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Determining Parents' Attitudes Regarding Child Education

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to determine the attitudes of parents of Grade second term students, regarding the functions of the education, economics, socialization, affection, recreation and protection of children during their education. The study was carried out with 519 parents of children from 13 primary schools in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). From the findings obtained, it was revealed that parents' attitudes were positive in their children's education, with regard to "education, economics, recreation, affection and socialization". However, the findings also indicated that for the "protection" function in a child's education, parents did not display a clear picture.

Keywords: Parents, child education, parents' functions, attitude.

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1. Introduction

The family is the basic unit of society and is the smallest unit. A healthy society requires healthy family lives. Additionally, a family is treated as a key word in a child's education and their upbringing. For this reason, the family is placed among the most basic institutions. It provides the primary interaction place for forming an individual's certain attitudes and values (Tezcan, 2009; Sayed, El-Sayed & El-Fattah, 2014). In addition, the family is one of the social institutions that provide the results of social changes considerably later, but in a very effective way. While in a conventional society, the family is an institution that protects, looks after, educates, rests, and provides spiritual satisfaction for an individual. However, with the advent of industrialization it has transferred some of its functions to different institutions. While there have been certain changes in the functions of a family with globalization, the majority of global values that help individuals to be able stand on their feet are seen in individual talents, rather than in a family (Peiro-i-Gregori & Hernando, 2013). The family is a family, but not only because of hereditary reasons; in addition, emotional communication, cooperation, and sacrificing for the family have crucial roles (Turkoglu, 2008; Malalu, Alfred & Chirchir, 2014).

However, in recent years it has been observed that the value attached to human relations has gradually increased, rather than the value based on individualistic competition. Obviously, the truth is that in Europe, the hard working ethics of the modern era has shown a change in the direction of "softer values". The descriptive characteristics of today's Western community show that more attention is being given to the environment, there are fewer working hours, more free time and, in general, a community has "close relations" (Yesildag, 2010; Stachowiak, 2013). Along with this research, there have been numerous studies on the change in parents' attitudes over child behaviour. These studies showed that children of democratic families are open to interaction with their parents and friends, can make their own decisions, can express himself/herself intellectually and are socially more talented and academically more successful. On the other hand, children of authoritarian families were found to be unhappy, had less self-esteem and confidence, were timid and shy, had poorer friend relationships and had a tendency to behave arrogantly (Sezer, Kolac & Erol, 2013; Razali, Dokoushkani & Rajendran, 2013). Parents would all like to do the best for their children and contribute to their development, however, what parents believe to be the truth and what they do for their children are not always right and good for them. Since every single parent has their own truths, which are different from each other, their attitudes and behaviour also show differences towards their children (Schaefer, 2012).

One of the factors that affect these attitudes and behaviour is the parents' income. This is one of the most significant factors that affect a child's talent, interests and adaptation to school. Children who are brought up in a wealthy and educated family environment have a more comfortable development stage, while children who come from a low income family environment can display negative personality development. Children, who are brought up under their parents' authority, grow up dependent on their parents' income. It was stressed that the thoughts of children who are brought up in an environment where incomes are high are valued and have importance. Also, it is understood that those children start to think like grown-ups earlier, furthermore, they think freely by getting rid of all their traditional behaviour.

Likewise, in a study conducted in India and Egypt, the school success of students transferring to secondary school was examined. It was revealed that students with high incomes had higher grade point averages (GPA), compared to the ones who were from middle and low-income groups (Turkoglu, 2008; Sayed, El-Sayed & El-Fattah, 2014).

