Effects of Parental Attitude on Academic Performance at Primary School: Sample of Istanbul

Mustafa YEŞİLYURT[1], Ahmet OKUYUCU

Abstract: Societies are engaged in establishing systems by setting various rules in order to be able to maintain and develop their continuity. Education is one of the most important factors for society. With education, new generations are trained in terms of the characteristics and needs of the society. The future of this education is starting in the family environment and continuing in the state institutions. Throughout this process the learning's realized by individuals are different and the achievements and failures are emerging. The surplus of individuals who are successful for the society is important. The reasons for the differences in success will undoubtedly vary for children. However, it can be seen that there are children who cannot learn in a positive environment as well as individuals who achieve great success despite being in a negative environment. This led us to the idea that more important factors for the individual than environment and possibilities may be sufficient for success alone or together. Apart from the facilities and environment, the common elements of the children are teacher and the family. Is the teacher the main factor or the parents for the child succeed? In line with this question, "Parents Attitude Scale" was applied to the 4th grade students for the attitudes of the parents. Scale results indicated that the attitudes of parents of successful students were more positive than that of parents of unsuccessful students.

Keywords: Children, Students, Parents Attitudes, Elementary Education, Improving Classroom Teaching

[1] Yıldız Technical University, Department of Primary Education, Istanbul, Turkey, afra65@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Education is the most important fact for either the developed or developing societies (Acikgoz, 1989). The significance given by the society to education and the quality of it are the primary effects on social progression, as for the societies the most enormous wealth is the human being. The human being is born with different features and abilities. Revealing and developing these individual characteristics and talents, using them in favour of not only the individual but also for the society is called education. Educated person is the most vital input for a country, and deprivation of skilled human force is the main restriction on development of a country (Kavak and Burgaz, 1994)

Communities deal with the education within the framework of their criteria that are determined by themselves. Individual features and abilities that they gave developed may differ. For the sustainability of operation in social mechanisms which are the results of demands, individuals with certain abilities are needed, and accordingly education is carried out. Before being placed in occupations, individual features are identified with the help of exams that are held for either upgrading or degrading. Students passing from primary school to secondary school take the high school entrance exam at the 8th grade, and with the consideration of their GPAs, they are placed in a high school. After 4 years of education, high school students take the exam called YKS (Higher Education Examination) to be placed in a university. Graduating from the university, individuals try to acquire a profession by taking several different exams. All these eliminations are done to differentiate the successful and unsuccessful students. After all, it is quite normal for the society to take advantage of successful individuals while it is trying to sustain its existence.

What is important for the society is not only the academic success of the individual. Just like the literates, professions, which don't require any formal education but developing within the perspective of a master-apprentice relationship, exist in and are necessary for the society. In an environment where both the literates and illiterates are, what is one of the most important facts is individual's' perspective on life and their sense of decency. In order to maintain social order and peace, individuals have to be well behaved. Ethic can be defined as the concept which looks for the reality behind the events either on an individual basis or as a group; which looks for the intention of individuals; which, in accordance with this intention, investigates, promotes and explains the necessary criteria and situations to actualize the public peace (Ozgener, 2004).

For the individual, who is continuously in a learning process, every cognitive and affective learning starts in family. Parents present various approaches comprised of their experiences. There are several reasons behind the approaches of the parents. These are categorized as biological, economical, affectionate, protective, social, educational and making use of time (Tezcan, 1977). Parents whose personalities are shaped within the frame of these factors adopt attitudes against their children. As a result of this, the child develops personality, and the education of the child is affected.

The approach based on the affection and respect is called Democratic Parenting Style. In this approach, parents try to solve the domestic situations by loving their children and talking to them. Parents adopting this approach are not only tolerant to their children but also support and provide freedom of action in a defined framework (Yavuzer, 1995). There is tolerance in a democratic family environment. Parents have respect for child's ideas and actions. With this, the child develops sense of responsibility and he/she gains decision-making habit. In other words, in authoritative family responsible children with self-respect and self-determining are raised (Yavuzer, 1995).

