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THE VIEWS OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN TURKEY ON HOME SCHOOLING PROGRAMS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY*

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Abstract

Home schooling is an educational model which values the learner as an individual, and provides a systematic education at home based on learner self-realization and on the individual's capacity for learning to learn. The aim of this study was to investigate alternative school models "Home Schooling Programs" by eliciting the views of academics working in education faculties in different universities. To this end, the study sought the views of academics about the support to be provided by families, citizenship education, violence, school size and culture. The study also examined the effects of such programs on private education and their applicability under Turkey conditions. In the study, the views of academics working at education faculties in different universities regarding home schooling programs were analysed qualitatively. The participants in the study consisted of 30 academics working at education faculties in five universities. Research data were analysed by content analysis, a

* Bu makale Crosscheck sistemi tarafından taranmış ve bu sistem sonuçlarına göre orijinal bir makale olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

qualitative data analysis technique. The study found out that academics do not have enough theoretical knowledge of "Home Schooling Programs". Furthermore, the majority of academics pointed out that if such an application is aimed to be carried out in Turkey the education level of parents can be considered particularly as a determining factor in the category of family support. On the basis of the research results, following suggestions could be taken into consideration: Introductory symposiums and panels could be organized in order to discuss examples of home schooling programs implemented abroad, pilot home schooling programs could be benefited within the context of private education system in Turkey.

Key Words: Alternative school models, home schooling programs, private education, Turkey,

Öz

Ev okulu, öğrenene birey olarak değer veren, onun kendini gerçekleştirme ve öğrenmeyi öğrenme kapasitesine dayalı sistemli bir şekilde evde eğitilmesini ön gören bir modeldir. Bu araştırmada alternatif bir eğitim modeli olan "Ev Okulu Uygulamaları"nın değişik üniversitelerin eğitim fakültelerinde görev yapan akademisyenlerin görüşlerine göre incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu genel amaç doğrultusunda aile desteği, zorunlu eğitim, şiddet, okul büyüklüğü ve okul kültürü boyutlarında ev okulu uygulamalarının Türkiye koşullarına uygunluğu akademisyenlerin görüşlerine göre incelenmiştir. Araştırmada ev okulu uygulamalarına ilişkin olarak değişik eğitim fakültelerinde görev yapan öğretim üyelerinin/elamanlarının görüşleri nitel olarak ele alınmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu beş üniversitenin eğitim fakültesinde görev yapan 30 akademisyen oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada veriler, nitel veri analizi tekniklerinden içerik analiz tekniği kullanılarak çözümlenmiştir. Araştırmada öğretim üyelerinin ev okulu uygulaması hakkında yeterli kuramsal bilgiye sahip olmadıkları saptanmıştır. Ayrıca ailelerin sağlayacağı destek kategorisi içerisinde akademisyenlerin çoğunluğu böyle bir uygulama Türkiye de uygulanacak olsa özellikle ebeveynlerin eğitim seviyesinin belirleyici bir etken olarak ele alınabileceğine dikkat çekmiştir. Araştırmanın sonuçlarına dayalı olarak şu temel öneriler geliştirilmiştir: Ev okulu programlarının uygulamaları hakkında sempozyum ve paneller düzenlenebilir, Türk eğitim sistemi içerisinde özel eğitim bağlamında pilot ev okulu uygulamaları gerçekleştirilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Alternatif okul modelleri, ev okulu programları, özel eğitim, Türkiye.*

INTRODUCTION

Home schooling is an alternative school model. Home schooling can be defined as the practice of parents educating children at home, instead of using traditional public or private school education (Hess, 2002; Akt, Farrell and Ryan, 2005). Home schooling is an educational model which values the learner as an individual, and provides a systematic education at home based on learner self-realization and on the individual's capacity for learning to learn.

In terms of the Turkish literature, no descriptive study has been undertaken, although there are some institutional studies that introduce home schooling (Aydın, 2010; Aydoğan, 2007; Gündüz, 2007). The current study therefore makes an important contribution to the literature, as it introduces an alternative educational model, takes into consideration the views of academics, and examines the applicability of home schooling under Turkish conditions.

