

Factors Associated with Absenteeism in High Schools

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Abstract

Problem Statement: There are many factors that affect student achievement directly and indirectly at the secondary educational level. Lower attendance rates have been cited as detrimental to academic achievement; therefore, it is suggested that improved attendance is a direct indicator, rather than determinant of students' academic achievement.

Purpose of Study: The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of individual, family and school variables on absenteeism among high school students.

Method: Data for this study was collected via a survey of 581 students from the 9th - 11th grades, selected with cluster sampling from secondary schools in Burdur. Among the respondents, 44% were males and 56% females. The data collection instrument consisted of five sections including personal information, causes of absenteeism, school commitment, quality of school environment, and parental control. The Causes of Absenteeism Scale was developed by the researchers for secondary school students. The scale consists of three dimensions: individual, family, and school-based reasons. Parental Behavioral Control was assessed using a 20-item measure recording the degree to which a parent monitors the adolescent's behavior or actions. The School Attachment Scale was used to measure the degree of children's and adolescents' school attachment. Comprehensive School Climate Assessment Scale dimensions (teacher-student relationship and student activities) and Quality of Life Scale dimensions (student-student relationship and school management) were used to measure the quality of the school environment. The model was tested using LISREL 8.3 with maximum likelihood estimation.

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Results: The model was specified and tested using hierarchical structural equation modeling and was found to reasonably fit the data. The study findings show that high school students' assessment of the school environment explained 83% of the variance of levels of their commitment to school. Students' commitments to school, parental control, and assessment of the school environment together explained 22% of the variance in absenteeism.

Conclusion: The major conclusion of this study is that absenteeism was predicted negative and significantly by students' commitment to school and parental control. Students' commitment to school is the most important predictor of absenteeism. In addition, this study provides evidence that students' commitment to school moderates the relationship between perceived school environment and students' absenteeism.

Keywords: Absenteeism, school commitment, parental control, quality of school environment

Introduction

In the secondary school level, there are many factors that directly and indirectly influence student achievement. Therefore, studies have been conducted in many areas including teaching approaches, learning styles, curriculum, and teacher training in order to improve secondary education quality and the academic achievement of students while trying to develop new approaches and applications based on these new approaches. Student attendance is one variable that has a significant impact on student achievement. The research on the relationship between academic achievement and school attendance proves the relationship between course or graduation grades or standardized test scores and school or course attendance (Lamdin, 1996; Barrington & Hendricks, 1989; Rood, 1989; Alexander, Entwisle & Horsey, 1997; Nichols, 2003; Roby, 2004; Sheldon, 2007; Gottfried, 2010). Based on these results, some researchers suggest that attendance level is a determinant of academic success as well as a direct indicator (Phillips, 1997; Lehr, Sinclair & Christenson, 2004; Sheldon, 2007). In addition, low attendance rates of students not only predict the academic success but also predict high risk factors for future education (Connell, Spencer & Aber, 1994; Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Nichols, 2003; Lehr et al., 2004). Therefore, the continuous increase in absenteeism is among the most important problems in secondary schools today (Martin, 1991, DeKalb, 1999; Rood, 1989). These findings, derived from administrative records of secondary education, reveal that there is a rapid increase at absenteeism at this stage. Data related to absenteeism shared by the Ministry of Education shows that there is a rapid increase in absenteeism at 2009-2010 compared to 2008-2009. The ratio of students absent more than 20 days to all registered students in general secondary education increased from 1.1% in 2008-2009 to 4% in 2009-2010. Vocational and technical secondary education attendance rate increased from 1.4% to 4.1% (ERG,

2010; 2011). It is seen that the absenteeism rate in secondary education is much higher than in other stages of the educational system.

Absenteeism interrupts the learning process. The educational system is founded on the assumption that students will attend school (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). For example, in Turkey students in upper secondary education are obliged to attend according to the Ministry of Education Secondary Education Institutions, Article 40, Passing and Exam Regulation. Students' success depends on complete participation in all classes. As seen, legal texts support this assumption.