Contrary to Democratic approach, individuals growing up in an "Over Protective Parenting Style" are highly depended on their parents, they have emotional problems and their decision-making mechanism is not well developed (Yavuzer, 1990). Over Protective

Parenting Style can be named as an approach in which parents are attached to their child with a great affection, and children are closed off from external factors because of apprehension. In order to protect their children from unfortunate external factors, parents restrict the child's movement area and they take all decisions on behalf of the child. They don't let the child develop his/her own character by experiencing life.

Over Authoritative Parental Style is in sharp contrast to Over Protective and Democratic Parenting Styles. The child is supposed to follow every single rule set up by the parents. When the rules are broken, the child is punished and is overpowered (Yorukoglu, 1982). Unlike Democratic Approach, in Authoritative Approach the child's opinions have no value, and acting against the parents' principles ends up with punishment. Punishment includes beating, threatening, condemnation, scolding, and yelling (Tuncer, 1980). Children raised by Authoritative parents become individuals who are coward and introvert. The child who is afraid of making decisions will have troubles with socializing. Also, as the child develops inferiority complex, he/she will be tending to rebel. Indeed, while the parents want to protect their child and prepare them for life, the approaches they follow make the child sick and detach from life.

In contrast to all these approaches, the approach, which doesn't give any importance to the child's ideas, is called "Careless Parenting Style". This approach is far from either controlling or leading the child. These parents don't have any protection feeling against outer effects. Careless parents leave the child alone and aren't interested in the child's needs. Not communicating, the parents isolate the child (Yavuzer, 1995). This has several effects on the child. The child grown up within this approach experiences anxiety and abomination very often, as well as aggression and defiance (Ugurel, 1979). It is not possible to expect positive thinking and behaviour from the child, whose parents are following the Careless Style.

As it is mentioned, there are several approaches that parents can adapt, and these approaches have reflections on the child. The approaches that parents take depend on their past experiences. Parents' attitudes against the child affect personality development and provide a basis for the child's success and failure on the way of becoming an individual. So that, parents should keep in mind that family is the linchpin of society. They should remember that their children are vital for society's improvement and should act consistently and steadily. The stronger the family is, the stronger will be the society. This study is conducted to determine whether the parenting styles have an effect on the success of children who will take a place in society.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This research is a mixed study. In this regard, quantitative and qualitative methods used together. With this, a scale was prepared with an expert opinion. The scale assessing how much the children are cognitively and emotionally supported in terms of parenting styles was carried out on 4th graders who were selected according to academic standing. The scale also assesses whether children with different parenting styles have differences in terms of success.

2.2. Research Group

The research study group consists of 4th graders of an elementary school in Esenler, Istanbul. In order to generalize the results of the study, grade 4 students from 10 classrooms out of 13 were subjected to the scale. 20 students of each classroom were called for the scale. Students called for the scale were selected according to their grade point average of common exams. They were divided into 2 groups as successful and unsuccessful ones. 4 students from the successful group and 16 students from the successful group didn't

participate in the scale assessment as either their mothers/fathers died, or they are illiterate. Number and the ratio of the participants are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Sample of the Study

Group	N	Frequency	Percent
Successful	100	96	53,3%
Unsuccessful	100	84	46,6%
Total	200	180	100%

As it is seen in Table 1, even if the number of students called for the scale from both groups were equal, the number of successful students participated in the scale is more. Out of 200 students, the ratio of the students whose scale is not valid is 16% among the total ratio for unsuccessful students. Number of parents who have passed away is 4 in both groups. Within the unsuccessful students there are 12 students who couldn't fill in the scale as they are illiterate or as they want to ignore the scale.

2.3. Collecting Data and Analysis

Based on voluntariness, grade 4 students whose GPAs are more than 70 and less than 50 were called for the scale implementation. Students whose grades were above three-quarters in numerical mark of a hundred are considered successful, and students who were under two-quarters are considered unsuccessful. This classification wasn't shared with the students. Groups were called into the conference hall during the free activity hours. Under the school counsellor supervision, students were asked to answer the questions sincerely and without fear by mentioning that the scale wasn't a test and they weren't supposed to write down their personal information on the paper. The same scale was carried out with both groups. 16 questions with 3-point likert scale include children's both mothers and fathers. From the data gathered a frequency table was created and to analyse the statistics SPSS program was used. Reliability analysis was done from the reliability and the validity of the data collection tool and the factor analysis. In order to measure the differences among the groups non-parametric Mann Whitney-U test was applied.

