⌈Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article⌋

Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi
Kastamonu Education Journal
Mayıs 2019 Cilt:27 Sayı:3
kefdergi.kastamonu.edu.tr

Başvuru Tarihi/Received: 08.01.2018
Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 30.06.2018
DOI: 10.24106/kefdergi.2540

Ortaöğretimde Okul Terkinin Bireysel ve Kurumsal Nedenleri[1]

Individual and Institutional Factors Contributing to School Dropouts

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Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, ortaöğretim öğrencilerinin okul terkine ilişkin gerekçeleri üreten bireysel ve kurumsal faktörleri ortaya çıkarmaktır. Çalışmada iç içe geçmiş durum deseni nitel araştırma yöntemi olarak kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu daha önce okulu terk etmiş 2014-2015 eğitim-öğretim yılı Şanlıurfa ili ve merkez ilçelerinde açık liseye devam eden 30 katılımcıdan oluşmaktadır. Araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre bireysel faktörler içerisinde öğrencinin fiziksel ve psikolojik sorunları, başarısızlıkları, öğretmen değişimi, okula karşı olumsuz tutum ve değerler, devamsızlık ve düşük eğitsel performansın; kurumsal faktörler içerisinde aile yapısı, aile içi uygulamalar, aile kaynakları, öğrencinin terk ettiği okulun bileşimi, yapısı, uygulama ve kaynakları ile akranların okul terkinde etkili olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: okul, öğrenci, öğretmen, okul terki, ortaöğretim

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors contributing to school dropouts in secondary education. A qualitative approach has been adopted in the study and embedded case study design was used. The study group is composed of 30 students leaving the formal secondary school and taking courses in open high school between 2014-2015 educational year, in the province of Sanliurfa, Turkey. Results indicated that the individual factors for school dropout are; physical and psychological problems, failures, changes of the teacher, negative attitudes and values towards the school, incompatible behaviors in the class and the school, absenteeism, school change, and low academic achievement. The institutional factors of dropping out of school can be summarized as the family structure, practices in the family, resources of the family, composition, structure, practices, and resources of the schools, composition of the community and friends.

Keywords: school, student, teacher, school dropout, secondary education

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Atıf / Citation: Karacabey, M.F., ve Boyacı, A. (2019). Individual and institutional factors contributing to school dropouts.Kasta*monu Education Journal, 27*(3), 1047-1057. doi:10.24106/kefdergi.2540

1. Introduction

Today, one of the educational priorities of many countries in the world is preventing school dropout. School dropout is an undesirable result for any student in the education system to decide not to continue their education or to have to leave the process for not being able to fulfill the requirements for continuing the education. The prevalence of school dropout varies from country to country, as well as age and grade range. The school dropout may lead to important problems for both the individual and the community. Considering the consequences, it is characterized as a multifaceted loss (Kronick, 1994).

The foremost negative effects of the school dropout can be observed on the student's social life and emotional health. The negative effects of school dropout on the individual level can be observed as low quality of life, lower wages because of low qualifications, unemployment, unconformity, suicide, and suicidal tendency (MDESE, 2014). Dropping out of school is a problem that lowers the quality of education, harms the country's economy and increases social assistance expenditures.

Dropping out of school means that the individual will be deprived of all the benefits of education. Dropouts are much more likely to be unemployed, and they also must work for less money, even if they have jobs. Compared to the graduates, for dropouts, the likelihood of engaging in illegal activities, having health problems, being economically dependent on others is much higher (Rumberger, 1987). This school dropout problem also means wasting education investments and national resources. In this sense, it is a significant risk to social consciousness and social well-being (Rumberger & Thomas, 2000; Uysal, 2008).

The school dropouts are more likely to experience situations such as constant unemployment, income inequality, or need for state aid. This will be costly not only for the state but also for the individual (APA, 2012). For example, the United States, where school drop-out rates are high, is experiencing major social and economic losses. Over the next decade, it is estimated that 12 million students will drop out of school, which will cost the US about 3 trillion dollars (Alliance for Excellent Education AEE, 2007). That the school dropout problem will raise educational costs is also a problem for other countries. In Turkey, to decrease the education cost, some practices such as removing the class repetition up to a certain grade with the decision of the teachers' council, decreasing the attendance requirements at school so as to have students pass the course or class by the decision of the teachers' board and so on are exercised. However, it is beneficial to analyze the results of such practices in terms of educational quality (Taşpınar, 2012, p. 151). In Turkey, the importance of education for economic and cultural development has been understood and investments in education, academic studies, national and international projects are carried out to develop human resources. But the school dropout problem in the education system hinders to achieve the goals.

