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SEARCH FOR AN ALTERNATIVE WAY IN  
PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

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for the degree of

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in

Sociology

by

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*To innocent faces and pure hearts*

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## **ABSTRACT**

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**January 2013**

### **SEARCH FOR AN ALTERNATIVE WAY IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION**

Beginning from the last decades of Ottoman Empire a bifurcation emerged between traditional educational institutions and modern types of schools as well as their representatives. Even if this dichotomy were ended by the 1924 Unification Law of Education, the problem has not been solved throughout the history of the Turkish Republic and the tension between religious education and the secular character of the new state has never ended. After the military intervention in 1997, the channels for religious education were further narrowed. Today, although preschool education is a relatively new phenomenon in Turkey, some parents search for an alternative way to provide religious education in their children's preschool years.

My research focused on three neighboring boroughs in Istanbul: Beykoz, Üsküdar and Ümraniye. During my project I interviewed 18 families and 4 school managers. As a result of my research I realized that parents choose these schools because they provide both regular preschool education and religious education together.

#### **Key words:**

Preschool education, religious education, civil education, sıbyan schools

## KISA ÖZET

**Muhammed SEVİM**

**Ocak 2013**

### **OKUL ÖNCESİ EĞİTİMİNDE ALTERNATİF YOL**

#### **ARAYIŞLARI**

Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun son döneminde başlayan ve özellikle Tanzimat'tan sonra ağırlık kazanan eğitimde ikili yapının bir sonucu olarak bir tarafta geleneksel kurumlar varlığını korurken, diğer tarafta modern eğitim kurumları yükselmeye başlamıştı. Bu yapının 1924 Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu ile sona erdirilmiş olması sonucu devlet, din eğitimini de üzerine almış oluyordu. Osmanlı döneminde çoğunlukla vakıflar ve sivil kuruluşlar üzerinden karşılanan bu eğitimin devletin eline geçmesi ve yeni kurulan laik ulus devletinin de din eğitimini ihmal etmesi sonucu, Türkiye'de din eğitimi talebi hem karşılanamayan bir eğitim olarak hep var olageldi hem de bir gerilim alanı olarak varlığını muhafaza etti. Devletin dini eğitime tahsis ettiği sınırlı alan bazı dönemlerde genişlemiş ve okullara din ve ahlak derslerinin konulması, İmam-Hatip Okullarının ve İlahiyat Fakültelerinin açılması gibi uygulamalarla da desteklenmiştir. Ancak, 28 Şubat süreciyle girilen yeni yolda, zorunlu eğitim 8 yıla çıkarılmış, dini eğitime yaş sınırlaması getirilmiş ve İmam-Hatip Okullarının ortaokul kısmı kapatılmıştır. Böylece çocuklarına dini eğitim sağlamak isteyen aileler yeni arayışlar içine girmiş ve okul öncesi eğitimi ile birlikte dini eğitimin de sağlandığı kurumlara yönelmişlerdir.

İstanbul'un üç komşu semtini (Beykoz, Üsküdar ve Ümraniye) konu aldığım bu araştırmamda 18 aile ve 4 ana okul müdiresiyle mülakatlar yaptım ve ailelerin bu eğitimi seçmelerinde etkili olan faktörleri araştırdım.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Okul öncesi eğitimi, din eğitimi, sivil eğitim, sıbyan okulları

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AIHHS	Anadolu Imam Hatip Lisesi (Anatolian Imam-Hatip High School)
AKP (JDP)	Ak Party (Justice and Development Party)
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People’s Party)
DİB	Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı (Presidency of Religious Affairs)
DP	Demokrat Parti (Democratic Party)
ECE	Early Childhood Education
IHHS	Imam-Hatip High School
MEB	Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (Ministry of National Education)
SQC	Summer Qur’an Class (Yaz Kur’an Kursu)
TBMM	Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (Grand National Assembly of Turkey)
QS	Qur’an School (Kur’an Kursu)
YÖK	Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu (Higher Education Council)

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## INTRODUCTION

In the years following the declaration of the Second Constitution in 1908, under the ministry of Emrullah Efendi there was a big debate about the reformation of education in Ottoman Empire. The question was whether they should have started the reforms from primary schools or universities (*Daru' Fünun*). According to Emrullah Efendi, they must have started from universities because there were not enough teachers (*muallim*) to meet the need.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, if they could not manage the university education, they would not see the positive effects of the reforms in primary schools. This theory is called *Tuba Ağacı* since it resembled an upside down- tree in Heaven (Ergin 1977: 1276-1280).

The Union and Progress Party (*İttihat Terakki*) was ruling the country and Emrullah Efendi was the ministry of this party. I wonder, given these efforts, if they aimed at a rapid change in society through education. That is, giving importance primarily to the cultivation of the educators would accelerate the process toward the change and transformation of the empire. According to Osman Kafadar, education has two main functions: one is to pass on current or old values, traditions, beliefs, and other kinds of knowledge to a new generation as a heritage: the other is to provide for the continuum of society by changing or developing cultural elements based on changing environmental conditions (1997:14). It cannot be denied that education, especially compulsory education, is an effective way to shape minds through religion, ideology and any kinds of doctrines as well as to create a monopoly

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<sup>1</sup> Similarly, when Mümtaz Turhan (1908-1969), one of the most prominent figures of psychology and sociology in Turkey, argue the main problems of Turkish educational system in *Maarifimizin Ana Davaları ve Bazı Hal Çareleri*, he posits that the idea of providing education from bottom to top and generalizing education all over the country may not be cure possible because the problem is not to increase the ratio of literates but to educate intellectuals well. Therefore, regarding education, he articulates that a good education can be provided by well raised teachers and they cannot replace with books or curriculum Turhan (1964: 23-27).

over society and control it accordingly. This is quite true in the Turkish example and the arena of education has been battlefield for years, with Islam and religious education standing in its center. Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, religious education has been seen as a taboo and remained as one of the biggest areas of tension in Turkey.

After the current Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan pronounced his desire for a “religious generation” a new debate occupied the Turkish agenda.<sup>2</sup> Changes in the Turkish educational system, such as adding the Qur’an, the life of the prophet Mohammad and the basic knowledge of religion classes to the curriculum as elective classes in middle schools and reopening the middle branches of Imam-Hatip High Schools, made me think that we are face to face with a new project and that Imam-Hatip High Schools are the bearer of this project.<sup>3</sup>

So far the idea of the religious generation has never been tested in Turkey. In addition to other reasons, in my opinion, the main reason rendering this expectation for a religious generation impossible is that the educational system does not allow for a religious education in Turkey. For this reason, throughout the history of Turkish Republic this need has been met by informal religious education, mostly through the institutions and foundations

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<sup>2</sup> For Prime Minister’s declaration see: <http://www.haberturk.com/polemik/haber/712088-dindar-nesil-polemigi>

<sup>3</sup> For a useful discussion about Islamism see a collective book: *İslamcılık Öldü mü?* İstanbul: Ufuk Yayınları, 2012. And for a discussion specifically about Imam-Hatip High Schools between columnists from *Zaman* and *Yenişafak* newspapers: Mümtaz’er Türköne, Hayrettin Karaman, Ali Bulaç, Yusuf Kaplan and others see:

[http://www.zaman.com.tr/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action?newsId=1309277](http://www.zaman.com.tr/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=1309277);  
[http://zaman.com.tr/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action?haberno=1316291&title=yeni-egitim-yasasi-ile-imamhatipleri-yeniden-dusunmek](http://zaman.com.tr/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?haberno=1316291&title=yeni-egitim-yasasi-ile-imamhatipleri-yeniden-dusunmek);  
<http://yenisafak.com.tr/Yazarlar/Default.aspx?i=33032&y=HayrettinKaraman>;  
<http://yenisafak.com.tr/Yazarlar/Default.aspx?i=33148&y=YusufKaplan> ;  
<http://yenisafak.com.tr/yazarlar/default.aspx?i=33008&y=HayrettinKaraman>;  
<http://yenisafak.com.tr/Yazarlar/Default.aspx?i=33103&y=HayrettinKaraman>;  
[http://zaman.com.tr/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action?newsId=1315401](http://zaman.com.tr/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=1315401);  
<http://yenisafak.com.tr/Yazarlar/Default.aspx?t=05.07.2012&y=HayrettinKaraman>.

established by religious groups (*cemaats and tarikats*). Nobody can assert that there is a generation in Turkey well versed in religion- even at the level of basic Islamic knowledge. Going back to Emrullah Efendi's theory, if even İlahiyat Faculties are far behind of the old *medreses* in terms of teaching Arabic and giving religious education, the idea of a religious generation will never be tested because the raisers of the raised need to be raised first.

Even if these regulations are relatively new and thus did not have a role on my choosing of a thesis subject, the discourses of religious generation under different names are not new and helped me to reckon on the relationship between the religious generation and religious education in Turkey. As an Imam-Hatip School graduate, I have followed different writers and scholars promoting a new or an awaited generation<sup>4</sup> based on the example of the prophet's time and his friends (this time is called *Asr-ı Saadet*, literally, the age of happiness). When I saw children taking their basic religious education in their preschool years, I once more remembered this utopia. Although the writings about this utopia and my observations on the children in preschools may be only slightly related to my project, it inspired me to investigate the factors leading parents to choose this sort of education.

As a person who experienced religious education and knowing the approach of the state against the religious education in Turkey, I was curious about how these families provided this education and what reasons urged them to search for a religious education in their children's preschool years. From this perspective, another question is how or why this education emerged in such a secular state and it is becoming widespread.

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<sup>4</sup>For instance, Asım's generation (*Asım'ın nesli*) of M.Akif Ersoy; the new generation (*nesl-i cedid*) of Said Nursi; the awaited generation (*beklenen nesil*) of Nurettin Topçu; the great eastern youth (*büyük doğu gençliği*) of Necip Fazıl; the golden generation (*altın nesil*) of F. Gülen; the generation of resurrection (*diriliş nesli*) of Sezai Karakoç.



During my research I checked some books about religious education approaching the issue from different aspects and some theses examining the history of religious education at different levels. Also, there are some works about preschool education and suggestions how religious education must be given in preschool education. However, I could see no work focused on both the history of religious education and religious education in preschool education, nor on the relationship between these two areas. Furthermore, as my questions reveal, my research differs from previous works in terms of focusing on a current example; that is, institutions providing religious education for preschool children and a group of families benefiting from this education. Therefore, my work is neither a history of religious education and its problems in Turkey nor suggestions about religious education for preschool teachers. My research stands in the juncture of education, religion, social movements and politics. Because the research has made in a multidisciplinary areas, I think that, as an umbrella discipline, sociology has helped me embrace all these throughout my journey.

In the first chapter, since preschool education is a new emerging stage of education and it is still not so common in Turkey, I began with the rise of preschool education in Europe and gave a brief history of preschool education in Turkey. In order to give a background about preschool education in Turkey I began with Ottoman Empire. I mainly focused on traditional *sıbyan mekteps* due to its resemblance of today's *sıbyan okuls*. Then, I followed preschool education in Turkish Republic and showed its place in Turkish educational system.

In the second chapter, I tried to show the tension between the secular state and religious education. I grouped religious education in Turkey formal and informal educational organizations. For formal education in primary and secondary schools I examined the change in religion and ethics classes in schools and the history of Imam-Hatip Schools dependent on the Ministry of

National Education (MEB). Since religious education in higher education is irrelevant to my research I did not focus on İlahiyat Faculties. I also included the Qur'an Schools in this chapter since they are somewhat related to my study. Because the Qur'an Schools and Summer Qur'an Classes are not dependent on MEB but on the Presidency of Religious Affairs (DİB), I examined these schools as a part of informal religious education. Additionally, since I focused on the history of religious education and the tension going on over religious education in Turkish Republic, I excluded the comparison of religious education in Turkey and other countries, specifically in Europe.<sup>5</sup> Lastly, even though the last changes in Turkish educational system, especially about elective religious classes in middle schools and reopening of middle branches of Imam-Hatip Schools, were made after I finished my research, I mentioned the last changes in educational system.

After the new regulations, the question of how the last changes in religious education will affect my thesis gained importance because I built it mainly on the approach of the secular state against religious education and narrowed educational channels after the 1997 military intervention on February 28<sup>th</sup>. In other words, the question is whether the new regulations affects my thesis or not because the channels are broadened by new government through adding the curriculum the Qur'an and *siyer* classes and reopening the middle branches of Imam-Hatip Schools. My answer is that it will not debase my thesis because, despite the last changes, religious education is not free and restrictions still exist in pre- and primary schools in Turkey. The reality in Turkey is that students can take religious education as much as the state offers but not as much as they demand. Additionally, my research covers the

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<sup>5</sup> For a study of comparison of religious education in Turkey and Europe see M. Zeki Aydın, "Avrupa Birliđi Ülkelerinde Din Öğretimi ve Türkiye ile Karşılaştırılması." In *Avrupa Birliđi'ne Giriş Sürecinde Türkiye'de Din Eğitimi ve Sorunları Sempozyumu*. İstanbul: Deđişim Yayınları, 2002. Also a study about the comparison of religious education in Turkey and England see Fatih Alakuş & Mehmet Bahçekapılı. *Din Eğitimi Açısından İngiltere ve Türkiye*. İstanbul: Ark Kitap-Özgü Yayınları, 2009.

history and its effects on today over a current example not a prediction about the future of religious education and its role in change. I think that the effects of the new regulations need to be examined in the following years and the comparison of the results of the new system with the old may be beneficial.

In the third chapter, I tried to give information about my research, family and schools. After introducing the families and the schools, I shared my findings and interviews made with families and school managers in the fourth chapter. I interviewed 18 families residing in Üsküdar, Ümraniye and Beykoz. Although my focus is not the schools in this project, I visited four schools (two kindergartens and two *sıbyan okuls*) located in Üsküdar. During these visits I requested from parents to fill out the four-page- questionnaires first. Then, based on their answers I asked further questions about their preference in order to understand the factors causing them to choose these schools. In the fourth chapter, after I examined the results of questionnaires, I shared the families' responses to my questions. Through my interviews I tried to catch the reasons playing a role on their choice.

During my research, some questions remained unanswered. One of them is how common this education is. Since I had to limit my research in time and geography, and therefore, I determined mainly three neighboring boroughs of Istanbul, I have no data about other boroughs in Istanbul and other cities in Turkey. Another question is when this education exactly emerged. Since this education is not permitted by the state and there is no other research and statistics about the schools and students, it is hard to discover the origin of this education.

Lastly, during my project I encountered some problems too. In terms of sources, because there are limited studies on the history of preschool education and religious education in Turkey written in English, I had to stick

to the studies mostly penned in Turkish. Sometimes it took lots of time to find true expression or word when I translated them into English. Therefore, I gave the translation first and included original Turkish or Ottoman words and expressions in *italic*.

In terms of field study, the main problem is that I had to talk to parents and sometimes their schedule did not allow catching father and mother together. Since mothers were overwhelmingly housewives and this education project came from them, I determined them as respondents and focused on their responses. Nevertheless, I tried to visit them in a family gathering as much as I could in order to learn fathers' approach too. However, focusing on mothers caused another problem. Some of them did not want to talk to me without the company of a third person. So, I visited some mothers with my sister and others with my uncle's wife. Or, some of their relatives were present in our meetings. I encountered similar problem when I wanted to visit *sıbyan okuls*. Thus, in my interviews with *sıbyan okul* managers, my sister accompanied us. Another problem is that managers are hesitant to be a subject of a thesis. What renders all managers hesitant was that they did not want to be known because the given education in these schools and the approach of the state. For this reason I could not get their help to reach more families and make surveys. Overall, despite some deficiencies, both parents and managers welcomed me cordially and contribute to my thesis with their candid remarks.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN EUROPE AND TURKEY**

Preschool education, in a broad sense, is a process of education lasting from birth to elementary school that, on the one hand, aims to provide a rich and stimulating atmosphere for children according to their ages as well as personal characteristics, and prepares them for social life by giving cultural and social values on the other. In terms of formal education, it is a systematic education that not only prepares children for primary education but aims to help children develop their physical, mental and social characteristics in a designed environment before compulsory education(Özeri 2004: 85-86). In addition to preschool education, as a concept, Early Childhood Education (ECE) has been extensively used. ECE can be defined as all attempts to provide shelter, care, development and education for a child (Ural and Ramazan 2007:13).

#### **1.1. THE RISE OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN EUROPE**

Although, in different eras and traditions, religious thinkers and philosophers touched upon the importance of early childhood education, with different forms, preschool education is a relatively new phenomenon and a product of modernity. Before the industrial revolution, Comenius (1592-1670), Locke (1632-1704) and Rousseau (1712-1778) wrote on nature of human and how it could be shaped by education in childhood, but early childhood care and education began to emerge formally after the industrial revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Ural and Ramazan 2007:11).

Rousseau, one influential figure, emphasized the importance of early childhood education and inspired pedagogues after him. Rousseau thought that human beings are basically good but have been corrupted by civilization.

He believed that “man” was born free and good and could remain that way in some ideal state of nature. He maintained that civilization in its present form was harmful because it had us away from nature. As he expressed in the first paragraph of his famous educational novel *Emile*: “All things are good as they came out of the hands of their Creator, but everything degenerates in the hands of man.” As an example of combating this corruption, in *Emile* he describes a child taken out of civilization and brought up in the country. Rousseau’s contribution to education is not this “Noble Savage” described in *Emile* but the connection made between nature and experience. He influenced with this connection many theorists and pedagogues including Johann Pestalozzi, Friedrich Froebel, Francis W. Parker, G. Stanley Hall as well as John Dewey (Noddings 2007:13; Ozmon and Craver 2008:123; Ulich 1968:211).

Rousseau’s question was “How should people be educated so as to preserve their natural goodness and also induce a positive sense of civic responsibility?” According to him, since children are naturally good, they must be raised and educated with the least possible restraint. The task of the teachers is to preserve this goodness while facilitating the growth of various competencies for adult life. With this approach, he set the stage for child-centered education. According to Rousseau, the child’s interests should guide education. He believed that timing is crucial in education. Children must learn certain things in certain times (Noddings 2007:14-16; Ozmon and Craver 2008:124).

In *Emile*, Emile learns from nature and Rousseau does not suggest a book learning until he reaches age 12. According to him, history and natural theology must be used for leading the child toward adulthood during adolescence when his passions grow, he begins to compare himself with others and to move to the deeper secrets of the universe (Ozmon and Craver 2008:123; Ulich1968:220). Coming back to the question at the beginning,

Ulich argues, "From a realistic point of view nothing is more paradoxical than placing Emile's young hero outside society for the very purpose of educating him for society. The reason for this paradox lies in Rousseau's belief that the present society is incapable of renewing itself." (1968: 217)

The work made by Swiss educator affected by Rousseau, Johann H. Pestalozzi (1742-1827), based on observations on his own child in 1774 is accepted as the first scientific work about child development (Başal 2005:39). Pestalozzi, who thought that social problems could be solved only by a new educational system, founded schools relying on basis of practice and "learning by doing" for poor children in rural areas. In his own farm in Neuhof, in addition to classes, such as reading-writing, arithmetic and house management, he provided an environment for orphans and poor children to work on farms as well as for learning spinning and weaving(Özeri 2004:92). Following Rousseau, Pestalozzi suggested that children should be educated through the senses. He refined Rousseau's and Locke's ideas and created an approach called the "object lesson". An Object lesson begins with an exhibition of an object and children are invited to describe it and its functions and it usually ends with a moral lesson. According to him all lessons should have a moral point as well as a cognitive one (Noddings 2007:19).

The German pedagogue W.A. Froebel (1782-1852) was another important pedagogue affected by Rousseau's thoughts. Froebel studied at Pestalozzian institute in Frankfurt and followed "object studies". Even though his educational techniques revolved around the material world with material objects, he saw everything unified in God, who manifests Himself in physical nature and the human nature. His primary focus was on the "gifts," songs and games. He emphasized the role of playing games in education and saw didactic games as a means to develop children's talents. He showed an astounding insight into early childhood experiences for the development of their personalities. This anticipation led him to stress the importance of

preschool education. In 1840, acting on his belief in the importance of preschool education, he opened a preschool in Germany and called it "Kindergarten". Therefore, he is known as the father of preschools in Europe. The kindergarten represented in his metaphorical system a garden where children could unfold and grow like flowers. Similarly, the circle in which children gather is not only a convenient way of grouping children but also it is "a symbol of collective life of mankind". One of his students, Carl Schurz, established the first preschool in America in 1855 (Başal 2005:39-40; Noddings 2007:21; Ozmon and Craver 2008:62; Ulich 1968:290-291).

Another important figure who contributed to preschool education was the Italian physician and educator Maria Montessori (1869-1952). She was familiar with Rousseau's thoughts as well as Pestalozzi's and Froebel's works. She benefited from Pestalozzi's ideas about the importance of sensation and the use of objects in the learning process. She also promoted Froebel's ideas of providing self activity and a natural environment for learning (Ozmon and Craver 2003:63). She studied first on mentally disabled children and observed progress on them. She posited that using the same methods could obtain better results for normal children than did current practices and opened a "Children's House" in Rome. In a prepared environment, she tried to give an opportunity for children to act and work freely through practical activities and by giving responsibilities to them according to their choices. According to her, a person beginning from birth has an absorbing mental ability (absorbent mind) and the ages between 0 and 6 are the critical period in learning (Özeri 2004:94; Başal 2005:40).

After Froebel and Montessori, similar attempts were made in different countries. In London, the first nursery school (*yuva*) was opened by Margaret McMillan and her sister Rachel in 1908. Their first studies aimed to improve the condition of health and care of poor children under 5 year-old in slums. They observed the effects of emotional, mental and social



developments on children's health and in ensuing years they gave weight to educational activities. Unlike Montessori's artificial environment, they urged outdoor activities in natural areas to contribute to the children's development (Özeri 2004:95). Their works affected some educators in America in the 1920s and some day-care centers based on their principles were founded in Detroit and Boston (Başal 2005:40).

Although some thinkers and educators emphasized the importance of early childhood education, preschool education remained limited to personal attempts and laboratory schools of universities and colleges. Governments in Europe began to support preschool education after World Wars I and II. In these decades, reconstruction of the families, to provide shelter for orphans and keep them from adverse environmental conditions, and to benefit from female labor force in a maximum way that industry needed, caused governments to support preschool education. Additionally, the discovery of the importance of 0-6 ages in the learning process and for the rest of one's life was the other important reason leading governments to back up early childhood education. At the beginning some European governments established institutions focused on children's health, care and physical development. In the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century, after realizing that the first six years of life has a crucial role on children's mental, emotional and social life, these institutions were designed not only as shelters and nursing centers but also as learning centers aiming to discover children's capabilities and preparing them to the future (Özeri 2004:95-98).

## 1.2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN TURKEY

The Prophet Mohammad's advice on teaching children according to Islam was the main reason for making early childhood education so common in Muslim lands. The first and the most important source of Islamic education throughout ages has been The Holy Qur'an among Muslim communities. It was also the source of the Prophet Mohammad's implementations (571-632).

Therefore, it can be said that according to Islamic belief education based on The Qur'an commenced with the first revelation. The Prophet Mohammad made clerks (*katip*)<sup>6</sup> write down verses and he encouraged his followers to learn and memorize them. Under the oppression in Mecca he both taught and interpreted the verses in Erkam's House (*Daru'l Erkam*). Before the hijara (*hicret*) he sent one of his followers to Medina as a teacher using the same method in a house called *Daru'l Kurra* (Ay 2005:1-2). After the emigration, the first thing that the prophet handled was to allocate a place for performing daily prayers and providing education. One corner of this mosque (*Mescid-i Nebevi*) was assigned for education and called *Suffa Mektep* and the residents of this mektep were known *Ashab-ı Suffa*. These people spent their time learning and memorizing The Qur'an as well as the prophet's sayings and approaches to the verses. In this modest place, about 80-100 people (*sahabe*) stay permanently although at times the number reached about 400 followers including some coming from outside Medina. These people were mostly poor and dedicated to education; so, the expenses of this mektep were met by rich Muslims (Baktır 1990:19-47).

As the Muslim domain grew bigger, the Prophet sent some teachers to different countries where they opened different mekteps; therefore, this method became widespread in Muslim lands and was used after his death

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<sup>6</sup> Since he did not know how to write and read, he was revealing the verses and the *katips* were writing them.

too. In the following section we will see how this education based on the prophet's advices and his implementations as well as the institution (religious foundations/*vakıf*) supported by benevolent Muslims were used in Ottoman Empire throughout the ages.

### 1.2.1. In the Ottoman Empire

Based on the Prophet's example and advice, Muslims maintained this educational tradition throughout ages. The centers of The Qur'an teachings were called *Daru'l Kur'an* during the Eyyubs; *Daru'l Huffaz* in the Anatolian Seljuks; and *Daru'l Kurra* by the Ottomans. The first *Daru'l Kurra* in the Ottoman Empire is *Yıldırım Daru'l Kurra* established in the Great Mosque of Bursa (*Bursa Ulu Camii*) in the last decades of 14<sup>th</sup> century. Teaching The Qur'an was the center of the education given in *sıbyan mektebs* (literally means schools for children) (Ay 2005:4).

In traditional Ottoman society the institutions that constituted the backbone of the civil education were *Medreses*. *Medreses* were established for higher education. *Sıbyan* (or *Sübyan*) *mektebs*<sup>7</sup> were the schools in which religious education as well as basic education was given. They were the centers of popular education and existed before the Ottomans. They had been founded and became widespread in Anatolia alongside the development of city life in 13<sup>th</sup> century. In the Ottoman Empire, in a simplest meaning the *mektebs*<sup>8</sup> were where The Qur'an and Islamic rules and ethics were taught (Aksoy 1968:193-195).

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<sup>7</sup> For a brief history of *sıbyan mektebs* see *Osmanlılar'da Mektep* by Cahit Baltacı in 'Mektep' in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Encyclopedia of Islam of Turkish Religious Foundation), 2004, Vol.29, pp.6-9.

<sup>8</sup> All the concepts *medrese*, *mekteb* or *mektep* and *okul* can be translated into English as school but I will use them as they are in order to picture the change in educational system and show the transition from tradition to modernity over the concepts.

Despite the fact that teaching The Qur'an and giving basic Islamic rules and ethics to children in their early ages had a deep rooted tradition before the Ottomans, in the Ottoman Empire the contents and programs of *sıbyan mektebs* are seen first in the pious foundations (*vakfiye*) of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (1432-1481) and his son Bayezid II (1447-1512). After conquering Constantinople in 1453, Mehmed established a foundation including many branches and allocated one part of it as a *sıbyan mekteb*. Mehmed required that orphans or, if there were not enough, poor children must be accepted to his foundation in Fatih, Istanbul. Based on Mehmed's and his son Bayezid's pious foundations, teachers were to teach The Qur'an and to train for daily prayers, and help children develop in terms of Islamic Ethics (Ergin 1977:82-88).

*Sıbyan mektebs* established as institutions for 5-6 year old children were called *sabi* (singular of *sıbyan*). These schools were called also *mahalle mektebs* (literally, neighborhood schools) since there were in almost every village next to the mosques as well as in each neighborhood in the cities. Because the ones in cities, especially in Istanbul, were built as stone buildings they were known also as *Taş Mektebs* among the public. They were not built by the government from taxes collected from the public, but, generally carrying the name of their founders, they were built by Sultans, their wives, viziers and other officials, wealthy people and the public itself; so they mostly emerged as a result of pious foundations (*vakfiye*) and had a civil character (Ergin 1977:82-88). As Kazamias concludes,

Thus popular education in Islamic Ottoman society was not the responsibility of the state. It was the function of the religious institutions and was essentially designed to induct the masses of the people into the Ottoman Islamic culture. With other agencies, such as the mosque, it performed a socializing

function, and for the large masses of the people it was a terminal type of education (1966:31-32).

There was no special day or season for accepting students, and families could take their children to these schools. The first commencement of education was an important day in children's lives as well as for families and they started these schools with a ceremony called *Amin Alayları*. In this ceremony children sang hymns and hodjas prayed (make *duas*) accompanied by acclamations of 'Amin'. This ceremony had an important role to encourage a student to study and for parents to send their children to school. Also, with its hymns this ceremony contributed Islamic music to be used in preschools (Ergin 1977:91-94).

Even if buildings, programs, staffs and instructors differed from place to place and time to time, in many places there was only one person in the teaching role: a hodja (*hoca*) who was usually the imam of the village or neighborhood and rarely a teacher who graduated from a *medrese*. A hodja taught between 20 and 40 students alone and sometimes had volunteers from among the mosque congregation, children's parents or community. Programs differed until the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century depending on whether they were located in a city, a town or a village or according to the instructor and the rules of pious foundations. Nevertheless, the Arabic alphabet (*Elif-Ba*) and reading The Qur'an, learning Tejvid<sup>9</sup> and short verses recited in daily prayers, rules of etiquette, hymns, basic Islamic knowledge about belief (*itikad*), worship and ethics were taught and how to perform daily prayers was shown extensively in these schools. In villages, education mostly occurred in winters and was generally based on oral education and memorizing whereas in cities and towns reading from books and even writing (calligraphy-*hüsn-i hat*) were common (Kara and Birinci 2005:10-13).

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<sup>9</sup> Tejvit (*Tecvid*): Art of reading or reciting Koran with proper rhythm (Kazamias 1966:298).

Instruction was given mostly in one room classes. Since there were children from different ages in a same class, education was personal; they were sitting next to the hodja one by one -there was no chair and the hodja was sitting, too- and they were taking their lesson and, after finishing, they were going back to repeat it by themselves (Akyüz 2009:90).

Özgönül Aksoy, who researched the architecture of Istanbul's *sıbyan mektebs*, indicates that it would not be true to evaluate these schools by separating them from society; rather, they can be appreciated by seeing them as a part of a neighborhood. They were one of the pivotal fragments of the center in a neighborhood constituted by such institutions as mosque, school (*medrese*), and library and so on. They were an extension of home and had a social role by giving a consciousness of belonging to a neighborhood (*mahallelilik bilinci*) as seen in some sayings including the term of mahalle: neighborhood school (*mahalle mektebi*), neighborhood bath (*mahalle hamamı*), watchman of neighborhood (*mahalle bekçisi*), honor of neighborhood (*mahallenin namusu*), Imam of neighborhood and etc. Thus, they built a bridge between family and school as well as society- by the way of a school peculiar to a neighborhood (Aksoy 1968:178).

Another important civil institution related to this social structure was the home *sıbyan* schools of women teachers (*kadın öğretmenli ev sıbyan mektepleri*). Some cultivated women gave some courses to teach The Qur'an, Hadith and Islamic rules to children and women in their homes or in a corner of a mosque. In neighborhoods, these schools especially contributed to women educating themselves at homes. (Akyüz 2009:94,164).

While approaching the Tanzimat Era,<sup>10</sup> the institutions of education divided into two parts: institutions for Muslims such as *medreses*, *sıbyan mektebs*,

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<sup>10</sup> Tanzimat: Literally "reorganization"; refers to the social and political reform of the period 1839-1876. For definition see Kazamias (1966:298).

Palace School (*Enderun*) and some martial schools; and for non-Muslim and foreigners such as schools belonging to Bulgarians, Ottoman Greeks (*Rum*), Armenians, Jews, Jesuits, etc,. Intellectuals and officers in this era desired to create an educational system under the surveillance of the government. This modern system would pave the way for westernization and render the government more powerful. Furthermore, through education, they thought that they could create an integrated society from a society which was departmentalized into different subgroups (*millets*). In this period; *mekteb* gradually supplanted traditional *medrese*, and so by being the symbol of reforms in education they undertook the responsibility of creating a new Ottoman society (Kodaman 1990:13-15).

The attempts of westernization made first in the military was followed by reorganizing the structure and organization of the central government, land ownership, control and gradually a disposition of pious foundations (*evkaf*) during the sultanate of Selim III (1789-1807) and Mahmud II (1809-1839) also affected the traditional structure of education. Kazamias states that "the first attempts were made to establish education as a state responsibility and to build schools other than the traditional *mektebs* and *medreses* in Mahmud II's reign" (1966:53).

Mahmud II's imperial edict (*ferman*) of 1824 was accepted as the first attempt to mandate compulsory primary education. In his edict, Mahmud II emphasized the importance of education and warned parents that nobody must send their children to work before completing their education. He says in brief,

A Muslim first need to learn his/her religion then works of the world. Unlike, most parents do not think that their children will be ignorant just as they were subjected to it by their own parents. Since parents send their children to work in their 5 or

6 as an apprentice they remain ignorant and in the rest of their life they cannot find any desire to study. Parents are responsible for that and will give an account in the judgment day. Nobody must send their children to apprenticeship until they reach puberty and before they learn Islamic knowledge. After they reach puberty, parents can send them to apprenticeship by getting a warrant from a Muslim judge (*Kadi*) near their neighborhood.

In spite of the fact that this edict was declared in other cities besides Istanbul, it could not be carried out even in Istanbul for a long time. During these years the attempts of abolishing Army of Janissary (*Yeniçeri Ocağı*) and continuing wars did not render this edict applicable. Later in *the* Tanzimat Era (1839-1876) compulsory primary school education was brought.<sup>11</sup> (Akyüz 2009:151-152).

Schools in the cities, after the second half of 19th century, had by that time more steady and systematic programs and richer curricula, and turned into primary-like schools called *mekteb-i iptidai*. New program included reading The Qur'an and learning *tecvid*, basic Islamic knowledge (*ilmihal*), Ottoman history, Ottoman geography, basic mathematics (*hesap*), spelling, grammar and vocabulary (*imla ve sarf-ı Osmani*) and calligraphy (*hüsn-i hat*) (Kara and Birinci 2004:14).