First of all, it is very important to emphasise that education starts in a family and continues at school. For this reason, the success of a child at school depends, not only the attitude of families towards their children, but also the school-family cooperation. Parents of successful children know how important it is to be in contact with the school. The most valuable contribution of this contact is to keep families informed about the education a child receives and the habits, behaviour and manners gained at school. Families with this information can make their children behave in the same way at home. Thus, a child would not hesitate in displaying his/her

behaviour. Again, there are studies in the literature indicating that children of families who are in a common programme with a school have higher school success (Gumus, Kurt, Ermurat & Feyetorbay, 2011). Parallel to this, Peiro-i-Gregori and Hernando (2013) believed that school-family cooperation is one of the issues that have had special attention in recent years. Also, research in the field of educational administration indicates that successful school directors and teachers are among the ones who care for the relations of the school and its environment and, therefore, school and family relations. This is why, in most of the developed countries, school-family cooperation is handled in a detailed and planned way and training is starting to be held with school directors, teachers and families. It was found that children with insufficient financial potential are more under negative risk in terms of their parents' attitudes. It was also found that 15-year-old children, particularly at puberty, might be more at risk of falling into depression or becoming drug addicted (Razali, Dokoushkani & Rajendran, 2013). While the age of starting school has decreased, the age of leaving school has increased. Therefore, we can say that time at school occupies a very big part of an individual's life. The new type of parent is more pertinent and knowledgeable compared to the old type of parent. Parents can do their jobs by having close cooperation with teachers. It is also important to point out that the parents' attitudes have a considerable impact on their child's school success (Kir, 2011; Peiro-i-Gregori & Hernando, 2013).

Another important factor is the function of socialization of the child. Socialization is expressed as a process that socializes a child, without influencing him/her directly. Socialization is especially important for conveying cultural values. Socializing a child in a healthy way means bringing up children who can stand on their feet, are independent but in harmony with their society and well-accepted by the society with the knowledge, skills and experiences they have gained from birth to adulthood (Turkoglu, 2008). When new generation parents analyse their childhood experiences, they encourage their children not to be restricted with the school environment, but to arrange meetings with their age groups and to meet different people and enter different social environments. In addition, the rapid development in modern technology and changes in children's life dynamics have resulted in changes in the attitudes of parents. This sometimes results in leaving children feeling isolated; in other words, they would be left under the risk of being antisocial and not being able to establish close relationships with their parents (Stachowiak, 2013).

The findings of research in the USA are parallel to the above, claiming that the academic success of students who are quiet and reserved, who are not social, is negatively influenced. These students struggle with problems and, thus, display negative behaviour; they also have difficulty in making contact with their teachers, friends and families. It is considered very significant for parents to encourage their children to leave some time for the activities arranged by the school and fill their free time accordingly. Even more, it is recommended that parents also join in these activities together with their children (Razali, Dokoushkani & Rajendran, 2013). Parents who use their time well have a positive impact on their children. In other words, it is very crucial for parents to spend their time in a planned and quality way with other family members. This automatically means that parents should use their free time in a planned and qualified way (Malalu, Alfred & Chirchir, 2014).

In addition, parents with a protective attitude, tend to protect and control their children excessively. Therefore, parents do many things that could easily be done by children themselves, and, thus, the children's learning by experience is prohibited. Children are not able to stand on their own feet and do not learn to trust themselves, because parents tend to interfere in every single subject more than is required. Unfortunately, this results in children being brought up who are unable to make decisions and who are dependent on others (Sezer, Kolac & Erol, 2013). Children who are brought up with this protective attitude have basic characteristics, like being dependent, having no confidence, having impaired social development and not being able to make decisions on their own. It is also important to point out that the research conducted in this field so far has indicated that the protective attitude is more often observed between mother and child (Yesildag, 2010).

