

**GENDER INEQUALITY IN TURKISH EDUCATION SYSTEM
AND THE CAUSES**

A Thesis
Submitted to
the Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
MASTER OF EDUCATION

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August, 2011

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ABSTRACT

Education is a crucial factor for nations to advance their social, cultural and economic well being. Gender equality in education is in direct proportion to gender equality in the labor force, in equal power in household and decision making. Educating females lower mother and baby mortality rates, generates higher educational attainment and achievement for next generations, and improves economic conditions of nations. Gender inequality in educational attainment and dropout rates is an agelong problem for Turkey since it was established in 1923. Girls are still have lower enrollment rates and higher drop out rates than their male counterparts in Turkey, even though education is free at all levels, there is a compulsory education law, financial aid is provided by government for parents to send their daughters to school, and there are boarding schools and free school services for girls living in rural areas. This thesis reviews a diverse literature on female education and the barriers to female education in the Turkish education system. In this thesis the background of the Turkish education system and the place of female education in that system are explored and the main barriers to female education in Turkey are analyzed through a review of the literature on gender gap, female education, and education policies. Some social and political strategies are suggested for Turkish policy makers, teacher educators, social workers, and teachers in order to promote female education and gender equity in the Turkish education system.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to Dr. Will J. Jordan for his invaluable guidance and support throughout this work, which shaped the direction of my thesis. I am thankful to him for sharing his experience with me at every step of my thesis writing. I am grateful to him for his patient, supportive, comforting, and friendly character; I could not have done this thesis without him.

I would like to thank to Dr. Novella Keith, for her insightful critiques and suggestions throughout my master's education since my first day in Temple University. I am grateful to her for the encouragement and support she provided to encourage me to focus on this topic, and for her warm and approachable personality.

I thank Dr. Joan P. Shapiro, for her gracious and friendly personality. Her course on gender in urban education provided me insight into gender issues in education.

I appreciate all my friends and colleagues in Temple university, they provided a warm and welcoming atmosphere that made me feel at home.

I would like to express my gratitude to my beloved husband, Mehmet Cagri Soylu. I couldn't have done this without his love, encouragement, and support. Your patience, compassion, and common sense were -and continue to be- very much appreciated. Thank you for being there for me.

I thank my parents and sister for their unlimited love and trust, for their prayers, and for cheering me up whenever I needed it.

I am grateful for the scholarship that the Turkish Educational Ministry has provided me. This scholarship turned my childhood dreams into reality, provided me the chance to enhance my point of view, and the chance to learn about the education system of the United States of America. It was an honor for me to be educated with this scholarship.

Finally, I thank my son, Efe Kayra Soylu, for teaching me to be patient, curious, and happy. He taught me to love without any expectation, to forgive without an apology, to play without getting tired. I realized that everything will be overcome with patience, sacrifice, and hope.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Girls' education is an essential key for the economic and social advancement of individuals, families, countries, and the world. Education strengthens the economy by creating better workers for the labor force, helps to modernize a society, and to increase the health of children and adults (Benavot, 1989; Jacobs, 1996; Tunali, 1996). It is reported that education has a positive impact on occupational status and income (Psacharopoulos, 1985). Providing gender equity in education is also a crucial factor for the social development of countries. Educating females lowers birth rates, mother and baby mortality, improves their health, promotes economic development, and encourages more education for educated women's children (Behrman & Deolalikar, 1988; Cochrane, 1979; Wolfe & Behrman, 1984; Schultz, 1993; Stromquist, 1990). Studies indicate that by educating girls, it is possible to reduce fertility rates, lower death rates of infants, children, and mothers, reduce the rate of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, increase labor force participation rates and earnings of women, and provide intergenerational educational advantages (Worldbank, 2009). According to Stromquist, women tend to be better mothers and wives, and think more analytically, as a result of education.

Women have lower literacy levels than men all around the world except in a few countries (Stromquist, 1990). In developing countries, female enrollments are lower than males and women are more likely to drop out. Turkey is no exception (Worldbank, 1993). There is still a significant gender gap in the Turkish education system at all levels, despite the policy of free education for all from kindergarten to university, and sanctions

against parents who do not send their children to school (McLoughney et al, 2007). Girls are less likely to be enrolled in schools and have a higher risk of dropping out (Dayioglu, 2005; Smits & Gunduz-Hosgör, 2006; Goksel, 2008). The main reasons for the under-education of girls in Turkey are the economic, social, and cultural backgrounds of families, residence in urban/rural areas, ethnicity, and education politics (Tansel, 2002, Kirdar, 2009; Kagıtcıbası, 1986; Abadan-Unat, 1981). According to Kirdar, the gender of the child matters in schooling because the returns on schooling in earnings, the opportunity cost of schooling, and the value of production in the market and home could be different by gender. Families treat their children differently according to their gender and girls are less likely to enroll in school and more likely to drop out (Ilion & Moodock, 1991).

Statement of the Problem

Gender discrepancies are still prevalent in Turkish society and they are the major stumbling blocks in Turkey's ability to become a modern and a democratic country in line with European Union standards (McLoughney et al, 2007). The female illiteracy rate of Turkey is higher than in many other developing countries (Goksel, 2008). There is a significant gender gap and low enrollment rates in middle school (although middle school has been phased out since the approval of the eight year compulsory education law) and high school levels in Turkey (Tansel, 2002). Tunalı (1996) finds that residence in rural areas, the education level of parents, and the age and gender of children are the main determinants of educational level. He also points out that the interchange between school and work is crucial, especially for children who live in rural areas. In Turkey girls less

likely to be enrolled and more likely to drop out because their parents do not permit them to be educated (Erturk & Dayioglu, 2004). Erturk and Dayioglu also assert that the gender gap in schooling widens as students get older.

