



How Can School Compensate for Home Disadvantage? The Role of Schooling on Equalizing Social Distinctions

Okul Aileden Kaynaklı Dezavantajlı Durumları Nasıl Telafi Edebilir? Eğitimin Sosyal Ayrımları Eşitlemedeki Rolü

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ABSTRACT: Explaining the social function of schooling through maintaining, reproducing, and increasing inequalities does not provide a clear framework for what can be done to help the disadvantaged benefit from education. In order to break this vicious circle of describing deficiencies and perpetuating, it is necessary to focus more on the recovery and compensatory function of education. This qualitative study, conducted with grounded theory, explores mechanisms within schools that can compensate for disadvantages that arise outside of school. These mechanisms were defined through the data obtained in a small city in Turkey from interviews focusing on the schooling practices of 35 educators, 19 of whom had administrative backgrounds and 16 of whom were teachers. The compensatory function of schooling operates in a gradual process of supporting the students to engage in school and become active in school. In the inclusion process, all the student's shortcomings are ignored and the student is seen as neutral. In the support phase, macro reformist and central policies are ignored, and support is rather individualized and concretized. This analysis suggested that strengthening compensatory role of schooling could help overcome barriers that students from disadvantaged backgrounds experience in educational attainment.

Keywords: Compensatory education, inequalities, reproduction, social function of schooling.

ÖZ: Okulun sosyal işlevini eşitsizlikleri sürdürmek, yeniden üretmek ya da artırmak üzerinden açıklamak, dezavantajlıların eğitimden yarar sağlamaları için neler yapılabileceği konusunda net bir çerçeve ortaya koymaktan uzaktır. Bu eksiklikleri tanımlama ve sürdürmeyle ilgili var olan döngüyü kırmak ve eğitimin iyileştirici ve telafi edici işlevine odaklanma çerçevesinde kurgulanan bu çalışma temellendirilmiş kuram ile yürütülen nitel bir araştırma olup, okul dışından kaynaklı dezavantajları telafi edebilecek okul içi mekanizmaları araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu mekanizmaları tanımlamak için 19'u yönetici ve 16'sı öğretmen olmak üzere toplam 35 eğitimcinin eğitsel pratiklerine odaklanan görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmelerden elde edilen verilerin çözümlemesi sonucunda ulaşılan bulgular eğitimin telafi edici işlevinin öğrencilerin okula katılmasını sağlamak ve okulda etkin hale gelmelerini desteklemek şeklinde aşamalı bir süreçte gerçekleştiğini göstermiştir: Dâhil etme ve destekleme. Dâhil etme aşamasında öğrencilerin tüm eksiklikleri göz ardı edilmekte ve öğrenci nötr bir varlık olarak görülmektedir. Destekleme aşamasında ise merkezi politikalar göz ardı edilmekte, destek uygulamaları bireyselleştirilip, somutlaştırılmaktadır. Bu analiz çerçevesi, eğitimin telafi edici rolünün güçlendirilmesinin, dezavantajlı kesimlerden gelen öğrencilerin eğitsel katılım süreçlerinde deneyimledikleri engellerin üstesinden gelmelerinde işlevsel olabileceğini ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Telafi edici eğitim, eşitsizlik, yeniden üretim, okulun sosyal işlevi.

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This article addresses an examination of the social function of schooling in terms of compensating for the lack of resources out of school. It is a well-known subject that schools are stratified parallel to the social class structure in society. The critical actors in schools mirroring the social structure and differentiating for their audiences are the educational and cultural competences of the family (Lareau, 2003; Reay, 2010; Reynolds & Bezruczko, 1993;). The role of schools in reproducing social injustice can be explained by school processes overlapping with the daily life practices of the middle class, therefore putting these individuals at an advantage and helping them benefit more from school (Ball, 2010; Horvat et al., 2003). On the other hand, the disadvantaged masses who cannot gain the cultural and cognitive competencies required to adapt to school and participate effectively in educational processes from their out of school environment generally view the school as a hostile environment (Lee et al., 1994) while the school refers to the situation of these individuals as cultural deficiency (Hurn, 2016). For students who lack an adequately supportive home or cultural environment, their disadvantages reflect on the school as academic difficulties (Ingram, 2011; Mayo & Siraj, 2015), low cognitive skills (Gaddis, 2013; Soubelet, 2011), and low ability to interact with teachers effectively (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Calarco, 2011). As advantaged students have more resources, they become more successful at school, therefore causing schools to reproduce social class injustice (Condrón & Roscigno, 2003; Downey et al., 2004). The common point behind these approaches to the social class-based elements that guide educational success and effective participation in school processes is that education is functional in families willing to invest in the schooling of their children and those who wish to and can support it.

A comprehensive literature exists about the effects of the family and non-school environment on educational achievement and the support mechanisms offered to middle class children in non-school environments (Lareau, 2003; Weis, 2010; Weis & Cipollone, 2013; Wheeler, 2018). However, a limited number of studies focus on the compensatory role of schools on non-school based disadvantages and that claim schools can bridge the differences stemming from non-school environments (see for exceptions; Downey & Condrón, 2016; Gorard, 2010; Hanselman, 2018). This leads me to an inquiry on the size of the effect schools have on people, or whether schools can transform the status quo other than reproducing, nurturing or responding to existing inequalities. If we are to accept schools as neutral in responding to inequalities (as Coleman et al., 1966 suggested), do we then assume that they do not have an equalizer or decreasing function on existing inequalities? Downey and Condrón (2016) state that the role of schools cannot be limited to neutral or exacerbatory functions that sustain these inequalities, but they also have a compensatory role that decreases them. Then this role of the school should also be considered. The main argument of approaches that explain achievement differences between schools or individuals via social class related advantages and life practices is that the non-school environment is the factor that benefits the middle class at school.

