

## CAUSES OF SCHOOL FAILURE FROM TEACHER AND STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

In this research, the aim is to determine causes of the failure in a school that was placed second to last as per TEOG average scores despite being located in Burdur city center. This research is in descriptive research model, and a mixed study designed according to both quantitative and qualitative research approach. Study group of the research consists of 11 school teachers and 171 students of the school in question. In the research, quantitative data was collected from students through the causes of failure determination survey, and qualitative data was obtained from teachers through open-ended questions. Quantitative data was examined with descriptive analyses and chi-square test, qualitative data was examined through content analysis. As a result of analyses, it is clearly understood that causes of students' failure show so much diversity. It has been observed that causes such as inability to ask questions to teachers on issues students do not understand, quickly forgetting what they learn and inability to take good notes show significant difference as per upper and lower success group, and that students pull such situations to forefront as reasons for failure. As a result of the content analysis, it is understood that teachers explain causes of failure under themes of family, student and school.

**Keywords:** Causes of failure, mixed study designed, school, teacher and student's perspective.

### INTRODUCTION

Together with social development and change, it is widely accepted that development in every field can be achieved through education. In this respect, we can say that the success achieved in educational practices plays an important role in the level of development and ensuring the continuation of development, and future and place in the world of both individuals and countries can be determined through education (Eğitim Reformu Girişimi [ERG], 2010; Program for International Student Assessment [PISA], 2009a; Özsoy, 2009). Thus, in a country, it is necessary to prevent failure of schools under the roof of its system to provide qualified education to the whole society rather than a certain section of it.

Since education is a complex process based on mutual interaction of many factors, school failure is known to be based on different and versatile reasons. According to researches carried out in this context, the reasons for failure are explained with not only characteristics related to family and school but also individual characteristics of students, school resources and institutional environment are known to affect educational outcomes (Ammermüller, Heijke and Wößmann 2005; Bean, Bush, McKenry, and Wilson, 2003; Crossley 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain'ine, 2005). However, regardless of its reason, an individual's failure in developing his/her behaviors is a great loss for family, country and further for humanity. In this respect, better success line for each school is not an option but an obligation. This obligation makes it inevitable to question these institutions and the education offered in these institutions. In addition questioning the education system as a whole, standard tests towards determination of student success at

national and international level are employed (Hanushek and Wößmann, 2007; Munoz, 2000). One of tests applied in this respect is the Exam of Transition from Primary to Secondary Education (TEOG)<sup>1</sup>. In Turkey, transition from primary education to secondary education is conducted based on this exam. TEOG exam is considered important both from the point of revealing academic success of students of primary education in special level and revealing success of schools and cities in Turkey at general level, even this exam is considered as a criterion.

In TEOG exams, Burdur province is one of cities with the highest success rate. TEOG exam average in Burdur is 328,632 in 2014. 2014 TEOG average of schools in province in question varies between 439.26 and 242.93. The school subject to the research is located in Burdur city center and has an average TEOG score of 264.69. With this score, the school in question is placed 75th among 76 schools in province, and 24th among 25 schools in city center. In consideration of these data, we can say that school's TEOG success is quite low and even lagged behind most village schools. However, according to some researches, school location in rural areas has a significant effect on assessment test scores. School located in settlements with a population of 15,000 and less remain significantly behind in test results. Rural area factor especially causing significant differences in math test scores has an effect in reading and science test scores similar to the significance threshold in math test. All these reasons make it necessary to find answers to questions like "What makes a school more successful than the other?", "Why do schools located in similar residential areas fail in achieving similar success line?". Scanning the field literature on the subject, although it is in evidence that number of researches conducted on school success, it is observed that number of researches directly addressing school failure is limited in Turkey (Akbaba Altun, 2009; Büyükkaragöz, 1990; Can, 1992; Olcay and Dös, 2009; Özabacı and Acat, 2005 and Birtil 2011). In some of these researches, causes of failure were found based on opinions of high school students and analyzed with descriptive analyses (Olcay and Dös, 2009) through data mining technique (Birtil, 2011). In another study, the aim was to determine causes of school failure based on socioeconomic differentiation. In this study that has quantitative research design, opinions of primary education students, parents and teachers were used (Özabacı and Acat, 2005). In the qualitative research conducted by Akbaba-Altun (2009), causes of failure were tried to be described from the point of teachers, parents and students. However, effects on inputs used in education on student success may vary according to the time of survey, country or region (Fuller & Clarke, 1994). In addition, schools are different from each other and they may show failure in different cases. In this regard, it is important to conduct school-based studies to clarify the reasons behind failure of each school in reaching the intended success. Researches in this direction are important in terms of determining variables that led to school failure and using necessary intervention tools towards these failures by considering suitable subjective conditions of the school. In this respect, this research is considered important since it will serve as a data source for educational policy and practitioners as researchers of similar subjects, students and parents. With reference to all these facts, in this study, the aim is to determine causes of the failure in a school that was placed second to last as per TEOG average scores despite being located in Burdur city center. In line with the general objective, the following questions are tried to be solved.

