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Descriptive Analysis of the Recommendations in Dissertations on Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education in Türkiye

Ümit Ünsal KAYA*

School of Foreign Languages, Afyon Kocatepe University, Afyonkarahisar, Türkiye
ORCID: 0000-0001-7662-8089

Özgün UYANIK AKTULUN

Afyon Kocatepe University, Afyonkarahisar, Türkiye
ORCID: 0000-0001-9456-6379

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The aim of this study is to descriptively analyze the recommendations sections of doctoral dissertations focused on parental involvement in early childhood education in Türkiye. The study examined a total of seven doctoral dissertations conducted at various universities in Türkiye and published in the Thesis Center of the Turkish Higher Education Council. The recommendations sections of these dissertations were evaluated using content analysis, identifying the stakeholders (parents, teachers, Ministry of Education, researchers, NGOs) to whom the recommendations were directed and the themes around which they concentrated (development of parental involvement processes, teacher training, policy development, etc.). The findings indicate that the majority of the recommendations are aimed at teachers and parents, with a strong focus on the development of parental involvement processes and teacher training. Additionally, a significant portion of the recommendations was found to be feasible in the short term, providing practical insights for immediate implementation. The analysis further revealed that recommendations targeting policymakers emphasize the importance of long-term strategies, including policy development and legal regulations. These results suggest that efforts to increase parental involvement in early childhood education in Türkiye require both short-term practical implementations and long-term strategic planning. The study underscores the critical role of parental involvement in early childhood education and highlights the need for further interdisciplinary research to explore its multifaceted nature and its implications for diverse socioeconomic and cultural contexts.

Introduction

Parent involvement is a critical component in supporting children's cognitive, emotional, and social development, especially during early childhood education (Yang & Tahir, 2023). The family, as the child's first learning environment, plays a fundamental role in shaping early learning experiences and developmental processes. Research consistently shows that parental involvement in education has a direct and positive influence on children's performance in school. The support and encouragement that children receive at home can

* Correspondency: umitunsalkaya@gmail.com

improve their educational outcomes, such as school readiness, academic achievement, and social competence (Epstein, 2018; Toran & Özgen, 2018). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory further supports the idea that children's development is shaped by the interactions between the family, school, and broader community systems. According to this theory, family-school collaboration is crucial for a child's holistic development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986).

The positive effects of parental involvement in education are well-documented across various studies. Research shows that greater parental involvement correlates with better school readiness, higher academic achievement, improved language and social development, and enhanced psychosocial competence (Powell et al., 2010; Arnold et al., 2008; Kohl et al., 2000; Wong et al., 2018). Parents' engagement in their children's learning environments creates stronger connections between the home and school systems, which, in turn, promotes overall child development (Hedenbro & Rydelius, 2019; Lamb et al., 2002). However, the extent and quality of parental involvement can vary significantly due to factors such as socioeconomic status, parental education level, parents' self-efficacy, and parent-teacher relationships (Benner et al., 2016; Freund et al., 2018; Santiago et al., 2016). For instance, Nevski & Siibak (2016) found that parents' active involvement in their children's education positively affects academic outcomes, while studies by Epstein (2018) suggest that such involvement enhances school attendance and exam performance. Despite these clear benefits, barriers such as time constraints, cultural expectations, and a lack of welcoming school environments can limit effective parent involvement (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Therefore, addressing these barriers is essential for realizing the full potential of parent involvement in education.

Doctoral dissertations, particularly those in the field of education, hold significant potential for contributing to the development of educational policies and practices. Doctoral studies are comprehensive academic endeavors that require students to engage deeply with their chosen subjects and produce original, scientifically grounded work (Tavşancıl et al., 2010). These dissertations are important resources for educators, policymakers, and researchers, as they offer new insights and recommendations that can guide educational practices (Fazlıoğulları & Kurul, 2012). The recommendations sections of doctoral dissertations are particularly important because they offer actionable strategies based on the findings of the research (Cemaloğlu, 2020). These recommendations serve as a bridge between academic research and practical implementation in the field of education. They should be specific, feasible, and aimed at solving problems or addressing gaps in the existing educational system (Baron, 2008; Tanrıöğen, 2014).

In Türkiye, research on parental involvement in early childhood education is still developing. Despite the acknowledged importance of this topic, relatively few studies have focused on how doctoral dissertations address parental involvement. Existing literature reviews provide insights into the general trends in graduate research on parental involvement in early childhood education, but there has been limited focus on the recommendations presented in these studies. Borekçi (2021), for example, reviewed graduate theses on parental involvement between 2010 and 2019, while Devenci & Elaldı (2022) examined theses from 2013 to 2021. Both studies highlighted the predominance of quantitative research methods and programmatic studies in these theses. Çopur & Tezel Şahin (2022) similarly reviewed theses and dissertations on early childhood education, noting that many studies focused on the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding parental involvement. However, none of these studies specifically analyzed the recommendations made in doctoral dissertations related to



parental involvement in early childhood education.

This gap in the literature highlights the need for more detailed analysis of the recommendations sections in doctoral dissertations on parental involvement. Recommendations from such dissertations could play a key role in shaping educational policies, informing teacher training programs, and improving school-family collaboration (Cemaloğlu, 2020). Doctoral research offers a unique opportunity to contribute not only to the academic field but also to practical solutions that address challenges in early childhood education (Komba, 2016). The recommendations sections of these dissertations have the potential to provide guidance for stakeholders such as parents, teachers, school administrators, and policymakers (Ocak, 2019). As emphasized by Sönmez & Alacapınar (2019), these recommendations should be grounded in the study's findings and designed to be actionable and relevant to the broader educational context.