Studies on the social character of schooling have a consensus that the disadvantaged segments of the society such as the poor and working class, migrants, those from different ethnical backgrounds, and those who live in the rural experience lack of attainment and underachievement because they cannot fulfill the requirement of school (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Kozol, 2005; Willis, 1981). In parallel with this

consensus, studies on social class and schooling have, on a more micro level, started to consider variables such as cultural patterns, meaning attributed to education, and cultural competencies required for the participation in the educational processes as parameters that differ in relation to social class (Ball, 2003; Bennet et al., 2012; Vincent & Ball, 2007). However, while doing this, researchers or theorists have focused on academic success, variables of educational attainment, educational investment of families, participation in extracurricular activities and outputs, and their focus have naturally been the interrelatedness or correspondence of social class and schooling (Cavanagh & Fomby, 2012; Croll, 2004; Horvat et al., 2003; Van Rossem et al., 2015; Von Otter & Stenberg, 2015). In such studies, there is a tendency to approach the individual's inability to receive sufficient economic, cognitive and academic support from the home environment in order to fulfill the requirements of the school in a structuralist and deterministic framework, and the quality of the educational life of the individual is evaluated from certain reference points. Therefore, when the topic at hand is the compensatory role of schools regarding non-school disadvantages, the focus should be inside the school, not outside. Chiu and Khoo (2005) indicate that a more egalitarian distribution of resources leads to better learning outcomes; a school system where each student is funded equally and distributed randomly reduces distribution inequality and may increase academic achievement. Gorard (2010) argues that schools may be designed to minimize social injustice and the effects of problems on themselves. Alexander (1997, as cited in Downey & Condrón, 2016) describes this compensatory role of education as "when injustice is involved, education is a part of the solution rather than one of the problem". It, therefore, seems important to reveal the mechanisms that explain how schools are an opportunity for disadvantaged students and that ruin the arguments which create the illusion that schools can only do so much for students from the low-class background. The study investigates whether it is possible to reduce the impact of social inequalities within the school context and to redefine the social function of schooling in terms of variables of the school context as an equalizer or supportive environment for students from low-class background.

Literature Review

The initial inquiry into the compensatory role of the school was undertaken by Bernstein (1973). He stated that "school cannot compensate for society". According to Bernstein (1973), "compensatory education" emerges as intervention or enrichment, and is defined as a way of transforming culturally deprived, linguistically deprived, socially disadvantaged students. Bernstein (1973) argued that "compensatory education focuses on families and children, not on the internal organization and the educational context of the school. Thus, it implies that the family and the child are lacking and the school compensates for the lack and deficiency". He criticized "compensatory education" as it places deficiencies stemming from the non-school environment to the center and blames students' home life, rather than the deficiencies at school, for the existing situation. Bernstein (1973, p. 149) suggested that the conditions and contexts of the educational environment should be considered most seriously and systematically. This means that what needs to change or be corrected is the condescending language of the school and the school itself, not the children or their families. What renders children disadvantaged at school is the school culture based on middle class practices, which Bernstein (1973, p. 152) explains as "It is not made for him: He may not answer to it". Instead of viewing

lack of achievement as stemming from a financial and cultural deficiency of the working class, it should be seen as a result of the rule of the middle class that defines what knowledge and achievement is (Whitty, 2001). However, schools seem to believe if only they were like middle-class parents, then we could do our job (Bernstein, 1973, p. 148).

What Bernstein means with compensatory education is the use of it as aim oriented and special support programs. Compensatory education brings to mind macro, centralized, founded, curriculum development-based programs. Nixon et al. (2002) criticize compensatory education policies for treating students pathologically and for aiming to improve or replace their culture within criteria identified by experts. Dyson (2011) states that school improvement efforts should steer clear of school professionals who claim to ‘know best’. Bernstein (1973) suggested that schools appealing to all students should be the case in regular education, not “compensatory education”, and he was pessimistic about schools offering students an optimal learning environment. Even though his argument that “school cannot compensate for society” may seem pessimistic at first glance, he means that describing the family and child as deficient is a pessimistic act. He argues that when we view deficits as differences and flex the standard middle class language of the school, there may be achievement.

Bellei (2013) discusses school effectiveness in relation to compensatory education in alternative school development efforts of teachers. In his study, compensatory education initiatives, which are carried out through providing financial resources to the improvement of academic success, were evaluated within the framework of the teacher professional development program over the importance of school effectiveness and the teachers in this respect. He suggests that teachers need to transform their present practices, and strengthen teamwork and social interactions. Muijs et al. (2004) discuss the compensatory function of the school in the context of school effectiveness, suggesting that while improving schools that serve disadvantaged groups is indeed a difficult task, since they have to deal with more than one disadvantage, it is not impossible. Still, these schools have to make efforts above normal, and teachers that are employed at these schools have to work overtime, and be more consistent in their efforts than the teachers working in more advantageous areas. Lezotte and Bancroft (1985) also tackle school effectiveness in terms of supporting the education of the disadvantaged, focusing on the distribution of success within a given school. Reform studies in this direction have emphasized the importance of monitoring how the success rate of students with low socioeconomic backgrounds go up or down within the overall rising success rate. To improve compensatory education, schools need to undergo two stages of transformation. The first stage consists of the satisfaction of basic needs such as providing a decent environment and fulfillment of basic expectations, whereas the second stage consists of structural improvements focused more on the systematic and long-term processes (Teddlie et al., 2003).

Several decades after Bernstein (1973) stated “school cannot compensate for society”, Gorard (2010) suggested that schools may act as “mini communities” to alleviate the experience and effects of inequality and showed that “education can compensate for society – a bit”. According to Gorard (2010), schools could create formative and transformative impact on student lives regardless of their social or cultural origin, thus promoting mobility, even if only a bit. She added that the

integration of disadvantaged students into school may be possible if the teacher respects all pupils and encourages them to learn at their own speed, is sensitive about discrimination and peer attitudes. Understanding social class differences in home-school interactions also addresses issues regarding teacher misconceptions (Fields-Smith, 2007). Studies regarding how teachers' expectations about students contribute to their school performance suggest that teachers tend to increase certain students' successful grades because they treat some students from whom they expect good performance differently than those from whom they expect low performance, and students with lower levels of success receive less instruction because of such approach (Hurn, 2016). The research of Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968) shows how teacher expectations influence student performance. After they applied IQ tests to students, they informed the teachers that some of the students, who in fact scored different levels, were highly gifted and they observed that the teachers acted differently towards those students and supported them more. Additionally, when the students were tested again at the end of the school year, the researchers observed that there was a significant increase in the IQ scores of these students who received their teachers' support.

