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Student and Parental Perceptions on Meeting the Educational Needs of the Disadvantaged Students in the Primary Schools

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Assuring that the primary school students should get maximum benefits from their schools in accordance with their needs is an organizational obligation both for the efficiency of the administration and for the productivity education. The aim of this research is to put forth the grade about meeting the educational needs of the disadvantaged students studying in primary schools. This research is a comparative-type descriptive study in which the student and the parental perceptions were determined with a face-to-face method of interview. The field of subject includes 'the educational needs of disadvantaged students' and the field of examination of the research consists of 42 students and their 41 parents from the district primary schools in the central province of Erzincan who attended "The Make-up Education Programme" on the Academic Year of 2010-2011. According to the findings, the differences that are not spotted which affect the disadvantaged students negatively have caused their educational needs to stay undetermined. The results of this research have proved out that the primary schools are not able to offer adequate support for the disadvantaged students about defining the socioeconomic characteristics of their families and thus fulfilling their educational needs.

Keywords: Primary school, disadvantaged student, disadvantaged family, educational need, social justice and equality of opportunity.

INTRODUCTION

Efficient measures should be taken at a national level in order to recognize and improve the living conditions of families who have children in primary school and to determine the educational needs of those children. These measures are basic problem areas that should be evaluated within the scope of educational administration and educational economy. Educational administration is the process of applying determined policies and making decisions by using human and material resources in order to deliver the objectives identified in the educational institutions (Taymaz, 2009). Educational economy refers to using the resources reserved for education with the aim of producing education services in line with the satisfying of individual and social needs (Adem, 1993; Balcı, 2005; Ortaç, 2003; Tural, 2002; Ünal, 1996). The function of educational administration and educational economy concerning primary schools can be defined as

supporting students to complete their studies in line with their potential through efficient administrative applications by assuring that all students, especially disadvantaged ones, are able to benefit from educational opportunities. Firstly, school managers and the relevant departments of the Ministry of National Education and then the provincial and district directorates for national education should always cooperate and make coordinative organizational efforts to accomplish this function. The problem of satisfying the educational needs of disadvantaged students is so important, and it includes so many multidirectional variables, that it cannot be solved by school managers alone. The solution to this problem is a complement of administrative actions which require policies and decision-making mechanisms at a national level. Policy makers and political decision makers should accept the impacts of "poverty and social exclusion experiences" on student achievement and participation in the education system in the context of educational administration and educational economy for disadvantaged students; and they should seek the solution in elimination of effects of these variables (Bakış et al. 2009).

The characteristics variables of students who come from socio-economically disadvantaged families are absence of membership to a social security institution, discontinuity of income, low-level income parents working in the black market, the absence of income assurance, the need for the child to work inadequacy of education services in rural areas where people are engaged in agriculture, not letting girls benefit from education services, ignoring children's education, the inadequate education levels of parents, especially of the mother (Abbott and Fouts, 2003; Adaman and Ardıç, 2008; Education Reform Initiative, 2009; Gelbal, 2008; Ndolo et al. 2011; Özbaş, 2010). A student may be categorized disadvantaged even if only one of the variables is present. The more the number of variables, the more they have impacts with negative results. Thus satisfying the educational needs of those students becomes more difficult. Students whose needs are not satisfied are obliged to drop out of school (European Commission, 2005).

It is accepted that the basic determinant in satisfying educational needs and increasing the success is the socio-economic state. According to the 2006 data of the Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) assessing academic achievements of 15-year-old students in the fields of reading, mathematics and science, the average science grade in Turkey is 423. while it is 500 in the OECD (the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. The grade of students who have both non-working mothers and who are socio-economically disadvantaged, who live in rural areas and who study in vocational high school is rather low; it is 222. However, it was seen that the grade of students who have working parents with a socioeconomic state above the Turkey average, and studied in Anatolian high schools was 546, above the OECD average. That proves that student achievement depends on socio-economic conditions. At the same time, this fact by and large prevents the social dynamism in individuals. which would enable them to develop and be a part of modernization in accordance with a democratic state approach. When the socio-economic conditions of disadvantaged students are taken into consideration, it is seen that school resources have almost no impact on their academic achievement though schools serve as a positive and privileged academic environment for socioeconomically advantaged students by creating similar environments to their home environments, maintaining their richness This fact prevents social liveliness for disadvantaged students and at the same time it cannot provide for positive personal transformation which exists in democratic education administration itself (Kolaşin and Dincer, 2009). Thus, schools become an instrument of inequality which brings more advantages to students who

have a high socio-economic level and which maintains a vicious "circle of poverty" for generations of students with a low socio-economic level.

