

## Learning from Parents and Learning with Parents in Social Studies

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**Abstract:** The main purpose of this study is to determine the level of parent involvement in Social Studies courses. Conducted through a survey model, this study utilizes questionnaires with open- and closed- ended questions directed at 530 families of 768 sixth grade students within the universe and sample boundaries. The results have shown that families do not have enough information about Social Studies course in general, are not adequately informed about the subjects in the curriculum.

**Key words:** Social studies • parent involvement

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### INTRODUCTION

The daily life of a primary school student starts and finishes with his/her family. Therefore, it is not possible to isolate the time spent at school from the time spent with the family. The school life of a student has various reflections in his/her family life. This is why the inclusion of the family within the school and courses is to be expected in order to achieve a successful academic life and individual development [1]. Analysis of studies on parent involvement shows that these studies generally focus on the impact of parent involvement on motivation, academic success and attitudes [2].

Examination of relevant literature has shown that studies concerning parent involvement in a specific course are sparse. According to the research findings of Carter [3], parent involvement in mathematics courses increases the success rate of students. Dearing *et al.* [4] pointed out that parent involvement in preschool education improved the literacy performance of children. Epstein *et al.* [5] suggested that programs entailing parent involvement should be developed in order to support success in math, science and reading. Recently, parent involvement has been a hot issue for research and studies, with schools including explanations for increasing parent involvement into their curricula [6]. Studies have indicated that children build a better relation with school, enhance their personal development, become more successful academically and develop emotionally when parents support and encourage them and design educational activities at home; or put another way, when parents have a high level of involvement in school life [7-11]. Carter [3] compiled an annotated bibliography of

studies that had been held in the last decade into the effect of parent involvement on students. The bibliography consists mostly of studies completed on parent involvement into preschool education, reading, mathematics, secondary education, primary education and homework assignments. Studies involving primary education are few in number and mostly focus on the impact of parent involvement. Moreover, only one study into Social Studies is included in the bibliography. Carter's bibliography [3] contains Epstein's (2001) study titled "Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork: Volunteers in Social Studies and Art". However, since there is a strong relation between the family where early behaviors regarding life are gained and the Social Studies course that teaches about life, one would expect the studies on parent involvement into Social Studies courses to be greater in number.

As mentioned by Sunal [11], a Social Studies course is an instrument via which parents can get involved in school life naturally. Parents equip their children with interest, information, attitude and values about life; and school builds on what the students already bring from home. Parent involvement studies in Turkey also focus mainly on preschool education, just as do those in other countries. On the other hand, there are few studies examining parent involvement in primary education; and what is more, there is no single study regarding parent involvement in Social Studies courses. Parent involvement is necessary in order to provide different ways in which to reach the objectives of Social Studies courses. Determining the degree of involvement is key in the organization of studies to increase the level of parent involvement.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether parents participate in Social Studies courses, activities that students hold together with their parents, problems that occur on the part of parents and students' expectations from their parents. By the end of the study, researcher hope to identify parents' and students' thoughts regarding parent involvement, to conduct educational activities for parents, to help teachers generate activities entailing parent involvement, to determine problems with parent involvement and to provide effective parent involvement in Social Studies courses.

The main purpose of this study is to identify the level of parent involvement in Social Studies courses. Accordingly, answers for the following questions have been sought throughout the study:

- (1) What are students' opinions regarding parent involvement in Social Studies courses?
- (2) Is there a significant relationship between the demographic characteristics of students and their opinion of parent involvement in the Social Studies course?
- (3) What are the examples provided by students for activities that they do together with their parents for Social Studies courses?
- (4) According to students, which problems originate with their parents during work on activities for Social Studies courses?
- (5) What do students expect from their parents for Social Studies courses?
- (6) What are parents' opinions concerning involvement in Social Studies courses?
- (7) Is there a significant relation between the demographic characteristics of parents and their opinion of involvement into Social Studies courses?
- (8) What examples are provided by parents for activities that they do together with their children for Social Studies courses?