According to Tansel's (2002) findings, the educational level of parents, household income, and location of residence (urban/rural) have the most significant effect on school performance in Turkey, especially for girls, which leads to less intergenerational socioeconomic conversion for girls. Smits and Gunduz-Hosgogor (2006) indicate that in addition to these factors the number of siblings, father's occupation, and mother's proficiency in Turkish are also determining factors of school attainment. Meltem Dayioglu (2005) claims that the interchange between school and work is a crucial barrier for education, and it has been increasing in recent years in Turkey. There are disparities across ethnic groups in school enrollment rates as well as the gender gap in Turkey, and the gender gap is more prevalent among ethnic Kurdish children than ethnic Turkish children (Kirdar, 2009). The studies listed above emphasize the gender inequality in school enrollment and dropout rates. There is a consensus that the school enrollment rates of female children are significantly lower and their chance to drop out is significantly higher than male counterparts in Turkey.

Purpose of the Study

The main principles of the Turkish educational system are the right to free education for all from kindergarten to university level, and adult education, adherence to Atatürk's principles, secularity, and gender equality (OECD, 1989). Women's education has been a dilemma in Turkey for a long time. On the one hand, there has been a strong

political will to support women's education from primary school to university since the establishment of the Turkish Republic. On the other hand, scarce economic resources and a patriarchal culture in society sustain gender discriminatory traditions such as sex segregation because of Islamic belief, early marriage, and the favoring of sons. Studies of girls' education were started in the last century of the Ottoman Empire with the order of Sultan Abdulhamit, and gained importance in the Turkish Republic with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's reforms; yet there is still a distinct gender gap in the Turkish education system (Tekeli, 1995). Taking account of the studies indicating the seriousness and significance of the obstacles precluding and lowering girls' school enrollment rates, educational attainment, and educational achievement, it is crucial to understand and analyze the historical background and the main barriers of girls' education in Turkey, and create policies accordingly.

This thesis is a literature review of lingering barriers to girls' education in the Turkish education system and the reasons for them. I will provide a summary of the historical background of the Turkish educational system from the late Ottoman Empire to today, and then investigate the geographic factors, the family characteristics, cultural, social, economic, and political factors that affect the educational achievement and attainment of girls in Turkey. Finally I propose strategies for policy makers, teacher educators, and teachers. The purpose of this study therefore is to explore the historical and current political implementations of girls' education, the historical and current situation of girls in the educational context of Turkey, and the barriers hindering female education in Turkey, to provide a comprehensive overview, and to propose suggestions for policy makers, educators in universities, and teachers.

Research Questions

The empowerment of women is widely acknowledged to be the key element to the social, cultural, and economic development of a nation. One of the most crucial ways to empower women is to educate them. However, in Turkey women are still in a disadvantageous position in terms of education and economic independence, and they have quite limited presence and influence in public life and decision-making processes (Mcloughney et al, 2007). Gender disparities in education are a prevalent problem, especially for developing countries such as Turkey, and is most pronounced in rural areas of the south-east and urban migrant settlements (Tansel.2002). Patriarchal social norms still prescribe certain roles and behavior for females in Turkey (Aytac & Rankin, 2004). Girls are expected to perform domestic tasks such as housekeeping, taking care of their siblings, helping their parents in the farm and acting in accordance with the expectations first of their fathers, then of their brothers, and eventually of their husbands (Worldbank, 1993). Parents regard girls' education as less important than that of boys (Rankin & Aytac, 2006). Mcloughney and others state that even though the literacy rates of both genders have been increasing since the Republic, the gap in education has not decreased in recent years. There is still a need for further study of the main impediments affecting girls' education, which result in lower enrollment rates as well as higher dropout rates for girls, particularly in rural/squatter areas and in low income families, and there should be more studies to identify policies that can further promote female education and reduce the gender gap. This inquiry is guided by the following four research questions:

(1) What kinds of policies were implemented in education during the Ottoman Empire, particularly for female education?

(2) What is the current education system in Turkey? What kinds of reforms have been implemented since Turkey became a republic? What policies are being followed for promoting equal education for all students? What kinds of measures are being taken by the Turkish government to assist dropout and/or unenrolled girls?

(3) What are the main barriers to girls' education? How does location of residence, family characteristics (such as household income, education levels and cultural values of parents, number of siblings, and parents' jobs), ethnic background, and proficiency in Turkish, and the headscarf ban affect girls' school enrollment rates and educational achievement?

(4) What kinds of policies and implementations are needed in order to promote girls' education and increase their educational attainment and achievement?

This inquiry seeks to explore whether historical, cultural, social, and political factors play a role in girls' education. The reasons for the gender gap in education despite the policy of free and equal education for all, the sanctions against parents who do not send their children to school, and the laws prohibiting early marriages (before 18 years old) are questions that need to be investigated.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND GIRLS' EDUCATION IN TURKEY

When the Republic of Turkey, a secular and Muslim country, was newly established in 1920 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a series of reforms were implemented in order to modernize society using a Western society model (Rankin & Aytac, 2007). Secularism defines the separation of religion and state in Turkey. Secularism was first introduced with the 1928 amendment to the 1924 constitution by removing the provision declaring that the “Religion of the State is Islam,” and with the reforms of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, which set the administrative and political requirements to create a modern, democratic, secular country. The secularity of Turkey was explicitly stated first in the 1937 National Constitution of Turkey. The secularity in Turkey is not a strict separation of religion and the state; rather, it describes the “active neutrality” stance of the state. The Presidency of Religious Affairs analyzes and regulates the actions related with religion in Turkey (“Basic Principles, Aims, and Objectives,” n.d.). According to Rankin and Aytac, educational reforms were the key element for the transition from the traditional Ottoman society to a modern and secular country. The most influential way to secularize Turkey and modernize its social and economic structure was to raise the educational level of the population (OECD, 1989). With reform, the Arabic alphabet was removed and the Latin alphabet started to be used. Replacing the Arabic alphabet, which was not compatible with Turkish vowels, with the Latin alphabet reduced the time to learn to read from two years to three months (Mumcu, 1986).

