



School Leak: An Evaluation Based on The Opinions of Teachers Working in Vocational and Technical Secondary Educational Institutions¹

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to determine the reasons for early leaving and what needs to be done to reduce early leaving in line with the opinions of teachers working in vocational and technical secondary schools. The research is a qualitative study, a phenomenological research model was used. A general framework has been drawn on the subject by scanning the existing literature. Research data were collected with a semi-structured interview form. In the analysis of the data, the descriptive analysis method, which is one of the qualitative data analysis techniques, was used. The findings obtained as a result of the analysis were interpreted by turning into tables in accordance with the purpose of the research. As a result of the findings, it is seen that the reasons for dropout of students are generally family and social environment. Divorced families, financial difficulties, and the negative attitude of the family towards vocational training are counted as early marriage among the reasons for family-related abandonment. They stated the reasons for school dropout related to social environment as negative friend circle, drug use, peer pressure and love hunger. The findings, which were requested by the ministry to prevent school dropout, were abolishing the 12-year compulsory education, decreasing the course hours, increasing the opportunities to find a job after school, and transferring the internship activities to the classes before the last year.

Keywords: Education, School, Drop-out, Vocational Education, Absenteeism

1. INTRODUCTION

In this part of the research, the status of the problem, the purpose and importance of the research, assumptions, scope and limitations, and definitions are given.

1.1. Problem Status

The school dropout problem, which has recently started to take place in the literature in Turkey; It causes serious failure due to personal, family and social factors. This situation causes great losses in the social and individual structure (Kronick, 1994). The decision to drop out brings with it a lower quality of life, a lower income, and the possibility of working in jobs that require less education compared to graduation (Doll & Hess, 2001; Ellenbogen & Chamberland, 1997; Ress & Mocan, 1997). This situation is also undesirable for the country's economy. These people, who cannot be classified as qualified workers, contribute less to the country's economy, pay less tax, need social assistance more, and therefore cause more taxes to be collected from all citizens for social assistance and other

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services to be provided to them (Campell, 2003; Orthner and Randolph, 1999; Tiggeman and Winefield, 1989).

Drop-out is also undesirable, as it is associated with reduced political participation, reduced intergenerational classroom mobility, and low health indicators (Hayes, Nelson, Tabin, Pearson, & Worthy, 2002). There has not been enough effort to address the problem of dropping out of school in Turkey and to carry out scientific or statistical studies on this issue. With the extension of compulsory education to twelve years, students were legally prevented from dropping out of school during the first eight years. However, it is also known that there are students who cannot benefit from education at all or drop out of school at any stage of compulsory education, in other words, there are students who are taken from school.

Students who take part in the education system and receive high school education have the right to drop out of their formal education voluntarily. In addition, there are regulations stating that students who cannot fulfill the requirements of the educational process or students who have behaviors that do not comply with the educational conditions will be excluded from the education system. In the 36th article of the "Regulation for Grade Passing and Examination of Secondary Education Institutions" numbered 2567, "students are a) those who fail to pass the class with a year-end grade due to their failure at the end of the average raising exams, b) those who fail to pass the class responsibly, c) those who are deemed unsuccessful due to absenteeism, repeat" phrase. In the 57th article of the same regulation, the statement "Students who repeat a grade for the second time during their education period are dismissed from the school at the end of the academic year" (Tebliğler Dergisi, 2004).

Similarly, the disciplinary regulation applied in secondary education institutions requires the student to be dismissed from the school under certain conditions (Resmi Gazete, 2007; 26408). In the light of this information, it means that the concept of dropping out of school encompasses all of the phenomena such as dropping out, being expelled from school, and being dismissed from school.

In vocational and technical secondary education, the attendance of students to school is of great importance in order to achieve the goals of education and training. The results of the studies show that absenteeism is related to many issues such as success, school dropout, crime and harmful substance use (MEB, 2017). Education is among the most basic needs of individuals and meeting them is among the priorities of societies. As a requirement of the social state understanding, governments are developing new methods and techniques every day to meet the educational needs of their citizens.