It is difficult to find a detailed source in Turkey that will precisely explain the reasons why students drop out of the school. Yorğun (2014) determined that school-based behaviors were predicted by gender, grade level, level of academic achievement, school change, number of siblings, everyday problems, family, friends, friend environment, teaching life, wide environmental disturbances. According to research results, the most important factor causing school dropout was peer effect and academic failure. The school dropout rate of boys is higher than girls in Turkey (Öğülmüş, 2013; Tamer, 2014; Uysal & Şahin, 2007). Tamer (2014) aimed to identify the reasons for school dropouts. According to the results of the research, it has been found that parents that have a high level of education, positive relationships among friends, teachers, and managers reduce the risk of leaving the school. As a result of the research Öğülmüş (2013) found that most of the students who left their schools had low socio-economic levels. The findings of the research show that factors such as the arrangement of course programs prepared at the school level, the lack of interest in the topics taught, and the inadequacy of opening and closing times of the school play an important role in the students' performance of class repetition. Of the students, 43% stated that difficult courses were placed on the same day, 24% were not interested in schooling, and 23% stated that school entrance and departure times were not appropriate. Taş, Seviltopu, Bora and Demirkaya (2013) found that vocational high school students' attitudes and behaviors of teachers and peers during school dropout were influenced by family support status. Bayhan and Dalgıç (2012) determined that students left the school due to reasons such as failure, absence from school and lectures, absenteeism, counter-gross emotional attachment, various habits, personal reasons from discipline and health problems and violence. Özer, Gençtanırım, and Ergene (2011) have found that family and friend support reduce school dropout, while impulsive behavior increases. Disciplinary punishment, use of harmful substances, and anti-social behavior are mediating variables that increase the risk of leaving the school. Students working in a job, having dropout friends, antisocial behavior, risky environment, and school alienation have an increased risk of dropout (Zorbaz, 2018). Boyacı, Karacabey, and Öz (2018) investigated organizational problems challenging the capacity of open vocational high schools in dealing with the school dropouts

and found that administrative, academic and legal problems can lead to school dropout.

According to the results of the research conducted by the Mother and Child Education Foundation (Gökşen, Cemalcılar & Gülselel, 2006) regarding the reasons for the school dropout problem in primary education, it was determined that the problem varies from region to region in Turkey. The fact that the school dropout problem differs from region to region, the questions arise, which region is affected more, and which region should be given priority to. Compared to the other regions in Turkey, the South-eastern and Eastern Anatolian regions, particularly in the Sanliurfa province, the number of school dropouts are considerably higher than the others (Şimşek, 2010).

This study is conducted in Sanliurfa with the participants selected from the province for the following reasons. Among the 81 provinces in Turkey, Sanliurfa province is ranked 78th in terms of enrolment rate in secondary education. With 13, 9%, it also has the lowest rate of the young population with high school education in Turkey. In addition, the school dropout rate in secondary education is 37.56%. In 2012, with 570 students per school, Istanbul is at the top of the list followed by Sanliurfa with 502 students per school. According to the Ministry of National Education (MEB), the most crowded classrooms are also in Istanbul and Sanliurfa with 38 students (MEB, 2012). Moreover, according to the statistics of TUIK and National Education, the rate of young people with high school education in Turkey is 31.1% in 2013. This ratio is highest in Karabük with 49, 5% and lowest in Sanliurfa with 13, 9%. According to MEB data of 2013-2014, the enrolment rate in Turkey is 77%. In Sanliurfa this rate is 53% and it is 78th among the cities in Turkey, after Van (46.45%), Muş (42.42%) and Ağrı (42.72%). According to the Ministry of National Education, the school dropout rate in secondary education is 26.97% in Turkey in the academic year of 2012-2013. However, in Sanliurfa, this rate is 37.56%, which is well above the Turkish average. In a research conducted in Sanliurfa province, striking results about the high school dropout problem have been reached. According to this study, in 2008-2009, only 6 out of 10 students enrolled could finish school in due time. These results show that only 50.38% of the students who started high school could graduate on time. The rate of graduation was 67, 78% for females and 42, 47% for males (Şimşek, 2011, p. 28).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the main reasons for high school dropout and how the dropouts legitimize their reasons for dropping out, based on student opinions. It is also aimed to reveal the individual and organizational factors that could cause school dropout.