The purpose of this study is to conduct a descriptive analysis of the recommendations presented in doctoral dissertations focused on parental involvement in early childhood education in Türkiye. By examining the recommendations made in these dissertations, this study aims to identify the stakeholders to whom the recommendations are directed (e.g., parents, teachers, policymakers) and to analyze the main themes around which the recommendations are centered (e.g., parental involvement processes, teacher training, policy development). This analysis will provide insights into the current state of research on parental involvement in Türkiye and offer a roadmap for future research and practice.

In this context, the current study fills a critical gap in the literature by focusing specifically on the recommendations sections of doctoral dissertations. By exploring how these recommendations align with the broader educational goals of enhancing parental involvement in early childhood education, this study aims to contribute to both academic knowledge and practical solutions in the field. Moreover, the findings of this study will be relevant not only to researchers but also to practitioners and policymakers who seek to improve parental involvement in early childhood education.

Method

Research Design

This study is structured using document analysis, as it aims to examine the recommendations sections of doctoral dissertations focusing on parent involvement in early childhood education. Document analysis was chosen as the data collection method. Document analysis involves the examination of written materials that contain information about the phenomena and situations targeted for investigation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). While document analysis is often used as a complementary tool to other research methods, it can also be applied as an independent method (Kıral, 2020). In this framework, the recommendations sections of the examined dissertations were analyzed using the descriptive analysis method based on predetermined criteria. The findings obtained were presented and interpreted in tabular form.

Sample and Selection Criteria

This research examined doctoral dissertations focusing on parent involvement in the field of early childhood education in Türkiye. As of August 15, 2024, a total of seven doctoral dissertations, conducted within universities in Türkiye and addressing parent involvement in

early childhood (36-72 months old children), published online in the database of the Higher Education Council Thesis Center “tez.yok.gov.tr”, were included in the study using criterion sampling method (Büyüköztürk et al., 2017). Although Kaya's (2023) dissertation explored parent engagement from a broader perspective, the study was included in the sample because the terms "parent involvement" and "parent engagement" are often used interchangeably in the literature (Kaya et al., 2024; Demircan, 2018). The primary aim in selecting these dissertations was to enhance the potential contribution to shaping educational policies by considering the academic depth and scope of the study. The following reasons were identified by the researchers for excluding master's theses and focusing solely on doctoral dissertations in this process:

- Academic Depth and Scope: Doctoral dissertations address their topics within a broader literature framework and generally offer more innovative and contributive findings compared to master's studies.
- Academic Rigor: Doctoral dissertations are expected to contain methodologically sound, theoretically strong, and empirically verifiable recommendations. These dissertations demonstrate the significant role of scientific research in developing educational policies and practices and how these research findings can be integrated into educational programs.
- Contribution to Policy Making: Recommendations presented in doctoral dissertations can provide significant contributions in areas such as shaping educational policies, updating teaching programs, and developing teaching strategies.

Table 1 below provides information on the examined dissertations.

Table 1. Information on the Examined Doctoral Dissertations

Dissertation No	Title	Author	Department	University	Year
1	Examining the Impact of Early Childhood Education on Primary Education in Terms of Parent Involvement and Various Variables	Deniz Ekinci Vural	Early Childhood Education	Dokuz Eylül University	2012
2	Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Education Institutions: Views of Teachers and Parents	Hasibe Özlen Demircan	Early Childhood Education	Middle East Technical University	2012
3	The Effect of Early Childhood Education Program Enriched with Parent Involvement Dimension on School Readiness Levels of 5-6 Year Olds	Pınar Bağçeli Kahraman	Early Childhood Education	Uludağ University	2012
4	Challenges in Implementing Parent Involvement Activities in Early Childhood Education and Their Effects on Language and Math Skills	Raziye Günay Bilaloğlu	Early Childhood Education	Çukurova University	2014
5	Co-Parenting and Parent Involvement in Education: Mediating Roles of Motivational Beliefs	Mustafa Çetin	Early Childhood Education	Middle East Technical University	2020
6	Applicability of Parent Involvement in Schools	Ersin Kuşci	Educational Sciences	Gazi University	2023
7	Parent Satisfaction and Engagement in Early Childhood: The Mediating Role of Home Literacy Environment	Ümit Ünsal Kaya	Early Childhood Education	Middle East Technical University	2023

The fact that there are only seven doctoral dissertations on parent involvement in early childhood education in Türkiye suggests that this topic has not yet been sufficiently explored in the academic research field. Despite the importance of parent involvement in early childhood education, the limited number of academic studies in this area indicates the need for more research. Early childhood is a critical period for children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, and parent involvement has a significant impact on this development. Therefore, more research in this area is necessary, and the findings should be integrated into educational policies and programs. The findings of this study can contribute to shaping educational policies by providing a detailed analysis of actionable recommendations derived from doctoral dissertations. These insights could guide the Turkish Ministry of National Education and educators in developing strategies to enhance parental involvement in early childhood education.