## **METHODS**

Aimed at determining students and their parents' opinions regarding parent involvement in Social Studies courses, this study was conducted through a survey model. The number of sixth grade students in the universe was 8744, however, only 768 of them were taken into the sample of the study. Due to the large size of the universe and the possible difficulties in data collection, the research team chose schools through random sampling;

thus identifying seven educational districts in the province as the sub-universe of the research. Following this, seven schools were randomly chosen from this sub-universe. Questionnaires prepared for the parents were then given to this set of parents. This study is limited to the answers provided by sixth grade students and their parents during the Spring term of 2005-2006 educational year in central primary schools in province.

Students' grades for Social Studies courses out of a five score evaluation scale (5 for A and 1 for FF) were as follows: 141 students (18.4%) scored 5, 224 students (29.2%) scored 4, 211 students 27.5% scored 3, 132 students (17.2%) scored 2 and 60 students (7.8%) scored 1. The educational backgrounds of mothers were as follows: 589 of them (76.6%) had graduated from a primary school; 92 (12.0%) had graduated from a high school; 49 (6.4%) were literate; 19 (2.5%) had graduated from a university; and 19 (2.5%) were marked as others. Similarly, the information that students gave concerning the educational background of their fathers is as follows: 451 of them (58.7%) had graduated from a primary school, 204 (26.6%) had graduated from a high school, 61 (7.9%) had graduated from a university, 29 (3.8%) were literate and 6 (0.8%) had master degrees. The educational backgrounds of the respondents of parent questionnaires were as follows: 335 (63.2%) had graduated from a primary school, 121 (22.8%) had graduated from a high school; 42 (7.9%) had graduated from a university, 16 (3.0%) were literate; and 16 (3.0%) had master degrees.

In order to collect related data, the researcher developed two questionnaire forms to be applied to students and their parents. In order to have a valid questionnaire, each item had to be related to the topic of the study. Furthermore, both questionnaires had parallel questions testing the consistency of the answers. Following this, the questionnaire was presented to experts to again test its validity. Prior to application, the questionnaire was tested by the researcher personally on a small pilot group that was representative of the study sample. According to the pilot study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was found to be 0.72 and 0.74 for student and parent forms, respectively. Another colleague participated and contributed to the descriptive analysis process in order to provide for the validity of the data collected from open-ended questions [12]. Data obtained from open-ended questions was examined by the researcher and an expert from the field to establish the reliability of the study. While the items for "Agreement" and "Disagreement" were experimental, a determined consensus was made for all items. Through the Miles &

Huberman's [14] formula  $\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Number of Agreement}}{\text{Total Number of Agreement} + \text{Disagreement}} \times 100$ ,  $P=100$  was found and the research was accepted as reliable. Questionnaire forms were delivered to 790 students and their parents; however, the number of returned forms was 768 (97%) for students and 538 (67%) for parents. The closed-ended questions of the questionnaires were evaluated in terms of frequency and percentage and the relationship between variables was analyzed via chi square test. In contrast, open-ended questions were interpreted through the descriptive analysis method.

## RESULTS

**Students' Opinions Regarding Parent Involvement in Social Studies Courses:** Table 1 depicts participating students' opinions concerning parent involvement in Social Studies courses. Moreover, the following data was analyzed in terms of its relationship with the demographic features of students; and explanations were embedded in the text if any significant relation was found.

462 of 768 participating students (60.2%) stated that their parents were a little knowledgeable in Social Studies courses in general, 196 students (25.5%) that their parents had little information and 110 students (14.3%) that their parents had no information. 283 students (36.8%) mentioned that their parents knew the subjects of Social Studies courses, 263 students (34.2%) said their parents were partially aware and 222 students (28.9%) stated that their parents knew nothing at all. Answers to the question "Do you ask for help from your parents when doing Social Studies homework assignments?" were as follows: sometimes 414 students, (53.9%), no 233 students, (30.3%) and yes 121 students (15.8%). 383 students (49.9%) answered that their parents occasionally helped them to complete Social Studies homework assignments, while 202 students (26.3%) said they never helped and 183 students (23.8%) stated that they usually helped.

