

THE SOCIAL WORK PERCEPTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

İLKÖĞRETİM ÖĞRETMENLERİNDE SOSYAL HİZMET ALGISI VE OKUL SOSYAL HİZMETİ

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to highlight the importance of school social work oriented towards the increasing problems in the school-age children, present the views and attitudes of the primary school teachers, who have close relationships with the students, towards the social problems in the school, determine the perceptions of primary school teachers towards the social work and provide academic contributions to the sustainable school social service.

180 primary school teachers working in district schools at different socio-economic levels in the Küçükçekmece County, İstanbul participated in the study. Socio-demographic, educational and professional information of teachers, as well as their views and attitudes towards the social problems in the schools, their perception of social work, their views and solutions towards both problems and school social work are determined with the interview form developed by the researcher. The problems encountered in the schools, as well as the quantitative and qualitative insufficiency of current psycho-social support for these problems, were revealed in the study. Besides, it was detected that the knowledge of teachers about the social work profession is insufficient, considering the aim and scope of their profession. However, their perception of social work was found to be mostly positive, and they viewed school social work as a necessity for solving the problems in the schools.

Keywords: Social Work Perception, Problems of Students, School Social Work

ÖZ

Bu araştırma, okul çağı çocuklarında artan sorunlara yönelik okul sosyal hizmetinin önemini vurgulamak, öğrencilerle yakın ilişkide bulunan ilköğretim öğretmenlerinin okullarda karşılaşılan sosyal sorunlara yönelik görüş ve tutumlarını ortaya koymak, ilköğretim öğretmenlerinin sosyal hizmet algılarının nasıl olduğunu tespit etmek ve sürdürülebilir bir okul sosyal hizmetinin sunulmasına akademik katkı sağlamak amacıyla yapılmıştır.

Çalışma, Küçükçekmece İlçesinde farklı sosyo-ekonomik seviyedeki semt okullarında görevli 180 ilköğretim öğretmeni ile yapılmıştır. Araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen görüşme formu ile öğretmenlerin sosyo-demografik, eğitim ve meslek bilgileri, okullardaki sosyal sorunlara yönelik görüş ve tutumları, sosyal hizmet algıları ve hem sorunların çözümü hem de okul sosyal hizmetine yönelik görüş ve önerileri saptanmaya çalışılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda okullarda karşılaşılan sorunlar ve bu sorunlara yönelik mevcut psiko-sosyal desteğin nicelik ve nitelik bakımından yetersizliği ortaya konmuştur. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin; sosyal hizmet mesleğine yönelik bilgilerinin, mesleğin amaç ve kapsamı doğrultusunda değerlendirildiğinde yetersiz olduğu, fakat çoğunlukla sosyal hizmet algılarının olumlu yönde olduğu ve okuldaki sorunların çözümü noktasında okul sosyal hizmetini ihtiyaç olarak gördükleri saptanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Hizmet Algısı, Öğrenci Sorunları, Okul Sosyal Hizmeti

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INTRODUCTION

Schools, founded to provide education to the children, are organizations witnessing the daily life of children and even playing an important role in shaping their lives.

Schools are composed of different groups of people such as managers, teachers and students. The dynamics of the relationship between these groups of people maintain the presence of schools. The families and environment of the children are involved in this system as important factors, despite not being present physically in the school system. Thus, the dynamics of these relationships should be included in the framework for creating solutions to the problems of students as well as all other activities concerning students.

The studies show that various problems in the family structure cause social-cognitive impairments, behaviour disorder, academic failure, drop-out, substance abuse and turning into crime, and threatens children (Baykara Acar ve Gökçearsan Çifci, 2011: 51; Çamur Duyan, 2011; 19-24). Besides, some studies revealed that while families can be the source of the problem, they can also be the solution to problems encountered (Gökçearsan Çifci and Polat Uluocak, 2011: 97).

The solution to the problem encountered by the children can be impossible only by working with the children. Including the family to the solution process and working in an integrated system can make it possible to reach a solution.

This situation is closely related to the "individual in her/his environment" concept, which is at the focus of social work. The social environment of the child is her/his family. Therefore, within the school social work framework, the interventions to be applied to the children encountering problems and her/his environment are important for carrying out preventive activities and developing necessary policies.

School social work should be initiated as soon as possible in the schools, which are very important for reaching the children in providing and maintaining their welfare. The problems in the environment of vulnerable children can be provided with solutions and their social sufficiency can be developed by increasing their environmental support with school social work, acting with an ecological perspective (Dupper, 2003/2013: 3). The empowerment approach adopted by the school social work plays a major role at this point. The individual is provided with opportunities to develop her/his capacity by focusing on her/his strengths (İçağasıoğlu Çoban, 2011:120). The correct analysis of necessities, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and developing models for these necessities will increase the quality of social work to be provided. Thus, determining the types of problems encountered at schools, the frequency of these problems, the extent to which the intervention to these problems is applied or the if any intervention is applied, the methods applied to these problems, the perspectives of teachers to the problems, their opinions about the parents, their evaluations about the current psycho-social support, their perspectives about the social work, which acts as the provider of social justice, and their views and suggestions about the problems at schools has great importance.

The study aims to provide answers to the aforementioned questions and highlight the importance of school social work.

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Purpose of the Research

The primary objective of the study is to reveal the need for school social service through the social service perceptions of the teachers.