2. Method

Design of the study

This research is a case study. The case study can be used when a current phenomenon is studied within its own framework and where more than one evidence or data source is available (Yin, 2003). For this study, an embedded case study design was used. An embedded case study is a case study containing more than one sub-unit of analysis (Yin, 2003). It is assumed that in an embedded case study, there is often more than one substrate or unit in a single situation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The target state refers to a system which is surrounded by a specific limitation (Merriam, 2009, p. 40), entity, organization or unit (Stake, 2005) rather than a function or action. In the research, the only case investigated was the situation of students who decided to drop out of school while they were studying at any secondary school in Sanliurfa city center, due to any reason and enroll in an open high school. The sub-analysis units in the study are students who dropped out of school.

Study Group

The data were collected through interviews with 30 participants who were chosen by criterion sampling and snowball sampling technique, that are purposeful sampling techniques. Purposive sampling is applied when individuals selected for the sample are deliberately chosen by the judgment of the researcher to produce the best data. The advantage of purposeful sampling is that the researcher has the chance to return to people and events that are believed to be critical for research (Denscombe, 2007). The criterion to determine the study group is that participants must have dropped out of the school in Sanliurfa city center during the spring semester of the 2014-2015 academic year, but they must have enrolled in open high school. These students were selected by snowball sampling. This approach is effective in determining the situations or individuals who may be a rich source of information (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011, p.111). Among the participants 13 were female and 17 were male. 12 participants dropped out of the school in 2014, 5 in 2013, 7 in 2012, 3 in 2011, 1 in 2010 and 2 in 2009. 25 participants dropped out of school in the 9th grade, 3 in the 10th grade, and 2 in the 11th grade. 16 participants dropped out of the Anatolia High School, 8 dropped out

of the Religious high school, 5 dropped out of the Vocational Technical Anatolian High School and 1 dropped out of the Multi-Program High School. 17 participants repeated a class while 13 of them did not. 9 participants failed 9th grade, 1 participant failed 2nd grade, 1 participant failed 10th grade, 1 participant failed 12th grade. 3 participants repeated 9th grade twice, 1 participant repeated 1st and 7th grade, 1 participant repeated 9th and 10th grade. While the sibling(s) of 6 participants repeated a grade, the sibling(s) of the 24 did not repeat a class. While the sibling(s) of 16 participants dropped out of school, the sibling(s) of the 14 did not drop out of school.

Research instrument

An interview form consisting of semi-structured open-ended questions was prepared for gathering data for the study. Participants were asked to respond to open-ended questions in the interview to determine the individual and institutional factors that caused them to drop out of the school. The individual and institutional factors that affect the performance of the students at the high school level were examined according to the framework of Rumberger and Lim's study in 2008. The prepared semi-structured interview form was presented to 5 experts in the field of Educational Administration. After piloting, the form was finalized. The interview form consists of 17 open-ended questions.

Collection and analysis of data

The data was collected through semi-structured (face-to-face) interviews that open-ended questions were asked. Interviews were recorded. Each interview lasted about 45 minutes on average. In addition, the consent form was prepared by the researcher and given to all participants before the interviews. The recorded interviews were later transcribed, the transcriptions were sent back to the participants to get their approval. Descriptive and content analysis methods were used in the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews. In the descriptive analysis, direct citations were given to reflect the views of the interviewee. In the content analysis technique, instead of giving direct citations, it is aimed to reach the concepts and relations that can explain the collected data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011, p 223). During the process of coding qualitative data, aliases were given to the participants and the data was put into categories and then themes and sub-themes. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. Later the coding scheme was formed. In the process of forming coding scheme and coding the transcriptions, the transcriptions in the descriptive data section were read and the codes were written in the descriptive index section on the form. This was done by the researchers and the experts in the field. The experts and researchers independently created a descriptive index. Based on the descriptive indexes that the researchers and experts created, they pointed out the appropriate theme for each purpose in the coding scheme. To see different coders coded the same data the same way, intercoder reliability is checked. For this, the consensus and the dissensus numbers were counted. If the researchers and experts marked the same theme or did not marked any theme at all for a specific purpose, it was considered as consensus. If the researchers and experts marked the different theme, the marking that the researcher was taken as a basis, but this was considered as dissensus. The reliability of the study was calculated using the formula "Reliability = consensus / consensus + dissensus" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.64). According to this calculation, the reliability was found as 0,88.

