

An Online Training Program for Gifted Children's Parents in Turkey

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Abstract

Problem Statement: Turkey began studies of gifted education relatively recently in comparison with other countries and these studies are focused more to the education of gifted children and their teachers instead of parents. Guiding and educating the parents of gifted students has recently been put into practice in our country while no matter how qualified a curriculum is, one will never reach the ultimate goal of education unless parent education is included. Therefore, studies focused on parent education and guiding of gifted students are vital need of gifted education in Turkey.

Purpose of the Study: The aim of the paper was to increase the awareness levels of gifted children's parents about giftedness via distance education.

Method: In total 154 parents, who have children at age 6-8, were interested with the study. 40 (31 mothers, 9 fathers) of them participated regularly in the training. One group pretest-posttest experimental model was used. Topics such identification of giftedness, intelligence, developmental aspects, perfectionism, depression, motivation, and educational preventions were covered in 8 sessions.

Findings and Results: The effects of training, measured by the Scale of Awareness of Gifted Children's Parents. Results showed that parents' awareness increased significantly ($t=5.29$, $p<.001$) in total. However in some sub-scales there were not significant differences, the mean scores of the post-tests were higher than the pre-tests.

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Conclusion and Recommendations: In conclusion, since gifted education field is growing in Turkey, it is very important to inform parents about their children's needs. Results showed that distance education is a practical and economical way to achieve that goal. The researchers due to very positive feedbacks about the study can recommend to do further studies with bigger sample from all over the country. In addition, for further studies more comprehensive questionnaire may be developed to evaluate the effects of the training program in a better way.

Keywords: Gifted and talented, training of gifted parents, distance education, adult education, scale of awareness of gifted children's parents.

Introduction

The education of gifted students is considered as a part of special education since gifted children are characteristically different from their peers (Tomlinson 2007). To meet these unique needs along with those specific characteristics has become one of the major issues in the field of education for some decades. In comparison with other countries, Turkey began studies of gifted education relatively recently (Sak 2011). And these studies are focused more to the education of gifted children and their teachers instead of parents (Davasligil 2004; Koksall 2007; Leana-Tascilar & Cinan 2014; Leana-Tascilar & Kanli 2014; Ozyaprak 2013; Leana-Tascilar 2015, Topcu & Leana-Tascilar, 2016). Guiding and educating the parents of gifted students has recently been put into practice while no matter how qualified a curriculum is, one will never reach the ultimate goal of education unless parent education is included (Aksoy 2002).

As it is explained above, studies focused on parent education and guiding of gifted students are vital need of gifted education in Turkey. The parents of gifted children occasionally need guidance and information about 3 topics. The two of them are identification of giftedness and education of gifted students. Lastly the parents need guidance about how to deal with social-emotional problems of gifted children (Peyre et all 2016). The detailed explanation of each topic is presented below:

Identification of Giftedness

One of the major problems of gifted children's parents is finding out whether or not their children are gifted. This requires parents to have a sense of giftedness. Parents also have conflicts about their role on identification. They wonder who is responsible for identification of their children; themselves, the school of their children or another specific center or foundation? They also need guidance about what to consider on identification process, which information is reliable and which institutions they can trust. They should meet with experts who can ensure information and explanations about giftedness (Silverman 1993).

Education of Gifted Students

Parents need guidance to recognize their children's educational needs and to select a proper school (Silverman, 1993; Elijah, 2011). What does a proper school have and provide to a gifted student? How can a parent decide on the adequate school for their gifted child? Which opportunities should a school for gifted learners have to offer for meeting gifted children's academic and social-emotional needs? How can parents support education? What are the activities and issues which parents should consider for home schooling their child? Gifted students' parents should be informed about the content of those questions.

The parents of gifted children need advice, information and educational resources. So they can support and encourage their child's special abilities. They need to know current definition of giftedness. The difference between academic achievement and giftedness should be understood by parents. The parents need to be aware of the risk for underachievement among gifted students. They should be informed about how to deal with it. Being in coordination with school is a very important step for gifted parents to meet the unique learning needs of gifted children. For that reason parents should be encouraged to collaborate with the school staff and administration (Clark,,2012).