The concept of compulsory education is a situation that emerged from these searches. With the decisions taken in the 2012-2013 academic year, the compulsory education period in Turkey was increased to 12 years. Primary, secondary and high school education, which has become compulsory, has brought with it various problems. The most important of these problems, the problem of school attendance, has become one of the factors that most affect the quality of education. The rate of absentee students for 20 days or more is 6.2% in primary school, 10.6% in secondary school and 6.9% in imam hatip secondary school. In secondary education level, it is significantly higher than primary and secondary school. It is 30% in general secondary education, 40% in vocational and technical secondary education, and 31% in Anatolian imam hatip high schools (MEB, 2019).



Considering the absenteeism and dropout rates in Turkey, it is understood that vocational and technical secondary education institutions have the highest absenteeism and dropout rates. The rate of absentee students for 20 days or more is seen as 2016: 39.9%, 2017: 39.8% (ERG, 2018).

When students are not peaceful and happy in the school environment, they prefer to stay away from school and turn to other alternatives that will make them happy. The circle of friends outside the school may be more attractive to them and they may prefer to leave the school with the influence of this environment. Some of the teachers' views see financial impossibilities and the family's attitude towards school as a reason for leaving school.

Many methods are applied in order to ensure the attendance of students who do not want to attend school at the age of compulsory education. This situation, which is called absenteeism or dropout, results in not completing the compulsory education period. The problem of leaving school is more common in Vocational and Technical Secondary Education Institutions, which are more numerous than other types of schools and have lower academic success and social adaptation skills. The concept of leaving school, which is the main subject of the research, will be examined by referring to the opinions of teachers working in Vocational and Technical Secondary Education Institutions. Considering the rate of young population in our country, the increasing dropout rate every year; A solution will be sought through the opinions of teachers who spend the most time with students, who can understand them the most, and who have the ability to interpret the reasons behind their behavior.

1.2. Purpose of the research

The aim of this research is in vocational and technical secondary education institutions; The purpose of this study is to determine the reasons why students drop out of school according to the opinions of teachers working in vocational and technical secondary education institutions. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought.

1. What are the reasons for school dropout?
2. What kind of work do you do to prevent school dropout?
3. What should be done systematically to prevent school dropouts?

1.3. Importance of Research

Although there is the opportunity to benefit from the right to education, which is constitutionally guaranteed and provided free of charge; Ensuring that students who cannot use this right voluntarily or for other reasons can use these rights reveals the importance of this research. There are approximately two million students enrolled in vocational and technical secondary education in Turkey. It is inevitable that absenteeism rates are high in an area where student density is so high. The fact that our young people, who are the guarantee of our future, leave the education system against their will, or worse, on their own will, increases the importance of our research even more.

1.4. Hypothesizes

It is assumed that the data collection tool is sufficiently comprehensive and capable of revealing opinions.



It is assumed that the teachers whose ideas were consulted answered the questions in the interview form sincerely and with the awareness that we are looking for a solution to an issue that concerns our own future.

1.5. Limitations

The limitations of this study are as follows;

- The findings of this study are limited to the opinions of teachers working in vocational and technical secondary schools in Samsun, Çarşamba District in the 2022-2023 academic year.
- It is limited to the questions asked in the interview form.

1.6. Definitions

School Dropout: It is the situation of leaving the compulsory education system without obtaining a diploma, except for reasons such as health problems and death that cannot continue education (Özdemir et al. 2010).

Dropout Rate: It is the ratio of the number of students who attended school in the previous academic year but did not attend the next academic year (Özdemir et al. 2010).

Dropout Child: It is a child who leaves compulsory education without a diploma, except for reasons such as a health report or death (Özdemir et al. 2010).

School Management: School administration is the application of educational administration to a limited area. The boundaries of this field are determined by the aims and structure of the education system. The duty of the school administration is to keep the school alive in accordance with its aims by using all human and material resources in the school in the most efficient way. Successful fulfillment of this task by the school principal depends on seeing the school as a system of roles and adjusting his behavior by taking into account the roles and expectations of the teachers and other personnel with whom he is always associated (Bursalıoğlu, 1987).

Social Relationship: It is called a social bond that lasts for a while between at least two people who are aware of each other, has a meaningful and specific purpose (TDK, 2019).

Socio-economic: It is the situation that concerns both the social and economic fields or the relations between them at the same time (TDK, 2019).

2.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this part of the study, the theoretical framework related to the subject is given. In this context, the definition of absenteeism, its reasons and absenteeism in vocational education in Turkey are examined.

