

The Perceptions and Support of Parents and Guardians whose Children Attend Montessori Programs

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ABSTRACT Parents' supporting and using Montessori education at home have very important roles in the success of the education. The aim of the present study is to investigate parents' perspectives of Montessori education at school and their support of Montessori education at home in International Montessori Schools in Pennsylvania in USA. The study is a correlational study. The universe of the study consists of parents whose children attend International Montessori Schools. In this regard, the present study investigate whether families' perspectives and supports of Montessori education differ with respect to children's age, gender, affinity to guardian; and parents' gender, education level, the number of children they have, other children's attendance to Montessori schools.

INTRODUCTION

In the first half of the 1800's "industrial revolution" which emerged in the Europe, influenced the nuclear family, as a result of the long-term work in factories of the parents, which 0-6 age child's care, nurturing and protection appeared as a significant problem. Owen from England, Froebel from Germany, and Montessori from Italy are the theorists of early childhood pedagogy and they are accepted as the architects of this notion (Arslan 2005). Today that early childhood models have been established on the base of emphasis on individual differences, which aims at maximizing the potential that the child has. Among them, Montessori Method has been a well accepted method with its designed special materials in terms of accelerating the development of children to acquire responsibility, to develop creativity, self-control, to ensure the development of a sense of wonder. There are basic principles that have formed the Montessori Method and these constitute a synthesis of the notion and practices of Maria Montessori. To respect the child is the first principle of Montessori Method and in addition, it is the basis of the other principles. According to Montessori, every child is unique. For this reason, education should be individualized.

Those, restricting the child's education, are the adults who try to impose his or her thoughts and dreams on the child (Erdiller 2010). Montessori education can be characterized via mixed-age, special educational materials, free choice, cooperation, individual and small groups, aca-

demic and social learning. It is an education system without tests. Environment, child, and teacher are the three main constituents (Samur 2012).

While Montessori was referring the principles of the method, she emphasized the difference between the learning systems of a child and adult, critical periods of learning special skills, their needs for special materials and environments for learning.

The child's having the ability of determination of his or her future is the principle of the foundations of Montessori pedagogy. The aim of education is to help the child to live. The parents and educators must help the child to realize himself (Wilbrandt 2012: 249). The system of Montessori curriculum with the new open-ended flexible grouping points out that teachers encourage the children to after the children completed the task given by the teachers (Rambusch 1965). Montessori Method makes the child find the best via the easiest way with practicing by himself. While learning, s/he feels happiness, is eager to learn because s/he is doing what s/he wants not what others expect of himself. In this method, its emphasized on eagerness to learn so to a life-long learning motivation is provided (Dogru 2009).

Montessori believed that those children educate themselves. Montessori wanted us to understand that children can't help learning. Simply by living children learn from their environment. Children are born to learn, and they are remarkable learning systems. Children learn because they are thinking beings. Montessori believed that children learn best in a prepared en-

vironment, a place in which children can do things for themselves (Morrison 2007). It is easily observed that Montessori aimed the child's gaining experience by using the materials by himself, which Montessori applied in an order.

One of the issues of Montessori focuses is "self-control". While providing an environment for the skill of shaping of child's own manners by his will, it is provided to make the child understand that there are freedoms in the boundaries (Sahin 2010). As well as having freedom of choosing activities and moving around easily, such responsibilities like respecting friends' rights, using materials appropriately, classroom cleanliness, and replacement are also expected.

Until after the turn of the twentieth century preschool education was essentially the concern of the family. Separate facilities for nursery schools were not established until about 1900 although some nursery schools were set up in America by 1900, they did not become popular until after the first world war previously, parents had felt that these institutions were encroaching on the function of the home and family (Povell 2010: 89). However, it is accepted that preschool foundation cannot be successful alone the contribution of the family is an important factor on achievement.

Beyond becoming a part of the school curriculum the child follows and the success of their child's school education, in the developed practices of the approach that deals with school, family and the society together, it is aimed the child to be an individual who has ideas and opinions on education, and an individual interested in education for developing the society other than his family (Ural 2005: 378).

