provided to the family. Considering these results and those of other studies in the literature, it may be argued that, via family involvement activities in school, parents not only get more involved in the education process, but they also improve their parenting skills.

Considering the opinions of the teachers on the benefits provided for teachers and schools by family involvement activities, it was found that they mentioned being motivated, knowing the individual traits of the children better, increasing the children's sensory and academic skills. With family involvement activities, as teachers develop positive relationships with families, they are supported and respected more by the parents (Eliason & Jenkins, 2003). Thus, family involvement activities have a significant place in teachers achieving professional motivation. Likewise, Henderson and Berla (1994) reported that family involvement activities provided motivation for teachers, teachers gained more support from parents, success levels of their students increased, and families assessed teachers more positively.

The results show that, as expected, the teachers stated PTA meetings as the events they most frequently organized. This result is in agreement with the findings of the study by Şahin and Turla (2003) that most teachers organized PTA meetings as a way of family involvement and set up individual meetings. Çaltık and Kandır (2006) stated that, among family involvement activities, teachers most frequently organized PTA meetings, phone calls, prepared bulletins and bulletin boards, sent newsletters, prepared pamphlets-brochures-posters, and sent photos to families. On the other hand, while the teachers stated that they implemented some family

involvement activities, the results showed that they did not organize these to a desirable extent, and the involvement by fathers was low.

According to the pre-school teachers who participated in the study, mostly the mothers of the students participated in the family activities. Other studies on this issue also showed similar results, with more involvement by mothers in comparison to fathers (Coley & Morris, 2002; Laflamme et al., 2002; McBride & Rane, 1997; Yeung et al., 2001). For example; Gonzalez et al. (2023) noted low paternal involvement in their research. Similarly, in the researches of Belli and his friends (2021), it was concluded that fathers should improve themselves in participating in school studies. In this case, it shows that mothers are generally more active in participating in the life and education of the child, and fathers are left behind.

In the study, the reasons that were provided by the teachers most frequently for lack of involvement by the fathers were intensity of work and unsuitable working conditions. McBride et al. (2002), in their study with pre-school teachers, stated that the primary obstacle for involvement in such activities by families was lack of suitable time, followed by difficulties in transportation, lack of awareness of the families on the importance of family involvement, and negative perceptions of families regarding the school environment. It is possible to list the factors that reduce the involvement of fathers in the child's life as lack of parenting skills, personal problems, problems related to the mother, length of working hours, economic problems. Additionally, it has been reported that some other reasons include fathers' perceptions that this is a job for the mother, it is the mother's responsibility, and mother are better at establishing communication (Crouter et al., 1987; Christenson, 2004; Crites, 2008). Similarly, Shumow and Miller (2001) also found lower rates of involvement in school by fathers in comparison to mothers. On the other hand, in the study of Mamur (2021), it was concluded that fathers do not see preschool education as important and are passive in participation. This result can be correlated with the research findings in parallel.

Another result of the study is that only a small part of the teachers stated that they plan activities for involvement of the fathers. Most teachers stated that they are not able to organize activities appealing to the fathers. While they did not have a problem with involvement of the fathers, they stated the reasons as, that they tried but failed, they did not think about it, the fathers were not willing, and the fathers were shy around children and teachers. Involvement of fathers in the activities at the school may only be achieved as a result of organized planning. Especially in cases where planning is not made for the fathers, they do not participate in the activities at the school by providing various reasons. Tabak (2020), in his study examining the variables related to family participation, stated that the teacher's invitation is one of the important variables in father participation. In their study, Gürşimşek, Kefi and Girgin (2007) found that, at schools where involvement

of the fathers is not encouraged, fathers behaved reluctant about involvement due to reasons of not being able to find enough time, being uncomfortable at school, finding it difficult to establish relationships with other parents. Likewise, Fagan and Palm (2004) also stated that fathers get discouraged from attending activities at the school when they hear that other fathers will not participate either. This situation demonstrates the need for organizing and encouraging father involvement in family activities more thoroughly.

In achieving father involvement, the teachers stated the fathers' being busy as the case they found the most difficult. Similarly, Abbak (2008) stated that unemployed parents who are living nearby the school visited the school almost every day and talked to the teachers in person. It may be stated that, as they are not able to visit the school, working parents who live farther away cannot be sufficiently aware of family involvement activities. Moreover, the findings of the study show that another issue the teachers found difficult in father involvement was that they had lack of confidence due to insufficient experience. This may have resulted from the lack of experience of the teachers regarding knowledge and skills related to family involvement.

According to another result of the study, the teachers thought that, in order to increase the fathers' involvement, father-only activities may be organized, the fathers may be encouraged and persuaded, activities may be set up for times suitable for the fathers, and awareness on this issue may be raised in the family. In Özkan's study (2014) it was observed that father involvement increased when family involvement activities with fathers were organized by considering the available time slots, needs and necessities, and sociocultural characteristics of the fathers.

As a result of the study, it was found that the participant teachers thought family involvement activities were useful for the children, parents, schools and teachers. A family should be able to continuously monitor the development of their child by receiving information from the school. Therefore, the positive and negative changes that are observed in the child may be detected early and repaired in a shorter time.

The results of the study emphasize the place and significance of father involvement in pre- school education. Accordingly, in pre-school education, the target audience may be determined as fathers in addition to mother, and studies on father involvement may be developed, implemented and popularized. Moreover, while teachers are planning family involvement activities, they may organize father-only activities in order to increase involvement by fathers. While planning these activities, they may increase involvement of the fathers by considering the working hours, interests and needs of the fathers. Teachers may inform the fathers regarding child development and support them in their establishment of positive

and healthy relationships with their children by organizing group meetings and conferences based on the needs of the fathers. Schools and educators may guide the family in regard to activities that will diversify and enrich fathers' relationships with their children.

Activities that will help fathers establish positive relationships with teachers should be planned. Practices and environment that will encourage father involvement should be organized in pre-school education institutions. Settings should be prepared to allow fathers to share the outcomes they obtained from involvement in the education process. Finally, teachers should be informed about family involvement, and their awareness of diversity of the activities to be carried out should be raised.

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