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Parent s' Attitude Towards Their Children Before and After Parental Education

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Abstract

Research about early childhood development concludes that parents, especially mothers play crucial role in young children's life therefore parental education is important for the healthy development of children. This study aims to investigate parental attitude and perception towards their children before and after parental education. 18 mothers and 8 fathers of children 3-6 ages with participated in the study. These parents were given education about child development and education by researchers during 10 weeks. The Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) was used as a tool for evaluation of parent attitudes before and after the education. Also an inquiry was administered to parents before and after the study. Data were evaluated according to gender. Findings of the study concludes some important implications for parental education programs.

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Keywords: Parental attitude and perception, parental education, preschool

1. Introduction

The effect of parenting on children's development and education has been the subject of empirical studies for a long time. Parents had always been in the center of their children's life. As parents are the first role model of them, young children can be able to learn basic skills by the help of their parents and can become healthy adults. By effective parental training programs parents can be able to learn how to behave their children, how to manage problem situations, how to respond and how to communicate with their children appropriately (Mann, Pearl, Behle, 2004; Leung, Sanders, Leung, Mak and Leu, 2003). As defined by Hoard and Shepperd, (2005); parent education is systematic education given to parents by experts in order to contribute to their children's development.

In their child rearing adventures, parents display some attitudes and styles. The relationship between mother-father and child depends basically on parenting styles (Yorukoğlu, 1997; Yavuzer, 1999). According to Darling (1999), parenting consists of complex duties and responsibilities in which mother and/or father has to decide how to organize and guide their son/daughter. During the early 1960s, Baumrind, (1967) identified four dimensions of parenting, using naturalistic observation, parental interviews and other research methods. Further research suggested

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the addition of a fourth parenting styles as, authoritarian parenting, authoritative parenting, permissive parenting and uninvolved parenting (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Maccoby and Martin (1983) identified parenting styles in two main topics; one is negative, demanding parenting and the other is positive, responsive parenting. Some factors such as child’s psychological or developmental problems and/or stress affect parenting attitudes.

As Myers (1996) mentioned, parental training about child care, health and development is important for the whole world. In modern communities both parents have to work for long hours both outside and inside the home, therefore they have to live in stressful environments and also they have to spend limited time for their children. Because of that, parents have to learn how to manage their parenting attitudes and abilities and how to give emotional and physical support for their off-springs. This study aims to investigate parents’ attitudes and perceptions towards their children before and after parental education.

2. Method

Forty volunteered parents attended the education program. Parents who could not attend the whole program for ten weeks were excluded from the study. 18 mothers and 8 fathers of 3-6 years old children participated in the study. The mean age of mothers was 28, fathers was 34. The mean number of children parents’ have is two.

2.1. Procedure

These parents were given education about child development and education by researchers for two hours per day during a period of 10 weeks. The education program topics were; importance of preschool education, parenting styles, developmental problems and delays, child and play, choosing appropriate toys for children, positive and effective discipline techniques, communication between parent and child, television and children etc...

The Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) was used as a tool for evaluation of parent attitudes before and after the education. Also an inquiry was administered to parents before and after the study,. PARI has five sub-components which are; “protective parenting”, “friendship, equality and sharing”, “refusing housewife role”, “husband and wife disagreement” and “pressure and discipline”. After the application of the questionnaire and PARI, collected data were evaluated statically by using Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data were analyzed with t test for independent variable.

Limitations for the present study are as follow. The sample is limited to 26 parents who have children in preschool period, living in the city of Kocaeli and the parent education program is limited within the topics about healthy children’s development and education for ten weeks.

3. Findings and Result

Table 1. Parental Attitudes Research Instrument (PARI) Results Before and After Parent Education

	Pretest					Posttest				
	Female		Male		p	Female		Male		p
N	Mean	n	Mean	n		Mean	n	Mean		
Protective Parenting	18	37,0000	8	43,2500	0,017*	18	35,6667	8	40,3750	0,109
Friendship, Equality and Sharing	18	26,2222	8	29,0000	0,751	18	26,9444	8	29,2500	0,712
Refusing Housewife Role	18	32,0556	8	31,1250	0,742	18	30,1111	8	31,2500	0,448
Husband and Wife	18	13,6111	8	13,0000	0,106	18	11,7778	8	13,3750	0,193

Disagreement										
Pressure and Discipline	18	29,1111	8	32,6250	0.029*	18	28,7222	8	31,2500	0,350

*p<.05; significant

As seen in Table 1 parental education program had a small effect on the attitudes of parents. Especially there seemed to be a little but, positive effect on the dimensions of protective parenting, and pressure and discipline dimensions. As mentioned in numerous studies, parent education had positive effect on parents' behaviors towards their children (Kane, Wood and Barlow, 2007; Wyatt Kaminski, Valle, Filene and Boyle, 2008). Parents, living in big or crowded cities, have to face difficult and stressful life conditions, violence, aggressiveness and crime frequently. These factors can cause pressure and concern about their children.

In the present study fathers and mothers' attendance to the education program was not equal. (Fathers' percentage were 30 %, mothers' were 70%). It can be said that fathers were not so much interested in parent education program. But the parent education program was planned for both fathers and mothers. Mothers were seen actively promoting relationship between father and child, and in parental studies mothers were found to restrict fathers from being involved with their children (Fagan and Barnett, 2003). This could be a reason for fathers being timid for attending to the education program. In the study both mothers and fathers scored higher in protective parenting and pressure and discipline dimensions, but fathers were found more protective than the mothers. And also their scores about pressure and discipline dimension were found higher than the mothers. This result can be an effect of their children's age. Parents attending the program had children in preschool ages, therefore they could think that their child/children might need more interaction and protection. Barnett and Baruch, (1987) found that fathers participation and interaction with their children decreased when their children were older.

4. Conclusion

Findings gained from the study introduced some important implications for parental education programs. In the light of these results it can be concluded that parental education program should be designed carefully according to parents' needs and interests. The topics should be discussed deeply and some methods like; introducing of case studies, role playing, and discussion or brain storming about creative parenting should be used.

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