3. Findings

The individual reasons for school dropout:

Participants' past experiences have some effects on their decision to drop out of school. Participants stated that the psychological and physical health problems they had in the past, the failures they experienced when they first started school, and the problems of adjustment due to the change of teacher were effective in their dropping out of school at the high school level. For example, Zeynep talked about the effect of psychological problems she experienced on her decision to drop out of the school. She said, "... my cousin died, and my boyfriend was a soldier, and my psychology was very bad and I did not want to go to school". Filiz states that the change of teacher had a negative effect on her engagement with the school. She said, "Because many of our teachers in secondary school changed, I got disconnected, alienated from school, and then decided to drop out.

Participants' attitudes towards education and school also seem to affect their school dropout decisions. Most students have a positive attitude towards education and school. Participants find the school and education valuable. They are also aware of the importance of school and education to achieve good status in society. Yıldız said, "to have a good life in the future, I am going to school". Yaşar said, "School means future, goal, and a good career above all." Cennet said "an educated person is more learned, knowledgeable, and special compared to the others. Education changes people, and it provides a better future". These citations show that some participants were aware of the importance of education and school in someone's life. However, some students had a negative attitude towards school and education

because they were under the impression that the education or school did not meet their expectations, it did not make any sense to go to school, and they were not good enough for school and education. Mehmet said, “Going to school was a complete waste of my time, there was no point in going to the school and I thought that it would Ok if I did not go.”

The participants’ behaviors both inside and outside the school also affected their decision to drop out of high school. These behaviors include negative interaction with peers, incompatible behavior at school, personality traits, and inadequate academic activity. Mustafa said that although his relations with his peers were good, his friends had a negative effect on him, and he left the school. He said “my friends are the reason why I dropped out of school. I had friends who did not care about school and skipped classes all the time. We were together all the time, so I left school because of them.” In addition, having to work in a job may also cause school dropout. Yusuf said, “I was working in a bakery. The lessons were very easy, but I did not study. Working and going to school at the same time was very tiring.” Based on this, it can be said that children from economically disadvantaged families are more likely to drop out of school.

The educational performance (academic success, school engagement, etc.) plays an important role in school dropout. Academic failure in high school is believed to influence most of the participants’ leaving school. Cennet said, “it is all because of my lessons, if I were a lit bit more successful, I would never drop out of my school. I failed most of my courses, my grades were terrible. I felt so bad about it so I decided to drop out of school”. Ruken said, “I was always late for the school, absenteeism is the only reason I dropped out of school.” Educational performance not only includes academic success but also includes attending the classes, not failing them. From the viewpoint of the participants, it can be said that any negative situation related to educational performance can lead to school dropout. It can be argued that all the factors they may lead to school dropout also negatively affect educational performance. Thus, it can be said that educational performance plays an important and decisive role in school dropout.

The institutional reasons for school dropout

Most parents tried to attend school meetings and followed the educational development of their children. However, some participants expressed the exact opposite. For example, Ruken said, “My family was not interested in my education at all. They did not ask anything about my school, lessons, etc. When they did not care, I stopped caring about it and I did not study. When my teacher wanted to see my parents, my mother would go but my father never did. If the teachers did not want to see them, they never bothered to come to school to see how I was doing.” Based on this citation, it can be assumed that the lack of parent-school relationship could lead to school dropout. Also, some families’ expectation of their children’s education is low. For example, Esra said “I was very badly affected by my family’s comments. For example, when I was studying, they would say I was studying in vain. When I took the exams, as I was doing the exam, I was also thinking about how I would leave the school. I could not focus on the exams because of my family. I did not have any problems with the lessons.”