When examining the years of publication of the dissertations, it is observed that there was an increase in this field with three dissertations in 2012, but there was no significant increase in the number of dissertations thereafter. It is noteworthy that there has been renewed interest in 2020 and 2023. Additionally, the different themes focused on in the examined dissertations suggest that parent involvement in early childhood education is a multifaceted issue and needs to be examined from various dimensions. This underscores the necessity of conducting more research on parent involvement in early childhood education in Türkiye.

Looking at the distribution of dissertations across universities, it is seen that three out of the seven doctoral dissertations examined were from Middle East Technical University, two from Dokuz Eylül University, one from Uludağ University, and one from Çukurova University and Gazi University. The diversity of dissertations from different universities in Türkiye shows that parent involvement in early childhood education is an area of interest nationwide and can be addressed by different academic disciplines.

The purposes of the examined dissertations focused on investigating various dimensions and effects of parent involvement in early childhood education. The study by Vural (2012) aimed to examine the effects of parent involvement on the transition to primary education and was conducted using a mixed-methods design on a sample of 929 students and their families in İzmir. This study found that children who received early childhood education had higher scores in social skills, emotional intelligence, and self-regulation skills. Demircan (2012) examined the relationship between developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood education institutions and parent involvement and conducted survey studies with 279 teachers and 589 parents for this study. The results emphasized the positive impact of positive attitudes of teachers and parents towards parent involvement on developmentally appropriate practices. Bağçeli Kahraman (2012) investigated the effect of an early childhood education program enriched with parent involvement on children's school readiness levels and used an experimental design on 57 children and their families from two different kindergartens in Bursa. This study showed that programs involving parent involvement significantly increased children's school readiness levels. Günay Bilaloğlu (2014) conducted a study with a mixed-methods design with 22 children and their parents to investigate the effects of parent involvement activities on language and math skills. This study found that parent involvement activities significantly improved children's language and math skills. The study by Çetin (2020) examined the effects of co-parenting relationships and motivational beliefs on parent involvement in the educational process using structural equation modeling on a large sample of 1,434 parents. This study revealed that a quality relationship between parents increased the levels of parent involvement. Kuşci (2023) investigated the applicability of parent

involvement in schools using a mixed-methods design with 9883 teachers, 862 administrators, and 42949 parents in Van. The findings of the study showed that strengthening parent involvement requires regulatory legislation and increased collaboration between educators and parents. Kaya (2023) investigated the relationship between parent satisfaction and parent engagement through the mediating role of home literacy environment using a path model that included 660 parents in Afyonkarahisar. Kaya's (2023) study revealed that higher-income families provided a better home literacy environment, positively influencing parent engagement. The overall findings of these dissertations emphasize the significant impact of parent involvement on children's academic and social development and the need to increase parent involvement in education. They also provide important findings on how parent involvement can vary in different socioeconomic and cultural contexts.

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study was conducted using content analysis, a method that enables the systematic evaluation of textual data to uncover meaningful themes, patterns, and categories (Krippendorff, 2018). The recommendations sections of the selected doctoral dissertations were subjected to coding based on predetermined and emergent categories. The coding process was divided into several phases to ensure a structured and comprehensive analysis of the recommendations, with a focus on identifying the key stakeholders addressed and the thematic areas emphasized in each dissertation.

Coding Process

The coding process followed a detailed and systematic approach to ensure accuracy and consistency. Initially, the recommendations in the dissertations were carefully read and categorized based on the stakeholders they targeted, such as parents, teachers, school administrators, the Ministry of National Education, researchers, and non-governmental organizations. Additionally, recommendations were categorized according to thematic areas, including the development of parental involvement processes, teacher training and awareness, family-school collaboration, policy development, and the impact of socioeconomic and cultural factors. For example, recommendations aimed at parents often focused on enhancing parental engagement in children's educational processes, while recommendations directed at the Ministry of National Education emphasized the need for policy changes to promote more effective parental involvement.

This study employed both deductive and inductive coding approaches. Initially, some coding categories were derived from existing literature on parental involvement in education (e.g., Epstein, 2018; Powell et al., 2010), where similar studies identified common themes and stakeholders. However, as the analysis progressed, additional categories emerged inductively from the data, allowing for the inclusion of unique aspects specific to the Turkish context of early childhood education. This hybrid approach to coding ensured that the analysis was grounded in established research while also being open to new insights that were specific to the dissertations being analyzed.

Coding Categories

The main coding categories, such as stakeholders and thematic areas, were derived both from the existing literature and the data itself. Stakeholder categories included parents, teachers, the Ministry of National Education, researchers, and NGOs, as these are the primary actors in the



early childhood education ecosystem. Thematic categories were shaped by recurring recommendations within the dissertations and included the following:

- **Development of Parental Involvement Processes:** Recommendations centered on improving the mechanisms through which parents are engaged in their children's education.
- **Teacher Training and Awareness:** Suggestions for increasing teacher competence in collaborating with families.
- **Policy Development and Legal Frameworks:** Calls for the Ministry of National Education to create policies that promote and support parental involvement.
- **Family-School Collaboration:** Recommendations aimed at strengthening communication and cooperation between families and schools.
- **Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors:** The need for tailored strategies to support families from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

These categories were continuously refined during the coding process to ensure they accurately reflected the content and intent of the recommendations.

