AN INVESTIGATION ON THE BELIEFS OF PARENTS OF FIRST-GRADE PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN READING

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This study aims at examining the beliefs of parents of first-grade primary school students in reading. This investigation has a descriptive relational survey model. The population of the survey consists of the parents of first-grade students in public primary schools in Turkey in 2015-2016 school year. The sample is a set of parents of 588 first-grade primary school students. Parent Reading Belief Inventory, Personal Information Form were used as data collection tools. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, arithmetical mean, and standard deviation), independent samples t-test, one-way variance analysis and Pearson Correlation statistic were conducted for the analysis of the collected data. According to the results that were obtained from the Parent Reading Belief Inventory, parents generally have a positive belief against reading. It was observed that there is no significant difference in the parents’ belief in reading due to the gender of the child. When the mother’s educational level was considered, it was seen that the general belief of parents in reading shows positive difference in accordance with the mother’s level of education. When the father’s education was considered, it was observed that the general belief of parents in reading were affected positively in accordance with the educational level of the father. When the parents’ belief in reading was examined considering the

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number of children they had, it was seen that the general belief in reading of the parents show positive difference when the number of the children is smaller. When the monthly income was taken into consideration it was observed that the general belief of the parents in reading are affected positively if the parents have higher income.

In direction with the results obtained, it is suggested that teachers should give information to parents about the role of activities that parents perform at home in the reading process. It is also suggested that, teachers should provide information that will enable parents to change their negative reading beliefs.

**Keywords:** Belief in reading, parents reading belief, reading activities at home, child reading activities

**Introduction**

The experiences with the parents are vital for children to gain permanent behaviours. Children gain some attitudes, behaviours and habits that need guidance of their parents to internalize spontaneously while they need the guidance of their parents to internalize and put into practice some of them. Literacy is one of the experiences that require parental guidance. Parents are the role models who present various literacy experiences and direct the attitudes of their children towards reading and who can be determinant in their children’s literacy developments by means of the literacy environment they organized (Yeo, Ong and Ng, 2014). The children who observe that the other family members read books, they discuss on the books and they have fun while doing all these perceive literacy as a tool that makes people spend nice time. In order for this perception to form, the parents should make their children feel the importance they give on literacy and they should encourage their children’s reading attempts. The conducted studies show that the reading activities which the parents perform with their children support the development of the children’s literacy and language skills (Burgess, Hetcht and Lonigan, 2002; Payne, Whitehurst and Angel, 1994; Senechal, Lefevre, Thomas and Daley, 1998). Reading books for the children who are not literate yet and who have just learnt reading and
writing increase the interests of the children towards reading (Çığın, 2006). Having some reading materials for children at home also affect the interest of children towards reading, their literacy and language skills positively (Aram and Levin, 2001; Senechal Lefevre, Hudson and Lawson, 1996).

Home literacy environment that is created by the parents and the reading activities that are practiced by the parents are affected by variables such as parent reading belief (Bingham, 2007; DeBaryshe, 1995; Dhima, 2014; İflazoğlu Saban and Altınkamış, 2014; Wu and Honig, 2010), parents educational status (Dhima, 2014; Mendive et al., 2017) and monthly income (İflazoğlu Saban and Altınkamış, 2014). The parents who have more positive beliefs about reading to their children read with their children more frequently (DeBaryshe and Binder, 1994). In the study of Weigel, Martin and Bennet (2006b), the mothers were grouped into two; the facilitator mothers who find reading to their children enjoyable and who believe that they should take responsibilities in their children’s learning and traditional mothers who believe that teaching children is the responsibility of the school. When the facilitator mothers are compared with the traditional mothers, it is expressed that the facilitator mothers perform activities such as reading to their children, singing songs for them and drawing pictures with them more often. While the parents who believe that parent child reading should include learning display learning-oriented behaviours such as asking questions during reading, the parents who believe that reading should contain fun use more positive emotional tones during reading (Meagher, Arnold, Doctoroff & Baker, 2008). Therefore, it can be said that parent reading beliefs are directly related with the children’s literacy skills (Cottone, 2012; Curenton and Justice, 2008).