The numbers of students stating that their parents supported, did not support and partially supported them in 'Activities Carried Outside the Home for Social Studies courses' were 374 (48.7%), 203 (26.4%) and 191 (24.9%) respectively. 557 students (72.5%) answered that their parents encouraged them to take trips organized for Social Studies courses, whereas 134 students (17.4%) stated a partial support and 77 students (10.0%) indicated that they were not supported at all. Students' replies when asked the question 'if they ever did activities together with their parents for Social Studies courses' were: never

305 students (39.8%), sometimes 273 students (35.5%) and usually 190 students (24.7%). The answers to the question "Do you think your parents contribute to internal and external school activities within Social Studies courses?" were as follows: yes 392 students (51.0%), sometimes 271 students (35.3%) and no 105 students (13.7%).

The chi square independence test was used to analyze whether students' answers regarding parent involvement in Social Studies courses changed according to their demographic features. The result of the analysis revealed that there was a significant relationship between students' grades in Social Studies courses and the following questions: "Are your parents knowledgeable in Social Studies courses in general?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 58.8$ ,  $p = 0.00$ , "Do your parents know about the subjects of Social Studies courses?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 33.8$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ; "Do your parents help you with Social Studies homework assignments?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 16.7$ ,  $p = 0.01$ , "Do your parents support your activities for Social Studies courses outside the home?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 24.6$ ,  $p = 0.00$ , "Do your parents encourage you to take trips you have for Social Studies courses?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 40.8$ ,  $p = 0.00$ , "Can you say that your parents contribute to the activities you do for Social Studies courses both inside and outside the school?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 20.9$ ,  $p = 0.00$ .

Another significant relation was found between the educational background of the mother (one of the independent variables) and the following questions: "Are your parents knowledgeable about Social Studies courses in general?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 30.4$ ,  $p = 0.00$ , "Do your parents know about the subjects of Social Studies courses?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 26.6$ ,  $p = 0.03$ , "Do your parents encourage you to take trips you have for Social Studies courses?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 45.5$ ,  $p = 0.01$ , "Do your parents support you in activities carried outside the home within the Social Studies course?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 17.1$ ,  $p = 0.02$ . "Do you ever do activities together with your parents for Social Studies courses?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 52.1$ ,  $p = 0.00$ . "Can you say that your parents contribute to the activities you do for Social Studies course inside and outside the school?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 23.1$ ,  $p = 0.02$ .

In addition, a further significant relationship was determined between the educational background of the father (one of the independent variables) and the following questions: "Are your parents knowledgeable in Social Studies courses in general?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 50.7$ ,  $p = 0.00$ , "Are your parents knowledgeable in the subjects of Social Studies courses?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 32.1$ ,  $p = 0.00$ , "Do your parents support you in activities carried outside

Table 1: Students' Opinions Regarding Parent Involvement into Social Studies Course

Students' Opinions	f	%
Are your parents knowledgeable about Social Studies courses in general?		
Yes	196	25.5
A little	462	60.2
No	110	14.3
Total	768	100.0
Do your parents know about the subjects of Social Studies courses?		
Yes	283	36.9
Partially	263	34.2
No	222	28.9
Total	768	100.0
Do you ask for help from your parents when doing Social Studies homework assignments?		
Yes	121	15.8
Sometimes	414	53.9
No	233	30.3
Total	768	100.0
Do your parents occasionally help you to complete Social Studies homework assignments?		
Yes	183	23.8
Sometimes	383	49.9
No	202	26.3
Total	768	100.0
Do your parents support you in activities carried outside the home within the context of the Social Studies course?		
Yes	374	48.7
Partially	191	24.9
No	203	26.4
Total	768	100.0
Do your parents encourage you to take trips organized by Social Studies courses?		
Yes	557	72.6
Partially	134	17.4
No	77	10.0
Total	768	100.0
Do you ever do activities together with your parents for Social Studies courses?		
Yes	190	24.7
Sometimes	273	35.5
No	305	39.8
Total	768	100.0
Do you think your parents contribute to intermural and extramural activities within Social Studies courses?		
Yes	392	51.0
Sometimes	271	35.3
No	105	13.7
Total	768	100.0