The evaluation of the scale is scored for the manners of both mother and father. According to the result of reliability analysis applied on mother scale and father scale assessment, mother scale was calculated as 0.701 Cronbach's Alpha index; father scale was calculated as 0.708 Cronbach's Alpha index. These results show that the scale is a reliable assessment and evaluation instrument. In order to provide construct validity factor analysis was applied, and for the mother scale KMO index was found as 0.783 and for the father scale KMO index was found as 0.762 (p=000). According to the results the scale is a reliable assessment and evaluation instrument.

3. Results and Discussion

As shown in Table 2, the scores of successful students were significantly higher in the mothers' part of the family attitude scale ($p < 0.05$). In the same way, the scores of successful students were significantly higher than those of unsuccessful students in the fathers' part of the family attitude scale ($p < 0.05$).

Table 2: Family Attitude Scores

Scale	Group	N	Sequence mean	Sequence sum	U	P
Mother	Successful	96	110,14	10573,00	2147,00	,000
	Unsuccessful	84	68,06	5717,00		
Father	Successful	96	110,84	10641,00	2079,00	,000
	Unsuccessful	84	67,25	5649,00		

According to these results, students who receive more support from their parents or who have better communication with their parents are in a successful group.

Answers given to 14 questions out 16, which were created in accordance with the research aim, were explained within a context.

Question 1. Appreciates my success at school

Question 8. Rewards my success

Appreciating the success is important for children to become conditioned to being successful. Academic success expresses the skills and knowledge developed in classes or determined by the test scores (Carter, 1973). Receiving positive feedback from the parents for his/her success at school is a positive reinforce for the child who is in an affective period. Reinforces enable children increase the frequency of the wanted behaviour. If the child is rewarded or knows that he/she will be appreciated for some behaviour, the possibility of repeating the action is quite high (Bandura, 1962).

Also, in the second statement the response looked for is whether the parents provide reinforces supporting the conditioning as the result of the child's success. In shape 1, the average ratio of the responses to the statements of "*Appreciates my success at school*" and "*Rewards my success*" is given.
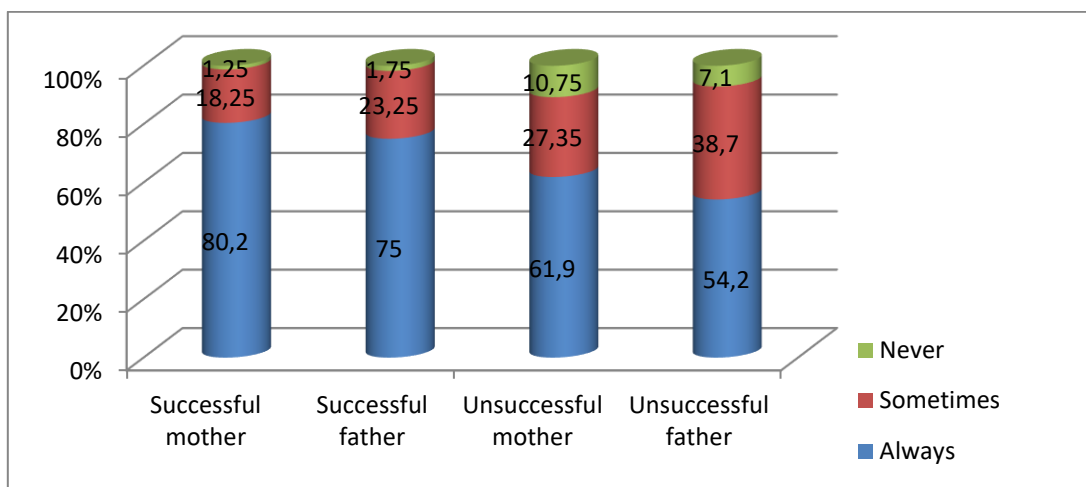

Figure 1. Appreciates my success at school / Rewards my success

The answers given to the questions show that successful students receive more positive reinforces by their parents. When the importance of reinforces is taken into consideration, it

is observed that parents of successful students contribute more to their children achievements. Among the mother and father groups, while mothers of the successful students present more positive behaviour, fathers of the successful students are the less adequate group of providing reinforces.

