

Examination of parents' anxiety about their gifted children's education

Deniz Ozcan*, Ataturk Education Faculty, Department Gifted Education, Near East University, Mersin 10, Turkey
Fatma Merdan, Ataturk Education Faculty, Department Gifted Education, Near East University, Mersin 10, Turkey

Suggested Citation:

Ozcan, D. & Merdan, F. (2016). Examination of parents' anxiety about their gifted children's education. *Global Journal of Psychology Research: New Trends and Issues*. 6(2), 063–069.

Received from; revised from; accepted from;
Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of GLOBE-EDU 2015.
©2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd.

Abstract

Sciences and Arts Centres provide opportunities of creating and applying projects to the individuals who has superior intelligence. In this study, parents' ideas about future job choices of their gifted children, limitations in social settings, efficiency of physical conditions of institutions, education of teachers and benefits of Sciences and Arts Centres has been searched. Twenty-one teenagers' parents have participated voluntarily. In this qualitative research, both secondary school and Sciences and Arts Centres' absence of physical opportunities of buildings, lack of laboratories and materials has been identified as problems. However, results emphasise that these centres lead children to be interested in natural sciences, arts and mathematics. Furthermore, the Ministry of National Education should assign the Provincial Directorates for National Education to give seminars and conferences to inform teachers and parents to realise the differences of gifted children in early ages. It may also be advantageous to prepare brochures, posters, and handbooks to give them.

Keywords: Superior intelligence, gifted, sciences and arts centres, teachers, education.

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: **Deniz Ozcan**, Ataturk Education Faculty, Department Gifted Education, Near East University, Mersin 10, Turkey. *E-mail address:* deniz.ozcan@neu.edu.tr / Tel.:+392-223-64-64

1. Main text

All children in the world have the right of having happy lives in the environment and society that they exist. For gifted children, having satisfying lives is possible by providing them information. Gifted and superior intelligent children should be directed properly to the areas that can improve their talents by their parents and teachers. Therefore, they may learn to use their educational abilities much better. True diagnosis by using good intervention techniques and developing their talents at the early ages of lives may end up with gaining higher places in the society for the gifted individuals.

Each of the gifted children has some special characteristics. They might behave differently from their peers. These behaviours may be fascinating, embarrassing or shocked for other people (Ataman, 2003; Walker, 2002).

Gifted and superior intelligent children have different mental, emotional and physical developmental stages as opposed to others in the same ages. Especially in childhood, this may end up with behavioural problems. One of the most important reasons is that education in the public school is insufficient for them and so they feel bored. What is more, they focused on the topic which they are interested in too much and they cut their connections with the social context.

In addition to the behavioural problems, they may be distinctive from others with particular kinds of acts. To start with, their language skills progress in very early ages and they might read and write before normal children do. They have well-developed discovering abilities and also they have retentive memories. They are enthusiastic with searching certain issues and they try to answer questions about these issues like what, why, for what and who.

Gifted children may be very sensitive and they have high-level communication skills. They are analysts, quick-thinkers and good at observation skills. They are critical thinkers and they have great imagination. They are compassionate, tolerant and perfectionist in many areas. They have high self-confidence and they have strong intuition. They are empathetic and they have high sense of humour (Ataman, 2002; Kokkot, 1999).

Most of the gifted and the superior intelligent teenagers have the ability of leadership; they are so sensitive about nature and animals. One of the clearest similarities of them is willingness to read and loving books from the beginning of very young ages (Baykoc, 2009).

In the last few years, numerous important decisions have been made and applications have been started about gifted children in many countries. The features of these children's educators have been searched as well. Some of the most essential characteristics are opening to new experiences, improving their own continuously, being fair and objective. Their subjects of interests should be various and they should direct children to suitable areas. Additionally, they should be humanistic and they should wish to solve their problems.

Teachers should be leader, careful, respectful and directive for their students rather than being repressive. They ought to encourage children with their ideas about literature, arts and sciences and they should gain their trusts. They may good at realising themselves; they have to say 'I don't know' if it is necessary. Supporting productiveness, having ability of reinforcing and praising are identified as some of the important features of educators.

In Turkey, the Ministry of National Education started to work on individuals who have superior intelligence as a separate part of special education in 1992. By taking economical, socio-cultural and educational characteristics of the country into account, the models in other countries were examined. At the end of this research, based on our countries' conditions, an education centre was prepared and a program was started to apply with the name of 'Sciences and Arts Centre'. In the studies of Prof. Dr. Baykoc Donmez, it was called as 'Additional Course Practice School'.

Sciences and Arts Centres are defined as places that gifted children in elementary schools, secondary schools and high schools are educated depends on their talents and abilities after school times (Baykoc Donmez, 2009).

2. Method

Research study has been conducted with the qualitative design. Interview form has been used in the study. This form includes questions about the parents' ideas about their gifted children's education institutions, future job interests and tendencies, expectations from teachers and social lives. Besides, it has searched to the situations and alterations of teenagers before and after they started to the Sciences and Arts Centre.

