



INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECT OF FATHER EDUCATION ON THE PERCEPTION OF FATHERHOOD IN THE LIFELONG LEARNING PROCESSⁱ

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Abstract:

In this study, the perceptions of fathers with children in the preschool period towards the concept of fatherhood, a lifelong learning process, and father education after the father education they received, were examined. The study was carried out with a qualitative research method. The sample of the study consisted of 14 fathers who had children attending two kindergartens in Kocaeli in the 2018-2019 academic year and volunteering to participate in the study. Fourteen fathers in the group were interviewed after the training program was applied. As a result of the face-to-face interviews with the semi-structured interview form, what they expressed about fatherhood, how they expressed themselves as fathers in the lifelong learning process, and their thoughts on participation in father education were obtained. It is known that the father has a critical role in the formation of the child's personality. Father education should be given importance to raise happy and healthy individuals. Today, it has been observed that there is a transition from the patriarchal social structure to modernity, and the fathers' traditional thoughts have changed, and they have started to think more child-oriented. It has been revealed that fathers gain awareness after education and fatherhood is a conscious and learnable phenomenon when an effort is made.

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1. Introduction

In the rapidly changing world, the role of mothers and fathers in the child-rearing process continues to be important. Recently, Studies emphasizing the importance and role of fathers in the growth period of children have gained importance. The family is the place where the individual has an uninterrupted interaction especially in the early childhood years, which has an important role in shaping the life of the individual starting from birth or even before birth. The family has an important place in making future generations happy and healthy. 0-72 months, which constitute the first years of a child's life, is a critical period in which development is the fastest, basic knowledge, skills, and first experiences are experienced (Erbay, 2008; Yıldırım, 2008). During this period, the first teachers of children in the home environment are parents (Gürşimşek, 2002; Seçkin and Koç, 1997). All over the world, the importance of the preschool period for the future of the child and society is emphasized, and the studies for the 3-6 age period are increasing day by day (Yavuzer, 2015; Özgündüz, 2015; Duffy, 2006). However, the effectiveness of preschool education can be strengthened if the child encounters similar attitudes at home. In this context, parents need to have the skills to be effective parents. Starting with the studies of Freud and Bowlby and conducted for many years, research focused on the importance and effects of the mother on child development. Studies on fathers' effects on child-rearing have only addressed the biological effect of the father. While Freud was talking about the influence of the father in the last childhood period of the child, Bowlby emphasized the role of the mother in the development of the child and the duty of the father to support the mother (Parke, 1981). In 1964, Schaffer and Emerson drew attention to the inadequacy of father studies and examined the infant's reactions to the separation from the mother or father, and the father was included in scientific studies (Ekşi, 2011). Research results are showing that fathers should prepare for fatherhood or learn fatherhood. As the results of these studies, it was concluded that factors such as fathers' lack of sufficient knowledge about the child, lack of effective models, insufficient time arising from working hours in father-child interaction, and in this case, affect their satisfaction with parenthood (Henry, Julion, Bounds, Sumo, 2020; Güder & Ata, 2018, Seçer, Çeliköz, Yaşa, 2007: 425-438; Fagerskiöld, 2006; Darling, Tiedje, 1990; Feldman, Nash, Aschenbrenner, 1983). These results emphasize the importance of fathers receiving education to be effective fathers.

There are some responsibilities that adulthood gives. These are the responsibilities of the roles that our age offers us, such as reaching a level of economic competence, being a parent, being a spouse, and being an active citizen. With these responsibilities, the individual enters the age period without being able to learn the expected roles. Therefore, from time to time, there may be situations where they have difficulty performing these roles. In this context, one can overcome the roles that will appear in adulthood by putting learning in the first place (Kurt, 2014). The lifelong learning approach enables the