In addition, it is aimed to find out whether the findings obtained varies depending on environments at different socio-economic levels by conducting interviews with the teachers at district schools at different socioeconomic levels, which are determined after working with the District National Education Directorate.

The sub-objectives of the research are determining the types of problems the teachers encounter at schools, the solutions to these problems and the methods they apply in order to solve these problems, as well as providing suggestions for the solution.

The Significance of the Research

Schools are the second-closest environment for the children, after their family (Altun, 2016: 313). Children spend the majority of their daily lives in school. Considered from this aspect, the schools are one of the most effective ways to reach children and their families. Interventions for the problems encountered by the children are usually applied at a delayed pace. Determining the problem in situations such as sexual abuse is usually much harder as the child exhibit protective behaviour towards the perpetrator. The schools have great importance in raising awareness of school workers in recognizing these problems and symptoms of abuse, as well as applying necessary intervention, prevention and orientation activities by school social workers and other related professionals (Jarolmen, 2014/2017; 260).

Schools have an important mission for developing, raising as well as reintegrating the individual (Özbeşler and Duyan, 2009: 24). The most efficient professionals in the realization of this mission are undoubtedly teachers. Raising the awareness of teachers, who are close witnesses to the many problems children face, and providing the suitable school environment for applying the required social work applications are key factors for the solution to current problems and prevention for possible problems school-age children may encounter.

Two striking points are making this study important. First of all, the study will contribute to filling the gap in the academic literature by presenting the information, opinions and evaluations of teachers about the social work, revealing the interventions applied to the problems encountered in the schools, as well as determining the perception of primary school teachers about the social work.

Secondly, the study is expected to contribute to developing social policies on education by presenting the current situation, requirements as well as attitudes and opinions of teachers when they encounter problems with children.

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METHOD

The study employed a mixed research orientation. General survey model and correlational survey model, two different types of survey model, were employed as the models. The features, preferences and attitudes of the sample group were investigated with general survey model. The relationship between two or more variables and the existence of significant differentiation between the case level analyzed and variable were analyzed with the correlational survey model (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2015: 103-105). The attitudes, opinions and suggestions of the primary school teachers were descriptively analyzed with the inductive approach, as the qualitative dimension of the study (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2015: 101)

Sample Group

The population of the study is the primary school teacher. The sample group of the study consists of 180 primary school teachers, 90 of them from district schools at low socio-economic level, remaining 90 of them from district schools at high socio-economic level, in the Küçükçekmece County, İstanbul The schools included in the study were determined by employing the disproportionate stratified sampling method; the socio-economic level of the districts they operate were stratified.

Data Collection Tools

Semi-structured interview form was employed as the data collection tool in the study. The form was developed by the researcher. It consists of open-ended questions, two-choice and multiple-choice questions, which have both quantitative and qualitative character. The interview form consists of four parts and a total of 43 questions. The first part consists of 13 questions about the socio-demographic, educational and professional background of participants. The second part consists of 15 questions aiming the reveal the opinions and attitudes of participants about the social problems. The third part has 14 questions aiming to determine the participants' perception of social work. Last part consists of one question about the opinions and suggestions of the participants.

Data Collection Process

The researcher went to schools, determined based on the information received from Küçükçekmece District National Education Directorate, during the working hours. The interview form was applied to the teachers who were volunteered to participate in the study. The form was applied during the appropriate hours for teachers. The participants were introduced to the interview form, and they were given information about the subject of the study by the researcher. The questions raised during the application of the form were answered by the researcher. The names of the school included in the study were made anonymous due to the ethical considerations.

After receiving the necessary permits from Governorship of İstanbul Provincial Directorate for National Education, an interview with Küçükçekmece District National Education Directorate was held to determine the schools to be included in the study.

The researcher went to the schools included in the study during the working hours. During the recess, when the teachers gather in the teachers' lounge, the researcher gave information to teachers about the study. Approximately 25 interview forms were given and approximately 12 of them were filled on a volunteer basis in each school. Teachers participating in the study were assured that their names and the name of the school they work would be kept anonymous. Thus they were ensured to answer the interview questions sincerely and the correct data were obtained in the study.

Data Analysis

The data obtained employing the semi-structured interview form applied in the study were coded and analyzed by using IBM Research Statistics 24.0 statistics software.

Descriptive analysis was used to compile, collect and summarize the data on the variables, and the Chi-square test was used in

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order to determine if there is a significant relationship between the variables. Chi-square test is a nonparametric test widely used in the data analyses (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2015: 2011-243).

The interview forms were filled by the primary school teachers who agreed to participate in the study. All the responses of participants to the open-ended questions were read by the researcher. The semantically close responses were categorized based on their frequency and they were individually coded. The encoded data were entered and then descriptive analyses were conducted.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study found that 69.5 per cent of the teachers are in the 20-35 **age group**. When the age groups of teachers and the social-economic level (SEL) of the schools are compared, a significant relationship ($p<0.05$) was found between two variables. According to the results, the teachers in the schools with low socioeconomic level are younger than the teachers in the schools with high socioeconomic level.