the home within the Social Studies course?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 20.1, p = 0.02$ , "Do your parents encourage you to take trips organized for Social Studies courses?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 53.6, p = 0.00$ , "Can you say that your parents contribute to the activities you do for Social Studies course inside and outside the school?"  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 18.7, p = 0.00$ .

As can be seen in the research findings, students think that their parents do not know enough about their Social Studies course. Occasionally students may want help from their parents with Social Studies homework assignments, or may not. It can be inferred that students do not always want their parents help because they hold

the opinion that their parents do not know enough about the content of Social Studies courses. On the other hand, it can be said that parents do not pay enough attention to Social Studies courses, which are seen as less important than Mathematics, Science and Technology courses.

**Examples Given by Students for the Activities They Do Together with Their Parents within the Social Studies Course:**

Sixth grade students participating in the study were asked an open-ended question such as “Can you give examples of activities that you do together with your parents for the Social Studies course outside the school?” and their answers are included in the following text with their frequency values and some direct quotations from students.

Examples of activities done together with parents are as follows: 75 students stated that they did research, 52 students said that they had trips, 27 students mentioned that they studied together, 21 students indicated that they took pictures and 17 students stated that they conducted projects. Furthermore, 15 students completed homework assignments, 13 of them did environmental arrangements, 11 students gathered information, 10 of them had interviews, 9 students did mapping exercises, 4 students saw movies and plays, 6 students had discussions, 2 students did experiments, another 2 played geographical games, 1 student mentioned solving puzzles and another wrote that they bought books together with their parents.

Regarding Social Studies activities done together with parents, one student said:

I and my parents visit historical places. When we get home, we exchange our opinions about these crafts, writings and subjects. In the end, we have a discussion and reach a final decision.

According to research findings, there are various studies made with parents, but in contrast, there are few opinions on studies with parents. In other words, students do not conduct adequate studies with their parents concerning Social Studies.

**Problems Emerging from Parents While Doing Activities for Social Studies Course:**

Students provided the following information about the problems originating from their parents while doing activities for Social Studies course: they don't know enough (28 students), we experience information conflict (18 students), they are indifferent (10 students), they don't let me take trips

(9 students), they don't provide me with a comfortable studying atmosphere (6 students), their expectations are high (3 students), they confuse me (3 students), they force me (3 students) and they belittle the course (3 students).

Concerning the problems, one of the students said: Mom and dad don't take Social Studies courses seriously.

Another wrote:

I also want to take pictures, hold interviews and talk with newspaper workers, but my parents don't allow me.

Although students do not study with their parents adequately within the Social Studies, they do not give too many opinions about their problems in this context. Students who mentioned their problems agreed that their parents do not have enough information about Social Studies. Low education levels of parents, the disinterest of parents in school participation studies and Social Studies causes lack of information in Social Studies.

**Students' Expectations from Their Parents within Social Studies Courses:**

Answers about students' expectations from their parents within Social Studies courses are presented below:

I want my parents to help me with my Social Studies course (135 students), I want them to take me on trips (64 students), I want them to support me (45 students), I want them to facilitate my access to sources (41 students), I want them to be knowledgeable (20 students), I want them to inform me (26 students), I want them to let me go on trips (18 students), I want them to recognize Social Studies courses (16 students), I want them not to force me (14 students), I want them to love, respect, trust and tolerate me (16 students), I want to share my ideas and have discussions with them (6 students), I want them to conduct research (5 students), I want to have private courses (3 students), I want them to provide me with a comfortable study atmosphere (2 students), I want them to join projects (2 students), I want them to talk with my teacher (2 students) and I want them to be a model for me (1 student).