Some of the participants had to drop out of school because of their economic situation. In general, most families are concerned about the education of their children, even though their economic situation is not good. However, economic problems caused many participants to drop out of school. For example, Muslim said “My father was the only person working at home. So, I had to work. I could not handle them both together. This was very depressing, and it was affecting my behavior at school. I could not do homework etc. For I already wanted to be self-employed, I left the school”. This citation shows that he could not go to school after he started working.

Some changes in the family such as loss of one family member, especially one of the parents, separation or divorce could lead to school dropout. In addition to these, in this study one of the parents’ having to work away from the family affected the educational performance of the student badly. As an example, Özkay said “I would always be the top of my class until the eighth grade. Later my father went away for four years. When my father left, there was no control over me, and I stopped studying and as a result, I failed.” This citation shows that the family leader plays an important role in the life of the family members.

Teaching styles, classroom management, discipline rules and practices, attitudes of teachers and principals towards students, and the difficulty and intensity of courses are among the factors that can lead to dropping out of the school. For example, Ruken said, “Teachers were just lecturing us, they could have been more interested in us. They could be a bit fun instead of being angry. They did not care about us.” This citation shows that teachers’ behaviors and attitudes may affect the students in a negative way. Similarly, Zeynep said, “In fact, they were very humiliating us. They used to tell us to drop out of school because we could not be anything. They did not take care of us anyway. I told them I wanted to leave school and they just agreed. They did not even bother to talk me out of it or call my parents or so.” This

shows that the teachers' indifference, their cold, and demotivating attitudes and behaviors could cause students to leave school. This kind of behaviors of the teachers may be related to the school and city where the school is located.

The intensity and difficulty of the lessons can also be considered as a reason for school dropout. Beril said "There were a lot of lessons and they were so difficult. Teachers used to give a lot of homework. When we did not do our homework, they said we would fail the class.", Mahmut said, "The lessons were very difficult. The high school courses were very difficult.", Merve said " I was going to the religious high school. I left high school in the 9th grade. The lessons were too difficult, and I had to leave."

In addition, strict discipline and school rules can be considered as another important factor in the participants' dropping out of school. For example, Ahmet said, "There were strict rules in the school. We were very bored with these rules. Some teachers were very annoying. We were very uncomfortable. In fact, students want to be more relaxed."Ruken said, "Rules are forcibly implemented. This situation was annoying to me." However, the failure to fully implement the rules, especially in class and the disciplinary behavior of some students may cause some students to leave school. For example, Abdullah said "Rules were not fully implemented. If the rules were fully implemented, we would not be in this situation. We would go to school and attend the classes. The student wants to be comfortable, of course, but it is odd that the teachers behave this way."

The resources of the school are generally grouped as financial and human resources. The lack of any of these, or the fact that these resources are not operated at the desired level, can also lead to school dropout. In this study, although school guidance in Turkey is compulsory service, the inadequacy of the guidance service offered by the school was one of the reasons for the participants to drop out of the school. Filiz said, "I went to the counseling service twice, but counselor was doing nothing, just listening to us.", Kübra said, "I went to the guidance service, but it did not do me any good. I think it was useless."

The presence of the addicted, problematic students and individuals in the school environment is another important factor in the participants' dropping out of the school. For example, Münevver said "the school environment was not good. There would be constant fights. The students would fight, and the police would come. There should be a security guard in front of the school, but we had no security. There is no security now, but there is a guard. It would have been better if there was security", Fatma said, "Everyone in the school was afraid of some students at school. They were addicts. Some of them would come to school drunk. No one would dare to say something to them because they were all trouble."

The structure of the school can also be regarded as one of the factors that have influenced some participants to leave the school. In very crowded schools, the communication and interaction between the students and the teachers may be limited. Merve said, "The school was very big, it was very crowded. No one cared about each other." This citation shows that overcrowded schools and classes prevent people from establishing good interaction, forming good relationships and it could lead to school dropout.