Teachers receiving **in-service training** approximately consists of four-fifths of the group (79.8 per cent). In other words, one-fifth of the teachers in the sample hasn't undergone any in-service training. Several studies have highlighted the need and importance of in-service training in training qualified teachers and providing qualified education to the students (Ergin, Akseki and Deniz, 2012; 63-64; Kayabaş, 2008: 29; Seferoğlu, 2004: 94)

A significant relationship was found between the teachers receiving in-service training and school SEL ($p<0.05$). The number of teachers receiving in-service training increases as the socio-economic level (SEL) of the school increases. In particular, private schools in the high SEL group are thought to increase this ratio. When the contribution of in-service training in training qualified teacher is considered, it is observed that there is less effort in receiving this training especially in the schools in low SEL group.

When **the topics** (children/youth, school, family, society, communication, disability, addiction, poverty, violence, abuse/neglect and others) in the in-service training of the teachers are analyzed, it is observed that teachers mostly took in-service training in children/youth, communication and school subjects. Besides, a significant relationship was found between the SEL of the school and the training topics children/youth, school, family, communication and addiction sub-groups ($p<0.05$). The number of teachers receiving training on these subjects increases as the socio-economic level of the school increases.

As the experience of teachers may not be parallel with their age, the working experience of teachers was also evaluated in the study. When the active working years of the teachers are considered, it was seen that most of them (30 per cent) had 2-6 years of work experience. A significant relationship was found between the working years of teachers and the socio-economic level of schools.

The working experience of teachers increases as the socio-economic level of the school increases. It can be inferred that the number of experienced teachers increases in the schools in high socio-economic level. In another study comparing the working experience of teachers with the socio-economic development level of provinces, a strong positive relationship was found between these two variables. It was found that in provinces with high development level, the average working experience of teachers has a tendency to be high (Eğitime Bakış 2016- İzleme ve Değerlendirme Raporu, 2016: 172) The schools in the high socio-economic level, including the private ones, choose teachers not by appointment, but by selecting in accordance with the preferences of the school management; which make it possible for experienced teachers to work in these schools.

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When the **branches** are considered, more than half of the teachers in the study are branch teachers such as Turkish and mathematics, while the rest of them are class teachers and advisor teachers. Interviews were intended to be conducted with at least one or two counsellors or advisor teachers in each school, however, no advisor teacher was found in some schools in the low SEL group (despite having more than 1000 students); thus no interviews were conducted. 11 advisor teachers were reached in schools in the high SEL group while only 5 advisor teachers were reached in schools in low SEL group. More than 70% of the teachers worked as a class teacher or coach. A significant relationship was found between the teachers working as a **coach** and the gender of teachers ($p < 0.05$). Male teachers were found to work more as class teachers/coaches than female teachers.

The number of teachers working in **social responsibility projects** is lower than half of all teachers. These teachers participated in social responsibility projects mostly related to the child, society, school, youth and poverty.

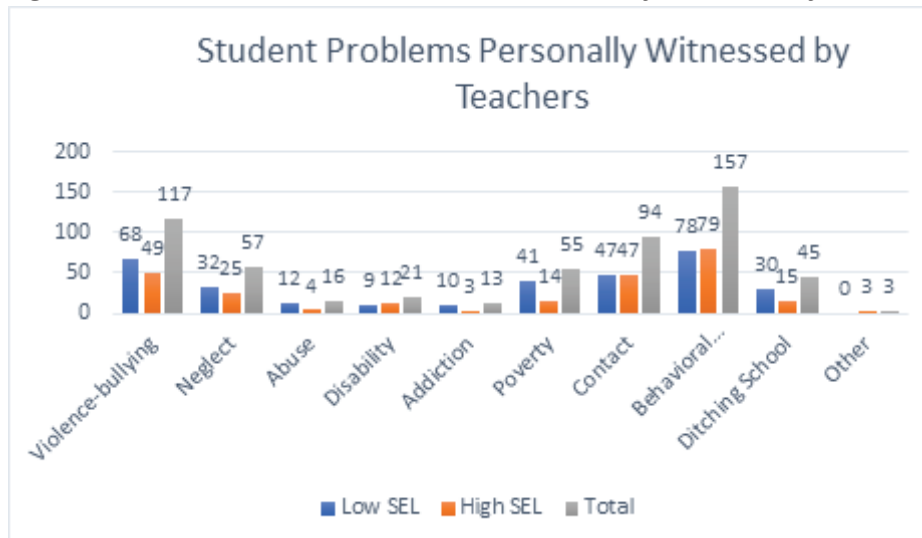
Teachers reported **having problems** between students, teachers, school management and parents within the context of school relations. Most of the problems were experienced between teacher-parents (68.3 per cent), student-student (65.6 per cent), student-teacher (55.0 per cent) and lastly teacher-school management (41.7 per cent). The high percentage of problems experienced by teachers both with parents, students and parents highlights the need of teachers for the school social work profession, acting as a bridge between school and parents. No significant relationship was found between groups experiencing problems and socio-economic level of schools. Another related research revealed that the psychological, economic and physical violence teachers face are found in schools both with low and high socioeconomic levels (Atmaca and Öntaş, 2014: 60) This fact show the need for school social work in schools both in high and low socioeconomic levels.

The problems witnessed by the teachers are listed based on their frequency as follows: behavioral problems (78.3 per cent), communication (73.3 per cent), neglect (40 per cent), mobbing (23 per cent), poverty (17 per cent), ditching school (15.6 per cent), abuse (9.4 per cent), disability (6.1 per cent) and addiction (5 per cent). Among these problems, A significant relationship was found between ditching school, poverty and school SEL ($p < 0.05$). In addition, the problems were found to be more frequent in schools especially in the low socio-economic level.

