Hizmet educational philosophy in the example of a Hizmet-inspired school; Hayskolen

Could Hizmet educational philosophy be an alternative solution to criminality and radicalism among immigrant-origin youths?

by

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Abstract

Turkey-origin families in Denmark have long been suffering for their children’s future due to the challenges of criminal gangs and violent religious extremist organizations. Hizmet (The Service) movement which is a non-governmental civic movement offers a solution to the afore-mentioned problems of youths through education. Hizmet movement is a voluntary, transnational, faith-inspired civil movement which was founded in Turkey 50 years ago by a Muslim scholar and preacher Fethullah Gülen and now is globally active.

The purpose of this thesis is to understand Hizmet movement educational philosophy and its role in the success and popularity of Hay school (Hayskolen) which is situated in the capital of Denmark, Copenhagen and known as a Hizmet-inspired school.

After having made a literature review about Hizmet educational philosophy, I tried to understand if this philosophy plays an important role in the success and popularity of Hay school by the data collected through institutional documents and semi-structured interviews.

The conclusion is that Hay school, have many similar aspects with other Hizmet-inspired schools and Hizmet education philosophy plays an important role in the success and popularity of Hay school. That is; The Hizmet-educational philosophy which is an important factor to ensure Hay school as a safe haven for pupils against criminality and radicalism contributes a lot to the success and popularity of the school.

Key words


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1. Introduction

In daily news in Scandinavia, I generally read news about Turkey-origin youths who take part in the criminal activities. Besides that I hear about the Turkey-origin generations, born in Scandinavia, recruited to the violent radical organizations such as ISIS, which is another cause of suffering for many Turkey-origin families in Scandinavia.

Due to my frequent contact with Turkey-origin families within the scope of my job, I am well aware of their problems with their children. Turkey-origin families in Scandinavia have been suffering for a long time for fears about their children’s future. Because the Turkey-origin youths are facing with the challenges of criminal gangs and violent religious extremist organizations.

Having said that, in this thesis I am not interested with the case of those youths who are already being involved in those criminal gangs or extremist organizations. My main focus is on searching for preventative measures: That is; What could prevent Turkey-origin youths from participating those criminal gangs and/or extremist organizations? How could this goal be achieved through education?

In my thesis, I would like to study a non-governmental civic movement called as Hizmet (The Service) which offers an effective solution to the afore-mentioned problems of youths through education. It could be enlightening to give the information that Hizmet movement is a voluntary, transnational, faith-inspired civil movement which was founded in Turkey 50 years ago and now is active globally. This alternative perspective deserves to be taken into account because of the positive fruits it has already produced. That is; the Hizmet-inspired schools which educate Turkey-origin generations with a new sense of identity with inner peace and in harmony with modern ideals such as democracy, human rights, justice, equality, tolerance, mutual respect and freedom of thought and speech.

In order to clarify, I would say that I chose to study Hizmet movement because I have been reading from the newspapers and hearing among Turkey-origin families about the success of Hizmet-inspired schools in Europe for a long time. By ‘success’ I do not only mean the students academic grades but also the mentality they acquire. That is; nearly none of the graduate students of these schools do participate neither criminal gangs nor violent religious organizations. I argue that referring to the statements of former Danish Minister of Education Bertel Haarder and the actual Danish Minister of Justice Soren Pind about a Hizmet-inspired school in Denmark which is called as Hay school (Hayskolen): According to the columnist Aymaz\(^1\), former Education Minister Haarder said in a conference: ‘Do not always mention bad examples when you talk about immigrants. There is also a good example of Hayskolen

which has proved to be successful and contributes a lot to the Danish society.’. Besides that Justice Minister Pind once said in his visit to Hayskolen years ago: ‘I do not visit your school because of your academic success. Yes, you are successful but that is not the main reason of my visit. I made a research before coming here and found out that there has not been any graduate of Hayskolen who became a criminal. How did you achieve that? I come here to understand that and congratulate you!’

So, I want to try to shed a light on the role of Hizmet-inspired schools in the integration processes of Turkey-origin youths in Europe. I aim to understand fully why Hizmet-inspired schools are successful? What is the originality of the educational philosophy behind it? What are the schools pros, cons and effects (positive or negative) on the students? Why Turkey-origin people have great interest in these schools?

Specifically, in my thesis, I focus on a Hizmet-inspired school in Denmark which is called as Hay school. Recently, this school has been chosen as the best school in Denmark in terms of elevating students academic performance by an independent Danish think-tank CEPOS: The Copenhagen Post online newportal reported this event as follows2: ‘Hayskolen in Copenhagen is Denmark’s best public school in terms of elevating students’ academic performance regardless of their socio-economic background. The private school scored best in a new comparison analysis carried out by the think-tank Cepos’. In addition to that the school manages to educate pupils to become a beneficial part of the society as witnessed also by two Danish ministers above.

1.1. Purpose of the study

In this thesis, I want to understand the originality of the educational philosophy of Hizmet movement focusing on the example of a Hizmet-inspired school in Denmark. Moreover, I tried to understand the application of this educational philosophy in Hay school. Additionally, I tried to find out the factors behind the great interest of Turkey-origin people in this school and the elements underlying the success of Hayskolen. Lastly, I wanted to examine and understand if there is a relationship between the Hizmet educational philosophy and the school’s success and popularity.

1.2. Research question

What kind of role does Hizmet educational philosophy play in the popularity and success of Hayskolen in Denmark which is known as a Hizmet-inspired school?

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1.3. Limitation of the Study

It is the very nature of qualitative study to utilize small sample sizes during inquiry. That is why, the findings can not be generalized. The most obvious limitation is the limited number of interviewed school staff and parents. I interviewed only 3 parents and 1 school administrator. I think the reflections of those limited number of interviewees could not give a whole picture of the situation.

1.4. Outline

Since the research question is stated as what kind of role does Hizmet educational philosophy play in the success and popularity of Hay school in Denmark which is known as a Hizmet-inspired school, firstly a general information about Hay school will be given in reference to the official website of the school and a semi-structured interview with the school principal. This is followed by giving a brief information about the think-tank CEPOS and an analysis of its report which declared Hay school as the best school in Denmark in terms of elevating students academically referring to the website of CEPOS.

Then a literature review will be made in order to determine the general characteristics of Hizmet educational philosophy. This is followed by a research design and methodological reflections on the study. Thereafter the data analysis includes discourse analysis of media news about CEPOS report, semi-structured interviews and observation of institutional documents.

After analyzing the findings and discussing the results, a conclusion will be presented which will try to shed light on the relationship between Hizmet educational philosophy and Hay school in relation to the success and popularity of the school.

2. Background

The research focuses on Hay school which is selected as the best school in Denmark in 2015 by an independent Danish think-tank CEPOS. Therefore, it could be complementary to give a general knowledge about Hay school, CEPOS and its report.

2.1. General information about Hayskolen

Hay School is a state-financed private school which was founded in 1st August 1993. The school is an independent institution based in Copenhagen and it is administrated by a board of administration. Nearly all the members of the board is either Turkish-speaking or Turkey-origin.

The school's operations are run by voluntary contributions from the school district and others (sponsors) interested in school, on the basis of school fees for pupils, quotas and by grants.

3 Retrieved 2016/03/05 from http://hayskolen.dk/wp2/?page_id=104, The information in Danish is translated to English by Google Translate. And the information is summarized by me.
from the public. The school must meet the own coverage requirements, as Danish Minister of Education has established the basis of the ‘’Law on Free Schools and Private Elementary Schools.’’

The school offers classes from 1st to 9th class. There are 350 Students from 7 different ethnicity. The students come from 25 different district of Copenhagen. Anf there are 25 teachers of whom 21 are certified ACT tutors\(^4\) in the school. The average class size is 20.4 student. There are 80 computers in the service of the students, which means there is one pc for every 4.3 student. Moreover, beginning from the 7th grade, the school offers students a Macbook Air as a tool in teaching.

Every year the school accepts 50-60 new students and at the same time graduate 50-60 students.

It is also important to mention that Hay school is not a religious school. The school considers that religion is a private matter which is best handled by the family. The school follows the Ministry of Education curriculum in the education of religion which is dealt under the subject of christian studies. The school offers Turkish language in the category of elective course as an extra, special educational service

The aims of the school are declared as follows: The institution's aim is, firstly, to prepare students to live in a democratic society like Denmark and also to develop and strengthen students' knowledge of and respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights, including gender equality.

The school's another aim is to exercise school activity on the following basis; creating a kindly but firmly environment that allows students from different nationalities and social classes the opportunity to grow up and develop in a community. In short, education to bring up socially useful (the world) citizens.

The school, through its culture, educate students to understand and participate in a democratic society. Students should be able to understand, respect and use the duties and freedoms associated with a democratic life.

The school respects the individual student's cultural background and the students right to be different is respected and supported. Students at the school must show respect for different cultures and opinions, so that students learn to respect theirs and others' religion, culture and attitudes.