Research suggests that schools are important environments for the disadvantaged and are the only accessible places to attain educational competencies. For instance, Berends (2000) states that schoolwide reforms create a difference not from one school and another, but within a school with the help of teacher support and practices that have a good impact on students. Hanselman (2018) similarly suggested that schools are the only place for the disadvantaged to acquire the skills that the advantaged may acquire outside or in the absence of a school. Therefore, schools should include the sources that offer advantages to the advantaged others outside of them. The fewer advantages students have, the more willing they are to use these sources at school and its supportive environment (Chiu & Khoo, 2005; Goldthorpe, 1996). Accordingly, teacher efficiency can be identified as another component of compensatory school order. If teachers regularly create better learning opportunities for all, disadvantages may be overcome (Balfanz & Mac Iver, 2000). Disadvantaged students are more successful in more effective schools (Teddle & Reynolds, 2003). Hanselman (2018) argued that while less effective teachers exacerbate inequalities, more effective teachers might compensate for academic disachievement. Wang and Gordon (1994) suggest that teachers' supportive teaching strategies, positive classroom environment and teaching policies can have a positive impact on students with disadvantaged backgrounds and circumstances (as cited in Arnold & Doctoroff, 2003). Teacher effectiveness is believed to be crucial in promoting especially the achievement of minority students and students with disadvantaged backgrounds (Konstantopoulos & Chung, 2011). Besides, it is very important that teachers respond to the learning needs of students, support students' progress, and help improve academic achievement for students with disadvantaged backgrounds (Ferguson, 1998).

Some previous research focuses on the organizational dimension of schools. As structural and organizational changes in schools contribute to create more caring and more supportive institutions, these efforts transform the climate and structure of school to "warmer, happier, and more peaceful places for students" (Balfanz & Mac Iver, 2000). Datnow and Stringfield (2000) suggested that schools adopt effective reform that suits a particular school's context instead of adopting reform models that would not be

suitable for the given school's culture, teachers and students. This is important for bringing equality of opportunity to education or minimizing the ineffectiveness that stems from the inequality policies of centralized and standard structure. Potter (2007) suggested that effective teaching practices, relationships with children, communicating and working in partnership with families and carers, teamwork and collaboration, and professional development are all necessary in order to improve educational attainment and achievement of students from disadvantaged social backgrounds, knowledge and understanding. Bernstein (1973, p. 149) also emphasized partnership with parents. He suggested that all families can do certain things for their children within their own competencies. If the school interacts with the family upon this principle, "then the parents can feel adequate and confident both in relation to the child and the school. This may mean that the contents of the learning in school should be drawn much more from the child's experience in his family and community". Downey and Condon (2016) identified mechanisms that can compensate for socioeconomic gaps and contribute to reducing inequality as curriculum consolidation, targeting resources toward disadvantaged children, and preventing teachers from blaming students from disadvantaged backgrounds for lack of effort. Following Frempong et al. (2012) and Hanselman (2018), who showed that schools could compensate for socioeconomic disadvantage, I studied "how" to do this. In this study, I seek to address compensation mechanisms by examining situations and how the training can be compensatory from the agents' perspective that operates the school's compensatory function.

Method, Design, and Procedures

Constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) guided this study's design and analysis process. Grounded theory was first identified by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and versions of grounded theory was identified by Strauss and Corbin (1998) as systematic model and by Charmaz (2014) as constructivist. Grounded theory aims to reveal the theory thought to exist within the data. The theory to be generated within a study designed in grounded theory grounded on the data that has been systematically collected and analyzed during the research process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 3). The purpose here is to produce analytical arguments and abstract analytical schemas from the data independently of context and time (Creswell, 2015). A general overall theme is necessary when going into the field, and mine was the compensatory function of the school. My aim was to form a theoretical model, rather than describe the existing situation. I, therefore, focused on actions and experiences.

Process and Participants

Data were obtained through one-on-one interviews with participants. The semi-structured interview questions had three focal points: barriers stemming from poverty; the approach to out-of-school environments; and the dimensions zoomed on to transform the current situation and what was actually being done. In general, the questions addressed to the participants were focused on whether there is a relationship between the socio-economic status and the success of the student, and what are the ways to break this relationship; under what conditions children can be successful at school even when they do not receive any support from home; what are the things that students cannot access at home but only at school, and how school provides these for the

students. What reproduced the status quo for disadvantaged groups was their inability to achieve standardized academic achievement, and the compensatory function of schooling was expected to break this, but it was unclear how. This provided the “fresh look” mentioned by Charmaz (2014). As a characteristic of grounded theory, the analysis continues through the data collection process (Charmaz, 2014), which meant that it was possible for new areas to emerge for the researcher to detail and question. As I analyzed the data, I added new questions to the sociocultural dimension of the school about how a transformative school culture could be created. Some questions come about which tackle the topics about the success stories of students who were usually not doing satisfactory in the traditional school environment, whether schools should be standard or more flexible in terms of their curricula, and how teachers act within and apply their own educational practices under these circumstances.

The data collection period started in November 2020 and ended in March 2021 and took approximately five months to complete. The study was completed in a small city on the periphery in inner Turkey. This means that transformation in any field attracts attention in the education agenda. The participants were identified with theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes his/her data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his/her theory as it emerges (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 45). Theoretical sampling is a feature specific to grounded theory. Theoretical sampling requires the researcher to have sufficient data to generate and ground the theory within the context of the research (Cohen et al., 2021, p. 223). The initial decisions for theoretical collection of data are based only on general sociological perspective and on a general subject or problem area (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 45). The first stage was, therefore, to reach administrators who made significant transformation in their schools in disadvantaged regions. In order to identify these individuals, I obtained information from two different people working at the administration and supervision units in the directorate of provincial education. They had been serving in this region for many years and mostly gave me the same names without conferring with each other. I completed pilot interviews with two different names. Initially, I reached the individuals who had been mentioned and interviewed them. Theoretical sampling focuses on finding new data sources (persons or things) that can best explicitly address specific theoretically interesting facets of the emergent analysis (Clarke, 2003, p. 557). The process then continued with snowball sampling. I was shown two different directions through these. In the first one, I reached the initial participants by asking my interviewees for information about people involved in compensatory mechanisms at school, similar to themselves. In the second one, participant narratives in data analysis concerning classrooms and teaching practices directed me towards the teachers who ran these mechanisms. I interviewed a total of 35 individuals. Of these, 15 were actively working as school administrators, and 4 were recently retired administrators. Sixteen people in the group were teachers and 3 had previous school administration experience. The age range was between 39-63. There were six females and 29 males. All of the females were teachers. I mostly visited school principals face-to-face at their schools but had to meet seven teachers and four rural school administrators online as they were facing health risks. The participants told me about the characteristics of those who they directed me towards. Among these

characteristics were sheltering drug-addicted children at home, admitting homeless children disowned by their families in the school dormitory and encouraging them to develop adaptation skills, giving them pocket money, educating high school students with reading difficulties to a level which would enable them to win provincial competitions, organizing extra classes for centralized exams during holidays, and funding students' transportation and eating needs. I interviewed the participants at times that were appropriate to them. The interviews lasted between 35-80 minutes. Since the determination of the number of people to be interviewed was dependent on the saturation of the categories, data collection and data analysis were performed simultaneously (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I stopped the data analysis stage when I was convinced that the data had reached saturation. I transcribed the data myself.