One of the first developments in primary education was an ordinance in April 1847. This ordinance was about "how instructors would teach and educate

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<sup>11</sup> Comparing with the countries in Europe in terms of emergence of compulsory education, in France, even if it was accepted in 1793 first, during the time of Jules Ferry (Ministry of National Education) in 1881-1882 it could be applicable. In Germany, compulsory education was brought in 1819 whereas in Britain it was accepted in 1876 (Akyüz 2009:151).



students in *sıbyan mektebs*<sup>12</sup>. The Ordinance of 1847 brought a new approach to *sıbyan mektebs* by adding to the old curriculum learning writing<sup>13</sup>. Until the Tanzimat Era, learning writing was rarely seen in *sıbyan mektebs*. The ordinance stated that teachers should have encouraged students to write and writing would make what they had read to learn easier. It also emphasized that 4-5 year-old children could go to school depending on parents' demands but, if they were 7 years old, they had to go to school. If not so, officers, imams or headmen of neighborhoods would control families and punish accordingly. They had to continue this school for 4 years and, if it was necessary, they could continue for 3 years more. In addition to these innovations, the ordinance upgraded compulsory education to 6 years by adding education of *rüşdiye mektebs*<sup>14</sup>, which continued 2 years after *sıbyan mektebs* which lasted four years. According to the ordinance, traditional *sıbyan mektebs* could not give the knowledge to know this world and hereafter. Emphasizing the deficiency of traditional *sıbyan mektebs* and urging students to continue in a new school called *rüşdiye* in place of traditional *medreses* show the approach of intellectuals and officers of the Tanzimat Era to education. It is understood that instead of making regulations in traditional education system composed of *sıbyan mektebs* and *medreses*, new alternative schools and systems were established. Even if this ordinance included some thoughts and applications about a new system in *sıbyan mektebs*, developing those thoughts took twenty years more (Akyüz 2009:160-162).

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<sup>12</sup> The original title of the ordinance was "Etfalin Talim ve Tedris ve Terbiyelerini ne Vechile İcra Eylemeleri Lazım Geleceğine Dair Sıbyan Mekatibi Hacerleri Efendilere İta Olunacak Talimat."

<sup>13</sup> Pay attention to the difference between calligraphy and writing. According to Ergin there were three main functions of *sıbyan mektebs*: to teach how to read the Qur'an, to show how to pray (daily prayer) and to make children memorize some verses to read during prayer, and lastly teach how to write. Ergin writes that this kind of writing is calligraphy; that is, a kind of art but not a kind of writing to express ideas (1977:86).

<sup>14</sup> It was a kind of upper elementary school or middle school.

After the ordinance of 1847, new “Regulations for General Education” (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi*) in 1869 brought wider regulations in education especially in primary education. For example, each village and neighborhood would have at least one *sıbyan mekteb*. If Muslim and non-Muslim communities were mixed, different schools would serve each group (3<sup>rd</sup> provision). The Costs of construction, restoration and instructors would be covered by local people (4<sup>th</sup> provision). *Sıbyan mektebs* would last 4 years and the curriculum would be as follows (5<sup>th</sup> provision): learn The Qur’an, *tecvid*, pamphlet of ethics, *ilmihal*, writing class, basic math, Ottoman history, Ottoman geography, and a pamphlet of useful information (*malumat-i nafia risalesi*). These schools would be compulsory for girls between 6 and 10 years old and boys 7 and 11 years old (9<sup>th</sup> provision). According to 15<sup>th</sup> provision, if there were two *sıbyan mektebs* in a neighborhood or village, one would be allocated for girls and one for boys. If there was only one, girls could go to the same school with boys but sit separately. Instructors must have been Ottoman citizen (*Osmanlı teb’ası*) and graduated from Men’s Teacher-Training School (*Darulmuallimin*) (Akyüz 2009:160-162). These regulations show a government planning to spread primary education all over the country and wanting to give at least basic education. Also, the condition of graduation from *Darulmuallimin* shows that the carriers of this new system would be *muallims* (teacher or instructor) rather than *hocas* graduated from *medreses* (Kodaman 1990:109-110).

This regulation separated schools into two types: general (*umumi*), under the Ministry of Education (*Maarif Nezareti*), and private (*hususı*), under Ministry of Pious Foundations (*Evkaf Nezareti*) in terms of administration even if costs of building and maintaining as well as wages of staffs belonged to local people. Another important point was that, although in this regulation, schools were still called *sıbyan mektebs*, schools under the administration of Ministry of Education were called such name *iptidai mekteb*,

*mekteb-i iptidai*, *mekteb-i cedid* and sometimes *taş mekteb* among the public. The provisions for Compulsory primary education in the Regulations for General Education (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi*) recur in the 114<sup>th</sup> provision of the Constitution of 1876 (*Kanun-i Esasi*) and hereafter it was repeated in other constitutions (Akyüz 2009:163). After 1876, the concept *iptidai mekteb* was used for primary education (Kodaman 1990:110).

In 1873, an *iptidai mekteb* was opened by Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, Minister of Education (*Maaarif Nazırı*), as a model of new system of primary schools, in Nuruosmaniye, Istanbul. This school was probably the first primary school (*iptidai mekteb*) opened according to new system (*usul-i cedide*). (Akyüz 2009:209)

Beginning in the Tanzimat Era, the change in the curriculum and the system shows that traditional basic education provided by *sıbyan mktebs* began to be replaced by western type primary education. At the very beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, preschools emerged within the primary education system in the Ottoman Empire. Even though minorities and foreigners had had preschools since the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, Muslims were late to open preschools. Some private preschools existed in Istanbul and some other cities before the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), but formal preschools opened and became widespread after the Balkan Wars. However, as in other regulations and innovations related to education, it was embarked on without any preparation because there were no female teachers for these schools. In order to fill this gap, some Armenian and Jewish female teachers were invited and all programs and curriculum were left to these teachers (Akyüz 2009: 267). In the time of Şükrü Bey, Ministry of Education (1913-1917), public preschools were opened and to meet the need for female teachers for these schools, a special class was opened in Women's Teaching-Training School (*Darilmuallimat*). Nevertheless, because no Muslim teacher could be found who would teach according to Froebel's discipline, it was benefited

from an Armenian teacher (Akyüz 2009:163). In 1913-1914 a female preschool teachers' class (*ana muallime sınıfı*) was opened in *Darulmuallimat* with 15 boarding (*yatılı*) and 8 day (*gündüzlü*) students. In 1914, this class turned into a Female Preschool Teacher School (*Ana Muallime Mektebi*) and in 1919 it was closed. During these 5 years, 370 female preschool teachers graduated from this school (Akyüz 2009:283).

At the very beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, preschool education emerged in Turkey not as a result of economic and social change but from an imitation of western type education systems. By the time the westernization of military schools was echoed in the education system, too. In this process, schools were opened according to western examples. Improvements of these schools among Muslims occurred after 1910s. Private institutions known as *Çocuk Bahçesi*, Kindergarten and *Valide Mektebi* were established for 4-6 year old children. In 1913, the Ministry of Education began preparations for preschools (Güven 2010:213). In September 1913, through the Provisory Primary Education Law (*Tedrisat-ı İptidaiye Kanunu Muvakkati*) prepared by Emrullah Efendi, preschools were considered as a part of primary education. According to this law, primary education was compulsory and free. The 3<sup>rd</sup> provision of this law preschools and *sıbyan* classes were defined as primary schools. The 4<sup>th</sup> provision of this law defined preschools and *sıbyan* classes as institutions serving children to improve them physically and mentally (*ruhsal*) through activities and games according to their ages; handiworks; hymns and patriotic poems; and stories and instructions about nature. Also it stated that these schools would serve 4-7 years old children (Ergin 1977:1408-1410; Özeri 2004:106-108).

As a continuation of this law, in March 1915 the Regulation of Preschools was prepared. In addition to some standards about the selection of teachers and physical and health conditions, this regulation brought other new provisions, such as preschools could be opened as a part of a girls' school or

independently; they could be free or fee-charging; 4, 5 and 6 year-old male and female children could be accepted in these schools and they could share the same class; children would be placed according to their ages and the number of the students per classroom would be limited to 30 (Özeri 2004:107-108).

Even though some historians consider *sıbyan mektebs* as preschools, in the history of education in Turkey there were no institutions known as preschool until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the West this type of education emerged as a result of social and economic change on the one hand, and changes in traditional family life and mothers' roles on the other. Through the breakdown of traditional family structure, nobody remained at home to take care of children when mother was at work. It was not seen as important in Ottoman society where there was not such social and economic change that would push mothers to work and ruin the structure of traditional family as in the Western countries. (Güven 2010:213)

### 1.2.2. In the Turkish Republic

Some say that The Law of Unification of Education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*) enacted after the foundation of the Turkish Republic represents an absolute break from tradition in educational system. With the Law of Unification of Education, the new symbol in education of a new country became *okul* instead of *medrese* and *mekteb* which were seen as remnants of the period of the Ottoman Empire (Kodaman 1990:17).

Since 1776, inspired by Western schools some military schools had been opened in Ottoman Empire , and in the Tanzimat Era (1839-1876) some public schools such as *rüşdiye* (middle school), *İdadi* (preparatory secondary school), and *Sultani* (secondary academic school) *mektebs* were opened and a *Darulfunun* (university) was established. In addition to these schools under the administration of the Ministry of Education, some other schools

(*medreses* and *sıbyan mektebs*) fell under the administration of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations (*Şer'îye ve Evkaf Nezareti*). Moreover, there were minority and foreign schools in Ottoman Empire. In order to provide unity in education, the Unification Law of Education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*) was enacted on March 3, 1924. Thus, with the unification of education, the state set up a monopoly over all schools the administration of Ministry of Education (Akyüz 2009:329). As a result of this law, Kazamias states that Ministry of Education took all *medreses* and funds used by the pious foundations (*evkaf*) for educational purposes under control. He summarizes the process:

Thus by the time of the revolution, a 'modern' administrative framework indeed existed...No sooner had the republic been proclaimed than the steps were taken to centralize the system further, to reassert and implement certain of the provisions of previous enactments. To abolish the dual control and organization of schools, and then pave the way for a uniform graded system of public education. The first Constitution of the Turkish Republic placed all education under the supervision and control of the state, and it reaffirmed the principle that 'primary education is obligatory for all Turks and shall be gratuitous in the government schools.' On March 3, 1924, the *Official Gazette* published the *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*, which provided that 'all educational institutions are to be placed under the control of the Ministry of Education.' (1966: 117-118)

Preschools were opened at the very beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century in Turkey; however, because of the unfortunate situations during the last decades of Ottoman Empire and the years of foundation of Turkish Republic, preschool education did not flourish. Among all schools in Ministry of National

Education, they are still the least developed schools and cannot meet the need of preschool-aged children (Özeri 2004:117).

After the foundation of the new state, government paid importance to primary education and used limited funds to provide basic education for the new generation. According to circular notes (*tamim*) declared In 1925 and 1930, based on the deficiencies in budget and the priority of schools for 7-12 year-old children, the Ministry of National Education notified schools that to improve elementary school education, preschools and classes would be changed to elementary schools and, therefore, some preschools were closed. According the circular note in 1930, as an exception, these schools could stay open in neighborhoods where mothers work in industry and on farms and had no one to take care of their children while they were working. Based on this verdict, some schools were opened for the children of working mothers in Istanbul. In 1932, the Municipality of Istanbul opened a preschool for 3-7 year-old children so that mothers, who were poor and had to work, could leave their children in day time (Güven 2010:218).

The Educational Councils (*Eğitim Şuraları*) and Five- Year Development Plans (*Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planları*) reveal the slow pace of development of preschools in the Turkish Republic. The first three Councils of National Education (*Milli Eğitim Şurası*), arranged in 1939, 1943 and 1946, do not refer to preschool education (Ural and Ramazan 2007:21). The first attempt to provide preschool education in the Turkish Republic was in the 4<sup>th</sup> Council of National Education in 1949. In the next council, held in 1953, programs and legislation for preschool education and teacher training courses for these schools was accepted. The importance of preschools was emphasized in many efforts of the Ministry of Education, and in the Primary Education Law (*İlköğretim ve Eğitim Kanunu*) enacted in 1961, preschools were considered parts of primary education, not compulsory but as optional schools (Özeri 2004:113).

The most effective study of the need for preschool education was made in 1962 during the 7<sup>th</sup> Council of National Education. According to the commission report, training preschool teachers and their assistants; opening preschool classes within primary schools in some regions for the students who have developmental delay and adaptation problems to primary education; providing care and education for orphans and needy children; establishing preschools in some industrial areas for children whose mothers work; and opening training preschools in big cities were recommended (Özeri 2004:113).

The 9<sup>th</sup> Council of National Education in 1974 defined the purposes of these schools: (1) to help children's physical, mental and emotional development and to help them gain good habits; (2) to prepare them for primary education; (3) to create an atmosphere for children who come from inconvenient families or environments; and (4) to advance children's capabilities in using and speaking Turkish. In this council, it was also stated that preschools could open as private institutions, or as classes within primary schools and called for training classes within related schools (vocational high schools for girls) (Güven 2010:219).

In 1977, the Preschool Branch (*Okul Öncesi Eğitim Şubesi*) was founded under the administration of the General Directorate of Primary Education (*İlköğretim Genel Müdürlüğü*). This branch expedited opening preschools within elementary schools, training preschool teachers and preparing equipment for these schools. Also 29 cities were chosen to commence a pilot program. The "Seminar of Preschool Education" (*Okul Öncesi Eğitim Semineri*) organized by the National Committee of Turkey in UNESCO (UNESCO *Türkiye Milli Komisyonu*) played an important role in projects of the Ministry of National Education about preschool education and to manage this project an agreement signed between the Ministry and Bosphorus (*Boğaziçi*)



University. In 1988, the 12<sup>th</sup> Council of National Education defined preschool based on age groups:

Kindergartens include children aged 48-72 and nursery classes 60-72 months. In 1992 General Directorate of Preschool Education was founded. In 1993, different from former councils, the 14<sup>th</sup> Council of National Education paid special attention to preschool education and for the first time in 1994, with the contribution of experts and related institutions, Ministry of National Education prepared a curriculum for preschool education (*Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programı*) (Güven 2010:219)

In Turkey, preschools are classified according to related ministry administering them and by age groups, such as kindergartens, nursery schools, and crèches.<sup>15</sup> Under the administration of the MEB, kindergartens serve 4-6 year-old children and nursery classes 5-6 year-old children. Crèches under the administration of Social Services and Child Protection Agency (*Sosyal Hizmetler ve Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu*) serve 0-2 year old children and day-care centers (*yuva*) serve 2-4 year-old children. Schools can be established as public or private institutions and training preschools within vocational high schools for girls, or they may be dependent upon the Ministry of Labor, universities, cooperatives and foundations (Özeri 2004: 86-122). Until recently, these institutions have been inspected by MEB and by the Social Services and Child Protection Agency, but today the MEB has the responsibility to supervise all preschool institutions (Ural and Ramazan 2007:31).

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<sup>15</sup> For detailed information about type of schools in preschool education and the numbers according to each group see Table: 1.2 at the end of this chapter.

**Table: 1.1. Number of preschools, students and teachers according to educational years (1923-2012)**

<b>The Education Years</b>	<b>Number of Schools/Institutions</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>
1923-1924	80	5.888	136
1943-1944	49	1.604	63
1963-1964	146	4.767	180
1983-1984	2.784	78.981	4.414
1997-1998	7.532	181.450	10.186
2000-2001	9.249	258.706	16.563
2003-2004	13.692	358.499	19.122
2005-2006	18.539	550.146	20.910
2008-2009	23.653	804.765	29.342
2009-2010	26.681	980.654	42.716
2010-2011	27.606	1.115.818	48.330
2011-2012	28.625	1.169.556	55.883

**Source:** (Akyüz 2009: 345; Başal 2005:50; Güven 2010: 222; M.E.B)

Although, beginning from the second Five-Year Development Plan (1968-1972), almost all Five-Year Development Plans have referred to preschool education and aimed to increase the number of preschools, the schooling ratio in preschool education is not still satisfying and far behind that of many countries (Ural and Ramazan 2007:26). In 2006, the schooling ratio<sup>16</sup> in preschool education was 19.4% in Turkey whereas in France it was 100%, Spain 97%, Morocco 34% , and Georgia 22% (Akyüz 2009:346). In educational year 2010-2001, for 4-5 year-old children, it reached to 43.10%

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<sup>16</sup> My purpose here is to show how new preschool education is in Turkey. Otherwise, I do not set a direct correlation between the schooling ratio and the level of development of a state.

(MEB).<sup>17</sup> In 2011-2012 it rose to 44.04% for 4-5 year-old children and 65.69% for 5-year-old children.<sup>18</sup> In recent years an increase can be seen in the numbers of students and institutions (see Table 1.1). However, despite the increase in the number of nursery classes associated with primary schools, public and private independent kindergartens, and the numbers show that preschool education has not been generalized and many students start elementary school without receiving any preschool education.

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<sup>17</sup> For details see:

[http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/istatistik/meb\\_istatistikleri\\_orgun\\_egitim\\_2010\\_2011.pdf](http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/istatistik/meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2010_2011.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> For details see:

[http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/istatistik/meb\\_istatistikleri\\_orgun\\_egitim\\_2011\\_2012.pdf](http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/istatistik/meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2011_2012.pdf)

**Table: 1.2. Number of preschools, students, teachers and classrooms by types of schools (2011-2012)**

Type of School	School/ Institution	Number of Students			Number of Teachers			Class room
		Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	
<b>Pre-primary Education (public+ private)</b>	<b>28.625</b>	<b>1.169.556</b>	<b>607.052</b>	<b>562.504</b>	<b>55.883</b>	<b>2.953</b>	<b>52.930</b>	<b>48.802</b>
Pre-primary Education (public)	25.172	1.058.904	548.330	510.574	40.919	2.400	38.519	38.214
Pre-primary Education (private)	3.453	110.652	58.722	51.930	14.964	553	14.411	10.588
<b>Total Number of Kindergartens (public+ private)</b>	<b>2.916</b>	<b>256.378</b>	<b>134.324</b>	<b>122.054</b>	<b>14.712</b>	<b>1.286</b>	<b>13.426</b>	<b>11.036</b>
Independent Kindergartens(public)	1.669	208.597	108.876	99.721	9.591	1.072	8.519	7.049
Total Number of Private Kindergartens	1.247	47.781	25.448	22.333	5.121	214	4.907	3.987
<i>Turkish</i>	1.242	47.585	25.327	22.258	5.111	214	4.897	3.972
<i>Minority</i>	5	196	121	75	10	-	10	15
<i>Foreign</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>International</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Number of Nursery Classes (public+ private)</b>	<b>23.978</b>	<b>864.603</b>	<b>447.050</b>	<b>417.553</b>	<b>32.947</b>	<b>1.353</b>	<b>31.594</b>	<b>32.273</b>
Total Number of Nursery Classes(public)	23.373	842.633	435.448	407.185	30.737	1.310	29.427	30.624
Nursery Classes	23.373	836.614	432.399	404.215	30.737	1.310	21.427	-
Summer Kindergartens and Nursery Classes	-	4.135	2.066	2.069	-	-	-	-
Mobile Kindergartens	-	1.884	983	901	-	-	-	-
Nursery Classes within Private Schools (private)	605	21.970	11.602	10.368	2.210	43	2.167	1.649
<i>Turkish</i>	591	21.547	11.397	10.150	2.161	43	2.118	1.603
<i>Minority</i>	12	361	175	186	31	-	31	32
<i>Foreign</i>	1	59	29	30	10	-	10	12
<i>International</i>	1	3	1	2	8	-	8	2
<b>General Directorate of Children Services (private)*</b>	<b>1.601</b>	<b>40.901</b>	<b>21.672</b>	<b>19.229</b>	<b>7.633</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>7.337</b>	<b>4.952</b>
<b>Institutions opened in accordance with Law no.657,article 191(public)</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>7.674</b>	<b>4.006</b>	<b>3.668</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>541</b>

\* Depending of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies.

**Source: MEB<sup>19</sup>**

<sup>19</sup> For details see:

[http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/istatistik/meb\\_istatistikleri\\_orgun\\_egitim\\_2011\\_2012.pdf](http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/istatistik/meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2011_2012.pdf)

## CHAPTER 2

### TENSION BETWEEN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SECULAR CHARACTER OF TURKISH REPUBLIC

After I started my research, in the spring of 2012, Turkish agenda was occupied by the new educational system. Then it was followed in the summer by the issue of closing private preparatory courses for high school and university entering exams (*dershane*). Many experts, politicians, scholars, pedagogues from far left to right on the political spectrum have shared their opinions for these issues. Skipping “the *dershane* issue”, before I pass to the journey of religious education in Turkey, I want to give a brief introduction the new system because it regards closely to my thesis.

This hot debate revolving around the new education system, which broke 8-year compulsory education and brought three- stepped 12-year compulsory education (the formula of 4+4+4), is not a new issue but has a deep background. Old system was brought following months of military intervention on February 28, 1997, and changed five year compulsory primary education, preceding 3-year middle school and 3-year high school education (5+3+3). When it turned into 8-year compulsory primary education, one more year was added to high schools later in the educational year of 2005-2006; so, high schools became four years but optional (8+4).<sup>20</sup>

Now new system, which started in 2013, includes four-year primary school, four-year middle school and four-year high school education, in total 12-year compulsory education. Besides required classes, the new system brought an elective class pool including the Qur’an, the life of the Prophet Mohammad and basic religious knowledge classes in secondary education. According to new system the starting age of the children to the primary education was

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<sup>20</sup> For the change in education system in the education year 2005-2006 see: [http://www.aol.meb.gov.tr/sayfa\\_goster.asp?ID=120](http://www.aol.meb.gov.tr/sayfa_goster.asp?ID=120)

between 60-66 months based on parents' demands. After 66 months children have to start an elementary school.<sup>21</sup> What is important here is that the new system brought the middle branches of IHHSs back and students can start these schools after four year primary education (about ten years old).<sup>22</sup> So far everything has seemed to revolve around one stepped (8 year) or three stepped (4+4+4) education, or elective classes in secondary schools and total years of compulsory education. However, it is beyond what it looks.

In today's debate, education and its pedagogic dimensions have not discussed enough; rather, as happened in previous change, it has been discussed from political aspects based on religious education, Imam-Hatip Schools, unification of education and laicism. Today, Justice and Development Party (AKP) was accused to take revenge from *Kemalists* by breaking the old 8-year continuing education system carrying the signature of military intervention of 1997. Actually, the story goes back until modernization attempts in the Tanzimat Era (1839-1876) and covering following years especially the Second Constitutional Era (*II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi*, 1908-1922) in general, and the reforms made in ensuing years of foundation of Turkish Republic in specific. Thus, in order to have better understanding, we need to go back to the last years of Ottoman Empire and the first years of foundation of Turkish Republic.

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<sup>21</sup> For the last regulations see: [http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/25486\\_.html](http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/25486_.html)

This is important for my thesis from another aspect. We will see in the last chapter that some parents were afraid of this change because it would step one year back the starting age to primary education and limit their chance for benefiting from the preschool education one more year.

<sup>22</sup> For the circular note of Ministry of National Education see: <http://www.meb.gov.tr/haberler/2012/12YillikZorunluEgitimeYonelikGenelge.pdf>

## 2.1. APPROACHING TO THE UNIFICATION LAW OF EDUCATION

As we saw in the previous chapter, although the system of *medrese* widespread in Muslim countries too- continued in Ottoman Empire until 1924, it lost its central role in 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this century, on the one hand the state attempted to render primary education compulsory and widespread; on the other hand, it opened western-style schools. Attempts of westernization in military schools intensely made during the Mahmud II (1808-1839) reign and continued in following years in the area of education. Additionally, during his sultanate for the first time students were sent to Europe systematically, especially to France. After they came back, they undertook responsibilities ranging from instructors and teachers in new schools to posts as Grand Vizier (Kafadar1997:86-87). Throughout this century many regulations and innovations were made in education. Ministry of Public Education (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti*) founded in 1847 opened new European-style primary schools (*iptidai mektebs*). In 1848 a university (*Dar'ul-fünun*) was established, and in 1868 a kind of high school (*Mektebi Sultan*) in which education was given in French was opened. Moreover, Regulations for General Education (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi*) were made in 1869 which would affect public education in the following years. In 1884 secondary schools (*mekteb-i rüşdiye ve idadiye*) were opened. In 1900 a theology branch (*Ulum-u Aliye-i Diniye Şubesi*) was founded in the in university, and therefore it gained a higher position over other *medreses* (Jaschke 1972:69). All these changes indicate that the state seized gradually the control over education while minimizing the authority of traditional institutions over the society while establishing the European type educational institutions to train and educate officers and bureaucrats.

Bifurcation under the concepts of *medrese* and *mekteb* beginning in the Tanzimat Era in education system lasted until Unification Law of Education in 1924. Indeed, as in offerings of changing the alphabet, discussions and

suggestions about unification of educational system had been made in the Second Constitutional Era (1908-1922). Following years of reforms in the Tanzimat Era, educational system became more complicated. Widespread primary education was provided by pious foundations (*evkaf*) and Ministry of Education as well. Also, Ministry of Education had control over secondary schools of this era. On the other hand, Meshikhat controlled over *medreses* in which higher religious education was given. Namely, in addition to authority over religious courts, Meshikhat also provided higher religious education through *medreses*, and Ministry of Pious Foundations had primary schools (Sarikaya 1997:160-162). Thus, Muslim theologians and scholars (*ulema*) had authority over widespread education funded mostly by pious foundations.

This dualism turned into contention by the time under the concepts of *mektepli/medreseli* or progressive/ unprogressive and occupied the public opinion. In fact, beginning from the Tanzimat Era time to time some suggestions and attempts about improving conditions, changing curriculum and organization of *medreses* were made whereas western style *mektebs* gradually displaced the traditional *medreses*. Even so, in public opinion, a negative attitude began to emerge towards *medreses*, and *medreses* and *ulema* were accused to preclude progression and development. Advocates of westernization asserted that these institutions must have abolished as soon as possible. Conversely, Mehmed Akif (1873-1936)-a famous poet, and later, writer of Turkish anthem- stated that even if these institutions did not meet the need, it is dangerous to imitate the West slavishly. What was to be done was to practice Islam according to its originality and take science from the West. In one of his poem, he satirizes admirers of West and says that *medreses* have raised students carrying out Islamic services in villages, towns and cities despite many deficiencies. However, new schools-so called



Messiah of the country- have not trained any doctor, veterinarian, engineer and accountant, and we still bring these people from Europe.<sup>23</sup>

However, Union and Progress Party (*İttihat ve Terakki Partisi*), which controlled the country dominantly after Abdulhamid II was dethroned in 1909, backed up the idea that dualism in education and judicial system must be terminated. Hence, authority of *Şeyhulislam* over religious courts must have been removed and handed over Ministry of Justice (*Adliye Nezareti*) and *sıbyan mektebs* of pious foundations must have been handed over to Ministry of Education. Therefore, according to Union and Progress Party, Meshikhat and pious foundations would focus on their own domains and unification in education and justice systems would come true (Sarıkaya 1997:140-160). From this perspective, discussions and polemics on unification of education go back to the last years of Ottoman Empire.

After the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century another important change was introduction and proliferation of western thoughts, such as positivism, materialism, naturalism and nationalism. It is accepted that these movements deeply affected Ottoman intellectuals and bureaucrats and contributed to the on-going transformation of the state and the society. After the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, three movements emerged in Ottoman Empire: Ottomanism, Islamism and later Turkism (*Turançılık*) (Kafadar 1997:116-127). Ottomanism did not work in a period that minorities began to engage into struggle for independence and Islamism lost its power after the fall of Abdulhamid II in 1909. After him, loyalty to the Sultan was replaced by loyalty to the homeland and the state. Hence, following years of falling of Abdulhamid II and declaration of the second constitution, former

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<sup>23</sup> Turhan emphasizes the same point by positing that in the age of Selim III (1761-1808) we brought many experts from the West so that they regulate our military and economic system and today we still keep bringing such experts. He concludes that nothing has changed up to now and in terms of self-sufficiency in these areas we could not advance throughout 150 years (964:32).

period and its values were maligned and humiliated. A well-known concept religious reaction (*irtica*)<sup>24</sup> was a gift of this era. Additionally, the years of the Second Constitutional Era were years of the first attempts of creating "citizen" (*vatandaş*) in place of "reaya".<sup>25</sup> Among many maneuvers, in order to sustain the state waning day by day and secure the constitutional regime, patriotism was invented and education must have been used for this reason. Therefore, primary education had central role to fulfill this reason, and intellectuals and officers of this era gave weight to primary schools. Ottoman history, Ottoman geography and knowledge of civilization (*malumat-ı medeniye*)<sup>26</sup> took place in the curriculum of primary schools. Namely, "child" was discovered as an independent entity in the Tanzimat Era began to be built in the Second Constitutional Era. And this child no longer belonged to his or her family but a part of public sphere. The child having been a constituent of family, neighborhood and community before the 20<sup>th</sup> century in traditional Ottoman society handed over his or her childhood to the state (Üstel 2004: 24-32).

Because the mindset establishing Turkish Republic was the product of the changes after the Tanzimat Era, the new state was founded on the basis of this inheritance. Representatives of this new movement were persistent to rub out all the obsolete values of the past and replace with the new ones. What was certain was a new generation and good citizens must have been

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<sup>24</sup> The concept *irtica* was invented first after the incident of March 31 in 1909. And this concept has been benefited to condemn any kind of religious reaction throughout the history of Turkish Republic. Concept was broadened by the time and sometimes any activity related to Islam became *irtica* and any person who practices Islam was called *mürteci* (reactionary).

<sup>25</sup> Dictionary of Turkish Language Institution (TDK) gives the definition of *reaya* as "in general, people under the rule of King, Sultan etc.; economically public who engage in agriculture and trade and not belong to the classes of administration and military." for definition see :<http://tdkterim.gov.tr/bts/>

<sup>26</sup> A kind of citizenship class and called different names based on time and the educational level such as "Malumat-ı Medeniye ve Hukukiye" (Knowledge of Civilization and Law), Malumat-ı Medeniye ve Ahlakiye (Knowledge of Civilization and Ethics), Malumat-ı Vataniye (Knowledge of Homeland). It was prepared first in 1908 and added to the curriculums of primary and secondary education in following years. This class would be used to create a secular ethics. For detailed information see Üstel (2004).

created. The question was that what they would look like and according to which principles they would be brought up. What would the role of religion be in cultivation of this new generation? As Jaschke (1972) accurately states, since almost mere factor of social and political reforms was Turkish Nationalism, to have a better understanding, the attitudes of two people towards religion were supposed to be known: father of this movement, Ziya Gökalp (1875-1924), and executor of it, Mustafa Kemal(1881-1938) (p.9).

With his articles and thoughts inspired by Durkheim in sociology, Gökalp had been influential on Union and Progress Party<sup>27</sup> (*İttihat ve Terakki Partisi*) during the Second Constitutional Era and the years of foundation of Turkish Republic although he could not see completely his ideological contribution to this new state. In his articles, he asks that it must be determined first which thought can awaken this nation from its deep sleep, which ideals can put them into a way to progress and which principles can elevate it to civilization. And he says Islamism, Turkism, and being civilized (*Medeniyetçilik*) are three source to live for. He formulates his thought and says "Know your nation, know your religion (*ümme*), and know your civilization!" He continues that as Turkish-Islamic tradition, tradition of European civilization had to pass from border based on our own culture. Every nation has to have cultural borders just as they have political and economic borders. According to him, culture differentiates from nation to nation and must be peculiar to it. What constitutes of it is what has kept itself as an institution; or else, it becomes social fossils (*fossiles sociales*). Therefore, as a residue, culture means total of religious, ethical, economic, linguistic, and judicial institutions. Only this culture will be national (*milli*) and can be taught the new generation. The purpose of education is to bring up a national generation (*milli fertler*)

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<sup>27</sup> Even if it received this name in 1894, it was established first under the name of Ottoman Union (*İttihad-ı Osmani*) in Military Medical School in 1889. Biological materialism was seen in their thoughts as well as the influence of Young Turks, especially Namık Kemal founder of the thought of the homeland (*vatan*). See Mardin (2003: 98-101). In fact, its title gives an opinion about its ideological root.

(Gökalp 1973:20-286). In addition to educational reforms, Gökalp pioneered the reforms with his doctrines ranging from taking civil code from the west, to the principle of laicism and unification of courts. In his book *Türkçülüğün Esasları* (Principles of Turkism) published in 1923, he asserts when he defines Turkism in law, its purpose is to constitute a contemporary law. The most essential requirement to join in the nations of this era is to extricate all branches of national law from ruins of theocracy and clericalism (Kafadar 1997:144-145).

Inspired by Gökalp as in many areas, Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk) first revealed his thoughts regarding education in inauguration of the Congress of Education held in Ankara in 1921. He states, "Nations have to inject a special qualification (*vasıf*) if they want to live as independent and happy. While our children and youths are being educated, they must be imbued to the obligation of fight against all alien elements." Then he makes clearer the alien elements after he emphasizes the need of a national education program: "When I mention a national program, I mean a culture omitting all alien effects coming from the superstitions of former era as well as the west and the east." In his another speech, he articulates his thoughts, "Everybody understands a different meaning when education is used solitarily. When it is mentioned in details, the purposes of education are varied. For example, religious education, national education, international education...The education that new Turkish Republic will give is a national education." He posits that whatever the grade of education is, new generation will be taught the fight against the enemies of nation, Turkish state, and TBMM. Also according to Mustafa Kemal, teachers are the members of the army of culture (*irfan ordusu*) and their mission is molding the future of nation. This army of culture is as important as military and fulfills its sacred mission by teaching latter why they die and kill. In another speech in 1923 in Adana, he determines the goal as to transform the nation into a massive mass of steel.

He stresses on the importance of language and says that "One of the most distinctive characteristics of a nation is language. A person who says I am Turkish must speak Turkish. Unless a person speaks Turkish, it is not convincing to claim adherence to Turkish culture and society." (Kaplan 1999:137-143)

## **2.2. AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN TURKISH REPUBLIC**

### 2.2.1. Formal Religious Education

#### 2.2.1.1. Religious Education Between 1920-1949

While the independence war was continuing, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey was opened on April 23, 1920. This is known as the first assembly of Turkey even if the sultanate was not abolished and Turkish Republic was not established yet. After the independence war and abolition of the sultanate, it was declared on October 29, 1923. During the first 25 years of this new state, reformist and secular group were dominant. This group had taken control as a result of specific historical conditions occurred between 1919 and 1922, and they abolished sultanate first in 1922 and caliphate next in 1924. After the World War II, Turkey needed to come closer to the West and this new approach paved the way for multi-party rule (Karpas 2010:80-81).