Some pedagogical principles of the school:

1) There must be mutual respect between teachers, students and parents.

2) Home-school cooperation priority : School / home cooperation is important for students to experience a whole in everyday life. There will be a parent and two parent-teacher

\(^4\) Certified ACT tutors are a team of educators with deep knowledge across all test prep subjects.
conferences annually for all. For personal or social problems of the student, the school called the parents for conversation when needed.

3) Tolerance and respect: The school aims to provide students with understanding and insight so that they develop both tolerance and respect.

2.2. Information about CEPOS and its report

CEPOS (Center for Political Studies) is an independent Danish think tank promoting a society based on freedom, responsibility, private initiative and limited government. It was founded in 2004 by prominent Danish business people, thinkers and cultural personalities and started its work on March 10, 2005. CEPOS does not work at the request of any political party, public authority, commercial enterprise, organization or individual.

The report titled as ‘The private basic schools best to lift students academically’ was conducted by a CEPOS research team directed by Henrik Christoffersen. The report which is an analysis of teaching effect in all the country’s primary schools was published on 11th August, 2015 by CEPOS and was presented to the attention of public opinion.

The analysis is based on figures from the Danish Ministry of Education via a ‘socio-economic reference’ takes into account students’ social and economic background. In addition to that the analysis includes data from all the country’s schools, which can be found on [www.undervisningseffekt.dk](http://www.undervisningseffekt.dk).

CEPOS carried out a new analysis starting from 9th grade departure characters have calculated how well individual schools are to lift students academically. The CEPOS research team, throughout their study concluded that Hayskolen (private Hay School) is the most promising school for the students in Denmark.

In order to enrich my paper I have tried to make an interview with the research team head Henrik Christoffersen in order to talk about the report in detail. For this purpose I sent an e-mail asking for an appointment but I did not receive any answer. Then I learned that the CEPOS do not want to share the details of the report because they want the evaluation criterion of their study remain in secret. Otherwise the schools could focus to prepare themselves for future studies which contradicts with the aim and principles of the CEPOS.

According to me, the CEPOS tried to shed light to the core problems of Danish education system by the report. They chose Hayskolen, taking into consideration and studying objective data from the Danish ministry of education. The use of governmental data in the study and also secret investigation of the schools performances convinced me more about the accuracy of the study.

5 Retrieved 2016/05/07 from the web url address: [http://www.cepos.dk/english](http://www.cepos.dk/english)

6 Retrieved 2016/03/15 from the website: [http://www.cepos.dk/artikler/de-frie-grundskoler-bedst-til-at-loefte-eleverne-fagligt](http://www.cepos.dk/artikler/de-frie-grundskoler-bedst-til-at-loefte-eleverne-fagligt). The report is originally in Danish language. The report was translated into English by google translate and summarized by me.
As the report also underlines; the success of Hay school is in its ability to lift the students with a different socio-economic background academically. In other words Hay school is able to motivate immigrant-origin students and lift them academically above the average performance of the country with respect to other schools.

Considering the fact that Hay school has students from 7 different ethnicity, I conclude that Hay school is highly successful to apply its pedagogical goals such as respect for others, tolerance and love.

3. Research Design and Methodological reflections

The aim of this thesis is to understand the role of Hizmet educational philosophy in the success and popularity of Hizmet-inspired school Haykolen in Denmark.

3.1. Research plan

For my thesis, I chose to carry out an action research. Because I want to understand better Hizmet’s educational philosophy in relation to the success and the popularity of Hay School in Denmark. This fits with the idea of an action research; As Johnsson states, ‘In an action research project, you are not trying to prove anything. You are not comparing one thing to another to determine the best possible thing. Also, there are no experimental or control groups, independent or dependent variables, or hypotheses to be supported. The goal is simply to understand.’

Therefore, I, firstly tried to understand better the educational philosophy of Hizmet movement which required absolutely a literature review. As Johnsson states, ‘A literature review also helps tie your action research project to what others have said and done before you.’ So I will not have to discover America again, With the insights I acquire from the other studies, my thesis will become more efficient and effective. So I have read few books and articles about Hizmet movement, Fethullah Gülen who is the spiritual leader of the movement, Hizmet-inspired schools around the world. In addition to that I read Gülen’s texts on education.

In short by literature review, I strived to understand the originality of educational philosophy of Hizmet movement and Gülen. Besides that, I become familiar with the research topic and form an overall impression of it. The literature review helped me to determine the basic aspects of Hizmet-educational philosophy. And so I could try to understand and evaluate Hay school from the point of those aspects. My familiarity to the research topic through literature review also helped me to prepare relevant and clear questions for the semi-structured interviews which I conducted.

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7 I want to clarify that these students are all Danish citizens, although they are from a different ethnic group. That is; they originally come from different countries. For example from Turkey, Azerbaijan etc.


The limitation of the study was that although Fethullah Gulen lives in the United States of America now, he is originally from Turkey and express his ideas in Turkish language. Also many of the studies about Hizmet-movement were written in Turkish language. Here a problem emerged. Since I write my thesis in English, I preferred to read english translation of the books and articles on the topic. But even an excellent translation can never give the taste of the original. In order to overcome this problem I also had a look at the original version of the translated one as long as I can.

3.2. Data collection procedure

For this thesis, the research question was stated as follows: What is the role of Hizmet educational philosophy in the success and popularity of Hayskolen in Copenhagen (Denmark) which is known as Hizmet-inspired school.

In this thesis, I make use of qualitative methods because qualitative methods tolerate more flexibility and openness to contextual interpretation. (Acar, 2013)

On the other hand, qualitative method is sometimes regarded as too subjective and complicated to replicate. It is also associated with processes which lack in transparency and results which are difficult to generalize.

The qualitative data collection within this essay involves: 1- Analysis of an institutional documents (CEPOS report, Hay School website documents) 2- Discourse analysis of the media texts about the CEPOS report. 3- Analysis of semi-structured interviews with a school administrator and 3 student-parents.

Firstly, in order to understand the Hayskolens success in Denmark, as a first step I analyzed the report of an independent Danish think tank CEPOS promoting a society based on freedom, responsibility, private initiative and limited government. This report was important because it identifies a typic Hizmet-inspired school; that is; Hayskolen as the best school in Denmark.

I wanted to have a detailed copy of this report and study on it. In that way I wanted to draw conclusions why Hayskolen was chosen as first? What kind of statistical data has played role in this selection? How does Hayskolen effect the orientation of the students? etc. That is why I sent an e-mail in which I ask for appointment for an eventual interview. But I did not receive any answer. Then I learned that CEPOS could not give any detailed information about the report because the study is always carried out in secret so that the schools do not prepare themselves for the evaluation in advance.

On the other hand, there are media news about Hayskolen in relation to this report. I made a discourse analysis in order to understand how media reacted to this success of Hayskolen. For the discourse analysis, I chose one newsportal which publish in English and another news source publishing in Danish in order to have a general idea about the perception of the Danish public opinion with regard to CEPOS report.

This discourse analysis was important for my research because it shows the misperceptions and/or misinformations in the Danish society about Hay school if we consider media as the
mirror of the society. So the analysis can also be used as a factor to explain the lack of Danish-ethnic students in Hay school despite its success and openness to all.

### 3.2.1. Discourse analysis

Firstly, it could be illuminating to define the term discourse. Discourse is a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world). Then it should not be wrong to call Discourse Analysis as a useful method which is concerned with the production of meaning through talk and so texts.

All different approaches to social constructionist discourse analysis share the starting point that our ways of talking do not neutrally reflect our world, identities and social relations but, rather play an active role in creating and changing them. In addition to general social constructionist premises, all discourse analytical approaches converge with their views of language and the subject: These claims are our access to reality is always through language and subjects are created in discourses.

The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) engages in concrete, linguistic textual analysis of language use in social interaction. This distinguishes it from other approaches. That is why I chose to use CDA which seems to me as to have a linguistic focus and so the most suitable tool in order to analyze the newspaper articles.

Secondly, I made interviews with the parents of actual students of Hay school in order to understand what are the motivations behind their choice of the school? What are their experiences about their children? I collected their story about the school through interviews and used the stories to draw out a brief collective story. Here, I could reach few parents who accepted my interview request. But it is arguable if the sample would represent the whole.

I also conducted a semi-structured interview with the school administrator and three (3) student parents. I designed the interview questions with respect to the research topic.

And I made a face to face interview with the director of Hayskolen in his office. For the school administrator interview, I prepared seven questions. The director of the school with whom I made an interview was also a parent of a student, so he could give information from both administrator and parent perspective. The interview took place in his office for an hour.

I also set interviewees with 3 parents through my contacts in the Turkish-speaking community. I asked parents seven interview questions. The interviews were semi-structured. That is; I asked questions which were prepared before interview to the interviewees. I asked the same questions to each interviewee and in the same order in order to ensure the consistency. I rarely asked extra questions in relation to the development of the

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interview dialogue. Each interview lasted about fifteen minutes. The interview took place in different locations (e.g. library, office, cafeteria) where parents were available.