Social Emotional Development

Gifted students' parents need information and support on some specific topics related to social-emotional development of gifted pupils. These topics can be summarized as the relationship between intelligence and social emotional characteristics, self-esteem of gifted children (Topcu & Leana, 2016b), giftedness and friendship, communication skills, perfectionism and its negative effects on children, depression among gifted children (Clark, 2012). By the way sometimes parents may not be aware of the importance of how understanding and supporting their children is crucial and necessary. Parents may consider a gifted student someone who never needs extra help and support either academically nor emotionally. On the other hand, parents may feel insufficient to meet their children's need. Therefore parents must be informed first about the characteristics of giftedness. So they realize that their children may need support even if they are gifted. Then parents have to be introduced to the educational, behavioral and psychological strategies and precautions that they can use (Muratori & Smith 2015).

Parent Training Programs from Turkey and World

Counselling and supporting this unique parent group is challenging. Hence, gifted students' parents are usually not offered enough guidance. The characteristics and needs of this group are so specific which complicates the interpretation of those needs and the development of empathy for the counsellor (Afat, 2013). Parents of gifted students may feel loneliness and despair because of the conditions mentioned above. So they should meet with the experts of the gifted education. Parents should be provided informative and supportive programs to accomplish that feeling of loneliness.

Unfortunately the number of those kinds of programs is quite limited around the world. Speaking of Turkey these limitations are higher in comparison to the other countries (Afat, 2013). Some of the well-known parent training programs for gifted parents are explained below. Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) Model is one of the parent support programs. The goal of this model is to prevent possible social-emotional problems which may occur between parents and their children. SENM Model requires having regular meetings. At the meetings parents share their challenges, problems, disappointments and various experiences with each other and the expert. SENM model offers some preventive approaches and problem solving techniques to beat the typical and usual challenges about parenting gifted children (Afat, 2013).

Positive Parenting Program (TRIPLE-P) is one other parent support program. The goal of this Program is to prevent not only possible social-emotional but also developmental and behavioural problems which may occur. TRIPLE-P intends to inform parents about the social-emotional characteristics of gifted children. Possible challenges come along with these characteristics and some strategies to deal with these challenges are also the main topics. TRIPLE-P also informs parents how to support their children academically and cognitively. TRIPLE-P has both informative and applied approach which lets parents gather experience in what they have learned during the training process (Sanders, 2012).

Working on Gifted Issues (WOGI) is the other popular parenting program which offers workshops for parents of gifted students. The goal of this model is to provide preventive and informative workshops where parents can also practice what they learn in those workshops. WOGI workshops comprise two parts: understanding giftedness and practicing parenting skills. Informative part includes information about what giftedness is, characteristics of gifted students, strengths and weaknesses of gifted individuals, peer relationships of gifted children. Implementation part includes information and practices about parenting and communication skills and some useful techniques to handle the possible challenges. Parents are also offered guidance about career planning methods in this part (Webb et al. 2007). Speaking of Turkey, education of gifted students is a newly developing field. That results a decline in the quantity of parent support programs in Turkey in contrast with other countries. Parents of gifted students mainly reach information via conferences, workshops and seminars. However, the number of those resources are only limited. They do also not have a systematic approach in order to have more effective results.

On the other hand, Afat (2013) has developed a parent supporting program which is the first systematic parenting approach for gifted students' parents in Turkey. It is called as Training Program for the Parents of Gifted Education (TPPGE). TPPGE aims to train parents to prevent and to cope with possible problems originating from gifted pupils' specific characteristics. Parents are expected to attend 10 sessions. Every session has two parts. In the first part parents get information from the experts. In the second part parents learn some strategies for real life problems. Parents have homework about learned strategies. They are expected to use those strategies in their life and to share their experiences with the group (Afat, 2013).

Adult Education

There are limited number of studies on the education of gifted children's parents in Turkey by reason of lack of experience, limited facilities and time-space restrictions. The most of them are not systematic. This is mainly because of verdancy of the field in Turkey. Also having access to the parents of the gifted children living in different cities at the same time constitutes a major problem. In addition, meeting with the parents after work hours is also a challenge.