Its old Montessori methods turn out to be a showcase of nearly every new idea that U.S. So the open-end curriculum, in which the teacher continues to offer stimulation to the child after he has completed the required amount of work, is implied in Montessori's flexible grouping system (Rambusch 1965).

Research on parenting styles and child outcomes suggests that children fare best when adults are high in warmth and control. As children get older, they fare best when their parents gradually hand over more control (Lillard 2005). As the first aim of Montessori education to discover and become free, mother, father and teachers should create an appropriate environ-

ment. They should be attentive that there are not any obstacles to prevent the substantive motions. They should be provided to search and present on their own (Oguz and Akyol 2006). There are a lot of materials, which they look at, touch, smell, hear and use at will in an appropriate learning environment for children. Everything, which makes the child's life easy and he can access, aids the child learn by prospering the child's world. Daily activities are routine for the adult at home but they are new and exciting for a child. The child, who dominates the house environment, is ready to begin complex learning processes. Each room at home can be used beneficial to raise a child. For this reason, parents should find ways to associate the children in house works (Sener 2012).

Dr. Montessori also counseled that adults give reasons to children in the elementary years, she wrote need to understand why, not just what and the research on parenting shows children fare better when parents to provide reasons. Authoritative parents also have high expectations, and relative to other school systems expectations of children those put of forth in Montessori classrooms may well be considered high (Lillard 2005: 271).

Parents are understandably confused about what conditions promote the development of individuality in children. There is a distinction that must be made here between a need of others, and a need to be something to others. School have been as timid as parents in recognizing the importance of the child as an individual. The shift in emphasis away from the group has begun only within the last decade, in American education (Rambusch 1965).

One of the most important tasks of the good mother is to inculcate in her child the habit of telling the truth. Parents understand full well their role in determining how their children will turn out or, as the popular saying has it. At any rate, until the family grew with the arrival of a new, innocent life, the parents competed in pointing out each other's defects (Montessori 1970).

Looking at the studies about Montessori, according to Gules and Erisen (2009), this method is suggested to play an important role on achieving real information for preschool children. In his study, Beken (2009) researched into the effect of Montessori Method on hand skills of 5-6 years children and he has found that children receiving Montessori education in these

schools have more advanced manual skills than other children. In the study of development of social abilities by Kocyigit et al. (2009), the children receiving Montessori education in the schools show remarkable differences to the students being educated in normal curriculum -in terms of social collaboration, social interaction and social independence. In the studies of Lillard (2008) on children at Montessori schools, it has been stated that the children in Montessori education have far better social abilities than the ones at traditional schools. In schools, where Montessori education is thoroughly applied, it is revealed that social and academic skills are developed. Cossentino (2006) has underlined that the education at Montessori school makes the child's cognitive, social, moral, self-care skills developed. Jacobsan (2007), Wills (2006) have emphasized that the Montessori Method increase the academic success of children and develop their academic skills so their families are happy. In his studies Malm (2004) has asserted families are very pleased about the training, besides, teachers and students are also satisfied. In his study on the families of those Montessori schools Crain (2004), has emphasized that families are content with the education. The families specified that this education brought their children in making choice, trust, communicating, and honesty.

In Shipley and Oborn (1996) model, developed accordingly Montessori education, they have mentioned a factor for family involvement that there needs to be a connection with services. In Glenn's (2003) longitudinal study, it is stated that Montessori education increases lifelong learning, effective decision-making, open-mindedness, confidence, patience, serenity, self-management, and the comprehension ability. Rule and Welch (2008), Soundy (2003) have asserted in their researches at Montessori schools that the children who are educated at these schools can develop their communication skills; they can communicate effectively with both adults and peers.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The Aim of the Study

The aim of the present study is to investigate parents' perceptions of Montessori education at school and their support levels of Mont-

essori education at home in International Montessori Schools in Pennsylvania in USA.

In this regard, the present study investigate whether families' perceptions and support levels of Montessori education differ with respect to parents relationship to the child, education level, the number of children they have, (if any) other children's at attendance to Montessori schools.