Only 10 percent of the population was literate in the Ottoman Empire before the establishment of a public school system (OECD, 1989). The OECD report indicates that: The elite schools for training military personnel, administrators and other high level man power needed to serve the Empire were open only to people from those social strata which could afford private basic education. The education of population in towns, and even more so in the wide rural areas, was on the whole limited to religious instruction by local Imams. (p. 13)

It can be concluded that in the old system, public schools were religious institutions and only boys were being educated with Islamic doctrines; and schools for educating girls did not exist. With education reform the religious schools were replaced with modern schools where boys and girls are being educated, including new scientific curricula (Aytac & Rankin, 2004). Providing gender equality in all areas, including education, was an objective of the government, and primary education become compulsory for all children regardless of gender (Arat, 1989).

In Turkey formal education is free of charge until university level at public schools; there are also private schools at all levels, which are all controlled by the Turkish Education Ministry. There is an eight-year compulsory education law for both genders in Turkey. There are legal penalties for parents who disregard compulsory education law according to the Elementary School Instruction and Education law. Every parent or guardian or family leader of students is obliged to provide regular attendance, and it is compulsory to inform the school administration about the situation of students who cannot attend to school because of disabilities. The administrative chiefs,

superintendents, and police force are obliged to take measures of all kinds to provide regular attendance at schools for children between 6 and 14 years of age, to assist parents, guardians or heads of family, and the school administrations (Article 52). The parents who do not send their children to school in spite of the notification made by headmen and administrative chiefs are obliged to pay fifteen Turkish liras for each day that the children do not attend to school, according to Article 56. If the parents continue not to send their children to school or do not report the reasons to the school administration for not sending them they are obliged to pay five hundred Turkish liras. Article 59 states that the students in elementary school who do not continue with compulsory education cannot work as paid or unpaid workers in any legal and private sector or anywhere else.

In 1924, five years of primary schooling became compulsory (OECD, 1989). Since 1997 the compulsory formal educational system in Turkey has been composed of five years of primary school, three to four years of middle school, three to four years of high school and two to six years at a university. The five-year compulsory education required finishing primary school for all genders. After the extension of compulsory education from five to eight years in 1997, primary schools and middle schools were combined and given the name of elementary school. In elementary school and high school levels there is a single compulsory curriculum for both private and public schools which is determined, approved, and controlled by the Turkish Education Ministry. If students reside in villages where there is no school, and the nearest school is more than two miles away, students are transported to a school free of charge by the Ministry of Education (Kirdar, 2009). There are also boarding schools especially for girls in rural parts of Turkey. The language of education is Turkish at all schools at the primary level.

OECD reports that in 1933 the establishment of universities was a significant achievement in creating a modern education system for Turkey. Since then 172 universities have been established. Of them, 107 are state universities, 61 of them are foundation universities, and 6 of them are technical schools for higher education.

In Turkey children start primary school at the age of six or seven, and they graduate from the eight years of compulsory education at the age of fifteen; if they attend high schools (which are for four years) graduation age is eighteen or nineteen. Preschool education is also free but it is not compulsory. There are public preschools and kindergartens for children between thirty-seven and seventy-two months old. There are also private kindergartens and preschools for children from birth to seventy-two months. Goksel (2008) asserts that the extension of the compulsory education law (combining the primary and secondary education) which was accepted in 1997 increased children's enrollment rates and has had a more beneficial effect for girls' high school attainment; however, increase in enrollment rates does not directly lead to an increase in the graduation rates, especially for girls. According to Goksel's findings, the literacy rate of women, which was 67.4 percent in 1990, increased to 80.3 percent in 2006; however, there has not been a significant difference in the net enrollment rate of primary education between 1990 and 2006 (for boys 95.06% in 2006 and 92.29% in 1990, for girls 88.7% in 2006 and 87.16% in 1990). Goksel found that there has been a significant increase in high school attainment rates for both genders; for girls the net enrollment rate in high school increased from 20.59 percent to 51.95 percent. These figures show that the extension of compulsory education from five to eight years has some benefits for both genders and especially for girls; nevertheless, students, and particularly girls, still drop

out or do not enroll in socially conservative parts of Turkey where parents are reluctant to send their daughters to school (Kirdar, 2009). Even though the education laws and sanctions increase school enrollment rates for both genders they are not enough to keep students, especially girls, in school per se. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the factors that have an impact on girls' school attainment and educational achievement.

Principles and Goals of National Education

In Turkey education has always been the most significant factor of democratic and developmental processes (OECD, 1989). The objectives and rules of education are specified and juxtaposed in the national constitution.

Article 24 states that:

Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religious belief and conviction.

No one shall be compelled to worship, or to participate in religious ceremonies and rites, to reveal religious beliefs and convictions, or be blamed or accused because of his religious beliefs and convictions.

Education and instruction in religion and ethics shall be conducted under state supervision and control. Instruction in religious culture and moral education shall be compulsory in the curricula of primary and secondary schools. Other religious education and instruction shall be subject to the individual's own desire, and in the case of minors, to the request of their legal representatives.

No one shall be allowed to exploit or abuse religion or religious feelings, or things held sacred by religion, in any manner whatsoever, for the purpose of

personal or political influence, or for even partially basing the fundamental, social, economic, political, and legal order of the state on religious tenets (Article 24).

This article stresses the importance given to freedom of choice and secularity. In the Turkish education system secularism is the major principle. However, there is a compulsory religious culture and ethics course in elementary school and in that course Islam has the most emphasis. That may create a discrepancy in this article. If there is free will in religious belief, the religious culture and ethics course should be selective; and there should be courses created for all or at least most prominent religions in Turkey. Each student should be free to choose to be enrolled or not enrolled in those courses.