- 1) How do socio-economic characteristics of the students range?
- 2) What are the reasons for failure according to students' opinions?
- 3) Do causes for students' failure differ significantly based on success status?
- 4) What are the causes of failure according to teachers' opinions?

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<sup>1</sup> TEOG exam aim at determining student's success not based on instant performance but by extending over a large period of time. To this end, one of exams for Turkish, Math, Science and Technology, Religion and Morals, Foreign Languages and Turkish History and Kemalism applied in the 8th grade cyclically is carried out among all students. Students' 6th, 7th and 8th grade year-end success scores and their 8th grade weighted common test scores are collected. The resulting sum is divided into two to obtain the score basis for placement. Grading is made over full score of 500 points. For detailed information, see Directive Regarding Transition to Secondary Education by Ministry of National Education.

## METHOD

### Research Model

In this research, the descriptive research model was used to determine causes of students' academic failure. This research is a mixed study designed according to both quantitative and qualitative research approach.

### Study Group

Study group of the research consists of students and teachers of the school in question. In the research, data was collected from 11 teachers and 171 students participated on a voluntary basis. Of teachers in the study group, 3 are female and 8 are male; their ages range from 32 to 43. One teacher from Physical Education, Social Studies, Math and Turkish Language branches presented opinions. One of the teachers has worked in this school for 3 months, another one for 8 years, and others have worked here for 1-4 years. Except two teachers, other teachers have been a teacher for at least 10 years. Only one of teachers graduated from master degree and others from bachelor's degree. 18.1% of students participated in the study attend the fifth grade; 24.6% of them to the sixth grade, 35.7% to the seventh grade and 21.6% of them to the eighth grade. 51.5% of the students are female, 48.5% of them were male with their ages ranging from ages 11 to 15.

### Data Collection Tool and Data Collection Process

In the study, two different measurement tools were employed. The first tool is "Determining Causes of Failure Survey" used to detect causes of students' failure conducted by Burdur Counseling and Research Center. This survey contains 44 items. Opinions of three field experts and one measurement and evaluation expert were consulted about whether expressions in items contain expressions of failure causes, whether they resemble with other items and whether they are consistent or not. In accordance with these reviews, some items were eliminated, and in some items, necessary arrangements in terms of statements and expression were applied. To put the measurement tool into its final form, preliminary application was applied on a total of twenty students including five students from each grade from another secondary school with similar student profile. As a result of this application, incomprehensible items were eliminated, and number of items was reduced to 30. In the survey, items towards determining demographic characteristics along with causes of failure were used. Another data used in the study was gathered from teachers through open-ended questions. In the questionnaire form, participants were asked the following question: "What do you think about causes of low TEOG achievement in your school? Please write in detail." To collect qualitative data for the research, the researcher contacted with teachers and informed them about the subject and presented the questionnaire in an envelope. Teachers were asked to put the questionnaire into envelope back after finishing answering questions and submit it to the teacher assisting the researcher. In the research, to ensure participants express themselves more comfortably and to reach more participants in a little while, this kind of data collection method was preferred.