In this period many revolution-like reforms were made and it would not be wrong to count the Unification Law of Education as one of them. In other words, this law was the turning point in education, but in order to see the whole picture and the trajectory of the new state, it must be considered together with other reforms. And these years would be another stage in the continuing struggle, and education was its means.

With the declaration of Republic in 1923, the Ottoman Empire took its place in history and a new state was established. In TBMM, on March 3, 1924 the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations was abolished on the

same day the Unification Law of Education was enacted. In place of this ministry, Head of Religious Affairs was founded. In the same year the Caliphate was abolished and a new constitution was prepared. This constitution included the expression of "the religion of the state is Islam" and stayed until 1928, officially acceptance of the principle of laicism. Dervish lodges (*tekke ve zaviyeler*) under the administration of the Head of Religious Affairs were closed in 1925. With a law enacted in 1925 wearing a hat became mandatory, and in the same year, new calendar (*miladi takvim*) was accepted. In 1926, together with the Swiss Civil Code (*İsviçre Medeni Kanunu*) a new penal code was accepted. In 1928, numbers first and the alphabet next were changed; so Arabic alphabet was abandoned and Latin alphabet was accepted. The measurement and weight system was changed in 1931. *Ezan*<sup>28</sup> began to be called as Turkish in 1932. Any kind of title, sobriquet and nickname were removed and the law of last name (*soyadı kanunu*) was accepted in 1934. Holiday of Friday was changed as holiday of Sunday in 1935(Ergin 1977:1610-2043).

When we take a look at the program of the first Grand National Assembly of Turkey, we can see how expectations from education were changed by the time. When the Grand National Assembly of Turkey released its first program in 1920, it determined "a national (*milli*)<sup>29</sup> and religious education" as an ideal in education. Religious education for the first time was addressed in abolition of the sultanate and elaborated later in 1928 when a law was accepted about releasing religious matters from the constitution. Minister of Education, in a circular note dated September 1929, spoke to teachers: "Turn your eyes from everything that belongs to the old; our holy ideal in education a new, prosperous and civilized Turkey. Thoughts that you will

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<sup>28</sup> Call for prayers as Arabic.

<sup>29</sup> The words *milli* and *ulusal* can be translated into English as national but at that time the word *ulus* (nation) and *ulusal* (national) had not been used yet. See Karpaz (2011:11-12).

imbue will be reflections of *Büyük Gazi* (Atatürk) who created Turkey and open a new page in our history.”(Jaschke 1972:82)

As a harbinger of new stage in education, we see in previous chapter, through the Unification Law of Education, all educational institutions were collected under the umbrella of the Ministry of National Education. The second matter of the Unification Law of Education says that all *medreses* and mekteps belonging to Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations (*Şer’iye ve Evkaf Vekaleti*) or private foundations (*hususî vakıflar*) will be passed on to Ministry of Education (*Maarif Vekaleti*). So, it points out that the on-going debate starting with the entrance of modern education in the Tanzimat Era and dualism in education created by the bureaucrats and intellectuals of this era finally ended. Furthermore, according to fourth matter of this law, Ministry of Education undertook the responsibility of establishing a Theology Faculty (*İlahiyat Fakültesi*) in *Darulfünun* for specialists and mekteps in order to train imams who would carry out religious services. With this matter, government announced that all *medreses* and higher religious institutions would be closed and in place of them new schools and a faculty in university would be open. In consequence of this law, İlahiyat Faculty in Istanbul Darulfünun was replaced with *medrese* of *Daru’l-Hilafeti’l Aliye* and Imam Hatip Mekteps took local *medreses’* place (Parmaksızoğlu 1966:24-25).

Throughout this stage of national education, according to Necdet Sakaoğlu (1992), within the first three years (1924-1927) after the enactment of law, religious education which had permeated from *medreses* to okuls was hindered and Arabic and Farsi education were finished. Religious signs and teachings as a means of propaganda for other nations were banned in colleges (*kolej*-high schools belonging to minorities and foreigners) and other minority schools. Also, Turkish history, geography and civics class (*yurt bilgisi*) were added into curriculum of these schools. In addition to their own

languages, Turkish class was put into program in minority schools. Further, 479 *medreses* passed on to the administration of Ministry of National Education were closed. The Ministry opened new Imam-Hatip Mekteps compatible with the Unification Law of Education, but they were closed because of lack of students. In 1927, religious classes were removed from elementary, middle and high schools due to the fact that, besides Muslims, people from different religions were living in Turkey. These changes paved the way for alphabet reform (*harf devrimi*) made in 1928(p.26-27).

#### a) Changes in Religion Classes

After The Law of Unification of Education in 1924, except the first year of elementary school, religious course were given as two hours a week under the name of The Qur'an and the courses of religion (*Kur'an-ı Kerim ve Din Dersleri*). In 1926, it was reduced to one hour a week beginning from third year of elementary school and given in fourth and fifth grade as optional one-hour class. In 1929, it was abolished from third grade and kept in fourth and fifth grades of elementary schools as well as the first and second grades of middle schools as an optional-one-hour class. Also, it was given as two-hour class in the first and second years of Teacher-Training Schools (*Öğretmen Okulları*) giving secondary education. Religious class was released in the curriculums of elementary and middle schools in cities in the educational year 1931-1932(Yılmaz 2003:75).

Until the second Council of National Education in 1943, religion and ethics classes were not brought to the agenda in education. In this council for the first time, subjects of improving education of ethics in elementary schools, making provisions to provide it and putting them into program were discussed. Head of Ethics Commission, Akil Muhtar Özden, determined the purpose of the council: "This council is not an ethics conference and will not discuss any doctrine. It will just search that to whom we can call a good



person, human and Turk." In the commission meetings, Hasan Ali Yücel, the Minister of National Education, emphasized that "without a unity of goal, means would not work; so, what kind of person we seek for must be determined first." He elaborated this person, "In my opinion, attributes of the person that we bring up can be summarized in three basic concepts: individual (*fert*), nation (*millet*) and humanity (*insanlık camiası*). Doctrines take one and ignore others; but we embrace all. The mainstay of our reform in morality is nation. For this reason, we need to know what kind of person we look for."(Ayhan 1999:67-69)

This council never set any relation between religion and ethics just as it did not mention religious education in any stage. Rather, it explains the principles of ethics and expectations of the council as to raise:

- 1) a Turk who devoted to Turkish language and culture as well as the principles and basis of reform, that is, Turkish ideal;
- 2) a human who embraces the supreme principles of ethics that all civilized nations accept;
- 3) a person who is respectful for himself or herself as well as others and has dignity, honor and honesty(*haysiyet, şeref ve namus*) (Parmaksızoğlu 1966:26-27).

Jaschke (1972) states in his book *Der Islam in Der neuen Türkei* (Islam in new Turkey) that after the World War II, religious education was discussed for the first time in TBMM on 24 December, 1946. Muhittin Baha Pars and Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, representatives of the Republican People's Party (CHP), offered the acceptance of religious education and showed the degeneration of new generation as a reason. Whereas Adnan Menderes and Fuat Köprülü, representatives of and leaders of opposition party, Democratic Party (DP), supported this argument, Prime Minister Recep Peker denied "opening doors for religious propaganda," he emphasized that science and

humanitarian thoughts (*insani görüşler*) must be guide for ethics of modern humans (p. 83).

After on-going debates in the media and TBMM, finally in 1949, Ministry of National Education sent circular letters to governors saying, "After the date of February 15<sup>th</sup>, religious education is given as optional (*ihtiyari*) class in elementary schools." It also reveals that students cannot be forced to take this class, nor can teachers be forced to teach the classes to give. Therefore, the educational year 1948-1949 religious education began to be given again (Ayhan 1999:118-119).

#### b) Imam-Hatip Mekteps<sup>30</sup>

As all other secondary schools, Imam Hatip Schools were dependent on Ministry of National Education and had to run under the surveillance and inspection of the Ministry. The curriculum of these schools includes 60% culture and science courses, 40% vocational courses. Therefore, without any deduction from credits of culture and science courses, in addition to regular high-school programs the curriculum of Imam-Hatip Schools have extra credits for vocational courses. Since these schools were reopened, this form more or less has been maintained (Öcal 1994:17-18).

Imam-Hatip Schools are institutions established to meet the need of religious public services. They were opened as a continuum of institutions opened before Turkish Republic. During the Second Constitutional Era, because of the need for imams and preachers (*hatip*), in 1913, *Medresetu'l-Eimme ve'l-Hutaba*<sup>31</sup> was founded. In this school, The Qur'an, Islamic belief and worshipping, oratory, *ezan* and hymns were taught and trained. However, in 1919, because of less demand, it was combined with another *medrese* which

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<sup>30</sup> Imam-Hatip Schools has been called with different names since it was established. In order to distinguish them I included their original names.

<sup>31</sup> Formerly it is a training school for imams and preachers.

was established for chaplains (*vaiz*); and the new institution was called *Medresetu'l-Irşad*<sup>32</sup>. Graduates of this *medrese* could work in Ministry of Religious Affairs, as preachers, chaplains and imams in cities, towns, and villages as well as in the army. This *medrese* was part of attempts in regulations of *medreses*, but far behind from meeting the expectations. Until it was closed together with other *medreses* during Turkish Republic, limited numbers of imams, preachers and chaplains were trained in this school (Sarıkaya 1997:182-183).

Since all *medreses* were tied to the Ministry of National Education and the state undertook the responsibility of providing religious education, they were reorganized according to the Unification Law of Education. This new system was put into practice with 29 Imam Hatip Mekteps in 1924. The number of Imam Hatip Mekteps decreased to 26 in 1925, 20 in 1926 and closed completely in 1930. During these years, restricted religious education, death and senescence of old educated generation and moreover rapid growth of Turkish population contributed to the need of religious education not in terms of practicing daily life according to Islam, but at least religious services such as the Friday (*Cuma*) and eid (*bayram*) prayers, washing and burying the dead according to Islamic faith (Parmaksızoğlu 1966:25-28).

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<sup>32</sup> It can be translated into English as "school for officers who will guide people and show true path."

**Table: 2.1.1. Opening years of Imam-Hatip Mekteps and number of schools and students (1923-1930)**

<b>Educational Year</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>
1923-1924	29	Beginning of the classes:2258 Ending of the classes:1822
1924-1925	26	1442
1925-1926	20	1009
1926-1927	2	278
1927-1928	2	200
1928-1929	2	100
1929-1930	Closed	-

**Source:** (Ünsür 1995:92)

In addition to public, seeking in religious education became prevalent in TBMM and the media after 1946. Change in the world as well as in Turkey contributed to this seeking also. As a result of vanishing fascist governments in Italy and Germany, democracy began to rise as a new value in politics. In Turkey, threat of communism triggered the-one party rule to get closer to the West. Turkey signed the Declaration of United Nations in February 1945. As a consequence of the fall of one-party rules in the west and an affinity with America and Europe, rumors about transition to democracy began to increase. In June, 1945, National Development Party first and in January, 1946, Democratic Party next were established (Karpaz 2010:225-239). These changes in the political arena contributed to debates about religious education and reopening of Imam-Hatip Schools. From public's perspective, they could have representatives in TBMM that would find solutions for their problems; from politicians' view, they had to gain public's approval because one person means one vote. In public opinion together with religious

education in general, the need to Imam Hatip schools was spoken out. In January 1948, Ibrahim Arvas and Fatin Gökmen offered a bill about reopening Imam-Hatip schools and establishing an İlahiyat Faculty in TBMM. Cihad Baban explicates and writes about this offer:

We will not break laicism. However, religion is not only a connection between man and Allah, but a social reality as well. In many times, people in villages cannot find anybody to bury the dead according to Islamic belief. On the other hand, if we do not train clerics, superstitions will spread out... Neither religious bigotry nor intolerant atheism can live in our tolerant society. We did not accept laicism in order to rub out Islam from Turkey. We need to benefit from the power of Islam against the expansion of Soviet Union (Jaschke 1972:76-77).

As a result of the urgent need of religious services, Imam Hatip classes (*imam-hatip kursları*) were opened 18 years after the Imam-Hatip mekteps were closed. Because the most urgent part of religious education was to train personnel who would meet the need of people living in countryside and villages who constituted 73% of the population, "in order to cultivate current clerics and make them approach to understanding of the day" 10 training centers in 10 cities were planned in 1948 by Ministry of National Education and opened in 1949 (Parmaksızoğlu 1966:29). Even so, debates about the need of religion class in schools, reopening Imam Hatip Mekteps and İlahiyat Faculty did not stop in TBMM. Banguoğlu, Minister of National Education, in his speech in TBMM asserted that "İlahiyat Faculty and Imam-Hatip Mekteps represented scholastic mindset and we founded a new and modern country. These institutions will no longer exist. So we will not open these schools." Ibrahim Arvas responded,

The representatives of scholastic mindset were priests and rabbi schools but you have supported these schools. You, as Ministry of National Education, allocate funds for these schools... On the other hand, Imam-Hatip Schools were established with a special law by the second assembly. This law neither was abolished nor regulated, so it is still valid. Are you more reformist than the second assembly? (Ayhan 1999:114)

After transition to multi-party life in 1945, Turkish people could speak out and criticize CHP in public opinion. Prime Minister Hasan Saka warned his friends in a group meeting, "Friends! (*Efendiler!*) If you do not accept religious education, public will not even vote us."(Ayhan 1999:115) In order to gain votes in approaching election, CHP had to make concessions from its basic policies. They had to accept to put extra-curriculum religion classes in elementary schools and open an İlahiyat Faculty. On the other hand, before the election of 1950, Democrat Party promised that they would reopen Imam-Hatip Schools, open new the Qur'an Schools and let *ezan* call in its original form. After one-party- rule finished and Democratic Party won the election in 1950, Imam-Hatip Schools were reopened in 1951(Ünsür 2005:155-156).

Another change occurred in these years was opening an İlahiyat Faculty in Ankara University in 1949. In Ottoman time, to give higher religious education *Ulum-i Aliye-i Diniye* was opened as a branch in *Darulfünun* established in 1900. Under the administration of Ministry of Education, the duration of education in this branch was 4 years. Its name was changed in 1908 as *Ulum-i Şer'îye* and after 1914 it was tied to Meshikhat as *Mutehassisin Medresesi*. With the Unification Law of Education, as other *medreses*, this higher *medrese* was closed and an İlahiyat Faculty was opened in university. So, for the first time an institution was established for higher religious education in Turkish Republic. Training time in this faculty

was 3 years and it stayed open between 1924 and 1933 (Ayhan 1999:38-49). Reopening an İlahiyat Faculty in Ankara University, after a long break, an institution was opened in order to train experts and teachers as well as to give higher religious education in Turkey. When TBMM accepted a law to open an İlahiyat Faculty in Ankara University in 1949, Banguoğlu, Minister of National Education would determine the role of this institution by emphasizing that this faculty would not run like *medreses* but fight off against "reactionary movements"(Jaschke 1972:78).

#### 2.2.1.2. Religious Education After 1949

##### a) Religion and Ethics Classes

After the Democrat Party won the election on May 14, 1950, some developments were seen in religious education. Two years after started the optional extra-curriculum religion classes, religion class were put into the curriculum and, petition forms were expected from the families who were not demanding this class. Because religion classes began to be given by form masters, religion class was added to the curriculum in the school of form masters. In 1953, it began to be given as one-hour compulsory lesson in the first and second grades of high schools. So, after elementary schools, for the first time religion class was put into program in a secondary school and, only in these schools, religion class was given by the fist graduates of İlahiyat Faculty. Even if there have been some improvements in curriculum in terms of religion and ethics classes in formal education, another problem was to train teachers who would give these classes in any level of primary and secondary education. Teachers of religion and ethics class were not considered independently from form masters in elementary schools until 1997. This class was given by form masters but not graduates of İlahiyat Faculty (Ayhan 1999:125-127).

Parmaksizođlu (1966) summarizes the first years of religion class:

Although religion class was not satisfying and was an extra-curriculum class, students overwhelmingly enrolled in it. In educational year 1949-1950, from 414.477 fourth and fifth grades elementary students just 2797 Muslim and 3002 non-Muslim students did not take this class; that is, about 99% of all fourth and fifth grade elementary students took this class. In 1951-1952, in total 3035(0.7%) students did not take religion class. Religion class took place weekly as one- hour class in the curriculum of fourth and fifth grades of elementary schools, first and second grades of middle schools and fourth and fifth grades of teacher training schools. Whereas it was main class in teacher training schools, in other schools it was an elective class given by depending on families' consent. (p.31)

Ministry of National Education added religion class in 1956 to the curriculum in the first and second grades of middle schools. According to circular noted published by Ministry, students who bring a petition form from their families showing not to take this class would be exempt of this class. Religion Class, which had taken place in the fourth and fifth grades of elementary schools since 1949, and the first and second grades of middle schools since 1956, was discussed for years in terms of the quality and the quantity. In order to provide a continuum, to add it to high school curriculum was suggested. Ministry of National Education took thousands of petitions from families and signs of about 200 representatives in assembly into consideration. So, religion class was added to the curriculum of the first and second grades of high schools in educational year 1967-1968. After continuing demands, it was added to the curriculum of the last years of middle and high schools (Ayhan 1999:128-134).



In sum, religion and ethics classes was put into program first as a class including basic religious information and ethics called "ethics and moral class" (*ahlak ve moral dersi*) and took place as extra curriculum and optional two-hour class in the fourth and fifth grades of elementary schools in 1948-1949. In 1950, it reduced to one hour a week in fourth and fifth grades but effective in passing class. In 1953 "religion class" (*din dersi*) was added the curriculum of the first and second grades of form masters-training schools (*ilköğretmen okulları*) as required class. Religion class also took place as an optional class and effective in passing class in the first and second grades of middle schools in educational year 1956-1957, and the first and second grades of high schools in 1967-1968. In educational year 1974-1975, "ethics class" became required class in fourth and fifth grades of elementary schools; the first, second and third grades of middle schools; the first and second grades of high schools. Approaching 1980, the last change in religious education was made in 1976. Religion class was included in the curriculum of the third grade of middle and high schools. Finally, following the military coup in 1980, the last constitution prepared in 1982 combined religion (*din bilgisi dersi*) and ethics (*ahlak*) classes and constituted a new class, culture of religion and knowledge of ethics (*din kültürü ve ahlak bilgisi*). It is still given under this name as two-hour required class during 8-year primary education beginning from fifth grade; and as one-hour required class in the first, second and third grades of secondary education (Yılmaz 2003:77-78).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> This education system was changed and new religious classes were opened in education year 2012-2013. For the change after 1997 and a summary of the new system see the first section of this chapter. For a detail information about the transformation of religious education in Turkey after 1997 see: Bahçekapılı (2012), *Türkiye'de Din Eğitiminin Dönüşümü (1997-2012)*.

## b) Imam-Hatip Schools

Since Imam-Hatip classes did not meet the need, Imam- Hatip schools were opened in 7 cities in 1951. They were opened as a two-staged-school after primary education. The first stage covered 4 years and the second stage 3 years (Ünsür 2005:155). Thus, they were organized as a different school consisting of 4-year middle school and 3-year high school and kept this form until 1971.

**Table: 2.1.2. Opening Imam Hatip Schools (1951-1971)**

<b>Educational Year</b>	<b>Number of Opening School</b>	<b>Number of Active School</b>
1951-1952	7	7
1953-1954	8	15
1954-1955	1	16
1956-1957	1	17
1958-1959	2	19
1962-1963	7	26
1965-1966	4	30
1966-1967	10	40
1967-1968	18	58
1968-1969	11	69
1969-1970	2	71
1970-1971	1	72

**Source:** (Ünsür 2005:157).

Based on Verdict of Board of Education in 1971, 7-year Imam- Hatip Schools was changed into 4-year Imam-Hatip Schools after middle school education. In this term, the numbers of Imam Hatip Schools were 72 and any additional school was not opened between 1971 and 1973. After the acceptance of Basic Law of National Education in 1973, Imam- Hatip Schools became Imam

Hatip High Schools (IHHS). Another change brought by this law was that graduates of IHHSs would be considered as graduates of high schools in branch of literature (*edebiyat kolu*) (Ünsür 2005:179). Before this law, since İlahiyat Faculty accepted only graduates of regular high-schools, they could only continue a kind of vocational high schools called Higher Islam Institute (*Yüksek İslam Enstitüsü*) opened first in Istanbul in 1959 (Ayhan 1999:224-235). According to 31<sup>st</sup> matter of Basic Law of National Education changed in 1983, they had a right to choose any department without any limitation. After this regulation, graduates of IHHSs began to study in other departments (Ünsür 2005:179).

The first stages of Imam Hatip Schools was closed in the following months of military coup in 1971 and reopened as three-year middle schools in 1974. With this change, whereas the formula of 4+3 turned into 3+4, just the Qur'an and Arabic classes were kept in middle schools of Imam Hatip Schools. Namely, except these two classes they were considered as regular middle schools and saved this form until 1997 (Ayhan 1999:208).

**Table: 2.1.3. Number of Imam-Hatip High School Students in Middle Branches (1971-1997)**

<b>Educational Year</b>	<b>New Registered Students</b>	<b>Total Number of Students</b>	<b>Graduates</b>
1971-1972	7.966	36.928	1258
1972-1973	2.583	16.443	3346
1973-1974	3.344	10.552	3523
1974-1975	18.896	24.091	2759
1975-1976	33.040	51.829	2286
1976-1977	40.832	84.863	9931
1977-1978	45.997	108.340	16.967
1978-1979	42.141	114.273	19.520
1979-1980	46.746	130.072	25.549
1980-1981	51.901	138.798	22.552
1981-1982	51.391	147.071	14.001
1982-1983	43.920	147.140	26.516
1983-1984	42.466	134.688	32.393
1984-1985	44.260	145.816	28.353
1985-1986	48.369	150.465	27.986
1986-1987	53.553	160.001	24.902
1987-1988	52.479	169.769	28.670
1988-1989	60.010	180.007	31.965
1989-1990	62.140	189.786	32.755
1990-1991	70.495	209.377	46.938
1991-1992	79.302	227.088	55.790
1992-1993	94.183	249.984	62.908
1993-1994	97.747	274.175	67.941
1994-1995	100.600	301.862	83.531
1995-1996	101.073	306.684	79.238
1996-1997	107.754	318.775	83.912

**Source:** (Ünsür 2005:184)

**Table: 2.1.4. Number of Imam Hatip High School Students in High School Branches (1971-1997)**

<b>Educational Year</b>	<b>New Registered Students</b>	<b>Total Number of Students</b>	<b>Graduates</b>
1971-1972	4.195	9.094	2.635
1972-1973	13.650	19.935	3.334
1973-1974	9.374	23.960	3.359
1974-1975	8.180	24.809	4.738
1975-1976	6.488	25.809	4.763
1976-1977	6.854	25.800	5.924
1977-1978	9.150	26.177	5.354
1978-1979	16.355	34.417	4.144
1979-1980	19.429	47.941	4.606
1980-1981	23.137	62.206	5.434
1981-1982	19.761	69.793	9.240
1982-1983	19.653	72.791	10.998
1983-1984	20.551	72.318	14.347
1984-1985	24.397	83.157	13.896
1985-1986	23.028	87.560	15.727
1986-1987	23.126	89.666	15.917
1987-1988	20.619	87.972	17.574
1988-1989	24.155	87.079	17.280
1989-1990	27.923	92.527	17.060
1990-1991	29.947	100.176	21.249
1991-1992	39.236	119.086	21.147
1992-1993	47.804	142.097	26.285
1993-1994	53.974	162.353	48.987
1994-1995	59.713	171.439	44.739
1995-1996	66.788	188.896	48.480
1996-1997	69.872	192.727	47.768

**Source:** (Ünsür 2005:185)

In educational year of 1985-1986, the first Anadolu Imam-Hatip High School (AIHHS) was opened in Beykoz and moved later to Kartal. This school was first planned for as a boarding school for children of workers in Germany and the language of education would be mainly German. Then the educational year of 1989-1990, English branch was opened. Afterward, some other AIHHSs were opened as its own administration or under the administration

of an IHHS (Ünsür 2005:223). In educational year of 1993-1994, another type of Imam Hatip High School was opened as a high school applying weighted foreign language. It was opened first depending on Central Ankara and Kadıköy Imam Hatip High Schools (Ünsür 2005:228).

**Table: 2.1.5. Anatolian Imam-Hatip High School according to opening years**

<b>Educational Year</b>	<b>Number of Opening Schools</b>
1985-1986	1
1990-1991	2
1991-1992	13
1992-1993	11
1993-1994	31
1994-1995	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>108</b>

**Source:** (Ünsür 2005:224)

Based on the law of 8 year-continuing education in 1997, middle branches of IHHSs could not accept any students. After the educational year of 1997-1998, it was turned to just high schools and middle branches of it were closed completely in the educational year of 1999-2000 (2000-2001 for AIHHSs). Also, a new concept "exponent of area" was brought in university entering exam. It was the most important factor restricted the choices of graduates of not just IHHSs but all kinds of vocational high schools if they choose other departments out of their areas. According to the decision of Higher Education Council (YÖK) made in 1998, the rule of exponent of area put into practice in university entering exams in 1999; therefore, graduates of IHHSs became disadvantaged when they apply to departments out of İlahiyat Faculty. Besides closing of middle branches of these schools, this change in university entering exams caused application of these schools to diminish (Ünsür 2005:230-233).

**Table: 2.1.6. Number of Imam Hatip High Schools and Anatolian Imam-Hatip High Schools (1997-2012)**

<b>Education Year</b>	<b>IHHS and AIHHS</b>
1997-1998	605
1998-1999	604
1999-2000	604
2000-2001	600
2001-2002	558
2002-2003	536
2003-2004	452
2004-2005	452
2005-2006	453
2006-2007	455
2007-2008	456
2008-2009	458
2009-2010	465
2010-2011	493
2011-2012	533

**Source:** (Öcal 2011:354)

As it is shown in the table 2.1.6 in the educational year 1997-1998 there were 605 Imam Hatip Schools. In fact, as an independent administration the total number was 505 because at that time there were 7 independent AIHHS and 498 regular IHHS. The rest 100 AIHHSs were run under IHHSs' administration. Namely, these 100 AIHHSs were not different schools but a branch under an established IHHS (Öcal 2011:354).

Until 2002-2003 it is shown as if these 100 different schools in statistics. For this reason in 2003-2004 it decreased to 452 schools in total. If we consider the schools as independent administrations, the total number were 505 in 1997-1998, it decreased to 452 schools in 2003-2004. It means that during 6-7 years 53 IHHSs and AIHHSs were closed. According to the table 2.1.6, the number of the schools began to increase after 2004-2005. It reached finally to 533 schools in 2011-2012 (see the table 2.1.7). A possible reason,

according to Öcal (2011), may be AKP's approach to IHHSs and public's expectation from this party for removing the area of exponent in the university entering exam (p.354-355). Indeed, it was removed by the last president of YÖK, Yusuf Ziya Özcan, in his last days in this rank. According to this change beginning from 2012 university entering exam this exponent is removed for any kind of vocational high school including IHHSs.<sup>34</sup>

**Table: 2.1.7. Number of Imam-Hatip High Schools and Anatolian Imam Hatip High Schools according to types (2011-2012)**

<b>TYPES of IHHS</b>	<b>NUMBERS</b>
IHHS	137
IHHS including AIHHS	378
Independent AIHHS	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>533</b>

**Source:** (Öcal 2011:355)

Another important point concerning IHHSs is that in addition to some buildings allocated by the state for IHHSs, some of these schools were built by some associations and religious foundations. Also, some others were built with public-state collaboration. According to a research made in 1995 by Ünsür 65% of IHHS buildings were built by the public (1995:148). Depending on his study about 400 IHHS buildings in this year (table 2.1.8), associations and foundations had 128 buildings and individuals had two buildings. On the other hand, when we investigate who built these schools, we see that 263 school buildings were built by associations and foundations. In addition to this contribution made by these institutions, there were 77 school buildings constructed by cooperation the state and public.

<sup>34</sup> For the news see: <http://www.sabah.com.tr/Yasam/2011/12/01/servetini-kaybetti-simdi-simit-satiyor>



**Table: 2.1.8. Number of Imam-Hatip High Schools by ownership and construction**

<b>IHHSs by Ownership</b>	<b>Total:400</b>
a)Belonging to Treasury	267
b)Belonging to Associations ( <i>Dernek</i> )	106
c)Belonging to Foundations ( <i>Vakıf</i> )	20
d)Belonging to Provincial Administration ( <i>Özel İdare</i> )	2
e) Belonging to Municipalities	3
f) Belonging to Individuals	2
<b>IHHSs by Construction</b>	<b>Total:400</b>
a)Constructed by the State	38
b)Constructed by Cooperation of the State and Public	77
c)Allocated by Treasury as IHHSs	22
d)Constructed by Associations, Foundations and Other Institutions	263

**Source:** (Ünsür 1995:149)

### **What renders IHHSs popular?**

So far we have seen the inconstant history of IHHSs in Turkish educational system. Yet, the questions of why these schools have attracted excessive number of students and why the public has helped to build and sustain them through foundations need to be discussed. Considering the narrowed channels for religious education in Turkey, a possible answer is that whereas the state considers IHHSs as vocational schools, they are the schools where religious education is given in public's eyes. In other words, some students do not prefer IHHSs or their families do not send their children to these

schools so that they can be just imam, *müftü* or a graduate of İlahiyat Faculty. For example, as it is revealed in table 2.1.9, despite the area of exponent many IHHS graduate choose law, political science, and faculty of education in addition to studying at a department of culture of religion and knowledge of ethics class teacher and an İlahiyat Faculty. The implementation of the area of exponent was applied first in 1999 university entering exam. In table 2.1.9, the effects of area of exponent can be seen after the years following 1998. Among these five groups IHHS graduates can choose the last two departments without facing with any disadvantages in the university entering exams. Keeping mind that after 1997, Imam Hatip Schools lost its popularity, the unfortunate change is still explicit for the first three subjects when compared especially the years 1998 and 1999.

**Table: 2.1.9. Accepted Imam Hatip High School Graduates for the Undergraduate Education (1998-2002)**

Years	Law	Political Science	Education (any kind of teacher)	CRKEC* Teacher	İlahiyat Faculty
1998	232	277	3.285	322	1.420
1999	54	97	315	669	1.324
2000	96	149	639	778	1.254
2001	82	93	541	785	917
2002	91	70	374	603	685

\*Culture of Religion and Knowledge of Ethics Class

**Source:** Ünsür 2005:293

Bozan states that these schools became the most popular vocational schools and especially in 1990s preferred by one of the each ten high school students. He counts the reasons as,

1. Demand of religious education,
2. Opportunity of scholarship and boarding school,
3. A good option for girls,
4. The support of religious or conservative peoples.

He continues that many research projects in different cities and times reveal that the main reason underlining the popularity of these schools was that they provided religious education. What is important here is also that when some parents and IHHS students were asked why they preferred these schools, they replied in a high ratio that because in these schools in addition to regular high school education religious education is given. For instance, according to a study made in Sakarya, Zonguldak, Ereğli and Karasu in 1993, when asked the students why they preferred these schools, 71 % of students reply "due to learn religion better" whereas only 9 % say "due to become a personnel for religious service." Another study made on 500 IHHS students in 1998 in Bursa and nine boroughs around it, 72.4 % of them mention that they prefer these schools because "in addition to regular high school education religious education is given" in IHHSs. According to a different study made in education year 1995-1996 on 565 IHHS students from 14 IHHSs around Bursa, 69.57 % of the respondents say that religious education and regular high school education are given together in these schools. (Bozan 2007:22-24).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Since the multidimensional education provided by IHHSs is closely related to my study, I will not discuss other reasons that Bozan counts above. For detail information and statistics about the other reasons see Bozan (2007).

### 2.2.2. Informal Religious Education<sup>36</sup>

In Turkey, informal religious education has been provided by the Qur'an Schools, publications and circles of religious groups. Just as religious education was not given in the years between 1931 and 1949 through formal education in Turkey, so too was informal education restricted. In these years, many religious-oriented magazines had troubles and some of them had to stop publication. Throughout the years under One-Party-Rule (*Tek Parti Dönemi*), informal religious education continued secretly based on training of reading The Qur'an under the surveillance and inspection of the state. Many books are collected including religious content, among them there were even The Qur'an and books of basic Islamic rules and ethics (*ilmihal*). The most prominent example of this era is that a book titled *Hz. Muhammed* published by *Sebilurreşad*, one of the mainstream magazines of religious people at that time, was collected by Ministry of Internal Affairs (Ayhan 1999:85). According to Bilgin (1980), due to lack of religious education, even officials did not distinguish religious book from political ones. In the public's eyes it seemed as if Islam itself was considered as a threat by the state. On the other hand deficiencies of religious education in Turkey and demands of public in this area have been abused by many political parties (p.49-50).

Throughout Ottoman history, institutions known as *küttab*, *sıbyan mektebs*, *Daru'l Huffaz*, *Daru'l Kurra* and *Daru'l Kur'an* were the places where reading The Qur'an and memorizing it according to Islamic tradition were taught and trained. They continued in the Turkish Republic, too, as *Kur'an Kursu*<sup>37</sup>. After

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<sup>36</sup> Because I focus on institutional religious education and an entire informal religious education is beyond my research, in this section, I will mention just the Qur'an Schools run under the Presidency of Religious Affairs (DİB).

<sup>37</sup> The original name of this concept is *Kur'an Kursu*. Presidency of Religious Affairs also opens Summer Quran Classes known as *Yaz Kursu* / *Yaz Kur'an Kursu*. Since the former is a name of a school and education continues during the educational year, and the latter is used

formerly Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations (*Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaleti*) was repealed in 1924, the Presidency of Religious Affairs (DİB) was founded and this department undertook the responsibility of Islamic education and religious services (Başkurt 2007:123).