Question 2: Putting pressure on me to study at home

Question 14: Putting pressure on me to get high scores and this is why I sometimes feel anxious at school

Pressure is a way of psychological violence. In general, the purpose of putting pressure on child is to make the child behave according to the parents' wishes. However, pressure to display behaviour should never be applied under any term. According to the research, putting pressure on children results in damage to children's social and emotional developments (Yavuzer, 2001). In shape 2, the average ratio of the responses to the statements of "*Putting pressure on me to study at home*" and "P*utting pressure on me to get high scores and this is why I sometimes feel anxious at school*" is given.
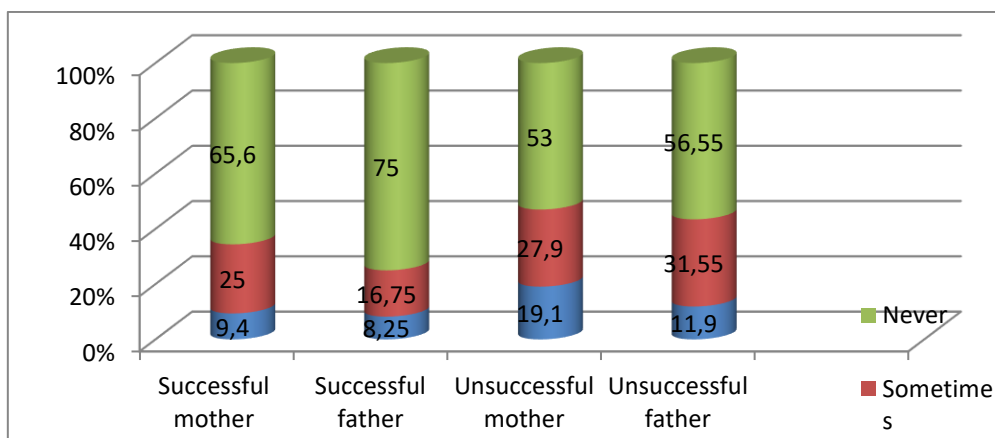

Figure 2. Putting pressure on me to study at home / Putting pressure on me to get high scores and this is why I sometimes feel anxious at school

Pressure is a kind of approach causing children to become unsuccessful by increasing the level of stress and anxiety. It is seen that unsuccessful children's parents show more pressure on their children. So, it is possible to say that successful students' parents present more positive attitudes and don't contribute to their children's failure as much as the others.

Question 3: Answers my questions.

Question 6: Always wants me to follow his/her decisions.

Question 10: Shows respect to my decisions.

Question 15: Allows me to express my idea.

Parents are responsible for the development of child's personality more than anyone. Childhood lay the foundation of affective behaviours. Children act in accordance with the needs of the environment. Parents showing the appropriate behaviours and supporting their children is highly vital for children's psychological development.

The child will try to learn by asking questions. This is just one of the ways that the child try to interpret life. Answers given by the parents to the questions arousing curiosity are highly important (Vygotsky, 1998). Trying to discover life by asking questions is a part of social learning, and social learning is achieved by parental reinforcement and feedback (Selçuk, 1997). The child who is learning through questions develops his/her own thoughts within time. In the frame of these ideas, the child expresses his/her own thoughts against the situations he/she is face with. It is not expected from the child expressing his/her ideas to be

able to either form right sentences or make right decisions all the time. Here guiding the child rather than focusing on his/her mistakes will be right attitude. Expressing himself/herself is important for the development of character, psychology and conscious of the child.

