

Review

Equal opportunity in education

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The concept of equality is a concept shaped as a result of economic, legal, political, and sociological debates throughout human history. The concept of equality in the modern age; Its content has been enriched with principles such as equality of opportunity, political, racial, social and economic equality, and equality between men and women, and has become a superior value. Many researchers define equality as "a moral and social ideal, the situation in which people have the same position and value as each other in terms of having the same human nature." In other words, equality is the principle that states that "people are equal to each other and therefore no discrimination should be made between people". For this reason, this research aims to provide a general perspective to researchers by compiling studies on equality of opportunity in education. As a result, the concept of equality is generally defined as opportunity which means It is a widely accepted principle in many countries that is considered equality. The education system plays an important role in the implementation of this principle. Providing equal educational resources to all individuals or equalizing the educational achievements of individuals is accepted as a universal right to education.

Key word: Equality, education, opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of equality is a concept shaped as a result of economic, legal, political, and sociological discussions throughout human history (Cimen, 2021). The concept of equality in the modern age; Its content has been enriched with principles such as equality of opportunity, political, racial, social and economic equality, and equality between men and women, and it has gained the feature of being a superior value (Cevizci, 2002).

Cevizci (1999), defines equality as "a moral and social ideal, the state in which people are in the same position and value with each other in terms of having the same human nature." In other words, equality is "the principle that states that people are equal to each other and therefore there should be no discrimination between

people". The concept of equality is generally considered as equality of opportunity and means. The education system plays an important role in implementing this principle. Field emission is achieved by providing equal educational resources to all individuals or by equalizing the academic attainments of individuals (Peragine and Serlenga, 2008).

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity is thought of as the introduction of opportunities by other parties or the inclusion of opportunities that a person can obtain in the environment

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in case there is no alternative option to the existing one in the current environment or there is no opportunity to access the options (Green, 1988). One of the most frequently used arguments of the democratic tradition is the concept of equality of opportunity (Uçkan, 2003). The concept of equality of opportunity can be interpreted differently depending on the development levels of societies or countries. Equality of opportunity; In some countries, is interpreted as education equality, while in some countries, it is interpreted as culture, economy, and gender equality (Yasar, 2014).

Existing resources should be open and accessible to all segments of society (Brando, 2016). The common point where these differences come together is formal equality of opportunity. In other words, all segments of society should have equal chances to reach advantageous positions with their knowledge and talent rather than the individual's origin, such as the caste system (Arneson, 2015).

EDUCATION

Different definitions were encountered in the literature on education. Buluç (1997) defines education as "a system determined by the moral rules, the economic and political structure of the society and ensuring the continuation of the social order". The idea system that people have about the world and humanity is formed through education. According to Gasset (1997), this system is the set of opinions that are the true guide of human existence, and general culture is the name given to the whole of this system. A person who cannot live at the level of the age, that is, does not know the culture, lives below what will constitute his real life (Gasset, 1997). Education is an uninterrupted process that exists at every level of life, planned or unplanned (Yenice et al. 2003).

According to Sugiyama (1991), who emphasizes the importance of education for human life, a person can only become a human through education. The great secret of the perfection of human nature lies in education. With a good education, a person constantly develops and becomes a human being. For education, he states that in addition to perfecting the human being, national education is a means of happiness for the individual; Herbert Spencer stated that it is a set of activities that offer the opportunity for a better life; Durkheim, on the other hand, stated that the young generation is socialized within a program (Tezcan, 2015).

Aydın defines education as "...in general, it is the sum of the processes in which the individual develops his skills, attitudes and positive behavioral patterns in the society he lives in" (Aydın, 2015). Considering the definitions given before, three basic features of education were talked about. These are that education which takes place in a process, in a way that affects the individual positively

in general and according to the rules of the society in which he lives. Ertürk (1998) who defines education as "...the process of bringing about intentional and desired behavioral change in the individual's behavior through his own life", also expressed the general acceptance of this definition.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION

Equality of opportunity in education first came to the fore with the state-supported compulsory education practice that started in Prussia in the 18th century. The first studies in the field of equality of opportunity in education were made by James S. Coleman. The report published by Coleman (1968) under the name "Equal Opportunity in Education" added a different dimension to the subject. Bishop (1997) defines equality of opportunity in education as providing everyone with the opportunity to demonstrate their skills without hindering or providing an unfair advantage to any group or person in society; Tezcan (2015) defined it as having the opportunity to reach the standards that an individual can benefit from in the society, without being exposed to discrimination and equally based on their skills. Aristoteles (2013) defined equality of opportunity in education as providing educational services that enable each individual to improve themselves and reach their desired living conditions, rather than providing the same educational service to everyone, and thus contributed to today's discussions.

