

**THE ROLE OF FAMILIES IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS
AT SECONDARY EDUCATION****Nurcan ÖZKAN¹****ABSTRACT**

The achievement of a student is the progress the student makes in reaching the defined objectives in the school and the grade the student is and the courses she / he takes. However, it is evident that, in contemporary sense, the concept of achievement cannot be classified in terms of the academic success since it includes non-cognitive behaviors such as interests, personal qualities and attitudes as well as cognitive behaviors such as knowledge and skills. The student's achievement is mainly based on the contribution made by a family. The achievement of a student does not only occur as a result of a teacher-student interaction at school. The parents can make significant contributions to complete their children's school activities. In this study, the existing situations between the achievements of students, the attitudes of their families and the reasons of communication gap are investigated and some suggestions believed to have a positive effect on a student's success have been developed.

Key Words: Secondary Education, School, Student, Parent, Achievement.

ORTAÖĞRETİMDE ÖĞRENCİ BAŞARISINDA AİLENİN ROLÜ**ÖZET**

Öğrencinin başarısı, öğrencinin bulunduğu okul, sınıf ve derse göre belirlenmiş sonuçlara ulaşmada göstermiş olduğu ilerlemedir. Ancak çağdaş anlamda başarı kavramının akademik başarı ile sınıflandırılmayacağı, bilgi ve beceri gibi bilişsel davranışlar kadar, ilgiler, kişilik özellikleri ve tutumlar gibi bilişsel olmayan davranışları da içerdiği görülmektedir. Aile katılımı, öğrencilerin okul başarısına etki eden en önemli etmenlerden biridir. Öğrencilerin okul başarısı sadece okulda öğretmen - öğrenci etkileşimi sonucunda gerçekleşmemektedir.

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Ebeveynler de çocuklarına okuldaki etkinlikleri tamamlayıcı nitelikte çok önemli katkılar sunabilirler. Bu çalışmada, öğrenci başarısı-aile tutumu arasındaki mevcut durum, iletişim kopukluğunun sebepleri ve öğrenci başarısına etki edeceğine inanılan bazı öneriler geliştirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ortaöğretim, Okul, Öğrenci, Aile, Başarı.

1. Introduction

Families can affect their children's achievement by the situations they provide. They can contribute to their children's academic success significantly whether by the quality of communication they establish with them and the level of cooperation they have with the school. First of all, families need to know their children well in order to contribute to their children's school achievement and enable them to get prepared for life in a more qualified educational environment. It is obvious that parents do not give enough support for the improvement of school-family relationships. They also do not prepare their kids for life when they do not know their children well regarding their positive and negative behaviors, and the interests and desires their children have. In a research conducted by Diaz (1989)² it is verified that the most significant factor distinguishing the students with low academic success and with a risk of failing in the class from the other ones is that they are deprived of parents' support and care. Parents' strictness, inconsistency and conflict are obviously seen to be an important risk factor for underachievement at school. Eastman (1988)³, It is concluded that school success of the children of the families who support their children is higher in education.

According to a comprehensive study conducted by Jencks et al.1980 (Quoted Malkoç, 1991)⁴, the most important factor effecting school success is the family characteristics coming from the school environment. It is

² Diaz, S. L., "The Home Environment and Puerto Rican Children's Achievement: A Researcher's Diary", *The National Association for Education Conference*, Hulston, April-May 1989.

³ Eastman, B., *Family Involvement in Education*, Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction, January 1988.

⁴ Malkoç, G., "Qualification Improvement in Family Education", 1st Educational Search Symposium. Istanbul: Kültür College Publishing, 1993.

possible to say that more than a half of school success results from the family support according to the findings of this research.

The study conducted by Satır (1996)⁵ states that the students, who are given close attention by their families, whose study environment is designed and planned by their families, whose academic achievement is praised by their families, who are encouraged by saying “do not worry. If you study hard, you will be successful in the end” by their families when they fail, have a higher degree of academic success when compared with the other students.

Bilgin (1990)⁶, in his research related with school-family relationship and problems, found that although the teachers made successful works in developing good relations between school and the families, the parents had difficulties in enhancing the relations between school and parent. He also found that parental education is necessary for a good family-school relationship and for increasing student success in schools.

In another study conducted by Çelenk (2001)⁷, it is determined that the teachers express positive opinions about the parents who have close relations with the schools and their children are better than the other students. Teachers also want the parents to be educated in the schools in order to guide the students in a proper way.

The research done about the motherless children by Spitz 1960 and Bowlby 1949 show that the children grown up without their mothers have some certain physical and mental problems, even they could attempt suicide (Quoted Günce, 1983)⁸.