In regard to interviews, firstly, I would inform that the interview language was Turkish. The interviews were all recorded by a voice recorder but they were not all transcribed verbatim, and translated into English. I took notes as much as possible during the interviews. The notes included the interesting ideas which were related mostly from my knowledge due to the literature review. Thereafter, I listened to the interview again. After having got the general idea of the interview, I quote parts from the interviews which I find important in order to use in the essay. Lastly I tried to translate the quoted parts into English with a neither a word-for-word, nor a contextualized type of translation but a dynamic type of translation. Each interviewee is named with a number in order to keep anonymity.

Since I drew data from semi-structured interviews, qualitative media texts discourse analysis and institutional documents; my obtained data from these sources can not be objective and generalised.

Finally I would add that, as a Turkey-origin person, I have a very positive opinion/experience about Hizmet-inspired schools. This may create questions about my impartiality. Because of that I especially took into consideration the constructive critics about these schools as a specific section both in literature review and data analysis which will follow:

4. Literature Review

In this thesis, first of all, I would like to understand better the underlying educational philosophy behind Hizmet movement’s success in education.

4.1. Hizmet Educational Philosophy

In order to understand better Hizmet Educational philosophy, firstly we have to answer three important questions: What is Hizmet movement?, Who is Fethullah Gülen? What are Hizmet-inspired schools?

4.1.1. Hizmet Movement

The Hizmet movement or in other words; the Gülen movement is a faith-based socio-cultural movement inspired by the ideas and works of the Turkish scholar and thinker Fethullah Gülen. (Acar, 2013)

The name of the movement is so unfamiliar especially for those who do not know Turkish language: Literally the Turkish word Hizmet means ‘The service’ in English. It is a key notion in all NUR11 communities; that is the ideal of working hard and sacrificing one’s own needs in order to serve other human beings and society, which ultimately means to serve Allah. (Solberg, 2005: 7)

11 The Nur movement is one of the leading Islamic movement in Turkey. There are about a dozen Nur communities who are inspired from Islamic Scholar Bediuzzaman Said Nursi.
Although the movement does not have any official name, it is generally known or called as Gülen movement referring to the name of the spiritual leader. But I prefer to name it with its less popular name, that is; Hizmet movement. Because, first of all, Gülen himself does not want the movement to be called in association with its name and secondly, there is not any official connection between the movement and Gulen other than a spiritual one.

On the other hand, it could be fair to underline that there is not still any consensus even on what kind of group is the Hizmet. Some argue that it is only a group, some argue community, some argue other etc...: The community in concern is called as ‘The Cemaat’,\(^\text{12}\) in Turkey and there is no consensus if it is a denomination, camia\(^\text{13}\), or movement. (Acar,2013)

The general tendency of the academics is to call the group as a movement. For example, Yavuz\(^\text{14}\) describes the movement as an education-oriented movement and emphasizes educational activities as the primary concern of the movement. (Acar,2013)

The Hizmet movement is considered as a global hope for many. But why? Because the Hizmet movement, which is a religiously grounded movement becomes important because of its universal, pluralistic and peaceful nature firstly in the Islamic world and then in the world. So the voluntary, apolitical, religion-inspired and transnational nature of the movement has inspired many books, conferences, seminars, workshops and scholarly articles. (Colak, 2015: 5)

In that sense Hizmet movement is unique in the Islamic world. In order to understand the movement’s characteristics, it is important to understand Gulen’s interpretation of Islam. (Acar,2013)

Then how does Gulen’s interpretation of Islam make a difference? According to Çetin (2010) the Gülen movement believes that we live in a global world, Muslims, non-Muslims, and all different ethnic groups live in the same community, therefore we have to create a shared understanding, a shared experience, and a shared code of ethics.

It is true that the humanity has to find common grounds in order to live peacefully in this globalized world. But how to achieve that? According to Yavuz (2004) the Gülen movement tries to accomplish this through education, and that is why they opened schools in China, in Russia and in Africa. (Acar,2013)

\(^{12}\) ‘The Cemaat’ is a compound word which is a combination of the English word The and the Turkish word ‘cemaat’ which means community.

\(^{13}\) The Turkish word ‘camia’ is referred to a social circle which includes people who have different social classes with differing worldvies but organized together in order to pursue a common goal.

\(^{14}\) M. Hakan Yavuz is a professor of political science at the university of Utah, USA.
4.1.2. Fethullah Gulen: His life in short

Gülen is a Turkish-Muslim preacher, writer and activist who has inspired the foundation of more than 1000 schools in many countries around the world, as well as dormitories, universities, and educational, cultural and interfaith dialogue centers. (Colak, 2015: 5) (see Ebaugh, 2010). In order to understand how Gulen became a global activist in education, I will, firstly narrate Gulen’s biography briefly. Consequently, I will try to shed a light on his ideas about education.

Fethullah Gülen was born in 1941 in a village in Erzurum which is located in the eastern part of Turkey. Gülen received his early religious education from his parents and then attended the nearest state primary school which is a general secular education for three years. After that his father was assigned by the state as preacher and imam15 to another place and there was no possibility for him to continue his formal school education.

During the 1950’s, Gülen completed his religious education and received his traditional license to teach (İjaza) from Sufi masters16 in Erzurum despite the fact that the state ignored and did not support this educational model. (Erdogan, 1996) One of the most important teachers of Gülen was a one of Erzurum Sufi master Muhammed Lutfi Efendi who was so effective in Gülen’s spiritual and religious education.

In this period, Gülen also met with Bediüzzaman Said Nursi’s students, and was introduced to the Risale-i Nur17. This meeting could be considered as a turning point for Gulen’s interpretation of Islam. Because He (Gülen) became aware of Nursi’s writings in 1958, which facilitated his shift from a particular localized Islamic identity and community to a more cosmopolitan and discursive understanding of Islam. (Michel, 2008: 1)

So I would argue that who inspires and influences Fethullah Gülen is Said Nursi, a popular Turkish Islamic reformist scholar of this century, who attempted to prove the compatibility between Islam and modern science and technology. (Solberg, 2005: 5) More, He (Said Nursi) promoted science as a study of the laws of nature, a study of God’s art. (Mohamed, 2007: 554)

Meanwhile, Gülen continued his modern education in science and philosophy. Further, he enhanced his intellect in other disciplines including literature and history. He also became interested in the modern sciences (e.g. physics, chemistry, biology, and astronomy). At the same time he read western philosophers that include Camus, Sartre, and Marcus. (Erdogan, 1996)

Gülen’s service in the field of education started in the Kestane Pazari Qur’anic School in İzmir18. His managerial responsibility included the mosque, the student study and boarding

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15 The Turkish word ‘imam’ refers to an employee who is responsible to guide the prayer in the mosque.

16 A sufi master is a sheikh (spiritual leader) of Sufism (spiritual life of Islam) who is authorized to teach, initiate and guide aspiring dervishes (disciples) in the Islamic faith.

17 The collection of books that are in one respect a complete and contemporary Islamic school of thought, contributed a lot to Gülen’s intellectual and spiritual development. (Unal & Williams, 2000)

18 A city which is located in the west part of Turkey near Aegean sea and known as most secular and westernized city in Turkey.
hall, and preaching in the regional mosques. According to Cetin (2010) during his Kestane Pazarı years in İzmir, Gülen’s perspective on education and service to the community solidified.

With Gülen’s encouragement, ordinary people started to mobilize collective efforts, especially in the field of education. But how did Gulen encourage? According to Acar (2013) Gülen motivates his audiences with Islamic values that are embedded in universal values.

And in 1978, the first university preparation center in Manisa¹⁹ had been established. This was the first step which was followed by the opening of schools around the world eventually.

In 1999, Gulen was forced to emigrate to United States of America due to persistent mediatic linch coordinated by the secularist military forces of the time.

Since then, he has been living in US and continue to express his ideas through the website www.herkul.org

4.1.3 Gulen’s ideas about education

According to Gülen, ‘the main duty and purpose of human life is to seek understanding. The effort of doing so is known as education.’ (Acar,2013) And Gülen thinks that education process is not limited to a place. In other words, ‘Education begins at home and the school is merely an extension of the home.’ (Mohamed,2007:559)

But each education system have its own problems. So, like some other contemporary Islamic scholars, Gülen criticizes todays educational systems. (Akdag, 2015:56) This can be seen in Gülen’s lectures, written works, and, interviews which reveal that he studied and criticized deeply both western and eastern schools.

According to Gülen, education should be embedded in values and the teachers must live these values. The reform process must start with the person itself, and who wants to reform the world, must reform himself first. (Akdag, 2015:62) Besides that, what makes the Gülen model unique is: the ‘inside education’ which causes the social and global change. (Akdag, 2015:62) Because a society, he states, could be changed only by the individuals who belong to it.