Inter-coder Reliability and Cohen's Kappa

To enhance the reliability of the coding process, inter-coder reliability was assessed using Cohen's Kappa coefficient, a statistical measure of agreement between coders (Cohen, 1960). Two independent researchers coded the recommendations, and the resulting codes were compared to assess consistency. A Cohen's Kappa value of 0.82 was achieved, indicating a high level of agreement between the coders. According to standard interpretations, a Kappa value above 0.75 is considered indicative of strong agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). This high level of agreement demonstrates the reliability and rigor of the coding process, minimizing the likelihood of subjective bias.

Validity

The validity of the study was strengthened through two main strategies: comparison with existing literature and consultation with experts in the field. The themes and findings from the content analysis were compared with previous research on parental involvement in early childhood education to ensure that the categories were aligned with broader educational trends and theories. This comparison also helped validate the relevance and applicability of the findings in both the Turkish and international contexts.

Additionally, the results of the analysis were reviewed by experts in the fields of early childhood education and parental involvement. These experts were selected based on their extensive experience in educational research and their specific focus on early childhood education policies and practices. Their feedback helped to refine the analysis, ensuring that the recommendations were interpreted accurately and that the themes identified were consistent with contemporary educational challenges. This external review process added an additional layer of validation to the study.

Limitations of Content Analysis

Although content analysis is a powerful tool for examining textual data, it is not without its limitations. One potential limitation is researcher bias during the coding process. Even with

well-defined categories, there is always the risk that individual interpretations may influence the coding decisions. To mitigate this, the study employed inter-coder reliability measures and achieved a high Cohen's Kappa value, which significantly reduced the potential for bias.

Another limitation of content analysis is its reliance on existing data, which may not fully capture the complexity of the issue being studied. In this case, the recommendations analyzed are limited to what was explicitly stated in the doctoral dissertations, which may not encompass all relevant perspectives on parental involvement in early childhood education. Additionally, while the themes identified in the study provide valuable insights, they are constrained by the scope and focus of the dissertations themselves.

Despite these limitations, the use of multiple coders and the systematic comparison of findings with existing literature and expert opinions ensured that the content analysis was conducted with a high level of rigor and reliability.

Findings

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of the recommendations presented in doctoral dissertations focused on parent involvement in early childhood education in Türkiye. The study aims to examine to which stakeholders the recommendations were developed, around which themes they were clustered, and how they were distributed in the context of in-service training, pre-service training, and parent education. Additionally, the diversity of recommendations targeting different socioeconomic and cultural contexts and the themes most frequently repeated in the dissertations will be addressed in this section. In this context, the frequency and percentage distributions of the recommendations will be presented with tables, and significant findings will be summarized, synthesized, and evaluated.

Distribution of Dissertation Recommendations by Stakeholders

The distribution of recommendations by stakeholders in the relevant doctoral dissertations was analyzed to determine how these recommendations addressed various groups. Based on the data obtained from this analysis, Table 2 provides a detailed presentation of the distribution of recommendations directed at parents, practitioners (teachers and school administrators), the Ministry of National Education, researchers, and non-governmental organizations.

Table 2. Distribution of Recommendations by Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Parents	16	25.40
Practitioners (Teachers and School Administrators)	18	28.57
Ministry of National Education	12	19.05
Researchers	9	14.29
Non-Governmental Organizations	8	12.70
Total	63	100

According to Table 2, 28.57% of the recommendations are directed at practitioners, specifically teachers and school administrators. These recommendations aim to increase teachers' awareness of parent involvement and to organize training programs that support this involvement. Additionally, there is an emphasis on supporting teachers' professional development and strengthening school-family collaboration. This highlights the critical roles of practitioners in the educational processes and the importance of their involvement in achieving successful parent involvement. About 25.40% of the recommendations are directed



at parents. These recommendations include educational and guidance services aimed at increasing parent involvement. Various programs have been proposed to encourage parents to participate more actively in their children's educational processes, emphasizing the positive impact of such involvement on children's educational success. Recommendations directed at the Ministry of National Education constitute 19.05% of the total recommendations. These recommendations place significant responsibilities on the Ministry regarding the development of educational policies, the enactment of legal regulations, and the creation of programs that promote parent involvement. The development of policies by the Ministry of National Education to support parent involvement would enable a more effective integration of parent involvement into the education system. Recommendations targeting researchers account for 14.29% of the total. These recommendations provide directions for future research, particularly emphasizing the need for more studies exploring the relationships between parent involvement and educational processes with different sample groups and methods. This indicates the need to deepen and diversify scientific knowledge on parent involvement. Finally, recommendations aimed at non-governmental organizations make up 12.70% of the total and include responsibilities such as raising awareness and organizing support programs related to parent education and involvement.

Thematic Distribution of Recommendations in Doctoral Dissertations

In this section, a detailed analysis of the thematic distribution of the recommendations presented in doctoral dissertations focusing on parent involvement in early childhood education is conducted. Using the content analysis method, each recommendation was grouped around specific themes, and the frequency and percentage distributions of these themes were examined. This analysis aims to identify the main topics on which the recommendations in the dissertations are concentrated and to determine the relative weight of these themes among the recommendations. Table 3 presents the thematic distribution of the recommendations in the examined dissertations, along with their frequency and percentage ratios. This table visualizes the critical areas that researchers, practitioners, and policymakers should pay attention to and highlights the focal points of the recommendations.