Data Analysis and Representation

For data analysis, I followed the initial, focus and theoretical coding stages defined by Charmaz (2014). In the initial coding stage, I distinguished the systematic and non-systematic data about the school's compensatory function. In this study, my focus was on systematic coding. Unsystematic codes were usually those related to the participants' subjective experience. To list a few, parental roles, loving kids, loving their teachers... etc. Systematic codes were those that included practical actions. As for the category of "admitting the students to school" we can list the following as examples: recognizing disadvantages, looking at matters holistically, and redefining the role assigned for families and schools. I named the systematic ones within the context of schooling process components. In the focus coding stage, I categorized the related concepts I used to code the data. The categories were gathered under themes based on their inner dynamics and an analytic frame was developed. However, these themes still did not offer a holistic framework about the compensatory function of schooling. I discovered an ordered relationship within these themes and saw that the compensatory function of schooling happened in two stages. As a result, two core themes were generated, and I developed a theoretical model on the experiences of the educators in operationalizing the school as a compensatory mechanism. My analytical framework is outlined below.

Table 1
Themes and Categories

| Themes | Sub-Themes | Categories |
|--|--|--|
| Stage 1: Inclusion We exist for you | Admitting the students to school | Rejecting the predominant pattern Not blaming the family |
| | Ties for attaching to school | Diagnosing Flexing |
| | Designing a Child-Friendly Environment | Creating a fresh atmosphere Providing hygiene |
| Stage 2: Support What can I do for you? | Creating a sphere for social action | Structuring cultural activities Taking academic achievement far from the core |
| | Resource transfer | Transfer from within the school Transfer from outside the school |
| | Organized responsibility | Organizing school in a collective form Keeping the child in the circle Expanding teacher-student interaction areas |

Ethical Considerations

I presented the study protocol to the Ethics Committee of the Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University and obtained the approval by Decision No:10-01 dated 02.11.2020. As I requested interviews from participants, I informed them about the purpose of the study and ethical procedures. I also prepared an informed consent form asking for their approval for an audio recording. Prior to the interviews, I asked for their oral approval for the recordings once again. The narratives they obtained during the interviews but later asked for them not to be included in the study were excluded from the analyses. During the analysis process, pseudonyms were assigned and any identifying information within the texts about the school or the students they mentioned were removed.

Trustworthiness and Data Quality

In order to examine trustworthiness, I deployed transferability and credibility strategies. As Guba (1981) suggests, trustworthiness of a study depends on criteria such as “prolonged engagement”, “triangulation”, “peer debriefing”, “negative case analysis” and “member-checking” to be fulfilled (as cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer validation was applied in order to achieve trustworthiness. Therefore, some interviewees are contacted and are asked to give feedback on the research findings (Merriam, 2013). After my analysis chart was ready, I interviewed three school principals once again about the validity of this framework in order to ensure participant control. In addition, some of the participants told me at the end of the interview or contacted me later to say that they could not stop thinking about our conversation and were reconsidering their professional practices with the help of my questions. This corresponds to Charmaz’s (2014) emphasis on researcher-participant relationship characteristic. On the other hand, Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that grounded theory methodology research should have the factor of transferability, that is, it should be applicable to other contexts

independent of the characteristics of the study (as cited in Cohen et al., 2021). The main strategy to ensure the transferability is detailed descriptions (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Accordingly I explained data collection and analysis process in detail, deployed thick descriptions and enhanced these descriptions with direct quotations.

There might be various limitations in field research regarding the researcher and the participants. In this study, some participants could not be interviewed in person due to global pandemic. Fortunately, distance education policies implemented in this period and assertiveness and flexibility of the participants, as well as their familiarity with the technology that allows for online meetings during the distance education process helped eliminate this limitation. Yet the online meetings held with two of the participants (Emin and Tan) got disconnected at times, some questions needed to be asked again, therefore causing these meetings to last over an hour.

Findings: Operationalizing the Compensatory Function of Schooling

Two core themes emerged from the analysis process regarding the compensatory function of schooling: inclusion and support. I labeled them as stage 1, stage 2 as the data set led me to a staged classification. In order for compensatory support mechanisms to function against the disadvantages of students, they first need to be included in the school. When they are not felt welcome at school or when they do not feel they belong there, it does not look possible or functional to support them academically or materially. Therefore, three categories were identified for the *first stage: inclusion*: the student feeling fully welcome at school; establishing the bonds that tie the student to the school: the school appealing to the child; and structuring the school environment in a friendly way. The *second stage: support* describes the more practical and action dimensions of the compensation mechanism. Here, three categories emerged: creating a sphere for social action, resource transfer and organized responsibility.

Stage 1: Inclusion

The compensatory function of the school refers to overcoming barriers emerging from the disadvantages of students from lower class backgrounds. As these students fail to meet the requirements of the school, they are excluded from schooling. The study focuses on practices which do not use these exclusion processes; in other words, on inclusive forms of schooling for disadvantaged students.

Admitting the Students to School

Recognizing the student's existence within its totality is an important step for inclusion. This emphasizes the importance of evaluating each student in their own circumstances and being fair by considering them. Equality of opportunity in education is treated as a cliché because differences in conditions outside the school cannot be neutralized by offering equal conditions inside the school. Nur (T) stated, "This child is behind already. She needs more support." Arif stressed the unfairness of evaluating unequal conditions via the same measurement and evaluation principles. During the process of purchasing resources to prepare students for centralized exams, Sedat (A) objected to the suggestion that these should only be bought for promising students by saying, "We do not know the potential of others, they may also pass the exams". Erdal

(A) also said, “We do not know what each student promises” and emphasized the importance of being fair and providing good conditions.

It is apparent that the expectation for all students to meet the requirements of the school, regardless of their circumstances outside of it, is no longer. Kaan (T) and Onur (A) stated that students should never be scolded for not bringing tracksuits, trainers, musical instruments such as the flute or painting tools, and their reasons for not doing so should be discovered in order not to alienate the children from the school. Tan (A) added that students from lower-class backgrounds are generally seen as a “hunchback”, while Mehmet (A) claimed that children who are banished to the back rows and ignored, or are labeled as non-achievers, will choose to assert their existence in unusual ways. Kaan (T) defined a child who is not welcome at school as “drowning in the ocean, struggling”. Referring to these children as “between home and school”, Esra (T) said the following about the importance of inclusion:

“These children are already scolded, complained about, otherized. In order to reinforce these, we should be doing the opposite. That is what I do. When the children realize that they too can be understood by someone, they start to behave differently.”