Feedback taken from the parents of a child expressing himself/herself will affect his/her life. The child making decisions by expressing his/her opinion tries to develop problem-solving skills. Feedbacks given to express opinions after every incident help the child interpret and experience life. While individuals who have developed their ability of decision making by this way can learn meeting their needs on their own, individuals who can't develop problem solving skills or who have been hampered will face with several psychological problems (Eskin, 2009). As a result of this, antisocial and introvert individuals are raised up. These individuals find it difficult to adapt into environment, and they are afraid of taking responsibilities. It is not possible to expect these children to be as successful as the children who are raised in a healthy environment. It is also not possible to expect that the learning process is the same for them. In shape 3, the average ratio of the responses to the statements of "*Answers my questions.*" "*Shows respect to my decisions.*", "*Always wants me to follow his/her decisions.*", and "*Allows me to express my idea.*" is given.
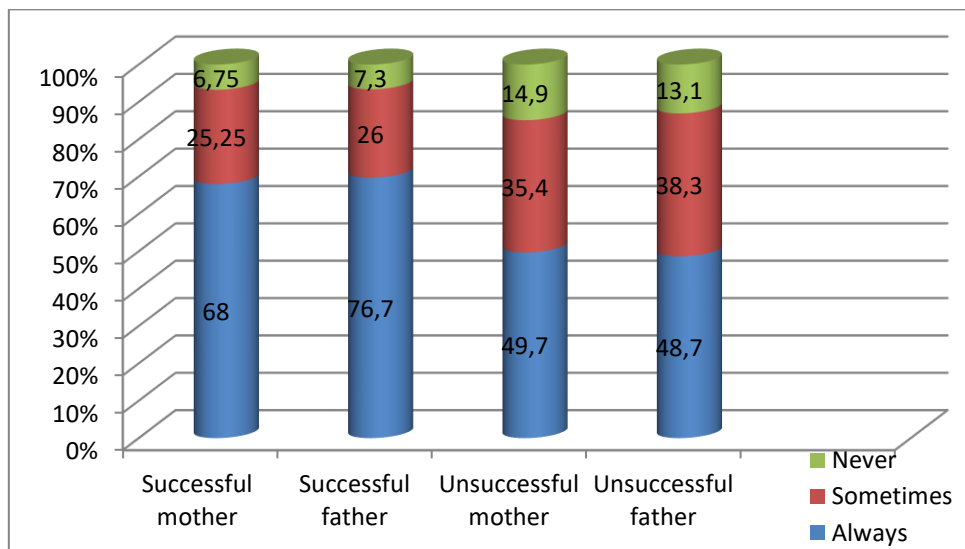

Figure 3. Answers my questions / Always wants me to follow his/her desicions / Shows respect to my decisions / Allows me to express my idea

The average of the responses given to the scale questions shows that successful students' parents contribute more to their children's personality development. Developing characteristic features have so many positive effects on individuals whose personality develops better. According to the results, it is possible to say that successful students' parents have more positive attitudes, while unsuccessful students' parents give rise to failure by contributing less to students' development.

Question 5: Provides the necessary conditions for me to study at home

Question 7: Reads a book with me

Question 9: Always controls whether I study or not

Question 11: Wants me to read a book

Studying environment both at home and at school has an important effect on child's success. Children's attention span is less than adults, and they can be distracted more easily. Attention is described as the ability of focusing on an event, an object or a situation for a specific time (MEB, 1983). Considering the fact that children's attention is distracted more

quickly than adults, we should arrange the studying environment in a way that doesn't evoke extracurricular activities.