76 teachers reported **negative behaviour by their students** (disobedience to the disciplinary rules, slur, slander, threat, physical violence). When the type of negative behaviour is asked, more than half of the teachers ($n=92$) reported the disobedience to the disciplinary rules among students. The fact that the number of disobedience to the disciplinary rules is higher than the number of times the teachers were exposed to negative behaviours by their students may seem like a contradiction, it can be explained by the fact that the teachers didn't associate these attitudes with themselves.

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Figure 1: Distribution of Students Problems Personally Witnessed by Teachers Based on the School SEL



The student problems personally witnessed by 180 teachers participating in the study are listed as follows based on their frequency: behavior problems (n=157), violence-bullying (n=117), communication (n=94), neglect (n=57), poverty (n=55), ditching school (n=45), addiction (n=23), disability (n=21) and abuse (n=16). A significant relationship was found between school SEL and the sub-groups of violence-bullying, abuse, addiction, poverty and school ditching ($p < 0.05$). The number of these problems increase as the socio-economic level of the school decreases.

Almost all of the teachers (96.1 per cent) reported that they **intervened to the student problems** they witnessed. The intervention methods employed by these teachers are as follows based on their frequency: meeting with the child (n=148), guiding to the counselling service (n=137), meeting with the parents of the child (n=135), notifying the school management (n=118), visiting the house of child (n=24), guiding to the government agencies (n=13) and other (n=3). When the sub-groups are analyzed; a significant relationship was found between the method of guiding the counselling services and SEL of the school. The tendency of teachers to report the problems they encounter to the counselling services increases as the SEL of the school increases. The teachers in the schools in the low SEL group seem to abstain from reporting the problems to the school counselling services. This may be since the number of advisor teachers is low, or there is no advisor teacher in the school, the teachers may not believe that current advisor teacher may not be able to solve the problem, or the teachers may not know the intervention methods.

Teachers stated that they didn't intervene with the problem due to the following reasons: they refrain from the parents of the child, they don't know the related institutions/agencies, they don't want to be involved in the problem and they refrain from the school management.

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Chart -1: Chi-Square Test Results of Giving up Intervention Based on SEL of School

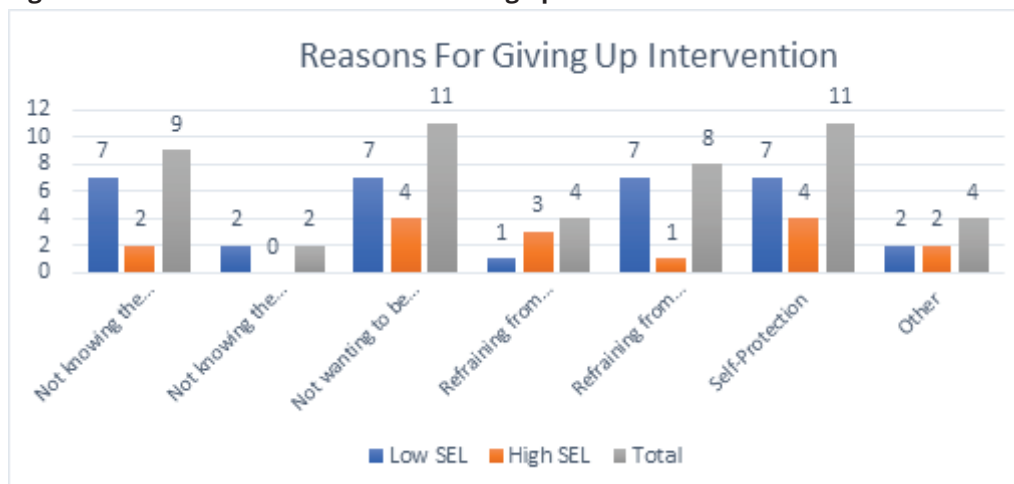
Variables	Groups	Low SEL		High SEL		Total	
		Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)	Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)	Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)
Giving up Intervention in the Student Problems	Yes	25	29.8	10	12.3	35	21.2
	No	59	70.2	71	87.7	130	78.8
Total		84	100.0	81	100.0	165	100.0

	Chi-square value	Degrees of Freedom	p
Pearson Chi-Square	7,484 ^a	1	.006

35 teachers **gave up intervention** despite feeling the need to intervene in the problem they encountered. In other words, more than one-fifth of the teachers (21 per cent) didn't intervene in the problems they encountered, despite the necessity of intervention. When the problems the teachers didn't intervene due to the unawareness of the problem are considered, it is revealed that problems encountered by children are ignored, let alone not solving them. In addition, only 3.9 per cent of the teachers reported not intervening in the problem they encountered in the previous question. 21.2 per cent of the same teachers reported not intervening in the problem in this question. It can be inferred from these results that teachers generally tend to solve the problems, but they abstain from intervention in some cases due to the different reasons.

In addition, a significant relationship was found between the teachers giving up from intervention and the SEL of school ($p < 0.05$). The teachers intervene less in the problems as the SEL of the school decreases. Considering the low quality and quantity of the counselling services in schools in the low SEL group, it can be inferred that the problems encountered by the students in the schools in the low SEL group are unsolved more than the students in the schools in the high SEL group.

