Abstract

Generally, school is on the top of the centers where educational institutions become concrete and active. Actually, schools are the indispensable part of the general social system of the societies. All kinds of innovations and changes in the society or in the world directly have an effect on education and school in terms of process, organization, structure and functional dimensions. Accordingly, schools cannot be considered independent from the social structure of the society as well as innovations and changes in the world. In order to understand and appraise the structure and function of the school, it is necessary to have an idea on the dynamics of the relational networks and the role of the school in the society. Regarding this fact, the present study intends to figure out the function of the school on theoretical and functional bases, its foremost problems and their possible solutions through a sociological perspective.

Keywords: general social, possible solutions, sociological perspective.

1. Introduction

Human is the only being required to be trained in order to maintain his life on earth and adapt the environment. The educational needs of human also have both biological and sociological reasons. Biologically human unlike other creatures comes to earth with motivationally undirected behaviors. Unlike other creatures human gains many behaviors through education. Therefore, education can be considered as a phenomenon and event that started and be formed with human’s show up on the stage of history. When viewed from the historical perspective, it is seen that educational activities were carried out mostly within the family and religious institutions framework.

The expansion of the division of labor, technology, transformation and differentiation of social structures from...
homogeneous to heterogeneous form can be considered as the most important factors which are effective on education and its becoming an independent institution in time (Brom and Selznick, 1963). Education is a process that aims biological, emotional, mental, social and moral development of human (Thornburg, 1984). In a contemporary world, this process was formed to a regular and planned structure which is carried out in a planned and scheduled way. The school is the important component of this structure. The school where education is carried out collectively is one of the most important centers of educational institution. It will be beneficial to know and use some sociological concepts to understand behaviors of students, teachers and school directors in these centers (Willower and Carr, 1965).

Issues like social structure and functions of the school, the school as a social system, classroom atmosphere, school and environment, job and career can be considered among the primary problems that educational sociology focus on (Gross, 1965). While education is a phenomenon connecting the society and various elements forming the society with each other, it is influenced and shaped by them. Developed and developing countries are intensively affected by the occurring developments in information and transportation technologies of their era and all these issues have restarted the debate how the school and education should be.

Educational problems cannot be solved unless we understand the developments and changes occurring as a result of the dynamic interaction of social relations network and differentiation of institutions as a consequence of these. Therefore, any educational event experienced or carried out must be scientifically analyzed and evaluated within the reality of social structure. An opposite attitude or approach becomes only saving the day and lacks in evaluating in detail. The real question should be asked and be focused on here is although there are numerous scientific studies related to education, why problems in schools are increasing instead of decreasing. Despite the rise in the level of education of societies, why the violence both in the area of family and education is increasing.

In addition, in recent years, many of contemporary educational researchers increasingly and specifically focus on the particular problems at school and this situation causes them to have difficulties in understanding the relationships in social and global magnitude of instructional developments and social changes in the classroom (Schneider, 2005). All these indicate that analysis of educational problems cannot be done alone in a simple manner. In other words, educational problems and activities cannot be considered independent from the social structure lived in and changing social and global developments.

2. Education and Teaching

Education is primarily a social phenomenon and activity. As other social phenomena, education concept is a phenomenon which is tried to be described in different ways and through considering many aspects. For instance, as a process education is preparing the child to the position in society where he will take place through teaching. Another definition of education is to create a behavior change in human in a desired direction. The part of education conducted in schools in a planned and programmed way is called teaching. Education is also defined as an effect that is applied by adults to the ones who are not prepared for life yet (Kızıloluk, 2013).

Teaching is a collection of processes which are used for learning and development of the desired behaviors on student. In teaching there is both a time limitation and it involves informing individuals unilaterally in particular subjects or transferring knowledge. The most important result expected from teaching is the comprehension of the provided information. Education and teaching are two complementary processes. In this process, teaching constitutes the head while education builds spirit and character. Teaching gives knowledge and education provides the values. However, it is understood that teaching will take place in education when knowledge is thought as a value among values and head as a part of spirit (Ulken, 1967). In general, teaching is considered as the part of education which is planned and programmed. Teaching includes the whole of the interaction between the instructor and learners. In other words, education is the result of teaching and learning activities. Teaching is an activity which is carried out to provide information to human and develop abilities and mental capabilities of human (Musgrave, 1983).