Hollingsworth and Hoover (1999)⁹ report that the positive attitudes that the children get from the schools can easily be deteriorated by the parents who are thought to be the teachers at home since they directly or indirectly educate their children. Thus, the today's teachers and trainers

⁵ Satır, S., *Determination of Parent Demands in Relation to Academic Success of Students in Tevfik Fikret High School*, A.U. Institute of Social Sciences (Unpublished Thesis), 1996.

⁶ Bilgin, M., *Parent-School Cooperations and Problems in Secondary Schools in Ankara Cities*, A.Ü. Institute of Social Sciences, Unpublished Phd Thesis, 1990.

⁷ Çelenk, S., *Contribution of Out-school Effects to Overall Success of Understanding in Primary School Writing Practices*. A.İ.B.Ü. Unpublished data, 2001.

⁸ Günce, G., ‘‘Child guiltiness and family’’, *Symposium on Child guiltiness and child courts*, Ankara University Publishing, 1983.

⁹ Hollingsworth P. M. and Hoover H. H., *Teaching Methods in Primary School* (Translated by Tanju Gürkan et al.), A. Ü. Publishing, 1999.

understand how important the parents are as the teachers' teachers at home.

Burns, Roe and Ross (1992)¹⁰ claim that good and regular communication between parents and teachers is very important. The tools for a good communication are writing letters to the parents about the facilities and activities at school and distributing brochures including school rules, school management and other necessary information.

For those who are developing into an adult, getting the karşı cins attention is much more important than the school success. Having a good time is more enjoyable than studying and doing homework. Being accepted as a member of a group becomes very important during this period. For this reason, they give importance on the things that are necessary to be a member of the related group. If the group includes the students who do not care about their schools and the courses, ultimately, it will effect the student who tend to show similar behaviors causing school success to go down. The group of pals has an affect on the development of a student's personality and moral values. Those who are under the influence of their friends are the students who are unlikely to be praised and whose behaviours are not welcomed at home (Düzen, 2010)¹¹.

The neglect of parents of the students toward school can be explained in the way that they could be unable to establish good communication with their children previously. The parents who do not take enough care of their children in pre-school period and are not concerned with their psycho-social and cognitive development but just content themselves with meeting their biological needs are not expected to show enough care to their children in school age. The quality and level of relationship between the parents and the child in pre-school period could provide important clues about the communication existing between the parents and school in school age. In this respect, the standard dimension of communication among parents and a child and its meaning for the child is important for their future. The children, who receive attention in the first years of their childhood, feel no emotional dissatisfaction, spend enough time with their parents whose responses are considered to be important could be said to be more healthier and amenable in every respect in school age.

¹⁰ Burns, C.P., Roe B.D. and Ross E.P., *Teaching Reading in Today's Elementary Schools*. Boston Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992.

¹¹ Düzen, S., Role of Family in Shool Success, www.aksarayram.gov.tr, 2010.

According to Balcı (1988)¹² the hypothesis that each student is able to learn and each teacher is able to teach underlies the concept of effective school being discussed intensively in the West since the second half of 20th century. However, the education in effective school is claimed to be the outcome of coordinative and effective efforts of parents, managers, teachers, and those others concerned, etc. The participation of parents appears as a complementary and supportive factor for the students to get academic achievement at school.

According to Özabacı (2005)¹³ home and family environments followed by individual characteristics, peers, school and teacher come in the first place in expressing the school failure of students. The studies on strengthening the communication between teachers and parents may not only augment the school success of the students but also prevent discipline problems in school.

Wrong attitudes, disinterests, pressures, strictness or too much attention of the parents cause students to cease to care for studying and feel scared and stressed (Küçükahmet, 2001)¹⁴.

Students staying in a dormitory or boarding school have more serious problems than those staying with their parents. The children growing in a family environment and having good communication with their parents were found to be in a better condition in terms of speaking skills, sentence length, number of questions, and vocabulary (Demirel, 2002)¹⁵.

2. Material and Method

A scale prepared to measure the impact of family on students' success in secondary education was applied to 100 families whose children were attending to the secondary schools in Çorlu, the biggest town in Tekirdağ and then, the data collected was assessed in percentages.

¹² Balcı, A., *Instrumental School*, Education and Science, 70, 21-30, 1988.

¹³ Özabacı, N., *Reasons of Academic Student Failure and Some Practical Resolution Advisory*, E Özet Eskişehir Eğitim Hizmetleri Merkezi, 2005.

¹⁴ Küçükahmet, L., *Schoolteaching Principles and Methods*, Ankara: Nobel Publishing, 2001.

¹⁵ Demirel, Ö., *Turkish Education*, Ankara: PeGemA Publishing, 2002.

