Full Length Research Paper

The perception of gifted students' parents about the term of giftedness

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The purpose of this research is to present the definition of 'giftedness' made by the parents who have gifted children.The study is of importance for presenting the term of giftedness from parents of gifted students as a result of their experiences. Also, this study has a great importance as it allows us to have more information about gifted children, to organize educational programs according to these children, to emphasize the outstanding characteristics in gifted children and to get suitable data that can be used during the selection process of gifted children. The content analysis was used from qualitative data analysis approaches in this study. The study group of the research is consisted of 50 parents who havea gifted children. Within the scope of this research, the answers of an open–ended question 'Can you make a definition for 'gifted children' by considering your own child?' were analyzed. The answers given by parents were grouped under 3 themes. These are: Academic features, Personal features and Creativity. The term 'giftedness' was defined through the eyes of parents who have gifted children and it was defined precisely with the expressions of parents who closely experience gifted children.

Key words: giftedness, perceptionof parents.

INTRODUCTION

It is necessary to determine gifted children in the early ages. If these children were not determined, it could be possible for them to get lost in huge crowds. This means a big loss for the countries and for the development of humanity. Families have great responsibilities at this issue.They should carefully observe their children, follow their kids and share the slightest differences that they see on their children with their teachers and experts if necessary. During the early childhood, the cognitive development of the gifted children depends on the experiences that they get in their families. From this perspective, the awareness of the families who have a gifted child regarding gifted children's features and needs peculiar to these features facilitates the developments of the children (Özbay, 2013).

The first step for recognizing the gifted children is the phase of nomination.The nomination is mostly made by peers, parents or teachers. The most important responsibilities are often taken by parents and teachers on the basis of the child's differences, development and skills. The nomination of the gifted students can be possible only after they are recognized by their parents and/or their teachers (Akar and Akar, 2012). What kind of helps the gifted children need educationally cannot be

evaluated properly. In this case, the recognition of the components which constitutes a hint for the concept of giftedness is of great importance (Karasu, 2010).

Gifted children show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience or environment. These children exhibit high performance capability in intellectual, creativity, and/or artistic areas, have an unusual leadership capacity or excel in specific academic fields (Jarosewich et al., 2002; Maitra and Gosain, 2009; MEB, 2006). Also Renzulli reported that gifted individuals had three elements such as having ability above normal, a high level of commitment to the task and high level of creativity (Alkan, 2013).

Generally, the most important feature of gifted children is their learning speed. These kinds of children learn speaking, reading and writing in earlier ages than others. They are always eager to learn new things with their insatiable curiosity (Karakurt, 2009). They constantly ask questions (Özbay, 2013) and interrogate everything (Ataman, 1998). They use their indefinite energies for achieving their purposes. They are both physically and mentally active (MEGEP, 2007). Gifted students pay more attention to mental operations because of their high level of intelligence and consequently their cognitive individual awareness is also higher (Narimani and Mousazadeh, 2010). They prefer to act independently, to be in decision making mechanisms and to draw a learning route in accordance with their own interests (Sak, 2009).

Perfectionist tendencies of gifted children are higher than their peers. They like taking responsibilities and discharging their responsibilities. They prefer to play on their own instead of being in a group. They are very curious. They do not obey the norms of a group. They insist on their own truths. They conflict with the authorities and they do not like if somebody imposes on them to do something. They like difficult tasks. They are persistent and decisive on the points that they believe in. They have extensive vocabulary. They have wide interests. Besides, they have features such as being creative, to be able to solve problems, solid memory and insights, to prefer new and difficult experiences, to use unique expressions. Leadership is one of the psychosocial features of gifted children. Their sense of responsibility is high and they try to accomplish their tasks with a high sense of responsibility. They can present the results of a given task with high self-confidence. They are very interested in their environments and constantly ask questions. They focus more on cause effect relations of the events. They have a solid observation and logic power. They prefer to implement the rules that they bring and they want others to obey these rules (Özbay, 2013).