2.1. The Concept of Absenteeism

Absenteeism causes the start of a process that limits the right to education and even affects the child's leaving school. Ensuring the attendance of children at the age of compulsory education to school is the common responsibility of all stakeholders in education. Elimination of absenteeism is possible through raising awareness of all stakeholders about absenteeism and early leaving, and through joint initiatives and efforts of these stakeholders to eliminate the reasons for absenteeism (Ögel, 2011).



In other words, absenteeism is a student attitude that can be caused by many factors such as family, environment, cultural, social and individual factors and is not thought to affect the academic success of the student negatively. Absenteeism is defined as not coming to school without an excuse during the school term. Absenteeism occurs in two ways: students studying in educational institutions come to school from time to time or not at all. intermittent absence; this is the type of absenteeism that happens when students sometimes come to their school and sometimes don't. Continuous absence; It is the situation where the student does not come to school continuously, even though the attendance is sufficient (Gül, Kiran and Nasirsi. 2016: 925).

In the study of Şanlı et al. (2015: 161), the reasons for students' absence from school; states that they are absent from school due to personal problems or their parents, school environment, school management and teachers. Students; It is said that schools should be much more fun, there should be more social activities, block classroom practices should be finished, teachers should show more attention to their students, a health specialist and teachers should be more tolerant in schools. Altinkurt (2008: 129),

on the other hand, determines the reasons for students' irregular attendance and their effects on their academic performance. According to the findings of the study, there is an opposite relationship between academic performance and absenteeism without an acceptable excuse. Regarding the concept of early leaving, it is an educationally undesirable outcome for any student in the education system to decide not to continue their education or to leave the process by failing to continue their education. This situation, which is called "dropping out" or "dropping out", is defined as the inability of the student who continues education to complete his/her education level due to various negative reasons (Dekkers & Claassen, 2001).

2.2. Absenteeism in Vocational and Technical Secondary Education Institutions

Absenteeism rate is high in vocational and technical secondary education institutions throughout Türkiye. In particular, the rate of grade retention and dropout seems to be higher in the ninth grade. The problem of dropping out or absenteeism in high schools is seen as an important problem for developed and developing countries. In particular, students with low academic achievement tend to drop out of school. In addition, poverty and maladaptive behaviors increase the risk of dropping out of school. A student who is in the process of making a decision to leave the school loses his/her desire to participate in educational and social activities related to the school. It is emphasized that in this period, which is defined as the school refusal period, personal and social problems can be observed in students. However, depending on the school leaving conditions, conflicts between students and school staff, lack of academic progress, serious behavioral problems and failure, combined with the student's incompatibility, show that a process that leads to dropping out of school begins (Güngör, 2019: 10).

2.3. Reasons for Absenteeism

In the literature, it is seen that there are many studies on absenteeism or school dropout and they show multidimensionality. It is seen that the reasons for school absences or dropouts are family, school, student and social environment. When scientific and academic studies are examined, the reasons for students not attending school are listed below (Şanlı, Altun, & Tan, 2015: 163-164).



- The main factors causing absenteeism are the student's health problems and fear of failure.
- The student's refusal to go to school due to many psychological problems, in other words, her unwillingness to attend school, also results in absenteeism and dropping out of school.
- It is also seen that the parents of the students are also effective in absenteeism. For example, it has been determined that parents who take care of their children and cooperate with the school are effective in ensuring their children's success, motivation and regular participation.
- In families with financial problems, the fact that children's educational needs are not adequately met and even the fact that the child has to work causes significant absenteeism from school. For example, the most important factors that cause students to exhibit absenteeism behaviors are the lack of self-confidence as a result of poverty and causes their children to be absent.
- In parallel with the impact of familial factors on absenteeism, the friendship environment and the social environment in the living environment may also play a role in absenteeism. For example, it is stated that those who are unsuccessful, absent, not attending school, addicted to drugs and committing crimes are most at risk.
- The fact that students do not get enough support from the school, that there is a lot of illegal behavior at school and that they are victimized increase the probability of absenteeism.
- Finally, studies have also investigated whether the gender difference affects school absenteeism and dropout. Although absenteeism and drop-outs can be seen in both gender groups, it is observed that males are higher in absenteeism from school in Turkey.

In this context, the reasons for dropout and absenteeism were examined under four sub-headings in this study, and these reasons are summarized below as family-based, school-based, student-based and social environment-based reasons.