A first has been achieved in Turkey with an eye to overcome the cited challenge by the current research. A distance adult training program has been developed in order to having access to the families of the gifted children all around the Turkey at the same time. The researchers focused that the online education environments are regardless of time and geographical barriers (Yurdugul & Cetin 2015). The education program provided in this paper includes gifted children's parents to the group of those benefiting from life-long learning opportunities by using distance education method. In general, adult education can be defined as the process of acquiring information and skills in line with the interests and needs in professional or daily life of individuals who deem themselves adults in terms of age and social role and who are aware that they are responsible for their own lives (Touati, 2016; Merriam & Brockett 1996; Tas et al. 2009). Adult education, aims to help adults develop the skills they have. It also aims to increase general and vocational knowledge. Adult education intends people to guide for achieving their personal developments via all kinds of adult-oriented intended, planned and organized training activities and programs.

It is observed in recent years that the concept of adult education is employed in conjunction with the concept of continuing education and lifelong education / lifelong learning. Lifelong learning concept has evolved within the adult education context (Field 2006; Smith 1996). The concept, as the name suggests highlights that learning or education cannot be limited to a certain time (age) or space (school). It continues from birth to death. It advocates that people must constantly renew their knowledge and experiences in the globalized world. Considering in terms of process, it is observed that lifelong learning (except for compulsory education) covers similar meaning, purpose and functions with adult education.

As can be seen from the literature given, learning is no longer limited to a particular place and time in the current world of communication and information technology. On the contrary learning is being considered as an ongoing process anymore (Fischer 2000). A large portion of individuals within the purview of adult education are individuals who work and who need self-improvement while working. Hence, need for lifelong learning which is independent of time and place has arisen for the individuals. The best tool to respond to the needs of the individuals of the contemporary society is to having access to most accurate information where and whenever needed. The distance education system is considered a very valid way of it.

Considering the characteristics of distance and adult education cited above, utilization of distance education for the parents of gifted children seems as an extremely meaningful and functional effort. First, gifted children's parents want to improve themselves in terms of healthy parenting on the field of characteristics and education of gifted children. Second, those parents are scattered in different provinces of Turkey. In this context, distance education is not a choice but a necessity in terms of the benefits it furnishes to the parents of gifted children.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to increase the awareness levels of gifted children's parents about giftedness via distance education. In this context the consecutive objective was to determine the effectiveness of the training program developed by the researchers.

Method

Research Design

In that study one group pretest-posttest experimental model was used.

Research Sample

Three hundred people were informed about the study via different ways like e-mail groups, and schools for gifted students etc. Because the characteristics of gifted children vary according to the developmental stages of the children, only parents with 6 to 8 years old children were included. In this regard, from the 154 parents that applied to the study, just the data of parents that attended regularly (7 of the 8 sessions) were used. In total, 40 parents (31 mothers, 9 fathers) from 5 different cities regularly attended the seminars. 6 of the parents who attended from Istanbul were from Asian and 12 from European part. In total they were from 18 different districts of Istanbul.

Research Instruments and Procedure

Scale of awareness of gifted children's parents. The aim of the scale is to evaluate the awareness of the parents of gifted children about their needs (Afat, 2013). It has 39 items with 5-point Likert type. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the scale showed that there are 4 different sub-scales: stress (15 items), perfectionism (7 items), motivation-achievement (9 items) and responsibility/ self-regulated learning (8 items).

Validity and Reliability

The validity analysis of the questionnaire made by Afat (2013). The total Cronbach's alpha of the scale was found as .83. The Cronbach's alpha for each sub-scale was .85, .67, .71 and .52 respectively. The results of test retest reliability analysis were $r = .71$ and the split half $r = 1.00$ and $r = 1.00$, significant ($p < .01$). In present study the total reliability result was .95 and the sub-scales' .92, .62, .94 and .65 respectively.