As all of the studies carried out to date in Turkey has been concerned with introducing the home schooling program, this study is valuable in that it is the first practical research in Turkey in this area.

This study aims to examine home schooling programs in the light of the opinions of academics working at education faculties in different universities. In accordance with this general purpose, answers to the following questions about home schooling were sought from academics. a) What views do they hold about family support? b) What views do they hold about its effects on violence in school culture? c) What views do they hold about its effects on compulsory education? d) What views do they hold about its effects on private education? e) What views do they hold about and its applicability under Turkish conditions?

METHOD

This study was undertaken using a qualitative research method. In the study, the views on home schooling of academics working in education faculties were examined.

Participants

There was one participant from Ankara University, five participants from Kafkas University, seven participants from Trakya University, seven participants from Çukurova University and ten participants from Mersin University. When the academic titles of the participants are examined, it may be seen that two are teaching staff, one is a research asistant, two are associate professors and 22 are assistant professors. Fourteen female and 16 male academics took part in the study.

Data Collection And Data Collection Tools

In the study, data were obtained using an interview technique, which is a qualitative research method. The interview technique (Yıldırım and Simsek, 2005) was chosen in order to obtain in depth knowledge from the academics about their attitudes to home schooling.

Data Analysis

Research data were analyzed using the content analysis technique, which is a qualitative data analysis technique. For this purpose, a transcript of the interview data

was made and codes were assigned on this text. Next, codes forming a meaningful and interrelated whole were brought together under the thematic headings. In order to ensure the reliability of the coding process and theme creation, the consistency of the data was evaluated by being coded independently by two researchers.

Forming categories. Pre-determined themes are utilized in order to avoid data loss in content analysis, and to prevent editing and interpreting the data incorrectly (Yıldırım and Simsek, 2005). For this reason, in this study the elements involved in home schooling programs were determined first, based on a review of the literature (Lyman, 1998; Ajex, 1999; Hill, 2000; Ensing, 2000; Basman, 2001; Princiotta and Berlick, 2006). Here are the items defined for the study: “family, school culture, applicability, compulsory education and, private education”.

Data processing. After the themes forming the conceptual framework had been determined, the data were tabulated by being coded individually. Next, the codes which had been determined by two researchers were compared for consistency. It was found out that ten of the codes determined by the two coders were different. These different codes were re-evaluated, taking the opinion of two experts. Based on the views of the two experts, it was concluded that these codes were suitable for the criteria and they were included in the analyses.

Validity and reliability. In qualitative studies, reporting the data in detail and the explanation by the researcher of how s/he procured the results are key criteria for ensuring validity (Yıldırım and Simsek, 2005). The procedures followed to ensure the validity of the results of the study are described below:

1- In order to ensure the validity of the study, every effort was made to describe clearly the data collected. Every observation expressed by the academics was recorded. In addition, care was taken to ensure that the presentation of the themes and the thematic coding were undertaken objectively.

2- The creation of the themes and the utilization of the theoretical structure were clearly defined in order that the results obtained here might be confirmed by other researchers. In performing the content analysis, first, the themes mentioned above were created, by examining the literature on home schooling programs in detail. Since the theoretical structure was used as a criterion to classify and summarize the obtained data and to determine whether the codes and the themes were consistent or not, the data were supported theoretically.

3- Moreover, validity was reinforced by presenting citations which supported the findings directly.

To ensure the reliability of the research data, the following procedure was adopted:

4- The coder reliability of the two researchers was calculated separately to increase the reliability of the study. In addition, the reliability of the results was

assessed by comparing results presented in the literature review with the results obtained from the content analysis.

“Consensus” and “dissidence” were identified separately for the questions on home schooling in the feedback form. Then, coder reliability was calculated using a reliability determination formula, recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994:64). For the 15 questions in the feedback form, the first researcher determined five themes (family, education program, applicability, formal education, private education) and the second researcher determined six themes (family, education program, school violence, suitability under Turkish conditions, compulsory education and private education). Accordingly, reliability was calculated as $5/5+1 \times 100 = 83\%$ for the themes section.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

In this section, findings obtained from the data analysis are presented, in line with the basic categories.