The value and importance that people in a community have for education and the safety of the school and the neighborhood may have some effects on the children's continuing or leaving the school. Some participants expressed that factors such as the value given to the education by the individuals in the community and the lack of safety of the school and the environment were effective in their decision to drop out of the school. For example, Cennet said "There were always strangers in front of the school. Without them, the school would have been nicer and safer. I did not see a drug dealer, but there were many people fighting.", İbrahim said, " It was not a very peaceful school. There was always a fight in front of the school. The school was not safe.", Özkay said, " the school was not very safe. It was next to the cemetery and there were not many beautiful things going on there. Some students were drinking, smoking, using drugs there." These citations show the importance of school safety for school engagement.

4. Discussion

When findings of the individual reasons for school dropout are examined, it is possible to mention the possible effects of past educational experiences on school dropout. It can be argued that the various problems that participants experienced during or before their high school education prevent them from continuing education. Among these problems, physical and psychological health problems come to the forefront like in the research results of Bayhan and Dalgıç (2012). Besides, failures in previous schools and teacher changes are also among the indirect causes of school dropout, as they reduce the school engagement. These results are consistent with previous research (Bayhan & Dalgıç, 2012). However, school failure was not a predictor of school dropout in the research of Zorbaz (2018).

To be successful in school, students need to value the school. This happens when they see the school as a tool which enables them to reach their short and long-term goals (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Therefore, attitudes and values towards school and education have an important role in the students' continuing and completing their education. In this study, most of the students developed a positive attitude towards school and education. The fact that all the participants are already enrolled in an open high school program shows this because the participants continue their education. Also, Taş, Seviltopu, Bora, and Demirkaya (2013) found that high school students' attitudes towards school influenced dropout. However, some bad event that some participants experienced with their teachers, principals, and friends did not prevent them from leaving their school. In some cases, the constant failure at school hurt their self-esteem. In such a case, the participant may have thought that it would be better to leave the school. It can, therefore, be said that dropouts are not only passive victims, but they express serious criticisms of the school and the education system.

One of the important factors in the participants' dropping out of school is the way they behave at school. The findings show that the inappropriate behaviors of the participants, with or without their peers, that would require disciplinary action, have caused them to drop out of the school. Having bad friends (delinquent etc.) (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000; Kaplan & Peck, 1997) or friends who have previously left school (Cairns et al., 1989; Carbonaro, 1998; Saiz & Zoido, 2005; Zorbaz, 2018) has been found to increase the likelihood of dropping out of school from an early stage as in seventh-grade. Many studies have shown that the friends are an important part of the individual's life in terms of smoking, drug, and alcohol use, and dropping out of school (Gaviria & Raphael, 2001; Tamer, 2014; Yorğun, 2014; Zorbaz, 2018). It can be expected that some behaviors such as not attending the courses, being shy, etc. may lead to behaviors such as not actively participating in the classroom, not showing any effort that negatively affects the academic development of the student. It is important to understand that these incompatible behaviours are usually realized with peers. The social network that students create with their friends in school can be the reason for their behaviours. It can be said that this social network is effective in producing all the incompatible behaviours from a low educational performance at school to dropping out of school. It is necessary to understand why this social network among students produces negative behaviours rather than positive behaviours. When it is considered on the school level, the importance of understanding the role of social network among students increases even more. In this case, similar schools may produce similar student networks that produce similar negative behaviours.

Educational performance of participants is also among the reasons leading to school dropout. Most of the participants dropped out of school in their first year at high school. One of the reasons for this is the absenteeism and class repetition. These two factors can also indirectly affect participants' academic achievement. The reason why at least half of the participants have low academic achievement can be explained in this way. Academic success is an important indicator of school dropout and student mobility (Pribesh & Downey, 1999; Yorğun, 2014). Low academic achievement may cause the student to change school several times. When the issue of changing school is considered in terms of social capital, it causes the individual to move away from their social networks, from the people they trust and from the culture, norms, and values of the institution they are in. This may lead to a variety of negative situations in their academic and social life in their new school, and problems may arise. In this study, it is found that some of the participants were forced to drop out of the school because they were forced to go to different schools, they did not want to go in the first-place due to several reasons.

When the findings of the institutional reasons of school dropout are examined, it can be said that the structure of the family, resources, and practices at home play an important role in the participants' dropping out of the school. The changes in the family such as divorce, the death of a parent, separation, one or both parents' being away from the children due to work, may cause the family to change the home or the place of residence. Because these changes can cause school change, the social relationship of the student with the others may be impaired and this may lead to school failure and consequently school dropout (Özer, Gençtanırım & Ergene, 2011; Ream, 2005; Taş, Seviltopu, Bora & Demirkaya, 2013; Yorğun, 2014). In this study, too, the separation of the father from the family due to work, the lack of parental control or guidance needed by the child seemed to have caused the child to miss school activities or affected his / her behavior at school negatively.