Table 3. Thematic Distribution of Recommendations in Doctoral Dissertations

Themes	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Development of Parent Involvement Processes	18	28.57
Strengthening Family and Teacher Collaboration in Education	12	19.05
Increasing Teacher Training and Awareness	10	15.87
Policy Development and Legal Regulations	8	12.70
Research Recommendations	9	14.29
Impact of Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors	6	9.52
Total	63	100

According to Table 3, a significant portion of the recommendations focuses on the themes of developing parent involvement processes and strengthening family-teacher collaboration in education. Recommendations for the development of parent involvement processes account for 28.57% of the total recommendations, making it the most dominant theme. This theme includes strategies and suggestions aimed at encouraging more active participation of parents in the educational process. The theme of strengthening family and teacher collaboration in education ranks second, with a percentage of 19.05%. This theme focuses on practices aimed at enabling teachers to communicate more effectively with parents and collaborate to contribute to children's development. The theme of increasing teacher training and awareness appears as an important theme with a percentage of 15.87%. This theme emphasizes the necessity of training programs and awareness-raising activities that will make teachers more

knowledgeable and equipped regarding parent involvement. The theme of policy development and legal regulations is represented by 12.70% and includes recommendations related to creating the necessary legal and policy frameworks to encourage and support parent involvement. These recommendations highlight the importance of legal arrangements necessary to ensure the sustainability of parent involvement. The theme of research recommendations accounts for 14.29% and includes directions for future studies. These recommendations emphasize the need for further research on the relationships between parent involvement and educational processes. The theme of the impact of socioeconomic and cultural factors is indicated at 9.52% and points to the need for developing tailored approaches to increase the participation of families from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. This theme requires the implementation of various strategies to promote parent involvement.

Distribution of Recommendations in the Context of In-Service Training, Pre-Service Training, and Parent Education

This section analyzes the distribution of 27 recommendations related to in-service training, pre-service training, and parent education presented in the examined dissertations, with the findings summarized in Table 4. These recommendations aim to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills regarding parent involvement throughout their careers, ensure that teacher candidates are adequately equipped in this area, and enable parents to participate effectively in their children's education.

Table 4. Distribution of Recommendations for In-Service Training, Pre-Service Training, and Parent Education

Type of Education	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
In-Service Training	10	37.04
Pre-Service Training	9	33.33
Parent Education	8	29.63
Total	27	100

Among the 27 recommendations examined, 10 (37.04%) are related to in-service training, 9 (33.33%) to pre-service training, and 8 (29.63%) to parent education. This distribution indicates that recommendations prioritizing the continuous development of teachers' knowledge and skills regarding parent involvement throughout their professional careers are given prominence. The recommendations for in-service training include regular seminars, workshops, and training programs to enhance teachers' awareness of parent involvement. Pre-service training recommendations emphasize incorporating education on the importance of parent involvement and effective collaboration strategies with families into the curriculum to ensure teacher candidates have sufficient knowledge in this area. Recommendations for parent education involve developing programs aimed at providing parents with the necessary knowledge and skills to participate effectively in their children's education.

Distribution of Recommendations for Socioeconomic and Cultural Diversity

This section examines the distribution of recommendations related to socioeconomic and cultural diversity presented in the reviewed dissertations. The study addresses recommendations on how families and children from different socioeconomic levels and cultural backgrounds can participate more effectively in educational processes. These recommendations were developed to ensure equal educational opportunities and support the



more active participation of disadvantaged groups in the early childhood education process. Table 5 presents the frequency and percentage distributions of the recommendations targeting different socioeconomic and cultural contexts. This table visually represents the areas in which the recommendations are concentrated and the extent to which socioeconomic and cultural diversity is considered in education.

Table 5. Distribution of Recommendations for Different Socioeconomic and Cultural Contexts

Socioeconomic and Cultural Diversity	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds	14	38.89
Rural Areas	10	27.78
Immigrant and Ethnic Minorities	7	19.44
Groups with Different Cultural Backgrounds	5	13.89
<i>Total</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>100</i>

In the reviewed dissertations, the inclusion of children from low socioeconomic backgrounds in the educational process and the development of supportive programs for these families are among the most frequently recommended topics. Recommendations for this group account for 38.89% of the total (n=36), with various strategies proposed to mitigate the adverse effects of economic disadvantages on education. These strategies include developing free or low-cost early childhood education programs and providing guidance and support services tailored to families' economic conditions. Recommendations targeting families and children in rural areas represent 27.78% of the total. These recommendations aim to increase access to early childhood education opportunities for children in rural regions and to develop educational programs that meet these children's developmental needs. Suggestions include collaborating with local governments to address issues such as the shortage of teachers and educational materials in rural areas, expanding mobile education services, and organizing special training programs for teachers in rural settings. Recommendations for immigrants and ethnic minorities account for 19.44% and focus on including these groups in educational processes and supporting cultural diversity in the educational environment. In this context, developing programs to facilitate the language and cultural integration of immigrant children, providing in-service training on cultural sensitivity for teachers, and incorporating elements that support cultural diversity into the early childhood education curriculum are suggested.

Recommendations for families with different cultural backgrounds constitute 13.89% of the total. These recommendations aim to increase cultural awareness and sensitivity and ensure that children from different cultural backgrounds participate effectively in early childhood education processes. Suggestions include developing training programs for teachers to enhance their communication skills with families from diverse cultural backgrounds, organizing school activities that support cultural diversity, and developing programs to increase parent involvement.