Category 1: Family Support

Table 1: Presents findings about the responsibilities of parents in home schooling programs.

Yes	n	Partly	n	No	n
Mutual Responsibility	4	Providing Conditions	4	Lack of Education	7
Education Level	3	Education Level	1	Obstacle to the Common Culture	1
Planning and Program Responsibility	3	Planning and Program Responsibility	1	Social Process	1
Consciousness	3			Lack of Organizational Structure	1
Interaction	2			Lack of Program	1
School-Family Cooperation	1				
Acceptance of School Task	1				
Attendance	1				
Recognizing Own Children	1				
Implicit Learning	1				
Value Transfer	1				
Total	21		6		11

According to Table 1, 21 participants think that families could take more responsibility in home schooling programs. There are two explanations for this. The first, under the code of "planning", is that "Parents have a major role in planning education". The second, under the code of "providing the conditions", is that "This is a point of view based on the parents educating their own children at home, although it is difficult to fulfil all the responsibilities in this program". Under the code of "providing the conditions", K4 states, "If certain conditions are met, it is possible. If parents take more responsibility and if they have the ability to educate their own children ..." K16 explains, "Because they know their children better", under the code of "recognizing own children". K16 also states, the "learning process is not limited by the school", under the code of "implicit learning". K24 states, "Parents have to take responsibility under current conditions, but they have to take more responsibility in the home schooling program. Because, whereas they currently share responsibility with the school, director, teacher, etc., in the home schooling system all responsibility will belong to the parents. K19 stated its opinion in the dimension of planning and application with the following sentence; " The planning and main responsibility to realise this event will belong to families in child's learning process." Six participants think that the family could take more responsibility in home schooling programs, if certain conditions were met, and if they had certain equipment. Two participants state "If the family is conscious of the issues, it is possible." They also state, "Families with a high level of income and status under Turkish conditions could take responsibility. K22 argues, "There might be differences, in terms of the parents. It could be considered for self-made people and for those who are at least high school graduates. How would parents who do not have these qualities help students in need of education?"

Table 2: Presents views about parents supporting each other in home schooling programs.

Yes	n	Partly	n	No	n
Expert Guidance	3	Dependence on Environment	1	Lack of Education	2
Different Program	3			Cultural Differences	1
Improving Interaction	3			Lack of Program	1
Interaction of Different Values	2				
Being a Model of Parenting for Each Other	1				
Overcoming Problems	1				
Acting Together	1				
Presenting a Proposal	1				
Material Aid	1				
Coordinating Education	1				
Total	17		1		4

According to Table 2, 17 participants think that families can get support from each other in home schooling programs. As a reason for this, three participants state, "There are currently people who obtain support from each other outside of formal education". Two participants state, "There could be a contribution in terms of specialism". Six participants state, "They should be able to interact to transfer the situations they encounter to each other". Two participants also state, "It depends on the family members' level of competence".

K6 points out that "Different programs and approaches could produce better results", in the code of "support between families". K5 points out that "In particular, families sharing the same values could support each other" under the code of "acting together". In addition, K18 draws attention to material aid, saying, "They could help each other in terms of resources such as material and teaching."

Table 3: Presents views about the intellectual competence of families in home schooling programs.

Yes	n	Partly	n	No	n
Sufficiency of Education	2	Sufficiency of Knowledge	1	Lack of Education	4
Parental Support	1	Sufficiency of Education	1	Lack of Interest	2
A Multi-Codeal Process	1	Elite Surrounding	1	Necessity of the Program	2
Lifelong Learning	1			Social Status Differences	2
Interaction Skills	1			Failure of Education Program	2
				Lack of awareness	1
				Difference in Education Style	1
				Closed Society	1
				Necessity of School Support	1
				Political Perspective	1
				Lack of Responsibility	1
				Reading Habit	1
				Lack of Time	1
				Respect for the Child	1
Total	6		3		21

According to Table 3, 21 participants think that if home schooling programs were to be practised in Turkey, the families would lack the intellectual competence to provide such an education. As a reason for this, two participants state, "A large segment of society does not even support normal school education."