The Training Program

The Training Program was conducted as live virtual classroom based lessons and were 8 sessions. A distance education system was used for carrying out the seminars. The sessions were held twice a week in evenings from 8 to 9 p.m. as 50 minutes lectures and 10 minutes for questions. The outline for each week was as follows:

a) *Introduction*: Intelligence, giftedness, creativity, achievement and talent were introduced. Identification of giftedness and the different styles of intelligence according to different models were discussed.

b) *Identification*: The aim, different styles and the stages of identification were introduced.

c) *Characteristics of Gifted Students*: Physical, cognitive, social, personality and moral development of gifted children were explained in detail. Twice exceptional children mentioned.

d) *Perfectionism*: Defined and the positive and negative aspects of perfectionism were discussed. The effects of perfectionism to achievement were explained and advice was provided for the parents who had perfectionist gifted children.

e) *Depression*: The main reasons that can produce depression in gifted children were introduced as well as the preventions that can be provided were explained.

f) *Stress and Conflict Management*: Different ways of helping gifted students and their parents with stress management that can prevent stress and conflict were discussed. Parents were informed about specialists or associations that can provide help for their children.

g) *Underachievement and Lack of Motivation*: The definition of underachievement was made and parents were informed about how to deal with motivational problems of their children.

h) *Educational Preventions*: The need of special education for gifted children and what special education can provide them were explained.

Data Analysis

The SPSS package program was used in analyzing the data. Descriptive statistics used to calculate the frequencies of the participants. The test of normality results showed that parametric statistical techniques can be used, so paired sample t-test used to analyse the pre and post-tests.

Results

Results about Working Group

In total, 40 parents attended the online trainings. The mean age of the group was 40.25, 31 mothers (77.5%) and 9 fathers (22.5%). Only one of the parents was divorced. Parents attended from 5 different cities of Turkey. 1 (2.5%) was from Antalya, 1 (2.5%) from Bursa, 1 (2.5%) from Eskisehir, 35 (87.5%) from Istanbul and 2 (5%) of them from Mersin (Table 1). Istanbul was the city with the most participants and they were from 19 different districts. Basaksehir, Bayrampasa, Beykoz, Beylikduzu, Halkali, Kartal, Umraniye and Zeytinburnu had 1 participant each. The

districts Avcilar, Besiktas, Eyup, Fatih, Maltepe, Pendik, Sariyer and Sisli had 2 participants each. Kadikoy had 3 participants and Atasehir with Kucukcekmece 4 participants each (Table 2).

Table 1.

Frequencies of the Participants' Cities (n=40)

Cities	Frequencies	
	n	%
Antalya	1	2.5
Bursa	1	2.5
Eskisehir	1	2.5
Istanbul	35	87.5
Mersin	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Table 2.

Different Districts of Participants from Istanbul (n=35)

Districts	Frequencies	
	n	%
Atasehir	4	11.4
Avcilar	2	5.7
Basaksehir	1	2.9
Bayrampasa	1	2.9
Besiktas	2	5.7
Beykoz	1	2.9
Beylikduzu	1	2.9
Eyup	2	5.7
Fatih	2	5.7
Halkali	1	2.9
Kadikoy	3	8.6
Kartal	1	2.9
Kucukcekmece	4	11.4
Maltepe	2	5.7
Pendik	2	5.7
Sariyer	2	5.7
Sisli	2	5.7
Umraniye	1	2.9
Zeytinburnu	1	2.9
Total	35	100.0

Education levels of the parents who participated in the online training program are presented in Table 3. According to that 5 percent of the mothers were graduates from high school, 7.5 percent from college, 50 percent from university, 10 percent had master's degree and 5 percent had doctorate degree. In addition 2.5% of fathers were graduates from high school, 5 percent from college, and 15 percent from university.

Table 3.

Frequencies of the Education Level of the Parents Who Participated in the Training Program (n=40)

Education level	High school		College		Graduate		Master degree		PhD degree		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
	Mother	2	5.0	3	7.5	20	50.0	4	10.0	2	5.0	31
Father	1	2.5	2	5.0	6	15.0	0	0	0	0	9	22.5
Total	3	7.5	5	12.5	26	65.0	4	10.0	2	5.0	40	100.0

According to the results of the study, 35 percent of parents who participated in the sessions had already attended other educational programs (generally just one day workshops) and 65 percent of the parents had not got any informative workshop about the needs of their children.