Figure 2: Distribution of Reasons for Giving up Intervention Based on SEL of School



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Teachers' reasons for giving up intervention are refraining from the family of the child, not wanting to be involved in the problem, and not knowing the intervention method. When the statements of teachers are analyzed, it can be seen that they generally tend to protect themselves. Related studies in the literature revealed that teachers are exposed to violence at different types and varying extent, they are exposed to various attacks from slur to stabbing. As a result of these attacks, the teachers felt emotional exhaustion and their work and life satisfaction were negatively affected. (Aküzüm ve Oral, 2015: 20; Atmaca ve Öntaş, 2014: 49). In addition, rates of reasons for giving up intervention are generally seen in the teachers working in schools in the low SEL group, but no statistically significant relationship was found between these groups.

Likewise, no statistically significant relationship was found between the **refraining** from the family of child, not wanting to be involved in the problem, not knowing the intervention method and the **gender of teachers**; however, the difference between the percentage is significant. 90.9 per cent of the teachers giving up intervention in order to protect themselves and 81.8 per cent of the teachers giving up intervention due to not wanting to be involved in the problem are female. When we analyze the higher ratio of female teachers giving up intervention due to self-protection and not wanting to be involved in the problem within the framework of insufficient prevention services for violence against women and protection services for women, it can be inferred that female teachers don't feel secure in the system, thus abstain more from intervention compared to male teachers.

Only 3.4 per cent of teachers called **ALO 183** support service line, founded by the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services. While most of the teachers found the psycho-social support activities in the school insufficient and reported additional support, most of them didn't try to get this support from the ALO 183 support service line. This may be due to the fact that they don't have information about this support service line or they don't find this line as efficient in solving the problem.

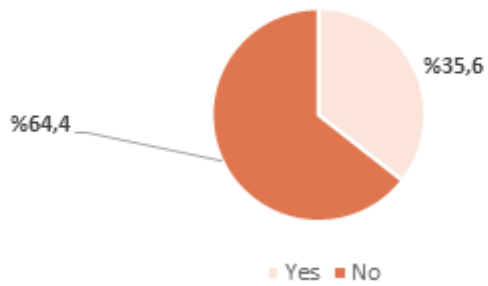
The responsible person for 180 teachers in solving the problems the students encounter are listed as advisor teacher (n=144), family (n=130), school management (n=129), class teacher (n=125), teacher (n=105), counseling research center (n=68), the student facing the problem (n=67), related government agency (n=42) and social worker (n=27). A statistically significant relationship was found between the responsible person as the advisor teacher and the SEL of the school ($p < 0.05$). The lower the socio-economic level of the school falls; the teachers less think the advisor teacher as the responsible person for solving the problem. This may be due to the insufficiency of advisor teachers in terms of both quality and quantity in the schools in the low SEL group.

Teachers think that parents have the second most responsibility in solving the problems of students. In addition, 92.2 per cent of teachers think that **families don't take enough responsibility for solving these problems**. Several related research has revealed the irresponsible and indifferent attitudes of parents and problems caused by these attitudes on students. (Kılıç, 2014: 32; Şama and Tarım, 2007: 144; Tunç, 2011: 19). At this point, the need for school social work is revealed, which will play an important role in solving the problems of students and include the families in the solution process.

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Figure 3: Teachers' Opinions About The Psycho-Social Support

Is there enough psycho-social support at
school?



64.4 per cent of teachers think that **enough psycho-social support is not provided** in the school. A significant relationship was found between these opinions and the SEL of school ($p < 0.05$). The frequency of this opinion increases as the SEL of the school decreases.

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Chart -2: Teachers' Definitions of Social Work

Variables	Groups	Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)
Activities Conducted to Solve Problems	Yes	29	16.1
	No	151	83.9
Total		180	100.0
Activities for Benefit/Advantage/Order/Welfare/Service of Society	Yes	31	17.3
	No	149	82.8
Total		180	100.0
Satisfying material and spiritual, socio-economic needs	Yes	32	17.8
	No	148	82.2
Total		180	100.0
Institution / Organization / Profession contributing/helping in social/economic/cultural/psychological aspects	Yes	44	24.4
	No	136	75.6
Total		180	100.0
Activities for developing/strengthening/liberating the individual/human/ society, increasing the quality of life, improving the social life	Yes	19	10.6
	No	161	89.4
Total		180	100.0
Services in the responsibility of state	Yes	11	6.1
	No	169	93.9
Total		180	100.0
Voluntary Service, Help/Organization	Yes	11	6.1
	No	169	93.9
Total		180	100.0
Activities conducted to prevent/detect/investigate the problems	Yes	17	9.4
	No	163	90.6
Total		80	100.0
Other	Yes	11	6.1
	No	169	93.9
Total		180	100.0

“How do you define social work?” 139 teachers among the 180 teachers in the study answered this question. Their answers were encoded in multiple ways. In other words, if the definition made by a teacher falls into two different categories, it is encoded in both of them. The teachers defined social work in the following ways based on the frequency: institution / organization / profession contributing/helping in social/economic/cultural/psychological aspects (n=44), satisfying material and spiritual, socio-economic needs (n=32), activities for benefit/advantage/order/welfare/service of society (n=31), activities conducted to solve problems (n=29), activities for developing/strengthening/liberating the individual/human/ society, increasing the quality

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of life, improving the social life (n=19), activities conducted to prevent/detect/investigate the problems (n=17), services in the responsibility of state (n=11), voluntary service / help / organization (n=11) and other (n=11).