One of the students wrote:

I want them to help me with my courses, to let me go when trips are organized and to support me when I get a low grade.

Table 2: Parents' Opinions Regarding Involvement in Social Studies Courses

Parents' Opinions	f	%
Are you knowledgeable in Social Studies courses in general?		
Yes	170	32.1
A little	285	53.7
No	75	14.2
Total	530	100.0
Are you aware of the subjects within Social Studies courses?		
Yes	181	34.2
Partially	205	38.7
No	144	27.1
Total	530	100.0
Do your children ask for help while doing homework assignments for Social Studies courses?		
Yes	104	19.6
Sometimes	275	51.9
No	151	28.5
Total	530	100.0
Do you help your children with their homework assignments within Social Studies courses?		
Yes	124	23.4
Sometimes	251	47.4
No	155	29.2
Total	530	100.0
Do you support your children in activities outside the home within Social Studies courses?		
Yes	291	54.9
Partially	113	21.3
No	126	23.8
Total	530	100.0
Do you encourage your children to attend trips organized within Social Studies courses?		
Yes	393	74.2
Partially	93	17.5
No	44	8.3
Total	530	100.0
Do you think you can contribute to your children's activities inside and outside the school?		
Yes	266	50.2
Sometimes	190	35.8
No	74	14.0
Total	530	100.0
Do you hold some studies together with your children within Social Studies courses?		
Yes	130	24.5
Sometimes	169	31.9
No	231	43.6
Total	530	100.0

It can be said that when the expectations of students who participated in the research are fulfilled, more effective participation will occur. Students who indicated their expectations, emphasized that they wanted their parents to help them. Students want to go on trips with their parents, or want their parents to allow them to go on trips organized by the school.

**Parents' Opinions Regarding Involvement in Social Studies Courses:** Table 2 shows participating parents' opinions about involvement in Social Studies courses. Moreover, findings were also analyzed in terms of their link to the demographic features of parents and related interpretations are included within the text if any significant relation was determined.

As depicted in Table 2, 285 parents (53.8%) said they were a little informed, 170 of them (32.1%) wrote that they were informed and 75 parents (14.2%) stated they were not informed about Social Studies courses.

205 parents (38.7%) wrote that they were partially aware of the subjects within Social Studies course, whereas 181 of them (34.2%) said that they were completely aware and 144 parents (27.1%) stated they had no knowledge at all. In addition, 275 parents (51.9%) mentioned that their children sometimes asked for help while doing homework assignments for Social Studies courses, while 151 of them (32.1%) said their children did not ask for help and 104 parents (19.6%) stated that their children always asked for help with homework assignments.

Answers for “Do you help your children with their homework assignments for their Social Studies course” are as follows: sometimes 251 parents (47.4%), no 155 parents (29.2%) and yes 124 parents (23.4%). 291 (54.9%) of participating parents stated that they supported their children in activities outside the home, whereas 126 of them (23.8%) wrote they did not support their children and 113 parents (21.3%) indicated that they partially supported their children. The numbers of parents stating that they supported, partially supported and did not encourage their children to take trips organized within a Social Studies course are as follows: 393 (74.2%), 93 and 44 respectively. Answers to the question “Do you think you can contribute to your children’s activities inside and outside the school?” are as follows: yes (266 parents), sometimes (190 sometimes) and no (74 parents). 231 parents said they did not hold some form of study together with their children within Social Studies courses, while 169 of them reported that they sometimes did and 130 parents answered that they always did.