Today, education and teaching are consciously planned and carried out activities. Education and teaching cannot be conducted in a random, unplanned and unscheduled way. Education is a planned and conscious activity of modern era that aims to train experts who need it. (Rothman, 1970). Today almost all societies form their education and teaching with a global perspective and on the basis of societal needs.
3. Education and School

Education is undoubtedly neither an issue about the certain period of the human life nor limited to particular age range. In other words, education does not only consist of the activities conducted in a certain time and a place or within certain plans and programs. The education provided in the governmental agencies and the schools constitutes only one aspect of the education. Beyond all these things, education is a much more comprehensive process including informal aspects. It can be said that the invention of writing has an important role in institutionalizing and organizing the educational activities. The invention of writing collectivized the knowledge and accelerated its being learnt and taught in certain places and in an institutional way by removing the knowledge being personal.

Today’s societies hold the school systems responsible for continuation of social life and raising the individual according to the expectations of the society (Tatlıdil, 1993). Although the education is a process directing and organizing the behaviours of the people from all ages at anytime and anywhere which cannot be limited to the school systems (Howard, 1993), in this present situation, the schools have become the basic and indispensible centres and associations of educational institution.

Regarding the education as the process of raising people according to the certain aims, John Dewey notes in his work “The School and Society” that education will have very important role as a meaning in social changes and development. Pointing out the directing role of education in the society and regarding it as the reorganization and construction of the experience, Dewey considers that it is possible to create a new society by means of the school. Dewey regards the education as the life itself, not the preparation for the life and he claims that education is a process of social development. This development should be provided from inside according to the needs and interests of the individuals rather than imposing from outside (Dewey, 1916).

In his work “Die Geistige Situation der Zeit” (1930), Karl Jaspers points out the role of the education and school for social future by saying that “Uneasiness has dominated the world. It is known that education determines the future and the humanity. The collapse of the education may be the collapse of the humanity. Moreover, Jaspers points out the role of the education in the social future by noting that the ones who have educated youth have the future itself (Berner, 2013). In historical perspective, it is seen that religious characteristics of the education has an important influence, it is organized within the scope of religious union and has a more dominant feature (Heasman, 1976). While the concept of education has a humanistic feature rather than religious one, it is begun to be directed in accordance with the personal benefits by placing immanent basis as a result of enlightenment philosophy. In today’s understanding of humanist education, the main aim of education is to maximise the student’s personal development and raise the students in accordance with their interests, needs and abilities (Kornblum & Julian, 1992).

Conflicting theorists in sociology have a critical approach to the educational systems and schools. By the theory of ‘deschooling society’, Ivan Illich strongly criticized the education and instruction conducted in today’s schools. According to him, the most important education is the one implemented out of the school. According to Illich claiming that there is no need for institutional structure, every institution in life is a school and every institutionalized person is a teacher. The curricula of the schools limit the students’ imagination and the schools have become authoritarian and firm. From this point of view, Illich notes that the schools will not be able to contribute to constituting an independent and modern society. The schools have alienated the people from learning (Illich, 2000).

4. The School as a Social Organization

All social theories are efforts for understanding and explaining the social functioning, affairs and the reality. The main aim of these social theories is to understand disruptions on functioning and the direction of the social affairs. On the other hand, the functioning of a social structure or a system without any problem cannot prevent us from asking where this system or structure leads us. From scientific perspective, a single phenomenon can be examined in different levels and aspects. Therefore the structure called as school can be analyzed within the paradigms of various disciplines (anthropological, socio-psychological, organizational sociology and law etc.) as a small model of the society.
As known, organization is a structure or an association composed by two or more people to achieve an aim or a common goal. In other words, organization is a social association created by a group of people to achieve a certain aim or a goal. From the sociological perspective, educational system is an administrative organization embodying various factors and forces. As a sub-institution of it, the school can be analyzed and handled as a bureaucratic organization (Kornblum and Julian, 1992). Because of this, as well as the school is a place where the students are educated, it is also a social organization where the people come together to achieve certain goals. Similar to the other organizations, the school is an organization having a certain place which consistently incorporates new members (students and teachers) and conducts the educational and instructional activities in an organized and systematical way (Musgrave, 1983).