The value of the family environment where parents have various roles comes from the fact that it is a natural source of love and trust. Love and tenderness from parents are among the needs of a child. This function of parents has shown very little change compared to the changes of other functions. It has been shown that whenever the love of parents for their children is insufficient, children become more stressed and display negative behaviour (Razali, Dokoushiani & Rajendran, 2013). Children often are not able to be together with their parents for a long time periods because of today's working conditions of parents. This is why children frequently lack of their parents' love and tenderness. Also, stress, tension, depression and problems that are the inevitable results of living in modern cities increase the need for parental love (Moen, Erickson & Dempster, 1997). The love function of parents for their children can affect the child's academic success, either positively or negatively. For children, the function of love is very important and has a big role in socializing and encouraging the child and helping them display positive behaviour outside of the family. Children who have insufficient parental love cannot establish a family and may have psychological problems (Stachowiak, 2013). In addition, the changes taking place all over the world do not only affect children, they also affect parents and this obviously changes the attitudes of parents in child education (Stachowiak, 2013).

In this context, the main aim of this study is determine the attitudes parents of Grade 1 / 2 - term students' attitudes, regarding the functions of education, economics, socialization, affection, recreation and being protective that take place in a child's education. In order to reach this aim, we asked the following questions:

1. What are the parents' attitudes in general towards child education?
2. What is the parents' function of education in the child's education?
3. What is the parents' function of economics in the child's education?
4. What is the parents' function of protection in the child's education?
5. What is the parents' function of affection in the child's education?
6. What is the parents' function of socialization in the child's education?
7. What is the parents' function of evaluation in the child's education?
8. Regarding, the parents' attitudes in child education:
 - a. Do they show any statistically significant difference according to the parents' nationality?
 - b. Do they show any statistically significant difference, according to the number of children that the parents have?

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

The population of the study was almost 9308 in number and the sample was formed from parents of students from 13 state primary schools from five different cities (Nicosia, Famagusta, Morphou, Iskele, Kyrenia) of TRNC. These 519 parents (337 mothers (64.93%), 182 fathers (35.07%)) of students were selected randomly and were given questionnaires. In addition, 34.3% of them were aged between 25 and 35, 56.2% of them were aged between 36 and 45 and, finally, 9.5% of them were aged over 46.

It was observed that the majority of the participants were mothers. The number of parents (79.1%) working for the private sector was higher than the rate of parents working for the government. It is also found that 31.4% of parents were primary school graduates, 18.1% of them were secondary school graduates, 35% of them were lycee graduates, and 15.5% of them were either university graduates, or had Master's or Doctorate degrees. However, the rate of having two children was stated to be high.

2.2. Data Collection Instrument and Application

The data that is needed for the research was gathered through an interview form developed by the researchers themselves (Hursen & Cumhur, 2014). First of all, the literature was reviewed and then by asking the opinion of experts, an item pool was formed. According to the expert opinions, some of the items were removed and some of them were reconsidered. In addition, two experts in the Turkish language reviewed the questionnaire statements and they performed the required corrections. The Scale of Attitudes of Parents Concerning Child Education consisted of 60 items. The scale that was developed for the parents is in a 5-point Likert type format and was formed from two parts. While the first part consisted of demographic characteristics of the participants, the second consisted of statements with regard to the examination of attitudes of parents concerning child education. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was calculated as 0.867.

2.3. Data Analysis

The data gathered from this study was analysed through the techniques of percentage, mean, and standard deviation. For the unrelated samples, independent t-test and single factor analysis of variance (one way ANOVA) techniques were used.

3. Findings

In this current study, quantitative research methods were used. The findings of the study are given below.

3.1. Parents' General Attitudes in Child Education

The findings with regard to parents' general attitudes concerning child education are given a place in the following. In Table 1, below, the distribution of the attitude scores of parents concerning child education is given.

Table 1. Distribution of General Attitude Mean of Parents in Child Education

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
General Attitudes	519	1.37	5.28	3.82	0.50

As can be seen in Table 1, the general attitudes of parents in child education are positive ($M=3.82$, $SD=0.50$) and are quite cohesive with life dynamics. The data obtained from the study showed that the functions of parents in child education are not restricted to only the function of education. Along with the function of education, the functions of economics, love, socialization, protection and recreation are all important to form unity.

3.2. Parents' Function of Education in Child Education

The attitude scores of parents in terms of the function of education concerning child education are given in Table 2, below.