When the studies on this issue in Turkey are considered, it is seen that there are limited number of studies in which the reading beliefs of the parents who have children in the pre-school period are investigated (İflazoğlu Saban and Altınkamış, 2014; İflazoğlu Saban, Altınkamış and Deretarla Gül, 2018; Şimşek Çetin, Bay and Alisinanoğlu, 2014; Türkay and İflazoğlu Saban, 2011). However, no studies about the reading beliefs of the parents who have children at the first grade in primary schools were found. This research is believed to be significant as it investigates the reading beliefs of the parents of the first grade students in primary schools regarding
the gender of the child, parents’ educational level, the number of children and monthly incomes and it determines the relationship between these variables. The determination of the effect of parents’ beliefs on the literacy activities of the children at home might lead the attempts to increase parental support in the process of literacy. This research is expected to contribute the parents to create a home environment that supports the development of their children’s literacy skills.

The main purpose of this research is to investigate the reading beliefs of the parents who have children at the first grade in primary schools. In line with this purpose, it will also be investigated whether the reading beliefs of the parents differ according to the gender of the child, mother’s educational level, father’s educational level, the number of children and monthly income.

Method

The investigation has a descriptive relational survey model. The population of the survey consists of the parents of first-grade students in public primary schools in Turkey / Şanlıurfa’s central regions (Eyyübiye, Karaköprü, Haliliye) in 2015-2016 school year. The sample is a set of parents of 588 first-grade primary school students. Parent Reading Belief Inventory, Personal Information Form were used as data collection tools. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, arithmetical mean, and standard deviation), independent samples t-test, Pearson Correlation Analysis, and one-way variance analysis (ANOVA) were applied for the analysis of the gathered data. In cases where the samples were distributed non-normally, the Kruskall-Wallis test was employed. A significance level of 0.05 was used for the analyses.

Result

According to the results that were obtained from the Parent Reading Belief Inventory, parents generally have a positive belief against reading. It was observed that there is no significant difference in the parents’ belief in reading due to the gender of the child. When the mother’s educational level was considered, it was seen that the general belief of parents in reading shows positive difference in accordance
with the mother’s level of education. When the father’s educational level was considered, it was observed that the general belief of parents in reading were affected positively in accordance with the educational level of the father. When the parents’ belief in reading was examined considering the number of children they had, it was seen that the general belief in reading of the parents show positive difference when the number of the children is smaller. When the monthly income was taken into consideration, it was observed that the general belief of the parents in reading are affected positively if the parents have higher income.

**Conclusion and Discussion**

When the sub-dimensions and overall of the Parent Reading Belief Inventory determining the beliefs of the parents about reading aloud to their children are considered, it is seen that the parents “completely agreed” on the items in the sub-dimension of oral participation and “agreed” on the items in the sub-dimensions of the efficacy of education, the positive effect of reading, information-based reading and resources and overall of the “Parent Reading Belief Inventory”. Then, it can be thought that the parents have opinions claiming that the parents are important teachers in their children’s learning, the children should be active participants during the process of reading, reading to children is not only teaching them to read but also making them enjoy reading, improving their knowledge and contributing their language developments and limited resources and time cannot be an obstruction for the parents to read to their children. DeBaryshe and Binder (1994) found in their study in which they investigated the American parents’ reading beliefs that they agreed on the Parent Reading Belief Inventory in general. DeBaryshe (1995) stated that the parents considered reading as important for increasing the school success of the children and they had positive beliefs towards reading aloud to their children. Wu and Honig (2010) carried out a study with Taiwanese mothers and revealed that they had strong beliefs towards the benefits of reading aloud to their children. Husain, Choo, Singh (2011) studied with Malaysian mothers and concluded that they had positive beliefs about reading aloud to their children. Boomstra, Dijk, Jorna & Geert (2013) found in their study with Dutch mothers that they adopted positive beliefs
about their own roles in their children’s language development. Dhima (2015) expressed that the parents in Albania had positive beliefs about reading to their children. It was seen; however, they “disagreed” on the items in the sub-dimensions of instruction of reading and environmental variables. Therefore, it can be said that the parents consider that language skills of the children do not only depend on the heredity but also environment. Vygotsky also emphasized on the importance of environment in learning and stated that learning actualized by the interaction with the environment (Ergün and Özsüzer, 2006).