Article 27 states the principle of right to education: “Everyone has the right to study and teach freely, explain, and disseminate science and arts and to carry out research in these fields.” Every Turkish citizen has the right to receive a basic education, and continue to post-basic education according to needs, expectations, ability, and interest. On the other hand making something free does not make everyone eligible. There are examinations at every level of the education system to analyze and determine the success of students. The high schools and universities that students can attend are determined by those tests. Even though girls have the right to be educated they have lower enrollment rates and higher dropout rates in Turkey, which highlights the importance of social, cultural, and economic conditions in making choices.

Article 42 states the importance of the adherence to Atatürk’s reforms and principles. According to this article primary education is free of charge in state schools

and compulsory for every citizen regardless of sex. The state's role in providing scholarships and assistance and taking measures to help those in need of special training to enable students to continue education is set out in this article. Turkish is the one and only legal language of Turkey that can be taught as the mother tongue in educational institutions or training institutions. Foreign languages can be taught in institutions of training and education (Article 42). According to this law, English, French, and German can be taught in any level of education from kindergarten to university as foreign languages. However, there is no preparatory Turkish language course or afterschool courses for immigrant and second language students, and this may lower their educational achievement.

In Article 58, it is stated that:

The state shall take measures to ensure the training and development of the youth into whose keeping our state, independence, and our Republic are entrusted, in the light of contemporary science, in line with the principles and reforms of Atatürk, and in opposition to ideas aiming at the destruction of the indivisible integrity of the state with its territory and nation (Article 58).

The government is held responsible for educating youth in accordance with Atatürk's reforms. Gender is specified in this article, stating the aim to educate both genders and keep them away from hostile ideas. This article also shows the aim of gender equity in education and the importance given to the education of youth.

Article 131 discusses higher education. According to this article, the Higher Education Council is required to "plan, organize, administer, and supervise education provided by institutions of higher education, to orient teaching activities, education and

scientific research.” This committee also has to ensure that these institutions are established and developed in accordance with the aims and principles of law. Higher education is planned and promoted by the state in Turkey. In this article, there is no gender bias or gender-specific demand.

CHAPTER 3

REASONS FOR GENDER DISPARITY IN THE TURKISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

In this chapter the main barriers to female education in Turkey will be investigated and analyzed. The barriers are grouped under four main topics: location of residence, family characteristics, the headscarf ban, and child labor.

Location of Residence

Stromquist (1990) states that low income people in rural areas are more likely to be illiterate, and this is also the case in Turkey. Education is not being rewarded enough in Turkey, especially in rural areas (Tansel, 2002). She suggests that location of residence has a more significant effect on educational attainment at middle school and high school levels than at the primary school level. Specifically, in southeast Turkey girls start dropping out of school approximately in the third grade (Otaran et al, 2003). Kirdar (2009) finds that living in rural areas of Turkey constitutes a lower possibility of enrollment, especially in the north, south, and center of Turkey. According to Rankin and Aytac (2007), girls who live in the eastern region of Turkey are at greater risk of not attending primary school. Kirdar states that the central rural region is connected with lower enrollment rate compared to the western rural area; however, when urban regions are taken into consideration, western urban regions are associated with the lowest enrollment rate.

In rural areas and squatter settlements schooling may cost more because of the limited accessibility of schools (Kirdar, 2009). This is because middle and high schools are located in urban areas far from squatter settlements and rural areas. In some rural

areas, especially in the eastern region of Turkey, there are free school services for children who go to schools far from their village, and in villages where there are no free school buses students have to walk significant distances, which is exhausting for them, especially in cold winter days (Otaran et al, 2003). School attainment is enhanced for both genders if there are available junior high schools near their houses (Rankin & Aytac, 2007). However, Kirdar claims that the quality of the available schools in less developed or rural regions may be lower, with insufficient facilities or unmotivated teachers, since these places are not favorite places to work. This may be one of the reasons reducing the educational success of the students living in these regions. Tansel suggests that parents perceive it is dangerous for their children to walk those distances.

Living in urban areas promotes the educational attainment of girls compared to their counterparts living in rural parts of Turkey (Rankin & Aytac, 2007). Urban areas have a modernizing influence on parents, which causes changes in their traditional attitudes about schooling (Tansel, 2002). She also claims that the service sector includes a group of productive activities generating more options for men than for women, which could account for the lack of stimulus for girls to go to school. Tansel found that residing in urban areas contributes to the probability of schooling and leads to girls receiving higher schooling than boys. Ethnic Turks are less likely than other ethnic groups to reside in rural areas (Kirdar, 2009). This is an advantage for ethnic Turkish girls to receive more and better education, and a disadvantage for girls from other ethnic backgrounds.

Family Characteristics

There is considerable scholarly research analyzing the structural and cultural factors affecting school attainment in Turkey. Studies point out that socioeconomic status

and family structure are significant determinants of school attainment of children and especially female children in Turkey (Dayıoglu, 2005; Goksel, 2008; Rankin & Aytac, 2006, 2007; Smits & Hosgor, 2006; Tunali, 1996). Higher schooling expenditures and lower efficiency of schooling generate a lower marginal rate of return and less desire for schooling (Kirdar, 2009). This causes serious barriers for the educational attainment of the children, particularly girls, from low socioeconomic classes whose parents earn their living in agriculture and live in rural areas and the migrants in urban areas who work in the lowest paying jobs and reside in squatter settlements far from the city (Tansel, 2002). Studies suggest that the household income, parents' education levels, occupation, and cultural beliefs are determinants for girls' education. Therefore it is important to explore family characteristics in order to analyze and understand the under-education of females in Turkey. In this section family structures, which undermine girls' education attainment and achievement in Turkey, will be elaborated and elucidated.