Kandemir and Kaya (2010), 'As a concept, "Equality of opportunity in education" can be defined as all individuals of the society, without discrimination, having the opportunity to benefit equally from educational services in developing their talents in the most appropriate way. "Equality of opportunity in education means that everyone who makes enough effort has a right to equal educational conditions, regardless of their family and economic origins" (Coşkun, 2010). "Education must be designed and accessible, taking into account the different characteristics and different needs of each child" (Alp, 2015-2016).

FACTORS AFFECTING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION

It is necessary to provide equal opportunities to individuals in education, but there are difficulties in achieving this due to different factors. This difficulty also affects the success of students in the education process. Factors affecting equality of opportunity in education are examined under five main headings in total. These are economic, geographical, political, individual, and social factors. Economic factors are the primary factors affecting equality of opportunity in education. "The right to education, which is one of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the

individual, varies according to privileged groups” (Akay, 2020). It is an undeniable fact that education is the right of every individual and should be easily accessible. Considering the geographical conditions of the country and the population distribution along with these conditions, it can be seen that many students experience various problems in accessing education.

When it comes to political factors, the state should determine the correct education policies to ensure equal education. “...the state is obliged to prevent inequalities arising from economic, social, regional and biological differences in access to education and therefore success through the education policies carried out in a country” (Bilgin and Erbuğ, 2021). Individual differences include the individual's intelligence level, abilities, perceptions, and physical competencies. Whether these differences are large or small they negatively affect equality of opportunity in education. The individual grows up by learning the traditions and customs of the society into which he is born. These are effective in many areas of an individual's life. Having to fulfill the roles that society attributes to individuals' gender which causes individuals to experience difficulties in their lives.

GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION IN TURKEY

The main actor that determines and shapes education policies in Turkey is the Ministry of National Education. National Education Councils have an important role in the reforms and innovations to be made for the development of the Turkish education system. Even though the council decisions were advisory, different segments and actors of the society need to come together and discuss the education system (Usta, 2013). Kaya (2013) listed the reasons why the issue of equal opportunity in education came to the fore in Turkey as follows:

- 1) Inadequate schools
- 2) Economic difficulties
- 3) Learning environments do not have the necessary equipment
- 4) Students are not motivated due to cultural and social factors.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is widespread disagreement about what equal opportunity in education requires. For some, this means every child is legally allowed to go to school. For others, it means that every child receives the same educational resources (Lazenby, 2016). For example, in the United States, although there is broad agreement that the society recognizes and supports the core value of equal

opportunity, there is considerable disagreement about its meaning when it comes to specific areas of application (Coleman, 1968). However, it is widely accepted that educational opportunities for children should be equally accepted (Shields et al., 2017). In fact, the ideal of equality of opportunity plays an important role in contemporary social and political discourse and is one of the few ideals that most people from all over the political spectrum accept (Temkin, 2016). For equal opportunities, educational conditions must be based on the specific abilities and needs of each individual. Child-centered ability should be measured, appropriate education should be allocated to the child and self-realization should be ensured, regardless of the child's social conditions and family background.

The child's abilities should be measured at an early age and as often as possible, as independently of parental and family history as possible. In this way, it can be ensured that the child's educational opportunities are as advantageous as they are in practice. Increasing the quality of education, especially access to education, and reducing the differences in achievement levels between regions and school types remain important as a basic need (Hansen et al., 1999; Hutmacher et al., 2001; Wiseman, 2010). In this context, in addition to increasing the duration of compulsory education, variables such as schooling rates, increasing physical capacity, and strengthening the technological infrastructure (State Planning Organization, 2010; Ministry of Development, 2013), the quality of learning environments are improved in accordance with the principle of equality and equality of opportunity in education is achieved. Providing it as much as possible can be said to be the variable of the mentioned importance.

High-quality schools are very effective on an individual's performance. Since these high-quality schools employ experienced and well-equipped teachers, the quality of education received also increases. One of the most important school variables affecting student success is teacher quality (World Bank, 2011). Quality should be investigated in schools that are defined as 'Qualified Schools', but where quality is achieved only by students with high scores. On the other hand, it is observed that the family and the student, who are the most important parts of the system, do not have the necessary information about the school in this preference orientation.

When considered in terms of equality of opportunity and means in education, every citizen has the right to access quality education. National Education should make every school "qualified" equally and fairly. To increase teacher quality; The fact that academics working in education faculties have worked in practice or have knowledge of practice through cooperation protocols with the Ministry of Education is effective in the process of the teacher candidates they train. Having students who choose education faculties at the specified lower limit score/rank

will increase the quality of teacher candidates. In addition, based on scientific studies, the student recruitment of education faculties should be updated to meet the teacher needs on a branch basis.

In a country, where opening universities in every province has been achieved as a goal, increasing the schooling rate in the preschool period and opening high-standard preschool education institutions in every neighborhood is the most important step for equality of opportunity at an early age. In addition to teacher quality, quantity and standards should be aligned within the country, and the necessary studies for this (such as the location where the school will be built, and the number of classrooms needed in the region) should be based on scientific studies.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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