When the scores received from the Parent Reading Belief Inventory were considered according to the variable of gender of the child, it was concluded that all sub-dimensions and the overall of the Parent Reading Belief Inventory did not differ according to gender. It was seen that the parents’ having daughters or sons did not change their reading beliefs. Similarly, DeBaryshe and Binder (1994) obtained a finding claiming that the reading beliefs of the parents did not differ according to the gender of the child. Wu and Honig (2010) revealed that the gender of the child did not correlate with mother’s reading belief. Meagher, Meagher, Arnold, Doctoroff & Baker (2008) found out that the gender of the child was not effective on the mothers’ beliefs about the purposes of reading. On the other hand, Donohue (2008) deduced that the reading beliefs of the parents with a son were higher than of the parents with a daughter. It can be considered positive for the parents’ reading beliefs not differing according to the gender of the child in terms of showing that the parents gave importance to the education of the girls.

When the scores that are got from Parent Reading Belief Inventory were considered according to the variable of mothers’ educational levels, it was seen that all sub-dimensions and the overall of the Parent Reading Belief Inventory differed significantly in favour of the mothers with higher educational levels. Based on this finding, it can be understood that the higher the education level of the mothers, the more the parents think that they had important impacts on their children’s learning and they should have helped their children in the learning process. Similar results about the effects of the mothers’ educational levels on the parents’ reading beliefs are seen in the researches of Cottone (2012), Curenton and Justice (2008),
DeBaryshe and Binder (1994), Gonzalez, Acosta, Davis, Pollard-Durodola, Saenz, Soares, et al. (2016), Husain et al. (2011) and Wu and Honig’in (2010). In parallel with these, DeBaryshe (1995) conducted two separate studies and found out that there was a positively significant relationship between the mothers’ educational levels and mother reading beliefs. Weigel et al. (2006b) propounded that mothers’ reading beliefs differed according to the mothers’ educational levels. They also determined that the mothers with higher educational levels had the belief claiming that reading to their children facilitated the language and life skills of their children and the mothers with lower educational levels had the traditional belief claiming that pre-school period was too early to learn something about reading and that responsibility belonged to schools. Torr (2008) stated that the mothers with higher educational levels had the beliefs claiming that literacy development of the children was an enjoyable activity that was integrated with daily life that was acquired by shared reading and the mothers with lower educational levels had the beliefs claiming that literacy development was the skills that were acquired by teaching directly independent from daily activities. Lynch et al. (2006) determined in their study that the reading beliefs of the parents differed according to their educational levels as in this study, the parents with higher educational levels had holistic beliefs that combined reading with daily life and the parents with lower educational levels had skill-based beliefs that considered reading separate from the other activities.

In discordance from these studies; however, Bingham (2007) investigated the parent beliefs about reading aloud effectively to children and the children's developing literacy skills at home and concluded that the educational levels of mothers did not correlate with the parent beliefs. Boomstra et al. (2013) conducted a study which investigated the reading beliefs of Dutch and Netherlands Antillean mothers and found out that the reading beliefs of Netherlands Antillean did not change according to the educational levels of mothers but the Dutch mothers' sub-dimension of the positive effect of reading differed in favour of the mothers with higher educational levels.