Socioeconomic Status

Kirdar (2009) finds that families' financial situations have a significant association with school enrollment rates. Erturk and Dayıoglu (2004) mention that children most often cannot attend school because of economic reasons. Ilion and Moodock (1991) suggest that children of wealthier families and highly educated parents are more likely to be enroll in school (at a relatively young age), and stay in school. Household income has more effect on girls' educational attainment at all schooling levels (Tansel, 2002). According to Tansel, household income has a strong effect on school attainment, which means that schooling is a normal good and therefore higher incomes

result in higher educational attainments. The income is a significant factor in the demand for schooling; therefore, income inequality would have a negative effect on school attainment (Goksel, 2008). Goksel finds that girls in the families that have relatively less income constraint are more likely to go to school and also that in such families the mother is less likely to work.

Education is an investment to maximize lifetime wealth; therefore the economic costs and the social rewards of education must be taken into account in order to analyze the determinants of schooling (Tansel, 2002). Schooling has benefits as an investment good such as an increase in wages and some other benefits such as reputation (Kirdar, 2009). According to Kirdar, costs of production are direct expenditures, foregone wages (opportunity cost of schooling), and psychological costs. Additional schooling leads to higher income as a benefit; on the other hand it postpones the entry time into the labor force (Goksel, 2008). Dayıoglu (2005) suggests that children from low income families may be forced to work in the labor market instead of going to school. There is discrimination against women in the private labor sector and the private returns from schooling are higher in the private sector than in the public sector in Turkey (Tansel, 1990). Parents may prefer to educate their sons rather than their daughters, since educating sons is more efficient. According to Goksel, parents may consider that their daughters will join their husbands after marriage, while their sons will support their parents financially even after marriage, so the future benefit of educating sons is higher than the future benefits of educating their daughters.

Parents' Education Levels

Education levels of parents have a strong relationship to school-enrollment rates at all grade levels (Kirdar, 2009). According to Kirdar, better educated parents are expected to demand more schooling for their children; therefore, children who have more educated parents are likely to acquire more productive schooling. The more education the parents have the higher their children achieve in schooling (Tansel, 2002). Tansel claims that parents' education is more effective in girls' educational achievement; however, this implies less social mobility for girls than for boys, since under-educated parents usually live where there are some barriers for girls to attend school.

Rankin and Aytac (2007) find that household income and parental education have a positive effect on school attainment, particularly on post-primary schooling. Goksel (2008) finds that the impact of the parents' educational level is positive and highly significant for all levels of schooling for both genders, and the education level of mothers is highly significant for girls' school attainment in Turkey. Mothers' literacy and fathers' schooling years are connected with enrollment rates and school success (Kirdar, 2009). Kirdar finds that when the dropout time is considered, the literacy status of mothers is significant at the elementary education level; yet fathers' years of schooling is significant for all grades.

According to the literature, parents' education may an indicator of their attitude to schooling for their children. Tansel (2002) states that if parents do not agree about the educational attainment and achievement of their children, gender-specific demand for schooling in favor of sons will predominate. Ilion and Moodock (1991) found that

mothers' educational level is more important in schooling decisions, especially for low income families. Mothers give more importance to their children's education when they are given the authority to decide (Goksel, 2008). Behrman (1997) provides a survey of the positive effect of a mother's education on her children's school attainment. According to the literature, the mother's education has more influence than the father's education on children's educational achievement (Schultz, 1993; Birdsall, 1985; Ilion and Moodock, 1991). Similar evidence is provided by Behrman and Wolfe (1984b), King and Lillard (1987), de Tray (1988), King and Bellew (1988), Lillard and Willis (1994), Behrman et al. (1994), Tansel (1997), Tansel (2002). Leibowitz (1974) suggests that mothers' education has a significant influence on home investments since they are the child care providers. The mother's education is also an indicator of the permanent household income, and effective household production (Tansel, 2002). Goksel claims that the importance of the mother's education has increased recently and the importance of the mother's education level may surpass that of the father's education level in Turkey in the next few years.

Cultural Values and Patriarchy

There are numerous policies being implemented by the Turkish government to promote female education. Compulsory education has been extended, boarding school facilities created, and free transportation provided since 1997 for children from rural areas where there is no school nearby; however, there are still barriers existing for female education because of the social norms regarding the 'purity' of women and the 'honor' of the family (Smits & Gunduz-Hosgor, 2003). Smits and Gunduz-Hosgor suggest that it is

believed that men, or even the entire family, can lose their 'honor' if women from their household engage in 'inappropriate' behavior with 'outsiders.' These social norms are the reasons why families do not want to send their daughters outside the village. It is obvious that cultural traditions of families are a significant determinant for girls' education in Turkey. Aytac and Rankin (2004) assert that patriarchal beliefs have a negative impact on girls' education and is a significant cause of the gender gap in Turkish education.

Patriarchic and religious parents, who are mostly living in rural and squatter settlements in Turkey, are reluctant to let their daughters to be educated in same schools with boys, especially after their daughters become adolescents (Kirdar, 2009). Kirdar asserts that therefore girls who live in rural and squatter areas and have patriarchic and religious parents can spend only few years in school before they become adolescent, since the school enrollment age is late in these regions.

Traditional gender beliefs and patriarchic family structure practices lower the school attainment of both genders, and reduce the probability of attending primary school for girls and going beyond primary school for both genders (Rankin & Aytac, 2007). Rankin and Aytac find that there is a significant positive relationship between frequency of prayer, headscarf choice, and traditional gender orientation which means that children, and especially girls, who live in households where parents' prayer frequency is high, traditional gender roles are practiced strictly, and fathers prefer their daughters to veil in public, are less likely to receive higher education. According to Rankin and Aytac, girls whose fathers expect them to cover their heads in public cannot finish primary school almost twice as often and go beyond primary education almost half as often as girls whose fathers do not make such demands.