### Data Analysis

In the study, descriptive analyzes were used to determine causes of failure based on students' answers and to describe characteristics of participants. Using chi-square test, it was analyzed whether causes of failure showed significant differences from the point of success based on students in upper and lower groups. Data obtained from teachers through open-ended questions were analyzed using content analysis. Within the framework of content analysis, firstly, the researcher read answers given to open-ended questions and determined codes and themes. Then a field and measurement-assessment expert was hired to determine codes and themes independently. By determining codes and themes with disagreement, another field expert was consulted regarding the situation. Based on the expert opinion, a secondary reading was carried out by the researchers, and codes and themes were put into their final form. Frequency values for the distribution of codes were calculated. In cases where it was necessary in the interpretation of the findings, opinions of participants were quoted. When participants' opinions were quoted as exact, participants were coded in the form of T1, T2, ....

## FINDINGS

In this part of the research, each research questions is discussed as a subheading by paying attention to research questions.

### 1) Socio-economic characteristics of students

Socio-economic characteristics of students are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of students according to their year-end scores

			Year-End Score <sup>2</sup>					
			169 and lower		70 up to 84		85 and higher	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
Parents' Education	Illiterate	Father	2	2.9	1	1.6	0	0.0
		Mother	2	2.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Primary School	Father	32	45.7	24	38.7	9	23.1
		Mother	45	64.3	38	61.3	23	59.0
	Secondary School	Father	25	35.7	14	22.6	11	28.2
		Mother	14	20.0	13	21.0	10	25.6
	High School	Father	10	14.3	20	32.3	16	41.0
		Mother	8	11.4	9	14.5	6	15.4
	University	Father	1	1.4	3	4.8	3	7.7
		Mother	1	1.4	2	3.2	0	0.0
Working Status	Unemployed	Mother	42	60.0	37	59.7	29	74.4
		Father	1	1.5	2	3.3	2	5.4
Number of Siblings	2 or fewer		62	88.6	55	88.7	35	89.7
	3 and more		8	11.4	7	11.3	4	10.3
Average Monthly Family Income	Less than TRY 1000		46	65.7	32	51.6	20	51.3
	Between TRY 1000 and 2000		13	18.6	17	27.4	10	25.6
	Higher than TRY 2000		11	15.7	13	21.0	9	23.1
Family Help Receiving Status (Food, fuel, other)			10	14.3	8	12.9	2	5.1
Private Teaching Institution of Student and Price	Goes to Private Teaching Institution		1	1.4	10	16.1	5	12.8
	Private Teaching Institution Fee Less than TRY 1000		0	0.0	2	3.2	0	0.0
	Private Teaching Institution Fee Higher than TRY 1000		1	1.4	8	12.9	5	12.8

According to Table 1, both parents of 2.9% of students with year-end score of 69 and lower are illiterate. Mothers of 64.3% of students and fathers of 45.7% of students are primary school graduates. Father of 14.3% of students and mothers of 11.4% of them are high school graduates, and only parents of 1.4% of them are college graduates. Among students with a year-end score of 70 to 85 points, 1.6% of them have illiterate fathers, and fathers of 38.8%, mothers of 61.3% of them are primary school graduates. Fathers of 32.3%, mothers of 14.5% of students are high school graduates, and fathers of 4.8% and mothers of 3.2% of them are college graduates. Students with a score of 85 and above have parents at least graduated from primary school. While fathers of 23.1% and mothers of 59% these students are primary school graduates, fathers of 41% and mothers of 15.4% of them are high school graduates, and fathers of 7.7% are college graduates.