Distribution of Short- and Long-Term Recommendations

This section classifies the recommendations presented in the reviewed doctoral dissertations into those that can be implemented in the short term and those that can be realized in the long term, presenting their frequency and percentage distributions. Short-term recommendations are defined as those that can be implemented relatively quickly and at a low cost using existing resources and infrastructure. These typically involve minor adjustments in educational policies, program improvements, and in-service training for teachers. In contrast,

long-term recommendations require more comprehensive planning, infrastructure development, and legislative changes, making them feasible over more extended periods. The findings related to the classification of recommendations based on their feasibility in the short or long term are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Distribution of Recommendations by Short- and Long-Term Feasibility

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Recommendations Feasible in the Short Term	35	55.56
Recommendations Feasible in the Long Term	28	44.44
<i>Total</i>	63	100

According to Table 6, the majority of the recommendations in the reviewed dissertations (55.56%) are feasible in the short term. This suggests that the current structure and processes of the education system can be made more effective with swift interventions and improvements. For example, the short-term in-service training programs proposed by Günay Bilaloğlu (2014) to enhance teachers' awareness of parent involvement can be quickly implemented within existing teacher training programs, yielding tangible results. Similarly, the proposal by Vural (2012) to initiate programs aimed at developing self-regulation skills among primary school students is also among the recommendations that can be realized in the short term. This recommendation could be implemented by making minor changes to the existing curriculum, making it feasible within the current capacity of educational institutions. On the other hand, long-term recommendations account for 44.44% of the total. These recommendations typically involve more profound changes and structural reforms in the education system. For instance, Bağçeli Kahraman's (2012) proposal to implement a Family Involvement-Enriched Education Program targeting children from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds to reduce inequalities requires more extensive planning and long-term strategic approaches. Such recommendations necessitate fundamental changes in the current system and long-term investments. Additionally, Çetin's (2020) proposal to develop national-level parent education programs to enhance parents' involvement in the education process is also considered a long-term initiative. These programs should be supported by national policies and implemented on a broad scale to encourage more active parental participation in the education process.

Evaluation of Changes in Recommendations Over Time

The doctoral dissertations analyzed in this study, published between 2012 and 2023, reflect the evolving needs, priorities, and trends related to parent involvement in education over different periods. The evolution of these recommendations over time provides significant insights into how they have responded to changing educational policies and societal dynamics.

In the dissertations from 2012, the recommendations generally emphasize the importance of parent involvement and focus on how this involvement can be enhanced. Vural (2012), while investigating the effects of parent involvement in early childhood education on children's social, emotional, and academic development, emphasized the need for more families to be involved in the educational process and recommended that parent involvement initiatives be implemented meticulously. Demirçan (2012), focusing on the relationship between parent involvement and developmentally appropriate practices, suggested that teachers should be better equipped in this area. These recommendations indicate that the educational policies and curriculum practices of the time needed to be structured to support parent involvement. In a



dissertation published in 2014 (Günay Bilaloğlu, 2014), the recommendations regarding parent involvement became more concrete and specific. Günay Bilaloğlu (2014) examined the impact of parent involvement activities on the development of language and math skills and found that teachers lacked sufficient knowledge about parent involvement, recommending comprehensive in-service training programs. During this period, there was an increased awareness of the importance of parent involvement in the educational process, and the recommendations began to include concrete steps on how to make this involvement more effective.

In dissertations published in 2020 and beyond, the recommendations appear to focus on broader and more long-term objectives. Çetin (2020) emphasized not only the need to increase parent involvement but also the importance of strengthening co-parenting relationships, suggesting that this would positively affect parents' participation in the educational process. This recommendation reflects a deeper understanding of the impact of family dynamics on education. Kaya (2023) examined the effects of parent satisfaction and the home literacy environment on parent engagement and recommended developing different strategies based on income levels to enhance parent engagement from a broader perspective. Kaya's (2023) study addresses the impact of socioeconomic factors on parent engagement and highlights how educational policies should be shaped according to these variables.

The evolution of recommendations in these dissertations over time illustrates how the issue of parent involvement in education has become more complex and multidimensional. Initial recommendations that were more general and focused on the importance of parent involvement have gradually evolved into more comprehensive strategies integrated into specific educational processes and considering societal dynamics. For example, while in 2012, parent involvement was simply seen as increasing the participation of more parents in the educational process, by the 2020s, recommendations considered broader social contexts such as parents' socioeconomic status, educational levels, and family dynamics. This shift reveals that educational policies and practices view parent involvement not just as a supportive element but also as a strategic tool to enhance equity and quality in education. This progression demonstrates that educators and policymakers need to consider the underlying social and economic variables when shaping policies aimed at increasing parent involvement. Consequently, the recommendations in the analyzed dissertations clearly show how perspectives on parent involvement in education in Türkiye have changed and developed.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study analyzed the recommendations sections of doctoral dissertations focusing on parental involvement in early childhood education in Türkiye. The key findings indicate that the majority of recommendations are directed toward teachers and parents, highlighting their pivotal roles in the educational process. Specifically, 28.57% of the recommendations are aimed at teachers and school administrators, suggesting that professional development and increased awareness of parental involvement are critical areas for improvement. Recommendations for parents, constituting 25.40% of the total, focus on providing guidance and support to help parents actively engage in their children's education.