Based on Unification Law of Education, MEB proposed to tie these institutions to MEB but as a result of endeavors of Rifat Börekçi, Chair of Department of Religious Affairs, they were tied to this department. Even though other institutions and schools were disappearing one after another beginning from mid- 1920's, the Qur'an Schools could maintain its existence. These schools officially started education and training with 9 institutions in 1925. As it is shown in table 2.2.1, the number of these institutions was 9 in educational year 1932-1933; 19 in 1934-1935; 56 in 1940-1941; 65 in 1941-1942; and, it was 61 in educational year of 1945-1946. Whereas the number of students in these institutions was 250 between 1932 and 1935 in average, reached to 1720 in average between the years 1940 and 1942. The number of students reaching to 2765 in 1945-1946 educational years was an important sign showing the demand of people. Their numbers rapidly increased after the transition to multi-part life but the problem of quality still continues in these institutions (Jaschke 1972:76; Başkurt 2007:123-124).

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for a class limited with summer season, I use in this study "the Qur'an School" in place of *Kur'an Kursu* and "the Summer Qur'an Class" as *Yaz Kur'an Kursu*.

**Table: 2.2.1 The Qur'an Schools (*Daru'l Kurra*) (1932-1950)**

<b>Educational Year</b>	<b>Number of Courses</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Number of Instructors</b>	<b>Number of Graduates</b>
1932-1933	9	232	9	-
1934-1935	19	231 Male 25 Female	10 Male 1 Female	-
1935-1936	15	358 Male 35 Female	12 Male 2 Female	-
1936-1937	16	372 Male 37 Female	14 Male	30
1940-1941	56	1380 Male 309 Female	56 Male	12
1941-1942	65	1369 Male 394 Female	68 Male	25
1943-1944	38	1081 Male 471 Female	34 Male	78
1944-1945	46	1520 Male 433 Female	46 Male	?
1945-1946	61	2021 Male 744 Female	65 Male	248
1947-1948	99	4181 Male 1570 Female	104 Male	475
1949-1950	127	6403 Male 2303 Female	130 Male	851

**Source:** (Ünsür 1995:93)

In addition to these institutions, education and training The Qur'an were given in mosques and the Qur'an Schools during the summer season. It is known as *Yaz Kur'an Kursları* among public and one of the most common institutions of informal education in Turkey. It is opened by local departments of religious affairs (*müftülük*) but being under the supervision and inspection of MEB. In a circular note released by DİB in 2000, according to the Qur'an School's directives, students who at least completed 5<sup>th</sup> year of elementary school can benefit from these classes based on their families or legal representatives' consent. They can take these classes in order to learn to read The Qur'an, to know its Turkish translation (*meal*), and improve their

Islamic knowledge. Duration of education in these institutions for summer cannot pass over 5 days a week and 2 months in total (Başkurt 2007:126-127).

**Table: 2.2.2. Number of the Qur'an Schools (*Kur'an Kursları*) by settlement places (2012)**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Provinces and District Centers</b>	<b>Towns</b>	<b>Villages</b>
<b>Total</b>	10.914	6.194	1.851	2.869
<b>Open to Education</b>	9.486	5.895	1.534	2.057
<b>Closed to Education</b>	1.428	299	317	812

**Source:** DİB<sup>38</sup>

According to directives of DİB added after following years of military intervention in 1997, students could apply to these schools after finishing primary education; that is, after completing 8-year compulsory education. Also, according to these directives, students who does not complete 5<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school could not take this education in the SQCs. This issue occupied the agenda especially in summers. Although this matter was clear about the restriction on the age to take the Qur'an classes, due to families' insistence, imams or instructors illegally accepted students who are younger than 12. This prohibition was finally abolished in September 2011.<sup>39</sup>

Lastly, it may be beneficial to remind that similar to IHHS, the contribution of public through foundations and associations to build and sustain these schools is undeniable. According to table 2.2.2 there are 8.707 the Qur'an Schools open to education. When we look at the ownership of these schools

<sup>38</sup> Retrieved on December 12, 2012, For the updated statistics see: "Kur'an Kursu" on <http://www.diyenet.gov.tr/turkish/dy/Diyenet-Isleri-Baskanligi-AnaMenu-istatistikler-561.aspx>

<sup>39</sup> For the news see: <http://gudem.milliyet.com.tr/kuran-kurslarinda-yas-siniri-kalkti/gudem/gudemdetay/18.09.2011/1439788/default.htm>

(courses), we see that out of 8.707 schools 348 schools belonging to; 1.779 to TDV; 248 to other foundations; 2.266 to Associations; 425 to individuals and 316 to others.

**Table: 2.2.3. Number of the Qur'an Schools (Kur'an Kursları) open to education by ownership (2012)**

<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Provinces and District Centers</b>	<b>Towns</b>	<b>Villages</b>
<b>Total</b>	9.486	5.895	1.534	2.057
<b>Treasury</b>	789	681	73	35
<b>General Directorate of Foundations</b>	379	355	14	10
<b>Turkish Religious Foundations (TDV)</b>	1.938	1.483	283	172
<b>Other Foundations</b>	271	219	31	21
<b>Associations</b>	2.468	1.966	333	169
<b>State Economic Enterprises (KİT)</b>	16	9	4	3
<b>Individuals</b>	463	363	47	53
<b>Municipalities</b>	990	426	541	23
<b>Village Juristic Personality</b>	1.828	93	178	1.557
<b>Others</b>	344	300	30	14

**Source:** DİB<sup>40</sup>

In sum, although Turkey does not recognize any religion in its constitution and accepts laicism, it established DİB and assigned it to execute religious services. Its authority is limited and can give religious education as part of informal education; that is, through mosques, publication and the Qur'an Schools because all schools dependant on MEB. On the other hand, the state

<sup>40</sup> For the updated statistics see: "Kur'an Kursu" on <http://www.diyenet.gov.tr/turkish/dy/Diyenet-Isleri-Baskanligi-AnaMenu-istatistikler-561.aspx>



gives the salary of officers such as imams, *muezzins*<sup>41</sup> preachers, chaplains, *müftüs*<sup>42</sup> and contributes to the expenses of mosques (Aydın 2002:88-89).

To sum up, in terms of formal education the state is the sole provider of formal religious education and private institutions cannot give it through formal education. The 24<sup>th</sup> matter of current constitution determines that "education of religion and ethics is provided under the supervision and inspection of the state. The culture of religion and knowledge of ethics classes are considered among required classes in the curriculum of primary and secondary schools. Except this, religious education and training rely on wishes of adults and for children approvals of their legal representatives."<sup>43</sup>

Even if this matter says that it is required in primary education, it is given after the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of elementary schools as weekly 2-hour class. Books of this class are prepared by Ministry of National Education or controlled by it. Also, as this matter reveals, not religious education but education of culture of religion and knowledge of ethics is required. So, it does not approve training of religion and books of this class are prepared according to the name of this class; namely, it informs students on the one hand about religion in general and basic rules of Islam in specific, and gives education of ethics on the other. IHHSs are other institutions that state provides religious education. These schools are classified as vocational schools where the purpose is to meet the need of officers who will fulfill religious services as well as prepare students for higher education, mainly İlahiyat Faculty in order to train experts and teachers for religion and ethics classes (Aydın 2002:88-89).

The current content of religion and ethics class is not satisfying as it stands for the Sunni majority, nor for Alevis. Sunnis claims that it does not give an

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<sup>41</sup>A person who calls *ezan*.

<sup>42</sup> *Müftü* is an officer responsible for religious affairs in boroughs and cities, such as Üsküdar's müftü, İstanbul's müftü...

<sup>43</sup> For constitution of 1982 see: <http://www.anayasa.gen.tr/1982ay.htm> (in Turkish)

opportunity to practice such as reading the Qur'an, praying, visiting mosques, but just gives superficial information. Alevis criticize the existence of this class as compulsory class and says that Sunni tenets are imposed by the state.<sup>44</sup> In fact, it seems that state keeps this class in order to reach majorities through religion and gives ethics by silencing majority at the same time; therefore, it just satisfies the state. Otherwise, the question is that why this class still exists whereas Sunnis (majority of Muslims in Turkey) and Alevis are not satisfied with this class.

Overall, the main problem is here that Turkish state undertakes the responsibility of providing religious education and considers it as a "social right" that the state must fulfill. If the state does not allow citizens to teach and raise their children according to their own religion or sect and open institutions accordingly, it has to satisfy its citizens by providing it its own sources (Aydın 2002:89).

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<sup>44</sup> For a few example about displeasure of Alevis concerning required culture of religion and knowledge of ethics classes see the news:  
[http://www.alevibektasi.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=654:tuerkiyed-e-din-dersi-ve-aleviler&catid=38:aratrmalar-kategori&Itemid=54](http://www.alevibektasi.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=654:tuerkiyed-e-din-dersi-ve-aleviler&catid=38:aratrmalar-kategori&Itemid=54);  
<http://www.tunceliemek.com.tr/haberdetay.asp?bolum=3403&uyeid=0>; <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/22184832.asp>.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **MY RESEARCH, FAMILIES AND THE SCHOOLS**

#### **3.1. ABOUT MY RESEARCH**

After seeing, on the one hand how new and undeveloped preschool education and how problematic religious education in Turkey on the other, it is time to share my story and reveal my findings. Until I set off this project I have never thought that I would make a research about a subject which is standing the overlapping areas of an inchoate level of Turkish educational system and a problematic one in the eyes of the state although many aspects are closely related to my life experience.

As a member of a society in general or a group in specific, in most cases while something is occurring around us, we do not recognize the importance even if we are sometimes an agent of this event. I have spent most of my life in Üsküdar, Beykoz and Ümraniye. I spent the summers of my elementary school years in the Summer Quran Schools in the mosques around my neighborhood. I also spent my middle school years in Beykoz Imam-Hatip High School, and one year in high school in Esatpaşa Imam-Hatip High School. Moreover, after the military intervention of February 28<sup>th</sup>, I was among those who had to leave IHHS in order to escape from the problem of “the area of exponent” and I searched for a regular high school that would accept me. During these years, I closely witnessed the attempt of the state to discredit these schools which have been opened throughout years by the state itself.

As a witness of these years emerging as a result of the tension between the secular character of the state and the religious education in Turkey, I had never regarded an institutional religious education or any kind of civil

education as possible in Turkish educational system in the near future.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, although I have lived within such an environment, I have never imagined writing a thesis about religious education in preschools. Realizing the existence of this kind of education goes back to years that I found myself as a sociology student. I do not know how close or how far I was standing to the "sociological imagination" of C. Wright Mills<sup>46</sup> but I was observing my environment with different glasses after being a sociology student. Additionally, spending my university years far away from Istanbul and my years living abroad may have contributed to my curiosity about this kind of education. When I came back to Turkey in 2009 after spending 3 years abroad, in my visits to my neighbors, relatives and my friends in different boroughs of Istanbul I have been seeing some 4-6 year-old children praying after dinner, chanting some short verses and hymns and having basic Islamic knowledge. As a person who knows the approach of the state against the religious education in Turkey, I was curious about how these families provided an education that promoted these religious activities. When I asked them how their children learned all these, they replied that they learned it in kindergartens.

During my visits, I came to realize that this education becomes widespread. However, because this kind of education is not permitted by the government, to investigate these schools seemed to be fruitless and finding sufficient data would be really hard. Furthermore, considering how new preschool education

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<sup>45</sup> Although the government has recently removed the obstacles in front of the Imam-Hatip High Schools, it is still not a civil education model but the project of the Leviathan from different aspects. So, I do not think that a civil educational model which is carried on not under the surveillance of the state will be possible in the near future.

<sup>46</sup> Mills signs in *The Sociological Imagination* the intricate connection between man and society, biography and history and self and the world. He states that "ordinary men do not usually know this connection." He continues, "What they need, and what they feel they need, is a quality of mind that will help them to use information and to develop reason in order to achieve lucid summations of what is going on in the world and of what may be happening within themselves. It is this quality, I am going to contend, that journalists and scholars, artists and publics, scientists and editors are coming to expect of what may be called the sociological imagination" Mills (2000: 4-5).

in Turkey is, when I searched for whether anyone has worked on this issue or not, I saw that there was not any research on this issue.

What draws my attention is that although there were public or private preschools nearer their home or public nursery classes in elementary schools, families preferred these schools over the alternatives. Even if families say that the main factor is a desire to assure their children religious education in their early ages, I wanted to learn how determinant this factor is or whether there may be some other reasons or not. After all my inquiries, I decided to visit some families whose children currently study in these schools in order to understand why they prefer these types of kindergartens among many others.

Although I already knew some families around me whose children participated in this kind of education, I preferred to reach new families whose children are presently taking this education and who had not talked previously with me about my project.

To locate research participants, I first asked my friends, neighbors and relatives whether they knew any family whose children were taking such an education. They informed me of people they knew and helped me make connections. For example, my sister knew two families in Beykoz and two in Üsküdar. Also, my uncle's wife knew two neighbors in Üsküdar. I began my interviews with these families and in each interview I asked if these families would refer me to others they knew about. Additionally, through my neighbors I reached six other families. Some families whom I visited for interviews helped me locate the rest of the sample. They also said they knew other families in Eyüp, Gaziosmanpaşa, Fatih, etc., and they could make a connection if I wanted. Since I faced both time limitation and a preference to reach more families in the same borough, I declined these referrals.

Nevertheless, I visited 18 families from three neighboring boroughs on the Anatolian side of Istanbul: Beykoz, Üsküdar and Ümraniye.

From my interviews with families, I came to realize that there were two kinds of preschools giving basic religious education. One runs under the supervision and control of the Ministry of National Education (MEB). The other is a kind of home school, known as *sıbyan okuls* among my respondents. When I asked them which school their child goes to, they simply replied he or she goes to a kindergarten or a *sıbyan okul*.

For the beginning of my project, I did not visit schools and interview school managers and teachers because I focused on families' demands and their reasons for sending their children to these schools. However, I also wanted to see these schools and their managers in order to verify differences from other regular kindergartens as well as from each other. Therefore, during my interviews I asked families to make a connection for me to interview with school managers. Consequently, with the families' help, I met with two managers from the first type of school and two from the second to confirm what families told me in my interviews and to ask managers how their schools differed from other kinds of kindergartens.

I reached the first type of school through families whom I visited. They called the managers (who were female) and informed them about my project. After managers accepted to give an interview, they made an appointment and I saw these managers at their schools. I also saw two managers (again, both female) from the second type of school through my sister's help. She reached them and I visited them with my sister.

For my interviews in the family visits, I prepared a four-page questionnaire that included questions about family and about children's education. Some questions were open-ended and others were multiple-choice questions (see the Appendices for a copy of the questionnaire.) Before starting the

interviews, I asked the respondents to complete these four-page questionnaires. According to their responses to the questionnaires, I explored some areas in the interviews in more detail.

Before I finish the story of my research, I can say that my all interviews were made in a friendly atmosphere. Nevertheless, I have to note that throughout my project, I encountered some problems, too. The most difficult one was the time limitation. I had to complete my interviews within three months to allocate enough time for looking at the literature about the history of preschool and religious education in Turkey and to pen my thesis until the deadline. Further, since I wanted to talk with both mother and father in order to get both side's perspectives and to see the child or children at home, I had to wait for weekends to fit couples'-especially fathers'- schedule. In my first a few interviews I saw that mothers were more eager to help my project than fathers were and they had more things to say about their children's education. Therefore, I decided to focus primarily on mothers as my main respondents.

Among 18 couples, I was able to see eight couples together. In these cases, the interviewees invited me to dinner. After dinner, we carried out the interviews over tea. However, I could not see the other ten families in a family setting. I was able to interview nine mothers without the participation of their husbands and I talked with one father whose wife was not accompanying him. In that interview, since mother spends more time with the child and the decision to pursue this kind of education was primarily her project, after interviewing father, I left a questionnaire and a few specific questions for the mother, too, and picked up the questionnaire at a later date.

Selecting mothers as the primary respondents caused another problem. Most mothers were hesitant to give an interview without an accompanying third

person during the interview. Therefore, either I waited for fathers' leisure time or I visited the mother with one of my female relatives. I visited four mothers and two female managers with my sister and two mothers with my uncle and his wife. The remaining three mothers each had a female family member present during our interviews.

A final problem was that managers did not want to be involved in helping me make surveys. Because of this reason I could not gather more samples through surveys but had to be contented with interviews by reaching families through the connection of my friends, neighbors and relatives.

### **3.2. ABOUT FAMILIES**

Before beginning to share the data that I obtained from questionnaires about families, I need to confess that at the beginning of my project I categorized these families as conservative families. That was an unrefined definition for my research in terms of several aspects. The first problem was that categorizing them-even if they have some common traits- was beyond my thesis because I focused on an alternative way in preschool education and the reasons leading parents to choose this form of schooling. The second problem was that, as in many concepts, being conservative, rightist or religious does not have an absolute definition and there are many approaches for these concepts. Specifically, if the subject concerns Turkey or how these concepts are perceived in Turkey, it becomes more problematic because there is insufficient academic work in this scope and there is no consensus on these concepts. Thus, it would be more reasonable to avoid engaging in this ambiguity. One can say that I may have had my own conceptualization. However, in this case I would have to broaden my research by asking many additional questions and significantly expanding my research. Furthermore, how would my conceptualization be useful? Thus, I



did not categorize these families as conservative and left the readers to their own conclusion as I share my findings about these families.

In the questionnaires I asked several questions about families to learn whether they were born in Istanbul or moved later to this city; their city of the origin and in which borough they live in now; their educational level and their employment status; their average monthly earnings; how many children they have; whether they have any relatives living with them; which newspapers, magazines, TV channels and programs they follow; and their background in terms of religious education. Questions referred to families and mothers answered all questions in questionnaires on behalf of their families.

According to their answers, most of these families are the first or second generation in Istanbul. Namely, I did not see any member whose grandparents were born in Istanbul; either they or their parents were born in Istanbul. Out of 36 members only ten mothers and 6 fathers mention that they were born in Istanbul. Others were born in one of the cities in Anatolia such as Sivas(2), Erzincan, Giresun, Rize, Çanakkale, Bartın, Trabzon(3), Malatya, Gaziantep(2), Kastamonu, Erzurum, Elazığ, Konya, Ankara, Sinop and-as a different example- North Cyprus and moved to Istanbul in their childhoods (see the table 3.1.).

**Table: 3.1. Places of Birth of Couples**

<b>Number of Family</b>	<b>MOTHER</b>	<b>FATHER</b>
1	NORTH CYPRUS	TRABZON
2	İSTANBUL	İSTANBUL
3	İSTANBUL	İSTANBUL
4	İSTANBUL	RİZE
5	ANKARA	SİNOP
6	MALATYA	İSTANBUL
7	İSTANBUL	İSTANBUL
8	İSTANBUL	ERZİNCAN
9	GAZİANTEP	GAZİANTEP
10	ÇANAKKALE	BARTIN
11	İSTANBUL	SİVAS
12	İSTANBUL	SİVAS
13	İSTANBUL	İSTANBUL
14	İSTANBUL	TRABZON
15	TRABZON	İSTANBUL
16	İSTANBUL	KONYA
17	KASTAMONU	GİRESUN
18	ERZURUM	ELAZIĞ

I limited my research with the families residing in three neighboring boroughs of Istanbul -Üsküdar, Ümraniye and Beykoz. Families in my research mostly prefer a school near their homes for their children in the same borough where they dwell. However two families living in Üsküdar preferred schools in Ümraniye and two families in Ümraniye preferred schools in Üsküdar.

**Table: 3.2. Locations of Families and Schools**

Where (which borough/neighborhood) do you live in Istanbul?	
<b>ÜSKÜDAR</b>	12
<b>BEYKOZ</b>	2
<b>ÜMRANIYE</b>	4
Where (which borough/neighborhood) is the school located?	
<b>ÜSKÜDAR</b>	12
<b>BEYKOZ</b>	2
<b>ÜMRANIYE</b>	4

Ten of the families interviewed have two children each; six families each have one child; and two families each have three children. The ages of their children range from two to ten. The ages of children who take preschool education are between 4 and 6 years old. Only one family has two children currently enrolled in this sort of education whereas each of the other families has one child. So, in total there are nineteen children-ten female and nine male-of eighteen families preferring this education.

**Table: 3.3. Genders of Children and Number of Children in Families**

GENDER OF CHILDREN TAKING PRESCHOOL EDUCATION		NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FAMILIES		
GIRL	BOY	With 1 Child	With 2 Children	With 3 Children
10	9*	6 families	10 families	2 families

\*In one family, two children are taking preschool education. So, in total there are 19 children in my research.

In my research mothers are overwhelmingly housewives and as a result of this they spend more time with their children than do fathers. Out of eighteen mothers, four work outside the home and fourteen mothers are housewives.

Among these fourteen mothers not employed outside the home two mothers contribute to family budget by working at home. One of them has a disabled daughter and works as a tailor at home. The other has recently left her job in order to take care of her child and gives extra math courses at home. It does not mean that other housewives do not have anything to do except housework. Seven of twelve housewives take extra courses or continue their education. For example, three mothers take Arabic courses in İSMEK; one studies Arabic at home with her friends; one takes English in İSMEK; one continues in graduate school on education and one is enrolled in The Open

University (*Açık Öğretim Fakültesi*) and at the same time takes English courses in İSMEK. Additionally, one volunteers in a foundation for several days. Out of eighteen fathers, nine of them work in a store whereas four of them have their own business. One father works for the Istanbul Municipality; two fathers are teachers and one works in financial sector.

**Table: 3.4. Occupations and Graduations of Mothers and Fathers**

MOTHERS				FATHERS			
Occupation	Freq	Education	Freq	Occupation	Freq	Education	Freq
Housewife	14*	Elementary School	4	Finance	1	Elementary School	1
Working at home	2**	Middle School	3	Officer	1	Middle School	4
Working in a Department	1	High School	5	Own Business	4	High School	7
Working in a Store	3	2-year - Voc. School	3	Teacher	2	2-year-Voc. School	2
		University	3	Technician	1	University	4
				Working in a Store	9		

\*Taking any course among housewives: 7 Mothers.

\*\*These two mothers are also counted among housewives.

Only in two families both mother and father have a university degree. In one family the mother has a university degree and the father has a two-year vocational school diploma and works as a technician. In another family the mother is a graduate of a two-year İlahiyat Vocational School whereas the father has a university degree from an İlahiyat Faculty and works as a religious class teacher in a high school. In total, out of eighteen mothers there are three university, three two-year vocational school, five high school, three middle school and four elementary school graduates. Among fathers, there are four university, two two-year vocational school, seven high school, four middle school and one elementary school graduates. The families in my research exhibit educational homogeneity. In these families partners choose mates near themselves in terms of education.

As it is showed in table 3.5, the monthly average salaries of four families are between TL 1000-1500; five families between 1500-2000; five families between 2000-2500; and two families between 2500-3000. There are two outliers within the sample: one earns less than 1000 and the other is over 3000 as monthly average salaries.

**Table: 3.5. Monthly Average Salaries of Families in TL**

MONTHLY AVERAGE SALARY of FAMILIES(TL)					
LESS THAN 1000	1000-1500	1500-2000	2000-2500	2500-3000	OVER 3000
1	4	5	5	2	1

In my research sample, many of these eighteen families reside near one of their relatives and they say that they can entrust their children to them on some occasions. Among eighteen families, two families live with a grandparent. Out of eighteen families, twelve families have a close relative, such as grandmother or aunt of children in the same building or near home, to take care of their children in case both mother and father are outside. For four working mothers, one lives with her mother in the same building, and three of them say that they can have a relative to leave her child/children in case of necessity.

Before I started my project I supposed that there could be a correlation between families' backgrounds in terms of religious education and their choice for their children. Thus, I asked several questions about religious backgrounds and daily practices. In each of these families, either mother or father or both studied in an institution, such as IHHSs, the QSs, two-year-Ilahiyat Vocational School (*Ilahiyat Meslek Yüksek Okulu*) or Ilahiyat Faculty. In other words, there is not any family where neither father nor mother took religious education in an institution. Among mothers, only one took religious education in a SQC in her childhood whereas five fathers took basic Islamic

education in the same traditional way in a mosque near their neighborhood or in their villages.

**Table: 3.6. Backgrounds of Families in terms of Religious Education**

Religious Education		MOTHERS	FATHERS
	QS		8
IHHS		6	2
QS and IHHS		0	1
Ilahiyat Vocational School		2	0
Ilahiyat Faculty		1	1
Others*		1	5
Not Taken		0	5
Do you know reading Quran in Arabic	Yes	16	13
	No	1	3
	Forgotten	1	2
Reading Quran in Arabic Weekly	Yes	16	7
	No	2	11
Reading Quran From Any Translation Weekly	Yes	10	8
	No	8	10
Daily Prayer	5 Times	17	14
	Sometimes	1	4
	Not Pray	0	0
	Only Fridays	-	0

\*Others: Respondents defined it as Summer Qur'an Classes (Yaz Kur'an Kursları) in mosques.

Among eighteen families, eight mothers and four fathers took religious education in a Qur'an School; six mothers and two fathers in IHHSs; two mothers in two-year-Ilahiyat Vocational Schools; one father and one mother in Ilahiyat Faculty. One father studied in both QS and IHHS. Interestingly, while all mothers have some degree of religious education, five fathers never took any religious education in such ways.

According to the questionnaire responses, sixteen fathers and thirteen mothers have reading knowledge of The Qur'an in Arabic. Whereas one mother does not know reading The Qur'an in Arabic, there are three fathers cannot read it in Arabic. Also, there are one mother and two fathers mentioning that they learnt to read it from its original language but cannot read it now. Additionally, sixteen mothers declare that they read The Qur'an weekly whereas two mothers do not. On the other hand, seven fathers say that they read it weekly in Arabic and eleven fathers do not read weekly. When I ask whether they read The Qur'an from its translation in any language, ten mothers and eight fathers mention that they read it weekly from its translation (*meal*).

In terms of daily practices, as shown in table 3:6, seventeen mothers and fourteen fathers report praying or trying to pray five times a day while only one mother and four fathers pray on some special occasions such as holy nights (*kandil*) and in the holy month of Ramadan. I added the section of "Only Fridays" for fathers because even if men do not practice daily prayer they may participate only in Friday prayer because it is a kind of weekly congregation of Muslims and an obligation for Muslim men.<sup>47</sup> No men in my questionnaire say that they pray only Friday prayer since they pray in other times in addition to Fridays.

In order to know these families better, I needed to learn from which media (TV channels, magazines and newspapers) they follow the world and daily news as well as which programs they mostly watch at home. Therefore, I asked several questions in order to learn their preferences in this area. According to their answers, seven families subscribe to a daily newspaper and eleven families subscribe at least to one monthly or weekly magazine. As it is represented in table 3:7, *Zaman* (11), *Taraf* (3) and *Sabah* (3) are three

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<sup>47</sup> Muslim women can participate if they want in place of their zuhur prayer (performed in afternoon), but participation of women on Fridays is not common in Turkey.

newspapers that families most frequently read. The most frequently read magazines are *Sızıntı* (7), *Gülistan* (3), *Semerkand* (3) and *Aksiyon* (3). During my interviews, three fathers added that they follow daily news and read some other materials from the internet. Whereas fathers watch mostly news programs, especially on *TRT's* news channels (4), *STV* (4) and *KANAL 7* (2), mothers watch Turkish series and daily programs prepared for women. For women the most frequently watched three TV channels, in order of frequency, *ATV* (9), *KANAL D* (6) and *SHOW TV* (5). The most three popular TV programs among families are *Adını Feriha Koydum* (3), *Fatmagülün Suçu Ne* (2), *Kurtlar Vadisi Pusu* (2) and *Ayna* (3). The first two programs are Turkish series and mothers watch it, the third one is a long-lasting TV series revealing covert face of the government (deep government, mafia, terror etc.) and preferred by fathers, the last one is a kind of documentary program introducing different countries and cultures around the globe. Mothers say that during the day *Yumurcak* (6) and *TRT Çocuk* (5) -channels for children- are mostly watched by their children.



**Table: 3.7. Newspapers, Magazines, TV Channels and Programs That Families Follow**

<b>THE MOST FREQUENTLY WATCHED THREE TV CHANNELS</b>												
T R T	S H O W TV	TV 8	KA NAL D	F O X	A T V	T N T	SA MAN YOLU	YUMUR CAK	TRT ÇO ÇUK	MEH TAP TV	KA NAL 7	S T A R
4	5	1	6	1	9	2	4	6	5	1	2	1
<b>THE MOST FREQUENTLY WATCHED THREE TV PROGRAMS</b>												
GÜL BEN	FE Rİ HA	KRALİ YET AİLE Sİ	ARKA SO KAK LAR	KUZEY - GÜNEY	KURT LAR VADİ Sİ	AY NA	ŞEFKAT TEPE	FARKLI DESEN LER	SABA TÜ MER	FATMA GÜLÜN SUÇU NE		
1	3	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	2		
<b>THE MOST FREQUENTLY READ THREE NEWSPAPERS</b>												
ZAMAN	SABAH	TERCÜMAN	BUGÜN	TARAF	MİLLİ GAZETE							
11	3	1	2	3	1							
<b>THE MOST FREQUENTLY READ THREE MAGAZINES</b>												
YAŞAM	BASİR	SEMERKAND	ALA	SIZINTI	YENİ ÜMİT	AKSIYON	BEYAN	GÜLİS TAN				
2	1	3	1	7	2	3	1	3				

### **3.3. ABOUT KINDERGARTENS AND SIBYAN OKULS**

#### **What makes these schools different?**

Before analyzing the reasons leading parents to choose these schools, it may be beneficial to ask what makes them different from their counterparts. In other words, in order to shed light on families' searches I need show what features attract parents to these two kinds of schools. Depending on the families' descriptions and my visits to these schools, they can be classified as two different institutions: kindergartens giving religious education and *sibyan okuls*. Both provide care for children as well as regular preschool education. These schools also arrange some outdoor activities by taking children to theaters, museums, aquarium, and zoo; or, they go for picnic, riding bicycles or horseback riding. Although children are not taught writing and reading Turkish, they do learn to draw letters and pictures, paint cartoons in books, counting, and -if the curriculum covers foreign language-some basic words in English. These activities are included in the curriculum of the Ministry of National Education (MEB), but these schools also provide religious education. Therefore, the difference between these schools and other kindergartens and nursery schools emerges in their providing religious education and Islamic ethics in addition to basic preschool education.

As it is explained previously, comparing with European examples, education in kindergartens and nursery schools are quite different in terms of religious education in Turkey. The first problem is the approach of the state against religious education. The content and the curriculum of religious education as well as in which grade or age it can be given are determined by the state. Thus, families cannot have a chance to provide it whenever they want or according to their beliefs or sects. Based on the secular understanding the curriculum prepared by official institutions promotes to be a good citizen by counting the priorities of the nation-state. As Hüseyin Yılmaz (2003) notes

that in a circular note declared by MEB in Official Newspaper (*Resmi Gazete*) in 1984, the purposes of preschool education are defined as "to help children develop their love to the homeland, nation, banner, philanthropy, and loyalty to moral values."<sup>48</sup> In this curriculum, we can see just a phrase in a prayer concerning religion, "Shall we pray God who saves us"<sup>49</sup>(p.148). Since all preschools regardless of public or private are run under the surveillance of the state, they cannot pass beyond this curriculum. At this point, despite the state, the schools in my example provide basic religious education compatible with families' goals.

During my visits I had a chance to look at the books used in these schools. Also I obtained information about the content from families and managers. The content of the books I examined more or less is as follows regarding religious education: teaching to read The Qur'an, memorizing short verses, hymns, prayers, poems, teaching basic Islamic rules, the prophet's life, ethics and social etiquette based on prophet's advice and practice (*sünnet*). Some of this knowledge is given through songs and poems according to the children's ages. Additionally, in these schools even if the curriculum of ethics class is similar to the ones in secular counterparts, the approach is quite different. All values are taught based on the understanding of Islamic ethics. For instance, stealing, lying and cursing are described as vicious habits because Allah does not approve these manners. Children are told they should respect family members and elderly people because Allah says in The Qur'an "...". Or, they must keep nature clean and love animals because

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<sup>48</sup> Original saying: "...çocuklarda vatan, millet, bayrak ve insan sevgisinin, manevi değerlere bağlılığın gelişmesine yardımcı olmak..." For the last (2012) version of the regulations in preschool education see <http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/25486.html>

In these last regulation the purposes of preschool education is defined in the 6<sup>th</sup> matter as "to prepare base for raising children who embrace the love of Atatürk, homeland, nation (millet), banner, family and human; loyal to national (milli) and moral (manevi) values... "

<sup>49</sup> Original Sentence in Turkish: *Bizi koruyan Tanrı'ya dua edelim*. In this sentence the secular word *Tanrı* is preferred instead of Allah.

prophet says "...” and so on.<sup>50</sup> They are taught hymns and short prayers for reciting after meals or during daily prayers. In these schools, not only official festivals but also Eids are celebrated. Or, at least teachers and managers reach the parents and celebrate their religious festivals and some special religious days (*kandil*).<sup>51</sup> Children memorize poems by national poets writing with religious connotations (*milli*) rather than secular ones (*ulusal*)<sup>52</sup>.

When I asked parents about the curriculum they gave similar answers. What is distinctive here is that in terms of religious education the curriculum of *sıbyan okuls* is more intense than that of kindergartens. For example, a father, whose child goes to a kindergarten, says, "My child has learned so far reading The Qur'an (*Elif-ba*)<sup>53</sup>, some *duas* (for example, one performed during the meal), some proverbs and short hadiths, Islamic ethics given through some stories and prophet's or saints' lives." A mother of a child in a different kindergarten summarizes the religious education given there as basic Islamic knowledge in addition to teaching to read The Qur'an. Another mother explains the curriculum for a kindergarten: social etiquette (*adab-ı muşeret*), basic Islamic rules, prophet's life (*siyer*) and reading The Qur'an. A mother whose child goes to a *sıbyan okul* elaborates the curriculum for six-

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<sup>50</sup> In order to clarify this approach an example concerning adults may be beneficial. For example, from the secular approach, by not paying taxes we do not fulfill our duty of citizenship and we violate the laws. But from an Islamic approach, not paying taxes is considered as one of the violations of a right of humans (*kul hakkı*). If someone violates a person's right, he must beg forgiveness from that person first and then from Allah. As in the case in any violation against people, this type of violation is out of Allah's forgiveness unless it is first begged from all people in that country. Of course, this situation is the same for the rulers who determine the taxes and use revenues for the benefits of public. The issue of what the responsibility of rulers and rights of ruled are a long story and surpass my example.