When the variable of the educational levels of fathers were considered, it was seen that the Parent Reading Belief Inventory’s sub-dimensions of the efficacy of the
education, positive effect of reading, the instruction of reading, information-based reading, resources, environmental variables and the overall of parent reading belief differed in favour of the fathers with higher educational levels. No difference was observed in the sub-dimension of oral participation. Considering this result, it can be said that the fathers with both higher and lower educational levels thought that it was necessary for the child to be active during reading.

When the variable of the number of children was considered, it was seen that the Parent Reading Belief Inventory’s sub-dimensions of efficacy of the education, the instruction of reading, information-based reading, resources, environmental variables and the overall of parent reading belief differed significantly in favour of the families with fewer children. Accordingly, it can be said that the parents with more children expressed the lack of time and materials as the reason of not reading to their children. İflazoğlu Saban and Altınıkmşiş (2014) similarly concluded in their studies that the parent reading belief’s sub-dimension of resources differed in favour of the parents with one child. No difference was observed in the sub-dimensions of positive effect of reading and oral participation according to the number of children. It can be thought that the number of the children of the parents were not effective on their views about the child’s reading process. It can also be expressed that the number of children did not affect the feelings of the parents about reading aloud to their children. However, on the contrary to this study, Boomstra et al. (2013) obtained the finding claiming that the mothers with more children gave more importance to the children’s being active during reading. On the other hand, İflazoğlu Saban and Altınıkmşiş (2014) revealed that the parents who had only one child had more positive feelings about reading with their children than the parents who had three or more children.

When the variable of the monthly income was regarded, it was seen that the Parent Reading Belief Inventory’s sub-dimensions of efficacy of the education, the instruction of reading, information-based reading, resources, environmental variables and the overall of parent reading belief differed in favour of the parents with higher monthly income. Considering this finding, it can be said that the more the monthly income the families had the more positive effect it had on the parents’ reading beliefs.
It can be thought that the parents with higher monthly income believed more in the role of environment on their children’s learning than the parents with lower monthly income and they felt themselves more responsible. It can also be stated that the parents with high monthly income believed more that reading books had an important role on their children’s acquire knowledge. The results of the researches by DeBaryshe and Binder (1994), DeBaryshe (1995), Gonzalez, Acosta, Davis, Pollard-Durodola, Saenz, Soares, et al. (2016), Husain et al. (2011), İflazoğlu Saban and Altinkamış (2014), Sonnenschein, Baker, Serpell, Scher, Truitt and Munsterman (1997) and Wu and Honig(2010) show consistency with these findings. DeBaryshe and Binder (1994) determined that the parents’ reading beliefs correlated with the family’s incomes significantly. Wu and Honig (2010) found in their research that there was a significant relationship between mother reading belief and monthly income. DeBaryshe (1995) expressed that the mothers with high income had the belief claiming that reading aloud with children should contain activities such as asking questions and giving feedback more than the mothers with low income. Sonnenschein, Baker, Serpell, Scher, Truitt and Munsterman (1997) concluded that the parents with middle income level approached to reading with regard to having fun and the parents with low income level considered reading as a purposeful skill acquisition. Gonzalez, Acosta, Davis, Pollard-Durodola, Saenz, Soares, et al. (2016) presented that higher socioeconomic level was in correlation with more facilitator mother reading beliefs. Husain et al. (2011) stated that there was a significant relationship between family monthly income and the sub-dimension of environment. It was also seen that the sub-dimensions of the positive effect of reading and oral participation did not differ according to monthly income. Accordingly, it can be said that monthly income did not have an effect on the parents’ feelings about reading to their children and the importance that they give on the child’s activity during reading. On the other hand, İflazoğlu Saban and Altinkamış (2014) identified that the sub-dimensions of parent reading belief, information-based reading and positive effect of reading differed in favour of the families with high income.

In line with the results obtained, it is suggested that teachers should give information to parents about the role of activities that parents perform at home in the
reading process. It is also suggested that teachers should provide information that will enable parents to change their negative reading beliefs.

References