The participants believed that the reasons for the child to fail to adapt to school as expected by the school need to be taken seriously, and that pushing them aside and labeling them as incompetent only sustains the existing situation. It may be seen that instead of approaching students with prejudice, the view that each of them is important and has potential is adopted.

Parental involvement in schooling is considered an important criterion for educational achievement, and differences in achievement are attributed to differences in the home environment. As the family takes on the role and responsibilities of the school, both the differences and the expectations from families increase. However, there is a contrary idea here. Some participants stated that giving the family responsibilities in order to support the schooling process of the child makes the family break all ties with the school. Yavuz (A) associates this with labelling:

“We label a child as non-achiever just because they failed a subject and we tell the parents this. Do we cause the parent to move away from the school, but we also probably cause problems between the parent and the child.”

Participants who had been able to make the school compensatory viewed lacking out-of-school resources from two perspectives. The first was to present these deficiencies to students as a pedestal to rise on. These teachers told the students that when they do not have the out-of-school resources to support their education, they should resist being excluded from school and instead use the school itself as a tool to escape this deprivation. The second perspective claimed that expectations for family involvement provided justification for the school to fail to do what it is in fact supposed to do. Eren (A) criticized the responsibility transferred to the family by referring to the functions and responsibilities of the school:

“We ask families to help with homework and teach how to behave so that children arrive at schools ready to learn. Transferring our responsibilities to families is a way of denying ourselves. Why do we need teachers? Why do schools even exist?.”

Murat (A) defined the failure of educators to take responsibility and everyone deferring it to either previous stages of education or families as “passing the ball over the touchline”. Similarly, Kenan (A) explained why they never build expectations from parents at their school as follows:

“I see those kids as kittens left outside a mosque. The parents visit the school for admissions and then disappear. I’ve known parents who were looking for their 11th grade kid at grade 10. I do not hold such parents responsible as I know they may have economic problems, cultural problems, lack of education. I’ve always acted as if parents do not exist because 30% of my students come from broken families or orphanages. If we are to believe that we cannot educate children without parental support, then it would be futile to admit students from orphanages in the first place.”

Ties for Attaching to School

The educators have to know the children: their strengths and weaknesses, interests, problems and needs. Following this diagnosing process, it is important to approach them with whatever it is that they need. At this point, strategies such as guiding the work of counseling services accordingly. Knowing students’ personal information and life circumstances means knowing how to intervene. Selin (T) discussed the importance of prioritizing the individuality of the student: “Each child is different, like a fingerprint. Of course, it is lame to say individual differences exist. The right thing is to see the difference for what it is and approach the child accordingly”. Mete (T) added that not knowing about local customs and lifestyles becomes viewed as condescension by students and results in their efforts being annulled. Having plans is a strategy emphasized by participants in relation to these issues. Creating risk maps [Mete (A)], knowing the students and forming special commissions to classify their needs [Deniz (A)] and preparing a functional strategic plan that will act as a compass and not taking chances [Alper (A)] were among the strategies mentioned. Engin (A) stated that meeting their belonging needs plays an important role in making them embrace school. Kenan (A), on the other hand, emphasized the importance of attracting children to school and the possible negative consequences of not being able to do so by saying “If you do not give children a branch to hold on to at school, they will start looking for that outside”.

One of the strategies to attach the child to school has been to create a collective identity at school. Collective identity is mostly a feature of elite schooling. Through symbols and rituals, children are given a sense of belonging and a network (Khan, 2010). Murat (A) had school keychain and pins made, and used them to make students feel special and give them a sense of belonging. Other strategies in this framework included festivals, banquets, and characterizing the school in a given field.

Flexibility was an important focal point. Participants were trying to avoid feelings of incompetence and maladaptation in their students provoked by rigid and standardized rules. Flexing rules remains problematic, but the rigid rhetoric needs to be softened at the very least. Also, there are other risk-taking situations, such as breaking the determinist structure of duties. The suggestion is that when the centralized and rigid structure becomes flexible, benefits may be obtained. There was an emphasis on “Building a system in which the school gets to know and adapts to the child, not vice versa” [Kenan (A)]. The rationale behind this is not breaking children’s ties with the school, to enable them to continue to benefit from school. Emre (A) explains flexibility as follows:

“If you insist on attendance in the center of Ankara as you would do in an agricultural region, you will lose the former student. There may be standard school rules, but they should be flexible in favor of children based on the cultural structure in your area. Otherwise, you will lose the majority of the students. You will lose their families as well.”

Designing a Child Friendly Environment

Designing schools as clean, pleasant and quality places is seen as a crucial step in including students in school. My participants stated that the physical context of schools should not be condescending or uncomfortable, or they should be transformed if that is currently the case. Based on Bernstein's (1977) argument that all school acts and discourse transmit certain messages to children about who they are, I have termed signals such as high walls, iron doors, window bars, continuously hidden away sports, music, art and experiment equipment as "condescending", and giving children the message "You may harm these; therefore, we need to protect them from you". Of the school principals that I interviewed, those who prioritized improving the physical conditions of schools rationalized their efforts by repeating Bernstein's reasons. They viewed improving the physical conditions of schools, giving students access to valuable materials, creating comfortable places within schools, and making students feel that all of these are done for their sake as a way of telling them "You are valuable".

In neglected schools with poor physical conditions, a different atmosphere was attempted by improving the existing situation. This was particularly the case in boarding schools and rural schools. Murat (A) explains these children's everyday spatial environment as follows: "Children sit for 8 hours daily in wooden desks. They then go to the dorm in the evening, study in wooden desks again, and go to bed". Akif (A) was taken aback by the dark floors of his school. He thought: "It feels like a prison. How can children feel like students and focus on learning here?" and in order to cancel this "prison" feeling, he had wooden floor boards and carpets, sofa sets and TVs in the rooms. Principal at a boarding school, Sedat (A) also emphasized the role of the school atmosphere in including children in school and said "You must evoke a home like feeling in the toilets, rooms, study areas so that children will feel safe and comfortable, just like at home". Deniz (A) said the following about the inclusive function of the school atmosphere through physical improvements:

It is essential that when children enter their school, they say "Yay, this is my school". A pleasant school is important, it attracts children.