2.3.1. Family Caused Reasons

Family culture can also be the basis of success or failure in school. It is stated that a family with a low socioeconomic level may be weak in supporting the school activities of the student and the parents will be insufficient in home education activities. On the other hand, in families with high socioeconomic status, mentoring support (life coach, group leader, etc.) is provided for educational activities in addition to family support, and this creates a gap in educational opportunities. In addition to these, behavior patterns in the individual are first learned in the family environment. For this reason, it is emphasized that the education level and life culture of the family are reflected in the behavior patterns of the students, and the participation and support of the family supports the sustainability of academic success at school. Therefore, it is stated that parental attachment at home, parents' education level and contribution to educational activities may be effective in students' behaviors such as dropping out and not attending school. Demographic factors that cause school dropout or absenteeism can be listed as the education level of the parents, the profession of the parents, other income sources of the family, and the ethnic origins of the families. Factors affecting the decision to leave school in terms of family characteristics, family size and structure, socioeconomic level of the family, different mother tongue, and the family's belief compatibility are also effective in absenteeism.



On the other hand, students living in a broken family structure in adolescence are more likely to drop out and be absent from school than children from families living together, since they have less support in school activities. While students with higher household incomes are more likely to attend school, the children of poor families are more likely to drop out of school as their age increases (Hoşgörr and Polat, 2015: 26).

2.3.2. School-Based Reasons

Reasons related to school are low academic achievement, dislike of school, expulsion from school with disciplinary punishment, finding school objectionable, insufficient attendance and disciplinary problems. In some studies, school-related factors are considered as cognitive factors, for example, note-taking, low academic achievement, consistently low exam grades, non-purposeful reasons are accepted as reasons for dropping out. In another study, the reasons for dropping out were the absence of sociocultural activities, excessive course load, the difficulty of the lessons, negative friendships, and school dropout and absenteeism in case of mockery by friends. It is underlined that students who drop out of school generally have a weak academic record at school and are more likely to repeat the course. In addition, it is stated that students who are at risk of dropping out of school may receive disciplinary punishments due to in-school behavior problems, may be reluctant to participate in school activities, and may decrease due to the shortening of individual attention periods in teaching classes. It is also said that the reasons for dropping out or absenteeism from school according to the school structure are related to the student-teacher ratio. It is also observed that the risk of dropping out is higher in large schools (Güngör, 2019: 26-27).

2.3.3. Student-Based Reasons

There are many reasons for student absenteeism and dropout. The most common of these are marriage and pregnancy, being older than their classmates, physical disability, ethnicity, illness or ongoing health problems, violence at school, drug and alcohol addiction, and sensory characteristics of the student (Bayhan and Dalgıç, 2012: 108). Students; Having to work outside of school, psychological disorders, not being sufficiently motivated due to dissatisfaction with school and future anxiety can cause absenteeism (Altınkurt, 2008: 131).

2.3.4. Reasons Based on Social Environment

Problems encountered in students' relationships with friends, teachers, family and people in the area they live in can cause deviations and negative attitudes in their social relationships. Dropout or absenteeism seems to be related to the social environment as well. At the macro-social level, it is underlined that dropouts and absenteeism occur more frequently in settings where school performance is not highly valued (for example, where school is in low socioeconomic status). On the other hand, the fact that extracurricular activities are more attractive, the student thinks of the external environment as a more free and less regulated place makes it easier for students in the risk group to drop out or be absent from school (Güngör, 2019: 33).

Various groups of friends around the student have an impact on student behavior. Students may not be present to enter or stay in a group due to group dynamics. In addition, physical reasons such as the student's departure from school can also be the reason for absenteeism (Altınkurt, 2008: 131).



2.4. Absenteeism in Vocational Education in Turkey

There are many studies in the literature with absenteeism. Among these studies, the ones on vocational high schools are summarized below.

Taş, Selvitopu, Bora, and Demirkaya (2013: 1551) examine the reasons for dropout of vocational high school students. In the study, it is emphasized that dropouts increase more after compulsory education is introduced and students in vocational high schools drop out of school every year due to reasons such as absenteeism, low school success, and grade repetition. School dropout is a phenomenon that has more than one reason rather than one. Altınkurt (2008: 131), in his research on the causes of absenteeism and the effect of absenteeism on academic success; It has been concluded that it is caused by school management, teachers, family, environment, academic anxiety and personal reasons.