The Model of the Study

The study is a co-relational study. The present study investigates the relation between families' perceptions and supports of Montessori education, and such variables as, to parents relationship to the child, education level, the number of children they have, (if any) other children's at attendance to Montessori schools.

The universe of the study consists of parents whose children attend International Montessori Schools in the state Pennsylvania in the USA during 2011-2012 education years. There are 100 parents, who have been chosen as 76% mother and 24% father with cluster sampling method.

Collection of Data

In the study a personal information sheet and a questionnaire of parents' perspectives and support of Montessori Education developed by researcher were administered. The personal information sheet, which was developed for the purpose of gathering information about independent variables of the study, is to get information about parents' gender, affinity to guardian, education level, the number of children they have, other children's attendance to Montessori schools.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The results were through the appropriate statistical procedures with the data has been obtained from those personal information sheet and questionnaire of parents' perspectives and support of Montessori Education, which were used in the study. The data of the parents' ages of the children, parents' education level, and the number of the children they have, if any, other child had education or not has been presented as percentages. Chi-square test of independence

has been applied in order to define whether or not every question is bound to variable of affinity to guardian, the age of the parents, education level, the number of children they have, other children's attendance to Montessori schools. It has been requested at least $p < 0.5$ level of significance at the statistics.

RESULTS

There are 100 parents (76% mothers, 24% fathers). 25% the parents who attended the survey are between the ages 29-34; 50% the parents are between the ages 35-40; 25% the parents who attended the survey are at the age of 41 and upper. 95% the parents who attended the survey had a graduate degree from university or post graduate. Only 5% of the attendants are high school graduates. 38% of the parents have one child, 52% of them have 2 children, 10% of them have 3 children. Among them, 39% stated that their other children had a Montessori education.

Following the study the aim of it is to investigate parents' perceptions of Montessori education at school and their support of Montessori education- the following conclusions were reached by evaluating the data obtained from 100 parents.

All the attendant parents have stated that they know the aims of the Montessori Method, which is in use at the school. This result shows that the parents chose the schools in a conscious way, knowing that the objectives of the schools. In addition, 87% of the attendant parents have stated that teachers informed them about the method; 91% of the attendant parents have stated that they were informed about the method by the head master. 83% of them have stated that they had the information from sources such as books, Internet, etc. Following this result, it can be said that the head master and the teachers are very effective on informing about the method. 92% of the parents have stated that they think they have enough information about the Montessori method being applied at school. The family's been informed about the method, their preferring the school with the knowledge of school's aims, some of the families sending their other children to Montessori Schools leads to this conclusion. 73% of the parents have said that they use "time-out" at home when the child exhibits undesirable be-

havior. That "time-out", which is widely used in Montessori Method too, is used at home is possibly an indicator of using the method at home. When 81% of the attendant parents have stated that they continue the method at home, 60% of them have stated that they receive help from the teacher. 73% of parents have stated that their children wear without help; 67% of parents have stated that their children put their own plate into the dish washer; 79% of them have stated that the children help the house works; 80% of them have stated that the children help in gardening and flower care.

Forty percent of the parents have answered "yes" and 60% of them have answered "no" to the question "Does your child need your redirect when he should do a duty?" According to this result, it can be said that Montessori education reflects on the child's daily life.

Ninety-seven percent of the parents have stated that Montessori education has contributed to their children's cognitive development; 99% of the parents have stated that this method has contributed to the positive personality development; 92% of them have stated that it has contributed to the skill of building social relationship and learning the group work. 90% of the parents have stated that it has developed their children's self-control and 93% of them have stated that their children can solve problems without any help. 95% of the parents have answered, "yes" to the question "Do you believe that children of different ages being together in the classroom provide development of your child at Montessori school?" Again the parents have stated that they think children of different ages being together in the classroom provide their children's future school achievement.

All the parents answered, "Yes" to the question "If you had another child, again would you let your child have a Montessori education?" This result can be thought as an indicator of the family's adopting the method and their desire to continue the Montessori Method at home.