A research including a definition of 'giftedness' through the eyes of families who have a gifted child could not be found as a result of the literature scan. In general, it was included to create metaphors about the concept of giftedness and the perceptions of teachers regarding the concept of giftedness. We can outline them as in the following:

Lee (1999)'s research aims to determine how teachers describe the term of giftedness. The results show that teachers understand giftedness as a series of conceptions, namely excellence, potential, rarity, behaviour, innate ability, motivation and asynchrony.In the studies carried out by Neumeister et al. (2007), the opinions of teachers on the concept of giftedness and the characteristics of gifted children were taken. It appeared that teachers defined giftedness as learning easily, creativity, understanding above the average level, awareness of patterns/connections, curiosity, extensive vocabulary, self-motivation.In Moon and Brighton (2008)'s research, respondents described gifted children as possessing strong reasoning skills, a general storehouse of knowledge and facility with language, including a strong vocabulary.

In Moore (2009)'s study teachers described gifted children as having a strong desire to learn, high motivation, inquisitiveness, excitement and enormous energy. They thought that gifted children need to be pushed and challenged as far as they can go. Some teachers noticed that gifted children do not always fit in or have a lot of friends, prefer to talk with adults, are independent, and can be disorganized. Some teachers also observed that gifted children are loving, sensitive, passionate, sweet, care about others, have a sense of humour, and can be immature. Almost all the teachers in this study commented on the academic aspect of giftedness in children by noticing boredom, frustration, problem solving skills, self teaching, mastery of content, and thinking outside the box. In the study of Eraslan Çapan (2010), the metaphoric perceptions of the prospective teachers who participated in the study regarding gifted/talented students were grouped under 13 categories; 1)Showing high performance 2) Trying to improve in inappropriate conditions 3) Need special education 4) Mysterious and requiring an effort to understand 5) Valuable 6) Open to be controlled and guided 7) To be able to predict and direct future 8) Making researches and to be able to look from different perspectives to the events 9) Look different from his/her peers 10) with high capacity 11) Productive 12) Creative 13) Sophisticated.

In Akar and Akar (2012)'s research, findings indicated that primary school teachers' perceptions about giftedness are inadequate for the realization and the nomination of the gifted children. The categories obtained in the scope of the research are as in the following: To have abilities/ skills/talents, to have different characteristics, to be successful, to have high IQ. In a study which was carried out with the parents of the gifted students, the parents stated the different features of their gifted child as to start speaking earlier than others, to start making

regular sentences in early ages, to be active, to ask a lot of questions, to start walking earlier than others and to give logical responses to the questions (Alkan, 2013).

The study of Özsoy (2014) was carried out for demonstrating the opinions of Science and Art Centres' teachers and parents on gifted and talented students whom they constantly interact through metaphors. As a result of this study, it was seen that the teachers and their parents in Science and Art Centre perceived the concept of 'gifted student' as students who have high performances, need special education, require an effort to understand, valuable, look different than their peers, have high capacity and sophisticated.In the research of Altıntaş and Özdemir (2014), the opinions of teachers about the term giftedness and the characteristics of gifted students were taken. Teachers' answers for the open ended questions are grouped under 7 themes. They are; being different from peers, academic achievement, high capability in certain areas, creativity, personal traits, development features and congenital. When we analyzed the categories under these themes, there were 2 categories under 'being different from peers', 15 categories under 'academic achievement', 2 categories under 'high capability in certain areas', 5 categories under 'creativity' theme, 18 categories under 'personal traits' theme, 6 categories under 'development features' theme and 2 categories under 'congenital' theme.

The purpose of this research is to present the definition of 'giftedness' made by the parents who have gifted children by moving from their own child.Also, this study has a great importance as it allows us to have more information about gifted children, to organize educational programs according to these children, to emphasize the outstanding characteristics in gifted children and to get suitable data that can be used during the selection process of gifted children. By moving from these expressions, we can state the problem sentence of the study as 'what are the perceptions of the parents who have gifted children on the term, 'giftedness'?

METHOD

In this part, the research model was explained and the information about the analyses of the data which was collected through data collection tools was presented.