Results about the Children of the Parents who Participated in the Program

Thirty-four (85%) of the gifted children of the parents who participated in the online training program were male and 6 of them (15%) female. Table 4 shows in what kind of institutions the gifted children were identified as gifted. According to Table 4, 12.5 percent of the children were identified by Counseling and Research Centers, 12.5 percent by clinicians in hospitals, 50 percent by private institutions for gifted students and 12 percent by academicians in university.

Table 4.

Frequencies of the Institutions that Gifted Children were Identified

Institutions	Frequencies	
	n	%
Counselling and Research Centres	5	13.8
Hospitals	5	13.8
Private Institutions	20	55.5
Universities	6	16.6
Total	36	100.0

Table 5 shows that 70 percent of the children of the parents who participated in the training program were enrolled in private schools and 30 percent of them in public ones. 30 percent of the children who enrolled in private schools had special education for their giftedness and 40 percent did not. 15 percent of the students were enrolled in public schools.

Table 5.

Frequencies and Percentages of the School Types and the Special Education Condition of the Gifted Children (n=40)

Do your children have special education?

		Yes		No		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
School Type	Private	12	30	16	40	28	70
	Public	6	15	6	15	12	30
	Total	18	45	22	55	40	100

Table 6.

Pre and Post-test Results of Paired Sampled T-test

Score	Groups	N	\bar{X}	ss	$Sh_{\bar{X}}$	t-test		
						t	Sd	p
Total Score	Pre	40	135.67	13.96	2.20	5.28	39	.001
	Post	40	143.95	12.55	1.98			
Stress/ Conflict	Pre	40	53.95	7.36	1.16	2.88	39	.01
	Post	40	56.65	6.30	.99			
Perfectionism	Pre	40	23.65	3.91	.61	1.41	39	.165
	Post	40	24.22	3.78	.59			
Motivation	Pre	40	33.9	4.79	.75	1.65	39	.105
	Post	40	34.95	4.34	.68			
Responsibility	Pre	40	27.7	3.41	.53	.86	39	.394
	Post	40	28.12	3.55	.56			

Results about the Training of the Parents

Shapiro-Wilk-W normality test results showed that the sample had normal distribution ($S-W=.418$, $p<.05$). Therefore the data was analyzed with parametric tests. Analysis of the data showed that 77 percent of the participants participated in all 8 sessions. In Table 6 pre- and posttest paired sample t test results can be found.

Results of pre- and post-test paired sampled t test of the Scale of Awareness of Gifted Children's Parents showed that they were significant differences in the total scale score ($t=5.28$, $p<.001$) and the sub-scale of the stress and conflict management ($t=2.88$, $p<.001$) but not in perfectionism ($t=1.41$, $p>.05$), motivation ($t=1.65$, $p>.05$) and responsibility subscales ($t=.86$, $p>.05$) (Table 6). However the comparison of the means of all sub-scales showed that the awareness scores were increased after the training.

Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to provide an 8-sessioned training opportunity to gifted students' parents all around Turkey by using the benefits of distance education. This was considered as a pilot research since the sample size ($n=300$) was small in proportion to the population of Turkey. However the results are believed to lead new research, since training parents of gifted children is crucial for education and psychology of gifted children. Keirouz (1990) emphasized the importance of guiding the gifted children's parents about identification of giftedness, educating the gifted child, sibling relations, parental roles, improving self-esteem and adjusting society.

The reflections of gifted children's parents about the training underlie the importance of guidance afore. Some sample reflections are given below.

"Now I have more academic explanations about the problems that I had to face as a parent of a gifted child. I feel more aware about the needs of her. Of course I can say that if the education was more detailed and longer it could be better. However I found very important the advices and the practical solutions that were recommended."

"I learned that different types of intelligence exist. Now I am more aware about the fact that parents really need such trainings more often. I believe that the sessions were very productive to be able to face the anxiety about the future of our child."