Since he considered education so important, Gülen’s doctrine is: ‘Build new schools instead of new mosques.’ (Akdag, 2015:55) That is why he (Gülen) called on people to build schools instead of mosques and to take active roles in society, merging activism with piety, which Özdalga²⁰ (referring to Weber) defined as ‘worldly ascetism’. (Colak,2015: 5). I think that doesn’t mean Gulen does not want the building of mosques. He just emphasized the need for and importance of new schools and that there are enough number of mosques at that time.

Gülen suggests this idea because he regards both morality and identity as founded in religion. (Solberg,2005: 8) and he relies on Qur’an and hadith which reveal and affirm learning as a religious duty and lift it on the same level such as prayers and charity, while he built his

¹⁹ A city which is located in the west part of Turkey and near to Izmir.

²⁰ Elisabeth Özdalga is a Swedish sociologist who has been living in Turkey since 1970’s.
educational philosophy. (Akdag, 2015:59) Therefore, according to Gülen, to educate and to teach are ‘holy’ activities and the educators and teachers are the ‘saints’. (Akdag, 2015:58)

At the other side Gülen attaches a special meaning to the human agency in bridging of theory and practice to educate an ideal youth. According to his opinion, Islam is a constitution of morality and identity. Hence moral consciousness can be raised only by participating in action. (Akdag, 2015:57)

He continually stressed that peace, social justice and consideration for different cultures and religions can be reached only by educated people. (Akdag, 2015:58)

4.1.4. Different opinions about Gulen’s ideas

There are also critics from academic world about Gulen’s ideas about education. For example, Akdag (2015: 63) argues that Gulen’s system in every conceivable manner is taken up in the west, until the problem of the individual is solved. Because Gulen’s model concentrates on the common aspect of education. Also Yavuz (Akdag, 2015:63) states that Gulen’s education system is not necessarily promoting the freedom of will and individualism, but rather encouraging a collective consciousness.

On the other hand, a parent from a Hizmet-inspired school from Belgium opposes this critic. Colak (2015:13) states: ‘Hizmet-inspired (or Gulen-inspired) schools are criticized on the grounds that they do not promote free will and individualism, but a Moroccan mother argues the opposite: ‘In public schools no attention is paid to the individuality and differences of students. The education is structured, strict and competitive. Here, it is more individual oriented. They adapt it according to the personal differences.’

4.1.5. Hizmet-inspired Schools

As a matter of fact, schools founded by Gülen-inspired volunteers, often referred to as ‘Gülen schools’, were named regardless of Gülen’s personal wishes (Michel,2003) , as there seems to be no organic link between Gülen and the schools other than a spiritual one. (See Mohamed, 2007: 561). Because of that I name these schools as Hizmet-inspired schools instead of Gulen-inspired schools throughout the essay.

The two things which are common for all these schools is that the initiative is taken by those who are inspired by Gülen and that they have Turkish origins. (Colak, 2015: 9)

Because of their academic success but also their ability to operate in diverse cultures, these schools have attracted both academic and media attention. ….Le Monde offers these schools as good examples compared to Europe’s low performing minorities. (Acar,2013). The example of private Hay school which is selected as the best school to lift the students academically in Denmark also confirms the above suggestion of Le monde.

So it is not astonishing that , The Gülen (Hizmet-inspired) schools pride themselves in maintaining a high academic standard, having highly qualified educators, providing individual attention, and keeping close communication with parents. (Mohamed,2007:566)

More, Gülen promoted moral values in a secular school environment, which would work within the state’s framework of unified education. (Mohamed, 2007:570) They (The Gülen
schools-Hizmet-inspired) stress the building of character and cultivating universal moral values, and at the same time, they provide an excellent education in order to prepare learners to become useful citizens of the society. (Mohamed,2007:553)

4.1.6. Are Hizmet-inspired schools Islamic?

There is a general tendency in some countries to perceive Hizmet-inspired schools as Islamic schools. This misperception does not rely on facts but only on ignorance or prejudices. According to Acar (2003:ADF) although Islam was seen as the driving force to open Gülen-inspired schools (GIS-Hizmet-inspired schools), it must be emphasized that the Hizmet-inspired schools around the world are operated as secular schools that do not offer religious instruction as part of their curriculum.

That is: despite the fact that, religion is the inspirational source in the emergence of the movement, Islamic religion is not being thought in Guelens (Hizmet-inspired) schools if it is not part of the national curriculum. The ethos promoted in the schools is universal and encourages hard work, tolerance, compassion and honesty. (Colak,2015: 5-6)

Also Michel states: (2008:4) These are not ‘Islamic schools’ in that even though their inspiration is found in enlightened Islamic ideals, both the teaching and administrative staff and the student body are made up of the followers of the other religions as well as Muslims.

So, Islam may be the driving influence behind Hizmet-inspired schools approach to education and to life but they could not surely be classified as Islamic schools. Hence, as Fuller states, these educational institutions are the opposite of fundamentalist schools. (Akdag, 2015:64)

According to Solberg (2005:7) Rather than teaching religion, the Gülen (Hizmet-inspired) schools stress the transmitting of ethical and moral values (Ahlak). In that sense I can say that it (the Hizmet-inspired school) offers Muslim learners an opportunity to pursue a modern education with a moral orientation. (Mohamed,2007:561)

On the other hand, moral values are not taught as special subjects such as ‘right living’ or ‘guidance’. Morality has to shape the vision of and ethos of the school and has to be integrated into classroom lessons; moreover, it has to be lived and practiced by the teachers. (Mohamed,2007: 553) According to Akdag.(2015:57) the teachers play a big role. They are models for the pupils with their behaviour without making available a formal religious instruction in the classroom.

And the specific experience of the Gülen schools shows that there are other ways in which religion can be incorporated into state-legitimated education systems or institutions (Solberg, 2005:3). Therefore rather than looking at whether and how religion is taught in the Gülen schools as an isolated subject, we may look at how religious ethos is incorporated into the education in other ways. (Solberg,2005: 8)

4.1.7. Why hizmet-inspired schools are popular?

The Gülen schools have a reputation for good results, but this is not the only reason why parents send their children to these schools. They are also impressed by its moral ethos. (Mohamed,2007:567). For example in his study Colak (2015:13) found out that more than
half of the parents showed concern regarding the moral cultivation of their children. These parents had expectations from the school in that sense. These schools are popular because in the Hizmet school, the Muslim child maintains an Islamic identity in a secular environment. (Mohamed, 2007:561)

In addition to that since parents feel that their cultural background is respected by the school management, they feel at ease about discussing certain issues with the school directors and teachers. (Colak, 2015: 9). More, their (parents) motivations are strongly related with how they imagine the school as a space. ..The spatial identification of parents with the school is influenced to a certain extent by how they relate to the movement and its ideals. (Colak,2015: 1)

Besides that Muslim parents wanted a safe educational haven for their children to overcome the resultant backlash of hatred and bigotry. (Acar,2013) Where this is not possible in the Islamic private schools, where a Muslim laager mentality is nurtured, making it difficult for them to adopt to a secular culture and pluralistic context. (Mohamed,2007:561)

4.1.8. Why hizmet-inspired schools are academically succesful?

According to Cetin, the successes of these Hizmet-inspired schools come from a new appreciation for the enterprise of education and profession of teaching, elevating both to noble status (see Cetin,2007). Another important factor for the success is cooperation among educators, parents and sponsors which can be interpreted as social dimension. (see Hunt & Aslandogan,2007)

4.1.9. Different opinions about Hizmet-inspired schools

There are also critics regarding Hizmet-inspired schools. Mohamed, (2007:564) criticized the schools for being elitist academically: ‘The school is not aimed at the struggling child, but a child with average or above average intelligence. In this sense the school may be regarded as elitist, but it is only academically elitist; for the norm is to be selective with admission on academic grounds.’

Another critic for the schools especially in Europe is that they become a place for discriminated people in contradiction to the target of the schools. Colak (2015:10) gives the example from Belgium: ‘The (Hizmet-inspired) school management wants to address the wider Belgian community, however, the school has rather become a place for discriminated people with mainly Turkish and Moroccan ethnic origins.’

4.2. Conclusion

After having made literature review about Hizmet educational philosophy, I would like to explain my conclusions in few points:

Firstly, The education is considered a lofty duty for human beings within Hizmet educational philosophy. Therefore, according to Hizmet to educate and to teach are ‘holy’ activities and the educators and teachers are the ‘saints’. (See Akdag,2015:58). In this sense school is consideres as a sanctuary. Gulen himself wrote21 ‘School is where we are taught everything

21 Kurt, M, Erkan, A Fethullah Gülen reader:So that others may live, (edited by Erkan M. Kurt) New York, Blue Dome Press.2013: pg.117
about life and what lies beyond it.’ I think these words explain why Gulen encourages his followers to build new schools instead of new mosques. (See Akdag, 2015:55)

Secondly, according to Hizmet educational philosophy, there should be a synthesis of the heart and mind, faith and reason, or science and religion in education. I think that is why Gulen criticized deeply both western and eastern schools which generally separated the heart and mind in education and scientific thinking. According to Gülen: the happiness of a nation can only be sustained if new generations are raised up in the integrity of both heart and mind (Kurt, 2013:125). In other words Hizmet movement foresees education as embedded in values and the teachers must live these values (See Akdag, 2015:62).