Under the code of "intellectual competence of families", under the code of "political perspective", K14 says, "I think that families will not be able to give this education due to their educational levels and political perspectives". Under the code of "lack of awareness", K28 states, "I think that they are not aware of what the program is, or of what the processes are in this program". Under the code of unconsciousness, while K28 states the opinion that "I am thinking about their being unaware of the process and what it is", K8 states in the necessity point of family support "no matter how much the parents are trained they cannot replace the elements taking part in the school process. The families only support to the education process of the child."

Under the code of "lack of education", K35 points out, "More than 50% of families in rural areas have only graduated from primary school". K1 also points out that "This process implies a close relationship with the educational level of parents." Therefore, "The practicality of this program seems almost impossible for families who do not have sufficient education or the right level of intellectual competence". Under the code of "respect for the child", K7 points out that "The child should be regarded as an individual in home education, but children in Turkey are not seen as individuals with certain rights".

Three participants think that families in Turkey are partly at this intellectual level. Whereas K34 states, "Some families can employ a private teacher. Few can educate themselves. Working life becomes an obstacle preventing them from developing their personality and getting information", K29 states, "Yes. I think it could be possible in an elite environment. Private courses, teachers and tutors do it partly". K30 states, "There are families who have this intellectual level, but I believe that the proportion is low. The latest statistics should be evaluated." One other participant also claims that families are partly at the intellectual level necessary to supply this education (K4).

Table 4: *Presents views about educating learners according to the knowledge and values of the families in the home schooling program.*

Yes	n	Partly	n	No	n
The Significance of Parental Values	6	Cognitive Gains to be Acquired at School	1	Understanding of Nation State	3
Educational Levels of Parents	3	Educational Levels of Parents	1	The Significance of Common Culture	2
According to the Field	1			Lack of Education	2
Transfer of	1			Common Ground	2

Correct Knowledge			
Cultural Transfer	1	Transfer of Different Cultures	1
Implicit Learning	1	Need for Time	1
A Natural Process	1		
An Organized Structure	1		
Total	14	2	11

According to Table 4, 11 participants think that if home schooling were to be practised in Turkey, parents stated that they cannot train their children in the direction of their own knowledge and values, or they should not educate their children in this way.

Because of this, K1 states, "It is not suitable for the structure of our nation and state". K22 also explains, "Children can only reach their parents knowledge and understanding in this type of education, and it will not be a contemporary education. First of all, it will not be possible to implement national education policies". Under the code of "understanding the nation state", K3 points out that, "the yeast sustaining the culture is common cultures and values". In the code of the "significance of common culture", K8 also points out that "It must not be contrary to the basic principles of education! It would not be possible to provide for the socialization of society, to collect individuals on common ground and to transfer cultural heritage".

Fourteen academics think that if this type of education were to be introduced, families would transfer their own values. Because of this, three participants state, "Of course, everybody will transfer the knowledge they know as correct to their children".

Two participants think that there will be partial value transfer in home schooling programs. K24 states, "It would be partly possible, but the interaction with the outside world is not just physical. There is a more colourful and attractive world, including TV, the internet, newspapers, etc., apart from their own knowledge and values." K20 also states, "Families will teach mostly their own values, together with universal values. In this case, being together would be more effective".

Category 2: School Violence

Table 5: Presents views on the effect of home schooling on violence, drug use, negative peer pressure, etc. in schools, if such a program were to be practiced in Turkey.

Yes	n	Partly	n	No	n
Protective Environment	1	Lack of Socialization	4	Communal Problems	5
Family Support	1	Family Violence	2	Social Interaction	3
		Communal Problems	2	Social Problems	3
		Psychological Problems	1	Causing Loneliness	1
				Violence in Family	1
Total	2		9		13

According to Table 5 thirteen participants do not think that home schooling would put an end to violence, drug use and negative peer pressure, etc. in schools. As a reason for this, five participants state, "It is not only schools, but also aspects of the environment that affect the behaviour of children. TV programs, movies and series are also influential, as is the dependence of children on the internet, CDs and DVDs. So, it appears impossible that isolating children from society will be beneficial". Three participants also state, "Children learn some of these types of habits from their parents and the cyber world".