Some examples with feedbacks about distance education:

"Nowadays it is very popular and effective to have distance education. It was good timing to have that for different topics as about the needs of gifted children."

"Distance education was a great idea especially for people like us who have to work daily. We could not be able to participate if it was not online."

"These lectures where just perfect, of course I am not saying that they were enough but they were very detailed as a first step. Having these lectures as online courses was very nice"

and time saving for people who have to travel long distances within a huge city as Istanbul. Everyone was comfortable in his/her own home. You brought the education till our doors."

Afat's (2013) assessment tool called Scale of Awareness of Gifted Children's Parents was used to assess the effectiveness of the training program in this research. Results of pre and post-tests paired sampled t test of the scale shows that there are significant differences in the total scale score. Also there is a significant difference between the pre and post-tests scores of the stress and conflict management subscale. There is not any significant difference between pre and post-test scores of the perfectionism, motivation and responsibility subscales.

These insignificances may be explained by the scale used in the research. Afat's (2013) scale was used to assess the current training program which may not be totally in line with the training program in this research. The scale was still preferred since it is the only valid and reliable assessment tool about parent training in Turkey. Also the two programs have parallel contents and the two researches have parallel findings.

There are studies presenting the advantages of distance education (O'Lawrence, 2007; Marques & Carvalho, 2010; Yilmaz, 2015). One of these advantages is allowing access to learning and training exempt from space and time restrictions. Distance education is also advantageous since it enables an interactive, learner-centered learning (O'Lawrence, 2007; Marques & Carvalho, 2010; Yilmaz 2015).

However as Tuncer and Taspinar (2008) indicated, distance education's superiority on traditional face-to-face education has not been proved, yet. Besides, there are surely some disadvantages of distance learning. The most significant con's is the negative results of lack of self-discipline and time-management of the attendees (O'Lawrence, 2007). Luckily, because the parents desperately need this education, it was not an obstacle in the study.

Another broad handicap is technical problems interrupting the instruction. These problems may create confusion and frustration for the instructor and students (Heinich et al. 2002). The trainers in the study well prepared with alternative plans to overcome the technical problems aforesaid. Also, extensive preparation is required to overcome the difficulty of online connections and to sustain participants' attention and motivation (O'Lawrence, 2007; Robb & Sutton, 2014). Various teaching strategies which were convenient to distance education were used to adapt online environment by the researchers.

Beyond the pro's and con's of distance adult education, the reflections of gifted children's parents prove that the current study is important and necessary to fill the training gaps in the field of gifted children's parents education. The gifted education field is recent relatively to Europe countries and USA. The population of the parents of gifted children is small and is scattered all over Turkey. Those two reasons limit the parents' opportunity to receive training.

Also parents need distance education because they have to work daily as a modern life necessity. This leads adults not to be able to participate in traditional,

face-to-face courses. Distance education seems as the most prominent solution to educational problems of adult learners (Marques & Carvalho, 2010; Yilmaz, 2015). Besides the aforementioned advantages, one can consider this research as unique and significant since there isn't any online adult education training program for the parents of gifted children.

As a result, it is concluded that a new scale specific to the context of current program has to be developed to have more valid results. It is also concluded based on the parents' comments that -even though there is not a significant difference between some sub-scales of the test- the training program was useful and necessary because of the advantages mentioned in the discussion part. In the light of the findings, literature reviews and comments of the parents of the current research, it may be concluded that an online training program is a helpful, available and practical way to raise awareness of the parents of gifted children about the field.

Recommendations

Distance education has its own pros and cons. Therefore in newly growing areas like gifted education in Turkey it is important to be able to educate people that they are far away and they don't have access to face-to-face trainings. The researchers due to very positive feedbacks about the study can recommend to do further studies with bigger sample from all over the country. Distance education can also provide cheap and practical help to the people who cannot afford or reach it. It will be very fruitful if universities or other institutions that they have the appropriate tools for distance education can provide it for the academicians. Thus it will be possible to educate not only the parents but also the gifted children with different programs.