Hygiene has an important place among schools' physical problems. This problem is more visible in village schools and schools in the periphery of cities due to economic and human resource problems (Robert, 1999). Kenan (A) describes his experiences about providing hygiene at school by relying on general beliefs about schools attended by the disadvantaged:

"A delegation from the Ministry of Health came to my school for inspection and, on the way out, one of them said: Sir, this school does not smell like a Vocational High School, how do you manage this? I told them, for example, that I left toilet paper in the toilets. During the first week of school, they played ball with the rolls, they blocked the toilets, tied each other, took them to class, used them to pull tape... I didn't give up. In the second week, ball games stopped and they slowly started to use the paper in the toilets. In the third week, they started to tell on those who wasted toilet rolls. I personally witnessed in the fourth week that the students themselves stopped others who were wasting paper and told them not to do it."

The vocational high schools mentioned in this quote are schools attended by children who generally fail to achieve academically, come mostly from a lower social background, and are sent to school to learn a craft/handicraft. Another issue that should be emphasized in this narrative is the students' resistance to transformation and attempts for their own comfort. However, this resistance is broken when it is understood that the

practices are persistent and are done for the students' best interest. Emin (A) expresses how the transformation he created regarding hygiene at school increased the motivation of teachers in addition to including students in the school:

“A strong smell of urine hit me as soon as I stepped foot in the school. Even the water infrastructure was not fully functional. Under those conditions, I could not expect either myself, or the teachers or students to be productive”.

This leads to the conclusion that hygiene at school has an inclusive role not only for students but also for teachers. Improving the physical conditions is a variable that motivates both the staff and the students.

Stage 2: Support

The physical presence of the student at school does not automatically mean that he can benefit from school or participate effectively in it. These students generally cannot participate effectively in school processes due to resource deprivation caused by the out-of-school environment, and therefore school can be highly demanding and challenging for them. The provision of support mechanisms at school corresponds to the praxis dimension of its compensatory function.

Creating a Sphere for Social Action

The way the participants deal with students who cause problems at school, bully others, are addicted to drugs, do not follow the rules in general, and have low academic achievement is apparent in the social action areas they construct for these students. The important point is to ignore these behaviors and create different spaces and topics via which interaction will be possible. These spaces are designed as common socio-cultural activity areas such as sports, arts, theater, poetry, and literature, considering regional characteristics and sustainability issues. Enver (A), Zafer (A) and Ali (A) created gardening areas in the school for which children are responsible. Another important point is to introduce the children to unfamiliar activities. Metin (A) constantly took the children to the swimming pool for this. It was a priority to create spaces where children could expend their energies. They channeled disinterested children who were unwelcome at school to these areas. The crucial point here was collectivity and designing spaces based on collective action, as opposed to continuing student-teacher hierarchy. “It’s very important to say come, let’s do it together. Children secretly wait to be discovered.” [Dilek (T)]. On the other hand, these areas also prevented disciplinary problems at school. Kenan (A) and Alper (A) stated that the disciplinary committee had not convened even once in 5 years. In addition, the existence of alternative action areas at school also improved attendance. In addition, Ali (T) and Engin (A) ensured that the school was open for such activities at weekends or outside school hours, and they emphasized extracurricular activity areas at school.

In order to create alternative action areas for students at school, it is first necessary to transform the established definition of achievement, that is, to de-emphasize academic achievement. Eren (A) states that when academic achievement is at the center, it means lack of achievement for other students:

“The school readily gives a feeling of lack of achievement when it should do the opposite. The fact that the child has an interest area other than academic achievement is considered problematic. The child is threatened by sentences that start with “if you don’t study”. Other areas are thus devalued.”

Emre explains this with the analogy that a good harvest can only be obtained when crops suitable for climate and land conditions are planted.

One of the objectives of national education is providing individuals with training that takes their unique areas of interest and capabilities into account. However, when this goal does not translate to the school environment properly, it is as if trying to grow wheat in the Black Sea region [which is a region in Turkey with high precipitation, and therefore does not meet the necessary climatic conditions to grow wheat]. Wheat cannot grow there, so it will definitely go wrong at some point. Or it is like trying to grow cotton in Central Anatolia, it is a waste of energy.

Kemal (A), on the other hand, expresses the importance of creating alternative achievement areas for students as follows:

“There are 500 students outside, but this room only takes 20. The 480 students outside are not there because they are bad, they’re there because this room takes 20 people. What about those left out then? We need to create other rooms and areas for them to enter. We cannot sacrifice 20 times as many students for the sake of 20 that are inside.”

There is evidence that socio-cultural activities and an experience of achievement in alternative areas translate to academic achievement. It is operationalized as an important mechanism in making the child effective at school. The point emphasized here is that the child tastes the feeling of achievement. Yasemin (T) states that this will make academic effectiveness accessible for the child: “The more we socialize our students, the better achievement will result. When we socialize the students, it will be easier for us to reach them and they will be more open to instruction .”

For example, Mete (T) integrated the very ordinary activity of book reading with performances such as theater and drama. In this way, he made it more permanent, meaningful and effective.

Mert (T) mentions the reflections of this at school by saying:

When you create an achievement culture at school and make the majority embrace it, others inevitably adapt. For example, when someone wants to sabotage school rules, he approaches other students but cannot receive support because they are busy with either the lesson or a cultural activity. When he cannot suit anyone to himself, he tries to suit himself to this structure.”

Resource Transfer

An important characteristic in the education patterns of students from a lower background is low material sources (Anyon, 2005). Poverty brings with it deprivation. However, it was obvious that the participants provided resource transfer via certain strategies. This transfer of resources had two dimensions: they both established transfer and common sharing mechanisms within the school and sought support from outside. At school, they resorted to methods such as aid funds created by teachers or assistance from existing resources. Some participants emphasized the importance of the school canteen, and it was used as a way to both understand whether the student needed financial support and to support this student. With respect to academic achievement, they operated support mechanisms by providing access to source materials or giving extra lessons. In order to improve academic skills, they created individual spaces where students could listen to online lectures.

Metin (A), who utilized local characteristics in transferring resources from his immediate surrounding and cultural context to the school, said:

“It is necessary to understand the people in the environment, their reactions, approaches, understanding, opportunities, what they can and cannot do. We need to renew the school, we need a budget. Donations are only enough for fuel needs. If I asked the villagers for money, they would not give it. They don’t have money, but they have resources that can be monetized.”

Tan stated the following about the transfer of external resources to the school:

“It is necessary to use some alternatives. You cannot ask for money if you don’t actively make an effort. I’ve never collected any money from my students. It takes some effort to transfer these resources to the school somehow. Good contacts are needed. In order to transfer resources to the school, it is first necessary to create functional areas that will bring resources.”