Number and Ages of Siblings

The number of siblings is a significant determinant for schooling of girls.

Children who have a large number of siblings acquire less educational achievement since their share of family resources is reduced (Kirdar, 2009). The number of children in a family has a significant negative effect on all levels of school attainment for both genders, but it has a higher negative effect on girls (Goksel, 2008). Goksel finds that girls' middle school attainment is negatively affected when there are more boys in the household, and girls' school attainment at all levels is inversely correlated with the number of children in the household. Kirdar suggests that younger siblings may force students to stay at home and take care of siblings and result in a higher opportunity cost for schooling.

Age is a significant determinant of school enrollment and attainment because more school attainment results in a less marginal rate of return (Kirdar, 2009). According to Kirdar, the opportunity cost of schooling increases for older children since their market value and home production increases. Goksel (2008) finds that there is a non-linear effect of age on schooling for girls, which means that older girls attain lower schooling and they are less likely to finish both middle and high school. The age distribution of siblings is also a significant determinant for girls' education. According to Rankin and Aytac, more young siblings suppress primary schooling for girls and reduce their chances of going beyond primary school (Rankin & Aytac, 2007). These studies imply the need for birth

control education for parents in Turkey. With fewer siblings girls will acquire more education.

Parents' Occupation

Goksel (2008) finds that the children from families engaged in agriculture are more likely to work as paid or unpaid workers. Girls from farming families have lower school attainment in Turkey because of the need for the contribution of female workers in farms (Rankin & Aytac, 2007). Goksel states that when one or both of the parents are self-employed, the opportunity cost of the children's school attainment is higher, since they ought to help their parents at work and contribute to the income. Kirdar claims that lower enrollment rates in rural regions may be because of the lack of junior high schools or the existence of an available job in agriculture. The number of females who participate in the labor force is quite low and therefore the importance of education becomes less important for girls (Tansel, 2005). This may be one of the explanations of the gender gap.

Goksel (2008) finds that mothers' self-employment has a negative and significant effect on school attainment for both genders. Goksel (2008) maintains that fathers' self-employment has a negative effect for the middle school age children, but it has a more negative effect on boys. If the father is self-employed in agriculture the school enrollment probability of children is lower, since a job is already available for these children (Kirdar, 2009). According to Kirdar (2009), the opportunity cost of schooling is higher for children whose fathers are self-employed in agriculture and this lowers the demand for

schooling. Kirdar (2009) finds that fathers' agricultural self-employment is significant only after the fifth grade, which is the end of the old compulsory education law.

Ethnicity and Proficiency in Turkish

There is a significant gender gap in enrollment level for all ethnic groups of Turkey; however, it is more prevalent among ethnic Kurds and ethnic Arabs compared to ethnic Turks (Kirdar, 2009). According to Kirdar (2009), Kurdish girls are the group most at risk of dropping out; they are at risk of dropping out before completing the eight years of compulsory education. Kirdar (2009) also found that there is also a substantial gender gap in dropout rates regardless of ethnicity; nevertheless, the time of dropping out varies by gender.

Cultural aspects play a significant role in the school enrollment rates of females in more conservative parts of Turkey where ethnic Arabs and ethnic Kurds are the majority (Kirdar, 2009). This is a disadvantage for ethnic Kurd and ethnic Arab girls. Kirdar's (2009) findings can be summarized as below:

- Females from different ethnic backgrounds are found to be less enrolled than their male counterparts. "52.5 percent of ethnic Kurdish girls and 44.9 percent of ethnic Arabic girls were not enrolled in school in this time period, compared to 24.9 percent of ethnic Turkish girls" (p.298).
- Socioeconomic status has a remarkable effect on education across ethnic groups.

- The illiteracy rate of ethnic Turkish mothers was 35.2 percent, while the illiteracy rate of ethnic Kurdish mothers was 89.8 percent and ethnic Arabic mothers was 71.3 percent. For female students ethnic disparities are influential in enrollment rates and the dropout time. Mothers' lack of proficiency in Turkish has a negative association with enrollment rates at all grade levels, but it is especially significant at earlier grades. Ethnicity is significant in education mostly for girls in Turkey. Ethnic Kurdish girls have a higher risk of dropping out before the fourth grade. Moreover, ethnic Arabic girls have a higher risk of dropping out before finishing the first grade.
- There are ethnic disparities existing at dropout rates regardless of location of residence, family status, and language competency. There is a more widespread gender gap for ethnic Kurdish children compared to ethnic Turkish children. When the location of residence and family type are accounted for, the difference in school enrollment rates vanishes across ethnic groups for boys, but it remains for girls, which means there is a significant unobserved determinant existing among girls from different ethnicities (Kirdar, 2009).

Kirdar's (2009) findings are crucial to understand and analyze. The low educational enrollment and high dropout rates of minority children is a problem for Turkey, as it is for every country. Kirdar's (2009) study indicates that policies are needed to promote education for ethnic minorities.

Language is a crucial factor of the cultural heritage and it provides ethnic identity transmission from one generation to other (Smits & Gunduz-Hosgor, 2003). After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, in which various local languages were spoken, the Turkish Republic, a unified 'nation-state,' was established in 1923 (Tekeli,1995) Turkish became the official language of the country in order to establish compulsory and free education in Turkish for all children in Turkey (the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey). According to Smits and Gunduz-Hosgor (2003), designation by government of an official language may unify different ethnic groups; nevertheless it also isolates some groups from the dominant language population and may prevent their use of the society's legitimate sources. Some children from ethnic minorities may not be able to speak or understand Turkish proficiently, which poses a further challenge for school enrollment when they come to school age (Kirdar, 2009). Consequently, they may have less ability to internalize the school curriculum, their educational success will decrease, and they may develop a negative attitude towards education and school. It has been reported that people who speak unofficial languages are more likely to be illiterate (Stromquist, 1990).