Most of the teachers expressed social work as a touch having positive effects on human lives in different methods. When the definitions of social work concept are analyzed, the shared aspects with the definitions of teachers can be seen. At this point, most of the teachers can be said to have a positive perception of social work.

6.1 per cent of teachers defined social work as a voluntary service. This may indicate that some of the teachers view social work not as a right, but as help based on request.

The fact that macro-level features of the social work such as developing or guiding social policies weren't mentioned in the definitions of teachers is noticeable.

Chart -3: Responsibilities of Social Workers

Variables	Groups	Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)
Solves Problems	Yes	35	19.4
	No	145	80.6
Total		180	100.0
Helps/Supports	Yes	41	22.8
	No	139	77.2
Total		180	100.0
Investigates the Society/Problem, Creates Projects, Detects/ Analyzes Malfunctioning Aspects of Society	Yes	23	12.8
	No	157	87.2
Total		180	100.0
Serves the Community, Acts in order to contribute to Society/ Social Life, Improves the Quality of Life	Yes	12	6.7
	No	168	93.3
Total		180	100.0
Guides, Counsels and Refers	Yes	4	2.2
	No	176	97.8
Total		180	100.0
Works Voluntarily	Yes	6	3.3
	No	174	96.7
Total		180	100.0
Other	Yes	28	15.6
	No	152	84.4
Total		180	100.0

127 teachers responded to the question "What does a social worker do?" These data are encoded as multiple responses. Teachers gave the following responses based on the frequency: helps, supports (n=44), solves the problems (n=35), investigates the society/problem, creates projects, detects/analyzes malfunctioning aspects of society (n=23), Serves the Community, Acts

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in order to contribute to Society/Social Life, Improves the Quality of Life (n=12), works voluntarily (n=6), guides, counsels and refers (n=4) and other (n=28).

Most of the teachers defined the social workers as professionals contributing to society, helping people, investigating and solving problems. At this point, the perception towards the social worker can be said to be positive.

The fact that a small number of teachers defined the social worker as a voluntary worker indicates that social work isn't perceived as a profession. It is perceived as an activity based on helping.

Figure 4: The First Word Social Work Concept Evokes

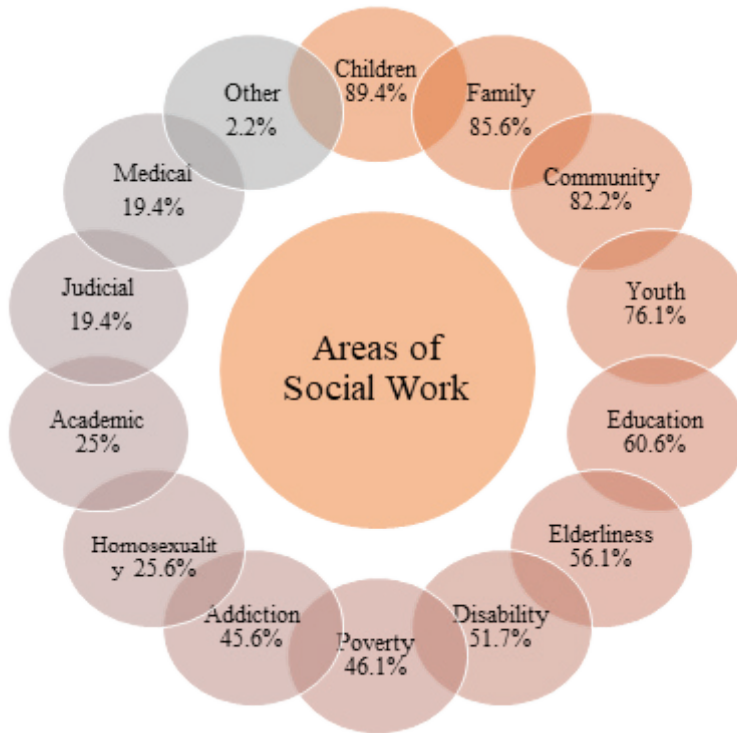


The first word the social service evokes are listed as follows based on their frequency: help / cooperation (n = 51), community (n = 14), support (n = 13), children (n = 7), solution (n = 6), volunteering (n = 3), solidarity (n = 3) and other (n = 52)

Teachers learned about social work mostly from Internet (n=74), printed media (n=51), work environment (n=50), immediate surroundings (n=50), tv/radio programs (n=47), branch training (n=35), public service ad (n=36), training out of teacher's branch (n=35), special interest (n=22) and other (n=3). When the responses are analyzed, it can be seen that printed and visual media, especially the Internet play an active role in the information transfer. However, only 24.4 per cent of the teachers learned about social work during branch training. When the curricula of education faculties, especially the counselling services departments are analyzed, courses related to social work can rarely be seen. In addition, starting from 2006-2007 academic year, Social Service Applications course has been presented to trainee teachers in order to increase the public awareness, develop social responsibility and improve efficient communication (Topluma Hizmet Uygulamaları Dersi Yönergesi, 2011: 1) . The studies about this education usually reveals positive results and successful gains in trainee teachers, (Er Nas, Şenel Çoruhlu and İpek Akbulut, 2015: 39; Küçüköğlü, 2012: 220-221) while another study on the same subject pointed out the insufficiency of the course due to being theory-driven and insufficient course hours, despite highlighting the advantages of education (Ergül, 2014: 231-232) .