Direct and indirect costs of absenteeism are extremely high to the individuals, schools, families and communities. First of all, absenteeism in school negatively affects student learning experience and academic achievement. Absenteeism reduces the success because students miss their education time. This also results in loss of other students' time since teachers must use additional time to compensate, which leads to lost teaching time for all students (Rood, 1989; Williams, 2001; Eastman, Cooney, O'Connor & Small, 2007). This effect is observed significantly more in progressive interconnected courses such as mathematics. Students who miss certain classes have difficulty learning other subjects and are forced to expend more effort. When students fall behind in their learning, they lose interest and fail (Pehlivan, 2006). In addition, students feel an increasing sense of alienation toward their classmates, teachers and their school (Lannegrand-Willems, Cosnefroy, & Lecigne, 2012). Also absent students can set a bad example and encourage absenteeism among other students (Pehlivan, 2006).

Absenteeism is not only an indicator of low academic achievement but also a strong indicator of diminished social and life success (Williams, 2010). Absenteeism makes it difficult to create a solid foundation in terms of discipline and sense of responsibility. Therefore, it leads to problems in work and discipline habits in future work life (Pehlivan, 2006). This leads to potential consequences, such as unemployment or low income and inability to work at a regular job (Eastman et al., 2007; Gentle-Genitty, 2008). Moreover, as absenteeism increases, students are inclined to experience psychological problems such as depression or behavioral disorders. They may also exhibit behavioral patterns such as becoming involved in violence inside and outside of the school, teenage pregnancy, quitting school and acquiring harmful habits (Gottfried, 2009; Eastman et al., 2007; Lannegrand-Willems et al., 2012; Sinha, 2007; Williams, 2001; Robinson, 2009; Gentle-Genitty, 2008; Jeter, 2011; Casserly, Carpenter & Halcon, 2001). In other words, absenteeism for young people is considered as a predictor of academic failure and leads to many other risk factors. If no measures are taken, absenteeism may be the beginning of a process ranging from academic failure to dropping out of school.

Definition of the Concept of Absenteeism

There are various definitions of absenteeism in the literature. Clark (2008) defined absenteeism as "not attending school without a legitimate reason." Sinha (2007) argues that absenteeism should be defined as "being absent without excuse" and considered to be a problem. Since there is a variety of basic regulations and the

definition of "excuse" varies across countries concerned, it is difficult to fully define what is considered absent without excuse. Clark (2008) explained it as follows: "without a valid excuse communicated by the student's family, not to be at school during the school day or during a part of the school day". As indicated, it is not only an excuse that is needed but an excuse that is considered to be valid. One student may miss class due to health problems, while another student may be absent due to a family vacation.

In the literature, there are many definitions within the scope of absenteeism. For example, Lannegrand-Willems et al. (2012) defined absenteeism as, "a student being absent in school with or without an excuse". Robinson (2009) considered absenteeism by describing behavior and defined it as "not attending the school with or without an excuse, miss some classes or being late for class". Regardless of the reason for absence, the fact is that the student is missing a portion of the academic process. Additionally, students who were absent with excuse, such as students staying away from school for a long time due to health problems, have difficulty in adapting when they return to school and may develop a habit of absenteeism without excuse. In other words, when "absenteeism without a legitimate reason" is removed from the scope of the problem, the disruption in children's learning process and other problems that may be experienced in the future should not be ignored.

Focusing on absenteeism as a problem, the duration is as important as the type of absenteeism. As Lannegrand-Willems et al. (2012) indicated, when absenteeism is rare, it is not considered to indicate a problematic situation. However, increased absenteeism is considered to be an indicator of various risk factors. Generally, 10-40% absenteeism during an educational calendar year is considered to indicate a problem. Examining the absenteeism within a school day is also important. Some students may miss an entire day of school while others may only miss one or two courses. The duration of and classification of absenteeism (with or without excuse) varies from country to country. However, the common point of view is that as the student's absenteeism increases, exposure to risk factors also rises.