Educational needs of primary school students coming from disadvantaged families

In the process of this research, which analyzed the variables on which the educational needs of disadvantaged students depend, firstly relevant literature had been reviewed. Secondly the socio-economic characteristics of the environment where the research was conducted had been taken into consideration. It was seen that educational needs resulted essentially from family characteristics, but they are also correlated with variables related to school (Aydın, 2002; Chen, 2010; Furman and Shields, 2003; Haynes, 2002; Marshall, 2004; OECD, 2004; Özbaş, 2010; Polat, 2007; Stewart, 2003; Tomul, 2009). Works to be conducted by educational managers and school managers for satisfying the needs are treated within an integrated approach as presented below.

Student needs resulting from their family characteristics

Each student's family has unique characteristics which are distinct from the families of others. That makes it difficult to know families in a multi-dimensional manner in the family environment, especially considering the children at primary education level (Özbaş, 2009). This is because the familial needs of a student can only be understood by examining his or her family environment under subjective conditions and in the home itself.

Removing the unequal opportunities of disadvantaged primary school students and making access to primary school possible under all conditions on social justice grounds are the primary responsibilities of the educational administration. Social justice is removing inequalities, not depriving anybody of the right to education and not favoring anybody for any reason under any condition (Gewirtz, 2006; Ministry of National Education, 1973; Ministry of National Education, 2010; Polat, 2007; United Nations, 1995). Social justice is a function that should be attentively applied so that everybody can benefit from the obligatory education process. However, the application of this function depends on holding the implementers responsible within a framework of accountability. In case when the responsibilities are not fulfilled, the authorities should stand for the rights of the people through efficient sanctions at once. In this context, firstly there is the need for legal regulations and administrative determination.

The most important adversities of disadvantaged students resulting from their parents can be expressed

as low-level of education (especially of mothers) and socio-economical disadvantage. The negative effects of family circumstances affect academic achievements of the students (Education Reform Initiative, 2009). Children who have parents, especially mothers who lack an adequate education level to assist them have a disadvantaged situation compared to other children. In order to prevent the negative results that this situation may cause, students are academically assisted in school and in the family. Students who lack the opportunities to satisfy their nutritional, dressing, transport, social life, entertainment, recreational needs etc. are also disadvantaged students (Chen, 2010; OECD, 2004; Özbaş, 2010).

Educational needs of disadvantaged students resulting from their school life

School is an efficient education environment as long as it satisfies the personal, social and academic needs of students. This fact is at the same time the main reason for existence of an efficient school as an education institution (Jones and Jones, 1997). One of the most important leadership characteristics of efficient school managers is to ensure that all students benefit from educational opportunities equally at maximum point while considering their fields of interests and personal needs. leadership characteristic mostly This concerns disadvantaged students when it is evaluated at the primary school level (Marshall, 2004; Polat, 2007; Tomul, 2009). This is because disadvantaged students benefit from obligatory education opportunities at a minimum level and the negative effects may be perpetual for them. It is possible to cite the main variables that affect the school lives of disadvantaged students negatively as follows: "Residing in a poor neighborhood that makes up the walls of the city, lacking in socio-cultural opportunities because of environmental issues to support education, depriving of information and communication technologies at home to support learning and teaching experiments, the pathetic need for the childrens' labour, ignoring the importance of education, families avoiding girls from the mobile and boarded education, opportunities of insufficient family incomes, economical exploitation of the children, inadequate and impermanent support given to families to fulfill the educational needs of their children. non-deterrent sanctions imposed on families who do not ensure the full time attendance of their children at school, parents lacking an awareness towards the importance of education on the behavioral level, lack of efficient cooperation between the students and their parents about regular attendance at school, having families who lack any awareness about the organized democratic movements standing for the educational demands of their children along with lack of assistance to children at home for their home works, projects, performances etc." Every negative factor cited above unfortunately causes for a new demand that needs to be fulfilled. All these, if ignored in the process of primary school education, either break the connection of the students with the school resulting with no graduation or make the students still get affected with these factors during their process of higher education. The students who are not supported enough both in terms of academic and education technologies for the discharge of such responsibilities as homework, projects, performances etc. become disadvantaged when compared to those who are supported adequately (Kolaşin and Dinçer, 2009).