Smits and Gunduz-Hosgor (2003) analyzed the correlation between the ability to speak Turkish and the socioeconomic status of Kurdish and Arabic women in Turkey by using data from the 1998 Turkish Demographic and Health Survey. Bourdieu (1991) suggests that there is an empirical connection between language proficiency and accessibility to social domains. According to Smits and Gunduz-Hosgor, people who are not proficient in the legal language of a country are less likely to be employed in official jobs, unable to access spoken and written sources, and need others who are from their ethnic group but also able to speak the dominant language of the country in order to

receive information. They compared women from the same ethnic groups who can and cannot speak Turkish. Their findings are summarized below:

- The majority of non-Turkish speaking citizens are Kurdish and Arabic women who live in the eastern region of Turkey and in rural areas, and more than 90 percent of these women have not finished primary education. Women who are not proficient in Turkish are more suppressed by cultural values, have limited access to the public sphere compared to Turkish speaking women and women living in urban areas.
- Kurdish women are less educated than their Turkish counterparts, which suggests that Kurdish women have fewer opportunities in economic life than Turkish women. Since Kurds are not likely to complete primary education (which is in Turkish), it is possible that they do not have access to many resources and positions in Turkey.
- Non-Turkish speaking women are less employed, their husbands are less educated, and have lower house incomes (2002). Children whose mothers who are not proficient in Turkish are more likely to be not enrolled in school.

The Headscarf Ban

Turkey has a Muslim cultural and religious society (Seggie & Austin, 2010). Women's covering head is an Islamic tradition existing in every Muslim country, including Turkey (Rankin & Aytac, 2007). Approximately 61 percent of all women are veiled in Turkey (Carkoglu & Toprak, 2007). After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire

in World War I, the Turkish Republic was established with the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Greene, 2005). In 1923, secularism was implemented in order to create a modern Turkey, and a series of political, legal, cultural, social, and economic reforms were designed to modernize the new Republic of Turkey into a democratic and secular nation-state (Fuller, 2004). Secularism and social and political reforms promoted social equity for women in their private lives and in public (Seggie & Austin, 2010). With Atatürk's reforms and the new legislation, which was adapted from the Swiss civil law with a few changes in 1926, the laws concerning women in public and private sphere were changed drastically in a short time (Kagıtcıbası, 1986). The majority of Turkish citizens defend secularism since they believe that secularism protects and promotes gender equality (Rebouche, 2009). Many of the citizens claim that the headscarf ban frees women from religious doctrines, discourages subordination, liberates women from social pressures, and protects them from certain patriarchal enforcements (Aytac, Rankin, 2003). Kagıtcıbası asserts that women gained equal legal rights regarding divorce, ownership of property, custody of children and so on, political representation and participation rights, and a ban on polygamy. With these reforms legal and institutional structures were provided to obviate sex segregation (Gole, 1997).

With the aim of protecting secularism, a Dress and Appearance law was enacted in 1980 which banned wearing headscarves in public places, such as schools, hospitals, government offices, and universities (Rankin & Aytac, 2007). The headscarf is prohibited in universities by the 1981 'Regulation Concerning the Dress of Students and Staff in Schools.' The headscarf is banned at universities and state-operated institutions as a necessity for the protection of Turkey's secularity by the Turkish Constitution

(Rebouche, 2009). Atatürk's reforms have been discussed and criticized in that they were unable to change the social conditions of women, especially from rural areas (Kagıtcıbası, 1986). Kagıtcıbası (1986) states that reforms provide the groundwork for changes in lifestyles, but they cannot guarantee that people will observe these changes. She adds that the changes in lifestyles depend on a myriad of factors, including economic conditions, religious beliefs, and family structures; therefore a comprehensive social change involving both modifications of social structure and modifications of cultural structure is required to change these informal structures.

According to Toprak (1995), religion was a barrier for the implementation of women's rights in all areas, including the right to equal educational access. Rebouche (2009) asserts that substantive equality may support gender equality in a constitution and in the civil and penal codes; however, it may obscure complex questions regarding the political importance for women/men. It is significant to understand equality. To ban headscarves in order to provide gender equality may serve as an inequality for some who prefer to cover their heads regardless of their parents' or husbands' wishes. There are studies reporting that the headscarf ban is a barrier to female education (Faris 2003; Rebouche, 2009; Zaptcıođlu 2004; Seggie & Austin, 2010; Human Rights Watch 2005). Rebouche asserts that the headscarf ban undermined women's autonomy and hampered their access to higher education. According to Kalaycıođlu (2006), the headscarf ban has had more impact on the higher education of girls than at the lower schooling levels. White (2002) suggests that wearing a headscarf enhances the interaction between female students and male students, and by providing a better interaction with faculty members it leads a more comfortable coeducational atmosphere. Hence, the ban may be promoting

the alienation of women in an educational environment. According to Seggie and Austin (2010), the headscarf ban has a negative effect on identity development of female Turkish Muslims by forcing them to alter their personal beliefs in order to pursue an education. Seggie and Austin claim that female students complain of being forced to make a choice between their beliefs and receiving education. However, Rankin and Aytac (2007) assert that the number of girls who dropped out because of their choice of veiling or their parents' refusal to allow them to go to school uncovered is unknown.