The changes in the family could affect the academic life of the students and this could lead to school dropout because of the lack of guidance, monitoring, supervision of the child and the low-income level (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Öğülmüş, 2013; Pong & Ju., 2000). The expectation from the education of the children of the family is an important factor in the children's dropping out of the school. In this study, it is found that some participants were forced to get engaged as soon as they graduated from secondary school, some participants' families did not care about their educa-

tion and were not interested in their children's education, and some families forced their children to go to a school he/she did not want. These situations led some participants to school to drop out of school.

The greatest indicator of family resources is socio-economic status (SES). SES is an integrated structure which is based on measurements of human and financial resources such as parental education, occupational status, and family income. It has been found in the studies examining the relationship between SES and high school drop out that children from families with high SES have a lower school dropout ratio than other groups. This is also true for middle school dropout. (Ekström et al., 1986; Fernandez, Paulsen & Hirano-Nakanishi, 1989; Öğülmüş, 2013). For this study, it is found that some participants' families did not have the financial power to meet the child's educational expenses. Therefore, some participants stated that they had to work as well as going to school. Therefore, they could not fulfill the obligations required by the school and had to leave school.

As a social institution, school plays an important role in the individuals' dropping out of school. The social structure of a school affects academic achievement and the characteristics of the student directly or indirectly on the individual level (Gamoran, 1992; Kahlenberg, 2001). The school consists of students from different backgrounds. Thus, factors such as SES level of the students (Rumberger, 1995; Rumberger & Thomas, 2000); the ratio of students in the risk group (students who received bad grades, lectures, disciplinary problems, or class repeats) (Bryk & Thum, 1989; Rumberger, 1995; Rumberger & Thomas, 2000); the ratio of students from racial and linguistic minority (McNeal, 1997; Rumberger, 1995; Sander, 2001); the ratio of students who changed school (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005; Sander, 2001); the ratio of students from non-traditional families (Rumberger & Paladary, 2005) are influential in dropping out of school. In this study, it was seen that some participants left school due to the presence of delinquent and problematic students in their schools. It is thought that the composition of the school also plays a role in school dropouts.

The structure of the school can also be effective for the students to leave the school. Although the studies that examine the relationship between school size and school dropout have produced mixed results, some have found that the school dropout rate increases as the school size increases (Lee & Burkan, 2003; Marsh, 1991; Rumberger & Paladary, 2005). In this study, too, one participant complained that the school was overcrowded. This caused a lack of interaction between the students and the other individuals, so people did not care about each other. Thus, it can be thought that when the students' engagement with the school and the individuals within is low, their commitment to the school and education gets low.

Studies suggest that the positive relationship between student teachers reduces the likelihood of dropping out of school (Croninger & Lee, 2001; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005). In one study, it was found that one-third of the students who left the school bad relations with their teachers. Male students stated that they were outlasted more (Uysal, 2007). In this study, many of the participants also stated that the teachers' unconcerned, angry, humiliating and disdainful attitudes towards themselves caused their negative attitudes towards school and education. Some also said that these school principals behaved similarly. It can be said that the schools where the school dropout rate is higher are managed by principals with strong principal leadership (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005). In addition to these, some participants stated that they were having difficulties to follow some lessons. This may indicate that the lack of self-confidence in oneself, little academic effort, negative attitude towards the teacher and the school may lead to school dropout.

There are also strict rules and disciplinary issues among the reasons that led participants to leave the school. According to Özer, Gençtınırım, and Ergene (2011), disciplinary punishment, use of drugs and anti-social behavior are some of the reasons that increase the risk of dropping out of the school. In this study, it is possible to mention the effect of strict rules and disciplinary problems. Some participants complained that the rules could not be fully applied and that the lessons were sabotaged by some students. On the other hand, some participants stated that school rules were strictly executed, and students were treated badly. When these situations are evaluated, it can be said that bad management and not being able to implement school and disciplinary rules fairly may lead to school drop-out.