Disadvantaged students are less successful than less disadvantaged ones (or non-disadvantaged ones) during their school life because of impossibilities resulting from their families; and the main reason for their academic failure is unfortunately perceived as the students' personal failure. Students who have advantages when compared to disadvantaged students are more successful in exams for passing to secondary school and higher education; and they continue their education mostly in schools financed from public sources and ones which offer better opportunities and conditions (Adaman and Ardıç, 2008; Education Reform Initiative, 2009; Enslin, 2006; Özbaş, 2009; Temur, 2005). These negative factors can be eliminated with educational who lead environmentally conscious managers administrative implementations. By this means, schools can become the starting point of a positive transformation based on social justice.

As the primary schools offer highest social benefits among all educational levels, the biggest contribution to this educational level should be provided from the public sources. This is because private finance support and funds are used more commonly in higher education; students' needs are satisfied; accordingly their access to education opportunities is facilitated (OECD, 2008). This means that primary schools are disadvantaged when compared to higher educational services; they benefit less from public resources. In this context, it is of great importance to supervise whether or not resources reserved for primary schools are used efficiently within the framework of accountability and employing a public supervision approach.

Purpose of the Research

In a democratic education system based on social justice, all students of an obligatory education age should be provided with opportunity to access to basic education. Students who have the most negative conditions for full access to obligatory education are students coming from disadvantaged families. What should be done for disadvantaged students is to determine the impossibilities which these students experience via efficient educational administration implementations and taking necessary

measures. For this reason, the subject of this research is the "satisfaction status" of the educational needs of primary school students who come from disadvantaged families. Accordingly, the research problem is what are student's and parent's perceptions in regard to the primary schools' satisfaction status of educational needs of disadvantaged students?

METHOD

The research, which is a comparative descriptive one, was conducted using a face to face interview method which aims to determine the satisfaction status of primary schools in regard to the educational needs of disadvantaged students according to the student's and parent's perceptions. Face to face interview has the highest answering opportunities. At the same time it is a research model which enables the formation of most relevant and longest questions. The interview is a purposeful conversation during which the researcher asks questions to all respondents in the same way (Kuş, 2007). The interview method enables the researcher to examine the research subject multi-directionally and profoundly; besides it gives the opportunity to make an integral interpretation (Büyüköztürk et al., 2010).

Participants

In this research, there are two fields of study: subject and research. The subject area of the research is the "educational needs of disadvantaged students" and the research area consists of 41 parents and 42 students studying at the primary schools in the province of Erzincan city center in the academic year of 2010-2011 who had attended the "The Make-up Class Education Program" who were not able to complete their education in the 6-14 age group which is the normal primary school age period.

Data Collection

"The Interview Scale for the Educational Needs of Disadvantaged Students" which was used in the process of this study had been developed by the researcher. For this purpose, firstly the "characteristics of socioeconomically disadvantaged families and students coming from these families" were examined multidimensionally based on the literature with an integral point of view. Then information about students having attendance problems were taken from the Erzincan Provincial Directorate for National Education Administration of Education Inspectors and the Research and Development Unit. There have been contacts with 28 school managers from Ankara, Amasya, Konya, Erzincan

and Siirt provinces in Turkey about the problem of absent students. Besides, there have been an exchange of views with 35 students and their parents from the schools mentioned above about the possible reasons for absence. A draft form consisting of 25 items was prepared based on interview results and from the literature survey.