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Figure 5: Application Areas of Social Work



The application field of social services teachers chose are listed as follows based on their frequency: children (n = 161), family (n = 154), community (n = 148), youth (n = 137), education (n = 109), elderliness (n = 101), disability (n = 93), poverty (n = 83), addiction (n = 82), homosexuality (n = 46), academic (n = 45), judicial (n = 35), medical (n = 35) and other (n = 4). Teachers think that social work profession mostly operates in the children and family fields. The fact that “Family” is involved in the current Ministry of Family and Social Policies, formerly entitled as “Social Services and Child Protection Agency” may provide a basis for this thought. Many of the teachers don’t know the social work practices in various fields such as judicial and medical social services, although many social workers operate in these fields.

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Chart -4: Target Group of Social Work

Variables	Groups	Low SEL		High SEL		Total	
		Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)	Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)	Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)
Individual	Yes	69	76.7	59	65.6	128	71.1
	No	21	23.3	31	34.4	52	28.9
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0
Family	Yes	62	68.9	56	62.2	118	65.6
	No	28	31.1	34	37.8	62	34.4
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0
Disadvantaged groups (migrants, disabled, addicted et al.)	Yes	51	56.7	37	41.1	88	48.9
	No	39	43.3	53	58.9	92	51.1
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0
Society	Yes	75	83.3	70	77.8	145	80.6
	No	15	16.7	20	22.2	35	19.4
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0
Other	Yes	4	4.4	2	2.2	6	3.3
	No	86	95.6	88	97.8	174	96.7
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0

Most of the teachers view society as the target group of social work. Individual, family and disadvantaged groups follow society, respectively. A significant relationship was found between the teachers viewing the disadvantaged groups as the target group of social work and the school SEL ($p < 0.05$). The number of teachers stating the disadvantaged groups as the target group of social work increases as the SEL of the school decreases. Considering the fact that violence, abuse, addiction and poverty problems are more frequently encountered in schools in the low SEL group (See. (See. Table 4.2.5, Table: 4.2.6, Table: 4.2.7, Table: 4.2.8, Table: 4.2.9) Teachers in the schools in the low SEL group may be said to have witnessed more people encountering problems and looking for solutions. The teachers may think these people as the target group of social work.

There are 50 teachers contacting with the social work institutions due to any reason. The institutions these teachers contacted are listed as follows based on their frequency: nursing home/hospice, disabled / rehabilitation centres, society for the protection of children, community center (social services center), child and youth centers, violence prevention centers and other institutions. A significant relationship was found between the teachers contacting nursing home/ hospice and school SEL ($p < 0.05$). The number of teachers contacting nursing home/hospice increases as the SEL of school increases.

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Chart-5: Responsibility to Provide Social Work

Variables	Groups	Low SEL		High SEL		Total	
		Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)	Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)	Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)
Central Government (State)	Yes	81	90.0	71	78.9	152	84.4
	No	9	10.0	19	21.1	28	15.6
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0
Local government	Yes	37	41.1	30	33.3	67	37.2
	No	53	58.9	60	66.7	113	62.8
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0
Non-governmental Organizations	Yes	46	51.1	44	48.9	90	50.0
	No	44	48.9	46	51.1	90	50.0
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0
Private Organization	Yes	15	16.7	15	16.7	30	16.7
	No	75	83.3	75	83.3	150	83.3
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0
Other	Yes	1	1.1	0	0	1	0.6
	No	89	98.9	90	100.0	179	99.4
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0

Most of the teachers think that the responsibility to provide social work belongs to central government (state) (84.4 per cent), non-governmental organizations (50.0 per cent), local government (37.2 per cent) and private institutions (16.7 per cent). A significant relationship was found between the SEL of the school and the opinion that the responsibility to provide social work belongs to the central government ($p < 0.05$). The opinion that the responsibility to provide social work belongs to the central government increases as the socio-economic level of the school decreases.

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Chart -6: Teachers' Opinions on Social Work

Variables	Groups	Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)
Are social work activities at a satisfying level?	Yes	14	8.0
	No	160	92.0
Total		174	100.0
Do you think that there is enough social worker?	Yes	13	7.6
	No	158	92.4
Total		171	100.0
Do you think that a social work department to be formed in the school would be helpful?	Yes	162	97.0
	No	5	3.0
Total		167	100.0
Do you think that school social work will lighten your workload?	Yes	145	90.1
	No	16	9.9
Total		161	100.0

92 per cent of the teachers think that social work activities in Turkey aren't sufficient. Again, the majority of teachers (92.4 per cent) think that the number of social workers in Turkey isn't sufficient. According to the compilation of Karakuş conducted in 2015, 4625 social workers are employed by the state while there are approximately 350 social workers employed in the private sector (Karakuş, 2016b: 186). Several social problems such as problems arising due to the socio-economic-cultural changes, increase in the elderly population (TÜİK, 2018), increase in the number of children driven to the crime despite a decline in the child population (See: Table:1.1.1), and the prevalence of violence against women (Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet Araştırması, 2015). Despite the existence of these problems, the insufficient number of social workers draws attention.

Almost all of the teachers participating in the study have positive views for the social work department to be founded in the school. 97 per cent of these teachers think that school social work department will be useful. 90.1 per cent of the teachers think that school social work will lessen their workload.