<sup>51</sup> A mother tells about her experience about kindergartens' approach to the holidays and religious eids in the following section.

<sup>52</sup> See for the comparison of the words *millet/milli* and *ulus/ulusal* : Karpaz (2011) Karpaz says that even though *millet* and *milliyetçilik* have a deep root in Turkish-Islamic history, nowadays *ulus* and *ulusculuk* are commonly used in place of these terms in Turkey. He explains that the term *ulus* is originally a Mongolian word and after a long silence it was revived in the Republican Era (*Cumhuriyet Dönemi*) (pp.11-12).

<sup>53</sup> *Elif-ba* is used shortly to define a 20-30-page- book including Arabic letters, some syllabus and words from The Qur'an in addition to short prayers and verses from The Qur'an. So, this thin book is used for learning to read The Qur'an.

year-old children as follows: reading The Qur'an, Islamic rules and daily practice (*fiqh*), basics of Islamic belief (*akaid*), *siyer*, and ethics. For another sbyan school a mother says, "My child has learned how to read The Qur'an, some short verses for daily prayers, hymns and basic Islamic ethics in this *sbyan okul*."

As a minor example, during the interviews with parents, two mothers proudly mentioned that their children had memorized ten whole quatrains of the Turkish National Anthem (the Independence March) composed by an Islamist, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, during the independence war (before the declaration of the republic). I asked about this to the managers of the preschools during the interviews. They confirmed that, as a usual practice in schools, they try to teach all students two quatrains of this anthem, but they choose some students and help them memorize to recite in some special occasions in which families are present. Normally, the first two quatrains are commonly recited in schools. This may be a detail but it is important because the rest of Turkish National Anthem includes many more Islamic phrases than do the earlier quatrains. It may be helpful to read all the verses but I share just phrases here. For example, there is only one phrase within the first two quatrains. It is written in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quatrain: "For freedom is the absolute right of my God (*Hakk*)-worshipping nation". However, it is composed in the 4<sup>th</sup> quatrain "...But I have borders guarded by the mighty chest of a believer"; "Days which God (*Hakk* not *Tanrı*) has promised to give you will dawn" in the 5<sup>th</sup> quatrain; "You're the noble son of a martyr..." in the 6<sup>th</sup> quatrain; "Martyrs would gush out should one simply squeeze the soil! Martyrs! / May God (*Hüda*) take my life, all my loved ones and possessions from me if He will" in the 7<sup>th</sup> quatrain; "Oh Lord (*İlahi*), the sole wish of my heart is that, / No infidel's hand should ever touch the bosom of my temple. These adhans (*ezan*), the shahadahs of which are the base of the religion" in the 8<sup>th</sup> quatrain; "Then my tombstone, if there is one, will a thousand times

touch its forehead on earth (like in *salah*) in ecstasy,” in the 9<sup>th</sup> quatrain, “glorious crescent” and again “For freedom is the absolute right of my God (*Hakk*)-worshiping nation!” in the 10<sup>th</sup> quatrain.<sup>54</sup>

The identity of the poet, his life and his poems, specifically the meaning of the anthem, where and when it is written and accepted (before 1923) must be taken into consideration to have a better understanding. Comparing it with other marches composed after 1923<sup>55</sup> it can be seen that this poem represents the love of homeland and nation (*millet*) from a more religious perspective. In addition to making children recite it in situations where families are present, when it is considered that the poem is beyond the level of understanding of the 4-6- year-old-children in terms of both its message and the intense Ottoman words, it can be deduced that with this poem sentiments of families are addressed too.

In my visits to two kindergartens I saw their managers and obtained information about their schools and the education given in these schools. Having a triple-apartment and a big playing ground in their garden, both schools run under the supervision and control of MEB. Based on the responses of parents in my research, these types of schools demand 400-700 TL as monthly tuition, including transportation and lunch (for the monthly tuition of the schools see the table 3.12.). I talked with managers of two kindergartens: Hale and Nazlı.

Hale, with headscarf, is both manager and a preschool teacher. After working in a preschool as a teacher for three years, she began to work in

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<sup>54</sup> For English translation and the history of the Turkish Independence Anthem see: <http://www.turkishclass.com/turkey/essay/admin/istiklal-marsi-translation-turkish-marches-and-p2>; for a different translation see also: <http://lyricstranslate.com/en/istiklal-marsi-liberation-march.html>; for a summary of the poet’s life in English see: <http://yagmurcan.blogcu.com/mehmet-akif-ersoyun-hayati-ve-istiklal-marsi-ingilizce/5286948> .

<sup>55</sup> See the famous march *10. Yıl Marşı* (The 10th Year March) written by *Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVvAQDVQ550>.

this school as a manager. Hale's school is the most expensive one among those I heard about during my interviews.<sup>56</sup> The monthly tuition of this school changes between TL 600-700 depending on the transportation need.

I ask about their education. **Hale** says that they give a regular preschool education. Then she elaborates,

We work under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education. So, we offer all facilities that a usual kindergarten does, maybe more. For example, we teach folk dances, chess and English; take students to swimming pools, the zoo, theaters and museums; also in the spring we go riding and on picnics; and arrange visits to handicapped and elderly people.

I asked Hale what the difference between her school and other private or public schools was. She replied that their education covers both national and moral values (*milli ve manevi değerler*). She says, "Children take here basic Islamic knowledge depending on their families' demands. Families want to provide preschool education and religious education together. We teach moral values based on Islamic understanding through reading them some stories and voiced education with poems and songs." She says that ethics and moral values can be taught in different ways: "In any school children may be taught to respect their friends and parents. But our approach is different. For instance, we tell our students to respect one another and do not be offended; instead, forgive each other. We make them to memorize a hadith mentioning that a Muslim cannot be stay offended for three days against another Muslim. Also, one of the first things we teach is respect and love of parents. We teach a verse from The Qur'an showing how we must behave our parents, especially mothers: "do not say even 'uff' to your

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<sup>56</sup> Some mothers told that the tuition of some preschools associated with colleges is more expensive (around TL1000) than a usual kindergarten. During my research I did not see any child go to a kindergarten of a college (*kolej*).

mother.”<sup>57</sup> Finally by addressing to Mehmet Akif’s poem she says, “I think that an understanding of religious ethics is more effective.”<sup>58</sup>

**Nazlı**, not wearing a headscarf, after working as a manager in private sector for years, begins as a manager in a kindergarten and has worked in this school for three years. She says first: “What we aim in this education is to give preschool education together with value-based education.” She continues,

Families in this neighborhood are asking whether we give religious education or not. I think that we fill a gap in this scope by meeting their demands. We give an education which is compatible with traditional Turkish-Islamic values. The Neighborhood is very important. Parents may not demand this sort of education in Kadıköy or even Doğancılar (a neighborhood in Üsküdar neighboring Kadıköy and the location of the first quarter of Turkish Army). However, in many neighborhoods in Üsküdar it is possible. I think that in Turkey it is necessary to give this education in early ages because the new generation has degenerated.

I ask her what their curriculum is and she answers:

Our education covers regular preschool education based on the Ministry of National Education towards improving the physical

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<sup>57</sup> The Qur’an 17:23. For English translation of Abdullah Yusuf Ali see: <http://www.kuranikerim.com/english/17.html>

<sup>58</sup> *"Ne irfandır veren ahlâka yükseklik, ne vicdandır; Fazîlet hissi insanlarda Allah korkusundandır."*

-Mehmet Akif Ersoy-

My translation: Neither knowledge nor conscience gives sublimity to ethics /But the sense of virtue springs from awe to Allah.

For Turkish version of this poem see:

[http://www.mehmetakifarastirmalari.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=68&Itemid=90My](http://www.mehmetakifarastirmalari.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=68&Itemid=90My)



and mental skills of children, preparing them for elementary school and arranging social activities.

When I asked her about families, she replies,

Many of them have a religious background. More broadly I can say that they are conservative families and they respect religion and tradition. We have some parents who have not had any religious education and some mothers do not wear headscarf, like me. Even there is a social-democrat family among them in this year. Some of them say that they cannot teach their children but want them to take religious education. They support their children to know their religion well, to love their country and nation (*millet*), to respect parents. That is what we aim with the education provided in this school.

The other type of school resembles traditional home schools as we see in the first chapter. However, the difference is that they are not content with just providing religious education but they also offer regular preschool education. These schools are known as *sıbyan okulu*. As its name reveals, it is a mixture of tradition and modernity. Before modern *iptidai mektebs* became widespread in Ottoman Empire, the traditional primary schools were *sıbyan mektebs*. Then, all *mektebs* and *medreses* were replaced by modern "okul"s in the Republican Era. Therefore, by getting "sıbyan" from Ottoman tradition and "okul" from secular Turkish Republic, the public intentionally or unintentionally call it *sıbyan okulu*. Their curriculum reconciles these two, too; basic religious education on the one hand and modern preschool education on the other.

As it is mentioned in the first chapter, in Islamic history as well as in Ottoman Empire, basic education was given as reading and memorizing The Qur'an (in Arabic). In addition to teach reading The Qur'an, students were

taught religious rules (*ilmihal*) and social etiquette based on Islamic belief (*adab-ı muşeret*). As mentioned in the second chapter, this form never disappeared in Turkey; it was maintained in villages and cities through individual education even in the years when religious education was banned or strictly controlled in Turkey. However, what is new is the transformation of this type of education into a preschool education in some neighborhoods. Thus, these schools are differentiated from today's SQCs held in the mosques for two-three months each summer. Now, women who graduated from a QS or an IHHS come together with one or two preschool teachers and open their houses for children. In these houses they give preschool education in addition to traditional education mentioned above. I talked with an owner of this kind of school and asked her story. Aslı is a QS graduate and memorized whole The Qur'an (hafiz) years ago. **Aslı** told the story of her school in a funny way:

We were supposing that preschool education existed just for working mothers or -by making fun of them- the upper classes (*sosyete* in Turkish). Then I heard that somewhere there is a school where religious education and preschool education are given together. About 10 years ago, I took my younger son to provide religious education to this home school in Beykoz. My child learned The Qur'an and basic Islamic rules from a female hodja (*hoca hanım*)<sup>59</sup>. He was under 6 years old and in winter it was really hard to go there from Üsküdar. There was no transportation service and after getting off bus, he was walking a long distance for a child. Nevertheless, he continued for a while. I believe that basic religious education and reading The Qur'an must be taught by an expert like this *hoca hanım*; or

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<sup>59</sup> This *hoca hanım* obtained religious education through a traditional way not from İlahiyat Faculty; that is, she took classes from some other hodjas. She memorized The Qur'an, studied hadith and Islamic law (fiqh).

else, it can be corrected hardly ever. When I come together with my friends, I offered that we could open our house for children here in Üsküdar. Our apartment was suitable and had a garden, too. So, I opened it seven years ago in my apartment. Then two years ago I rented a house and still continue there. After I opened my home, two of my friends opened their houses too. Therefore, I can say that this education occurred as a result of an urgent need. That is, religious people have benefited this education according to their needs.

By the time she checked preschool books and provided materials and toys for children. Now, with two assistants she gives basic preschool and religious education. One of the teachers is a graduate of an İlahiyat Faculty and other graduated from a QS. There is one female cook preparing lunch and one male driver<sup>60</sup> providing transportation service. In her school there are about 30 students mixed boys and girls. She says,

We accept children who are between 4 and 6 years old. There are three classes arranged by ages: one is for beginners, and the second is intermediate and the last is higher. The last level consists of mostly six-year-old children. If a child learns quickly we can upgrade him or her regardless of age because their ages are very close to each other.

I ask her why parents prefer this education and her school. She replies,

Many families live in this neighborhood and know us. These families mostly took religious education too. Some mothers work and need to leave her child somewhere. Yet, they do not

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<sup>60</sup> This driver does not merely works for this *sıbyan okul* but works for other schools, too, including elementary schools.

prefer a nursery school but want their children to learn something useful. Our tuition is cheaper than kindergartens also. To be realistic, nobody sends his or her child to a school just because it is cheaper. I mean they approve this education and demand from us to teach basic Islamic knowledge. You know that we do not just give religious education here. We do not teach writing but through voiced education they learn letters, numbers and counting. We have a guest English teacher. She teaches basic words in English, colors, fruits etc. We arrange extra outdoor activities and visits as much as we can. So, we try to entertain these children and they also gain a basis for elementary school and can adapt easily. Some mothers say that some teachers in elementary schools distinguish their children from others and ask them whether their children have taken any preschool education.

Related to my thesis, she mentions that parents generally complain about not finding an institution to provide religious education. She was only one among four managers emphasizing the role of 8-year compulsory education on insufficient religious education in Turkey:

I think that 8-year compulsory education played an important role on parents' demands. As I explained before I had never heard that this kind of education exists 10-15 years ago because there were some ways to become *hafiz*<sup>61</sup> or take religious education. You know better that before February 28<sup>th</sup>, it was possible to go to a QS after 5 year elementary school education (around 12 years old). Now it is possible after 15 years old. Also the middle branches of IHHSs were open and

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<sup>61</sup> *Hafiz* is one memorizing whole The Qur'an. This education takes mostly two-three years in a boarding school.

students benefited this education after elementary school. Before the change, students could take basic Islamic education in middle branches of these schools and continued in high schools. Now, without any basis some students go to these schools in high school level.

As a contribution to Aslı's explanation it may be useful to recall another option for graduates of former elementary schools. At that time compulsory education was limited to five years and students could pursue their education through open middle and high schools by continuing the QS at the same time. This option is offered after 8-year compulsory education for high school education.<sup>62</sup>

I talked with two different owners of similar schools. Another hoca, **Hatice**, graduated from an Education Faculty and then memorized The Qur'an. I can say that the curriculum and the system of her school resemble Aslı's school. After she tells her story, she talks about her motives. She narrates, "I came from a totally different life. I was a Muslim before starting university but I really learned Islam during the university years." She considers what she tries to do as a responsibility. She thinks that teaching The Qur'an and basic religious education is a responsibility bearing upon every Muslim parent even if the state does not provide it. According to her, her school helps families fulfill this responsibility. Based on her experience she underlines a problem that children do not want to take any religious education after elementary school, or at least it becomes harder because they have to sacrifice from their further education or leisure times to get this education. "After this age, it is really hard to teach," she says. She also adds, "comparing with our childhood, now computer games, cartoons and movies have a destructive

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<sup>62</sup> All interviews in this research were completed before the educational system was changed. The new system includes three staged-12- year- compulsory education with the formula of 4+4+4; so, after elementary school, students have different options in terms of religious education.

effect on children' subconscious. You know that there are some books mentioning how some messages and lifestyles are given through these games and cartoons. We have to value these ages to teach ethics and our religion, or else it is really hard to correct them after they are poisoned." She says that some parents are aware of this situation and demand religious education in early ages. She states, "Degeneration nowadays comes first among the issues most complained about by parents."

**Table 3:8 How did parents learn these schools?**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Where did you hear from this school? (Open Question)</b>
11	From family friends
2	From neighbors
2	From relatives
1	It is in my neighborhood
1	Publicity, brochures
1	Search

Lastly, even though I will examine the table 3:8 in the following section, a summary may be beneficial in this section too. When I asked respondents how they learned about these schools they mainly said that they were informed by their family friends (11 times). The next most frequent response was from neighborhood and relatives with two times. There was only one respondent saying that the school is located in their neighborhood and very close to home. One respondent mentioned that she found the school as a result of search, whereas other respondent said she was informed through a brochure.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **SEARCH FOR AN ALTERNATIVE WAY IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION**

As I mentioned before, during my visits to families I gave questionnaires first and followed by interviews according to their answers. In the questionnaires after I obtained a background about families, I asked an open question to learn their motivation in choosing these schools: "What were the most important three factors causing you to choose this school?" Asking this question I targeted to have extra information because I might miss some factors in my statements (see tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3). Through questionnaires they gave me some responses concerning usual factors, such as tuition, nearness, preparation for elementary school and some others peculiar to aforementioned schools. I counted fourteen factors and wanted mothers to measure them from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Finally, among the fourteen factors, I asked mothers to list the three most important factors causing them to prefer this school.

#### **4.1. FACTORS CAUSING PARENTS TO CHOOSE THESE SCHOOLS**

##### **4.1.1. Nearness**

Among these factors in table 4.1, nearness is one of the most written answers. In order to understand how determinant this factor is I asked: "Is there any other private or public preschool or kindergarten nearer your home?" There were fifteen respondents saying "Yes" and three saying "No". So, for the large majority of respondents there are public or private kindergartens in their neighborhood nearer than the preferred school.

According to table 4.2 eight respondents agree and nine disagree with the statement of "I chose this school because it is near my home or my work." Also, table 4.3 shows that nearness is one of the most important factors on

parents' choice. Seven respondents affirm that it is important in their choice. It is also third in rating, following religious education (sixteen times) and teaching ethics (ten times).

**Table: 4.1. Three factors causing families to choose these schools**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>What were the most important <u>three factors</u> causing you to choose this school?(Open Question)</b>
8	Nearness *
7	General Education
7	Islamic/Religious Education
7	Helping child socialize/ Having friends/Arranging social activities
5	Tuition
3	Ethics and Moral Values
3	Teachers
2	Preparation for Elementary School
1	Protecting the child from TV
1	Care
1	Religious Education and Ethics
1	Religious Education and Preparation Together
1	Institutional Education
1	Cleanliness
1	Teachers are good example for my child
1	Recommendation

\*Is there any other private or public preschool or kindergarten nearer your home? Yes: 15, No: 3.



**Table: 4.2. Factors leading families to choose these schools**

SD: Strongly Disagree; DA: Disagree; NAND: Neither Agree nor Disagree; A: Agree; SA: Strongly Agree

<b>Number of Factors</b>	<b>Factors (Selective)</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>DA</b>	<b>NA ND</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
1	I chose this school because it is near my home or my work.	2	7	1	6	2
2	I chose this school because it provides transportation service.	2	6	2	7	1
3	I chose this school because the tuition of the school is cheaper than others.	1	8	1	7	1
4	I chose this school because the school prepares my child for elementary school.		3	1	9	5
5	I chose this school because the school arranges social activities to entertain my child.		2	4	10	2
6	I chose this school because the school helps my child have friends and to socialize.		2	4	9	3
7	I chose this school because my neighbor's child/relative's child goes to same school.	4	9		4	1
8	I chose this school because my worldview (culturally, religiously, politically etc.) coincides with that of this institution.			2	8	8
9	I chose this school because the teachers at this school are good role models for my child.			2	10	6
10	I chose this school because the school teaches a foreign language.	1	9	4	4	
11	I chose this school because the school teaches ethics.		1		7	10
12	I chose this school because the school gives religious education.		1		8	9
13	I/we chose this school because both mother and father work.	8	9		1	
14	I/we chose this school because I/we do not have any relatives to take care of my/our children when I/we work.	8	8		1	1

**Table: 4.3. The Frequency of the Most Effective Three Factors Among Fourteen Factors**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>CHOOSE THE MOST EFFECTIVE 3 FACTORS AMONG 14</b>
16	I chose this school because the school gives religious education.
10	I chose this school because the school teaches ethics.
7	I chose this school because it is near my home or my work.
6	I chose this school because the school helps my child have friends and socialize.
5	I chose this school because the school prepares my child for elementary school.
3	I chose this school because my worldview (culturally, religiously, politically etc.) coincides with this institution.
3	I chose this school because the tuition of the school is cheaper than others.
2	I chose this school because the school arranges social activities to entertain my child.
2	I chose this school because the teachers at this school are good role models for my child.

Moreover, since transportation service is provided by these schools, as a mother mentions, nearness may be a minor factor. Two of the children of the parents in my study did not benefit from this service because they walk to school. During the interviews, when I asked mothers how long does it take from school to the home by service, none replied more than 30 minutes. Also, during an interview one family mentioned that they would not send their child to a school in another borough. I can understand their concern because Istanbul is a huge city and traffic jams are a major problem of this metropolitan city. Parents may not want to consent a 4/6-year-old child to spend over one hour in rush hour even if he or she is in safe in a van. Keeping in mind that Beykoz, Üsküdar and Ümraniye are neighboring boroughs, when I compare the boroughs of family residence to the borough where the school is located , I find two families residing in Üsküdar but sending their children to a school in Ümraniye and vice versa. The rest (fourteen families) chose a school located in their borough of residence.

Additionally, during our conversation in interviews two mothers emphasized nearness as an important factor. **Betül**, a working mother, sends her daughter to the school where her niece goes. Although her daughter is picked up in the morning and left after the school, Betül stressed that she would not have sent her daughter to the school if it had not been near to her older sister's house because her niece goes to this school and her sister can take care of both children during the day. She says, "Unfortunately, my daughter could not adapt to this school and I do not plan to send her to this school for the second term. Interestingly she does not want to go to school but to spend her time with her grandmother (they live in the same building.)" As it is understood from Betül's explanations, the factor is not nearness but her older sister's care and her niece's accompaniment.

Another mother, **Asiye**, states that there is a *sıbyan okul* in their neighborhood and she accompanies her 5-year-old daughter every day while going to school and back home. She says that she would not dare send her child to one of these schools if the school were not near to home. She is satisfied with the education; even so, nearness is the most effective factor for her in choosing this school.

Overall, based on the tables and parent's responses, I can say that nearness may be helpful in choosing one school among others; however, it cannot be the answer of why these families prefer especially this kind of education for preschool education.

#### 4.1.2. Affordable Tuition

As a general reason in choosing school affordable tuition may have an important role. The question here is whether parents would prefer these schools just because this education is cheaper. Before examining this question, it may be helpful to give the monthly tuition of these schools.

As it is presented in table 4.4, the tuitions of these kindergartens and *sibyan okuls* differ from each other. Among my respondents, five families prefer kindergartens and thirteen prefer *sibyan okuls*. In total there are nineteen children of eighteen families benefited from this education. In other words, fourteen children take this education in *sibyan okuls* and five children in kindergartens. Kindergartens have more facilities to attract children. They are also run under the surveillance of MEB. So they determine a regular price as in private kindergartens in these boroughs. Yet, the tuition of these schools ranges between 400 and 700 Turkish Liras.

**Table: 4.4. Monthly Tuition of the Schools (TL)**

Tuition of the School	Number of Family paying this tuition	Monthly Earnings of Families*	Preferred School	Total
700	1	Over 3000	KINDERGARTENS	5
645	1	1500-2000		
600	2	2000-2500;2500-3000		
400	1	1500-2000		
300	2	2000-2500(2)	SIBYAN OKULS	13**
250	2	1500-2000;2000-2500		
200	5	1000-1500(2);1500-2000(2);2500-3000		
160	1	2000-2500		
150***	3	less than 1000; 1000-1500;2500-3000		

\*Comparison of family budget and monthly tuition of the school. Numbers in parenthesis show how many families with these earnings prefer the school with this tuition.

\*\*19 children of 18 families; 14 children go to 13 *sibyan okuls* and 5 children go to kindergartens.

\*\*\*One family whose monthly earning is between 2500-3000 pays 300 for the tuition of two children, so the tuition of that school is 150 for each.

In my visits to kindergartens, I asked two managers the tuition of the schools. **Hale** replied that normally they demand TL 700 but they are not rigid in this price because of several reasons such as families' financial situation, benefiting transportation service or not, being an acquaintance of a teacher in this institution or a family previously sending their children to this school. She also adds, "There are some families having a few children and they study at different schools in different levels. So they cannot afford to pay TL 700 for this education. Some parents have two children or relatives in our school. They demand a discount for two children, for example. We have to take all these situations into consideration in registration."

Another manager **Nazlı**, mentioned that their tuition is between TL 500-600 depending on families budget. She continues,

The families preferring our school learn the existence of this school mostly from their family friends. It is good on the one hand because we do not need to spend any effort for advertising, but on the other hand it is a disadvantage for us in determining a fixed price for tuition. When we make a discount for a child, another family hears it in a family meeting or gathering and demands the same tuition for their children. So, in many cases we cannot turn them back and make a discount.

*Sıbyan okuls* cannot offer the same atmosphere offered in kindergartens. Based on my observation and families' testimony, they are established in one flat and accept 20-30 students according to largeness of the flat. Since they do not have a garden they assign a big room as a playground for children. They try to compensate this deficiency with extra outdoor activities by taking children to ride horse, go to picnic, theater, zoo, museum and so forth. In this case they demand extra money for these activities as kindergartens do. As it is shown in table 4.4, there are different price for monthly tuition

changing between TL 150 and 300. Comparing with private kindergartens, they demand a modest amount of money for tuition. In the table 4.4, three respondents say that they pay TL 150. Two of them are siblings and this family pays TL 300 for their two children.

When I asked Asli and Hatice about their tuition, they posited the similar reasons mentioned by Hale and Nazlı. **Aslı** additionally explained that there are some families who are very poor and cannot pay TL 300 for month. So, if she knows such a family, she makes a discount or finds a financial support, or some benevolent people pay for this child. She articulates, "Considering transportation service and lunch, monthly expenses for rent and bills, teacher's salary, the tuition is not enough to sustain this school." Some families and benevolent businessmen support her school. **Hatice** says,

Our tuition is already low and do not meet the expenses of activities. So when we arrange any activities we have to demand extra TL 10-20 according to event. For example when we go to a theater we inform families and demand extra money for this event. Of course, in case of demanding extra money some families sometimes cannot afford it. So, either we try to find this money or have to arrange limited events so that all students can join them.

I go back to the question how much the affordable tuition determines families' preference. When we look at table 4.1 (open question), we see that there are five answers among 50-this also means five different families - saying that the tuition of the school is one of the most important three factors in choosing these schools. In this table it comes after religious education (in total nine times), nearness (eight times), general education (seven times) and the contribution to the socialization of children (seven times). In table 4.2, nine respondents disagree and eight agree with the

statement of “I chose this school because the tuition of the school is cheaper than others.” In table 4.3, when respondents are requested to choose the most effective three factors among fourteen statements, three respondents affirm that tuition is a determinant for choosing these schools.

On the other hand, when I compare parents’ monthly earnings with the tuition of schools, I see that except for a few, families choose a school compatible with their family budget. What draws my attention in table 4.4 is that four families with monthly earnings of TL 2000-2500 and two families with TL 2500-3000 prefer *sibyan okuls* by paying at most TL 300 per month although they can afford to send their children to a kindergarten. Also, one family earning TL 2500-3000 pays TL 300 for two children. What is strange is that one family with TL1500-2000 monthly earnings pays TL 645 for the monthly tuition of a kindergarten. When I asked the mother how they can afford the tuition of this school, she says “We have our own apartment and so save for rent. We have only one child and invest in his future.”

Consequently, considering the all data depicted in the tables above I can say that the monthly tuition of these schools is not the dominant factor for families’ preference. I reach this conclusion because the tuition of kindergartens is more or less determined to fall at the level of other kindergartens. So, families who prefer kindergartens can afford to send to ones giving secular education. Further, in terms of family budget, six families among 13 preferring *sibyan okuls* may afford to send their children to a kindergarten; rather, they choose a *sibyan okul*. If their greatest concern were the tuition of the school, they would have chosen public preschools instead of kindergartens or *sibyan okuls*.

However, tuition may be important in choosing a *sibyan okul* instead of a kindergarten. Comparing these two kinds of schools, families may not want to pay more for a similar curriculum in religious education. In this case

families would face a tradeoff between a cheaper one and one offering more extra opportunities. Although families were satisfied with the education in *sıbyan okuls*, in the interviews four mothers mentioned that instead of a *sıbyan okul* if they could have afforded it they would have sent their children to a kindergarten giving religious education. In sum, it is understood that parents choose these school because of its education.

#### 4.1.3. Contribution to Socialization of Children

Before seeing these families, I was expecting that parents would mention the need for socialization of children and- no matter what kind of education is given- that preschools are chosen for this reason too. So, I was not surprised when parents chose socialization as a reason to send their children to a preschool or complained about it.

Apart from my project, in my regular visits to my friends and relatives I had witnessed countless times people complaining about how Istanbul changed within the last 20 years through immigration. According to them (I am on this side, too) they were lucky because- comparing their childhood with the new generation- they passed the world in a better time due to several reasons. First, little space today remains for children to play but what used to be empty space is now occupied with buildings. They exaggerate by saying that they sometimes take a trip to find a place to having picnic with family members in Istanbul. They feel as if they need to find a place to entertain their children. Many of these places are artificial<sup>63</sup>; neighborhoods do not fulfill this function anymore. Some parents were also complaining that neighborhoods are not safe anymore for kids. Comparing with their school years they say that in elementary or middle school they used to go to school by walking or taking a bus; however, they cannot dare the same thing for

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<sup>63</sup>This is not just about AVM's but I think the phenomenon of AVMs (a giant mall including restaurants, cafes, cinemas, playgrounds and stores) becoming widespread in the big cities needs to be examined in many aspects including this.



their children because they hear an incident about a purse snatching, stealing, kidnapping, harassment, killing people on the street, etc., every day in the news. Because of aforementioned reasons they mention that they can neither trust the environment nor the school. However, in such a case children cannot socialize and thus feel imprisoned in the house in front of a TV or computer. Of course, the negative effects of TV and internet too should be considered on lack of socialization.<sup>64</sup> Although the validity of all these comments need to be supported by further independent researches, during my research parents contributed these evaluations of the characteristics of socialization opportunities available to their children.

Families in my research mention this factor with different phrases, such as for "having friends," "my child's socialization," "social activities." I think collecting all these responses in one factor is more reasonable. According to families' responses in table 4.1, seven respondents see this factor as determinant in their preference. Therefore, it is one of the most often mentioned, together with "religious education," "nearness," "general education" and "tuition." In table 4.2, the fifth and sixth statements are related with socialization. In the fifth statement while twelve respondents agree with the statement, "I chose this school because the school arranges social activities to entertain my child," two respondents disagree. Similarly, in the next statement, twelve agree with the statement, "I chose this school because the school helps my child have friends and socialize." Again, two respondents disagree whereas four respondents stay neutral to this statement. Interestingly, when requested to determine the most effective three factors among fourteen statements, among 54 answers two of them are assigned to the fifth statement and six of them to the sixth statement. Even if in total there are eight responses regarding socialization, they select "having friends" more than "social activities and entertainment."

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<sup>64</sup> From this aspect further researches about the negative effects of the internet and social media on family members may provide a better understanding.

Overall, the contribution of the school to the socialization of children is a determinant factor. Nevertheless, one question stays unanswered: why did these families not choose a regular public or private kindergarten if they aimed for their children to socialize? So, social activities and contribution of socialization may be a supportive factor in choosing these schools. We need to evaluate this factor with others in order to reach a better conclusion because it is important where and with whom these kids are socialized.

During the interviews, even though parents did not talk specifically about this factor, they referred to it when they answered why they sent their children to these schools. Even if a few mothers complained about the lack of parks, the need for peers to play and socialization in a safe environment, they addressed this issue together with education as a whole. However, I note that concerning the factor of the contribution of socialization of children and social activities they mention social events, gaining self-confidence, making friends and learning from others as attractive factors; they list no more choices at home for children except computer games and watching cartoons on TV and no play ground around the home or in the neighborhood as repulsive ones. Because of these attractive factors of the school and repulsive factors of home and the neighborhood, they need a preschool.

As it is seen in table 4.1 one mother specifically writes that she sends her child to protect her from TV. During the interview, **Selma** directly pointed out the need for a school in terms of both keeping her child from being degenerated and to help her daughter socialize. She says that her son likes his school very much. She explains the reasons:

Although he learns at school, too, he does not go to school to learn but he is eager to play with his friends. At home, he is imprisoned in front of TV every day. Also, I do not let him play any computer games so that he does not become addicted to

it. There was only one option: to take him to the park every day. I sometimes took him to the park but he did not have friends there. As soon as he went to the school, he made friends and participated in social activities and events. So, he does not have to watch cartoons anymore during the day.

**Rukiye** mentions that her child has a problem in her arm and needs to exercise. Rukiye adds,

My daughter goes to a *sıbyan okul*, which is very close to my home, for three days on weekdays. Activities and games are helpful to use her disabled hand. I take her to the hospital for physical treatment and depending on her doctor's advice I also take her to a swimming pool every weekend in order to activate her arm.

Another mother **Elif** says that she has only one child, a son. He is so bored because he is alone. She states, "The given education is important for my child but I must confess that my children do not learn all. Expecting from a 4 year-old- child to learn everything given in these schools is not realistic. I mean that the sole reason is not the religious education. In my cases his socialization comes first because I cannot help him at home and need a place meeting this need."

**Ahmet** and **Zuhal** give more details about the need for socialization of children. **Zuhal** explains why preschool education is important for her:

It may be a classic saying (cliché) but they learn easily and quickly in these ages.<sup>65</sup> But more importantly if they stay at home they will have a timid character and cannot express

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<sup>65</sup> A Turkish proverb: *Ağaç yaşken eğilir.*

themselves. Today's children are more self-confident compared to our generation. Also I think that this education helps them develop their physical and mental skills. We cannot give all these at home and they can learn them easily in mutual learning at schools.

**Ahmet** pursues,

Maybe it is not true to say for children in this age but competition is an important factor in teaching or learning. When they do something good, their teacher draws a smiling face on their notebooks. Even this makes them happy and they become eager to memorize poems, *duas* and songs, or behave properly to gain a 'well-done'. They also encourage children through some presents and merit points. By the way, I do not ignore the benefit of keeping our child away from TV.

Another couple, **Eyüp** and **Nurdan**, emphasizes the importance of the environment to socialize while counting three important reasons to choose this school. **Eyüp** says, "If I have to count three important reasons, I would say: education based on religion and ethics, a good social environment and usual preschool education." **Nurdan** adds, "I think this school offers a good opportunity for our child to socialize in a safe environment."