Thirdly, Hizmet Educational philosophy aims to ensure the public support and participation in education. Gulen assumes that the solution to the problems of the society is an overall improvement in education. In that sense the formation of educator-parent-sponsor triangle is essential.

Lastly, it is necessary to emphasize that there has not been one particular ideology promoted within the Hizmet educational philosophy. Rather a more ethical and moral pedagogical approach has been applied, in which educators act as role models for students to follow. (see Akdag, 2015). Also Michel\(^{22}\) states that characteristic of Hizmet educational philosophy: ‘Members of the Gulen community hope to change the society through a holistic pattern of education that draws from and integrates disparate strands of previous pedagogical systems’. In short it is not possible to speak of a precise Hizmet pedagogy used in all schools opened by those who are inspired by the ideas of Gulen.

Until now, I tried to understand Hizmet Educational philosophy through literature review. This section will be followed by a discourse analysis of media texts about CEPOS report and findings from semi-structured interviews. Throughout these sections I want to uncover how Danish media perceives Hay School’s success and I also intend to reveal the various aspects of Hizmet educational philosophy which is reflected in the example of Hay School.

5. Data Analysis

Since ‘research is the systematic method used to collect data’\(^{23}\). In my thesis, I collected data by semi-structured interviews with a school administrator, 3 student parents and also institutional reports. It was Johnson’s advice which confirms that few data collection methods are sufficient\(^{24}\): ‘I would encourage you to select only two to four types of data to collect to keep your research focused. Nothing is more confusing than trying to read research that seems to go off in all sorts of directions.’

\(^{22}\)Michel, T., ‘Peaceful movements in the Muslim world’ in Religious pluralism, globalization and world politics (Edited by Thomas Banchoff), Oxford University, Newyork: 2008: pg.240


5.1 A discourse analysis of media news about CEPOS report

Firstly, let me clarify that discourse is a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world). Then it should not be wrong to call Discourse Analysis as a useful method which is concerned with the production of meaning through talk and so texts. The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) engages in concrete, linguistic textual analysis of language use in social interaction. That is why I chose to use CDA which seem to me as to have a linguistic focus and so the most suitable tool in order to analyze the news articles about CEPOS report.

By the help of CDA, I examined 2 news articles which would be illuminating to have an idea about how this report was perceived among Danish public opinion. Those news articles are from Danish TV2 website and Danish online newsportal The Copenhagen Post (CPH).

The Danish TV2 ‘s article titled as ‘Top 10: These schools are best and worst to improve pupils’ is a media discourse. TV2, under the photo of veiled students wrote ‘Students from the Turkish private school is best to raise their skills.’. Here TV2 described the ‘Hay school’ as a Turkish private school which is not absolutely true. In fact the TV2’s article has a big mistake in the sense that Hay school is nothing more than a state-financed Danish private school.

Here, we can easily understand that although Hay school is a Danish school, the perception of the school in some Danish public opinion is as a Turkish private school. This misperception is due to the fact that the Hay school is run by Turkey-origin Danish citizens. Moreover, the TV2, throughout the article also mentioned that the successful private schools students are mainly from middle eastern and Muslim background.

The Danish The Copenhagen Post’s article titled as ‘top schools improving student performance’ is also a media discourse. Here, ‘The Copenhagen Post’ newsportal seem to use more inclusive discourse. It did not name Hay school as a Turkish private school like TV2. It described Hay school as a Danish private school which is true.

But The Copenhagen Post used a photo of unveiled students in the article which does not reflect the overall reality. Because in Hayskolen there are students both veiled and unveiled.


and they study together with respect and tolerance. Moreover, The Copenhagen Post did not make any reference to the background of the students in those successful private schools whereas TV2 did.

To sum up, I can conclude that both of the articles highlighted the CEPOS report which indicated that private schools are more successful than public schools. But their type of discourse throughout the articles seemed to me different. The TV2 which publishes in Danish language used a language which underlined the differences while The Copenhagen Post which publish in English did not give any attention to those differences. This may also be due to the different audience they are targeting.

5.2. Findings from interviews

Education is one of the most effective tools by which we, as humanity, have to bring up new generations with lofty and noble ideals. So the importance of an educational philosophy, which is followed during educational practices is so clear.

Having said that we have to admit that no philosophy can be articulated without first taking human beings into consideration. On the other hand every human being is similar to a small universe which means that every human being is in all his aspects complex like the universe. What I want to say is that every human being is so complex and very difficult to understand.

Therefore, although the states of the world set general rules and regulations for education systems to promote standardization, the application of different types of educational philosophies is allowed since the humanity can not invent an educational philosophy on which every body agree. And perhaps this will never be possible due to the complexity of each human nature.

The aim of my study is to observe the effect of Hizmet educational philosophy in Hay school. Accordingly the study tried to answer the research question: what is the role of the Hizmet Educational philosophy on the success and popularity of Hayskolen. I assume Hay school as succesful because an independent Danish think tank called CEPOS, in its report about Danish education system in 2015, chose Hayskolen as the most promising school for the students in Denmark. More two Danish minister stated that the school manages to raise pupils who are well-integrated to the society and the school contributes a lot to the society. On the other hand, I assume that Hayskolen is popular because in my interview with the principal of the school and I learned that there is a long queue of Turkey-origin students who applied for the school and waiting to be admitted. In addition to that I was well aware of the popularity of Hay school due to my regular contacts with Turkey-origin families in my ambient.

After having made a literature review, in order to answer my research question, I made interviews with the school principal and some student parents to collect qualitative data. In this part of the thesis, I want to present the data collected through semi-structured interviews.

29 See Appendix A
Firstly, I have made an interview with the principal of the school, who has been working in the education sector for more than 21 years and has been the principal of the school for 16 years. He said that the school was an education project which has been started by 5 Turkey-origin parents who has been inspired by Hizmet movement and Fethullah Gulen. He continued; ‘But the inspiration was not the only factor. There has been a natural demand for education of children among Turkey-origin people at that time and Hizmet movement played an important role here to encourage and lead them for such a project.’

On the other hand, the principal underlined the fact that even if Hayskolen is known as a private school, in fact it is not private in universal sense. That is: it is a state-financed private school like all the other private schools in the Danish education system. Regarding the curriculum and book systems, he added: ‘it is not possible to talk about a special curriculum of a Hizmet-inspired school in Hay school or a special books system. We are following the curriculum from the Danish Education Ministry. We are following the regulations from the private school law in Denmark.’ He also emphasized that they, as the school board, do not want to be different from the mainstream education methods in Denmark. Because, given the information that Hay school has students from 7 different ethnic background and 25 different districts in Copenhagen, the principal said that they are in constant communication with the Danish education system. That is: they admit everyyear around 50-60 students and cirka 50-60 students graduate from the school. Therefore, they do not want to be different and they do not want their students to have adaptation problems with the main stream education system in the country.

Thirdly, the Hizmet-inspired schools are not Islamic schools although they are generally misperceived as Islamic schools. The principal gave the information that also in Hay school there is not any extra religion education other than foreseen by the Danish education system. This is also overtly mentioned in the web site of the school. The principal explained that: ‘Because in this society if you open a private school as a foreign-origin entrepreneur, you are automatically considered to have a religious purpose which is not in our case.’

Fourthly, the school is a safe haven for the students and also the teachers played an important role as a role model for these students. The principal reminded that they have students from 25 different districts in Copenhagen which are generally considered as ghettos like Íshoj, Hvidovre, Taastrup. And he explained the underlying reason behind this: ‘When these children, from those districts leave their ghetto enviroment, they become more eager to learn from Hay school. Because in their local schools or ghetto enviroment where criminal gangs, radical religious groups prevail these children do not have a real chance to become successful in these schools. I think this is the main reason why so many different family from different districts choose our school although the school is far from their homes. I do not say that there is no risk for children living in the ghettos since they come here to study. I only argue that the risk here is very low with respect to the other schools in ghettos.’

Fifthly, the principal said that their school accepted the universal values such as democracy, tolerance, mutual respect etc.as mentioned in the regulations of the school during the foundation of this school project. Because they have foreseen that they would have students
from different cultures, ethnicities, religions etc… And they thought that these common universal values would be base to live and study together, side by side. And he continued ‘We constantly pursue activities in order to establish those values in the school and our teachers are effective in that sense as role models.