The opinions, proposals and criticisms of academics from the Department of Educational Administration, Supervision and Economy were sought in order to determine whether or not the prepared form was about the educational needs of disadvantaged students. Academicians were also expected to evaluate "The Draft Form for the Educational Needs Disadvantaged Students" in terms of "content validity". In line with feedback received from the academics, the number of items was reduced to 20 by omitting 5 items which were thought to be irrelevant to the subject in terms of the concept. Two applications were made at 15 day intervals with 21 absentee students and their parents in order to determine the reliability state of the form. The first application was made on the 28th of December 2010 - 12th January 2011. The second application was made on the 29th January -14th February 2011. It was determined whether or not there was a percentage difference for the answer to each item between the first and the second application. Then the percentages of applications determined for each of the items were compared. Similarities concerning percentages were added according to the items and their average was taken. As a result, form reliability was found to be 91.7 %. Thus, it was decided to use this form as the interview scale as it was fit for purpose in terms of validity and reliability. In the scale, there are 11 items about educational needs resulting from family characteristics and 9 items about educational needs resulting from school life.

In line with the research permission taken from the Erzincan Provincial Directorate of National Education, the application process of the research started. The scale was applied in the family environment of students and to the parents themselves. Before starting the application, the researcher participant presented his identity as a researcher and showed the permission for the research to each student and parent separately thus he tried to gain their trust and confidence. In the application process, firstly the purpose of the research was explained to the students and their parents and then their perceptions about the scale items were determined. The answers of the participants about every scale item were recorded and necessary explanations were made about the items when participants needed this.

Analyzing and interpreting data

In the analysis of descriptive data obtained from student

Table 1. Student and Parent Perceptions about the Satisfaction of the Educational Needs of Students Resulting From Their Family Characteristics

Items		S	tuden	nt	Parent			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Were your family's living conditions determined								
by having a visit to your home?	8	19.1	34	80.9	12	29.3	29	70.7
2. Was it determined if the family has adequate								
opportunities or not for the student's attendance								
to school?	5	11.9	37	88.1	6	14.6	35	85.4
3. Was family provided with nutritional, clothing and								
income support for satisfying the needs of the students?	12	28.6	30	71.4	10	24.4	31	75.6
4. Was any information taken from you about whether								
there is someone in the family who is a member of a								
Social Security Institution or not?	10	23.8	32	76.2	8	19.5	33	80.5
5. Was it explained that education can provide the								
most efficient and permanent change in both a								
student's and a family's life?	4	9.5	38	90.5	5	12.2	36	87.8
6. Was the education level of the family ascertained?	6	14.3	36	85.7	7	17.7	34	82.3
7. Were the needs of the family for the student's								
education determined?	5	11.9	37	88.1	5	12.2	36	87.8
8. Was any information given about the school's								
education opportunities and how to profit them?	9	21.2	33	78.8	6	14.6	35	85.4
9. Was any educational support provided to the								
mother by considering her impact on the child's								
education?	2	4.8	40	95.2	3	7.3	39	92.7
10. Was any information taken from you about								
the number of your family members and the								
presence of a disabled person in your family?	7	16.7	35	83.3	11	26.8	30	73.2
11. Were you given explanations about what								
would happen if the student did not attend school?	23	54.7	19	45.3	25	60.9	16	39.1

and parent perceptions about the "Satisfaction State of Educational Needs of Disadvantaged Students Resulting From Their Family and School Life", statistical techniques related to frequency (f) and % distributions were used. The answers of students and parents about the "satisfaction state of educational needs" which is in each item of the scale were "need is satisfied" or "need is not satisfied"; thus, for positive answers given to items, there was a "yes" option, and for negative answers a "no" option was used. The purpose of adopting this approach is for digitizing data. Digitizing is one of the main qualifications of the data analysis. Numbers are used in expressing frequency of units that can be stated clearly. While interpreting data obtained as a result of analyzing answers that participants give to scale items, mostly frequency and % are used (Büyüköztürk et al. 2010). Accordingly, it was aimed to interpret the findings according to frequency (f) and the % rates of "yes" and "no" answers that participants gave to each item. While interpreting findings, similarities and differences between the student and parent perceptions were also emphasized and necessary comparisons were made. As forth comparison of datas only the differences of perceptions between 10 % and above were taken into consideration.