The researchers must also underline the limitations of the paper. First of all, it was not possible to reach a big population as it was expected. Second, the scale that was used did not totally overlap with the sub-topics of the training sessions. Third, the researchers must take into consideration the limitations of distance education itself. In that sense for further studies the researchers suggest that bigger sample is needed and more comprehensive questionnaire be developed to evaluate the effects of the training program in a better way. It must be underlined that further researches can help gifted children and their parents to have better conditions in a developing country like Turkey.

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Uzaktan Eğitim Yoluyla Üstün Zekâlı Çocukların Ebeveynlerine Farkındalık Eğitimi

Atf:

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Özet

Problem Durumu: Üstün zekâli ve yetenekli çocukların eğitimi, Türkiye'de son on yıldır derinlemesine araştırılmaya başlanmış olan bir konudur (Sak, 2011). Alan yazın incelendiğinde bu araştırmaların büyük bir çoğunluğunun üstün zekâli çocukların özellikleri, eğitimleri, tanılanmaları ve normal zihinsel düzeyinde olan yaşlılarıyla çeşitli değişkenler açısından karşılaştırılmaları üzerinde yoğunlaştığı görülmektedir (Davashgil, 2004; Köksal, 2007; Leana, 2009; Leana-Taşcılar & Karlı, 2014; Özyaprak, 2013). Yapılan bu araştırmalar alan yazında üstün zekâli ve yetenekli çocukların öğretmenleri ve velileriyle ilgili derinlemesine araştırmalara ihtiyaç duyulduğunu göstermiştir. Bu çocukların öğretmenlerinin hangi özelliklere sahip olması gerektiğine ilişkin araştırmalar, ailelerle ilgili araştırmalara kıyasla daha çok sayıdadır. Üstün zekâli ve yetenekli çocukların anne babalarına yönelik sınırlı

sayıdaki araştırmanın daha çok ebeveyn tutumları ya da anne babaların özelliklerine yoğunlaştığı dikkati çekmektedir. Anne babalara çocuklarının özellikleri hakkında bilgilendirici ve farkındalıklarını arttıracak eğitim çalışmaları ise oldukça sınırlıdır. Oysa pek çok eğitim seminerinden sonra anne-babalar her zaman çok faydalandıklarından bahsetmekte ve bu eğitim seminerlerinin devamlı olmasını talep etmektedirler. Bununla birlikte sürekli seminerlere katılmak özellikle büyük ve kalabalık şehirlerde her zaman mümkün değildir. Uzaktan eğitim, dezavantajları olmasına karşın, eğitim vermek için pratik ve ekonomik bir yöntemdir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bahsedilen üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli çocukların anne babalarına yönelik sınırlı eğitim açığını kapatmak adına mevcut araştırmada üstün zekâlı çocukların ebeveynlerinin çocuklarıyla ilgili farkındalıklarını arttırıcı bir eğitim programı hazırlamak ve programın etkililiğini sınamak amaçlanmıştır. Üstün zekâlı popülasyon çok küçüktür ve Türkiye'nin farklı illerine dağılmış bulunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda farklı bölgelerdeki ebeveynlere ulaşabilmek adına uzaktan eğitim imkânından faydalanmanın çok kıymetli bir atılım olacağı düşünülmüştür.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Bu doğrultuda, pek çok farklı kurum ve kuruluş aracılığıyla üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli çocukların anne babalarına ulaşılmıştır. E-mail aracılığıyla ulaşılan 154 kişiden 40'ı sanal eğitimlere devamlı olarak katılmıştır. Bu bireylerden 31'i (%77.5) anne, 9'u ise (22.5) babadır. Araştırmada tek grup öntest-sontest deneysel model uygulanmıştır ve ilk iki yazar tarafından hazırlanan eğitim programının etkililiği sınanmıştır. Sekiz oturumdan oluşmakta olan sanal eğitim programında ebeveynler zekâ ve üstün yetenek, üstün zekâlı çocukların özellikleri ve tanılanması, üstün zekâlı çocuklarda mükemmeliyetçilik, üstün zekâlı çocuklarda depresyon, üstün zekâlı çocuklarda beklenmedik başarısızlık ve motivasyon, yaratıcılık ve üstün zekâlı çocukların eğitimleri konularında bilgilendirilmişlerdir. Her oturum yaklaşık olarak 1 saat sürmüştür ve her oturum sonunda 10-15 dakikalık soru sormak için zaman verilmiştir. Oturum saatleri, eğitim başlamadan önce katılacak ebeveynlere en uygun saatler saptanarak belirlenmiş ve akşam saatlerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Her seans esnasında üç araştırmacı da hazır bulunmuş, ikisi eğitimi verirken, üçüncü araştırmacı teknik destek sağlamıştır. Programın etkililiği Afat (2013), tarafından geliştirilen *Üstün Zekâlı Çocuğu Olan Ebeveynlerin Farkındalıkları Ölçeği* ile değerlendirilmiştir. Ölçek, Toplam Puan, Stres, Mükemmeliyetçilik, Motivasyon ve Sorumluluk olmak üzere toplam beş alt boyuttan oluşmaktadır. Ölçeğin bu araştırmadaki toplam iç tutarlık Cronbach's Alpha değeri .95 olarak bulgulanmıştır. Diğer alt boyutların iç tutarlık katsayıları sırasıyla .92, .62, .94 ve .65 olarak bulgulanmıştır.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Araştırmada elde edilen öntest-sontest eşleştirmeli t- testi sonuçları, verilen sanal eğitim programı sayesinde, ebeveynlerin üstün zekâlı çocuklarıyla ilgili farkındalıklarının anlamlı bir şekilde arttığını göstermektedir ($t=5.29$, $p<.001$). Bununla birlikte alt boyutlar ayrı ayrı değerlendirildiğinde Stres alt boyutunda öntest ve sontest puanları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılık ($t=2.88$, $p<.01$) saptanırken; diğer alt boyutların öntest ve sontest puanları arasındaki puan ortalamaları farklılaşmakla birlikte anlamlılık derecesine ulaşamadıkları görülmektedir. Uzaktan eğitimlere katılan ebeveynlerin olumlu geri bildirimleri de dikkate alınarak çalışmada sunulmuştur. Ebeveynler, uzaktan eğitim aracılığıyla sunulan eğitimden sonra, üstün zekâlı çocuklarının sorunlarıyla ilgili daha çok