Research model

In this research, the content analysis from the qualitative data analyses approaches was used. Content analysis involves defining suitable and important examples, themes and patterns in the data. In content analysis, the observations or citations which are the samples of the topics, concepts of ideas which are similar and suitable to each other are searched.This case sometimes includes combining all the data which guide us to a certain evaluation question (Patton, 1987). Content analysis requires in-depth analysis of the collected data and it allows us to find out themes and dimensions which are not apparent. The basic purpose of the con-

tent analysis is to reach concepts and correlations which can explain the collected data. For this, it is necessary to conceptualize the collected data beforehand, later on to organize them according to appeared concepts in a logical way and to determine the themes that are explaining the data according to them. The data in qualitative studies are analyzed in 4 phases. The phases are as follows: coding the data, finding themes, organizing themes and codes and defining and interpreting the findings (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008).

The study group

The research was carried out in the fall semester of 2013-2014 academic year. The research group of the study is 50 parents (mother or father) who have gifted children. While determining the participants, convenience sampling was conducted due to some practical reasons such as ease of transportation, implemention of the study rigorously and communication.

Data collection tool

'Parents' view form" which was prepared by the researcher for the parents of the gifted children was used within the scope of this study. 'Parents' view form' is composed of 8 open ended questions. The questions were prepared by the researcher via literaure scanning. For validity of the view form, in the direction of the view of an expert some changes were made and the forms were finalized. From the view form, only the answers of the open-ended question 'Can you make a definition for 'gifted children' by considering your own child?' were considered within the scope of this study. This question is examined in a detailed way.

Data analysis

The data collected from the open-ended question used in 'Parent view form' were qualitatively analyzed. The content analysis was used in qualitative data analysis. After the answers given by the parents through considering their own children about the definition of 'gifted child' were categorized, they were grouped under different themes. The obtained categories and themes were presented in the form of frequency (f) and percentage (%) in tables and the necessary evaluations were made accordingly.

The data gathered from 50 parents were analyzed. While analyzing the data, an coding process was carried out by the researcher in the direction of the idea of an expert. In the coding process, the reliability of view form was calculated by the method of double coding of Miles and Huberman (1994). Firstly, the answers of 50 parents were coded by the researcher. 25 forms which include all the codes got from the analysis of all forms were selected and they were coded by an expert. The reliability of the analyzed question was 0.95. Because the reliability value is higher than 0.70, we can say that there is a compliance between scorers.

RESULTS

In Table 1, the answers the parents provided for the open-ended question 'Can you make a definition of 'gifted children' by considering your own child?' were divided into categories and themes through analysis.

When the table is analyzed, it is seen that the answers of the parents which they provided for the open-ended

Table 1. The expression of answers obtained from open ended question according to themes and categories.

Themes	Categories	f	%
Academic features	Being eager to learn and teach	21	42
	Having talking ability	39	78
	High visual intelligence	38	76
	Intelligent	46	92
	Bookish	34	68
	Having Ability to think rapidly	36	72
	Learning rapidly	41	82
	Development of mathematical ability in the early age	31	62
	High perception	38	76
	More awareness	38	76
	Extensive vocabulary	32	64
	Reading and writing in the early age	36	72
	Repudiation of folkways	14	28
	High motivation	24	48
	Hard to be understood	32	64
	Eager to be first	37	74
	Ability to put a mask in places where he/she enters	7	14
	Leader	40	80
	Independent	42	84
	Talking too much	48	96
	Asking questions too much	40	80
	Authentic	21	42
	Expressing oneself well	12	24
	Messy	29	58
	Ambitious	34	68
	Moving too much	46	92
	Kind-hearted	12	24
	Having sense of justice	19	38
Personal features	Impatient	45	90
	Getting bored quickly	42	84
	Persistent	31	62
	Exciting	21	42
	Perfectionist	44	88
	Needing rules and disciplines	28	56
	Having confidence	40	80
	Modernist	29	58
	Internally controlled	11	22
	Logical	36	72
	Emotional	24	48
	Objecting too much	47	94
	Hard to convince	44	88
	Having his own rights	48	96
	Becoming more mature	25	50
	Having different interests	29	58
	Having a different viewpoint	24	48
	Reacting differently	12	24
	Showing versatile development	19	38
	Thinking like an adult	31	62

Table 1. Contd.