Children may not have the appropriate studying environment because of the inadequacy of rooms; because of the families sharing the same flat as a result of financial problems; because of the parents not paying attention to tasks that a child can do at home. On the contrary, there are of course children who have positive environments to study. However, it is for sure that providing an appropriate environment to study is not enough on its own. While using electronic devices with high pitch distracting child's attention is an example of physical negative conditions, including themselves in their children's' studying period is a good suggestion that parents can apply. Instead of constantly checking whether the child has done their homework or not, it is a better idea to do the homework with the child and read books with them. Parents should guide the children to find the answers rather than giving them the answers in advance. Children imitate their parents. While telling the child to study, if the parents do activities that may attract the child such as watching TV, working on computer or eating, they will set a negative sample to their children. For instance, while reading a book the environment should be set effectively, family members should talk about the book and individuals should buy books as gifts (Tanju, 2010). In shape 4, the average ratio of the responses to the statements of "*Reads a book with me*", "P*rovides the necessary conditions for me to study at home* ", "*Always controls whether I study or not*", "*Wants me to read a book*" is shown.
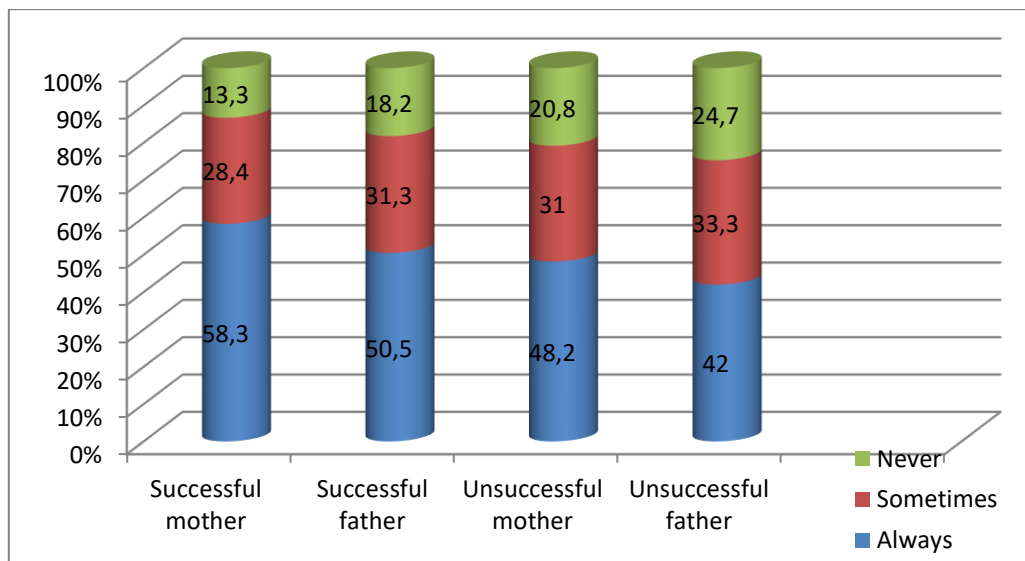

Figure 4. Provides the necessary conditions for me to study at home / Reads a book with me / Always controls whether I study or not / Wants me to read a book

Attention span and level is a feature, which is acquired and developed within time. This is why students at elementary school have less attention span. The abundancy of things that can distract students either at home or at school may bring failure. Making the home environment eligible for studying may be helpful to gain success. Even if there is no such a big difference for both groups in terms of the effects of home environment, it is seen that successful students' parents show more positive manners compared to the unsuccessful students' parents. So, it is possible to say that parents of the successful students contribute to their children's achievements more.

Question 4: Uses violence at home

Question 12: Punishes me for the things I even don't have any idea about

Violence is called as the approach or behaviour by which an individual is injured physically or emotionally (Arin, 1996). Children who are exposed to violence become introvert and unsuccessful individuals who have communication problems and who even don't want to go to school (Kardam, 2010). Children who experience domestic violence believe that things work in this way and most probably they become individuals who pose danger for the society (Polat, 2009). Violence applied to children is a result of parents' image of false facts. Besides the violence, parents also punish their children in order to make hem follow their rules. Punishment is given to remove the child from unwanted behaviours or to prompt the child to exhibit the desired behaviour (Basaran, 1994). While the right punishment can be functional for behavioural change, violence should never be applied. In shape 5, the average ratio of the responses to the statements of "*Uses violence*" and "*Punishes me for the things I even don't have any idea about*" is given.
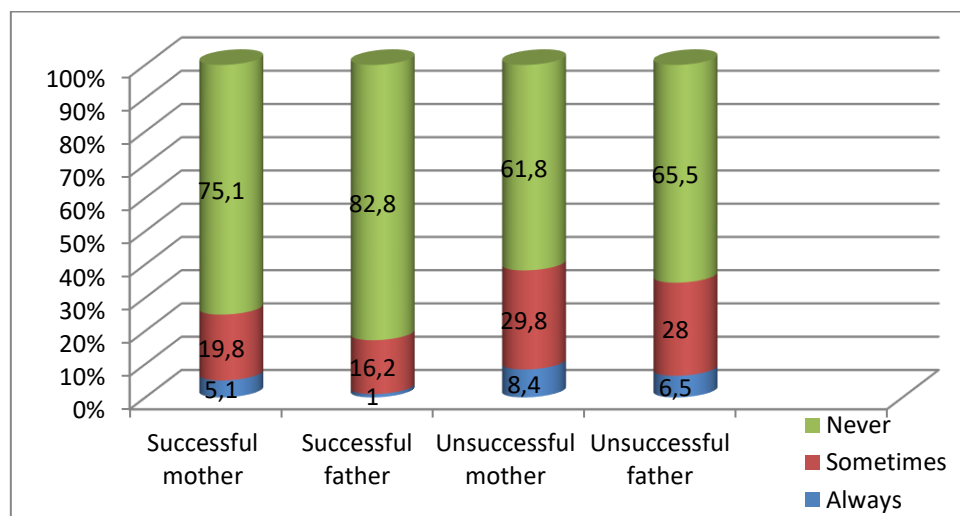