As a result, even if parents use different phrases, they put forward the idea of school as necessary for the socialization of children. In my opinion, this factor is one of the most important ones why parents prefer a preschool. This factor must also be considered together with a need for institutional education because these people do not send their children just for playing games. So, the following sections help us evaluate this factor better.

#### 4.1.4. Working Mothers and Extra Time for Mothers' Self Education

Depending on my common sense I was thinking that the phenomenon of working mothers might play an important role in the search of a preschool. But this research did not justify my assumption. As it is seen in table 4.1, there is no answer concerning the phenomenon of working mothers and only one response mentioning care. Since working mothers was a possible factor, I included it in my statements. The thirteenth and fourteenth statements in table 4.2 are closely related with this factor. For the response of the 13<sup>th</sup> statement positing "I/we chose this school because both mother and father work," seventeen respondents disagree and one respondents agree with this statement. Similarly, in the 14<sup>th</sup> statement sixteen respondents disagree with the statement "I/we chose this school because I/we do not have any relatives to take care of my/our children when I/we work" whereas two respondents agree with it. As in table 4.1, in table 4.3 there is nobody ranking this factor as important in their search for preschool education either.

When it is considered that among my respondents only four mothers work outside the home, the irrelevance of this factor do not contradict this situation. In other words, there are fourteen housewives and two of them at the same time work at home; hence, they have time to take care of their children. Further, in case they work they have relatives to take care of their children. Considering that twelve families having a close relative, such as grandmother or aunt of children in the same building or near home, this factor is unimportant in their search for a preschool education. Even if it were important, I would ask why they did not choose a regular private or public kindergarten. From this perspective, it is understood that they do not look for only care.

On the other hand, I interestingly found that housewives are busy with self education. By sending their children to a school (not just preschool) they can allocate time for their extra courses and activities. As it is mentioned in the previous chapter, except for two housewives working at home, seven of twelve mothers have extra courses, such as foreign language, Open University or graduate education. Among them, five mothers take language courses two days a week in İSMEK. In our conversations this issue was not addressed but I think that sending children to a preschool creates extra time for mothers. Consequently, preschool education helps some mothers set aside time for their self education and extra activities.

#### 4.1.5. Overlapping Worldviews and Search for a Role Model

Another factor that I thought might be influential on parents' choice was overlapping worldviews. This is actually related to education and therefore to families' expectation from these schools. Hence, it may have been more reasonable to share it under the title of religious education. But there are some minor stories that I want to share under the title of worldview. Let's examine tables before passing to tell these stories.

In the open question in table 4.1, no respondent specifically mentions overlapping worldviews. However, in table 4.2 when I ask them to respond to the statement "I chose this school because my worldview (culturally, religiously, politically, etc.) coincides with this institution," sixteen respondents agree and two respond neutrally. As the following table shows, three of them rank this factor as one of the most important among fourteen factors. Whereas they overwhelmingly agree with the 8<sup>th</sup> statement in table 4.2, they do not clearly pursue their attitude in ranking this factor among fourteen factors. This lower ranking seems to be explained because they dominantly choose the given education based on religious education and ethics. Out of 54 there are 26 affirmative answers regarding the given

education in these institutions. Indeed, this supports that parents look for a school compatible to their worldview. Or else, why parents would prefer these schools although this type of education is banned by the state and they could provide a usual preschool education to their children in a public or private kindergarten?

Similarly, in table 4.1, three respondents say that teachers have an important role in their choice. However these responses do not directly point out that these parents prefer these institutions because of their search of a role model since it may include harmony between teacher and the child, teaching method of teachers and so forth. Nevertheless, one respondent clarifies that one of the three effective reasons is the search of a role model. This respondent thinks that instructors are good example for her child. However, in table 4.2, sixteen respondents agree with the statement, "I chose this school because the teachers at this school are good role models for my child." Again, the remaining two respondents neither agree nor disagree with this statement. Two respondents pursue their approach for the same factor in table 4.3. As in the factor overlapping worldviews, this factor too must be considered together with the given education in these schools. In my opinion, when parents' expectations from education are taken into consideration these two factors may be clearly understood. During our conversations Ebru, Mustafa, Figen and Derya shared their stories concerning these two factors.

Since a mother in the interview told a similar story, before sharing parents' stories I need to quote a story narrated by Yılmaz. Expressing their expectation from education, almost all families used the cliché national and moral values (*milli ve manevi değerler*) and emphasized that the current Turkish educational system lacks these values. In order to reveal how far the Turkish educational system and the approaches of instructors in schools are perceived to vary from the local values of Turkish people, Yılmaz (2003)

quotes the confession of a manager (woman) in a kindergarten. She says, "We celebrate Christmas and give presents to children. However, we do not celebrate any religious day or arrange any activities in such day." Yılmaz continues that, in preschools, even though children's birthdays, Mother's Day, Christmas, and official holidays such as Children's Festival of 23th April (*23 Nisan Çocuk Bayramı*) and Festival of Republic (*Cumhuriyet Bayramı*)<sup>66</sup> are celebrated with some activities, no sacred day or religious festivals (*bayram*) commonly celebrated in Turkey are marked in the schools (p.149). In one of my interviews, **Ebru**, a university graduate, narrates an event from her older daughter's kindergarten eight years ago:

We sent our older daughter to a private kindergarten near our apartment. At that time Ramadan Eid was very close to Christmas. After Eid, one day there was a family meeting in the kindergarten. The Female manager of this school said that there would be a party for children to celebrate Christmas and they would give presents, too. I said that I do not want my daughter to participate, I will not send. She said that my daughter would hear from her friends and it would be harmful on her psychology unless I send. Then, the discussion turned to a quarrel. I said that Christmas is not an important day to celebrate for me; also it is not one of our traditional days...At last I asked why they did not arrange an event to celebrate Ramadan Eid. She said that parents can do it at home by themselves. I said finally, parents can celebrate Christmas at home too, and finished the quarrel.

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<sup>66</sup> It may be helpful to remember the tension going on over secular bayrams/holidays for a few years and religious bayrams before. Especially in the last *Cumhuriyet Bayramı* on October 29<sup>th</sup> there was a big march under the leadership of CHP. They summoned the son of Republic to save the heritage of Atatürk after the prime minister declared that there was intelligence about a provocation and public would not be allowed for a march to *Anıtkabir* (Atatürk's memorial tomb.) For news see: <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25392204/>; [http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2012/10/121029\\_republicans\\_last.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2012/10/121029_republicans_last.shtml).



After this quarrel she decided to find another school and heard from one of her family friends about a private kindergarten where religious education is given. So, after older daughter moved to that school her younger daughter continues in this new school too.

A father gave a similar example about his older daughter. Mustafa has two daughters; the, older daughter took religious education for one year, and the younger one has continued for two years. He posits that teachers can have powerful effects on students in early ages. One of his older daughter's teachers one day humiliates the Ottoman Era and glorifies one-party rule. Her teacher defames some Ottoman Sultans. **Mustafa** says,

Nobody is perfect and everybody can make mistakes. We must learn our history as a whole and accept it accordingly. It is not necessary to curse the Ottoman History in order to glorify Atatürk and his reforms. They speak according to official history, and we do not still know our real history. We entrust our children to them and they shape them according to the official ideology. However, when, we as parents try to raise them according to our belief and tradition, it becomes-so-called- "harmful". So, my children must learn their religion and history well.

Similar to Mustafa's approach, **Figen** argues,

I do not know whether any society brought up with hatred to its own history like us. I learned to respect our history in my IHHS years. We are taught in elementary schools that, for example, Vahdettin was a traitor and escaped from Turkey during the independence war. In IHHS we learned that he was not... Also, what I learned in this school is that Ottomans were powerful as long as they valued religion. I believe that we can

achieve the same thing through the same way. Therefore, I want my children to respect their religion and history.

A mother, Derya, graduated from an Ilahiyat Faculty and continues her education in a graduate school. She has two sons, 6 and 8 years old. In her speech, she addresses first to the distracting factors and finally draws attention the role of instructors as a good example:

There are more stimulants now than 10-15 years ago. TV, games, internet occupy children's world and they do not want to learn anything. Learning and studying are like a burden for them, especially in further ages. They have rights but not responsibilities; pedagogues promote this idea. I do not agree with this approach; they must undertake responsibilities. To do it we have to occupy their time with useful things. They will play games, too, of course, but learn as well. In order to give personal and social responsibilities, to respect others and others' rights, ethics and religion are important. Children learn from manners no matter what your mouth says. Thus, if the matter is teaching social etiquettes and having good habits, teachers are very important in learning process of children especially in these ages.

Overall, during the interviews just a few parents stressed the overlapping worldviews and need for a role model for their children. Since they specifically mention this factor I preferred to examine it under a specific title. Again, we have to consider this factor together with other factors before deciding the relative weight to give to this factor.

#### 4.1.6. Religion-Oriented Education

In this section I prefer to evaluate the religious education and ethics and moral values together instead of examining them separately. No doubt, these schools promote basic Islamic education. Further, as discussed above, ethics and moral values are taught in these schools from an Islamic perspective. Therefore, what is distinctive in these schools is that they determine a different curriculum in value-based education; that is, their religious approach makes these schools different from their counterparts. So, families do not mean secular education when they mention ethics and moral values. As we will see in this factor and the following, when we examine families' expectations for education and their critics about Turkish educational system, they are not satisfied with the ethics and moral values provided by current primary and secondary schools.

When we evaluate families' responses separately as religious education and ethics and moral values we see that in table 4.1, among 50 responses seven responses directly mention that they prefer these schools because of Islamic/religious education and one writes that it is because the school combines religious education and the preparation for elementary school together. Combining both concerns, one respondent says it is because they give religious education and teach ethics. In total, nine responses (from different respondents) are related to religious education. Finally, three responses mention that education in ethics and moral values play an important role on their preference. Adding ethics and moral values showing in table 4.1, it can be said that out of 50 responses there are twelve responses showing that value-based education is a determinant factor.

On the other hand, as table 4.2 shows, seventeen respondents agree with the statement, "I chose this school because the school teaches ethics," whereas only one disagrees. The same is true for the next statement: "I

chose this school because the school gives religious education.” When I look at this one exception, she writes her three effective reasons for the open question (table 4.1) because the school is very close to home, I like teacher’s method, and my child likes the school. Since the last one cannot be a reason before sending school but may be a reason to maintain it, I omitted this last reason. For the same respondents when I looked at her rankings for fourteen statements I see the first (nearness), the sixth (socialization), and the ninth (role model) statements in her ranking. In table 4.3 sixteen respondents give place to religious education and ten respondents choose teaching ethics in their rankings as one of the most important three among fourteen factors.

Interviews give more details about these families’ approaches. In my interviews, I always ask whether there is any school closer than this school. It was important because nearness was one of the most chosen factors in questionnaire. In just three examples, the school was the nearest one to home. Many say that there are preschools closer than this school but they either private schools or nursery class in an elementary school, neither of which give religious education.

A mother explains the importance of nearness of this school. Zuhail has two children, 3 and 5 years old. Her son continues the same school for two years. Zuhail, a graduate of Ilahiyat Vocational School, says: “Nearness is not a big issue. They pick our children up anymore. They call before approaching home and bring them in front of our home. Also, the distance takes 10-15 minutes by car. We live in Üsküdar, so is school. However, it would not be easy for us to send my child to a different borough.” **Zuhail** makes the main distinction between other schools and these types of schools by asking:

Why should I send my child to a public nursery class or a private school where children just play and entertain? He can learn, too, at this age while he is entertaining at the same time.

What is more, he takes basic Islamic education which will be effective on his life, learns basic words in English (colors, numbers and names of objects) and improves his skills under six years old. He can learn all these in one school. I think these schools teach them well considering their ages.

Parallel with Zuhail's explanation many parents stressed on importance of religious education in early ages, especially before beginning compulsory education. As many parents did in my interviews, after emphasizing the importance of the first six years in learning process, a father who is a graduate of a QS and IHHS, gave more detailed responses concerning religious education and the situation in Turkey. **Burak** mentions,

As you know there are some special rules in reciting The Qur'an. It is not satisfactory to know Arabic letters but to vocalize them according to this reciting style. Last year my daughter was taking the same education in a similar school but they could not teach letters well. It is hard to change after learning wrong. This year we changed her school and this is better in teaching The Qur'an. This is true also for foreign languages; in early ages they learn quickly and better. Another point is that we may not find any other chance better than this because she is 6 years old and will start elementary school next year.

**Zeliha** listens to her husband and disagrees with some points: "I think the former school was good too. We have to keep in mind that she grows older one more year and can understand better. The former school paid more attention to social activities. This is beneficial too in her further educational life." I asked **Burak**: "What would have you done if there had not been any school like this?" He said,

It means we would have to wait until her graduation from elementary school, or we would back up at home or three months in summers in the following years through the SQC. After such age it is really hard to teach The Qur'an. I know from my experience. The older you are the more you cannot learn and do not want to spend time learning these things. Religious education in elementary and high schools is not sufficient.

I asked him a further question: "While you or your wife can teach, why do not you teach her at home?" Burak adds that his wife also graduated from a QS. He continues, "However, it is not realistic to say that we can do it at home. It would not be as serious as in school. No matter preschool or not, we would provide this education according to available opportunities. Now, there is a big opportunity to do it and we use this opportunity."

**Ceyda** mentions that her 9 -year-old son could not take this education and she says "Who has taken this education and who did not can be understood from their attitudes and behaviors. I wish we could provide this education him too now. I want them to work for their homeland (*vatan*) and nation (*millet*). Nobody gets harmed from a religious man." Cemil's wife **Yıldız** contributes to this factor by saying, "In this age we try to raise respect toward religion. I can observe that we have achieved it through this education. At least she would be brought up with Islamic values." **Rukiye**, a graduate of an IHHS, has a disabled daughter and works at home. I asked her: "Why is religious education important for your child in preschool education?" She responded,

There is a rumor that next year preschool education will be compulsory<sup>67</sup>. Perhaps, we will have to send her to a public preschool next year. By considering that my child is four and half year old, it means there may not be any opportunity to benefit from this chance. Also, religious education is important for us in general because my father had troubles as a military officer in army because of his religiosity. Despite some problems, he sent me and my sister to an IHHS and provided us this education. Now, it is easy for us to do the same thing for our child without paying any price.

Throughout my interviews two main approaches were described to meet the need of religious education. One is, as Burak says, about the insufficient religious education in Turkish education system. The other one is about the need in early age because firstly it is easy to teach in these ages and secondly the age limitation renders the situation harder in Turkey. In one of my interviews I wanted to hear from a teacher the situation of religious classes in schools. Zuhâl's husband **Ahmet**, graduated from an İlahiyat Faculty and he is a culture of religion and knowledge of ethics class teacher in a high school. I asked him about his class and function of this class which is required after 4<sup>th</sup> grade in schools<sup>68</sup>. He said:

I do not know elementary schools but it is like a burden for high school students. They do not come to class in order to learn but to pass the class. Also, they expect what I teach and say and behave accordingly; that is, another teacher, for example a mathematic or science teacher, may be effective in

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<sup>67</sup> This interview was made on December 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2011 before the starting age to education was changed. That is, this rumor came true from a different aspect. For the summary of the last regulations see the second chapter.

<sup>68</sup> Again this question was asked and answered according to the former educational system; that is, one stepped 8-year compulsory education.

case of speaking about religion. So it is not effective. Another issue is that students do not question anything. They have to take this class and pass it. Furthermore, we cannot take them to any mosque to show Islamic practices or any museum exhibiting Islamic works.<sup>69</sup> We give just basic information about religion. In my opinion it is hard to give this through required class and state initiative. It would be better if the state removed limitations over religious class and make it elective, I can teach students who are eager to learn and we can visit mosques, museums and so on. I think private institutions can provide better religious education in an attractive way for students. In my class, in a serious atmosphere by using grade as a charm, this class cannot be functional as well as it cannot meet the expectations of the public.

During the interviews some parents mention directly the effects of religious education in preschool level. However, I also wanted to learn the side effects of religious education in these ages. In their responses some parents maintained their approach by emphasizing the need for an early religious education whereas some others drew attention its way to teach and the curriculum.

#### 4.1.6.1. The Possibility of Side Effects of Early Religious Education

In case of teaching The Qur'an and giving basic Islamic education one may assert that it would be harmful on children's development. May be because of this concern, examined in the second chapter, an age limitation in religious education has always existed in Turkey. Indeed, the age limitation in religious education reminds us of Rousseau's approach concerning the natural process in education. He believes that timing in education is crucial

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<sup>69</sup> Ahmet approaches the issue from Islamic perspective.



and in his famous book, In *Emile*, he does not suggest book learning until Emile reaches age 12 (Ozmon & Craver 2008:123; Noddings 2007:16). Therefore, I wanted to learn managers and parents' opinions about this issue. My last question was about the possibility of side effects of religious education given in early ages. I was wondering what especially the QS graduates would say because they take an intensive education lasting two or three years to memorize The Qur'an. As a result of this education, sometimes degeneration and disregarding Islamic practices occur among them.

I asked especially **Burak**, the only one taking both the QS and IHHS education among parents in my research. He says that this education is different from the education given them in the QS. He continues,

Now our child takes basic religious education together with social activities and playing with her friends. Our education was really dense. At that time we could start after completing 5<sup>th</sup> grade; that is about 12 years old. Consider a child spending his weekdays in a building memorizing The Qur'an for months. We did not have same opportunities that my daughter has. Also, the expectation of a child changes according to his or her age. Staying in a boarding school for a long time may be harmful for some children and make them negligent to some values. I know many bad examples from my experience. As a result, I can say that ages, schools, opportunities and more importantly attitudes of instructors are totally different now.

In addition to Burak's response, what **Ahmet** thinks on this issue was important for my research. He replied my question as follows:

I do not think that they will go to a school and learn something just because we want. In this age unless they like the school,

instructor or friends they do not want to go there. As a religion and ethics class teacher I speak clearly that I would not send my child to this school if only religious education is given. It is because we live in a different time and the old system remained in the past. It does not work for today's children. Although there are many attractive means to help us teach students, we can still teach barely. It is because they are distracted by many others, too.

Similarly, **Fatih** asserts that children, especially in this globalized world, do not accept merely traditional religious education. He insists,

Otherwise, they are estranged by this education and dislike religion. They must live their childhood and learn at the same time. If this school had not provided these both we would not have sent our child to this school. But religious education is important because children have questions that are supposed to be answered and these questions increase when they grow up.

Another father, **Hüseyin**- Figen's husband- emphasizes the combination of social activities and games with religious education. He simply states,

In these ages an intense religious education- for example, memorizing whole The Qur'an (being a *hafiz*) - is not a beneficial method to teach religion and I think it would reverse. So, social activities and games are crucial for the children under six years old. In my opinion, if a value will be taught, it must be taught through this way.

**Derya**, a graduate of an Ilahiyat Faculty, after mentioning how crucial religious education in preschool and elementary school is, says,

Even if we do not value the importance of religious education in this age and suppose that they do not learn anything, I believe, after a while, 'water finds its way.'<sup>70</sup> Even if they seem they not to care about religious practice, if they have a strong basis it occurs later. But these ages are very important because if they do not like what they learn and they hate school, it means we waste our time and money. I know a bad example, my husband's cousin. He spent a couple of years in a QS. He memorized The Quran and became a *hafiz*. But after starting to work he began not to practice Islam and his life changed. Why? I think because he stayed and studied in a QS although he did not want to. His parents forced him to become a *hafiz*. He memorized whole The Qur'an but did not learn anything.

**Halime** simply replies this question, "If my child were taught just rules and prohibitions, they were estranged to religion and degeneration would occur. However, my child takes religious education together with social activities, games and preschool education. If he does not like the atmosphere of the school, there is no way to send him to this school." In another interview, Mustafa's wife **Pinar**, who also graduated from a QS, underlines another important point. She explains,

When I compare us with our own parents, I can say that we are more conscious and demanding about education. My parents did not search for schools but we do. I do not blame them because they did not have the same opportunities that we have. My generation wants their children to reach somewhere. So, we look for a better school and education depending on our budget. I think my generation thinks differently from former one. I mean we do not send our

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<sup>70</sup> *Su yolunu bulur*, a Turkish expression.

children to a QS or IHHS to become merely a *hafiz*, *hoca* or imam. Conservative families have learned many things about education and pedagogy and are more demanding now.

With these words she also stresses the importance of education generally to have place in society.

In my visits to schools, I asked the same questions to managers. All stressed the same point that their education is not a heavy one; rather, it is compatible with the students' ages. As an exception, both managers of home schools (*sıbyan okuls*) confess that although they have a big room at home for a play ground, a garden would be better. The other two managers do not have such problem because they have a big triple apartment with a big garden. Even if they demand extra money for extra activities like the *sıbyan okuls* do, their tuition already provides more events outside school, such as horseback riding, going to a theater or a cinema to see a cartoon, visiting a museum and so forth. A manager, **Hale**, confirms Pinar's point of view:

Families are more demanding now. Some parents demand a Montessori style preschool education. Whereas some of them advise us how to teach better, others encourage us for more social activities. We give a basic religious education; teach them some values based on parents demands. Previous families are very satisfied with this education and they recommend our school. Many parents mention that their children are successful in elementary schools because of this education. They are more social and confident. This contributes to our reputation; therefore, we do not advertise but families who know us recommend our school to their friends.

She also says that children will have time to learn other knowledge given throughout compulsory education. She adds, "They will even learn many

useless ones through internet and the media. But it may be too late for parents to give an education based on moral values (*manevi deęerler*)."

After elaborating her description of their curriculum and showing that they do not have an intense curriculum in religious education, **Nazlı**, manager of another kindergarten, mentions that children would not accept an intense religious education. She tells me that they sometimes encounter some problems even in teaching the Arabic alphabet to 4-5 year-old children. Based on her experience, she says that it is easier to teach reading The Qur'an to a 6-year-old child. She puts forward some reasons:

It may be because they learn better in their 6 after gaining a basis in previous ages. Also, some families do not check and repeat at home what we teach here. For this reason, some children have to be content with what they learn in the school. Family is very important in teaching them and developing their knowledge. I observe that if parents have a religious background or support this education at home, their children learn better. On the other hand, families have to make their children love whatever they want to teach. I think it would be satisfactory in preschool level if the children are given basic Islamic knowledge and ethics.

She thinks that there are limited options in front of parents to back up this education during the elementary school years: Parents can send either their children to the SQCs or some institutions having summer programs for religious education- they have a summer program too.

In my opinion, what the managers of the *sıbyan okuls* would say for the question of how religious education would affect children in these ages was more discerning because, on the one hand, their education is more comprehensive in terms of religious education and, on the other hand, in

terms of social activities and facilities they do not have as sufficient opportunities as a private school does. Further, many staff members of these schools are themselves graduates of a QS; that is, they memorized whole The Qur'an or at least large number of sura in their early ages. Among managers **Hatice** says,

I am in opposition to memorize The Qur'an in early ages. Or at least this education is supposed to be given together with values. And it must be supported with activities considering their ages. Otherwise, I think that they would lack the essence of religion without knowing what The Qur'an says. They memorize it but do not esteem it and by the time they ignore religion. Some families force their children to become *hafiz*. That way never works and it brings degeneration in practice. I know that some children are already bored and cannot even complete this education. Also, now many students incline to outside world when they stay in a boarding QS. After graduation they do not express themselves and begin to imitate others because they do not learn Islam but just memorize The Qur'an.

Other manager of this type of school **Aslı** argues,

One-dimensional education is not a true way. I mean I oppose spending two-three years just to memorize The Qur'an. The educational system does not already permit it. Neither today's world (the environment, school, work, etc.) nor the students accepts this education. So, they have to pursue their education and have to obtain a good job. For these reasons, families take their further education into consideration and demand an education accordingly. We try to meet their need for this

education. Of course, religious people must provide religious education for their children according to their ages. But they have to explain in a reasonable way to their children why they need this education. Or else, we cannot protect them because children are not living in a glass cover anymore.

Depending on the majority of the parents and the managers' explanations I can say that parents are seeking religious education. However, they are aware of the importance of the pedagogical constraints of this education such as taking into account the children's ages and the instructors' approach. Some parents and managers mentioned that education is must be multi-dimensional. We will see some other parents in the following sections who directly emphasize the importance of multidimensional education.

#### 4.1.6.2. Need for Institutional Religious Education<sup>71</sup>

The Need for institutionalizing religious education was discussed in the section on religion-oriented education, but a specific discussion is needed for several reasons. First, some parents stressed their concern in our conversations. Second, it is closely related to the history of religious education in Turkey elaborated in the second chapter. Additionally, parents intentionally choose this way instead of staying in the officially recognized and authorized educational institutions. Lastly, children can have different opportunities if religious education is given in an institution, especially in preschool term; that is, this contributes to children's development and to their socialization and preparation for elementary school. In fact, many of the parents I spoke with did not separate education into secular and religious components but demand it as a whole. So, these parents differ from the

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<sup>71</sup> By institutional education I mean that because of other benefits of schools parents do not prefer to teach their children at home or send them, for example, to a neighbor who is *hafiz* or *hodja*.

priorities of the state and thus mark a distinctive approach to the historical, contemporary, and future of religious education in Turkey.

For the beginning I have to say that my statements do not include this factor because I considered it within religious education and did not expect that families would emphasize the need for an institutional education in these ages. Thus, there is no statement in table 4.2 regarding institutional religious education. As it is seen in the table 4.1, one respondent says that the school is chosen because of institutional education. This respondent distinguishes a SQC from a kindergarten providing religious education. However, in my interviews, when I broadened the question, Burak, for example, gave further details why a school is important. Most of the parents I interviewed themselves received an institutional religious education. One wonders why they do not teach their own children if they are well versed in religion. It would be also cheaper and safer. Sending a child to a kindergarten would be reasonable in case both mother and father work but many housewives with religious background could also provide religious education at home. So, I asked this question and repeated it in my interviews. The answer overwhelmingly concentrates on a need for an institution, as Burak explains.

One mother states that after a while children do not learn from parents. **Burcu**, points out that her 6-year- old son does not care what she says and her methods are ineffective for teaching. Many of my interviewees offered similar comments. In another interview, **Elif** gives more details elaborating on Burcu's comments:

I try to teach basic Islamic habits based on the prophet's life and advice (*sünnet*) about daily activities, such as eating with the right hand, washing hands before and after eating, saying *bismillah* when starting to eat or drink and saying *elhamdulillah* after finishing, greeting people and so on. However, my son



does not take me seriously. After he began school, though, he began to practice them.

Another mother, **Nurdan**, supports this approach. She says that her daughter takes her school and instructors more seriously than she does what her mother says. She adds,

Children go to these schools 9 months a year 5 days a week. They go there as they go to an elementary school. There are a few teachers at school and they learn different things from each. At home I would have to teach her and at the same time play with her. It would not be easy to pass from one stage to another at home. However, at school, they do everything collectively and have different teachers to direct them.

**Ceyda**, taking two years the QS education after elementary school, simply puts it: "Even if I can teach the Arabic alphabet and reading The Qur'an at home, an institution is more effective because I see that my son both likes his instructors and is afraid of them; so, he takes his instructors seriously. I cannot do it at home." **Selma** talks about religious education and draws my attention to a different point: "What I have seen is that children take schools more seriously than they do the education at home or SQC. (By smiling) Also, parents take it seriously, too, because we pay for it."

Similarly, **Kadir** supports the need for an institution. He has never taken any institutional religious education but in his childhood he participated in the SQC. However, his wife is a QS graduate and works in a foundation for three days a week. They have two daughters; the older one went to religious preschool, too. Kadir expresses:

Teaching methods are always changing and schools can follow them because this is their work. In an institution, education is

consistent and disciplined. I am sure that at home parents cannot keep consistency and discipline. Also, teachers should keep the distance in some situations, parents cannot do it.

In this visit I could not talk to Kadir's wife Kübra. I picked up the questionnaire and her written answers regarding my project later. In her answers **Kübra** explains first why religious education is important for her child in this age and then she emphasizes the need for institutional education in order to provide this education:

I think that these years are the best term in their life to learn not because they can learn easily but also they have not contacted harmful stuff conveyed by the environment or the media. What they have learned in these ages will be the most dominant one in their life. It is a big chance for them to take religious education and get prepared for the school life at the same time. I cannot carry on this at home not because I am busy for three-four days but because I cannot keep the discipline. So, I chose a school that I already knew and entrusted my child to it willingly. I used to send my older daughter to the same school. I was satisfied with the teachers' care. The school is renewed and modernized. Also, even if the owner and staff were the same, four-five years ago they could not give a religious education but Islamic ethics. Now they can...the curriculum is broader now in terms of religious education.

But the main problem for parents, especially those who themselves did not take any institutional religious education, is to meet the need their children's religious education. **Fatih**, Ebru's husband, points out:

Even though I graduated from a university, I am not a graduate of an IHHS or a QS. We did not have such opportunities. After starting work, it becomes more difficult to allocate time. I do not want to give wrong information about religion when my children ask any question. My children ask questions and sometimes it is not easy to convince them. They do not say that it is true because our father says so. Even if I knew, I wanted someone to teach them who was well versed in religion. So, I think that institutional education is necessary.

Mustafa, after complaining about how materialism and a consumption culture are becoming common in Turkish society, states,

We have to back up this education because children are raised without having any values. The curriculum does not give any values any more, nor can teachers discipline them. The understanding of ethics is loosening day by day. I do not want my children to live the day by consuming without any purpose. We have to provide religious education in any kind of institution that we can find and support it at home as well.

As a result, while religious education is crucial for these parents an institutional education covering religious education is more beneficial because institutions are more effective for collective learning as well as for the socialization of children. Therefore, the benefit of institutional education is not only teaching children but helping them socialize and collaborative learning as well.

#### 4.1.7. Desire to Provide a Safe Environment

Respondents did not specifically write about their desire for a safe educational environment in their questionnaires (table 4.1), nor had I

predicted that it might be a concern (table 4.2 and 4.3). However, respondents led me to this factor when I asked about how they will pursue this religion- based education. In my definition I use “environment” generally to include neighborhood, friends, school, etc.

Before passing to families’ plans in primary and secondary schools and their relationships with the desire to provide a safe environment, I should point out the social capital of these schools being well known. When asked, “Where did you hear from this school?” the respondents overwhelmingly said that they heard it from their family or friends. In table 4.5 the frequency of “from family or friends” is eleven followed by “from neighborhood” and “from my relatives” with the frequency of two. This table supports the managers’ saying that they do not advertise but become well known via word of mouth from their former students’ families.

**Table 4.5 How did parents learn about these schools?**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Where did you hear from this school? (Open Question)</b>
11	From family friends
2	From neighbors
2	From relatives
1	It is in my neighborhood
1	Publicity, brochures
1	Search

More importantly, I discovered that the reputation of these schools is spread through conversations in the gatherings of women. Many women gather weekly or monthly for exchanging money or gold (it is called *gün* among Turkish women), or for religious reading and reciting The Qur’an in neighborhoods (it is called *mukabele*). Every mother among my respondents

had participated in a religious circle reading The Qur'an or its translation, hadiths, or books written by Muslim scholars.<sup>72</sup>

Additionally, in all visits to my friends I saw that the endeavor for this education occurred as a result of mothers' initiatives and fathers just supported it. Furthermore, during the interviews mothers especially offered to introduce me to a family whose child takes this kind of education. They know each other from gatherings or they are already relatives or neighbors. However, as I mentioned before, I did not accept these invitations because I aimed to reach students from different schools as much as possible.

Nevertheless, parents do not send their children to a school just because their family friends recommend it; or because they send or used to send their children to same school. When we look at the tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, and compare them with 4.5 we can understand that to know these schools does not exactly mean to prefer them. That is, although many of these families hear about these schools through their family friends, relatives or neighbors, there is only one answer about recommendation among the answers of the open question in table 4.1. Also, in table 4.2, whereas four respondents agree with the statement, "I chose this school because my neighbor's child/relative's child goes to same school," ten respondents disagree with it. In table 4.3, no one lists this factor as an important one. Therefore, family or women's gatherings play an important role on the publicity of these schools. Also, parents prefer a school that they already

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<sup>72</sup> This is arranged mostly by the branches of Nakshibandia movement. Among my respondents, 7 mothers currently follow and two mothers used to follow one of this movement's weekly gatherings. Also four mothers are affiliated with different Islamic movements and have a meeting arranged once or twice a week. Şerif Mardin (2002) in *Türkiye'de Din ve Siyaset* generally emphasizes the role of Nakshibandia movement on the transformation of Turkey. However, I do not know any study on women's weekly gatherings in neighborhoods and its role on religious life in Turkey. For well known Nakshibandia branches and other Islamic movements see *Ayet ve Slogan* by Ruşen Çakır and a collected work, *İslamcılık* by Hulusi Şentürk.

know some parents who prefer the same school and its education. In a conclusion they want to keep their children in a well known environment.

#### 4.1.7.1. How will these families pursue this religious education?

Attempts to creating an appropriate environment for their children bring parents face with a dilemma. What would they do after preschool education since their children would not take any religious education until 12 years old?<sup>73</sup> The dilemma is that they would have to choose one: after primary education, either they send their children to IHHSs or the QSs for the sake of religious education at the risk of their future, or they relinquish religious education and gain their future. According to some parents, religion and ethics classes in secondary education are not satisfying. In case of choosing an IHHS to provide their children religious education at the same time, their children are in a disadvantageous position in university entering exam. Some parents also do not want their children to wait until completing 8-year compulsory education.

When I asked families about their children, most of the respondents were hesitant and vacillated between choices. Some favored leaving it for a time. For some, the SQCs were the only remaining choice to maintain religious education. Additionally, their plans to provide a safe environment at schools were at a dead end. Many were hopeful about the betterment of IHHSs. Some expected the government to make changes in this situation so their children could continue their religious education.

I asked two further questions to learn their plans. The question, "After preschool, to which elementary school do you plan to send your child?" is not explanatory because there is no any school given religious education in elementary level. One can say that they can choose private schools affiliated

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<sup>73</sup> It was before "4+4+4" education system, which has recently changed.

with religious groups in Turkey. It does not help, too, not because the tuition of these schools are really high but also because they operate under the supervision of MEB and they cannot pass beyond the regular culture of religion and knowledge of ethics class. However, there are some options after 12 years old, as I discussed in previous chapter. So the question, "After elementary school, to which high school do you plan to send your child?" is more discerning.