Generally, students are the only child in the family or have two brothers (69 and lower for 88.6%, 70-84 for 88.7%, 89.7% for 85 and above). Analyzing students' parental working conditions, it is understood that

<sup>2</sup> Year-end score categories are determined based on provisions on granting Certificates of "Achievement" and "Excellence" by the Ministry of Education Regulation on Pre-Preschool Education and Primary School Education Institutions.

mothers of many students are housewives (60% for 60 and lower, 59.7% for 70-84, 74.4% for 85 and higher) and fathers of some students are unemployed (1.5% for 69 and lower, 3.3% for 70-84, 5.4% for 85 and higher). Parents of 65.7% of students with low scores have a family monthly income of less than TRY 1000. Nearly half of students with a score of 70 and higher have a monthly income of more than TRY 1000. Students' parents receive assistance from different institutions and organizations (14% for 69 and lower, 13% for 70-84, 5% for 85 and higher points). Students from each score group receive support from private educational institutions outside the school or receive private tuition. Only 1.4% of students with lower scores receive support from another private institutions outside the school and pay an average fee higher than TRY 1000 annually. The ratio of students taking courses increases slightly among students with higher scores (16.1% for 70-84 score, 12.8% for 85 and higher). Nearly 13% of students in each group spends an average of TRY 1000 for this purpose.

## 2) Reasons for failure according to students' opinions

Results related to reasons for failure according to students' opinions are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Causes of failure

Causes of failure	Success Status						Total	
	69 and Lower		Between 70-84		85 and Higher			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
My family being too much crowded	4	5.7	1	1.6	-	-	5	2.9
My family failing in assisting me	11	15.7	11	17.7	5	12.8	27	15.8
My health deteriorated	4	5.7	1	1.6	2	5.1	7	4.1
Lack of a separate study room	22	31.4	18	29	7	17.9	47	27.5
I live apart from my family	2	2.9	2	3.2	-	-	4	2.3
My family unnecessarily urges me to study	9	12.9	10	16.1	6	15.4	25	14.6
I cannot behave freely since my family is highly authoritative	7	10	11	17.7	5	12.8	23	13.5
My family do not show interest in me	7	10	3	4.8	2	5.1	12	7
I cannot understand what teacher tells	18	25.7	9	14.5	5	12.8	32	18.7
I am shy about asking question to my teachers on issues I cannot understand	31	44.3	24	38.7	5	12.8	55	32.2
I quickly forget what I learn	27	38.6	22	35.5	6	15.4	60	35.1
I cannot understand what I read	10	14.3	3	4.8	2	5.2	15	8.8
I cannot express in writing what I know	14	20	12	19.4	3	7.7	29	17
I cannot express in word what I know	8	11.4	8	12.9	2	5.1	18	10.5
I am not rewarded when I am successful	7	10	10	16.1	3	7.7	20	11.7
I am not interested in some courses	25	35.7	21	33.9	9	23.1	55	32.2
I cannot follow courses watchfully since our class is crowded	-	-	-	-	1	2.6	1	0.6
Information given in courses is useless	4	5.7	2	3.2	2	5.1	8	4.7
I do not know good study methods	15	21.4	19	30.6	13	33.3	47	27.5
I cannot spare time to study because of duties given by my family	14	20	10	16.1	5	12.9	29	17
My teachers deliver subjects monotonously	8	11.4	5	8.1	4	10.3	17	9.9
Unrest in my family	3	4.3	1	1.6	-	-	4	2.3
I cannot focus on subject while studying since I think other things	16	22.9	16	25.8	6	15.4	38	22.2
My place in the classroom is not suitable for following courses	20	28.6	18	29	7	17.9	45	26.3
Not enough interest from my teachers	6	8.6	4	6.5	1	2.6	11	6.4
I do not like studying	5	7.1	3	4.8	-	-	8	4.7
I cannot take good notes in courses	16	22.9	4	6.5	4	10.3	24	14

I do not have friends to study together	18	25.7	10	16.1	3	7.7	26	15.2
Financial status of my family is insufficient	10	14.3	9	14.5	7	17.9	15	8.8
My previous knowledge not enough	9	12.9	4	6.5	2	5.1	45	26.3

Analyzing Table 2, although reasons for failure differ much among students, students mostly explain failure with lack of support from parents (15.8%), lack of a separate study room (27.5%), inability to understand what teacher tells (18.7%), inability to ask questions to teachers in subjects he/she does not understand (% 32.2), immediately forgetting what they learn (35.1%), no interest in some courses (32.2%), unaware of good study methods (27.5%), inability to spare time to study because of duties given by parents (17%), thinking of other things while studying (22.2%), inability to answer questions in exams despite believing in learning the subject (26.3%), inability to take good notes in class (18.1%) and the lack of friends to study together (15.2%).