FINDINGS

As the subject of the research is satisfaction status of primary schools in regard to the educational needs of students who come from disadvantaged families, the research findings were analyzed and interpreted accordingly. For this reason, firstly the findings about the family characteristics of the students and then the satisfaction level of their educational needs resulting from school were analyzed and interpreted. As is presented in Table 1 above, it is seen that schools have generally a very low level of awareness on the family characteristics of disadvantaged students and satisfying the educational needs resulting from these characteristics.

Table 2. Student and Parent Perceptions about the State of Satisfying Student Educational Needs Resulting From Their School Lives

		Student				Parent				
		Yes		No		Yes		No		
Items	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
12. Was the student's class explained?	7	16.7	35	83.3	5	12.2	36	87.8		
13. Was the family given application examples about										
how to assist the student for their lessons?	5	11.9	37	88.1	6	14.6	35	85.4		
14. Was information given about educational										
rights and how to use them?	4	9.5	38	90.5	6	14.6	35	85.4		
15. Was the student presented with the right to profit										
from educational technologies?	12	28.5	30	71.5	7	17.7	34	82.3		
16. Was the student provided with the opportunity to										
spend his/her leisure time with social activities?	6	14.3	36	85.7	4	9.8	37	90.2		
17. Was the student assisted in order to prevent his/										
her failure?	9	21.2	33	78.8	8	19.5	33	80.5		
18. Was the student introduced to service units that										
he/she could consult for the solution of social and										
psychological problems?	7	16.7	35	83.3	7	17.7	34	82.3		
19. Was the student informed about school rules?	28	66.7	14	33.3	21	51.2	20	48.8		
20. Was the student provided with opportunity for										
development in the field where he/she is talented?	3	7.1	39	92.9	4	9.8	37	90.2		

Not knowing the differences that affect disadvantaged students, results in the schools not being able to determine their educational needs. This reduces the benefits disadvantaged students get from educational opportunities. It was revealed that apart from "explaining the legal responsibilities of the families on the issue of student absenteeism" (Item No. 11), the schools' performances for satisfying student needs resulting from family characteristics were at a very low level. This fact shows that schools only have a particular impact on students and parents about the discharging of the bureaucratic responsibilities that legal and administrative regulations order for students' attendance to school. However, it was revealed that schools could not show the same performance in satisfying student needs resulting from family circumstances, which interest the student directly and provides benefits to the student. According to both student and parent perceptions, the most important inadequacy of schools concerning family education is "providing pedagogical assistance to the mother about her child's educational process" (Item No. 9) and "creating awareness on the importance of education" (Item No. 5). On the other hand, schools are very inefficient also in "determining the educational needs of parents" (Item No. 7) and "determining the economic state of the family" (Item No. 2). Significant differences between student and parent perceptions concerning the satisfying of student educational needs about "determining the living conditions of families were observed by visiting their homes" (Item No. 1). In addition it gave the opportunity to "learn about the number of family members and noting about any disabled person in

the family-if there had been any" (Item No. 10). In these items, students think that schools have a lower performance. Students are of the opinion that their family environment and the subjective aspects of their lives are not known and that their needs are not satisfied.

Both student and parent perceptions about satisfying disadvantaged students' educational needs resulting from their school lives came out as highly negative. Both groups have the perception that schools cannot satisfy the educational needs of disadvantaged students. Research findings show that schools cannot make activities that can improve students academically, socially and personally and cannot find solutions to problems. Schools cannot supply the students' families the competences necessary to help their children in their learning experience and they cannot achieve a teaching leadership that suits the characteristics of the families. Students cannot be presented opportunities to benefit from educational rights as well as the technological and social facilities of school.

As can be seen on Table 2 the schools have the highest performance in "introducing school rules to students" (Item No. 19). This situation shows that schools give more priority to implementing bureaucratic norms which can facilitate management actions than in satisfying the needs of disadvantaged students. This situation shows that schools give more priority to implementing bureaucratic norms which can facilitate management actions than in satisfying the needs of disadvantaged students. Schools were found to be most inadequate in the activity of "providing students opportunities of improvement in the fields in which they are

talented to' (Item No. 20). Accordingly, schools cannot provide their students with the opportunity to improve their cognitive, affective and psychomotor competences. Groups have perceptive differences about "giving the students an opportunity to benefit from educational technologies" (Item No. 15). Schools also have a very low performance about supporting the students on the issue of "academic failures" (Item No. 17).