Creativity	High imagination	45	90
	Curious	48	96
	Repartee	42	84
	Witty	31	62
	Finding practical solutions	30	60
	Thinking differently	31	62
	Perfect humour	33	66
	Pedantic	40	80

question used in the opinion form classified under 3 themes. These themes are "Academic features, Personal Features and Creativity". The categories under the theme of "Academic features" are being eager to learn and teach, having talking ability, high visual intelligence, intelligent, bookish, having ability to think rapidly, learning rapidly, development of mathematical ability in the early age, high perception, more awareness, extensive vocabulary, reading and writing in the early age. The categories under the theme of "Personal features" are repudiation of folkways, high motivation, hard to be understood, eager to be first, ability to put a mask in places where he/she enters, leader, independent, talking too much, asking questions too much, authentic, expressing oneself well, messy, ambitious, moving too much, kind-hearted, having sense of justice, impatient, getting bored quickly, persistent, exciting, perfectionist, needing rules and disciplines, having confidence, modernist, internally controlled, logical, emotional, objecting too much, hard to convince, having his own rights, becoming more mature, having different interests, having a different viewpoint, reacting differently, showing versatile development, thinking like an adult. The categories under the theme of "Creativity" are high imagination, curious, repartee, witty, finding practical solutions, thinking differently, perfect humour, pedantic.

Some examples from the answers of parents are as follows:

"Learning rapidly, having an idea and not to hesitate to say his ideas, curious, asking questions too much, having different viewpoint, repudiation of folkways"
"A child who is repartee, thinks like an adult when needed, has high perception, is interrogation, curious, makes wit"
"He apprehends the subject easily and does the necessary. He speaks like an adult, because having high visual intelligence, he learned reading in the early age.
"Children who apprehend easily, think differently, move too much, have a high imagination"
"Moving too much, independent, having his/her own ideas, having more awareness, having a developed speech and extensive vocabulary when compared his/her

peers, reading and writing in the early ages, Development of mathematical ability in the early age."
"Expressing oneself well, asking questions too much, speaking too much, objecting too much, hard to convince, researching the reasons of the events, bookish, having his/her own rights, ability to put a mask in places where he/she enters, hard to be understood, having characteristics of a leader and confidence, having high perception and high motivation, having some abilities."

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The answers which were given for the definition of 'gifted child' by parents through considering their own children were group under 3 themes. These are; academic features, personal features and creativity. There are 12 categories under academic features, 36 categories under personal features and 8 categories under creativity.

The categories under the theme of "Academic features" are being eager to learn and teach, having talking ability, high visual intelligence, intelligent, bookish, having ability to think rapidly, learning rapidly, development of mathematical ability in the early age, high perception, more awareness, extensive vocabulary, reading and writing in the early age. The categories under the theme of "Personal features" are repudiation of folkways, high motivation, hard to be understood, eager to be first, ability to put a mask in places where he/she enters, leader, independent, talking too much, asking questions too much, authentic, expressing oneself well, messy, ambitious, moving too much, kind-hearted, having sense of justice, impatient, getting bored quickly, persistent, exciting, perfectionist, needing rules and disciplines, having confidence, modernist, internally controlled, logical, emotional, objecting too much, hard to convince, having his own rights, becoming more mature, having different interests, having a different viewpoint, reacting differently, showing versatile development, thinking like an adult. The categories under the theme of "Creativity" are high imagination, curious, repartee, witty, finding practical solutions, thinking differently, perfect humour, pedantic.

When the results obtained in this study are considered,

this study is parallel with the studies of Lee (1999), Neumeister et al. (2007), Moon and Brighton (2008), Moore (2009), Eraslan Çapan (2010),Akar and Akar (2012), Alkan (2013), Altıntaş and Özdemir (2014) and Özsoy (2014). As for the results, the 'giftedness' was defined through the eyes of parents who have gifted children and it was defined precisely with the expressions of parents who closely experience gifted children. This case has great importance as it allows us to have more information about gifted children, to organize educational programs according to these children, to emphasize the outstanding characteristics in gifted children and to get suitable data that can be used during the selection process of gifted children.

The following suggestions can be offered within the scope of this study:

1. Interviews can be conducted with the parents of gifted students for a better analysis of the answers provided by parents.
2. A seminar should be given to families about 'being a family of a gifted child'.
3. By carrying out similar studies with more families, some demographic variables such as the educational levels of the families and their socio-economic status should be considered.
4. It is recommended to carry out similar studies with both teachers and parents and to compare the results of both studies.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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