As it is seen on the Table 1, it has been found remarkable in the results of Chi-square test of independence, which has been applied, in order to define whether or not the question: "Were you informed about the method in use at the Montessori School?" is bound to variable of affinity to guardian. (Chi-square=4.021; $p < 0.5$). It is seen that while the rate of "yes answer" to

Table 1: The Results of Chi-square test of independence, which has been applied, in order to define whether or not the question: "Were you informed about the method in use at the montessori school?" is bound to variable of affinity to guardian

Groups	Yes	No	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
Affinity the Guardian	Mother among%	69	7	76	4.021	1
	Father among%	90.8	9.2	100.0		
	Total	18	6	24		
	among%	75.0	25.0	100.0		
	among%	87	13	100		
	among%	87.0	13.0	100.0		.045

Table 2: The results of Chi-square test of independence, which has been applied, in order to define whether or not the question: "do you continue the education at home that your child takes at montessori school? is bound to variable of affinity to guardian

Groups	Yes	No	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
Affinity the Guardian	Mother among%	57	19	76	7.407	1
	Father among%	75.0	25.0	100.0		
	Total	24	0	24		
	among%	81.0	19.0	100.0		
	among%	81	19	100		
	among%	81.0	19.0	100.0		.006

Table 3: The results of Chi-square test of independence, which has been applied, in order to define whether or not the question: do you believe in the montessori method improves your child self-control? is bound to variable of affinity to guardian

Groups	Yes	No	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
Affinity the Guardian	Mother among%	73	3	76	4.533	1
	Father among%	96.1	3.9	100.0		
	Total	20	4	24		
	among%	83.3	16.7	100.0		
	among%	93	7	100		
	among%	93.3	7.0	100.0		.033

the question "Were you informed about the method in use at the Montessori School by the teacher?" is 90.8% at mothers, this rate is 75% at fathers. This result makes us think that mothers are more interested in the school and education of their children. In addition, that mothers' desire to develop themselves has an effective on this, too.

As it is seen on the Table 2, it has been found significant in the results of Chi-square test of independence, which has been applied, in order to define whether or not the question: "Do you continue the education at home that your child takes at Montessori School? is bound to variable of affinity to guardian (Chi-square=7.407; $p<0.5$). It is seen that while the rate of "yes answer" to the question "Do you continue the education at home that your child takes at Montessori School? is 75% at mothers; this rate is 81% at fathers. It can be said that the fathers

does not compensate for some standards and that they have had information have an effect on this result. In the report of Caedmon School (2010) have reported that the Montessori school meets the teachers' and students' needs, the families join in voluntarily.

As it is seen on the Table 3, it has been found significant in the results of Chi-square test of independence, which has been applied, in order to define whether or not the question: Do you believe in the Montessori method improves your child self-control? is bound to variable of affinity to guardian (Chi-square=4.533; $p<0.5$). It is seen that while the rate of "yes answer" to the question Do you believe in the Montessori method improves your child self-control? is 96.1% at mothers; this rate is 83.3% at fathers. It can be said that high expectations of the fathers have an affect. Ahmadi (2003) have compared the students at traditional school and the ones at

Table 4: The results of Chi-square test of independence, which has been applied, in order to define whether or not the question: "does your child need your help about a duty s/he should do? is bound to variable of the age of the parent

Groups	Yes	No	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
<i>The Age of the Parent</i>	29-34	11	14	25	7.333	2
	among%	44.0	56.0	100.0		
	35-40	14	36	50		
	among%	28.0	72.0	100.0		
	41&older	15	10	25		
	among%	60.0	40.0	100.0		
	Total	40	60	100		
	among%	40.0	60.0	100.0		.026

Table 5: The results of Chi-square test of independence, which has been applied, in order to define whether or not the question: "did you get help to continue the montessori education from the teacher?" is bound to variable of the number of the children the parent has.

Groups	Yes	No	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
<i>The Number of the children the Parent</i>	1 child	30	8	38	11.489	2
	among%	78.9	21.1	100.0		
	2 children	23	29	52		
	among%	44.2	55.8	100.0		
	3&more	7	3	10		
	among%	70.0	30.0	100.0		
	Total	60	40	100		
	among%	60.0	40.0	100.0		.003

Montessori school; it has been seen that children at Montessori school are more independent, confident, and control their own selves.