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Chart -7: Professionals that should be employed in the School Social Work Department

Variables	Groups	Low SEL		High SEL		Total	
		Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)	Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)	Number of People (n)	Percentage (%)
Social Worker	Yes	74	82.2	57	63.3	131	72.8
	No	16	17.8	33	36.7	49	27.2
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0
Psychologist	Yes	62	68.9	62	68.9	124	68.9
	No	28	31.1	28	31.1	56	31.1
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0
Psychological counsellor and guide	Yes	76	84.4	66	73.3	142	78.9
	No	14	15.6	24	26.7	38	21.1
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0
Voluntary Teacher	Yes	48	53.3	42	46.7	90	50.0
	No	42	46.7	48	53.3	90	50.0
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0
Other	Yes	6	6.7	6	6.7	12	6.7
	No	84	93.3	84	93.3	168	93.3
Total		90	100.0	90	100.0	180	100.0

The professionals that should be employed in the school social work department according to the teachers are listed as follows based on their frequency: psychological counsellor and advisor teacher, social worker, voluntary teachers who want to take part in this department and other (sociologist).

Chart -8: The Necessity of Employing Social Worker in School Social Work Department

	Chi-square value	Degrees of Freedom	p
Pearson Chi-Square	8.104 ^a	1	.004

A significant relationship was found between the SEL of the school and the opinion that social worker should be employed in the school social work department ($p < 0.05$). The opinion that the social worker should be employed in the school social work department increases as the SEL of the school decreases.

33 of the 180 teachers participating in the study out forward some recommendations for the solution of problems in the school and 43 of them gave positive opinions about the school social work. Teachers suggested that the awareness of the families should be raised with training, professionals who can spend time individually with students should be employed, and the reasons for student problems should be investigated. Most of the teachers think that school social work will provide communication between teacher-student-parents and school, the team consisting of professionals from different disciplines will be useful and thus the problems will be detected earlier and intervened with the appropriate method.

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the responses of the teachers show that there are many problems in schools, one-fifth of these problems are never intervened and the psycho-social support services in the schools are inadequate for the solution of problems. In addition, violence-bullying, abuse, addiction, poverty and ditching school problems are more frequently encountered in the schools in the low SEL schools. The psycho-social support is insufficient and the opinion that social worker should be employed in the school social work department is more common in these schools.

Furthermore, the opinions of teachers towards social work are generally positive, the teachers have certain information about the social work science and profession. However, they don't have enough information about the fundamentals of social work such as the aim, field and target groups. They have positive opinions about the school social work department.

Recommendations for practitioners

School social work departments, as the bridges between the student-school and parents, should be initiated as soon as possible despite the multitude of problems and insufficiency of the psycho-social support in the schools.

The problems of students should be assessed with an ecological approach and the students should be evaluated in the environment they are included in.

The family should also be included in the system in the solution process. The family should be treated both as a threat and a healing power in the life of the child (Gökçearslan Çifci and Polat Uluocak, 2011: 97).

Social responsibility and social work understanding should be developed in the undergraduate education of trainee teachers and regulations must be carried out on the system in order to maintain this understanding (Ergül, 2014: 231).

In-service training should be concentrated on to increase the qualifications of teachers in the schools. The frequency and content of these training should be shaped based on the social, economic and cultural environment of the schools.

Training should be given to the teachers and other professionals in the schools in order to make them recognize student problems. Intervention methods should be presented to teachers and they should develop emergency response skills. Teachers should not be left alone in coping with the problems. The problems should be intervened by a team of professionals, including the social worker, with the appropriate method.

The present study revealed that printed and visual media have a profound effect on the information teachers have about social work. The current media should be inspected and the number of media presenting the social work should be increased in order to raise awareness on this issue.

Crisis intervention teams should be established in the schools and the appropriate intervention should be practised in cooperation with professionals from other disciplines. The professionals and their limitations in the departments to be established should be determined clearly.

All the children should be screened by the social work department to be formed in the school, the students under risk should be determined and preventive social work intervention programs should be developed for these children, thus the potential problems should be prevented.

Social, cultural and physical conditions of the schools should be improved and a safe school environment should be provided (Aküzüm and Oral, 2015: 6; Çalık, Kurt and Çalık, 2011: 81; Özdemir, Ferudun, Karip and Erkan, 2010: 221).

The possibility of the student problems such as violence, abuse and addiction varies according to socioeconomic level of school. Thus, models and methods to be applied within the framework of school social work should be developed by considering the socio-economic level of schools.

The present study found that ditching school is a problem encountered more frequently in schools with a low level of socio-

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economic level. The reasons for absenteeism of students in the low SEL schools should be investigated and activities for promoting the education should be planned.

A system should be established in order to protect teachers, starting from the low SEL schools to all schools. A team of professionals should be established in order to intervene in the student problems, which are left untouched due to the self-protection reflex of teachers.

There are some teachers, although low in number, who think that school social work will not be useful due to the fact that it will not be properly applied. This opinion highlights the importance of considering quality as well as the quantity of the activities to be performed. At this point, employing professionals undertaking social work training in the school social work departments to be established in the schools has profound importance in the success of these departments.

Recommendations for researchers

The present research was carried out in Kucukcekmece County, İstanbul Province. The sample group can be extended both to different counties of İstanbul and to all the provinces in Turkey.

The study was conducted with teachers, psychological counsellors and advisor teachers. A similar study can be conducted with the school managers and students. Thus, the findings can be presented from a different perspective. (Acar and Acar, 2002).

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