3. Results

Each parent wants their children to be successful and believes that good education enables them to be successful. Table 1 shows what kind of success families expect from their children. Accordingly, approximately half of the families express that the success they expect from their children is to be successful in life.

Table – 1 The success expectancy of the families from their children in future %

Children success	37 %
Life success	45 %
School success	18 %
Job success	17 %
Family success	9 %
Career success	8 %
Undecided	3 %

Table 2 presents the most of the families established good communication that make their children happy and successful by decreasing the rate of anxiety, stress and panic.

Table –2 The relationship between the child and parents %

Type of communication between the child and parents	
Making oneself valuable	98 %
Making oneself worthless	2 %
General types of communication with the child in the family	
Breaking anxiety, stress and panic	85 %
Ascribing anxiety, stress and panic	15 %
The unconscious impact of the families on their children's success	
Support	97 %
Hinder	3 %

Table 3 displays the relationship between the environment and future of the child. It also shows that what their children expect from life is much more important than those of the other family members'.

Table – 3 The relation between the environment and future of the child %

The families' sense of life	
What their children want for their own life	92 %
Opinions of others	8 %

The research in table -4 points out whether the families observe their children's studying strategy or not.

Table – 4 The child's studying conditions %

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Is it clear what and why your child wants to learn? Does your child know the answer and the reason of the question that she/he is studying?	85%	8%	7%
Does your child teach each subject s/he reads by discovering the meaning and associate themselves with their past knowledge?	70%	10%	20%
Does your child sometimes check whether she/he remembers what they learn?	62%	25%	13%
Before starting a new subject, does your child revise basic concepts preceding this topic and could s/he correlate between the past and current knowledge?	65%	19%	16%

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In this research, 92 % of the families accept that successful people have some certain targets. They state that their children merely receive support from them for the future and they are aware of their responsibilities and involved in planning of their own lives. 5% of the families always

supervise and guide their children who are suspicious, insecure and afraid of planning of their own lives. On the other hand, 3% of the families are undecided about this case. In some families, there is no excessive discipline on the child; on the contrary, the child has too much freedom which is as dangerous as too much discipline. In this type of families, the child does not bear any responsibilities. Too much freedom and lack of guidance are also significant responsibility problems. The student coming from this kind of family cannot learn how to consult, investigate and get someone's opinion. The parents, who are excessive supervisors, on the other hand, have the right to comment on something in the name of their children without getting their children's opinion. Excessive discipline could lead to the lack of self-confidence and excessive indifference could bring about unreal self-confidence; both of them are also poor.

According to Table 1, the lives of the people being successful in life are meaningful and strong. If career and job success became an obsession, life success would be overshadowed and obstructed. The belief that school success automatically brings about career success is very common in our society. However, someone giving importance to meaningful and job success achieves not only what they do but also they have a happy family life.

Successful people have the desire and eagerness for being successful. The first thing to arouse the students' desire and eagerness is to respect them in the environment they are involved in. No decision should be taken on behalf of them. They should be listened when they speak. Their ideas and feelings should not be judged and the events told by them should also be evaluated in their perception. In this way, "Supportive Family" environment can be created as seen in many families in Table 2. In a "Hampering Family" environment, however, the limitations and responsibilities of a child are not respected because such families are not even aware of the limitations and responsibilities of the child. Each child is unique and was born with a glorious potential.

Families should try to understand what their children want to do by asking the questions and also where and how to use the information given to those questions. If they cannot realize and reply those questions in a clear way, it means that they are not aware of their own intention. In that case, their studies cannot be meaningful and efficient. Therefore, the first thing to do is that parents should help their children to determine the methods of studying and to discover the "reason" underlying their efforts. Children can get learning opportunities and improve themselves according to the results of

each experience. At the end of each experience, children should evaluate their experiences via questioning themselves about what they have done and they can do, how well they have done and they can do and what they have learned. Children should be observed to see whether they improve themselves or not.

According to the results presented in Table-4, most of the parents observed the studies of their children. The fact that students discover a way of studying, approaching to the information that helps them succeed that discovery, obtaining strategies and skills related to that information, applying these strategies and skills and evaluating these applications, learning from their mistakes if there is any will lead them towards life success. Two conditions should be fulfilled to teach those mentioned above; first, parents should have good communication with their children. Second, they should also internalize the mentioned above in their own lives.

There are supportive or negative attitudes that affect success in life. It is very important which ones someone tends to. It is the duty of parents to encourage the child and help them in struggling with difficult situations. Some of the negative attitudes are the feeling of quitting, shock, panic and pessimism, and some of those supporting attitudes are utilizing the opportunities, doing one's best and focusing on the right time and place.

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