2.1. Study group

Participants of the study have been mothers and fathers of 21 children who had been educated in Sciences and Arts Centre of Kocaeli in Turkey in the session of 2014–2015. Interviews have been conducted with either mother or father or sometimes with both of them. Interval of subjects' ages is from 35 to 60 years.

2.2. Data collection

Interview form has been used as a data collection material. The form has included seven questions. Each question has been prepared to get different data by getting the opinion of an expert in this area. Interviews have been done in Sciences and Arts Centre in Kocaeli. Each of them has taken 10–12 minutes. The form has contained the questions as

1. What are your expectations about future job choices of your gifted child?
2. What are your expectations about social life of your gifted child?
3. What are your expectations from education centres of your gifted child?
4. What are your expectations from teachers?
5. What kind of activities did you do for your child and whose help do you need?
6. Do you think if the physical conditions of the school are suitable for your child?
7. What kind of changes did you observe from your child after he or she started to the centre?

2.3. Data analysis

Data has been typed on the computer and then it has been analysed by using the qualitative research method of content analysis by the researcher. Answers of the families have been classified by the similarities to interpret and also some of them have been given directly. The same points have been identified by asking an expert's ideas.

3. Results

3.1. Findings about expectations of parents about their gifted children's future choices of profession

Children who have superior intelligence are the future leaders, scientists, intellectuals and artists of the society. Families should know these important characteristics of them and they should make an effort to realise their potentials.

Ten of the families who have been interviewed want them to do jobs about the issues they love, they are interested in and they can be happy to work. Two of the parents expected them to work on good and high quality jobs about the areas of arts and sciences. Four of them have answered that they want to see their children on the jobs that is suitable to their abilities, intelligence, dreams and

targets. Three families expect them to work on an academic setting and two of the parents want them to have high quality education which fits the level of their intelligence.

As a part of a social setting, the professional choices of gifted individuals are very advantageous for the community. Families who have the same ideas about are willing to provide world class education to their children.

3.2. Findings about expectations of parents about their gifted children's social lives

Table 1. Findings about the expectations of parents about their gifted children's social lives

Ideas of parents	f
Fit into society	7
Being interested in sports and music	2
Having healthy connection with people	2
Being accepted by the society	4
Works for benefits of society	3
We do not have any social problem	3

In the Table 1, answers of the parents whose children have an education in the Sciences and Arts Centre has been given. They have stated more than a single opinion. Bosker, Kuyper and Van der Werf (2007) claim that social support mechanisms are much more necessary for gifted children than normal ones (Bozgeyikli, Dogan & Isiklar, 2010).

3.3. Findings about expectations of parents from education centers of their gifted child

It is essential to prepare a suitable education program to the children who are gifted and who has superior intelligence. Satisfying and good quality schooling requires a detailed and well-designed program. From this point of view, mothers and fathers have been asked what their expectations from training centres for the youngsters are.

Five of the parents think that the Sciences and Arts Centres should provide well-equipped laboratories for the works on scientific areas such as physics, chemistry and biology. They complain about not finding it in the public schools and they need support of the government about this problem. Families of three children explained that making the centre's education time earlier might be more beneficial for both teachers and students. Four of them emphasised the importance of educators on the quality of training. They advocate that the teachers should be graduated from the education of this area and they shouldn't be assigned to the different schools continuously. In addition to these, four families want to get scientific curriculum which is parallel with the teenagers' capacities. Three of them expect from teachers to lead their students to discover their talents and to support their personal and emotional developments. Last two want to be chosen proper teaching methods for the learning models of the children. What is more, they expect to learn some practices to improve the creativity of the students outside the school.

3.4. Findings about expectations of parents about physical conditions of the school

Table 2. Findings about the expectations of parents about physical conditions of the school

Ideas of parents	f
Physical conditions are not sufficient	7
They are sufficient for Turkey's standards	2
Schools are not suitable to produce projects	5
Buildings, materials and environmental planning are insufficient	4
Opportunities for researches, experiments and art activities are limited	3

According to the answers of parents, it is clear that they are not pleasant about the current situation of the physical conditions. They have expressed the challenges because of the limited conditions.

3.5. Findings about expectations of parents about competence of teachers

Table 3. Findings about expectations of parents about competence of teachers in education centres

Ideas of parents	f
They should improve themselves and they should get sufficient education	6
They ought to discover talents of their students, have close relationships with them	3
They are successful based on current opportunities, they have good relationships	5
They should give scientific education and realise children's potentials	3
They are insufficient because of limited conditions of the school	4

Based on the findings about teachers, some of the parents think that their efforts are satisfactory in contrast to the others who expect from teachers to improve themselves. They should join courses about their profession or they should be graduated from a program about gifted people to be beneficial for the students. In addition, they ought to have motivation and personal effort to have good relationship with teenagers.