As it is seen on the Table 4, it has been found significant in the results of Chi-square test of independence, which has been applied, in order to define whether or not the question: "Does your child need your help about a duty s/he should do ? "is bound to variable of the age of the parent(Chi-square=7.333; $p<0.5$) It is seen that the rate of "yes" answer given the question "Does your child need your help about a duty s/he should do?" is 44% between the ages of 29-34 years; 28% between the ages of 35-40; 60% at 41 and older. It can said that 41 years and older parents being more protective, interventionist have influence on. By the same way, the parents in 29-34 group, whom we can call as young, follow this. However it could be thought not only the experience is effective on the mature parent in the middle age group (35-40 years) who less often routes his/her child, but also his or her being more confident about his or her parental is effective.

As it is seen on the Table 5, it has been found significant in the results of Chi-square test of independence, which has been applied,

in order to define whether or not the question: "Did you get help to continue the Montessori education from the teacher?" is bound to variable of the number of the children the parent has. (Chi-square=11.489; $p<0.5$) It is seen that the rate of "yes" answer given the question "Did you get help to continue the Montessori education from the teacher?" is 78.9% of the parents who have 1 child; 44%, of the parents who have 2 children; 70% of the parents who have 3 or more children. It can be said that the parent of 2 children can be seen himself or herself as more experienced than the parent who has 1 child. For this reason, s/he might request help slightly. Nevertheless, it can be declared that the parent who has 3 children may have the desire to grow a child in a conscious way and her/his sensitivity of this issue is more than others may lead this conclusion. In the study of Bent (1989), the teachers reported that teaching could be with the cooperation between child-family and teacher.

As it is seen on the Table 6, it has been found significant in the results of Chi-square Test of independence, which has been applied, in order to define whether or not the question: "Do you use 'time-out' when your child misbehaves?" is

Table 6: The results of Chi-square test of independence, which has been applied, in order to define whether or not the question: "do you use 'time-out' when your child misbehaves?" is bound to variable of the number of the children the parent has

Groups	Yes	No	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
<i>The Number of the children the Parent</i>	1 child	34	4	38	12.880	2
	among%	89.5	10.5	100.0		
	2 children	30	22	52		
	among%	57.7	42.3	100.0		
	3&more	9	1	10		
	among%	90.0	10.0	100.0		
	Total	73	27	100		
	among%	73.3	27.0	100.0		

Table 7: The results of Chi-square test of independence, which has been applied, in order to define whether or not the question: "do you think montessori method contributes to your child's mental development?" is bound to variable of having a child with taking montessori education

Groups	Yes	No	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
<i>Child with Montessori Edu.</i>	Mother	36	3	39	4.837	1
	among%	92.3	7.7	100.0		
	Father	61	0	61		
	among%	100.0	0	100.0		
	Total	97	3	100		
	among%	97.0	3.0	100.0		

Table 8: The results of Chi-square test of independence, which has been applied, in order to define whether or not the question: "do you think that the presence of the children of different ages at the same class contributes to your child's success at school in montessori method?" is bound to variable of having a child with taking montessori education

Groups	Yes	No	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
<i>Child with Montessori Edu.</i>	Mother	33	6	39	6.904	1
	among%	84.6	15.4	100.0		
	Father	60	1	61		
	among%	98.4	1.6	100.0		
	Total	93	7	100		
	among%	93.3	7/0	100.0		

bound to variable of the number of the children the parent has. (. (Chi-Square=12.880; $p < 0.5$) It is seen that the rates of "yes" answer given the question: "Do you use 'time-out' when your child misbehaves?" is 89.5% of the parents who have 1 child; 57.7, of the parents who have 2 children; 90% of the parents who have 3 or more children. It can be said that the parents of 1 child and the parents of 3 children fulfill the requirements of children's education more than the parents of 2 children.