Rankin and Aytac (2007) investigated the headscarf ban and parents' religiosity on girls' education by using the data of fifteen- to nineteen-year-olds in 1988. They find that religiosity does not have a significant impact on educational attainment; however girls whose fathers demand that they wear a headscarf are found to have lower educational attainment. There is a large negative headscarf effect in girls' education, which signifies that the headscarf ban may be contributing to the educational gender gap (Rankin & Aytac 2009). Rankin and Aytac (2006) find that girls are disadvantaged in educational attainment when fathers restrict their wives to traditional in-house domestic roles and practice sex segregation. They also assert in the same article that the probability of secondary school enrollment of both genders, but particularly girls, is lower if mothers think that men should make the important decisions, that education is more important for male children, and that men can beat their wives if their wives argue with them. Rankin and Aytac suggest that even though the headscarf is believed to be a symbol of women's oppression, it can be somehow liberating. They claim that the headscarf ban may be a barrier for accessing equal education and fully participating in education for females in Turkey.

Child Labor

Child labor, especially among peasant families living in rural areas of Turkey, is also a significant factor lowering school attainment for both genders (Rankin and Aytac, 2006). Tunali (1996) investigated the relationship between schooling and child labor in Turkey, considering the rural-urban, regional, and gender-based variations in this relationship. His research points out that working children are less likely continue their education and at more risk to drop out of school. It was found that work at earlier ages (sometimes as early as six years) in rural areas interferes with children's access to education, and that girls are clearly disadvantaged in this respect as well. Tunali reports that 33 percent of fourteen-year-old children residing in rural areas work, whereas the percentage is 9 percent in urban areas in Turkey. The wide range of work opportunities provides an alternative to school in western urban regions of Turkey (Kirdar, 2009). Urban and metropolitan areas, where there are more plentiful jobs for females, increase the investment in female education since the expected returns of education are higher (Rankin & Aytac, 2007). Tansel found that an increase in industrial employment leads an increase in the probability of receiving higher education, and an increase in the share of the service sector in local employment leads to a decrease on the probability of receiving higher education. She attributes this to the poor wage expectations in the service sector. According to Tunali, the gender-based division of labor provides more chance for boys in the labor market and girls in housework, yet both types of work function as prompters for dropping out of school.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Numerous studies show that education leads to better health conditions for mothers and children, lowers the rates of mother and baby mortality, and enhances social capital (Jere and Deolalikar, 1988; Haveman and Wolfe, 1984; Psacharopoulos 1985; Schultz, P. 1988; Schultz, T. W. 1961, 1963, 1974, 1995; Behrman and Wolfe, 1984; Ilion and Mook, 1991; King and Lillard, 1987; Stromquist, 1990; Tansel, 2002, 2005). Hence, policies about girls' education should be improved and augmented. Goksel (2008) suggests that income growth, increase in parents' educational level, and birth control will enhance children's school attainment, and these are more crucial for girls than boys. Parents' education has a significant effect on their attitudes to girls' education and therefore compensatory policies should be generated, especially in places where parental education levels are lower (Tansel, 2002). She suggests that in the future, with growth of income, increase in parents' education, industrialization and urbanization, and amelioration of schools, schooling of the children will increase, especially for girls (2002). Ilion and Moodock (1991) suggest that promoting females who enroll and stay in school in this generation will lead to an increase in school enrollment for both genders in the next generation. They claim that it is significant when considering the long-term outcomes of female education. Tansel suggests that the government and nonprofit and charitable donors should target effective education for children who live in poverty on squatter settlements or undeveloped streets. Tansel concludes that easier immigration possibilities increase educational attainment by providing higher rewards for schooling in urban centers than in rural areas.

Ethnic disparities remain for female children even after controlling the location of residence and family characteristics which is crucial for policy makers to understand (Kirdar, 2009). According Kirdar's findings, the education policies of Turkey, which focus on factors such as poverty and regional disparities, cannot fully solve the educational gap. Positive discrimination policies for girls from certain ethnic groups should be taken into account.

Girls' education is a deep and significant problem for Turkey, and it is not logical to approach the problem from one dimension. Numerous social, political, and economic theories must be taken into account in order to solve the problem. Changing cultural values should be the basic goal. Teachers must be educated in the cultural differences in different regions of Turkey. Parent education programs must be established in schools and in social services. Scholarships must be provided, especially for girls. All these steps must ensure that society regards education as valuable and rewarding. The Turkish education system should be analyzed from a gender-based perspective. Specific policies targeting the obstacles in girls' education are needed to eradicate gender differences in school enrollment and dropout rates. Policies and specific measures need to be created and implemented accordingly to these analyses for all levels of education (Worldbank, 2003).

The economy plays a stabilizing role in society by fulfilling the requirements of the society for adaptation (Appelrouth & Edles, 2008, p.361). Hence the social system of these girls coming from low income and low educated families must be economically adapted to its 'material environment;' in order to do so welfare and support must be provided to the families for costs of child care. Although education is free from

kindergarten to college (there is a small fee demanded for college education), childcare centers for babies under thirty-seven months are private and childcare support is not provided by the government. Child care for babies under thirty-seven months should be provided for free. Integration must be provided by the social system by building school-community bridges, providing partnerships, improving parent involvement, and creating community organizations. Parents and families, especially the ones who live in rural areas and squatter settlements in eastern and south eastern regions of Turkey, should be targeted for gender sensitivity and gender awareness. The importance of educating girls should be explained to parents by social workers, imams, and teachers working in rural areas. Female role models should be provided for girls who live in patriarchic and conservative areas. Therefore women teachers should be recruited in east and southeast Turkey as female role models. The ongoing monetary aid programs need to be analyzed as to their usefulness in promoting educational attainment for girls. Gender-prioritized financial support should be provided for families residing in urban squatter areas and rural areas. The teacher candidates in universities should take core courses regarding gender sensitivity and awareness, and in women's rights, and the current teachers in rural areas should be educated in seminars. Mass media campaigns supporting and praising female education in all levels are needed. Positive sex segregation policies should be created in order to enhance women's chances to work in the labor force.

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