In the same context, under the code of "communal problems", K5 states, "I think that this problem cannot be solved only by this program". K9 asserts, "The child will interact with the environment anyway". Under the code of "social problems", K8 argues, "Even if there is no school, children live in a social environment. They may acquire such negative habits from a different social environment." K14 states, "I think that we must consider the other causes of school violence". Under the code of "loneliness", K13 points out that "There will be loneliness". Under the code of "violence in the family", K23 states, "At this time, the pressure will begin."

Nine participants think that home schooling would partly put an end to the violence, drug use, negative peer pressure, etc. caused by school. As a reason for this, three participants argue, "It will partly end these problems, but it will also cause some problems".

Category 3: Applicability under Turkish Conditions

Table 6: Presents the views of academics about the applicability of home schooling under Turkish conditions.

Yes	n	%	Partly	n	No	n
Parents' Education	1	50	Lack of Parental Education	1	Lack of Parental Education and Awareness	10
Appropriate Planning	1	50	Depends on Program	1	Lack of Infrastructure	4
					Lack of Country Preparation	4
					Impediment to the Common Culture	2
					Need for Plot Scheme	1
					Prevention of Individual Freedom	1
					Need for Program	1
					Formation of Different Ideas	1
Total	2	100		2		24

Four participants assert that home schooling would not be appropriate under current conditions in Turkey. As a reason for this, seven participants state, "We are just not ready, in terms of background and the educational level of families". In this context, K6 states, "If each individual is educated according to a different way of understanding, the common culture will be lost and private teachers will be introduced". Under the code of "impediment to the common culture", K22 states, "The incompetence of parents and their lack of education, multiculturalism in our country and the human services performed by education will not allow this". Under the code of "lack of parental education and awareness". Under the code of the "need for infrastructure", K2 states, "It seems impossible that this could be widely implemented in the near future. But prospective studies could be carried out, with a view to establishing a legal infrastructure". K1 asserts, "It is too early, because I think this is a matter of top-level status." Under the code of "lack of country preparation", K8 argues, "First of all, the current education system must produce very qualified students, so as to begin alternative programs. And the problems in our education system must be solved." K24 claims, "The current system is very bad and it is getting worse day by day. So it would be very difficult for a new system to be successful." K9 states, "Most of the families who do not send their children to school give home schooling as a reason". Under the code of "the prevention of individual freedom", K11 explains, "I

think that, in the framework of individual freedom, there is not the appropriate level for this program". Under the code of the "need for a program."

Two participants think that home schooling programs would be partly suitable under current conditions in Turkey. Under the code of "depends on program", K18 states, "It is difficult to answer this question in the context of the current formal education system. But, if an alternative and special program were to work well, it might be possible." K19 states, "I think that if the home environment, supplementation of conditions where necessary, the knowledge and ability of the parents, and collaboration are taken into consideration, the program could be implemented".

Two of the participants think that home schooling programs would be suitable under current Turkish conditions. As a reason for this, they state, "It could be implemented if the individuals are selected. This type of education cannot be given by every parent". Under the code of "planning the program", K29 notes, "Some people have applied this (eg. Erkin KORAY). I think that it would cause the emergence of class differences. Only wealthy people can benefit from it and they have already benefitted. I do not recommend that the state should be responsible for this program.

Category 4: Compulsory Education

Table 7: Presents views about the effect of home schooling on compulsory education.