**Table: 4.6. Families' plans about their children's further education**

<b>After preschool, to which elementary school do you plan to send your child?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Public Elementary School/Nearest Public Elementary School	15
Not planned	2
Private Elementary School	1
<b>After elementary school, to which high school do you plan to send your child?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Not planned	6
IHHS	4
Public High School	2
Vocational High School	1
Girl's Vocational High School or IHHS	1
AIHHS	1
Private High School (College)	1
College or IHHS	1
Depends on child's preference	1

According to table 4.6, whereas fifteen families plan to send their children to a public elementary school, only two respondents say they prefer a public high school. In preferences of high schools, families promote IHHS: four respondents directly point out that they will prefer these schools. One family who has a daughter mentions that they will prefer a girls' vocational school or an IHHS whereas one family says that they can send their child to a private high school (*kolej*) or an IHHS. In total, six families consider IHHSs a desirable option for their children's high school education. Another point is

that in the interviews among six families who do not have any plans, two families mentioned that because of the disadvantages to IHHS graduates, they cannot prefer IHHS. The same situation is true for one family who plans to send their child to a public school. In this family, the father and mother (Ahmet and Zuhai) do not agree with the benefits of *kolejs*, so they prefer a public school. They say that if the problem of area of exponent is solved in the near future, they can prefer an IHHS. In this example **Ahmet**, teacher of the religion and ethics class, replied to my question as follows:

To which school we will send our children (5-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter) is a big issue and depends on many factors. The most important one is our financial situation. Because we have two children and their ages are very close to each other. If we send one, we will have to send both. So, if I can afford it, I want to send them to a *kolej* (affiliated with a religious group).

**Zuhai** does not support her husband's approach and stresses the luxury of *kolejs* beyond its tuition:

I do not agree with my husband. We can't afford it now, but let's say we will be able to afford the tuition in the future. In this case the problem will not be about the tuition. They every day will see their friends' clothing, brand-new-shoes, phones, even their friends' houses or parents' car. They will demand them from us or they will bring up with this complexity. So, even if we can pay the tuition we cannot pay for their luxury. I do not want to have children who are spoiled by this luxury. If they want to pursue their education, they must study more. I do not want to raise my children with privileges; they will take an education as the majority of this country does. Therefore, I



prefer a public school, or, if the unfortunate situation changes, maybe an IHHS.

When I asked Zuhal and Ahmet how they pursue this religious education, they say that in this case IHHS may be a better choice in order to pursue religious education.

**Ceyda**, with two sons aged 6 and 9 years old, say hesitantly that she may send both to an IHHS in case the situation is changed in the near future. Another hesitant mother is **Betül**. Even though she graduated from an IHHS, she cannot say that she would send her daughter to an IHHS. She explains: "I cannot say that I would prefer an IHHS because I want my child to pursue her education in a university. If she does not want to study at an Ilahiyat Faculty, as a graduate of IHHS it would be really hard to choose another major. "

Another important point is that many parents distinguish girls from boys in their further education. For example, **Halime** says, "Even if the situation stays same, I will send my daughter to IHHS because these schools are still safer for girls." I asked her, "if she had a son, what would her do?" She said: "Boys have to work and sustain a family but girls do not have to. In such a case I would not prefer an IHHS unless he wants to be an Imam or study at an Ilahiyat Faculty."

**Asiye** replies the same question by saying, "I do not know how I protect my child against degeneration. I want my daughter to study in an IHHS not because of work but because of religious education. But if I had a son I would not prefer an IHHS because of the disadvantages of these schools in university entering exam." A father, **Cemil**, articulates that conservative families prefer IHHSs not because their children will learn Islam better but to save their children, especially daughters. He has a daughter too and answers my question by offering a few options:

I want to say first that I want my daughter to study wherever she can reach. On the other hand, I have to protect her, too. We are not rich to send her a *kolej* belonging to some religious groups. I accept that as these preschools, IHHSs are preferred by conservative families and they partially provide a safe environment for girls. Even so, it is up to my daughter. Within 10 years, the conditions may change, I hope. Still, I would prefer a girl's vocational high school or an IHHS but if she does not want, we can send her to another school. I think that in case of digesting some values, there will be no problem for her.

Similar to Halime's and Asiye's approach, **Rukiye** emphasizes the uncertainty of IHHSs and distinguishes girls from boys:

Unfortunately, we are not rich and so we cannot send her a private school in elementary and high schools. Of course, it is too early to say that we will send her an IHHS. For a boy it would be easier to study on every level of education remaining religious at the same time. If she were a boy, my answer would be different. But you know, to get same education for a religious girl is not easy in high schools as well as at universities because of the headscarf issue. She may go to an IHHS or vocational school special for girls. As I said, it is too early; we do not know her talents yet. Also, it depends on the future of IHHS. They are very far from the bright old days. So, situations may change in Turkey by the time. But in general, the primary reason for education is not to find a job after graduation, but we want our child to obtain an education to be a good person. That is, honest and hardworking, knowing Allah and loving the prophet (*Allah'ını bilen ve peygamberini seven*),

sticking to their religion and loving their country and its people  
(*vatanını ve milletini seven*).

Another father, **Hüseyin**, stresses the degeneration of the social environment and says, "I trust my daughter and I am sure we can back up this education at home or in the summers. Nevertheless, I cannot say complacently that she can study at a university far away from home, somewhere in Anatolia or abroad. The reason is not because I do not trust her but I do not trust the environment."

As a QS graduate and currently a clerk in a pharmacy, **Gaye** does not see much difference between students in IHHSs and other schools. She says,

I am working in a pharmacy next to an elementary school. When I observe them I see that smoking, cursing and fighting have become common in elementary schools. Girls' clothing styles have changed as well as boy-girl relations compared to ten years ago. They are just in their 13-15. Now students are addicted to "facebook" and chatting whole day. I see also students from IHHS in bus stops and on buses. I can observe the changes occurring by the time. In our time, the boy-girl relations among IHHS students were not common. They were standing in bus stops and sitting on buses separately. They are now so reckless and dating became ordinary among them. They do not practice what they learn.

Gaye says that she wants her child to pass one of the exams of Anatolian High Schools (*Anadolu Lisesi*) or Science High Schools (*Fen Lisesi*). Otherwise, an IHHS could be the other option. As the mother of a daughter she thinks her child can overcome the negative effects of the environment with her personality. Another mother stressing degeneration is **Burcu**. Her response counters Hatice's (manager of a sibyan school) expressions. She

does not know where she will send her son to elementary and high school. Not knowing what she will do, she complains about the degeneration of youth:

What I see in the new generation is complete degeneration. There remained no discipline in elementary and high schools and nobody cares for the teachers. Public or private schools, or IHHS or regular high schools... what is going to change if schools cannot give any value? They imitate whatever they see on the TV. In the series and magazine programs every kind of relations are imposed. They also see and learn from their friends at school. I do not believe that some degenerated families, girl and boy relations, lives of artists and singers and their luxuries showed in these programs are the reality of Turkish society. But this lifestyle is becoming widespread among the new generation. I am afraid that my child will be the same.

**Burak** argues that they do not let their children degenerate, nor is their neighborhood open to it. Similar to Hüseyin's approach, he posits,

We live in a good neighborhood. Many of our neighbors are owners of their apartments and old residents in this neighborhood. We know each other well and we are like relatives. They are mostly pious people. So are my and my wife's friends. Nevertheless, nobody can predict what school life will bring. Because she is a girl we cannot say that we cannot support the idea of sending her to a usual high school. An IHHS or a girl's vocational school may be better for her. I want her to study at a university but I do not want to send her to a university outside Istanbul.

**Kadir** argues first that religious education in primary and secondary school is not sufficient. He insists,

Religious education in the schools is so weak. To be honest we cannot support the education that they have taken in this kindergarten throughout in elementary and high schools. I do not force my daughters to go to an IHHS unless they demand. I do not insist on covering their heads because I want them to study. You know that the headscarf issue is not totally solved yet. I desire for my daughter to complete her education despite the headscarf problem. Regardless of girl or boy, our children have to study and must work for the goodness of their country (*memleketine faydalı olmak*). So eliminating IHHSs, what remains? We have to back up it at home. But how and until where? When I look at the future and how uncertain it, once more I understand the importance of the education that they have taken in these ages because we cannot find this chance again to provide it.

In her written answer to my questionnaire, **Kübra** mentions simply that she may send their daughters to a summer program arranged by some foundations for elementary school students. She is not sure whether an IHHS would be a good choice but says that talents and demands of their daughters would determine which school they will prefer for them. **Derya** says that she plans to support this education through summer programs. She continues,

Some kindergartens and foundations arrange summer camps including religious education and some activities. I would not prefer an intense program because each age needs different knowledge and activities. I will send my younger son to his brothers' public elementary school. I do not have any plan for

high school. If I had a daughter I might prefer IHHS. Still the best option seems IHHS for my sons. As long as the middle branches of these schools are not open I do not plan to send my children there because it would be hard for my children to adopt the education in IHHS.

Parents argue that they have limited options to pursue religious education in the middle and high school levels. In this situation for many parents IHHSs are the best option to pursue this education. However, unless the uncertainties surrounding these schools and disadvantages IHHS students face in university entering exams are solved, families cannot be certain on this option. According to some parents, choosing an IHHS would be risky for their sons. On the other hand, some parents distinguish girls from boys and think that an IHHS education would be a good idea for their daughters but not for their sons due to different reasons. In sum, parents are not satisfied with the options offered by the state in terms of religious education in elementary and high school levels.

#### 4.1.8. General Education

General education, together with religious education, socialization and nearness, is one of the most frequent responses to the question, "What were the most important three factors causing you to choose this school?" The frequency of this factor in table 4.1 is seven. This also represents seven different respondents. Also, related to general education, two respondents list "preparation for elementary school". However, parents are in search of an education beyond usual preschool education. **Zuhal's** words mentioned above summarize this approach:

Why should I send my child to a public nursery class or a private school where children just play and entertain? He can learn, too, at this age while he is entertaining at the same time.

What is more, he takes basic Islamic education which will be effective all his life, learns English (colors, numbers and names of objects) and improves his skills under six years old. He can learn all these in one school. I think these schools teach them well considering their ages.

When we look at the table 4.2, we see that fourteen respondents agree with the statement, "I chose this school because the school prepares my child for elementary school," while three respondents disagree and one is indifferent. In table 4.3, five respondents list this factor as one of the most important ones on their choice. On the other hand, comparing "preparation for elementary school" with "foreign language," we see that the latter is not as important as the former. In table 4.1 nobody mentions that they choose a school because a foreign language is taught there. We have to keep in mind that according to my respondents some schools related to my project do not teach a foreign language although foreign language instruction was in the curricula of two kindergartens and *sıbyan okuls* that I visited . In table 4.2, out of eighteen respondents, fourteen respondents disagree with the statement: "I chose this school because the school teaches a foreign language." And in table 4.3, no respondent says this factor is a determinant on their choice. Consequently, I can say that foreign language is not a critical issue within the education provided in these schools compared to the contribution of socialization of children and teaching religion and ethics.

It can be deduced from parents' responses that religion-based education differentiated education of these schools from others. However, I had to ask one more question to clarify their expectations for this education. In my interviews I asked whether these parents would send their children to a preschool in which only religious education is given. Only two mothers agreed that they would. One, **Asiye**, said she would prefer only religious education in this age but not on the elementary and high school levels.

According to her, the ages less than six years old are very important for determining a child's life and learning basic values would help her child in the rest of her life. The other, **Halime**, says, "Nobody knows what brings tomorrow. I do not ignore other benefits being offered in these schools but we do not prefer this school because of other benefits, so our priority is religious education. Our daughter will learn other knowledge in elementary school sooner or later but nobody guarantees that she will be able to find this chance again."

Even these two exceptions are not merely content with religious education and they demand an education which will prepare their children for the future morally and mentally. Rather, their concern is closely related to the situation of religious education in Turkey. Together with Halime's concern it may be helpful to remember **Rukiye's** words when she says, "There is a rumor that next year preschool education will be compulsory. Perhaps, we will have to send her to a public preschool next year. By considering that my child is four and half year old, it means there may not be any opportunity to benefit from this chance."

Throughout my research I realized how parents emphasize the importance of education. They stress education generally rather than separating it as secular and religious or modern and traditional. As a first or second generation residents in a metropolitan city, they could take religious education and pursue as far as they could with limited opportunities that their parents provided for them. On the one hand, they want to provide a better education than they received. Now it is their turn and they try to search ways to do better. On the other hand, they consider education as an important means to rise up the social and economic ladder. While they demand this, they do not want to give up their values. In sum, they think that their values are not a barrier in front of development. Their approaches



are crystallized in **Eyüp**'s words (Nurdan's husband): "We have to prepare our children for both here and hereafter."

**Cemil** also contributes to this approach: "By sending our children to this school we provide them a religious basis and they are also prepared for elementary school." His wife **Yıldız** narrates that they firstly send their daughter to a *sıbyan okul*, then after one year they began to send a kindergarten. She confesses,

Now I think that her old school was better. It was like a home school. The owner of the school was a devoted woman and ran this school mostly with her families' earnings. In terms of religious education the education was more intense compared to her new school. But we thought that it could be harmful for her future educational life. The new school seemed more attractive to us. So, we did not want to send a school where an intense religious education is given and so we changed the school.

On the other hand, **Selma**, after stressing the importance of preschool education and social activities for her child, says, "If the education in the kindergarten had been similar to the one in the SQC, I would not have sent my child there." During the conversation **Kadir** argues,

The future of our children completely relies on education, a good education. If conservative people (*muhafazakar kesim*) can take a breath freely now, we cannot overlook the role of education. So, if we want to live in peace, we have to provide a better education to our children. While doing that we cannot ignore our values and teach them through schools. What we have taught at home is not sufficient.

His wife **Kübra** is a graphic designer and volunteer in a foundation that publishes books and magazines. She gathers many factors and offers a broad approach when she explains why religious preschool education is important for her children:

To begin with, elementary school education is competitive these days and I think parents treasure education more than ever. So, many parents want their children to get prepared for elementary schools. Another important reason is that compared to the old times, children today lack an environment where they can socialize. We cannot leave them on the streets and cannot visit our friends and relatives so that they can find any known peers. Unfortunately (I speak generally), they are imprisoned in a world consisting of TV, the computer and the internet. As parents we sometimes have to put up with this situation. Maybe it is the easiest way for us. Thus, I prefer that my child should go to a school instead of spending her time watching TV or playing computer games. By going to school they have an opportunity both to learn and to socialize. They learn with joy. I would send my child no matter whether I worked or not.

**Fatih** draws attention to the multidimensional education in these schools:

I think that they are devised for the further education as well as for obtaining a background in religious education. I see that children who take preschool education are one step ahead according to their friends who do not take such an education. Her sister took the same education before and we experienced its benefits. From a different perspective, consider that my child did not take this education and started school at 7 years old. If

we did not put this daughter in preschool, she would squander three years by learning nothing. But she is ready for the elementary school and has taken basic religious education as well. She knows to read The Qur'an at age 5. It is more important for me that what they both have learned is not hearsay knowledge, but they have learned from the instructors well-versed in religious knowledge.

With a general approach, **Figen** emphasizes the convergence of value based-education and success. She mentions,

I want my children to be successful. But being a pious Muslim does not hinder one from, being a successful person or having a high rank at work, or vice versa. I am sure that having these values will help them in their further life. I think the youth raised according to moral values (*manevi deęerler*) will be more beneficial for their society.

Overall, parents do not support just a religious education but desire an education covers both. I think this perspective may help us to understand why IHHSs are so popular among them in terms of education. IHHSs offer both science and religion classes together. That is, an IHHS student (I was one of them) has a chance to take math, biology, chemistry, history, geography, Turkish and English classes in addition to The Qur'an, Arabic, Islamic law (*fiqh*), life of the prophet (*siyer*), and hadith classes.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> After the betterment of their situation in university entering exam and the regulation of its middle branches, demand for these schools increased. For a news about the demand toward new elective classes and IHHSs visit: <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/779370-kurtce-son-sirada>.

## **4.2. WHAT DO RESPONDENTS THINK ABOUT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN TURKEY?**

I think that, before finishing this chapter, sharing respondents' approaches to Turkish educational system and religious education may be helpful to have a better understanding about families' expectations about education. Although some have already mentioned their thoughts about religious education in Turkey, others addressed this issue specifically. Therefore, I want to share their thoughts separately.

In order to see the place of religious education within Turkish educational system from these respondents' eyes and how they perceive religious education in Turkey, I asked one general question: In your opinion, what are the three most important flaws of the Turkish educational system? In their answers some respondents did not write three flaws but gave only one or two. In total, respondents identified nineteen different issues with the frequency of 38. As table 4.7 shows, seven issues concern insufficient religious education and two regard lack of social etiquette and moral values in education. So, nine of 32 are related to the given values. Three responses see the headscarf issue as a problem in the Turkish education system. Referring to the second chapter again, this problem is not merely about the educational system; rather, it springs from the understanding of secularism (laicism) of Turkish ruling elite and the fear of Islamism as a threat to the Republic. However, what is interesting here is that with their answers respondents catch one of the problematic areas in Turkey.

**Table: 4.7. The flaws of Turkish educational system according to respondents**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>In your opinion, what are the three most important flaws of Turkish educational system?</b>
7	Insufficient religious education.
4	University entering exam
3	Not based on practice /experiment/ observation
3	Headscarf Issue
2	Ignores personal capabilities
2	General education level
2	Not given enough social etiquette and moral values
2	Lack of building/school
2	Lack of material
2	Lack of teachers' care
1	Lack of elective classes; it does not meet students' interests
1	There are lots of official days and celebrations especially in elementary school, so it is a waste of time
1	Insufficient sport activities
1	Mixed classes; not offering a separate- class- option for girls and boys
1	Foreign language
1	Lack of counseling and professional support
1	Demanding money from families
1	Lack of teachers' knowledge
1	Not teaching questioning but based on memorizing

Another four respondents emphasized the problem of being prepared for the university entering exam while three name the teaching methods in Turkish educational system, stressing that teaching methods do not rely on observation, experiment and practice. Indeed, one respondent points out that the teachers want their student to memorize, a problem that leads a culture of religion and ethics class teacher, Ahmet, to complain about the lack of opportunities offered by the system.

Last, my questionnaire included a final table consisting of eight statements in order to identify the respondents' opinions about religious education and the culture of religion and knowledge of ethics classes taught in elementary and

high schools. The first statement in table 4.8 resembles the question asked above about preschools. This is a different question, however, since it does not cover every level and age. Nevertheless only four respondents prefer a school where only religious education is given. Since this question was important about their perception about education and the place of religious education within this education, I wanted to learn what they meant by this. Interestingly, in these families, the father, the mother or both were a QS graduates and thought that it would be beneficial for their child to memorize the whole The Qur'an (become a hafiz) before or after elementary school. So they do not disagree with the general education but want to provide this education too in a The Qur'an School. Unfortunately, in order to provide it they have to face with the dilemma mentioned above.

As table 4.8 shows, the second question is about respondents' opinion about IHHSs. The majority of the respondents (twelve) mention that they would prefer an IHHS in their children' further education life. What is interesting here is that there are five hesitant respondents and this may be explained by the uncertainty of these schools' futures; parents emphasized this issue during the conversations. The rest of the statements include respondents' approach to religion and ethics class in Turkey. As it is revealed in the third statement, with sixteen disagreements, respondents overwhelmingly find the religious education currently offered as insufficient. The majority of the respondents does not support the idea of elective religion class but insist on a required-religion class although they are not satisfied with the given religious education in this class. In fact, families are not satisfied with the content of this class and do not find it sufficient in terms of religious education.

**Table: 4.8. Parents approach to religious education**

SD: Strongly Disagree; DA: Disagree; NAND: Neither Agree nor Disagree;  
A: Agree; SA: Strongly Agree

Number of the Statements	RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	SD	DA	NA ND	A	SA
1	I would send my child to a school that gives <u>only</u> religious education.	3	11		3	1
2	I will send my child to Imam-Hatip Schools.		1	5	9	3
3	I think that religious education given in elementary and high schools in Turkey is sufficient.	9	7	1		1
4	Religion and ethics class should be elective class in <u>elementary</u> schools.	6	9	2	1	
5	Religion and ethics class should be required class in <u>elementary</u> schools.	2	2	1	4	9
6	Religion and ethics class should be elective class in <u>high</u> schools.	7	8	1	2	
7	Religion and ethics class should be required class in <u>high</u> schools.	1	1	2	3	11
8	Religion and ethics class should be excluded from the program in <u>elementary and high</u> schools.	15	2			1

There may be some benefits of this class; however, this is a controversy to support a required religion and ethics class while demanding more free space in religious education. How about the students who do not want to take this class? Another equally important question is that why the state determines the content of this class. I did not ask this to the parents during in my project but was curious whether any of them would criticize the religious education given by the state in a required class. In my approach I differentiate the initiatives of the state in providing a freer religious education in determining the content of this class and according to which religion, sect or understanding it is going to be offered. Among parents, even if he did not touch upon this issue, **Ahmet**, the culture of religion and knowledge of ethics class teacher, was only one mentioning how unfunctional this class is

and that it must be elective class in the schools. In addition to his opinions that I shared above, he also argues,

In my opinion, many problems in Turkey including religious education can be overcome by more freedom. When you force people to do something or to become someone, they give more reaction. I know some people whose parents forced them to become a *hafiz* in their early ages, now they do not remember what they memorized and some of them do not even perform their daily prayers. So, in case of oppression, people turn their receivers off (in Turkish, *alicıları kapamak*). When limitations and prohibitions are removed, private institutions and foundations (*vakıf*) can provide this education more effectively.

During our conversations, some parents approached the issue over the Prime Minister's declaration about a "religious generation."<sup>75</sup> **Betül**, an IHHS graduate, thinks that the state cannot raise a "religious generation" but can at most give moral values to the youth; even this would be a big achievement for the Turkish educational system. **Gaye** says, "There is a consensus that religious education in Turkey does not meet the expectation of people. Yet, I do not think that raising a religious generation is a good idea because many people oppose to it; therefore, it will cause a tension in society." **Kadir**, addressing the same phrase, posits, "We are living in a time when we need a religious generation the most." From the same phrase "religious generation," **Rukiye** says, "I think the responsibility of the state is to create an appropriate environment so that a generation respectful to values of public can be raised. This cannot be carried out by prohibitions but the state can contribute to it." **Burak** puts forward,

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<sup>75</sup> For Prime Minister's declaration see: <http://www.haberturk.com/polemik/haber/712088-dindar-nesil-polemigi>



We live in a Muslim country; so what's wrong to say "I desire a religious generation". I voted for this party so that it would create an environment to raise my child according to my religion. This party declares that it is a conservative party. When I hear conservatism, what come firstly to my mind are religious values. The government cannot raise a religious generation but politicians can clear the obstacles so that parents can find an opportunity to do it.

Finally, **Hüseyin** approaches the issue from a different side. He says,

This problem can be solved by changing the contents of religion and ethics class in the schools. I consider it as a solution because I think many people are not satisfied with the content of this class. The Ministry of National Education determines the curriculum and the content of the classes. The government can do it as they removed national security class from high schools.

Consequently, their search for religious education generally and their explanations in this section prove that according to these families Turkish educational system does not offer adequate option for people who are in search of a religious education.

## CONCLUSION

“Neither each part of past is bad nor is each part of new good.  
Ingenuity is to be able to reconcile the old with the new.”  
-M. Cevdet (1883-1935) -<sup>76</sup>

In the classical period of the Ottoman Empire, education and religion were intertwined. Based on the Prophet’s applications, schools were mostly established around mosques. Benevolent people, Sultans and their family members, viziers and other statesmen were the main sustainers of these institutions and they maintained these schools through religious foundations (*vakıf*) throughout ages. As Muallim Cevdet (1978) emphasizes, since Islam holds parents responsible to teach Islamic belief, religious practices and etiquettes (*adab-ı muaşeret*) to their own children after 7 years old, education had been widespread in Muslim society.” What is important here is that the initiatives about education was not limited with the state; rather, public<sup>77</sup> was the main contributors of education by meeting the expenses of the students, instructors and school (p.57-58). The teaching method was one-to-one and the content of the education was determined by these foundations and up to the instructors.

*Medreses* were the cornerstone of education in the Ottoman Empire. Primary education was given in *sıbyan mekteps* located in each neighborhood or villages. In these schools, children were taught basic Islamic knowledge and ethics, reading The Qur’an and writing. This traditional structure changed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when modern schools emerged next to traditional ones. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire and

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<sup>76</sup> *Eskinin her parçası fena değildir. Yeninin her parçası iyi değildir. Hüner eski ile yeniye telif edebilmektir.* (Cevdet 1978:48)

<sup>77</sup> Although Cevdet mentions the situation in Muslim communities, it was the same for all non Muslim communities (*millet*s).

the establishment of a new government, this dichotomy in education- as in law- was ended by the Unification Law of Education in 1924. This reform as well as others made in 1924 and in the following years, such as abolishing Caliphate, the acceptance of the principle of laicism, changing the alphabet and units of measurements, replacing the Arabic call (*ezan*) with the Turkish one show that the new state tore down all bridges between it and its predecessor and determined a new trajectory.

With the Unification Law of Education, all *medreses* and *mekteps* belonging to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations (*Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaleti*) or private foundations (*hususî vakıflar*) were passed over to the Ministry of Education (*Maarif Vekaleti*). With this law, the Ministry of Education undertook the responsibility for providing religious education. For this reason, a theology faculty (*ilahiyat fakültesi*) in university (*Darülfünun*) would be opened for specialists and *mekteps* in order to train imams who would carry out religious services. Neither these institutions nor the religion classes lasted long. Religion education was released from the curriculum in the education year 1931-1932, Imam-Hatip *Mekteps* were closed in 1930 and *Ilahiyat* Faculties in 1933. Only the Qur'an Schools maintained their existence during the silence of religious education in Turkey.

As a result of changes in Turkey and the world, during the 1940s religion and religious education were debated in the Turkish media as well as in the Turkish Assembly. Approaching the last years of one party rule (CHP) some changes occurred in religious education. Religion and ethics class was added to the curriculum and an *Ilahiyat* Faculty was opened in Ankara. After the Democratic Party (DP) won the election it reopened the Imam-Hatip Schools in 1951. Religious education has always occupied the Turkish agenda and never stabilized. During the military interventions in 1960, 1971 and 1980, the possibilities for religious education were narrowed. In the brief history of the Turkish Republic, the educational debate has mainly revolved around

Imam-Hatip Schools. Whereas the ruling elites saw these schools as a threat for the regime, some politicians used them as a means for vote. In 1980s they were adapted as a carrier of Turkish-Islamic synthesis. In 1990's they gained popularity and, while approaching the military invasion of the 28<sup>th</sup> February, they were called "the back garden of the political Islam". After 1997, their scope was reduced to institutions meeting the need for religious services (Bozan 2007:4). Now, they are unchained and in the centre of the educational system in the eyes of the current government.

We left behind last year with hot debates on the new educational system and political agenda in Turkey was occupied for months with elective religious classes and reopening middle branches of IHHSs. The last regulations in Turkish educational system added elective religion classes such as The Qur'an, *siyer* and basic religious knowledge classes<sup>78</sup> and allowed girls to cover their heads during the Qur'an classes.<sup>79</sup> Also, middle school branches of IHHSs were opened and, after 4 year elementary school education, students now have an opportunity to continue these schools. After these regulations, students can take religion classes or apply to an IHHS in their tenth year because the elementary schools start in their sixth and ends in their tenth year. So, the age limitation for religious education was reduced from 12 to 10 in practice.

These new regulations are closely related with my research because I completed my project and interviews before these regulations were declared. I built my thesis mainly on the approach of the secular state against religious education and narrowed educational channels after especially the 1997 military intervention on February 28<sup>th</sup>. In other words, the question is

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<sup>78</sup> For the elective classes, its weekly hours according to the grades see the table on page 39: [http://www.meb.gov.tr/duyurular/duyurular2012/12yil\\_soru\\_cevaplar.pdf](http://www.meb.gov.tr/duyurular/duyurular2012/12yil_soru_cevaplar.pdf)

<sup>79</sup> For the news see: <http://www.haber7.com/egitim/haber/915712-derslere-basortusuyle-girebilecekler>

whether the new regulations will affect my thesis or not because the channels are broadened by the AKP government-at the wheel since 2002.

Now, the question that should be asked is that because of these betterments about religious education, these families will simply give up demanding preschool education covering basic religious education. Depending on parents' search and expectations from education I can say that they will not. Although preschool education is not compulsory and it is even not common in Turkey, they prefer preschool education. Also, even though they are not rich, they do not prefer public schools. One can say that it is because they are in search of religious education. However, when I asked families whether they would prefer an institution in which only religious education is given, they overwhelmingly said "No". Instead, they distinguish the Qur'an Schools and Summer Qur'an Classes from preschool education. In addition to basic religious education they want their children to get prepared for elementary schools, socialize and gain self-confidence so that they can be successful in their future life. In other words, they are cognizant of the role of education as an important means to rise up the social and economic ladder. In fact, many of the parents I spoke with did not separate education into secular and religious components but demand it as a whole. These parents differ from the priorities of the state and, thus, mark a distinctive approach to the historical, contemporary, and future of religious education in Turkey.

During the interviews some parents mention that they have limited opportunities to provide religious education for their children and they benefit from this preschool education. Otherwise, they would have to wait after graduation from elementary school (8 year in the old system). Now, they do not have to wait until their children reach to their 15 because, on the one hand, their children can take elective religious classes in regular middle schools, on the other hand they can send them to a middle branch of an IHHS. However, these changes will not debase my thesis because religious

education is not free and restrictions still exist in pre- and primary schools in Turkey. The reality in Turkey is that students can take religious education as much as the state offers but not as much as they or their families demand. Lastly, my research covers the history and its effects on today over a current example not a prediction about the future of religious education and its role in change. I think that the effects of the new regulations need to be examined in the following years.

Although my research does not specifically focus on IHHSs, which is only a minor part of mine, the research on IHHSs closely related to my findings. What my research reveals is that parents are in search of religious education and while providing this education for their children they do not want to give up regular education. That is, they try to reconcile religious education and preschool education. As other researchers have found, parents prefer IHHS because both religious education and regular high school education are given together. In my research what is also surprising that families dominantly posited that they would not prefer a preschool in which only religious education is given. Many of them emphasized that their children need to be socialized and get prepared for elementary schools. In sum, they are in search of a multidimensional education and, since the state does not provide it, they support alternative institutions offering this education.

I called their search "an alternative way" because parents intentionally choose this way instead of staying in the officially recognized and authorized curriculum. Moreover, in the example of *sıbyan okuls*, they carry a traditional tone as well as a modern one due to both their name and the education provided by these schools. Considering the monopoly of the state over education and the approach of the secular state against religious education, *sıbyan okuls* are embodiment of civil education. Families promote this education because they offer preschool education in addition to basic religious education.

Another important point that I reached in my thesis, many parents I interviewed see IHHSs as a strong option for their children's high school education. Interestingly, by differentiating girls from boys some parents also mention that they would prefer these or girls' vocational schools for their daughters for their secondary education. In this case, as Bozan (2007) emphasizes in his study, because IHHSs offer separate classes for girls and boys as well as permit wearing the headscarf in classes, parents consider these schools a good option for their daughters (p.25-29). Therefore, and taking this factor into consideration, a religious education should offer an option too for girls who want to continue their educations with their headscarves.

Lastly, during my research I observed that mothers mostly undertook the responsibility of their children's education. Unfortunately, I can say that some fathers do not have anything to say about their children's future or they even comment they do not help their wives in practice. During the interviews some parents mentioned that they are not satisfied with religious education provided in Turkey and they desire for a more religious generation. As İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu (1886-1978) points out, religions or ideals cannot be taken only from books or through education but from beings themselves because they are living phenomenon too<sup>80</sup>. He continues, "When I am asked 'how a faithful generation (*inançlı nesil*) is raised', I answered, 'it is from a faithful one'" Baltacıoğlu (1964:46). Therefore, although I do not ignore the role of teachers but I think that some parents overlook the role of family itself, environment and the media on the character of a child but focus on just education given in these schools.

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<sup>80</sup> In fact, this is the one side of the coin because, on the one hand, "man is a social product" and, on the other hand, "society is a human product" (Berger & Luckmann 1967:61).

Although religion has been challenged by positivism and modernity, human beings still have unanswered questions in which science is not interested, although philosophy and religion are. As Said Nursi posits, people have always been in search of “convincing and satisfying answers to the three awesome and difficult questions that have always bewildered and occupied minds: Where do you come from? What are you doing here? Where are you going?” (Nineteenth word, Third droplet)<sup>81</sup> On the other hand, no matter how much human being has developed in terms of science and technology, they do not mean anything as they stand because it depends on how human beings apply to them. So, belief and ethics are the limitations in front of people’s voracity. Nietzsche’s famous expression reminds us, if God<sup>82</sup> dies what will demarcate people? Therefore, no matter what we consider religion- either as an essential constituent for a society or a need for human beings- people have always been searching for learning, teaching and practicing religion.

Freedom of conscience and religion is one of the fundamental rights and, no matter the ways are restricted, people will always be in search of alternative ways to practice their beliefs and pass down their children. The history of religious education in Turkey after the establishment a secular nation state is a good example for this struggle. The last regulations show that the restriction over religious education is going to be released step by step. As a permanent solution for not only religious education but also other rights and freedoms, Turkey needs a new constitution prepared by wide-range participation. In this new constitution the interpretation of secularism and the understanding of the Unification Law of Education must be revised. Although a pool of elective classes brought by the last regulation such as elective

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<sup>81</sup> For English translation see: <http://www.saidnur.com/en/index.htm>

<sup>82</sup> With this term I refer to not a specific religion or God but all systems of beliefs and understanding of ethics.