The Chi square independence test was conducted in order to figure out if the answers given by the parents regarding parent involvement into Social Studies courses varied according to their level of education. Significant relationships were found between parents’ educational levels and the following questions: “Are you knowledgeable about Social Studies courses in general?”  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 124.2, p = 0.00$ ; “Are you knowledgeable in the subjects of Social Studies courses?”  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 54.4, p = 0.00$ ; “Do your children ask for help while doing homework assignments for Social Studies courses?”  $\chi^2(n = 530) = 15.4, p = 0.01$ ; “Do you help your child with his/her homework assignments within Social Studies courses?”  $\chi^2(n = 530) = 15.0, p = 0.03$ ; “Do you support trips organized within Social Studies courses?”  $\chi^2(n =$

768) = 23.8,  $p = 0.00$ ; “Do you think you can contribute to your children’s activities inside and outside the school?”  $\chi^2(n = 768) = 19.6, p = 0.01$ .

It can be seen from the results of this study that there is a meaningful relationship between questions related to the parent’s level of education and their knowledge of Social Studies courses, content, helping with homework assignments, supporting trips and activities. It can be said that the parent’s level of education affects participation in Social Studies.

### **Examples Given by Parents for the Activities They Do Together with Their Children within the Social Studies Course:**

Participating parents were asked the following open-ended question; “Can you give examples of activities that you do together with your children within the context of the Social Studies course, if you do at all?”. The examples provided are as follows: organizing trips (63 parents), doing research (49 parents), studying together (28 parents), taking pictures (24 parents), helping with the homework assignments (22 parents), collecting and preparing materials (19 parents), following current issues (18 parents), interviewing (12 parents), explaining related subjects (10 parents), studying on a map (10 parents), building awareness about the environment (9 parents), doing projects (9 parents), constructing folders (8 parents), reading together (8 parents), being a behavior model (7 parents), going on a picnic (7 parents), doing experiments (5 parents), going to the movies or plays (5 parents), watching TV (4 parents), sharing opinions (3 parents), drama (3 parents), solving puzzles (2 parents) and visiting the mayor (1 parent).

For example one parent said:

We cut pieces and pictures of news from newspapers and paste them on cardboard to form our own newspaper and then we name our newspaper.

Similarly, another parent wrote:

We’ll take pictures of nature and build an album to assemble them with my two daughters. We have finished taking the pictures and are now working on the album.

Examples given by parents for the activities they do together with their children within the Social Studies course are similar to examples given by children. It can be said that parents are organizing trips, doing research,

studying together and taking pictures with their children. However, it should be noted that few parents do these kinds of activities.

### **CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION**

Most of the participating students think that their parents do not have enough knowledge about Social Studies courses. 63.1% of students state that their parents lack adequate knowledge concerning the subjects covered in Social Studies courses. More than half of the students (53.9%) sometimes ask for help from their parents while doing homework assignments, while 30.3% never do. On the contrary, the majority of students (76.2%) indicate that their parents do not help them effectively with their homework assignments.

Almost half of the participating students (51.3%) point that they cannot get enough support from their parents in Social Studies activities they perform outside the home. Most students (72.5%) state that their parents support the trips organized within the Social Studies course. 39.8% of students indicate that they do not do Social Studies activities together with their parents, while 35.5% state they sometimes do. Students stating that their parents cannot contribute to Social Studies activities inside and outside the school form almost half (51.0%) of the sample, whereas the other half (49.0%) state that they can. However, busy parents can interact with and contribute to their children's studies during daily routines such as shopping or cooking due to the close relationship of a Social Studies course with daily life. Parents and children can talk about daily events, can have read-out-loud sessions, or can do homework assignments by discussing them with each other [13]. The Chi square independence test was used to determine whether students' answers regarding parent involvement in Social Studies lessons varied according to their demographic features. The result showed that some answers had a significant relation with students' grades and the educational levels of both the mother and father.