### 3) Causes of failure according to students of upper-lower group in terms of success

In this part of the study, chi-square test was performed with a view to determine whether situations shown by students as cause of failure differ according to students in upper and lower success group in terms of success. Chi-square analysis results are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Chi-square results regarding causes of failure given by students as per year-end success scores

		N	Below	85 and	X <sup>2</sup>	P
My family do not assist in my courses	Effective	16	15.7	12.8	.167	.457
	Not	93	84.3	87.2		
Lack of a separate study room	Effective	29	31.4	17.9	2.33	.095
	Not	80	68.6	82.1		
I cannot understand what teacher tell	Effective	23	26.1	12.8	2.62	.083
	Not	85	73.9	87.2		
I am shy about asking question to my teachers on issues I cannot understand	Effective	33	38.6	15.4	6.38	.009
	Not	76	61.4	84.6		
I quickly forget what I learn	Effective	36	44.3	12.8	11.21	.001
	Not	73	55.7	87.2		
I am not interested in some courses	Effective	34	35.7	23.1	1.86	.125
	Not	75	64.3	76.9		
I do not know good study methods	Effective	28	21.4	33.3	1.86	.129
	Not	81	78.6	66.7		
I cannot spare time to study because of duties given by my family	Effective	19	20.3	13.2	.85	.258
	Not	88	79.7	86.8		
I cannot focus on subject while studying since I think other things	Effective	22	22.9	15.8	.76	.271
	Not	86	77.1	84.2		
I cannot take good notes during class	Effective	21	25.7	7.7	5.23	.017
	Not	88	74.3	92.3		
My previous knowledge is not enough	Effective	14	15.7	7.7	1.44	.185
	Not	95	84.3	92.3		
I do not have friends to study together	Effective	17	14.3	17.9	.26	.403
	Not	92	85.7	82.1		

Analyzing Table 3, significant different is observed between causes given by students such as inability to ask questions to teachers in subjects he/she does not understand (38.6% of students in the lower group, 15.4% in the upper group), immediately forgetting what they learn (44.3% of students in the lower group, 12.8% in the upper group) inability to take good notes in class (25.7% of students in the lower group, 7.7% in the upper group) and students' position in upper and lower success group. In addition, considering findings, we can say that students in the lower success group bring all situations with significant difference to forefront as causes of failure. Besides analyzing Table 3, it can be understood that other situations mostly specified by students as causes of failure do not show significant difference among students in upper-lower success group ( $p > 0.05$ ).

#### 4) Causes of students' failure according to teachers' opinions

As a result of the content analysis, it is understood that teachers explain causes of failure under themes of family, student and school and system. Causes of failure specified by teachers under the theme of family are given in Table 4.

Table 4: Codes regarding students' failure under the family theme

Theme	Codes	Teachers Presenting Opinion	f
Family	Low socioeconomic status of the family	T1, T2, T4, T6, T8, T9, T10	7
	Disregard of education by the family	T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8	6
	Structural characteristic of the family	T4, T5, T8	3

Analyzing Table 4, it is understood that some of teachers who participated in the study (n = 3) attribute students' failure to fragmented family structure and the majority of teachers attribute this to low socioeconomic status (n = 7) and disregard of education (n = 6).

Examples of teachers' opinions that attribute student failure in their schools to socioeconomic level and structure of the family are as follows:

"...Most of our students are from low-income groups and among single parents. Some of them are not cared by neither parents. There are children who live with grandparents. They have nobody to question or protect them." (T5).