Kurdish class,<sup>83</sup> the Qur'an and *siyer* classes offer more choice to students and reduce the tension over some problematic areas in Turkey, I believe that with the participation of people from different parties, ideologies and religions a broad "Unification Law of Education" can be constituted. But this will not be carried out to unify people and will not represent the monopoly of the state over education; instead, it will carry a civil tone permitting much freer area in education under the guarantee of the state.

The current government and the national assembly are working now on a new constitution. It is hard to guess whether they will agree with a new approach to secularism, the Unification Law of Education and making religious education free. But, considering the new changes in the educational system I can predict that religious education and the headscarf issue in the schools will end totally sooner or later. However, even if secularism is interpreted more broadly and a new constitution passes the Turkish assembly, I am curious whether the state will restrict itself by allowing civil education or alternatives and, therefore, giving up an important means to control over society through education. That is, the question is whether the state will consent to the existence of civil institutions or will continue to provide education only according to its will. I think the answer of this question is crucial, because of the nature of the power, the state and its rulers (in this case AKP) may not want to create a freer atmosphere at the expense of "others"<sup>84</sup>. I hope that we do not have to face with a new project by escaping another (former) one. As a result, for a permanent solution, in

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<sup>83</sup> See the question 53 on page 25:

[http://www.meb.gov.tr/duyurular/duyurular2012/12yil\\_soru\\_cevaplar.pdf](http://www.meb.gov.tr/duyurular/duyurular2012/12yil_soru_cevaplar.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> In case of permission of civil institutions independent from the Ministry of National Education, different religious groups will open their schools from preschool to universities and give religious education based on their interpretation legally. We keep in mind that not only Sunnis but also Alevis are going to open their own institutions. So, the question is whether AKP would allow this diversity or not.

addition to laicism the role and the limits of the state must be determined or reinterpreted too.

As Turhan emphasizes, each new carries a tone from the old. The way of not imprisoned by the past is not to deny but passing beyond it by utilizing from the useful parts of the past. It is not a solution to ban and disparage all institutions inherited from the past because- unless the need can be met- the past is going to revive sooner or later (1964: 52-53).

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **Preferences of Families in Preschool Education**

This survey is conducted by Muhammed Sevim, a graduate student in the sociology department at Fatih University, in order to capture the factors affecting preferences of families in preschool education for their child. I assure you that all the data collected through this study will be kept in confidence. **Please, do not write any names** on the questionnaire. In this survey, some questions are open whereas some others consist of boxes and scales. If there are any boxes, please select the most appropriate one for you; if there is no box, please write your answer clearly.

Thank you for your cooperation and candid responses.

Muhammed Sevim  
Fatih University  
Istanbul

Your affinity with the child as a family member filling up this survey:

Mother    Father    Both    Other (please specify).....

**MOTHER**

-Mother's occupation: .....

-Hours/week at work: .....

-Mother's place of birth: .....

-Mother's education status:

Elementary School    High School    Middle School  
Undergraduate    Graduate

-Did the mother receive a religious education?

Qur'an School    Imam-Hatip School    Ilahiyat Faculty  
Other    None

-Do you know to read Qur'an (in Arabic)?

Yes    No    I knew but I forgot

-How many pages do you read Quran (in Arabic) weekly in average?

0    1-5    5-10    10-15    15-20    over 20

-How many pages do you read Quran from any translation (*meal*) weekly in average?

0    1-5    5-10    10-15    15-20    over 20

-Please check the most appropriate one showing your daily prayer habit

I pray almost 5 times a day  
I sometimes pray  
I do not pray

-If the mother does not work, within the last six months has she taken any special courses such as cooking, foreign language, Ottoman language, sewing, painting, etc.,? If yes, please specify it:

.....

## FATHER

-Father's occupation: .....

-Hours/week at work: .....

-Father's place of birth: .....

-Father's education status:

- Elementary School   High School   Middle School   Undergraduate  
Graduate

-Did the father receive a religious education?

- Qur'an School   Imam-Hatip School   Ilahiyat Faculty  
Other   None

-Do you know to read Qur'an (in Arabic)?

- Yes   No   I knew but I forgot

-How many pages do you read Quran (in Arabic) weekly in average?

- 0   1-5   5-10   10-15   15-20   over 20

-How many pages do you read Quran from any translation (*meal*) weekly in average?

- 0   1-5   5-10   10-15   15-20   over 20

-Please check the most appropriate one showing your daily prayer habit

- I pray almost 5 times a day  
I sometimes pray  
I perform only Friday or/and eid(*bayram*) prayers  
I do not pray



-Do you have any other children who have attended at any kindergartens?  
.....

-After preschool, to which elementary school do you plan to send your child?  
.....

-After elementary school, to which high school do you plan to send your child?  
.....

-The average monthly income of the family in TL:

- Below 1000            1000-1500            1500-2000            2000-2500  
2500-3000            over 3000

-How much do you pay monthly for this school including transportation?  
.....

-Are there any grandparents living with you? (If yes, please specify)  
.....

-Do you have any relatives to take care of your child in case both father and mother are at work? (If yes, please specify)  
.....

-Where (which borough/neighborhood) do you live in Istanbul?  
.....

-Where (which borough/neighborhood) is the school located?  
.....

-Is there any other private or public preschool or kindergarten nearer your home?    Yes             No

-Where did you hear from this school?  
.....

-What were the most important three factors causing you to choose this school?

1)

2)

3)

-What are the three aspects that you appreciate best about this school?

1)

2)

3)

-What are the three aspects that you think the school needs to improve?

1)

2)

3)

-Why do you think that preschool education is important for your child?

.....

.....

.....

.....



**Please answer the following questions by marking one box only**

**1) I chose this school because it is near my home or my work.**

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**2) I chose this school because they pick my child up (transportation service).**

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**3) I chose this school because the tuition of the school is cheaper than others.**

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**4) I chose this school because the school prepares my child for elementary school.**

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**5) I chose this school because the school arranges social activities to entertain my child.**

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**6) I chose this school because the school helps my child have friends and socialize.**

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**7) I chose this school because my neighbor's child/relative's child goes to same school.**

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**8) I chose this school because my worldview (culturally, religiously, politically etc.) coincides with this institution.**

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**9) I chose this school because the teachers at this school are good role models for my child.**

- Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**10) I chose this school because the school teaches a foreign language.**

- Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**11) I chose this school because the school teaches ethics.**

- Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**12) I chose this school because the school gives religious education.**

- Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**13) I/we chose this school because both mother and father work.**

- Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**14) I/we chose this school because I/we do not have any relatives to take care of my/our children when I/we work.**

- Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**Now, look back over the list above and please list the three most important factors causing you to choose this school:**

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

-In your opinion, what are the three important flaws of Turkish educational system?

1)

2)

3)

**Please answer the following questions by marking one box only**

**1) I think that religious education given in elementary and high schools in Turkey is sufficient.**

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**2) I would send my child to a school that gives only religious education.**

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**3) I will send my child to Imam-Hatip Schools.**

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**4) Religion and ethics class should be elective class in elementary schools.**

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**5) Religion and ethics class should be required class in elementary schools.**

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**6) Religion and ethics class should be elective class only in high schools.**

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree  Strongly Agree

**7) Religion and ethics class should be required class  
only in high schools.**

- Strongly disagree    Disagree    Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree    Strongly Agree

**8) Religion and ethics class should be excluded from the program  
in elementary and high schools.**

- Strongly disagree    Disagree    Neither agree Nor disagree  
 Agree    Strongly Agree

If you have any further question or explanation please do not hesitate to contact me. If you need to talk face to face I can visit you for an interview. Thank you for your help and detailed explanations.

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## APPENDIX B

### Ailelerin Okul Öncesi Eğitim Tercihleri

Bu çalışma, Fatih Üniversitesi Sosyoloji Bölümü Yüksek Lisans öğrencilerinden Muhammed Sevim tarafından, okul öncesi eğitiminde ailelerin tercihlerini etkileyen nedenleri araştırmak için yapılmaktadır. Bu manada, vereceğiniz cevaplar genel eğilimi belirlemenin yanında, hem çocuğunuzun eğitim gördüğü kurumlar hem de çocuğunuz gibi bu şekilde eğitim alan çocuklar için de önem arz etmektedir. Soruları cevaplarken eğer şık konulmuşsa sizin için en uygun olanını seçiniz. Kutucukların olmadığı durumda cevabınızı mümkün olduğunca açık ve detaylı yazmanız araştırmanın sıhhati açısından önem arz etmektedir. **Lütfen anket formu üzerine herhangi bir isim yazmayınız.** İsim yazılması durumunda da bu isimler tarafımdan saklı tutulacaktır. Araştırma İsim gerektirmediğinden sorularınızı içtenlikle cevaplayabilirsiniz. Yardımınız için teşekkür ederim.

Muhammed Sevim  
Fatih Üniversitesi  
İstanbul

\*Formu dolduran velinin öğrenciye yakınlık derecesi:

Annesi Babası Her ikisi Diğer(lütfen belirtiniz): .....

## **ANNE**

-Annenin mesleği: .....

-Haftalık toplam çalışma saati: .....

-Annenin doğum yeri: .....

-Annenin eğitim durumu

İlkokul mezunu Ortaokul mezunu Lise veya dengi bir okul mezunu  
Meslek Yüksek Okulu mezunu Üniversite mezunu  
Yüksek Lisans mezunu Diğer

-Anne herhangi bir dini eğitim aldı mı?

Evet, Kur'an Kursu Evet, İmam Hatip Lisesi  
Evet, İlahiyat Yüksek Okulu Evet, İlahiyat Fakültesi  
Evet, Başka bir kurum Hayır, Almadı

-Kur'an(Arapça olarak) okumasını biliyor musunuz?

Evet Hayır Öğrenmiştim fakat unuttum

-Haftada ortalama kaç sayfa Kur'an(Arapça) okursunuz?

0 1-5 5-10 10-15 15-20 Bir cüzden fazla

-Haftada ortalama kaç sayfa meal okuyorsunuz?

0 1-5 5-10 10-15 15-20 20den fazla

-Namaz ibadetinizle ilgili en uygun şıkkı seçiniz:

Günde beş vakit kılarım/kılmaya çalışırım  
Ara sıra kılarımKılmıyorum

- Eğer anne çalışmıyorsa, son altı aydır herhangi bir kursa veya okula devam ediyor mu?(Açık Öğretim veya Üniversite, İSMEK, dikiş-nakış, Osmanlıca veya yabancı dil vs.)  
.....

## **BABA**

-Babanın mesleđi: .....

-Haftalık toplam çalışma saati: .....

-Babanın doğum yeri: .....

-Babanın eğitim durumu:

İlkokul mezunu Ortaokul mezunu Lise veya dengi bir okul mezunu

Meslek Yüksek Okulu mezunu Üniversite mezunu

Yüksek Lisans mezunu Diđer

-Baba herhangi bir dini eğitim aldı mı?

Evet, Kur'an Kursu Evet, İmam Hatip Lisesi

Evet, İlahiyat Yüksek Okulu Evet, İlahiyat Fakültesi

Evet, Başka bir kurum Hayır, Almadı

-Kur'an(Arapça olarak) okumasını biliyor musunuz?

Evet Hayır Öğrenmişim fakat unuttum

-Haftada ortalama kaç sayfa Kur'an(Arapça) okursunuz?

0 1-5 5-10 10-15 15-20 Bir cüzden fazla

-Haftada ortalama kaç sayfa meal okuyorsunuz?

0 1-5 5-10 10-15 15-20 20den fazla

-Namaz ibadetinizle ilgili en uygun şıkkı seçiniz:

Günde beş vakit kılarım/kılmaya çalışırım

Ara sıra kılarım

Sadece Bayram ve Cuma namazlarını kılıyorum

Kılmıyorum

-Genelde evde en fazla izlenen 3 televizyon kanalını belirtiniz:

1) 2) 3)

-Genelde en fazla takip ettiğiniz 3 televizyon programını ismiyle birlikte yazınız:

1)

2)

3)

-En sık okuduğunuz 3 gazeteyi belirtiniz:

1) 2) 3)

-En sık okuduğunuz 3 dergiyi yazınız:

1) 2) 3)

-Herhangi bir gazete veya dergiye abone iseniz ismiyle birlikte yazınız:

.....

-Aile içerisinde çocuğun eğitimiyle genelde kim ilgilenir?

Sadece Anne Genelde Anne Hem Anne Hem Baba  
Genelde Baba Sadece Baba Diğer

-Şu an okul öncesi eğitimi alan çocuğunuz da dahil olmak üzere toplam çocuk sayısı ve çocuklarınızın yaşlarını belirtiniz: (Örneğin, 2 çocuk 5 ve 7 yaşlarında)

.....

-Şu an okul öncesi eğitimi alan çocuğunuzun ya da çocuklarınızın yaşı ve cinsiyeti: (Örneğin, 5 yaşında Kız)

.....

-Kaç yıldır çocuğunuz bu eğitimi alıyor? .....

-Bu şekilde değerler üzerine eğitim veren bir kurumda daha önce okul öncesi eğitimi almış başka bir çocuğunuz var mı?

Evet,.....yıl önce Hayır





-Çocuğunuzun eğitim aldığı okulun takdir ettiğiniz 3 yönünü yazınız:

1)

2)

3)

-Okulda eksik gördüğünüz veya okulun geliştirmesi gerektiğini düşündüğünüz 3 yönünü belirtiniz:

1)

2)

3)

-Okul öncesi eğitimi çocuğunuz için niçin önemli?

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Aşağıdaki yargılara sizin görüşünüzü yansıtacak şekilde, yalnızca bir kutucuğu işaretleyerek cevap veriniz.**

**1) Bu okulu evime veya işime yakın olduğu için seçtim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum     Katılmıyorum     Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum     Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**2) Bu okulu servis imkanı sunduğu için seçtim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum     Katılmıyorum     Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum     Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**3) Bu okulu okul öncesi eğitimi veren diğer okullardan daha ucuz olduğu için seçtim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum     Katılmıyorum     Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum     Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**4) Bu okulu çocuğumu ilkokula iyi hazırlayacağını düşündüğüm için seçtim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum     Katılmıyorum     Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum     Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**5) Bu okulu sosyal aktiviteler düzenlediği için seçtim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum     Katılmıyorum     Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum     Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**6) Bu okulu çocuğumun sosyalleşmesine ve arkadaşlar edinmesine katkı sağladığı için seçtim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum     Katılmıyorum     Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum     Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**7) Komşumuzun veya akrabamızın çocuğu da aynı okula gittiğinden dolayı bu okulu seçtim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum     Katılmıyorum     Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum     Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**8) Bu okulu dünya görüşüme yakınlığından dolayı seçtim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum     Katılmıyorum     Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum     Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**9) Okuldaki öğretmen ve idarecilerin çocuğuma iyi birer örnek teşkil edeceklerini düşündüğümden dolayı bu okulu seçtim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum     Katılmıyorum     Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum     Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**10) Okulu yabancı dil eğitimi verdiği için seçtim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum     Katılmıyorum     Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum     Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**11) Okulu ahlak eğitimi verdiği için seçtim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum     Katılmıyorum     Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum     Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**12) Okulu din eğitimi verdiği için seçtim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum     Katılmıyorum     Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum     Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**13) Çalışıyor olmamızdan dolayı çocuğumuzla ilgilenemiyor olduğumuzdan bu okulu seçtim/seçtik.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum     Katılmıyorum     Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum     Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**14) Annesi ve babası isteyken çocuğumuzla ilgilenecek herhangi bir akrabamız/yakınımız olmadığından bu okulu seçtim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum     Katılmıyorum     Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum     Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Yukarıdaki 14 maddeyi tekrar gözden geçirip sizin bu okulu seçmenizde en fazla etkili olan 3 maddeyi yazınız.**

1)

2)

3)

-Size göre Türkiye'deki eğitim sisteminin 3 önemli eksiğini yazınız:

1)

2)

3)

**Aşağıdaki ifadeleri sizin için en uygun kutucuğu işaretleyerek cevaplayınız**

**1) Çocuğumu yalnızca din eğitimi veren bir okula göndermek isterdim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum       Katılmıyorum       Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum       Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**2) Çocuğumu İmam-Hatip Lisesine gönderirdim.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum       Katılmıyorum       Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum       Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**3) Türkiye'de ilkokulda ve lisede verilen dini eğitim yeterlidir.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum       Katılmıyorum       Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum       Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**4) Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi ilkokullarda seçmeli ders olarak okutulmalı.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum       Katılmıyorum       Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum       Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**5) Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi ilkokullarda zorunlu ders olarak okutulmalı.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum       Katılmıyorum       Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum       Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**6) Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi lise müfredatında seçmeli ders olarak yer almalı.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum       Katılmıyorum       Kararsız  
 Katılıyorum       Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**7) Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi liselerde zorunlu ders olarak okutulmalı.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum      Katılmıyorum      Kararsız  
Katılıyorum      Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**8) Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi ilkokul ve lise müfredatından tamamen çıkarılmalı.**

- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum      Katılmıyorum      Kararsız  
Katılıyorum      Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

Eğer herhangi bir sorunuz veya araştırmaya katkısı olacağını düşündüğünüz bir tavsiyeniz olursa, lütfen bana aşağıdaki telefon numaramdan veya mail adresimden ulaşınız. Verdiğiniz içten cevaplar için teşekkür ederim.

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## APPENDIX C

### QUESTIONNAIRE SAMPLES

#### SAMPLE 1

**Ailelerin Okul Öncesi Eğitim Tercihleri**

Bu çalışma, Fatih Üniversitesi Sosyoloji Bölümü Yüksek Lisans öğrencilerinden Muhammed Sevim tarafından, okul öncesi eğitiminde ailelerin tercihlerini etkileyen nedenleri araştırmak için yapılmaktadır. Bu manada, vereceğiniz cevaplar genel eğilimi belirlemenin yanında, hem çocuğunuzun eğitim gördüğü kurumlar hem de çocuğunuz gibi bu şekilde eğitim alan çocuklar için de önem arz etmektedir. Soruları cevaplarırken eğer sık konulmuşsa sizin için en uygun olanını seçiniz. Kutucukların olmadığı durumda cevabınızı mümkün olduğunca açık ve detaylı yazmanız araştırmanın sıhhati açısından önem arz etmektedir. Lütfen anket formu üzerine herhangi bir isim yazmayınız. İsim yazılması durumunda da bu isimler tarafımdan saklı tutulacaktır. Araştırma İsim gerektirmediğinden sorularınızı içtenlikle cevaplayabilirsiniz. Yardımınız için teşekkür ederim.

\*Formu dolduran velinin öğrenciye yakınlık derecesi:

Annesi  Babası  Her ikisi  Diğer (lütfen belirtiniz): .....

<b>ANNE</b> -Annenin Mesleği: <u>Evli Bir Kadın</u> -Haftalık toplam çalışma saati: <u>54</u> -Annenin doğum yeri: <u>İstanbul</u> -Annenin eğitim durumu: <input type="checkbox"/> İlkokul mezunu <input type="checkbox"/> Ortaokul mezunu <input type="checkbox"/> Lise veya dengi bir okul mezunu <input type="checkbox"/> Meslek Yüksek Okulu mezunu <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Üniversite mezunu <input type="checkbox"/> Yüksek Lisans mezunu <input type="checkbox"/> Diğer -Anne herhangi bir dini eğitim aldı mı? <input type="checkbox"/> Evet, Kur'an Kursu <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evet, İmam Hatip Lisesi <input type="checkbox"/> Evet, İlahiyat Yüksek Okulu <input type="checkbox"/> Evet, İlahiyat Fakültesi <input type="checkbox"/> Evet, Başka bir kurum <input type="checkbox"/> Hayır, Almadı -Kur'an(Arapça olarak) okumasını biliyor musunuz? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evet <input type="checkbox"/> Hayır <input type="checkbox"/> Öğrenmiştim fakat unuttum -Haftada ortalama kaç sayfa Kur'an(Arapça) okursunuz? <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-5 <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 10-15 <input type="checkbox"/> 15-20 <input type="checkbox"/> Bir cüzden fazla -Haftada ortalama kaç sayfa meal okuyorsunuz? <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-5 <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 10-15 <input type="checkbox"/> 15-20 <input type="checkbox"/> 20den fazla -Namaz ibadetinizle ilgili en uygun şıkkı seçiniz: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Günde beş vakit kılarım/kılmaya çalışırım <input type="checkbox"/> Ara sıra kılarım <input type="checkbox"/> Kılmıyorum	<b>BABA</b> -Babanın mesleği: <u>Polis</u> -Haftalık toplam çalışma saati: <u>54</u> -Babanın doğum yeri: <u>İstanbul</u> -Babanın eğitim durumu: <input type="checkbox"/> İlkokul mezunu <input type="checkbox"/> Ortaokul mezunu <input type="checkbox"/> Lise veya dengi bir okul mezunu <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meslek Yüksek Okulu mezunu <input type="checkbox"/> Üniversite mezunu <input type="checkbox"/> Yüksek Lisans mezunu <input type="checkbox"/> Diğer -Baba herhangi bir dini eğitim aldı mı? <input type="checkbox"/> Evet, Kur'an Kursu <input type="checkbox"/> Evet, İmam-Hatip Lisesi <input type="checkbox"/> Evet, İlahiyat Yüksek Okulu <input type="checkbox"/> Evet, İlahiyat Fakültesi <input type="checkbox"/> Evet, Başka bir kurum <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hayır, Almadı -Kur'an(Arapça olarak) okumasını biliyor musunuz? <input type="checkbox"/> Evet <input type="checkbox"/> Hayır <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Öğrenmiştim fakat unuttum -Haftada ortalama kaç sayfa Kur'an(Arapça)okursunuz? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 10-15 <input type="checkbox"/> 15-20 <input type="checkbox"/> Bir cüzden fazla -Haftada ortalama kaç sayfa meal okuyorsunuz? <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-5 <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 10-15 <input type="checkbox"/> 15-20 <input type="checkbox"/> 20den fazla -Namaz ibadetinizle ilgili en uygun şıkkı seçiniz: <input type="checkbox"/> Günde beş vakit kılarım/kılmaya çalışırım <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ara sıra kılarım <input type="checkbox"/> Kılmıyorum <input type="checkbox"/> Sadece Bayram ve Cuma namazlarını kılıyorum
---	--

-Eğer anne çalışmıyorsa, son altı aydır herhangi bir kursa veya okula devam ediyor mu?(Açık Öğretim veya Üniversite, İSMEK, dikiş-nakış, Osmanlıca veya yabancı dil vs.)

Diğer sayfaya geçiniz

## SAMPLE 2

2

-Genelde evde en fazla izlenen 3 televizyon kanalını belirtiniz:  
1) Kanal D 2) ATV 3) Yumurcak

-Genelde en fazla takip ettiğiniz 3 televizyon programını ismiyle birlikte yazınız:  
1) ---  
2) ---  
3) ---

-En sık okuduğunuz 3 gazeteyi veya internetten takip ediyorsanız haber portalını belirtiniz:  
1) --- 2) --- 3) ---

-En sık okuduğunuz 3 dergiyi yazınız:  
1) Semerkand 2) --- 3) ---

-Herhangi bir gazete veya dergiye abone iseniz ismiyle birlikte yazınız:  
---

-Aile içerisinde çocuğun eğitimiyle genelde kim ilgilenir?  
 Sadece Anne  Genelde Anne  Hem Anne Hem Baba  Genelde Baba  Sadece Baba  Diğer

-Şu an okul öncesi eğitimi alan çocuğunuz da dahil olmak üzere toplam çocuk sayısı ve çocuklarınızın yaşlarını belirtiniz: (Örneğin, 2 çocuk 5 ve 7 yaşlarında)  
2 6 ve 10 yaşlarında

-Şu an okul öncesi eğitimi alan çocuğunuzun ya da çocuklarınızın yaşı ve cinsiyeti: (Örneğin, 5 yaşında Kız)  
6 erkek 10 kız

-Kaç yıldır çocuğunuz bu eğitimi alıyor? 2 yıldır

-Bu şekilde değerler üzerine eğitim veren bir kurumda daha önce okul öncesi eğitimi almış başka bir çocuğunuz var mı?  Evet, .....yıl önce  Hayır

-Okul öncesi eğitiminden sonra çocuğunuzu hangi ilkokula göndermeyi düşünüyorsunuz?  
---

-İlkokul eğitiminden sonra çocuğunuzu hangi liseye göndermeyi düşünüyorsunuz?  
---

-Ailenin ortalama aylık geliri  1000 TL'den az  1000TL-1500TL  1500TL-2000TL  
 2000TL-2500TL  2500TL-3000TL  3000TL'den fazla

-Servis ücreti dahil olmak üzere, okula TL olarak toplam ne kadar ödüyorsunuz? 160 TL

-Sizle birlikte yaşayan bir aile büyüğünüz var mı? Varsa lütfen büyükanne büyükbaba vs. şeklinde belirtiniz:  
Kızları babanne kalıyor

-Anne ve babanın çalışması durumunda çocuğa bakabilecek bir akrabanız veya yakınınız var mı? Varsa lütfen yakınlık derecesini belirtiniz: Teyzesi, baban ve

-İstanbul'da hangi semtte veya mahallede oturuyorsunuz? Kirazlı Tepe mah

-Çocuğunuzun okul öncesi eğitimi aldığı okul hangi semtte veya mahallede bulunmaktadır? Kirazlı Tepe mah

-Evinize bu okuldan daha yakın, okul öncesi eğitimi veren özel veya devlete ait başka bir okul var mı?  
 Evet  Hayır

-Bu okulun varlığından nasıl haberdar oldunuz?  
Akraba vasıtasıyla

-Özellikle bu okulu seçmenize sebep olan en önemli 3 etkeni sıralayınız:  
1) Çocuğumun dini eğitimi için  
2) Evinize yakın olduğu için  
3) Çocuğumun sosyelleşmesi için

Diğer sayfaya geçiniz



### SAMPLE 3

3

Aşağıdaki yargılara sizin görüşünüzü yansıtacak şekilde, yalnızca bir kutucuğu işaretleyerek cevap veriniz

1-Bu okulu evime veya işime yakın olduğu için seçtim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

2-Bu okulu servis imkanı sunduğu için seçtim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

3-Bu okulu okul öncesi eğitimi veren diğer okullardan daha ucuz olduğu için seçtim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

4-Bu okulu çocuğumu ilkokula iyi hazırlayacağını düşündüğüm için seçtim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

5-Bu okulu sosyal aktiviteler düzenlediği için seçtim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

6-Bu okulu çocuğumun sosyalleşmesine ve arkadaşlar edinmesine katkı sağladığı için seçtim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

7-Komşumuzun veya akrabamızın çocuğu da aynı okula gittiğinden dolayı bu okulu seçtim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

8-Bu okulu dünya görüşüme yakınlığından dolayı seçtim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

9- Okuldaki öğretmen ve idarecilerin çocuğuma iyi birer örnek teşkil edeceklerini düşündüğümden dolayı bu okulu seçtim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

10-Okulu yabancı dil eğitimi verdiği için seçtim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

11-Okulu ahlak eğitimi verdiği için seçtim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

12-Okulu din eğitimi verdiği için seçtim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

13-Biz annesi ve babasının çalışıyor ve dolayısıyla çocuğumuzla ilgilenemiyor olmamızdan dolayı bu okulu seçtim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

14-Annesi ve babası işteyken çocuğumuzla ilgilenecek herhangi bir akrabamız/yakınımız olmadığından bu okulu seçtim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

Yukarıdaki 14 maddeyi tekrar gözden geçirip sizin bu okulu seçmenizden en fazla etkili olan 3 maddeyi yazınız.

- 1) Okulu ahlak eğitimi verdiği için seçtim.
- 2) Okulu din eğitimi verdiği için seçtim.
- 3) Dünya görüşüme yakınlığından dolayı seçtim.

Diğer sayfaya geçiniz

## SAMPLE 4

-Çocuğunuzun eğitim aldığı okulun takdir ettiğiniz 3 yönünü yazınız:

- 1) Bire bir ilgilenme
- 2) Sevgisine uygun ilgilenmesi
- 3) Öğrendiklerinin kalitesi

-Okulda eksik gördüğünüz veya okulun geliştirmesi gerektiğini düşündüğünüz 3 yönünü belirtiniz:

- 1) Sosyal faaliyetlerin azlığı
- 2) İngilizce eğitimi
- 3) Yemek çeşitliliği

-Okul öncesi eğitimi çocuğunuz için niçin önemli?

Okulda adapte olmasını kolaylaştırması için. İlkokul öncesi eğitimi  
bir yere daha uygun bilgilerle öğretilmesi için

-Size göre Türkiye'deki eğitim sisteminin 3 önemli eksiğini yazınız:

- 1) Yeterince pratik yapabilmesi tam bilgilerin teoride kalması
- 2) Yeterince geniş problem yapabilmesi
- 3) Satranç, basketbol gibi faaliyetlere yeterince yönlendirilene olması

Aşağıdaki ifadeleri sizin için en uygun kutucuğu işaretleyerek cevaplayınız

Çocuğumu yalnızca din eğitimi veren bir okula göndermek isterdim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Tarafsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

Çocuğumu İmam-Hatip Lisesine gönderirdim.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Tarafsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

Türkiye'de ilkokulda ve lisede verilen dini eğitim yeterlidir.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Tarafsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi ilkokullarda seçmeli ders olarak okutulmalı.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Tarafsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

Din kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi ilkokullarda zorunlu ders olarak okutulmalı.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Tarafsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

Din kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi lise müfredatında seçmeli ders olarak yer almalı.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Tarafsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

Din kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi liselerde zorunlu ders olarak okutulmalı.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Tarafsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

Din kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi ilkokul ve lise müfredatından tamamen çıkarılmalı.

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Tarafsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

Eğer herhangi bir sorunuz veya araştırmaya katkısı olacağını düşündüğünüz bir tavsiyeniz olursa, lütfen bana aşağıdaki telefon numaramdan veya mail adresimden ulaşınız. Verdiğiniz içten cevaplar için teşekkür ederim.

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## SAMPLE 5

4

-Çocuğunuzun eğitim aldığı okulun takdir ettiğiniz 3 yönünü yazınız:

- 1) Manevi değerler
- 2) İki sene
- 3) Yakın çevre

-Okulda eksik gördüğünüz veya okulun geliştirmesi gerektiğini düşündüğünüz 3 yönünü belirtiniz:

- 1) Küçük bir okul revasta bir okul da çok fazla öğrenci olması
- 2) Sosyal aktiviteler çok para hocamaları ve devletin verdiği kitaplar da
- 3) Sosyal aktiviteler çok para hocamaları ve devletin verdiği kitaplar da

-Okul öncesi eğitimi çocuğunuz için neden önemli? Şimdiki ilköğretim daha zor olduğunu düşünüyorum. Her şeyin alt yapı olması. Her şeyin altına koyulması. Her şeyin altına koyulması.

-Size göre Türkiye'deki eğitim sisteminin 3 önemli eksikliği yazınız:

- 1) Eğitimde çok sosyalleşmeye ağırlık veriyorlar belirli grup kullandılar.
- 2) Çok valit geliyor örnek ulsoy müsamer, senlik çok fazla atlatıp eğitime daha çok vakit ayırabilirler.

**Aşağıdaki ifadeleri sizin için en uygun kutucuğu işaretleyerek cevaplayınız**

**Çocuğumu yalnızca din eğitimi veren bir okula göndermek isterdim.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Çocuğumu İmam-Hatip Lisesine gönderirdim.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Türkiye'de ilkokulda ve lisede verilen dini eğitim yeterlidir.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi ilkokullarda seçmeli ders olarak okutulmalı.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi ilkokullarda zorunlu ders olarak okutulmalı.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi lise müfredatında seçmeli ders olarak yer almalı.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi lise müfredatında zorunlu ders olarak okutulmalı.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi ilkokul ve lise müfredatından tamamen çıkarılmalı.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

Eğer herhangi bir sorunuz veya araştırmaya katkısı olacağını düşündüğünüz bir tavsiyeniz olursa, lütfen bana aşağıdaki telefon numaramdan veya mail adresimden ulaşınız. Verdiğiniz için cevaplar için teşekkür ederim.

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## SAMPLE 6

4

-Çocuğunuzun eğitim aldığı okulun takdir ettiğiniz 3 yönünü yazınız:

- 1) Çocuğunuzun psikolojisiyle birebir ilgilenmesi.
- 2) Ahlak yönüne çok dikkat etmesi.
- 3) Temizliğe ve disipline önem göstermesi.

-Okulda eksik gördüğünüz veya okulun geliştirmesi gerektiğini düşündüğünüz 3 yönünü belirtiniz:

- 1) Sosyal faaliyetleri.
- 2) Aileye yönelik toplantılar.
- 3)

-Okul öncesi eğitimi çocuğunuz için neden önemli?

4.5 yaşın çocuk hayatı için önemli bir dönem olduğunu düşünüyorum. Bu dönemde alınan bilgilerden ziyade ahlaki değerlerin kazandırılması gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Okulda bu aşular pekiştirilmesi ve sosyalleşmesi için önemli.

-Size göre Türkiye'deki eğitim sisteminin 3 önemli eksiğini yazınız:

- 1) Çocuğunuzun zeka türü keşfedilip ona göre eğitim verilmeli.
- 2) Eğitim kişiye özel olmalı.
- 3) Yüzeysel kalmamalı.

**Aşağıdaki ifadeleri sizin için en uygun kutucuğu işaretleyerek cevaplayınız**

**Çocuğumu yalnızca din eğitimi veren bir okula göndermek isterdim.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Çocuğumu İmam-Hatip Lisesine gönderirdim.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Türkiye'de ilkökulda ve lisede verilen dini eğitim yeterlidir.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi ilkökullarda seçmeli ders olarak okutulmalı.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi ilkökullarda zorunlu ders olarak okutulmalı.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi lise müfredatında seçmeli ders olarak yer almalı.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi liselede zorunlu ders olarak okutulmalı.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

**Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi dersi ilkökul ve lise müfredatından tamamen çıkarılmalı.**

Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum  Katılmıyorum  Kararsız  Katılıyorum  Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

Eğer herhangi bir sorunuz veya araştırmaya katkısı olacağını düşündüğünüz bir tavsiyeniz olursa, lütfen bana aşağıdaki telefon numaramdan veya mail adresimden ulaşınız. Verdiğiniz içten cevaplar için teşekkür ederim.

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