individual to improve himself at any age. There is no direct training regarding mother and father roles. Learning through modeling and observation affects our child-rearing attitudes. Depending on this situation, education, and resources that raise awareness to effectively cope with the situations that the individual will encounter in the process of becoming a mother and father are increasing day by day. Considering the importance of mothers' and fathers' behaviors in the development of the child (Lee, Knauer, Lee, MacEachern; Garfeld (2018), it is obvious that information should be provided through mother and father education programs to provide a better development and learning for the child (Morrison, 2006; Lee, et al., 2018). Today, when families are not included in education, it has been found that it is difficult to perform expected behaviors regarding parental roles. Therefore, the fact that it is necessary to raise awareness of families and that this situation will be provided with family education has become more and more evident day by day (Yalman, 2014; Can Toprakçı, 2006; Varol, 2005; Kıral, 2020). One of these training is father education programs. The purpose of the Father Support Program (FSP) initiated by AÇEV is defined as ensuring the understanding of the importance of the father in child development, informing the father about child development, education, and upbringing, the father playing a more active role in the development of the child, ensuring the balance between parents in child development, the father's learning of the democratic attitude and applying the democratic attitude to his wife at home, as a result, creating happy families and thus strengthening the family, which is considered as a basic structure of a community, and reflecting father's methods of solving problems with child's mother and child to his environment by improving his communication skills (Koçak, 2004). The fact that fathers participating in this program realize the importance of being a father today and put what they have learned into behavior can be an example for future generations and people in the role of a father. The FSP program consists of 14 weeks and 70 hours. Fathers are expected to practice every week in the program with 13 compulsory themes. These themes are; 1. The meeting and the role of the father, 2. Family Attitudes I, 3. Listening and narrating 4. Family Attitudes II: Democratic Relationship and Empathy, 5. Developing Positive Behavior, 6. Social-Emotional Development, 7. Mental Development, 8. Relations with Preschool Education Institution and Preparation for Primary Education, 9. Physical and Sexual Development, 10. Spending Time and Play with the Child, 11. Life Difficulties and the Father, 12. The Child Acquiring Responsibility (Elective Session), 13. Sexual Health (Elective Session), 14th Mother's Meeting I, 15. Mother's Meeting II.

When the themes are examined, it is seen that there are basic topics that a father will need in the development process of his child. At the end of the training, it is aimed for fathers to develop more effective relationships with their children.

This study was carried out based on the view that it is important to see the effect of the father's role on the perception of fatherhood in the process of learning through father education and to examine an adult's openness to learning fatherhood through education. It is thought that this issue can be examined in terms of establishing the link between traditional and modern insight.

In this direction, it was aimed to examine the perceptions of fathers who have children in the preschool period regarding fatherhood in the lifelong learning process. For this purpose, answers for the following questions were sought.

- How do fathers who attended the training express themselves in terms of fatherhood?
- How do they express themselves as fathers in the lifelong learning process?
- What do they think about participating in father education?

2. Material and Methods

A comparative or descriptive analysis of the study based on results, on previously studies, etc. The results should be presented in a logical sequence, given the most important findings first and addressing the stated objectives. The number of tables and figures should be limited to those absolutely needed to confirm or contest the premise of the study. The authors should deal only with new or important aspects of Research model In this study, data were collected through a semi-structured interview form that included open-ended questions. Descriptive studies are carried out by summarizing and interpreting the obtained data according to the previously determined conceptual framework or themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The data obtained through semi-structured interviews in the research were analyzed using qualitative data analysis methods. Codes, themes, and categories were determined and content analysis was made.

2.1 Study Group

The study group was determined by purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is the name given to sampling depending on the purpose of the study (Maxfield & Babbie, 1998). It consists of 14 fathers who have children in two kindergartens in Kocaeli province in the 2018-2019 academic year and completed the FSP program and volunteered to participate in the study.