Recommendations for the Ministry of National Education (19.05%) emphasize the need for policy development and legal frameworks that promote parental involvement at the institutional level. Additionally, 14.29% of the recommendations are targeted toward researchers, encouraging further investigation into parental involvement, particularly in

different socioeconomic and cultural contexts. Non-governmental organizations (12.70%) are also identified as key actors, with suggestions to increase awareness and develop support programs for families (Cemaloğlu, 2020; Baron, 2008; Börekçi, 2021).

The thematic analysis reveals that the most frequently discussed topic is the development of parental involvement processes, accounting for 28.57% of the recommendations. This suggests a need for strategies that encourage more active and sustained parental engagement in early childhood education. Other major themes include strengthening family-teacher collaboration (19.05%) and increasing teacher training and awareness (15.87%), further reinforcing the need for a systemic approach to parental involvement (Benner et al., 2016; Freund et al., 2018; Santiago et al., 2016).

Recommendations for Stakeholders

Recommendations for parents focus on increasing their active participation in their children's education, recognizing that home-based support is critical for academic success. Programs aimed at educating parents about the importance of their involvement and providing them with the necessary tools and strategies to engage more effectively, are suggested. For instance, guidance services and educational workshops could help parents understand how to better support their children's learning at home, particularly in the early childhood phase. These recommendations align with the broader literature, which emphasizes the positive influence of parental involvement on school readiness and academic outcomes (Powell et al., 2010; Epstein, 2018).

Teachers and school administrators are recognized as key players in fostering parental involvement. The recommendations call for enhanced professional development programs that equip teachers with the skills to effectively communicate and collaborate with parents. This includes organizing regular in-service training programs to increase teacher awareness of the benefits of parental involvement and providing practical strategies for building stronger relationships with families. School administrators are also encouraged to facilitate parent-teacher communication through the establishment of school-wide initiatives that promote a culture of collaboration between the home and school (Arnold et al., 2008; Wong et al., 2018).

Recommendations for the Ministry of National Education focus on the need for policy development and legal frameworks that formally incorporate parental involvement into the national education strategy. These recommendations emphasize the importance of creating structured programs that promote parental engagement at both the local and national levels. Additionally, the Ministry is encouraged to provide resources and support for schools to implement these programs effectively, ensuring that parental involvement becomes an integral part of the education system. These policy-oriented recommendations align with previous studies that highlight the need for institutional support to sustain parental engagement in education (Tavşancıl et al., 2010; Epstein, 2018).

Recommendations directed toward researchers emphasize the need for further studies on parental involvement, particularly focusing on how different socioeconomic and cultural factors influence parental engagement. This aligns with existing research that suggests parental involvement varies widely based on these factors, and that tailored strategies are needed to address the specific needs of diverse family groups (Benner et al., 2016; Santiago et al., 2016). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also identified as key actors in supporting parental involvement through the development of community-based programs.



NGOs can play a crucial role in raising awareness about the importance of parental involvement and providing support services for disadvantaged families (Freund et al., 2018).

Unique Contribution of the Study

This study offers a unique contribution by providing a focused analysis of recommendations on parental involvement in early childhood education based on doctoral dissertations in Türkiye. While previous studies have explored parental involvement in various educational contexts, no research has specifically analyzed the recommendations sections of doctoral dissertations in this area (Börekçi, 2021; Deveci & Elaldı, 2022). This study fills this gap by identifying key themes and stakeholders in the recommendations, thereby offering new insights into how doctoral research in Türkiye addresses parental involvement.

One of the key contributions of this research is its emphasis on the role of stakeholders—such as teachers, parents, and policymakers—in enhancing parental engagement. By systematically categorizing the recommendations from doctoral dissertations, this study highlights the need for practical interventions at multiple levels, from teacher training to national policy development. This analysis not only deepens our understanding of how parental involvement is conceptualized in Türkiye but also demonstrates the potential for these recommendations to inform broader educational practices and policies (Tavşancıl et al., 2010; Cemaloğlu, 2020).

Furthermore, the study contributes to the existing literature by providing a context-specific analysis of parental involvement in early childhood education in Türkiye. Previous international studies (Epstein, 2018; Powell et al., 2010) have consistently shown the positive effects of parental involvement on children's academic and social outcomes. This study confirms these findings within the Turkish context and extends the discussion by revealing the particular challenges and opportunities for fostering parental engagement in Türkiye, especially within its unique cultural and socio-economic landscape (Santiago et al., 2016; Benner et al., 2016). By doing so, it lays the groundwork for future research and policy initiatives focused on enhancing parental involvement in early childhood education.

Practical Applications

The findings of this study have direct practical applications for improving educational policies and practices related to parental involvement in Türkiye. One key recommendation is the development of teacher training programs that specifically focus on strategies for engaging parents in early childhood education. Such programs could be integrated into both pre-service and in-service teacher education curricula to ensure that teachers are equipped with the necessary skills to foster effective collaboration with parents (Wong et al., 2018; Arnold et al., 2008). These training programs should include practical examples and case studies that demonstrate successful parent-teacher partnerships, especially in early childhood settings.

Additionally, the findings suggest that schools should implement structured parent involvement programs that go beyond occasional parent-teacher meetings. For instance, schools could organize regular workshops and seminars for parents to help them better understand their role in their children's education and provide them with tools to support learning at home. Such initiatives would align with previous research showing that parents who are actively engaged in their children's education contribute to better academic outcomes and improved psychosocial development (Epstein, 2018; Powell et al., 2010). Furthermore, schools could establish formal policies that encourage consistent and meaningful communication between parents and teachers, which is essential for building strong school-family collaboration (Toran & Özgen, 2018).