Deniz (A) draws attention to sustainability in the transfer of resources and emphasizes that children who feel confident about school do not drop out. He draws attention to the connection between different levels. He states that determining the economic or academic needs of each individual child may not mean much and emphasizes the importance of informing the next educational level to ensure continued support.

Organized Responsibility

It was emphasized that all stakeholders of the school and the educational process should share the responsibility in an organized manner, instead of putting the responsibility on others. The participants expressed that they saw the school as a whole and mentioned the importance of making teachers, administrators, support service staff (cleaning, catering, transport staff) and students see themselves a valuable part of this whole. Alper (A) draws attention to the importance of such partnership to avoid resistance by saying “You cannot be a school principal against the teacher”. Acting together is considered important in ensuring this partnership. The participation of all stakeholders and a culture of mutual respect were considered important in making decisions about the school as well.

Not distancing the child from responsibility is another component of organized responsibility. A significant part of the participants stressed the importance of keeping students defined as bad within the system rather than removing them from it. Emphasizing that the child should not be labeled and pushed aside, Dilek (T) explains the status quo regarding this as follows:

“Children like this are not wanted. People think this child is going to be a problem for us... and end up excluding the child. The teacher says I’m tired of this kid, do whatever is necessary. We need to tell this student what to do, we need to say let’s have a talk, we need to be solution-oriented. We have many children who are excluded in this way. The teacher usually looks at the children and says this one it will be okay, those should be sidelined.”

Arif’s (A) view is invaluable at this point. He argues that not pushing the child out of the system should be defined as an achievement.

“We can sacrifice one student out of our 1,427 with disciplinary action. But the important thing is to include the minority in school processes without sacrificing them for the majority. When we look at a student and think he disturbs the peace at school, sets a bad example for others, tries to harm the school structure, goes against the system or against my methods and rules, the number of people we have to sacrifice will increase. As a result, you may believe your school sends the highest number of students to university in the province, but you need to also consider the number of students you sent off.”

Not reducing interaction with students to the mechanical processes of class or school is also included in extended responsibility. It is believed that interacting with children only within class hours or about teaching activities will cause many important details to be overlooked. For this reason, it is considered important that the teacher interacts with the child outside of the classroom, both in and outside the school. Taner (T) noted that “It is necessary to pay attention to the child. In the hallway, at recess, outside. You can even tell something is wrong from the way the child walks. Is he cold? Is he hungry?” Interaction can also liberate the teacher from a didactic role, and mean contributing to and sharing with the child not only in regards to academic knowledge but also in other areas of life. Yavuz (A) is of the opinion that “interaction in different topics may also benefit the teacher by eliminating preconceptions about children”. This is also important to determine the subjects in which children need support.

Conclusion and Discussion

The results of this study, focusing on how the school may be compensatory for the disadvantages arising from the home environment of students from lower class, showed that this could happen in two stages. The first is to find ways of giving students the message that they are the reason for the school’s existence and that the school is there for the student, thus involving the student in the school. The findings revealed that educators do this by not seeing the home environment as a continuation of the school or as a complementary school form, without burdening the home with extra responsibilities to support the school, and by supporting students in ways their job descriptions require and in line with student needs. The teachers do not dwell on parental involvement, deficiencies and other problems associated with lower class educational patterns, such as academic abilities, or resource and material support. Thus, both the family and the student are prevented from feeling inadequate in fulfilling the requirements of the school and from withdrawing or resisting. Therefore, it can be said that exclusion forms caused by lack of parental involvement can be broken when the school operates family-based educational support mechanisms within its own system. Participants stated that the nature and existential reasons of schools should be reconsidered by asking questions such as “Why does the school impose a standard language on this student and assign functions such as teaching, caring and guiding to the family? To raise individuals who meet the school’s standards and exclude or eliminate others?” Acceptance of a student at school helps overcome barriers to participation arising from exclusion. However, access and action are not the same things. The child’s participation in school does not mean that he will be active or benefit from the school. This corresponds to the second stage: Support. The questions posed to the students is: “What can I do for you?”. What is important here is individualization and concretization of support. At the center is the understanding of relativity and a criticism of centralized egalitarian approaches. It is considered important to view each school in terms of its own internal dynamics and integrity, to determine what schools and students really need, and to design an action plan for improvement in line with this, not with macro reformist policies. The fundamental characteristics of compensatory education close the educational gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children (Davezies & Garrouste, 2020) and provide additional resources to certain disadvantaged groups in order to create equal opportunities in education. These are also macro policies, but being macro does not mean they are ineffective. In Turkey, there are some important macro policies with

regards to eliminating certain deprivations of lower-class students in the school context such as free textbooks, scholarships and dormitory opportunities for students, Training Programs at Primary Schools [IYEP], which aim to support the achievements in Turkish and Mathematics class at primary schools, and Support and Training Courses [DYK] at secondary and high school levels. However, it is safe to argue that macro policies naturally fail to see the disadvantages experienced locally and singularize varied and multiple disadvantages, and therefore may not be widely effective.

Therefore, it is an important finding that the scope of these programs should be specific to the school or region. Also, what is considered a disadvantage and how best to deal with it is not as simple as it may seem at first glance (Dyson, 2011) and may pose a problem that cannot be solved in a standard way. Our findings also showed that students and the social environment need to be well understood in all their aspects. In order to improve the school, it is necessary to understand it; and in order to improve it, it is necessary to look at it individually (Goodlad, 1984). This point of view is reinforced by creating alternative areas of action for the students within the school and basing these areas on practices that overlap with the cultural context.

The findings revealed that providing resources for both inclusion and support is important. This transfer of resources usually takes place for students in the form of operationalizing government benefits as a compensation mechanism (Doyle et al., 2009; Goldhaber & Eide, 2002). It is believed that when public support for education is reduced, social class effects will increase (Hout et al., 1993, as cited in Lucas, 2001). However, compensatory education programs have been criticized for increasing social differences between schools (Davezies & Garrouste, 2020; Gamoran & Mare, 1989). Gorard (2010) suggests that raising standards in education is not really functional in closing gaps. Ball (2010) stated that policies implemented to increase or eliminate inequalities in achievement make the situation worse. The fact that compensatory programs target disadvantaged populations based on social and academic criteria is in line with Bernstein's criticism of outside intervention in schools. Our findings showed that these criticisms are justified and that the school will be functional only with individualized programs, not with centralized and standardizing programs. It was deduced that sustainable practices are needed, not policies applied on at certain education levels or with certain individuals. The findings suggest that the problem cannot be solved by simply increasing school resources as Hanushek (1997) suggested, that this must be integrated with student needs in other areas to make it more functional. A crucial point emphasized by the participants was not to focus on disadvantages or deficiencies, and to functionalize them as a step forward.