Yes	n	%	Partly	n	No	n
Parents' Education	1	50	Lack of Parental Education	1	Lack of Parental Education and Awareness	10
Appropriate Planning	1	50	Depends on Program	1	Lack of Infrastructure	4
					Lack of Country Preparation	4
					Impediment to the Common Culture	2
					Need for Plot Scheme	1
					Prevention of Individual Freedom	1
					Need for Program	1
					Formation of Different Ideas	1
Total	2	100		2		24

According to Table 7 three participants think that the home schooling program would have a positive effect on compulsory education. As a reason for this, under the code of "facilitator", K3 states, "It may facilitate compulsory education". K2 states, "When this program is put into practice, it could benefit from the support of distance and non-formal education".

Fifteen participants think that home schooling would have a negative effect on compulsory education. As a reason for this, two participants state, "If we think about campaigns such as the 'Girls' Education Campaign', it would be very difficult to prevent a situation arising in which girls would not complete their compulsory education. As there are numerous girls in this situation, it will be impossible to implement this." Four participants state, "This is a situation which would work against the process of individuals emerging from the common education system as citizens who protect and develop the existing educational system and order. Moreover, it is a situation which does not take national unity and cooperation into consideration".

K15 states, "It may cause negative results in terms of the acquisition of fixed and common values. Every education system aims to produce individuals who will continue its own political order". Under the code of "transfer of the ideology and values of the state", K13 argues that "Citizenship values will be in trouble". Under the code of "Prevention of national unity and cooperation", K20 argues, "Citizenship requires that people act together, collaborate and help each other. Home schooling programs would cause difficulties in providing this. K11 asserts, "I think that as every family would educate their children in line with their own situation, the principles of national unity and cooperation would not be taken into consideration". In addition, under the code of "lack of awareness of parents", K5 states, "It will affect compulsory education negatively. Although education is compulsory in our country, some families still do not send their children to school. In particular, girls are still not sent to school."

K6 states, "It would certainly produce positive effects - But if it is carried out together with formal education". Under the code of formal educational support, K22 states, "If home schooling is carried out with the support of other distance education programs, it might be possible. Otherwise, there might be a negative development in citizenship education and it will be impossible for the individual to develop".

Category 5: Private Education

Table 8: *Presents views about the effects of home schooling programs on sick or disabled children.*

Yes	n	Partly	n	No	n
Main Idea	1	Support of Formal Education	2	Transfer of the Ideology and Values of the State	4
Support of Compulsory Education	1	Depends on the Program	2	Raising Individuals to Protect the Order	3
Facilitator	1	Depends on the Program	1	Prevention of National Unity and Cooperation	3
		Depends on the	1	Lack of Awareness of	2

Content		Parents	
Impedes Transfer of Common Values	1	Prevention Socialization	of 1
		Incapability Controlling Program	of 1
		Support of Formal Education	1
Total	3		7 15

Table 8 shows that fourteen participants think that home schooling is a good choice for disabled or sick children. As a reason for this, five participants state, "I think this program should be implemented for children who have an ongoing disease or disability". Six participants also state, "Certainly, yes. It will be useful for children who have not benefitted from educational opportunities for various reasons". Under the code of "providing support", K13 says, "Yes. Because private education is necessary". Under the code of "natural environment", K10 asserts, "Being educated by conscious parents in their natural environment without experiencing difficulties will benefit such children". Furthermore, under the code of "ensuring attendance", K19 states, "Yes. These children have some problems in respect of attendance at school. Certainly. There are many children imprisoned in the house. This program will offer these children the chance of education". K11 also draws attention to the effectiveness of the program in gaining children who are outside the system, saying, "Yes. It may be a good program for children outside the system". Under the code of "setting standards", K8 explains, "Standards must be clearly defined for the system. It is necessary to identify the families to be educated about the program, the private students and the nature of the disabilities of the children who are to be included in the program. All of these must be organized according to standards".

In the same context, K14 points out that "It might be suitable for disabled and diseased children. However, this situation does not remove the deficiencies of this program. Home schooling programs affect the social and personal development of the individual negatively." Under the code of "social learning", K12 points out that "It is possible; but in terms of the child's socialization, school is essential." Under the code of "integration", K9 says, "Possible. But such children might be isolated, and integration is essential nowadays".