At the policy level, the Ministry of National Education could use the study's findings to inform the development of national guidelines or frameworks that promote parental involvement across all early childhood education institutions in Türkiye. These guidelines could outline best practices for engaging parents from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, ensuring that all families—regardless of their circumstances—are empowered to participate in their children's education (Santiago et al., 2016). Moreover, policy initiatives could focus on creating legal frameworks that mandate parental involvement in early childhood education, providing schools with the resources and support they need to implement these policies effectively (Cemaloğlu, 2020).

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the small sample size, consisting of only seven doctoral dissertations, limits the generalizability of the findings. While these dissertations provide valuable insights into parental involvement in early childhood education, the small number of theses analyzed may not capture the full diversity of perspectives on the topic. This limitation is particularly relevant given the broader context of Türkiye's education system, where variations in parental involvement might exist across different regions and socio-economic settings (Santiago et al., 2016; Benner et al., 2016).

Another limitation is the study's focus solely on doctoral dissertations, excluding master's theses and other forms of academic research. While doctoral dissertations tend to offer more comprehensive and theoretically grounded insights, the exclusion of other types of research may limit the scope of the findings. Including a larger variety of academic work in future studies could provide a broader perspective on parental involvement in early childhood education (Cemaloğlu, 2020). The findings from this study should be interpreted with these limitations in mind, and future research could build on this work by incorporating a wider range of theses and academic outputs.

Future Research Directions

The results of this study point to several directions for future research. One potential avenue is to investigate the long-term effects of parental involvement on children's academic and social development. While this study highlights the short-term impact of parental engagement, there is still a need for longitudinal studies that examine how early parental involvement influences children's success in later stages of education (Epstein, 2018; Powell et al., 2010). Research that tracks students overtime could provide deeper insights into the sustained benefits of parental engagement.

Another important area for future research is to explore how parental involvement differs across various socio-economic and cultural contexts. Specifically, studies could focus on how schools can tailor their parental engagement strategies to meet the needs of low-income families or immigrant parents, who may face unique barriers to involvement in their children's education (Freund et al., 2018; Nevski & Siibak, 2016). These studies could use both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the challenges these families face and develop strategies to overcome them. Additionally, experimental studies could test the effectiveness of specific interventions aimed at increasing parental involvement among different demographic groups.



Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors

Socioeconomic and cultural factors play a significant role in shaping parental involvement in education. In Türkiye, families from lower socio-economic backgrounds may experience more difficulty engaging with their children's schooling due to limited financial resources, lack of time, or lower levels of educational attainment (Santiago et al., 2016; Benner et al., 2016). This study confirms that recommendations addressing these challenges are essential, as policies aimed at increasing parental involvement must account for these socio-economic disparities. For example, creating free or low-cost educational programs and providing additional support services for low-income families could help bridge this gap (Freund et al., 2018).

Cultural beliefs also influence how parents perceive their role in their children's education. Immigrant families or those from diverse ethnic backgrounds may have different expectations about how they should interact with schools, which could either hinder or enhance their involvement (Nevski & Siibak, 2016). Therefore, schools need to adopt culturally sensitive approaches to parental engagement, ensuring that communication methods and expectations are aligned with the cultural values of the families they serve. By understanding these socio-economic and cultural factors, educational policymakers and practitioners can develop more inclusive strategies that encourage meaningful parental involvement across all segments of society.

Critical Analysis of Themes

The thematic analysis in this study identified several important areas of focus for enhancing parental involvement in early childhood education. However, there are also areas where the recommendations were less developed or underrepresented. For example, while many dissertations emphasized the role of teachers and school administrators, fewer recommendations addressed the role of community organizations in supporting parental involvement. This suggests a gap in the research that could be explored further, as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other community actors have the potential to play a significant role in promoting parent engagement (Cemaloğlu, 2020).

Additionally, while themes related to parental engagement processes and teacher training were well-represented, there was a relative lack of focus on long-term strategies for sustaining parental involvement. Most recommendations tended to focus on short-term interventions or immediate changes in practice, without offering guidance on how these changes could be maintained over time. This lack of attention to long-term sustainability is an important limitation of the existing recommendations and should be addressed in future research and practice (Epstein, 2018; Wong et al., 2018).

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the recommendations made in doctoral dissertations on parental involvement in early childhood education in Türkiye. The findings highlight the importance of collaboration between parents, teachers, school administrators, and policymakers in promoting effective parental engagement. The study underscores the need for comprehensive strategies that address both short-term improvements in parental involvement and long-term policy changes to sustain these efforts over time (Epstein, 2018; Powell et al., 2010).

Moreover, the study contributes to the literature by offering a context-specific analysis of how

parental involvement is conceptualized in Türkiye and providing practical recommendations for enhancing parental engagement in early childhood education. The results can inform future educational policies and practices, especially in relation to teacher training, school-family collaboration, and the development of culturally sensitive approaches to parental involvement (Santiago et al., 2016; Benner et al., 2016). By addressing the unique challenges faced by families in Türkiye, this study paves the way for more effective and inclusive educational practices that support the holistic development of children.

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