"...Unfortunately, families of most of our students are not powerful economically and socially, students are generally from poor and fragmented families." (T9).

Examples of teacher opinions that attribute school failure to disregard of education by parents are given below:

"...Students cannot proceed much without support from parents. Despite teachers' efforts, they cannot achieve better. Rather than being interested, many parents leave their children's responsibility on teachers by remarking similar expressions like 'be as rough as you want with my child'." (T6)

"...Unfortunately, with the lack of interest by families and effect of the environment, children cannot reach a certain point despite their potential. We are thankful that the children in our school come to school being dressed up at least." (T3).

Conditions associated with the school theme as the source of students' failure according to teachers are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Codes regarding students' failure under the school theme

Theme	Codes	Teachers Presenting Opinion	f
School and System	Parent-school-student collaboration	T1, T3, T5, T6, T8, T9, T10	7
	The lack of financial resources-physical-training in	T2, T3, T7, T10	4
	Prejudice against school	T3, T5	2
	Density of the curriculum	T10	1
	Prejudice of school staff against students	T6	1

Analyzing Table 5, one of teachers participating in the research specified the density of curriculum (T10), another teacher specified prejudice of teachers and administrators against students (T6), two of them specified prejudice against school (T3, T5) and some of them specified the lack of financial, physical and educational resources among causes of failure. Many teachers also talk about student-parent-school cooperation under this theme (n=7). Teachers' opinions considering low success in schools caused by the lack of parent-school-student collaboration are as follows:

“...Unfortunately, there is not enough coordination and cooperation between teacher-student-parent. It is not possible to connect with the parents one-to-one too much. Even at meeting, three or four people barely attend.” (T1).

“...In our school, there are many children with social difficulties. When it is required to connect with the family, we cannot find anyone to communicate on the issue.” (T8).

Examples of teachers’ opinions attributing low school achievement to the lack of financial, physical and educational resources are as follows:

“...In order to increase success of students, firstly, physical structure of the school must be appropriate. Are the physical characteristics of our school very well? No. For example, our laboratory is not very good condition. In addition, the laboratory is not always empty. You can visit the lab if it is free.” (T10).

“...Our students are those with social difficulties; however, we do not even have a guidance teacher in our school.” (T3).

“...Parent profile in our school is obvious, therefore, it is very difficult to raise funds through the PTA. The State pays only expenditure items similar to other school expenditure items. Therefore, we do not have a big budget in financial terms and our change of making improvements decreases.” (T7).

Opinions of teachers attributing students’ failure to the density of curriculum are given below:

“...Our curriculum is very full. I hardly keep up with this performance. There are so many experiments left undone as planned. Students only listen to courses without understanding its logic. Either period must be extended or curriculum must be shortened and simplified.” (T10).

Some of the teachers specified the cause of failure as the prejudice of environment and school staff towards students. Examples of students' opinions on this issue are given below:

“...Teachers and administrators have already accepted the situation with an approach stating that *“fabric is not good, how well suit we can make”*. For me, this is the most important obstacle to success.” (T5).

“...There is a negative perception of the school. Families with better opportunities send their children to better schools. It is necessary to change parents’ perception of the school who will be able to support our school. If students who will be positive samples to other student attend our school, our and other parents’ expectations towards the school and students may change.” (T3).

Codes specified under students theme given among causes of failure are given in Table 6.

Table 6: Codes regarding students’ failure under the students theme

Theme	Codes	Teachers Presenting Opinion	f
Student	Students’ level of readiness	T1, T5, T9, T10	4
	Low motivation of students	T3, T5, T7, T8, T9, T10	6
	Students’ prejudice against courses	T6, T10	2
	Students’ lack of goals for life	T8, T9	2

Analyzing Table 6, it is observed that nearly half of the teachers participating in the research specified lack of student readiness (T1, T5, T9, T10), low level of motivation (T3, T5, T7, T8, T9, T10) as the cause of failure. According to two teachers, students’ prejudices felt against courses (T6, T11) and the low expectations of life (T8, T9) bring along low achievement. Examples of teachers’ opinions attributing school failure to graduating students without achieving school qualification, namely low level of readiness among student are given below:

“...Success requires a solid foundation. Many of the students still have reading and writing problems. Students graduating from primary school should be well educated so that we can proceed on this foundation.” (T9).