Table 2. Distribution of the General Attitude Mean of the Function of Education of Parents in Child Education

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Function of Education	519	1.19	8.13	4.20	0.71

As it is very obvious from Table 2, above, that the general attitudes of the function of education of parents were positive and was calculated as ($M=4.20$, $SD=0.71$). This finding shows that the function of education was considerably significant for parents and the required significance was attached to that function by the parents. Along with globalization, there have been changes in the functions of a family and this change has automatically increased the function of parents in education that targets them to bring up an individual who needs the changes of the new century.

3.3. Parents' Function of Economics in Child Education

In this part, the findings obtained from the attitudes of parents in child education concerning the function of economics are given in Table 3, where the distribution of attitude scores of parents in child education concerning the function of economics is shown.

Table 3. Distribution of the General Mean of the Function of Economics of Parents in Child Education

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Function of Economics	519	1.11	10.22	3.80	0.75

As can be seen in Table 3, the attitudes of parents concerning the function of economics were positive ($M=3.80$, $SD=0.75$). This finding shows that parents in general make the required financial contribution to their children's lives. Financial contribution is one of the basic requirements that have a very important place in the child's education. Parents' function of economy is in direct proportion to the function of education. It also contributes to the success of a child.

3.4. Parents' Function of Affection in Child Education

The distribution of attitude scores of parents concerning the function of love in child education is given in Table 4, below.

Table 4. Distribution of the General Attitude Mean of Parents Concerning the Function of Love in Child Education

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Function of Affection	519	1.60	9.30	3.65	0.61

As it can be seen in Table 4, above, it is so obvious that the general attitudes of parents concerning the function of love are positive ($M=3.65$, $SD=0.61$) direction. Love is a big need in a child's life and it is the parents who provide this first. In order to bring up healthy individuals for the future role of parents, the function of love is very important. Parents are required to provide their children with sufficient love.

3.5. Parents' Function of Protection in Child Education

In this part, the findings presenting the parents' function of protection in child education are given in Table 5, where the distribution of the attitude scores concerning parents' child protection is detailed.

Table 5. Distribution of the General Attitude of Parents Concerning the Function of Protection in Child Education

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Function of Protection	519	1.00	5.00	3.27	0.74

From the findings obtained from the study, it was revealed that the attitudes ($M=3.27$, $SD=0.74$) of parents concerning the function of protection were among the boundaries of "indecisive". The main reason for this situation is thought to be the increase in external factors that threaten children who try to keep up with the rapidly changing and globalizing world and parents display indecisive attitudes due to such situations.

3.6. Parents' Function of Recreation in Child Education

The findings obtained from the attitudes of parents concerning the function of recreation in child education are given in Table 6, below.

Table 6. Distribution of the General Attitude Mean of Parents Concerning the Function of Recreation in Child Education

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Function of Recreation	519	1.15	8.00	3.72	0.58

As can be seen in Table 6, the general attitudes of the parents for the function of recreation were positive ($M=3.72$, $SD=0.58$) direction. This result shows that parents displayed positive attitudes concerning recreation. This situation has a positive impact on the academic success of children.

3.7. Parents' Function of Socialization in Child Education

In this part, the findings of parents' function of socialization in child education are given in Table 7, which demonstrates the distribution of attitude scores of parents in child education.

Table 7. Distribution of the General Attitude Mean of Parents for the Function of Socialization in Child Education

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Function of Socialization	519	1.00	10.25	3.75	0.67

As can be seen in Table 7, it was found that the general attitudes of parents for the function of socialization were positive ($M=3.75$, $SD=0.67$). Having positive attitudes for the function of socialization contributes to the acceptance of a child by the society and helps in the socialization of a child with the external environment.

3.8. Attitudes of Parents in Child Education Concerning Nationality

The distribution of the general attitude mean of parents depending on the nationality is given in Table 8.