2.2 Data Collection

In the study, a "semi-structured interview form" was used to determine fathers' perceptions of fatherhood, lifelong learning, and father education. Interview technique is one of the qualitative data collection techniques aiming to reveal the behaviors, feelings, and thoughts of the individual. The semi-structured interview technique is a technique in which the interviewer prioritizes the questions but provides flexibility in the questions with additional questions when necessary, and in which the respondent has the share of correcting some parts (Ekiz, 2009: 62-63; Sönmez and Alacapınar, 2013: 108). In the research, the interview form was prepared by taking the opinions of three experts. During the interview, additional helpful questions were asked to enable the interviewed father to open up his feelings and thoughts and express themselves more comfortably. To strengthen the validity of the study and to ensure ethical conditions, a consent form was

obtained from the participants for their voluntary participation in the study. For the interviews to be carried out in an environment of trust and to receive sincere face-to-face answers, the interviewer was informed about the study. During the interview, an audio recording was taken and the interviews of each participant were transcribed.

2.3 Data Analysis

For data analysis, the content analysis method was used to analyze the interviews. Content analysis is an in-depth analysis method. In the content analysis, sentences are examined and the data are classified according to code, theme, and categories (Büyüköztürk et al., 2017: 164; Sönmez and Alacapınar, 2013: 162). To analyze the data, it must go through four processes: finding codes, determining themes, organizing codes and themes, and finally defining and interpreting the findings. (Yıldırım, Şimşek, 2011, Büyüköztürk et al, 2017: 163). The analysis was carried out based on these stages. Codes such as Father 1 (F1) were given to protect the identities of the participants before starting the analysis process. In qualitative studies, four principles have been determined to ensure reliability, credibility, transferability, stability, and verifiability (Güler et. al., 2013). In this study, the researcher paid attention to collecting comprehensive data by ensuring intensive and long-term participation in the process of conducting interviews. Also, the data were analyzed and divided into codes by three independent researchers. While creating the codes, internal validity is provided to be meaningful and holistic. The reliability of the study was calculated using the formula $\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Agreement}}{\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement}}$, and it was observed that 95% compliance was achieved.

3. Findings

Table 1: Demographics of the Participants

		N	%
Age	30-35	8	57,14
	36-40	4	28,57
	41 or more	2	14,28
Education	Primary Education	-	-
	Secondary Education	6	42,85
	Higher Education	8	57,14
Income	Income less than expenditure	2	14,28
	Income equal to expenditure	11	78,57
	Income more than expenditure	1	7,14

57.14% of the participants are between the ages of 30 and 35. Higher education graduates constitute 57.14% of the group. 78.57% of the participants' income is equal to the expenses.

Fourteen fathers in the group were interviewed after the training program applied to fathers. The following findings were obtained as a result of face-to-face interviews by applying a semi-structured interview form.

The views of the participants on "how they express themselves as a father" are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Answers Regarding How They Express Themselves about Fatherhood

Code	Theme		Descriptions
Meets the need Leader Model Emotional connection Dynamism Who plans the future	Father's Role in the Family		F7: Father supports children in every sense....
			F1: Will take measures against problems and display a constructive and democratic attitude ...
			F2: Father should be an example in the family
			F1: ... having a child is like a job that takes 24 hours
Be moral Self-improvement individual Having a profession Free individual	The expectation from the Child	Fatherhood	F3: You start to think ahead
			F10: Making them a good person in general
			F12: Be respectful, have self-confidence, express themselves comfortably and claim his rights
Must be empathic Must be a model Open to learning Scheming	Concept of Father		F7: Let her/him know that s/he should never do something s/he doesn't want
			F1: I improved my ability to empathize
			F9: For example, I smoke but I do not smoke when my child around...
			F12: Interacting with fathers ...
			F13: While designing one's own day...

To understand the paternity perceptions of the interviewed fathers, the question "How do you express yourself about fatherhood?" has been asked. When Table 2 is examined, the answers they give are divided into the themes of the father's role in the family, expectations from the child, and the father concept. Fathers the father's role in the family; They expressed it as meeting the need, leader, model, emotional connection, dynamism, scheming for the future. Fathers' expectations from their children; be moral, self-improvement individual, having a profession, a free individual. Fathers expressed the concept of being a father as being an empathic, model, open to learning, and scheming.