3.6. Findings about activities that parents do and people they asked for help to support development of their gifted children

In the interview, parents have been asked what kind of activities they do for improving teenagers and it is expected from them to do self-criticism. Very few of them explained they lead their children to do sports, arts or scientific workings. Most of the families admitted to not doing any activities. Furthermore, it has been learned who they asked for help to educate youngsters. According to this, 10 children's families told not to ask for any professional help. Four people explained that they found Science and Arts Centre by the advices of primary school teachers. Six parents had information from internet, books and doctors from university departments.

3.7. Findings about alteration of children after they start to education in sciences and arts centre

Last question of the interview has been about positive changes of gifted children which are the results of Sciences and Arts Centre. Based on 10 parents' answers, they become more socialised; their behavioural problems lessen in the public schools; they change their talking style and make more scientific sentences. Three parents indicated not to see any visible differences. Six parents realise rise on their sense of wonder and changes on their point of view about subjects in the school. Teenagers also become hard-working by the advantages of science and arts-based education type. According to two families, they become a part of a social group to share their ideas, to socialise and to do brainstorm about scientific fields.

4. Suggestions

In this part, suggestions are given based on the findings of the study.

- Parents, teachers in the school and society should be informed about discovering gifted children by ministry and related departments of universities by preparing seminars, hand books and interviews in national and local media channels.

- The Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Health should do a joint project for the true diagnosis of people with superior intelligence by taking account of their characteristics and individual differences.
- The High Education Board may organise university departments to train successful educators.
- It is beneficial to be organised informative meetings to provide moral and material support to the Sciences and Arts Centres by universities and NGOs.
- Teachers of gifted children might improve their skills by attending training courses, conferences, congresses to become prepared for current education systems.
- Government should produce projects to develop sufficient education programs which are conforming to European standards from pre-school terms to universities, NGOs, The Ministry of National Education, the Chamber of Industry and Trade, establishments, foundations, research centres, institutions of arts and the Sciences and Arts Centres.
- Children with superior intelligence should be provided sufficient settings, materials and opportunities to teach how to do science, how science is developed and how scientists could discover new information.
- One of the biggest problems of gifted children is that girls have much limited opportunities to improve themselves and to choose scientific jobs because of their social roles as motherhood and partnership. That's why, social institutions should work to change this point of view about women in society.
- For choosing educators for gifted children's training, it is important to find people, who have creative ideas, who is tolerant for different perspectives and who is willing to learn about individual characteristics and requirements of target group.
- Legal rights of gifted children in the constitution of Turkey to provide finance for domestic or overseas education on painting, music and fine arts by government should be applied.
- Teenagers with superior intelligence like to solve problems by using different ways. Teachers should give them chance to use these methods. By supporting their original ideas, their world of thought may be enriched.
- Educational institutions should provide practices and environmental organisations to support gifted children's original ideas and realisation of their potentials.

4.1. Suggestions to mothers and fathers

For the one question of interview about efforts of families and helping people to improve their gifted children, parents indicate that they cannot find any setting to bring teenagers because of the hardship of living in a big city.

- Children with superior intelligence love to search about history, culture, sciences and astronomy. That's why, parents may bring them to travels in our country to show geographical and historical structures, town planning, production and consumption relationships in an integrative way.
- They should direct their teenagers to the sports activities in their free times to teach them using their body and mind coordinately. Being a part of group, sports may teach children to sharing and to be disciplined. Besides, they might become more active on team works and having responsibilities.
- Regardless of the degree of talent, music has very special place on youngsters' lives. As normal children, music is an efficient tool on mental and emotional development of gifted children as well. Parents should realise that directed their gifted children who are talented to the musical areas could be beneficial for their emotional, social and professional acquirements.
- Parents should observe their children in detail. By knowing their features, they should understand teenagers' interests and development and they should support them. By doing this, they might lead their children to have an identity and make them to be integrated in a society.

References

- Ataman, A. (2003). *Ozel Gereksinimli Cocuklar ve Ozel Egitime Giris*. Ankara, Turkey: Gunduz Egitim ve Yayıncılık.
- Baykoc, N. (2010). *Ogretmenlik Programlari icin Ozel Egitim*. Ankara, Turkey.
- Bayindir, A. (2010). *Bireylerin Mesleki Olgunluk Duzeyleri ile Anne Babalarının Tutumlarını Algılamaları Arasındaki İlişki*. Ankara, Turkey: Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi.
- Bozgeyikli, H., Dogan, H. & Isiklar, A. (2010). *Ustun Yetenekli Ogrencilerin Mesleki Olgunluk Duzeyleri ile Algıladıkları Sosyal Destek Duzeyleri Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi*.
- Dogan, C. (2004). *Ustun Zekali Cocukların Özellikleri*. 1. Istanbul, Turkey: Türkiye Ustun Yetenekli Cocuklar Kongresi Bildiriler El Kitabı.
- Milli Egitim Bakanlığı Yayınlar Dairesi Başkanlığı. (1991). *Birinci Ozel Egitim Kongresi Raporu*. Ankara, Turkey.
- Milli Egitim Bakanlığı. (2001). *Birinci Ozel Egitim Kongresi Raporu*. Ankara, Turkey.