Table 8. Distribution of the Attitude Mean of Parents Depending on the Nationality

	Nationality	N	Mean	SD	p
Function of Education	Foreign	324	4,26	0,71	0,02
	North Cyprus	195	4,11	0,70	0,02
Function of Economics	Foreign	324	3,83	0,77	0,309
	North Cyprus	195	3,76	0,71	0,299
Function of Socialization	Foreign	324	3,78	0,73	0,347
	North Cyprus	195	3,72	0,56	0,315
Function of Recreation	Foreign	324	3,69	0,54	0,115
	North Cyprus	195	3,77	0,62	0,127
Function of Love	Foreign	324	3,70	0,67	0,010
	North Cyprus	195	3,56	0,47	0,005
Function of Protection	Foreign	324	3,25	0,75	0,463
	North Cyprus	195	3,30	0,71	0,457

As can be seen in Table 8, the nationality of parents (TRNC and Foreign - Turkey, Bulgaria, Turkmenistan, Moldova and Azerbaijan) shows a scientifically significant difference in the functions of education and love in child education. Nonetheless, it does not show any scientifically significant difference in the other functions. Depending on the nationality of parents, the cultural characteristics are an important variable as well, as are the basics of the function of education. These cultural characteristics also help in shaping a child and showing tenderness to him/her.

3.9. Attitudes of Parents Depending on the Child Number

The ANOVA test was carried out in order to identify whether the attitudes of parents depending on the number of children, had any scientifically significant difference or not. The findings obtained from the study are given below.

Table 9. Distribution of the Attitude Mean of Parents Depending on the Number of Children

	Number of Children	N	Mean	SD
Function of Education	1	67	4,31	0,71
	2	261	4,24	0,76
	3	134	4,17	0,54
	4 and over	57	3,98	0,80
Function of Economics	1	67	3,83	0,62
	2	261	3,83	0,78
	3	134	3,74	0,64
	4 and over	57	3,76	0,98
Function of Socialization	1	67	3,77	0,51
	2	261	3,79	0,76
	3	134	3,73	0,54
	4 and over	57	3,62	0,70
Function of Recreation	1	67	3,70	0,45
	2	261	3,71	0,53
	3	134	3,76	0,67
	4 and over	57	3,72	0,67
Function of Love	1	67	3,66	0,48
	2	261	3,71	0,65
	3	134	3,56	0,58
	4 and over	57	3,56	0,55
Function of Protection	1	67	3,39	0,63
	2	261	3,27	0,68
	3	134	3,27	0,79
	4 and over	57	3,13	0,93
Total	1	67	3,87	0,45
	2	261	3,85	0,51
	3	134	3,80	0,43
	4 and over	57	3,72	0,62

As can be observed in Table 9, as the number of children that parents have increases, the attitude mean of the function of education decreases. This is inversely correlated with the parents' attitude of the function of education concerning the child. An increase of child number negatively affects the attitudes concerning the function of education.

Table 10. The ANOVA Test of the Functions of Parents in Child Education, Depending on Number of Children

Dimension	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Square	F	P
Function of Education	Between Groups	4,180	3	1,393	2,730	0,043
	Within Groups	262,834	518	0,510		
	Total	267,014	518			
Function of Economics	Between Groups	0,903	3	0,301	0,528	0,663
	Within Groups	293,929	518	0,571		
	Total	294,832	518			
Function of Socialization	Between Groups	1,421	3	0,474	1,028	0,380
	Within Groups	237,286	518	0,461		
	Total	238,707	518			
Function of Recreation	Between Groups	0,261	3	0,087	0,258	0,856
	Within Groups	174,286	518	0,338		
	Total	174,548	518			
Function of Love	Between Groups	2,494	3	0,831	2,239	0,083
	Within Groups	191,202	518	0,371		
	Total	193,696	518			
Function of Protection	Between Groups	2,017	3	0,672	1,219	0,302
	Within Groups	283,927	518	0,551		
	Total	285,944	518			