Lastly, the principal believes that the parents prefer Hay school, because they, like all the other parents, want a bright future for their children economically, culturally and socially. They want their children to learn positive science like maths, physics, biology etc. good while also keeping their identity, values, mother-tongue language. Besides that they want that their children grow and study in a safe and free environment where they do not feel they are different, lacking or stranger.

To sum up, the school principal mentioned that the founders of Hay school are inspired from Hizmet movement and Fethullah Gulen. Secondly, Hay School is considered as a private school in Denmark education system. It can not be considered a private school in universal sense because it is mainly financed by the Danish state. Thirdly, Hay school is not an Islamic school in contrary to the general misperception in the Danish society. Fourthly, the school provides a safe and peaceful enviroment to the students, and this leads to success of those students coming from ghetto districts. Fourthly, the teachers played an important role in the education of the students as role models. Fifthly, the school promotes universal values such as democracy, tolerance, mutual respect. Lastly, the principal believes that Hay school is popular because the student parents want a better future for their children.

On the other hand in my interviews with the parents, I found that there are four important themes which explain their motivation for choosing the school.

The first motivation is the strong cooperation between the school staff and the parents. The parents underline happily the disponibility of the teachers and administrators. The parents also mention that they are being treated seriously by the school staff when they argue about an issue either about the school or the student.

A student parent who send two of his children to Hay school said that he likes the teachers of the school very much because they are good role models for his children. He also added: ‘My dialogue with the teachers is very good, I think they take care of my children better if we compare with other schools. And I believe that this dedication of teachers leads to success.’

Another parent said that ‘In Hay school you can have also an informal way of communication besides formal communication with the school staff but in public schools you are generally limited to have a formal communication with the school personnel.’ And he added: ‘I sent my daughter to a public school near my home for three years before Hay school, so I can compare.’ And he also offered the idea: ‘Another advantage of Hay school is that some of the teachers who are working now there were former students of the school and they know the school very well.’

Also the school principal confirms this efficient and fast communication between the school staff and the parents. He said: ‘A parent can reach just either by a telephone call or by visiting the school, he/she can easily meet the head of decision-making mechanism. This is also result
of sending children to a private school. Of course, this is an advantage for the parents. Besides that we see this efficient communication and cooperation with the parents as an indispensable and vital part of our education system. When we have a problem with a student, we always decide what to do with the parent from the beginning, and act with the parent until the end of the rehabilitation process.’

The second motivation for the parents is the morality given to the students by the school. They especially emphasize the culture of respect to the parents and the elderly which is given by the school. A student parent admitted that the morality which was given to the students in the school is another motivation for him to send his daughter to Hay school. He argued that Hayskolen teaches a culture of respect to the elderly which is rare in Danish society and is not taught in any other school. He also gave an example to explain his argument: ‘For example, in any other school the students call their teachers with their names but here, in Hay school the students call their teachers such as ‘my teacher, my sir.’ Another student parent said that his nephews who have graduated from Hay school are always respectful and good to him and also to the others. And he believes that they gain this culture of respect from the school and their family, and that is also another motivation why he chose Hay school.

The third motivation for the parents is academic success of the school. They were informed before making their choice that the school has always been successful to motivate the students to strive for higher academic successes which is generally lacking among immigrant-origin students.

A student parent said that he was aware of the academic success of the school before he chose to send his daughter to the school. He explained this in these words: ‘I know many students of Hay school who already study and who have studied there and who have graduated from the school before. From these observations I was convinced that the school is successful and I decided to send my child there.’ Another student parent also offered the same idea: ‘I know my nephews who have studied in Hay school. They graduated from Hay school and one of them now is going to finish a university under the minister of Health soon. He became the first Turkish-origin student who manage to study there. My nephews success stories, of course influenced me in my preference of Hay school’

The fourth motivation is that they perceive Hayskolen as a safe school environment. Generally the immigrant-origin families live in outer districts of the Copenhagen city. These districts like Ishøj, Taastrup, Khidovre are sometimes also named as ghettos in the media news. In these ghettos, the students, even if they are ambitious, they can not concentrate on their studies due to the unrest created in the school atmosphere by criminal gangs, radical groups or any other challenges. But in Hayskolen, due to the educational principles, preliminary admission test, discipline criterion and peaceful school atmosphere the student get the chance of studying in a peaceful and safe school environment. A parent who send three of his children to the school said that he chose Hay school because of its academic success and the discipline in the school.’
In consideration to the question how they hear about and choose Hayskolen, the parents generally answer that they learn and hear about the success of Hay school through their relatives or friends.

In regard to the critics about the school, one parent complained about the narrow physical space of the school. He said that ‘if the school were situated in a larger area, it could be better.’ Moreover he added that ‘there are very few Danish ethnic students in the school, and this is a disadvantage. But I think that this is not the fault of the school. This is more because of the not so good image of Turks and Muslims in the society.’ The other parents were very satisfied with the Hay schools education and did not have anything to criticize about the school.

In short, the parents motivations to choose Hay school can be summarized in 4 points: Firstly, the parents are satisfied with fast, strong and informal communication with the school personnel. Secondly, the morality given by the school is also an important factor. Especially, the culture of respect to the parents and to the elderly is specified. Thirdly, Hay school’s academic success is appreciated. Finally, the parents perceive the school as a safe environment for their children. All the parents I interviewed confirmed that they chose Hay school for their children due to the afore-mentioned motivations.

The parents generally do not prefer to criticize the school. The only serious critic was due to the limited school space. On the other hand, the lack of Danish-ethnic student in the school is seen as a disadvantage in relation to the integration of the students to the society. But this is not seen as a specific problem of the school but the society as a whole as argued in the discourse analysis of media news about CEPOS report.

6. Discussions and conclusion

This study was designed to understand the role of Hizmet educational philosophy in the success and popularity of Hayskolen in Denmark. I collected data through interviews and institutional documents besides literature review. After the data analysis, four important themes come into surface:

First of all, I want to argue that it is possible to see some aspects of Hizmet educational philosophy in Hayskolen. In other words the Hizmet educational philosophy reflected itself in some themes:

Firstly, the project of Hay school has been started by 5 parents who has been inspired by Hizmet movement and Fethullah Gulen. These parents who took the initiative are all Turkish-origin. In this sense it can be said that Hayskolen is a hizmet-inspired school due to the finding Colak (2015:9) argued: ‘The two things which are common for all these schools is that the initiative is taken by those who are inspired by Gülen and that they have Turkish origins.’
Secondly, Hay school can also be considered as a Hizmet-inspired school according to the fact that the school does not follow a special curriculum but only the curriculum from the Danish Education Ministry. This coincides with the argument that there has not been one particular ideology promoted in hizmet-inspired schools. Rather a more ethical and moral pedagogical approach has been applied, in which educators act as role models for students to follow. Also Michel\(^{30}\) states that characteristic of Hizmet educational philosophy: ‘And members of the Gulen community hope to change the society through a holistic pattern of education that draws from and integrates disparate strands of previous pedagogical systems.’

Thirdly, Hay school is similar to many other Hizmet-inspired schools in the sense that there is not any religion education or any extra religion education other than foreseen by the curriculum of the country. Hay school only gives a religion education which is determined by the curriculum of Danish ministry of education. That characteristics resembles a Hizmet-inspired school as Colak states (2005:5-6): ‘Despite the fact that, religion is the inspirational source in the emergence of the movement, Islamic religion is not being thought in Gülens schools if it is not part of the national curriculum.

Fourthly, Hay school is perceived as a safe haven for their children by parents like many other Hizmet-inspired school. The principal of Hay school also mentioned this point reminding that they have students from 25 different districts of Copenhagen which are generally considered as ghettos like Ishøj, Hvidovre and Taastrup. He said that ‘the parents choose our school although it is far from their homes because they think that their children are safe from the danger of criminal gangs and radical groups in that school. This characteristics of a Hizmet-inspired school also mentioned by Acar (2013) and Mohamed (2007:561) as follows: ‘Besides that Muslim parents wanted a safe educational haven for their children to overcome the resultant backlash of hatred and bigotry. Where this is not possible in the Islamic private schools, where a Muslim laager mentality is nurtured, making it difficult for them to adopt to a secular culture and pluralistic context.’

Fifthly, Hay school promote the universal values such as honesty, tolerance, mutual respect etc. which is mentioned also in the regulations of the school. This is true also for many other Hizmet-inspired schools as Mohamed (2007:553) states: ‘They (The Gülen schools-Hizmet-inspired) stress the building of character and cultivating universal moral values, and at the same time, they provide an excellent education in order to prepare learners to become useful citizens of the society.’