"...Our grade passing system is set up in such a way that child can now easily get the upper grades without receiving enough benefits from previous grade. Because of lack of enough knowledge, student cannot receive educational benefits from upper grades." (T1).

Teachers' opinions attributing school failure to lowness of student motivation and lack of life goals are as follows:

"...The students have no goals of life. This situation reduces the motivation of students towards school." (T8).

"...Most students think that they could not achieve their best in current adversities; they are sent to school only to get rid of necessity of sending children to school without any goals and by accepting their conditions." (T7).

Examples of teacher opinions explaining school failure through students' prejudice against some courses are as follows:

"...Students fail in some courses with a perception of difficulty; they move away from the course. You do not want to study for course you do not like. Despite your abilities, you build a wall between you and the course. If you do not like the teacher of course; here is the failure..." (T6).

## DISCUSSION

Analyzing the research findings, it can be understood that students are generally of lower socioeconomic origin and the cause of student failure is generally attributed to family, student, school and the education system despite their diversity. According to the students' opinions, prominent causes of failure in the context of family are students' lack of academic support from their families and lack of appropriate physical environment for studying. Similarly, teachers also specified causes such as low socioeconomic level of the family, fragmented family structure and lack of importance attached on education as a part of this failure puzzle. According to field literature, education is a complex process that relies on mutual interaction of many factors. In this respect, failure in education can be regarded as the common representative of elements that allow production of education service. However, family is shown as possibly the most important among these parts. It is stated that socioeconomic level of family affects student achievement and strengthen the effect of education. It is observed that student's success in test increases as socioeconomic level of family increases (Davis-Kean, 2005; ERG, 2009; Gelbal, 2008; Konstantopoulos, 2006; Köse, 2007; PISA 2009b). In some countries including Turkey, socioeconomic structure of family comes to the front as the main source of failure and inequality of opportunity in education (Ferreira and Gignoux, 2010). Besides, other applied studies have revealed that social support plays an important role in maintaining student's attendance along his/her academic achievement and his/her adaptation (Cutrona *et al.*, 1994; Yılmaz, 1998). It has been specified that the most important sources of social support for students are family, friend and teacher. However, it has been determined that children of poor families cannot receive adequate social support from their parents (Hashima and Amato, 1994). Indeed, in our study, it is understood that students cannot receive enough support from their families on their education, they do not have friends to study together and they are afraid to ask questions to their teachers about subjects they do not understand. These findings suggest that students of the school in question lack adequate social support. In this context, we can say that results obtained in the research are in consistent with the literature.

According to another finding of the study, teachers and students indicate that the second important part of the puzzle in context of failure is student. Under this dimension, although students' lack of better learning method, prejudice against courses and lowness of motivation, inability to express oneself and shy personality are among causes of failure, it can be understood that items such as shyness in asking teachers questions about subjects that students do not understand, learning in class but forgetting quickly and inability to take notes vary based on students' success, and that students within lower success group bring these situations to forefront as causes of failure. It is observed that teachers have also given similar statements among causes of student-based failure. According to teachers, deficiency in students' readiness level, prejudice towards courses, lowness of motivation and lack of expectations in life are among causes of failure in school. Many

social scientists also emphasize a close relationship between academic achievement and student characteristics (Konstantopoulos, 2006; Merrett, 2006). As a matter of fact, in a study in which administrators, teachers and parents were asked about what they did to achieve success, teachers and parents specified that “material is good” and they attributed the basic reason for school success primarily to students (Negis Işık, 2010). Besides, in the field literature, an individual feeling himself/herself inadequate in every subject (Hoffman & Spatariu, 2008) and the motivation level (Arioğul, 2009; Unrau and Schlack, 2006; Yılmaz, 1995) are shown as causes of failure. It is mentioned that a student’s belief in his/her failure in a field affects his/her motivation; causes anxiety and stress (Bandura, 1997), negatively affect academic achievement (Metallido & Vlachou, 2007; Wolters & Pintrich, 1998). In this regard, we can say that research findings are compatible with many studies.