Two trends can be observed in compensatory education programs recently implemented in different countries: The first one includes the standard and central practices we criticize that aim to improve academic performance (in Portugal Ferraz et al., 2019). The other includes efforts that offer equality of opportunity over the context-based compensatory role of education rather than the dissemination of education or efforts to increase academic achievement (in Texas Stevens, 2016; in France Davezies & Garrouste, 2020; in Canada Squires, 2020). The 2023 educational vision published as a strategy document by the Ministry of National Education in Turkey (MoNE, 2018) plans for the monitoring, evaluation and support and improvement of activities for children's personal, academic and social development, within the framework of a

“School Development Model” that will enable schools to develop within their conditions and priorities. There is no systematic framework, evaluation or follow-up study for the implementation processes of this model, and no emphasis on the compensatory role of education.

My research analytic framework is the compensatory function of schooling itself, without labeling anyone as deficient or holding them responsible for being different, in a neutral way. The main emphasis here is not on whether the student is lacking or flawed according to the school’s standards, but the gap between the conditions of the school and the student. The educators who are the subjects of this study are characterized by not laying the responsibility of closing this gap on the shoulders of the student. The structuring that will take the school away from being a hostile environment needs to be general, sustainable and holistic, beyond the mere use of central or specific policies focusing on specific areas. There is a gap between equality of opportunity studies as a policy and equality of opportunity studies as an academic research subject in Turkey. Policies to ensure equality of opportunity in education are generally focused on providing access to education. Students are placed at schools at the basic education level via an address-based population registration system, and students from lower classes usually go to schools that match their social patterns. Schools revealing a pattern compatible with the student profile is named as double effect by Frempong et al. (2012). The double effect refers both to the home and school environments that are not supportive enough for academic achievement. On the other hand, tracking is done with central exams, and the main criteria for academic achievement are scores obtained from central exams based on mathematics or verbal skills. Jennings et al. (2015) criticized the representation of the inequality-reproducing function of schools in educational research. They found that inferences about this function of schools were made by looking at test scores alone. Still, in fact, the effects of school on students and inequality were due to unexplained differences. Our programs are centralized and they are not sufficiently inclusive of students’ school-related challenges, thus necessitating support within the school. Downey et al. (2004) examined in their study how inequality varied in school and non-school conditions. Students were followed up during a school term and the summer term, and schools were found to serve as a great equalizer. Entwisle and Alexander (1992) addressed the school’s equalizer function on a seasonal basis and claimed that home disadvantages are compensated during the winter, that is, during the school semester, while learning deficiencies happened among disadvantaged children during the summer. These studies and the findings of the present study all reveal that the school can be compensatory. The findings on how to ensure this suggest that the mechanisms which give middle class children an advantage outside of school (i.e., extra lessons, tutoring, shadow education, extracurricular activities, awareness and motivation situations related to the value and functions of education, etc.) should be embedded in schools, and channels that will provide access to mechanisms that cannot be embedded should be opened. This means restructuring the out-of-school resources that provide an advantage to the middle class as school-based resources.

A notable finding from the present study is the organization of responsibility for the child. Thanks to this acceptance and support mechanism that surrounds him, the child is able to benefit from school. Bernstein (1973) states that the teacher should be an

important subject in a student's life in order to ensure that the child stays at school by saying "If the culture of the teacher is to become part of the consciousness of the child, then the culture of the child must first be in the consciousness of the teacher (p. 154)". The organization of responsibility and the integrated and inclusive embedding of support mechanisms to enable the student to take advantage of the school also display consistency in actions and thoughts.

Implications and Limitations

Ever since the 1980s, neoliberal economic policies in Turkey has enlarged the gap between social strata, which deepened even more in recent years with the introduction of practices such as the use of the address-based population registration system. For several decades now, the agenda of sociology of education studies in Turkey have emphasized social inequalities, quality of schooling and deprivation of working class and poor families. However, this usually has no meaning other than being the object of reproduction for the working class or the subject of research for researchers. If we cannot reduce social inequalities and claim that achievement differences between schools are due to these, then we should turn the gaze to what can be done within the school and move from critique to critical, as suggested by Sever (2012). Sever (2012) argues that critical qualitative research has lost its transformative power, and criticizes the lack of a tendency to unite around larger policies to transform injustice. Otherwise, this situation carries the risk of creating mental barriers for both researchers and policymakers about what can be done to ensure the effective participation of disadvantaged groups in schools or to increase their academic achievement. Therefore, despite all the criticisms against schools and the social function of education, schools are still the primary option for the disadvantaged to access certain social benefits. For this reason, it may be more useful to talk about strengthening a compensatory role rather than struggling within limits determined by the reproductive function of education.

The data set of the present study was obtained not in the context of any educational policy, but through the practices carried out by individuals entirely on their own initiative and mostly from individuals independent of each other. I attempted to discover the patterns in them and reveal how compensation could work. Therefore the study is different from the evaluation of the effectiveness of an interruption/intervention program. It covers a narrower area. The study is neither contextual nor longitudinal, which presents a limitation for displaying outputs in the transition between levels and for long-term systematic effects. Therefore, a future study may be conducted which would include all subjects related to the collective operation of this system in certain school contexts. In addition, the experiences of people who have been able to rectify the disadvantages of their home and achieve vertical mobility thanks to schools may also be studied.

Besides, in line with the research findings, the following recommendations regarding in-school practices can be made regarding how educators may support the compensation mechanisms of school. Schools can be evaluated in its own right, externally and independently of standard criteria, and work plans can be created within the framework of feasibility studies to be conducted in school. However, unlike these needs assessment studies, we can consider it a monitoring system. In this respect,

Lezotte and Bancroft (1985) propose the concept of “data driven”. Therefore, as suggested by the research findings, we can expect that this will help compensation support that will be given to students to be individualized, concretized, and sustainable. We expect that these support strategies which will be applied may differ from one school to the next. Regarding this, intervention points can be determined through a map to better understand the needs of the school. Increasing students’ knowledge on forming learning environments outside of school, modifying in-school activities in accordance with school’s needs and internal dynamics after the diagnosing process of the above-mentioned practices and determining strategies for developing collective responsibility.

Conflicts of Interest

I acknowledge that there is no conflict of interest.

Author Bio

Ayşe Soylu is an assistant professor in sociology of education. Her research concentrates on critical pedagogy and social stratification especially on class-based schooling, inequality, education of migrants, and distribution of power. She also took part in projects on supporting education of disadvantaged students.

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