Lastly, Hay school, which is in education sector in Denmark for more than 25 years cannot still attract Danish-ethnic students although it aims to reach all and its academic success is proved. This point is also stated by a parent as: ‘There are very few Danish-ethnic students in the school, and this is a disadvantage. But I think that this is not the fault of the school. This is more because of the not so good image of Turks and Muslims in the society’. And this gives credit to the critic for the Hizmet-inspired schools especially in Europe that they become a

\(^{30}\)Michel, T., ‘Peaceful movements in the Muslim world’ in Religious pluralism, globalization and world politics (Edited by Thomas Banchoff), Oxford University, Newyork: 2008: pg.240
place for discriminated people in contradiction to the target of the schools. Also Colak (2015:10) reached the same conclusion in Belgium: ‘The (Hizmet-inspired) school management wants to address the wider Belgian community, however, the school has rather become a place for discriminated people with mainly Turkish and Moroccan ethnic origins.

To sum up, I would say that Hayskolen, as a Hizmet-inspired school provides a safe school enviroment to the pupils so that they become academically successful and stay away from criminal gangs and violent radical groups. In that sense Hay school can provide a solution to the fears of Turkey-origin families in Denmark. The Hizmet-educational philosophy is an important factor to ensure this characteristics of Hay school.

Moreover, Although Hayskolen can not still attract Danish-ethnic students, this is mainly because of a bigger problem in the society which has misperceptions and false information about private schools run by immigrant-origin people. This is also demonstrated by discourse analysis of two media articles from Danish media.

7. References


Appendix 8.1: Cepos analysis report

THE PRIVATE BASIC SCHOOLS BEST TO LIFT STUDENTS ACADEMICALLY
(August 11, 2015)\(^{31}\)

A CEPOS analysis of teaching effect in all the country's primary schools

The private basic schools create better outcomes for students than public schools, which is better than the schools. According to a new analysis from the think tank CEPOS that starting from 9th grade departure characters have calculated how well individual schools are to lift students academically.

\(^{31}\)Retrieved 2016/03/15 from the website: http://www.cepos.dk/artikler/de-frie-grundskoler-bedst-til-at-loefte-eleverne-fagligt
The analysis is based on figures from the Ministry of Education, via a "socio-economic reference" takes into account students' social and economic background. This makes it possible to draw a picture of whether the individual school students have performed departure samples better or worse than students nationwide with the same background.

The school, which promises the students the most is the **private Hay school in Copenhagen**, while Ruds Vedby School in Sorø municipality and Selsmose School in Hoje Taastrup has the weakest result among public schools.

The analysis shows that there are clear differences between the best and worst elementary school, says research director Henrik Christoffersen, CEPOS. Some schools rises from one year to another, including because there are different teachers leading students up to examination. But conversely, there is not an insignificant number of schools that were below the national average in 2010 and who are still there in 2014. Then Education Minister Christine Antorini tried in 2012 to address the problem of weak schools, but abandoned after pressure from schools and municipalities. And that means that the problem still exists, says Henrik Christoffersen.

The analysis includes data from all the country's schools, which can be found on www.undervisningseffekt.dk.

The analysis also these conclusions:

- There is no statistical correlation between municipal expenses per student and student performance-boost

  Municipalities average cost per. student in primary school is 61,782 kr. Langeland municipality uses 93,805 kr. per. student, while Næstved municipality uses 46,770 kr. - less than half.

  If all schools used the same cost per. student as the municipality that uses the least money, society would need 10 billion. crowns less for elementary school. The amount is even grown since 2010, although spending per. student in real terms is reduced a bit.

  Municipalities have actually increased the efficiency by 3.5 percent in the period from 2010 to 2014. But the figures show that there are still good opportunities to save on school spending without the need to go beyond teaching, says Henrik Christoffersen.

**Appendix 8.2. : School administrator interview questions**

**Preliminary information**

1) Title and certification. Number of years the person has worked in education

2) Number of years the person has been employed in current position.

**Interview questions**

1) Hayskolen is known as Hizmet-inspired school among Turkey-origin community in Denmark. Would you agree with that idea? If no, why is that perception?
2) If yes, how does the curriculum of a Hizmet-inspired school differed from that offered in public schools? Please give specific examples. Is there any Hizmet educational philosophy? If yes, where did you learn this?

3) Would you describe the school’s educational curriculum? Do you think it is effective?
   
   B) Is there a religion education in this school?

4) Could you describe the school’s role in the community?

5) Could you talk about the activities that include parents and community members?

6) Could you share your opinion with me why Hayskolen has been chosen best school by CEPOS and why the school is popular among Turkey-origin people?

7) Would you like to add something else?

6) Could you share your opinion with me why hayskolen has been chosen successful for the second time and is popular among Turkey-origin people?

7) Would you like to add something else?

Appendix 8.3.: Parents interview questions

Preliminary information

Gender, age?

Number of children, years of attendance

Interview questions

1) What do you think about your child’s school?

2) What is the main motivation for your choice? A) Morality given, b) academic success, c) because the school is Hizmet-inspired d) other…. (specify if any other…)

3) How did you choose? a) friends advice b) media advertisement c) other…

4) What kind of relationship do you have with school? Do you think it is effective?

5) Are you familiar with the overall educational philosophy of your child’s school?

6) What could be better with your child’s school?

7) What is your idea about the reputation of Hay School?

8) Would you like to add something else?
Appendix 8.4.: Interview transcripts (Quotations)

In this section, I present the interview transcripts of the quotations from interviews which I used in my essay (Quotations in the section 5.2. Findings from interviews).

In regard to interviews, Firstly to mention is that the interview language was Turkish. The interviews were all recorded by a voice recorder but they were not all transcribed verbatim, and translated into English. I took notes as much as possible during the interviews. The notes included the interesting ideas which were related mostly from my knowledge due to the literature review.

Thereafter, I listened the interviews again. After having got the general idea of each interview, I quote parts from the interviews which I find important in order to use in the essay. Lastly I tried to translate the quoted parts into English with neither a word-for-word, nor a contextualized type of translation but a dynamic type of translation. Each interviewee is named with a number in order to keep anonymity.

In the paper the red colored part is the quotation in English. The blue colored part denotes the exact place of the quote in the folder of the voice recorder. The orange colored is the Turkish transcript.

5.2. Findings from interviews

Firstly, I have made an interview with the principal of the school, who has been working in the education sector for more than 21 years and has been the principal of the school for 16 years. He said that the school was an education project which has been started by 5 Turkey-origin parents who has been inspired by Hizmet movement and Fethullah Gulen. He continued; ‘But the inspiration was not the only factor. There has been a natural demand for education of children among Turkey-origin people at that time and Hizmet movement played an important role here to encourage and lead them for such a project.’

Interviewee 3, Folder C(1), 01:30-01:51 Tabii pek çok etken var, bir tabii fütri bir ihtiyaç söz konusu burada yaşayan insanların eğitim alanında, efendim, artık bir cesaretlendirme, ön ayak olma gibi burada hizmetin bir rolü olduğu söylenebilir.

On the other hand, the principal underlined the fact that even if Hayskolen is known as a private school, in fact it is not private in universal sense. That is: it is a state-financed private school like all the other private schools in the Danish education system. Regarding the curriculum and book systems, he added: ‘it is not possible to talk about a special curriculum of a Hizmet-inspired school in Hay school or a special books system. We are following the curriculum from the Danish Education Ministry. We are following the regulations from the private school law in Denmark.’

Interviewee 3, Folder C(1), 4:10-

He also emphasized that they, as the school board, do not want to be different from the mainstream education methods in Denmark. Because, given the information that Hay school has students from 7 different ethnic background and 25 different districts in Copenhagen, the principal said that they are in constant communication with the Danish education system. That is: they admit every year around 50-60 students and circa 50-60 students graduate from the school. Therefore, they do not want to be different and they do not want their students to have adaptation problems with the main stream education system in the country.

Thirdly, the Hizmet-inspired schools are not Islamic schools although they are generally misperceived as Islamic schools. The principal gave the information that also in Hay school there is not any extra religion education other than foreseen by the Danish education system. This is also overtly mentioned in the web site of the school. The principal explained that: ‘Because in this society if you open a private school as a foreign-origin entrepreneur, you are automatically considered to have a religious purpose which is not in our case.’

Fourthly, the school is a safe haven for the students and also the teachers played an important role as a role model for these students. The principal reminded that they have students from 25 different districts in Copenhagen which are generally considered as ghettos like Ishoj, Hvidovre, Taastrup. And he explained the underlying reason behind this: ‘When these children, from those districts leave their ghetto enviroment, they become more eager to learn from Hay school. Because in their local schools or ghetto enviroment where criminal gangs, radical religious groups prevail these children do not have a real chance to become successful in these schools. I think this is the main reason why so many different family from different districts choose our school although the school is far from their homes. I do not say that there is no risk for children living in the ghettos since they come here to study. I only argue that the risk here is very low with respect to the other schools in ghettos.’
yerde, akraba çevresinde, şurada burada radikalleşebilir, fakat bu risk biz de dışarıya göre çok çok düşük.