The expressions of the participants regarding the question of how to express yourself as a father in the lifelong learning process are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Answers Regarding How They Expressed to Themselves as Fathers in the Lifelong Learning Process

Code	Theme	Main Theme	Descriptions
Effective communication Awareness Uniqueness Time allocation	Raising a Child		F8: I do not criticize children in the presence of others, the importance of effective communication
			F3: I compared myself on my rights and wrongs
			F13: Every child is an individual and special

Emotion		Learning	F9: Changed my perception, I learned that
Joint		Father	children are much more valuable
responsibility	Concept of		F1: Taking the responsibility starting from the
Being a conscious	Fatherhood		mother's pregnancy...
father			F12: Taught us to be conscious.

To understand fathers' lifelong learning, the question "How do you express yourself as a father in the lifelong learning process?" has been asked. When Table 3 is examined, in line with the answers given, the fact that the father is the learning father is grouped under two headings and divided into the themes of raising a child and fatherhood. In the theme of raising a child as a learning father, four codes were created: effective communication, awareness, uniqueness, and time allocation. Fathers stated the concept of fatherhood as an emotion, joint responsibility, and conscious fatherhood. Based on the content of father education, they stated that they realized the importance of effective communication with their children in the process of being a father, and they paid attention to communicating with their children and to allocate time for them. They also stated that education and fatherhood involve a shared responsibility in the family. They drew attention to the importance of fathers sharing their feelings with their children.

Table 4 shows the opinions of the participants about "participating in father education".

Table 4: Answers Regarding Participation in Father Education

Code	Theme	Main Theme	Descriptions
Being an effective father			F1: I improved my ability to empathize
Awareness	Educational		F11: Training fulfilled most of them.
Contribution to	Expectations		F10: To be able to do the right
development			behavior, to react correctly to events ...
Renewal of information			F2: I did not come with an expectation,
		Father	I just wanted to see if I have any
		Education	shortcomings.
Education Scheme	Motivation		F13: One should listen to people
Curiosity	Sources		speaking with the knowledge in this
Functionality			field rather than our own stereotypes.
Environment			F4: How much more can my
			perspective change, what am I doing
			right or wrong?
			F3: Maybe we can add something to us
			and have a better time with our child
			F10: Encouragement of the teacher and
			friends at my child's school ...

The question "What do you think about father education?" has been asked to fathers to understand their opinions related to father education. When Table 4 is examined, the answers given to the questions by the fathers who received post-implementation training are divided into themes as educational expectations and sources of motivation. Being an

effective father, awareness, contribution to the development and refreshing knowledge were father's expectations from education. Fathers stated their sources of motivation as education scheme, curiosity, functionality, and environment.

4. Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

In this study, it was aimed to examine the perceptions of fathers who have children in the preschool period regarding fatherhood and lifelong learning. For this purpose, answers were sought for the following questions: "How do they express themselves about fatherhood?", "How do they express themselves as fathers in the lifelong learning process?" and "What do they think about participating in father education?"

When the answers of the participants about how they express themselves about fatherhood were analyzed, which is the first question of the study, they emphasized the concept of fatherhood in the family. They mentioned the importance of being democratic, communicating, expressing father rather than posing a traditional father role. They emphasized that while raising their children, they care about growing them up as individuals with values in the future and what they understand from the concept of fatherhood in general. They drew attention to the differentiation of roles in the family as a father. It can be said that explanations are overlapping with the findings obtained in the studies on this subject. In one of the studies, Önalın (2016) found that fathers started to change their roles from traditionalism to modernity and that they started to think child-centered, with an increase in the roles of model, dynamism, and emotional ties in addition to their leader, need-fulfilling, future-planning features. Besides, studies are showing that parents' expectations from the child shape the lives of children and affect their psychological health (Zhang et al., 2019, Öngider, 2013). Stating what kind of individual, they want their children to be as a father, the participants stated that the change in fathers' expectations from the child moved away from traditional roles. Also, they emphasized the skills and qualities such as being empathic, model, and open to learning for the child to become an individual. They stated that they want to be a free individual who develops more individually focused. Öngider (2013) emphasized that families care about an upbringing model that cares about their children's psychological health. In the study of Yogman & Garfield (2016), it was seen that they emphasized the attitudes of fathers at an early age in problems of adolescence. In this context, it is considered that it is important for fathers participating in education to emphasize behaviors that highlight the emotional development of their children.