According to another finding of the survey, teachers also emphasize the effect of factors based on school and system on failure of their schools compared to other schools. In this context, many students mentions the weakness of the student-parent-school cooperation. Researches applied on factors increasing school success emerge as a complementary and supportive factor for school-parent cooperation and participation of parents. These studies highlight the importance of home-school cooperation on school success (Çelenk, 2003; Kolay, 2004; Silver, 2004). A direct relationship between parents’ contribution to school and qualified education is established (Aslanargun, 2007). Parent involvement or school-parent cooperation has a direction of increasing success, also there are also social aspects such as embracing school by the society, school finance and assessment of school as a training center (Silver, 2004). In fact, according to some teachers, the prejudice developed by environment towards school, by school staff towards students lie behind failure of school. One of obstacles to development of success is that the environment and school staff focus on students’ negativity and know them with their deficiencies. In some researches applied on the subject, there are findings available that show a consistent and higher relationship between teacher expectations and student success (Brophy, 1983; Özkal *et al.*, 2002; Tauber, 1997). Teachers’ opinions and attitude regarding how much his/her student will learn and what kind of performance he/she will show affect student’s success. While students with high expectations show a success suitable for their potential or closer to this fact, students with low expectations learn less than they could (Arends *et al.*, 1998). The student developing low expectation internalizes this expectation after a period of time, and he/she does not show any efforts towards changing this situation by going into learned helplessness. Thus, we can say that, as a result of teachers’ prejudices and lower expectations towards students, almost a wall of glass between student and achievement is built and student is doomed to failure.

Some of the teachers in the study specified causes of failure as the lack of financial, physical and educational resources of school. Despite differing as per development status of the country, physical facilities and equipment of schools are shown among indicators that negatively affect quality of education and result in performance differences between schools (Kurul Tural, 2002; UNESCO, 2002; UNICEF, 2000). Moreover, it is stated that restrictive effect of such deficiencies in countries such as Greece, Norway and Turkey are higher than expectations (MEB, 2005). Besides, there are also researches available reporting that a relationship does not exist between resource usage and success that the amount of money spent in the event of effective usage of sources has indirect effect on student success (Dünya Bankası, 2011; Hanushek and Wößmann, 2007). Under the circumstances, we can say that quality of physical infrastructure and resources allocated to education do not guarantee success in education, but adequate level in these elements are among prerequisite for effective learning. Also in the survey, according to some teachers, another reason for student failure is the absence of guidance counsellor in school. Researches on the subject show that activities carried out within the scope of educational guidance have positive effect on increasing students’ academic success (Zalaquett, 2005). In this context, contributions of seminars conducted towards students, families and teachers and related to study techniques, coping with exam anxiety and time management are emphasized (Camadan and Sezgin, 2012). Considering from this point, we can say that this finding of the research is consistent with the field literature.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result, causes such as absence of suitable study conditions at home and lack of social support and learned failure are said to result in failure. However, some students are able to overcome the difficulties despite all the negative social events they experience and they may reach high academic achievement. Therefore, to achieve long-term solutions rather than immediate returns, powerful and effective guidance services should be provided in schools. Emotional and social supports may be provided to students that will raise awareness about themselves, develop their strengths and allow their true potential and that will assist them to experience joy of success and to believe in themselves. Besides, students and workers should be encouraged with sample experiences relating to the fact that failure is not destiny and can be overcome when attempted. Together with individual and group guidance activities, students may be ensured to cope with learned failure and test anxiety, to make study plans and acquire good study habits. Parents should be informed by discussions and seminars on the subjects of creating positive study environment at home together with such issues. On the other hand, positive learning and study environment may be established in school outside regular hours for students who cannot find a positive study environment at home.

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