akademik bilgiye sahip olduklarını, ihtiyaçlarının daha çok farkına vardıklarını, günlük iş yoğunluğu arasında farklı mekânlara gitmeye fırsat bulamadıklarından eğitimlere katılamadıklarını, dolayısıyla uzaktan eğitim aracılığıyla verilen eğitimlerden faydalandıklarını belirtmişlerdir.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Bu araştırma, ülkemizde yeni gelişmekte olan bu alanda ebeveynleri bilgilendirme konusunda sanal eğitim desteği sunan ilk çalışmadır. Araştırma, bir ön çalışma olarak düşünülmekte ve ülke genelindeki ebeveynlere ulaşmayı hedefleyen ileriki araştırmalara yol gösterici olacağı umut edilmektedir. Uzaktan eğitimin kendine göre artıları ve eksileri olmakla birlikte, ülkemizde yeni gelişmekte olan bir alan olan üstün zekâlı çocukların ebeveynlerinin eğitiminde ve farkındalıklarını arttırmada önemli bir rol oynayabileceği düşünülmektedir. İleriki çalışmalarda, daha fazla oturumdan ve daha kapsamlı olan eğitim seanslarından oluşacak olan programların etkililiğinin sınanması önerilmektedir. Buna ek olarak, ebeveynlerin uzaktan eğitim programıyla ilgili geri bildirimlerinin nitel araştırma yöntemleriyle de değerlendirilmesinin faydalı olacağı düşünülmektedir. Benzer eğitim seminerleri, ülkenin dört bir yanında hizmet vermekte olan ancak çalıştıkları şehirlerde eğitim alma imkânları olmayan öğretmenler için de düzenlenmesinin faydalı olacağına inanılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Üstün zekâ ve yetenek, üstünlerin ailelerinin eğitimi, uzaktan eğitim, üstün zekâlı çocuğu olan ebeveynlerin farkındalıkları ölçeği.