DISCUSSION

Schools cannot provide enough assistance disadvantaged students in regard to knowing about the socio-economic characteristics of their families and in satisfying their students' educational needs. Not being able to determine the differences of disadvantaged students resulting from their families, and not being able to determine their educational needs, make them once more disadvantaged when compared to advantaged students. Thus, the state of being disadvantaged becomes permanent like a chronic illness. In this research, it was revealed that disadvantaged students are dealt with like advantaged students within a generalizing approach, thus their needs resulting from both their families and schools cannot, by and large, be satisfied. It was also determined in the research that schools' performances to satisfy the academic, social and personal development needs of students were highly inefficient. According to the report of the Ministry of National Education (2002) called "Determination of the Achievements of Primary School Students", the academic achievement level of students in Turkey is generally below 50% in almost every grade and subject field. This rate is even lower in areas with restricted opportunities socio-economic factors are taken consideration. According to the Monitoring Report (2009) of the Education Reform Initiative 2008 with the research findings of Adaman and Ardıç (2008), the socio-economic inadequacies of families prevent schools significantly realizing their academic, social and personal development function in line with their purposes and, when schools do not provide the necessary support, students are obliged to drop out of school "as the educational process is very expensive." Çokgezen and Terzi (2008) state that the performance of students and teachers in state schools is lower than in private schools in Turkey; the low performance of state schools and educators is attempted to be compensated through private educational institutions.

In this study, which concerns the satisfaction state regarding the meeting of the educational needs of disadvantaged students by their schools, it was proved that schools did not present students with the opportunity to become successful in learning domains where they are failing and to improve themselves in the fields where they

are talented. The number of studies which are directly about disadvantaged students is very restricted. It could be argued that a great emphasis should be put on results of the present study taking into consideration the facts about the education of disadvantaged students. In Gelbal's study (2008) reported that students' academic achievement depended rather on the physical opportunities that families provide at home such as a study room, a bureau and teaching technologies like the computer and internet access, more than on the opportunities that schools provide. In Özbas's study (2009) covering school-family relations, it was seen that primary school managers found themselves inefficient in presenting students with opportunities to increase their academic achievement.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

indifference School to family socio-economic circumstances caused to satisfy the educational needs of students that resulted from their coming from families at a very low rate. Mothers cannot be taught competences to assist in the child's education; and importance of education cannot be taken on by families. Schools give priority to the implementation of rules which can facilitate the school's bureaucratic function rather than satisfying the educational needs of disadvantaged students that result from their family circumstances and their school lives. Students have a highly negative perception about the level at which they are known in relation to their individual aspects and in relation to their family environment. Educational needs of disadvantageous students caused by their school experiences cannot be satisfied so as to overcome the negative effects. Schools cannot provide enough assistance to students for academic, social and personal development which can erase the negative differences between the advantaged disadvantaged students. Efficient leadership roles cannot be realized in families for helping the children with their lessons and the usage of teaching technologies. The proposals below were developed in line with the research results:

- Policies and implementations at a micro level should be realized in order to reveal family characteristics of disadvantaged students properly.
- School principals should take training for communication and cooperation skills and social awareness in order to understand disadvantaged families in relation to their living environments and according to their social status in an integrated way.
- There should be extra teachers who could be teaching leaders for families in addition to providing an efficient cooperation between the school administration and disadvantaged families.
- It should be proved to families that for a prestigious social status, the most efficient and permanent change

that can be realized is through education; and they should be shown the importance that should be given to their children's education.

- The economic circumstances of families that prevent them from meeting their children's basic needs and the educational needs that result from their school lives should be determined with objective methods and families should be given constant income support as well as teaching technologies support.
- Taking into consideration the impact of the mother on her child's education, mothers should be given functional literacy education in accordance with their personal circumstances, at home or in school, along with education support at the level of the child.

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