Four participants do not think that home schooling would be a good choice for sick or disabled children. As a reason for this, K2 explains, "But for children who have special needs or ongoing illnesses, studying in the same environment as their peers is an extremely important factor in enabling them to perform a social role and to gain independent life skills."

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the academics drew attention to the need to take the educational level of parents into consideration as a determining factor in deciding whether home schooling could be implemented in Turkey. In fact, most of the participants (n=18) believed that families could take more responsibility in home schooling programs. Others (n=6) argued that families could take more responsibility if certain conditions were met and if the families had certain qualifications. As a reason for this, they explained that families lack sufficient awareness. However, it was also argued that if families at a higher socio-economic level were to implement the program, they would be able to give it enough support. Moreover, participants noted that families already support and collaborate with each other regarding education, and suggested that that similar collaboration could be made in home schooling programs, too. Some participants (n=6) pointed out that it would be difficult for families to support each other in this program, on the grounds that families are not sufficiently well equipped, and that they are not at the necessary intellectual level. A large majority of the participants (n=25) stated that if home schooling were to be introduced, families would educate their children in line with their own knowledge and values, and that they would transfer their own values.

In fact, according to Baslam (2001), one of the two basic features of home schooling families is the structure that forms the environment that controls and directs the children's character development. The other is the understanding that oversees the academic development of the children (Wilhelm and Firmin, 2009). The findings of the study also support this view. According to Redner's study (1999), in comparison with the general population, home school families are more educated. In that study, it was determined that the children of home school families with even a minimum level of education have gained marks above the national norms. In the same research, it was determined that the performance rates of home school students at all levels are higher than the performance rates of students in public schools (Rudner, 1995; Akt, Rudner, 1999). Thus, the educational level of families is a determining factor. Families have to bear a significant cost in home schooling. Lyman's research (1998), conducted with 1657 families and 5042 students, found that the fathers of 17.3% of home schooled children are accountants or engineers, 16.9% of them are professors, doctors or lawyers, and 10.7% of them are businessmen, and that 87% of home schooled children's mothers are housewives. This indicates that the economic situation of families is an important determinant in the implementation of the program. According to data from the U.S.A. National Education Statistics Center, there are differences between the socio-economic level of families whose children attend home schools and of families whose children go to public schools. It was determined that both the

economic and educational levels of families whose children attend home schools are higher.

Under the code of “violence in school”, five participants did not think that home schooling would end the violence, drug use, negative peer pressure, etc... caused by school. Five more participants thought that home schooling would only partly end such problems, because, even if home school immediately reduced the violence caused by school, it would also cause different problems in relation to socialization. Furthermore, a large number of the participants (n=15) asserted that such programs would not end the violence and other problems such as drug use and negative peer pressure in schools, since they are fed by the social environment. In the literature, much emphasis is laid upon the negative culture of schools. Princiotta and Bielick (2006) reached similar conclusions regarding the reasons for families’ preferring for home schooling, but with different priorities. Princiotta and Bielick’s study showed “environment” and “security” as main reasons.

It is also stated that the probable cause might be the explosion of violence occurring in schools since 1999. Thus, security issues in schools affect the ideologues’ preferences regarding home schooling. As stated above, some families are anxious about moral safety of their children (Knowles and et al, 1992), some are anxious about their children’s physical safety (Basham, 2001; Hill, 2000; Princiotta and Bielick, 2006) and some are anxious about their children’s religious and spiritual safety.

Under the code of “suitability under Turkish conditions”, while 23 participants stated that home schooling would not be suitable under current conditions in Turkey, two participants stated that it would be partly suitable now. Reasons for this included a lack of parental education and awareness, lack of infrastructure, unreadiness of the country, impeding the common culture, inhibiting individual freedom, the need for a program and the emergence of different ideas. In the same context, Hill (2000) emphasizes in his study that it is impossible to confuse home schooling with the main philosophy of public education. He also states that home school practitioners are free from the bureaucracy, unionization and undisciplined activities of public bodies; and that, unlike schools, home schooling does not include traditional rules or institutions, but will be a broad movement with numerous participants. Stough (1992) analyzed “the level of acquisition of the necessary attitudes, knowledge and skills for life functions” of children who attend home schools or traditional schools. He found that many home schooled students are deprived of socialization opportunities. It emerged that some home school students were less competent than the students in traditional schools in terms of socialization (Stough, 1992, Akt. Aiex, 1999). Under the code of “applicability under Turkish conditions”, the present study also identified concerns that home schooling might impede the common culture. The most important criticism of home schooling is that it has weakened the civil foundation of American society (Apple, 2000; Lubienski, 2000). So, participants raised concerns about Turkey being unprepared for such a program and about the possibility that different opinions might emerge. Similarly, Lubienski (2000) claims that home schooling undermines the unique