As it is seen on the Table 7, it has been found significant in the results of Chi-square test of independence, which has been applied, in order to define whether or not the question: "Do you think Montessori method contributes to your child's mental development?" is bound to variable of the having a child with taking Montessori education (Chi-square=4.837; $p < 0.5$). It is seen that while the rates of "yes" answer given the question "Do you think Montessori Method contributes to your child's mental development?" is 92.3% of the parents whose other child have taken a Montessori education, 100% of the parents whose child didn't take a Montessori education. As it is understood from the results of the study that after all families have knowledge of this method, they send their children to these schools. Again, it can be stated that these families have chosen these schools, as they know it will contribute to the development of their children's senses, skills, discipline, responsibility and self-control.

As it is seen on the Table 8, it has been found significant statistically in the results of Chi-Square Test of independence, which has been

applied, in order to define whether or not the question: "Do you think that the presence of the children of different ages at the same class contributes to your child in Montessori Method?" is bound to variable of the having a child with taking Montessori. (Chi-square=6.904; $p<0.5$). It is seen that while the rates of "yes" answer given the question "Do you think Montessori method contributes to your child's success at school?" is 84.6% of the parents whose other child have taken a Montessori education, 98.4% of the parents whose child didn't take a Montessori education. Each group think that this will affect the success at school but the families, whose children had this education, might think that other factors may affect the school success as well as the presence of the children of different ages at the same class. In the study of Gules and Ongoren (2008) at Montessori school, the parents stated that the presence of the children of different ages at the same class caused to make the children understand the meanings of sister, brother, elder sister, and elder brother. Therefore, the children started to believe in the necessity of living in harmony.

DISCUSSION

According to the results of this study on the parents' perceptions of Montessori education at school and their support levels of Montessori education at home; All the attendant parents have stated that they know the aims of the Montessori method, which is in use at the school. This result shows that the parents chose the schools in a conscious way, knowing that the objectives of the schools. In addition, 87% of the attendant parents have stated that teachers informed them about the method; 91% of the attendant parents have stated that they were informed about the method by the head master. In the study of Yildiz (2010), which was applied on the parents' whose children were at Montessori School, it has been stated that social adaptation of children receiving this education is 66.4%, academic compliance is 72.8%.

When 81% of the attendant parents have stated that they continue the method at home, 60% of them have stated that they receive help from the teacher while the rate of "yes answer" to the question "Does your child need your help about a duty s/he should do?" is 40%, "no answer" is 60%. In his study, Kendall (1996) he has

found that the skills confidence, freedom, initiative and self-regulate of the children are fed more (Korkmaz 2005).

73% of the parents have said that they use "time-out" at home when the child exhibits undesirable behavior. All the families answered "yes" to the question "If you had another child, would you send him to the Montessori school?". This conclusion can be thought as the desire of adopting the Montessori Method and continuing at home by the families. Crain (2004) indicated that families satisfied with Montessori Schools, education improves the child's strengths, children learn to make choose freely and trust.

It is seen that while the rate of "yes answer" to the question "Were you informed about the method in use at the Montessori School by the teacher?" is 90,8% at mothers, this rate is 75% at fathers. It is seen that while the rate of "yes answer" to the question "Do you continue the education at home that your child takes at Montessori School?" is 75% at mothers; this rate is 81% at fathers.

It is seen that while the rate of "yes answer" to the question "If your child doesn't pull his weight properly, will you interfere and fix it?" is 72.4% at mothers; this rate is 50% at fathers. According to Montessori the origin of the problems of education is adult behavior. The solution is to reform the adult. The first step should not be for the child, but the adult trainer. For this, the adult should be reformed, his preliminary judgments should be eliminated (Yildiz 2012).

Montessori Method is due to the basic principles on which today still validity has in the locality. That the motivating environment, which is offered to the child and the adult's being organizer and aimmer of this environment, are important principles.

CONCLUSION

In this study families' perceptions about Montessori education in schools and their support level was investigated and research results indicated that families had knowledge about the program. Also parents continue the Montessori Education program at their homes. Families reported that they could choose this school again for their children. These results show they were satisfied with the Montessori school so they prefer to continue that education at home.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Studies with families whose children are at Montessori schools can be extended. Studies with teachers in addition to the families can provide different perspectives. The effectiveness of this method should be increased by dissemination of Montessori schools to elementary and secondary education

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