The school is one of the social organizations founded by the society to meet the educational needs and to maintain the educational activities. In other words, the school is an organization by which educational activities are conducted regularly and continually (Hunt, 1972). As an educational organization, the school provides the students to gain knowledge, ability and attitude in accordance with the aims and principles of the educational system. The school is a social organization on its own as well as it can be handled within the context of the relations and its place within the society. Within this context, the roles of teachers and students, authority relations and disciplinary in the school are important (Brom and Selznick, 1963). The school and the society are the structures within the complicated and interdependent relation. For a long time, the pedagogues have dealt with the simple, pedagogical question of how good education should be (Berner, 2013). The pedagogical process disconnected from the social reality or a pedagogical independence like a “holy world” lead people to the blind streets of the city of pedagogy (Berner, 2013). The teachers, union of the teachers and the students in the school and the forces like political parties, association, groups of economy, religious communities, science and scientific organizations out of the school affect the school and the education in a direct or indirect way (Berner, 2013). For most parents, the schools are institutions of education and instruction. Besides the virtues like care, harmony, cleanliness, it is expected from the staff at the school to have social attitudes like trueness, being obedient and helpful, having responsibility and will (Berner, 2013).

The schools are organized educational centres to achieve the educational function. Institutionalized for bring about a change on students’ behaviors, the schools are general learning environments. Having similarities to the learning content, the classrooms in the schools are much more specific environments where the behavioral change is aimed to be achieved by means of the objectives on the common curricula. The classrooms are learning areas to meet the social learning needs rather than individuality. As collective learning environments, the classrooms are the areas where the students’ behaviors are harmonized. There are varieties of learner characteristics in the classrooms (Doğan, 2011).

The society expects and asks the school to make the students adopted to the society and also developed. Therefore, one of the areas of investigation in the educational sociology is the school as a social system, because there is a close relationship between the aims of the school and the expectations and values of the society. The society affects the school and the school affects the society by its outcomes. Therefore, the society and the school can be conceived as two sides of the coin.

The students’ and society’s need of knowledge has been an important factor on the constitution and development of the schools. On one hand, the growing bureaucracy of educational system, one other hand the need for getting maximum output from the educational institution have caused the arise of the school management as a specific discipline (Mialaret, 2001). The school is a distinctive association aiming at providing balance within the society, raising people understanding and explaining the knowledge (Ülken, 1967). In the old periods that the writing, press and technique had not been improved, the schools were regarded as the institutions where the teachers do teaching. But now, the school has become an organization including people gathered to achieve an aim. In the school as an organization, the students, teachers, advisors, officers, employers and the members of parent-teacher association provides the school to fulfil its functions. The relationship between these people can be analysed as a whole.

There is a correlative relationship and interaction between the curriculum and organization type of the school and the structure of the society (Musgrave, 1983). The functions of the school have changed in the course of time. Even though the education is grounded on national, egalitarian and secular features, the aim of the education is to raise people according to the specialized fields the society needs. As a social organization, the managers, teachers and the students of the school have to function to achieve certain aims within the scope of specific rules. From this aspect,
modern school systems present a bureaucratic character by its structure of hierarchical authority, (Kornblum and Julian, 1992). Today’s school has an important role in the developments of personality, formation of national consciousness and awareness of humanity. The schools are the centers aiming at raising a citizen having developed personality and supporting psychological factors of personality, like emotion and mind (intelligence and abilities) and consciousness of perception.

5. School and Teacher

School is a centre which both trains individuals within a framework of a certain plan and program and influences and shapes the society as a result. School is a union which tries to enlighten a group in terms of intelligence, morale, technical knowledge and skills meeting in a particular time and place in a conscious and systematic way. The two most important elements of education and teaching are the teacher and the student. The quality of relationship between these two elements is a crucial determinant in the quality of education (Yilmaz and Tosun, 2013). Teacher is the specialized and instructive actor of education. In the success of provided education, the quality and number of the teacher, an important actor in education, is very important too. In educational services, school administrators and teachers have a very important role. In general school administrators providing management service at schools and teachers offering teaching services are considered as the direct production centres of educational services.

Personal characteristics of teacher may sometimes be more important than field knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. These are empathy, respect and sincerity, and considered as essential qualities of being teacher. Empathy is the ability of an individual to put himself in others’ shoes and to understand others with his/her own point of view. Respect is the acceptance of an individual another one as he/she is unconditionally, Sincerity refer to be consistent in what one says and does. A sincere person does what he/she says (Saban, 2005). Teachers contribute to meeting the educational needs and expectations of the students and the environment through teaching-learning experiences. Teachers must create leaning environments that could encourage potentials of the students in learning process. Teacher must perceive each student as a genius and act accordingly. Another crucial expectation from the teacher is to create a caring and friendly learning atmosphere at school and in the classroom.