Reasons for absenteeism; Parenting style of families and social and economic situation of families, family relations and domestic violence, labeling of the youth, substance abuse of the youth and his family, lack of life of the young person and the rigor of his thoughts about life bring about absenteeism from school. Parents' separation, the inadequacy of the family's economic situation, neglect of the child's education by the family, the family's failure to provide the necessary conditions for the child to attend school, and the child's inability to prepare for school are among the reasons for absenteeism. The circle of friends, which negatively affects the participation of students in educational experiences, can be classified as individuals who are separate from the formal education system, have bad habits and do not have a positive view on education. Among the most important reasons for absenteeism caused by students are any illness they experience and the fear of missing grades. It has been determined that variables such as teacher support, participation in classroom activities and decisions, peer commitment, clarity of rules, and organization of the classroom and school, which are the characteristics of a positive climate, are related to students' and teachers' commitment to academic achievement. Maintaining the student's interest and attention in classroom life depends on whether they are excluded from learning experiences. The meaningful continuation of social life in the classroom environment is ensured by the participation of each student. Schools need to be enriched in terms of activities that emphasize the cognitive, affective and dynamic development of children. School safety is when students feel physically, psychologically and emotionally free. Bullying students intimidate other students with their words and behaviors, deprive them of their right to free education, thus causing other children to feel insecure and generally continue from school (Adıgüzel and Karadaş, 2013: 52).

3.CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, the reasons for school dropout in vocational and technical secondary education institutions and suggestions to be made to reduce it are given.

Results on the Causes of School Dropout

Absenteeism is the most common problem in education. Attendance at school is very important for a student in education life. Because absenteeism, except for certain health or serious problems, affects the education life of the student. Therefore, the reasons for absenteeism and solutions for these reasons are very important.

When the family-related reasons for school dropout are considered, results such as divorced families, financial difficulties, negative attitudes of the family towards vocational



education, early marriage, cultural differences and the family's employment of the student emerge.

When the reasons of school dropout related to social environment are taken into consideration, it emerges as negative friend circle, drug use, peer pressure and love hunger.

The reasons for school dropout are the lack of desire to read, the tendency to take it easy, low basic education and not finding school fun.

Within the scope of practices aimed at preventing school dropout, studies for families are listed as parent meetings, parent visits, one-on-one interviews and parent information seminars.

Studies conducted for students to prevent early leaving are listed as guidance studies, efforts to make the school attractive, incentives, simplification and simplification.

On the other hand, studies for the institution emerged as improving physical facilities, organizing parent meetings, organizing social sports activities and conducting guidance studies.

The studies required to be done at the ministry level to prevent school dropouts are listed as abolishing 12-year compulsory education, reducing course hours, increasing job opportunities after school, and transferring internship activities to classes before the last year.

Things to be done at the level of provincial national education directorates; There are results such as offering job opportunities to graduates in their own province, increasing the schooling rate, increasing the schooling rate, reviewing the project activities, reducing the paperwork, focusing on the causes and conducting guidance studies.

The studies to be done at the level of the district national education directorates are listed as orientation studies, security measures, reducing the workload of schools, and helping students in setting goals.

Suggestions

While parental indifference, economic inadequacy, education level, domestic violence and health problems are the leading causes of familial reasons, in relation to the social environment, the circle of friends, wrong examples in the environment and negative habits such as drugs are at the forefront. Students and parents should be made aware of the necessity of education and should be informed correctly. Social media, academic failure, mental deficiencies, and lack of future plans are in the first place among student-related problems. Vocational high schools should especially be encouraged. Within the scope of these incentives, after-school job opportunities should be offered. Parent meetings and home visits were emphasized by almost all the interviewees as well as suggestions to prevent school dropout. In addition, it is important to increase the motivation of students with adaptation studies for students. Finally, it is important for institutions to engage in encouraging and rewarding behaviors by conducting social activities for students. It is extremely important for students with problems to be rehabilitated so that they can be integrated into the system.

Within the scope of systemic recommendations, it is suggested that the Ministry should abolish compulsory education in high schools and that the curriculum should be updated. On a ministerial basis, the curriculum should be overhauled. The necessity of



updates, especially within the scope of EU directives, is important. Continuing compulsory education is also important. Within the scope of the Provincial and District Directorate of National Education, it is recommended that they give priority to guidance services, conferences, seminars, projects and encouraging social activities. In vocational high schools, more practice than theory should be given so that students can start working quickly after education.

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