It is possible to talk about the effect of resources of the school on school dropout. Some participants stated that they tried to get help from the guidance service, but the counselor sometimes was not very willing to help them because of the lack of interest and information and sometimes because of the lack of experience. Therefore, they stated that they found the guidance service unnecessary and ineffective.

The society in which the school is located also has an impact on school dropout. The community in which the school is located (the groups that make up the community) usually is the reason why the students behave the way they do. In other words, society produces its own members. This is one of the main reasons why schools are affected by the community they are in. Some researchers argue that in a high-quality environment, the rate of dropping out of school

will decrease or vice versa (Crane, 1991). It can be argued that violence in the neighborhood also causes high school dropout (Fagan & Pabon, 1990; Grogger, 1997). In addition, the rate of school dropout was found to be higher in schools where students did not feel safe (Lee & Bryk, 1989; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005). In this study, some participants emphasized that both the school and the neighborhood were insecure and dangerous. The characteristics of the neighborhood especially led female students to drop out of school at an early age and grade rather than male students.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the individual reasons for school dropout are physical and psychological problems experienced by the individual, failures, changes of the teacher, negative attitudes and values towards the school, incompatible behaviors in the class and the school, absenteeism, school change, and low academic achievement. Therefore, it may be advisable to design and arrange schools according to the students' needs, physical disabilities or problems. To do so, some projects need to be organized by the governorship and the ministry to provide schools with financial aid. For students with psychological problems, the first place to go is the guidance service and counselors in a school. So, it is necessary to provide guidance service at schools which do not have a guidance service. It is necessary to provide the necessary support for these services so that they can work more effectively. For this purpose, it is important to appoint a counselor at every school. The change of teachers is another important problem especially in the east of Turkey. Some problems in the area cause teachers not to stay and work there and most of the teachers make efforts to be assigned to other schools. This situation affects student-teacher interaction in a negative way. This also makes it difficult for the student to engage with the school. This is also the case when a student changes the school. When the student changes the school, he or she must adapt to a new neighborhood, which can have negative consequences in terms of academic, social and emotional. The fact that the academic failures experienced in the previous stages are continuing in high school indicates that the participants seem to have failed to develop the necessary skills to be successful. For this, various personal and academic development programs can be developed for the students. Thus, students can gain an awareness of themselves and acquire the necessary skills for academic success.

The institutional causes of dropping out of school can be summarized as the family structure, practices in the family, resources of the family, composition, structure, practices, and resources of the schools, composition of the community and friends. The family plays an effective role in the school dropout. It is very important that parents should protect family integrity for the sake of their children. Because some families have no educational expectations from their children, they get their children to work or marry, they do not care about their children's education, they do not cooperate with the school. However, parent-school cooperation is very important to prevent children from dropping out of school. Therefore, raising the awareness of the families related their children's academic life is very important and for this purpose, some programs and projects for family development can be developed with the cooperation of schools and local governments. Families can be encouraged to participate in these programs. If the family is not willing to participate and cooperate with the school, the school and local governments can reach the family and find out the reasons for their indifference. Thus, necessary precautions can be taken for the education of the children and if necessary financial aid can be given to those who are in need. Institutional reasons also include the problems that students experience in the school. The rigidity of rules and disciplinary practices in a school can have negative consequences for students' engagement to the school. In this respect, the importance of professional development programs for teachers and managers cannot be denied. In schools where there are a lot of problem students, there is a need to implement holistic development programs for both students and school staff. In this regard, it will be useful to work together with national education directorates, to implement these programs, and to measure comparative outputs at the level of schools, staff, and students. The most important actors in dealing with problem students in schools are school counselors. For this reason, their professional and personal development need to be ensured and the attitudes of the students towards the guidance service need to be worked on. The community in which the school is located is especially important in terms of bringing students together from outside the school. The relationships that students establish with their peers and individuals outside the school, the common behaviors they exhibit, and the social networks they create can influence students' attitudes to school and education. The reason for this may be that the learner's feeling that they do not fit in the school or not treated as he/she was treated outside. Therefore, the various steps mentioned above should be taken to increase the engagement of the student to the school.

Acknowledgment

Authors thank the Ministry of National Education (MEB) for granting permission for this study.

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