potential of public education to serve as a democratic institution defending the common interest (p.211). In the context of a lack of parental education and awareness, Kohn has put forward his viewpoint that “This movement is a part of the general trend for active and wealthy families to pursue the best opportunities for their children” (Akt, Lubienski, 2000: 209). Under current Turkish conditions, the lack of parental education and awareness is an important reason for not applying such a program.

Lubienski (2000) emphasizes the tensions between the purposes of public education and the interests of the private sector, showing that families have met their expectations of success for their children, but that they have been incompetent in the realization of social goals. Crowson (2000) draws attention to the necessity of the program saying that with democratic debate and the strategies far from criticism personal belongings may be formed and many of the participants regard the lack of programme as the main deficiency in the application of this research in the conditions of Turkey. In this study, most of the participants have also noted that the fundamental deficiency undermining the suitability of home schooling for Turkish conditions is the lack of a program.

Under the code of “main idea”, 17 participants stated that home schooling would have a negative effect on citizenship education. As reasons for this, it was claimed that home schooling operates against national unity and cooperation; that it prevents the state from transferring its own ideology and values; and finally, that families do not give enough importance to education.

Seven participants argued that if certain conditions (depending on the program and its content) regarding citizenship education were met, home schooling would have a positive effect, in part. Farris and Woodruff (2000) take a different perspective on the viewpoint that home schooling would have a negative effect on citizenship education. According to Farris and Woodruff (2000), the argument that schools, other than public schools, are isolated from the public arena and that they are highly specialized areas is deficient. Moreover, Farris and Woodruff (2000) also assert that many home school students are not isolated, since it is a fact that home school parents are in contact with other families and institutions in society. Home schooling organizations have participated in various social activities and programs at local, regional and national levels. Examples of such activities include play areas used together by home schooled children, local libraries, museums, zoos, organized drama productions, scientific projects and art workshops, swimming classes, picnics organized by home schools, meals and many other events.

Twenty-one participants thought that home schooling would be a good choice for sick and disabled children. Five participants thought that it would be a good choice,

in part, for such children. As a reason for this, they stated that educating sick and disabled children with other students would be useful for their socialization, in part.

Five participants thought that home schooling would not be a good choice for disabled and sick children. In this context, Ensign (2000) found that the individualized structure of home schooling provides an opportunity for parents to focus on the special education needs of children with learning disabilities or with a high mental capacity in a long-term study, conducted over nine years,

Ensign (2000) asserted that home schooling is a better option for children who need special education, for three reasons: a) It focuses on the child as a whole, not on ability or superior talent; b) It considers the student as an individual focus of interest; c) Subjects are explained by the teacher when the child is ready. Furthermore, the teacher does not have to follow set rules when studying with children who need special education. For this reason, according to Ensign (2000:8), "Students do not have to have the expected patterns of the other students attending their classrooms."

The research findings support this argument. In addition, Ensign (2000) points out that home schooled students with learning difficulties have participated more than their peers in public schools in learning activities, and that they make more progress in reading and writing than their peers in public schools.

On the basis of the research results and discussion, the following suggestions could be taken into consideration:

1- Introductory symposiums and panels could be organized in order to discuss examples of home schooling programs implemented abroad.

2- Pilot home schooling programs could be benefited within the context of private education system in Turkey.

3- More comprehensive studies, with a wider range of participants, could be undertaken under the aegis of the national ministry of education.

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