Children take their parents as role models, observe their communication, approach to problem strategies, and behaviors (Morrison, 2006; Önalın, 2013). In the study, the fact that the participants stated that they should be role models for their children and that it is important to show empathy is a result of their desire to communicate with their children and to continue this effectively. In terms of the topics covered in the father education program, it can be said that democratic attitude, family attitudes, and communication issues have an impact on fathers.

The second question of the study is "How would you define yourself as a father in the lifelong learning process? The main theme of the question was determined as the learning father and its sub-themes were as child-rearing and fatherhood. It was found that the participants focused on the importance of moving away from the traditional father role and being a conscious father who is open to learning. It was observed that they were open to change and learning by participating in father education. This situation supports the findings that the responsibilities of fathers have increased not only outside the home but also in the home, and the idea of how to do this, their approach to the child, and the necessity of supporting their spouse, has started to be adopted (Onur, 2012). At the same time, it can be said that they have positive perspectives on lifelong learning by going beyond social stereotypes. Mentioning the importance of raising children, fathers stated that it is important to spare time for their children, to spend quality time and to communicate, and stated that fatherhood brings a lot of responsibility. In addition to the negative aspects that they experience time constraints, they focused more on their positive aspects. It has been stated that the time the child spends with the father is important in establishing emotional intimacy and it is necessary to take responsibility in raising healthy individuals (Aydın, 2008; Erdem 2020). It was emphasized that it is important for parents to communicate and interact together and to approach with a democratic attitude in child development (Akçınar, 2017). From this point of view, it can be said that the research group is open to the development and learning of fathers, that these fathers can be a role model for other fathers around them, and they can be at a point that emphasizes the importance of education in spreading effective father behaviors. It may be possible to say that the FSP and similar father-based education continue to be opened in different provinces every year and the number of participants increases. As the third question of the study, "expectations of participation in father education" were asked. Participants provided information about their expectations from effective training and their sources of participation in this training. They talked about their desire to learn to be effective fathers, to renew their knowledge, and to develop. Their motivation for participation is that they think education is effective, they are curious, and the environment is effective. Fatherhood is a situation that is learned when an effort is made and effort is made (Sümer Tanyeri, 2017; Kıral, 2020). Similar to different research findings, it was stated that parents become conscious, control themselves, are open to learning, and realize the importance of education in the development of their children (Warner & Sower, 2005; Liman, 2020). It has been observed that with father's education on the issues of being effective fathers, creating awareness, applying existing knowledge, and their contribution to both their own development and their families (Jessee & Adamsons, 2018). It has been observed that father education contributes to both their own development and their families in becoming effective fathers, raising awareness, and applying existing knowledge.

It is stated that willingness and volunteering in adult education affect motivation, and it is necessary to continue education and to continue the implementation of what has been done (Mutlu, 2018). It is known that the approach of the educators, teaching

methods, and techniques used, the environment, and social relations are important in adult education (Alper, 2004). In the study, it was found that the factor in fathers starting education is curiosity and it has been observed that the motivation sources, the functionality of the training, the expert's knowledge, and the scheme of the education affect the continuity and implementation of the training. The father is important to the child at every stage of his life but is especially critical in the early childhood years when a child's personality is formed. With this study, attention was drawn to the perception of fatherhood developed by the father, who constitutes the child's immediate environment, after the father's education, the change created by his own learning, and the importance of father education in the child's upbringing. According to the findings obtained from the participants, it was concluded that the roles of fathers in the child-rearing process need to be reshaped and changed. The sense that fathers attribute to fatherhood should be considered independently of motherhood (Erdem, 2020). Also, it is thought that it is important to expand family members and neglected father education to raise healthy and happy individuals.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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