Students mentioned doing research, taking a trip, studying together, taking pictures and doing projects as examples of outside activities that they do together with their parents. Regarding the problems emerging from their parents, students stated that their parents were not informed enough, that they experienced information conflict, that they were indifferent, that they didn't let them go to trips and that they did not provide a comfortable study environment.

Most parents (68%) wrote that they did not have an adequate amount of knowledge about Social Studies

lessons and 68.5% of them stated that they were not exactly on familiar terms with the subjects covered in Social Studies course, while a great majority (80.4%) of them indicated that their children did not ask for help completing homework assignments. That children thought their parents were not knowledgeable enough and indifferent to Social Studies may be the reason why children did not seek help from their parents. Since parents' attitudes are effective on instructional activities [14] it may be said that the quality of the course will improve as parents start to care and learn about Social Studies lessons.

It may be concluded that parents did not effectively (76.4%) help their children with their homework assignments even when asked to. A little more than half the parents (54.9%) supported their children in Social Studies activities outside the home, while the other half (45.1%) stated that they could not supply adequate support. On the contrary, the majority of parents (74.2%) indicated that they supported the trips organized within Social Studies course. The percentages of parents stating that they efficiently and inefficiently contributed to Social Studies activities inside and outside the school are 50.2% and 49.8%, respectively. Answers given by parents to the question "Do you yourself do some activities together with your children for Social Studies courses?" are as follows: no, 43.6%; and sometimes, 31.9%. Therefore, it may be true to suggest that most parents (75.5%) do not hold an adequate amount of Social Studies activities with their children. As pointed out by Sunal [11], although a Social Studies course is very suitable for the designing of projects and activities that will enhance school and family relations, parent involvement studies have been largely ignored in this field.

The Chi square independence test was applied to understand whether parents' answers regarding parent involvement into Social Studies course differed in terms of their demographic features. The results demonstrated that there was a significant relation between the educational level of the respondent and some items of the questionnaire. Lareau [15] also asserted that the level of parent involvement in school life varied across social classes. Likewise, Lee and Bowen [16] found a significant relationship between the level of parent involvement in school and parents' socio-economic status. Based on these findings, it may be concluded that there is a significant relationship between parent involvement and students' success and parents' educational level. As shown by the results of this study, the parents of sixth grade students were not sufficiently knowledgeable about Social Studies lessons that their children had been



studying for three years and as a result, were not effective in helping them and getting involved with the course.

Taking trips, doing research, studying together, taking pictures, helping with homework assignments, collecting/preparing materials, following current events, interviewing, instructing, studying on a map, raising environmental awareness, doing projects, constructing folders, reading together, being a behavioral model and going on a picnic were examples provided by parents. Amundson [17] and South Carolina State Education Oversight Committee [18] suggested several ways to improve parent involvement in Social Studies courses. Parents may organize family trips that will teach children about life around them. Therefore, children may experience another option quite different from that of books and the Internet to learn about life and culture. Parents can talk with their children about differences in people's lives and can improve children's thinking ability through imagining life in a big city, in a farm, or even on the moon. Furthermore, they can watch news programs; read newspapers; choose the person, reporter, sportsman, showman of the week; prepare a sketch of directions from home to school or to a friend's house, which will bridge the mapping exercise with daily life; discuss the effects of historical and geographical events on society; share ideas about the social contribution of people from different cultures; and discuss values, principles and symbols of their society together with their children.

The following suggestions can be made based on the findings of this study: Programs informing parents about Social Studies courses and training them on how to get involved into the course may be developed. School administration should engage in activities (letter, brochure, invitations to trips, meeting hours) that will enrich parental involvement. Teachers may be trained in parent involvement in Social Studies lessons through in-service programs. Social Studies teacher training departments of universities should formally educate candidate teachers about parent involvement in Social Studies courses. Teachers should develop activities that will improve parent involvement in Social studies courses. Finally, further research designed through qualitative and quantitative methods may be conducted to discover the obstacles impeding parent involvement in Social Studies courses.

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