As can be seen in Table 10, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the number of children that parents have and the attitudes of parents for the function of education. Parents with four or more children had slightly lower attitudes for the function of education, compared to the other parents.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The family that is the oldest institution in history and is essential for both individuals and Society, with the functions that it fulfils. The family is an environment where social and cultural processes of a child's upbringing, socialization and education occur in the best way. The most comprehensive knowledge transfer regarding culture and life that an individual belongs to occurs here. The structure of a family displays changes depending on certain developments and changes taking place in the structure of a society. The rapid urbanization and the developments in the field of industrialization have shown changes in the family structure. It seems that in large families, the father has the power and mother has the responsibility. On the other hand, when this case is approached more scientifically, it is obvious that each family has its own rules within its boundaries. It is not possible to make one family use the rules of another family. Therefore, we should not expect to see families that adopt the rules. Thus, it is worth pointing out that the picture drawn above is just a vision. Furthermore, it is not possible to draw a clear picture of what the situation is in reality (Kir, 2011; Yesildag, 2010).

Family order is established and maintained in the direction of decisions attained from the experiences of elderly. Although spouses wish to be the single decision makers regarding their child's education, their wish may not come true in many cases (Kir, 2011; Malalu, Alfred & Chirchir, 2014). According to Malalu, Alfred and Chirchir (2014), it is not true to arrive at the idea that only parents have duties and responsibilities within a family. Children, who are considered to be the future of societies, should also be assigned with duties and responsibilities according to their ages, genders, characteristics and talents. Families, all over the world, are more or less

distinct from each other. However, they meet at a common point, which enables individuals to learn what sort of persons they can become. The literature claims that the characteristics of a family are shaped by its size, type, cultural background, socioeconomic status, geographic location and state of the family members' health. It is possible that in a family, individuals may have special or exceptional situations or health problems and such special cases may affect whole family.

The findings obtained from the results of the questionnaires show that the function of education was scaled as "strongly agree", which means that parents do bring up educated generations. When even the parents were classified into groups according to the education they received as primary, secondary, lycee, university and over, it was found that the attitudes of all groups regarding child education were scaled as "agree". In a way this demonstrates that families' states of education are changing in order to keep up with the world that is globalizing, changing continuously and trying to keep up with the economy. Therefore, it is seen that whatever the case is, parents carry out the function of education consciously. This result is in parallel with the findings of the study carried out by Peiro-i-Gregori and Hernando in 2013.

Additionally, the general attitudes of parents for the function of recreation were identified as being positive. Therefore, this finding proves that parents invest for their children's future regarding recreation. It is important to state that this has a positive impact on the children's academic success. In addition, it was also seen that general attitudes of parents for the function of socialization were positive. Again, the general attitudes of parents for the function of socialization in child education contribute to the acceptance of a child by the society and ease the socialization of a child with the external environment. Improving himself/herself, controlling his/her behaviour, adopting himself/herself into the society, showing tenderness, and behaving appropriately are the main targets that parents in the function of socialization enable their children to gain (Yagmurlu, 2009).

The function of protection was scaled as "indecisive", which proves that parents are indecisive and because of this it was not possible to draw a clear picture of what their protective functions are for their children when trying to keep up with rapidly changing technology in the world. In a study conducted by Razali, Dokuoushkhani and Rajendran (2013), very similar findings were reached. These researchers explained the indecisiveness of these parents with the increase in external threats that children face today. The studies carried out in the literature also indicate that, regardless of what the education level of the parents is and what socioeconomic level they come from; parents believe that they need family education in different subjects (Sahin & Kalburan, 2009). With respect to this, it is recommended that experts could arrange family seminars, in order to display better child education attitudes for their own children. In addition, the nationality of parents shows a scientifically significant difference in the function of education attitudes in child education. However, the increase in child numbers affects this situation negatively. Stachowiak (2013) also had the same finding in his study conducted in 2013. Therefore, his findings are in support with the findings of this current study.

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