Fifthly, the principal said that their school accepted the universal values such as democracy, tolerance, mutual respect etc. as mentioned in the regulations of the school during the foundation of this school project. Because they have foreseen that they would have students from different cultures, ethnicities, religions etc... And they thought that these common universal values would be base to live and study together, side by side. And he continued ‘We constantly pursue activities in order to establish those values in the school and our teachers are effective in that sense as role models’. Interviewee 3, Folder C(1), 15:32-15:55 Bunu güçlendirmek için biz hem derslerde, hem okul içi aktivitelerde bunları öne çıkaran projeler, aktiviteler ile destekliyoruz. Interviewee 3, Folder C (1), 16:16- 16:26 Burada İşte öğretmenler arasındaki bu düşünce, anlayış öğrencilere de yansııyor.

Lastly, the principal believes that the parents prefer Hay school, because they, like all the other parents, want a good future for their children economically, culturally, socially. They want their children to learn positive science like maths, physics, biology etc. good while also keeping their identity, values, mother-tongue language. Besides that they want that their children grow and study in a safe and free environment where they do not feel they are different, lacking or stranger.

To sum up, the school principal mentioned that the founders of Hay school are inspired from Hizmet movement and Fethullah Gulen. Secondly, Hay School is considered as a private school in Denmark education system. It can not be considered a private school in universal sense because it is mainly financed by the Danish state. Thirdly, Hay school is not an Islamic school in contrary to the general misperception in the Danish society. Fourthly, the school provides a safe and peaceful environment to the students, and this leads to success of those students coming from ghetto districts. Fourthly, the teachers played an important role in the education of the students as role models. Fifthly, the school promotes universal values such as democracy, tolerance, mutual respect. Lastly, the principal believes that Hay school is popular because the student parents want a better future for their children.

On the other hand in my interviews with the parents, I found out that there are four important themes which explain their motivation for choosing the school.

The first motivation is the strong cooperation between the school staff and the parents. The parents underline happily the availability of the teachers and administrators. The parents also mention that they are treated seriously by the school staff when they argue about an issue either about the school or the student.

A student parent who send two of his children to Hay school said that he likes the teachers of the school very much because they are good role models for his children. He also added: ‘My dialogue with the teachers is very good, I think they take care of my children better if we compare with other schools. And I believe that this dedication of teachers leads to success.’ Interviewee 2, Folder B (2), 00:20- 00:33 ‘Öğretmenlerle ile olan diyalogumuz
Another parent said that: ‘In Hay school you can have also an informal way of communication besides formal communication with the school staff but in public schools you are generally limited to have a formal communication with the school personnel.’ Interviewee 1, Folder B (1), 02:58-03:10 ‘Bu okulda bir öğretmeni rahatlıkla arayıp konuşabiliyorsunuz. Danimarka eğitim sisteminde öğretmeni çok arayamınız. Ancak resmi bir iletişim aği kurabilirsiniz.’

And he added: ‘I sent my daughter to a public school near my home for three years before Hay school, so I can compare.’ Interviewee 1, Folder B (1), 02:16- 02:41 Benim kızım 3. sınıfta başladı. Sebeb de şu duydu uzak yerde oturuyoruz. (Dolayısıyla diğer okula kıyaslayabiliyorum) And he also offered the idea: ‘Another advantage of Hay school is that some of the teachers who are working now there are former students of the school and they know the school very well.’ Interviewee 1, Folder B (1), 06:15-06:30 Bence bu okulun en güzel avantajlarından bir tanesi de öğretmenlerin çoğunluğunun Hay mezunu olması. Çünkü öğretmenler okulun hangi aşamadan hangi aşamaya geldiğini çok iyi biliyorlar.

Also the school principal confirms this efficient and fast communication between the school staff and the parents. He said: ‘A parent can reach just either by a telephone call or by visiting the school, he/she can easily meet the head of decision-making mechanism. This is also result of sending children to a private school. Of course, this is an advantage for the parents.’ Interviewee 3, Folder C (1), 23:26- 24:00 İnsanlar (veliler) bir telefonla veya kontora geldiklerinde, büroya geldiklerinde karar mekanizmasında en üstteki insanla yüz yüze görüşebiliyorlar. Bu konuda belki özel okul olmanın da artısı da vardır muhakkak. Daha verimli, hızlı karar alabiliyoruz. O konu da veliler için bir avantaj.

Besides that we see this efficient communication and cooperation with the parents as an indispensable and vital part of our education system. When we have a problem with a student, we always decide what to do with the parent from the beginning and act with the parent until the end of the rehabilitation process. Interviewee 3, Folder C (1), 24:18- 24:37 Artı biz bu bunu teribiyanın de bir parçası olarak da görürüz. Çocuklarla öğrencilerle ilgili yaşadığımız skantılarda ilk müracaat ve son müracaat adresimiz veliler.

The second motivation for the parents is the morality given to the students by the school. They especially emphasize the culture of respect to the parents and the olderly which is given by the school. A student parent admitted that the morality which was given to the students in the school is another motivation for him to send his daughter to Hay school. He argued that Hayskolen teaches a culture of respect to the olderly which is rare in Danish society and is not taught in any other school. He also gave an example to explain his argument: ‘For example, in any other school the students call their teachers with their names but here, in Hay school the students call their teachers such as ‘my teacher, my sir.’ Interviewee 1, Folder B (1), 01:09- 01:16 ‘Örneğin diğer okullarda öğretmenlerin isimleri ile hitap edilir, burada daha farklı bir şey; hocam deniyor, öğretmenim deniyor.’ Another student parent said that his nephews who have graduated from Hay school are always respectful and good to
him and also to the others. And he believes that they gain this culture of respect from the school and their family, and that is also another motivation why he chose Hay school.

The third motivation for the parents is academic success of the school. They were informed before making their choice that the school has always been succesful to motivate the students to strive for higher academic successes which is generally lacking among immigrant-origin students.

A student parent said that he was aware of the academic success of the school before he chose to send his daughter to the school. He explained this in these words: ‘I know many students of Hay school who already study and who have studied there and who have graduated from the school before. From these observations I was convinced that the school is successful and I decided to send my child there.’ Interviewee 1, Folder B (1), 00:24-00:35  ‘Öğrencileri, geçmişteki öğrencilerinin başarısı, şu anki eğitim seviyesi olarak da Danimarka’nın iyi okullarından biri olduğunu düşünüyorum.’ Another student parent also offered the same idea: ‘I know my nephews who have studied in Hay school. They graduated from Hay school and one of them is now going to finish a university under the ministry of Health soon. He became the first Turkish-origin student who manage to study there. My nephews success stories of course influenced me in my preference of Hay school’ Interviewee 2, Folder B (2), 01:15-01:26  ‘Benim yeğenlerim de orada okudu. Simdi çok iyi yerlerde. Bu son senesi, Sağlık Bakanlığı’nda ilk defa o İngilizce okuluna giren ve orayı bitiren ilk Türk olacak. O da etkiledi beni tabii yeğenlerim.

The fourth motivation is that they perceive Hayskolen as a safe school environment. Generally the immigrant-origin families live in outer districts of the Copenhagen city. These districts like Ishoj, Taastrup are sometimes also named as ghettos in the media news. In these ghettos, the students, even if they are ambitious, they can not concentrate on their studies due to the unrest created in the school atmosphere by criminal gangs, radical groups or any other challenges. But in Hayskolen, due to the educational principles, preliminary admission test, discipline criterion and school atmosphere the student get the chance of studying in a peaceful and safe school environment. A parent who send three of his children to the school said that he chose Hay school because of its academic success and the discipline in the school.

In consideration to the question how they hear about and choose Hayskolen, the parents generally answer that they learn and hear about the success of Hay school through their relatives or friends.

In regard to the critics about the school, one parent complained about the narrow physical space of the school. He said that ‘If the school were situated in a larger area, it could be better.’ Moreover he added that ‘there are very few Danish ethnic students in the school, and this is a disadvantage. But I think that this is not the fault of the school. This is more because of the not so good image of Turks and Muslims in the society.’ Interviewee 1, Folder B (1), 05:17-05:18; 05:35-06:10  Fiziki olarak okul biraz daha iyi olabilir; Danimarkalı çocuklarının olmamamasi bir dezavantaj, o da okulun şuçu değil. Bu genel
The other parents were very satisfied with the Hay schools education and did not have anything to criticize about the school.

In short, the parents motivations to choose Hay school can be summarized in 4 points. Firstly, the parents are satisfied with fast, strong and informal communication with the school personnel. Secondly, the morality given by the school is also an important factor. Especially, the culture of respect to the parents and to the elderly is specified. Thirdly, Hay school’s academic success is appreciated. Finally, the parents perceive the school as a safe environment for their children. All the parents I interviewed confirmed they chose Hay school for their children due to the afore-mentioned motivations.

The parents generally do not prefer to criticize the school. The only serious critic was due to the limited school space. On the other hand, the lack of Danish-ethnic student in the school is seen as a disadvantage in relation to the integration of the students to the society. But this is not seen as a specific problem of the school but the society as a whole.