Figure 5. Uses violence at home / Punishes me for the things I even don't have any idea about

Results show that both groups of students are exposed to domestic violence. However, it is seen that unsuccessful students' mothers engage in violence more. Among four groups the ratio of negative response is higher for unsuccessful students' mothers and fathers. In terms of ratio, the less amount of punishment is seen for the fathers of successful students. When the destructive effects of violence on child are considered, it is possible to say that as unsuccessful students' parents adopt more negative methods, they give rise to the failure of their children.

4. Results and Recommendations

Below are the results of this study:

• Successful students' responses about their parents are more favourable than unsuccessful students' responses about theirs.

• It is seen that successful students are appreciated more because of their achievements. Appreciating which is a way of positive reinforcement ensures that the child acts in a particular manner and increases the frequency of the manner. It is observed that successful students' parents provide more positive reinforcement to their children, which contributes to students' desire of success.

• Children are more passive than adults against the situations which cause stress. Parents putting pressure on the child also has negative effects on the child's success. It is observed that unsuccessful students' parents put more pressure on their children at home. This situation increases the stress level of children who are less successful and worries them more at school.

• The scale shows that successful students' parents give their children more freedom of thought, let them express themselves, and respect their ideas. Results of the unsuccessful students don't have the same positivity. When children's intellectual development is supported, they become confident individuals socializing expressing themselves more easily. So it's vital that parents support their children's' intellectual development. It is seen that successful students' parents are supporting their children's intellectual efforts concerning their characteristic developments.

• It is observed that successful students' parents are more concerned about the environment for study. It is possible to say that parents giving importance to the environment where the learning takes place directly contribute to their children's success.

• When the results are analysed, it is seen that unsuccessful students' parents use more violence and give punishments to their children out of no reason. Violence is never a way for education. Punishments with no reason have adverse effects on child's psychology. It is possible to say that parents applying this method cause directly to the failure of their children.

• Children's success and failure depend on various factors. As success may be the result of one or several facts, failure may also be based on one or several reasons. While it is vital for a successful child to face with positive behaviours in order to sustain success, it is necessary to eliminate negative behaviours to save children who haven't become successful yet.

• Results of the scale show that unsuccessful students' parents have more negative attitudes than the successful students' parents. Although there are students who gave negative responses among the successful students, there are enough factors provided for their success. It will be right to improve parental behaviour in order to sustain achievements of these successful students. In addition to this, it is seen that there are also some students who gave positive responses among the unsuccessful students. However even if they are exposed to positive manners under some situations, the negative situations exposed by the unsuccessful children might be the dominant reason for their failure. For this reason, to determine and to improve the situations hampering the learning ability of the child will be the right attitude to be followed not only for the child but also for society. According to the results of the scale, the most responsible people at this topic are parents.

In accordance with the results of this study, the following recommendations can be given:

• By developing a scale including students from each grade and by measuring situations that students experience in social life, facts that children are influenced might be determined in a more comprehensive way. In accordance with the data collected, facts that have negative effects on children can be worked on and improved.

• Parents whose children are at the age of starting school may be trained to how to behave towards their children and deal with their classes. They may also be lectured on parental approaches and their effects on children psychological and cognitive development.

• Failing students was abolished. Also, punitive discipline ways are no longer applied, and teachers are under the control of parents. In order to create an image of a serious school in the eyes of parents, it is necessary to bring back the implementation of failing students and discipline. Also, there must be enforcement of regulations for the parents as much as for the teachers.

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