There will be problems at school which is a small model of the social structure and social life. These problems can be mainly categorized as follows;
1. Problems related to teachers
2. Problems related to courses (Academic issues)
3. Problems of friendships
4. Psychological and personal problems
5. Developmental issues

No matter what the problems are, everybody should be aware of that they can be solved with the cooperation of school administration, parents, teachers and students. The teaching profession requires professionalism however educator Ira Shor points out that an ordinary teaching life with full of repetition can cause teachers to suffer from official information by being placed in a cage. It is a need for teachers to study and improve themselves much more to be able to have satisfaction from teaching and learning processes (Shor, 2009). Teachers can be considered as successful on the achievement of their objectives as long as they are instructional leaders and role models to their students for situations they may encounter in every aspect of life.

6. School and Family

School is a structure which interacts with all formal and informal organizations in the society and affected by them. There is also a union or structure at the most special and immediate surroundings of the school which is family. Every human being is born in a family environment, so family is the beginning point of education and socialization process. Knowledge and experience coming from family is also the beginning of learning process. Actually education is a process beginning with what family provides to their child and the school forms the second step of it. School is an organisation which consists of student, teacher, directors, counselors and also children’s families.

School’s structuring within and its relationships with the environment and especially with the family is crucial.
Today, schools are considered as the base and core of the social life like family. School and family are both environments containing intense social content (Ağdemir, 1991). Family points to an environment in which there is a union among individuals composed of mother, father and children or individuals close to family who are relative in some way. School also indicates an objective and large social environment which is responsible with meeting the individual and social needs of children of the families coming from its own social environment and developing them. Student families consist of the closest social environment of schools. A good and healthy educational environment can only be provided by teacher and parent collaboration (Ataç, 2003). Student is the common denominator of the school and family. These two institution must communicate effectively and continuously with each other because of the students (Özbaş, 2009). Especially "School phobia" which is a common problem among children at the beginning of the semester who are new at school must be solved in collaboration with the family and school.

Nowadays, family has become prominent as trainer and school as an instructive institution. However, consistency and positive interactions between training at home or with family and education at school are important in terms of getting successful and desired results in education. When it is thought that family has a particular role on the success of education, the relationship between the family and educational institutions is more important. One of the pre-conditions of a healthy educational environment is the family and school cooperation. Collaboration of teachers, administrators, students and parents is important for family and school to know the child and for child to know himself/herself too. It is an obligation for family and school to have effective communication to obtain the intended results from educational system and school.

7. Conclusion

Education appears as a powerful resource which both affects society and also affected by it. There is a close relationship among needs of societies ideal and values of them and educational systems. In this context each society or nation applies an educational policy and strategy according to their own needs and problems. Social and individual needs push educational institution into a mutual and constantly dynamic interaction with other social intuitions.

Social organizations are units that partly necessitate continuity in terms of the presence of society and achieving its objectives. The school like other social organisations is part of the society. The schools have become obligatory educational institutes in almost all the societies. Schools are complex social structures in which students, teachers and school administrators interact with each other and educational experiences of the child are shaped. In this context educational intuitions and schools as embodied structures of them must follow both other various social organizations like family and global changes and developments. Educational activities are neither independent from structural features of the outside world that surrounds them nor from the structural characteristics of the society they are located in. Schools can survive as long as they develop students' individuality and contribute to their socialization. Any structures which do not fulfill social and individual demands become ineffective. The student would like and attend school as long as their needs and expectations are fulfilled, and they find school meaningful.

If it is a reality that the society is composed of the constituent elements such as population, environment and housing, the economy, education, politics, family and religion, generalizations made without considering this structure may cause wrong impressions, and also policies implemented may cause false consequences. Most simply phenomenon of violence at school cannot be solved without knowing the network of relationships such as family structure of a child, social environment he/she lives and peer group. Briefly, any educational activity or any event taking place at school should be handled with in the integrity of social structure. In other way, educational and instructional activities and problems cannot be analyzed independent from their own social environment and developments. Schools must know that they must provide learning opportunities which are suitable for the needs and capacities of individual, communities and humanities. For the progress and development of the individual and society, it is important that educational system, schools and teaching activities to be carried out in a critical approach providing changes and developments.
References