Causes for Absenteeism

The causes of student absenteeism are complex and multi-faceted. The factors associated with absenteeism are classified in the literature into three fundamental areas: individual, family and schools (McCluskey, Bynum & Patch, 2004; Eastman et al., 2007; Clark, 2008, Robinson, 2009):

Individual Factors. Students' individual factors may negatively affect school attendance. Research indicates that absenteeism increases by seniority in high school (Rood, 1989) and most frequently happens at age 15. Absentee students usually do not feel safe at school. They feel academically or socially inadequate. They find classes boring and their positive experiences related to school are less than those who attend school regularly (Clarke, 2008; Corville-Smith, Ryan Adams, & Dalicandro, 1998; Williams, 2001). Thus, self-esteem, confidence, concentration, self-management and social skills of these students are low. They feel powerless in the school and think other students do not respect them (Eastwold, 1989; Wall, 2003; Eastman et al.,

2007). According to Reid (2000) and Gentle-Genitty (2008), other results include not wanting to get up in the morning, receiving strict punishment, sleeping late, not completing homework, being in a grade that is one above or one below the regular grade level, switching to another school in the middle or the beginning of the school year, feeling extreme test pressure, feeling constantly ill, and having siblings who are regularly absent. Participating in fun activities and socializing with their peers outside of school are also among the reasons (Williams, 2001). Interestingly, as Clark (2008) indicated, some students are absent since they find courses difficult and some others are absent because they find the courses monotonous and boring.

Family factors. Another major reason for absenteeism is "family factors". A student's parent has a significant impact on his attendance in school (Clark, 2008). Research indicates the following reasons for student absenteeism arising from the family: family's socio-economic level; family's need for student to work; parenting skills; psychological problems; support or neglect; alcohol or drug problems; criminal behavior (McCluskey et al., 2004; Clark, 2008; Reed, 2000); the lack of consistency; divorce; inter-parent conflicts; family structure, such as a single parent; interest or control level for the student's behavior; parents have low education level; negative past school experiences; lack of participation in school or not understanding procedures; and not providing environment for the student to do homework (Corville-Smith, Ryan Adams, & Dalicandro, 1998 ; Rood, 1989; Corley, 2012; Gentle-Genitty, 2008, Eastman et al., 2007, 2007; Reed, 2000). The level of respect the family has for education is seen as a role model for students.

The primary responsibility of parents is to ensure their children regularly attend school. Conditions at home have a significant impact on children's attendance and on their promptness. Poor family control and lack of persistence is perhaps one of the most important factors behind school absenteeism (Pehlivan, 2006). Family control can be defined as parents' knowledge about their child's activities, friends and the information regarding his whereabouts (Cetin & Cok, 2011). Disinterested families are often seldom concerned with their children's success or failure. They do not help in solving the problems at school and they rarely attend parent-school meetings. These families are unlikely to create a disciplined environment for children at home (Hallam & Rogers, 2008). According to Williams (2001), today's high school students are controlled less than their parents were in the past. As well as lack of control and lack of monitoring, some parents ignore the excuses with less than a valid reason. In so doing, they are supporting and justifying the absenteeism.

School factors. School-related factors influence students' decisions toward school attendance. A school's attitude and rules against absenteeism are factors that are contribute to the absenteeism problem (Eastman et al., 2007). According to Robinson (2009), schools' procedures are inconsistent and do not produce meaningful results in reducing absenteeism. Students are not receiving clear messages from the school about the importance of attendance. Tolerant policies or lack of firm implementation for existing policies gives the wrong message to students and parents about the importance of attendance (Clarke, 2008). Wall (2000) also indicated that inconsistency of policies, lack of meaningful results and poor school record keeping have a

negative effect on students.

Although there are various reasons for absenteeism, one of the most important of these reasons is "not liking the school" (Pehlivan, 2006). If the school is cold, not secure, or if there is a climate of tolerance for bullying, students will prefer not to be in school (Clark, 2008; Corley, 2012). In particular, conflicts with peers and teachers, exposure to bullying, and dislike of teachers are important causes of absenteeism (Eastman et al., 2007; Reid, 2000; Gentle-Genitty, 2008). In a school environment where students do not feel a commitment to school, they would not want to attend, resulting in increased feelings of alienation. As Hamm and Faircloth (2005) stated, commitment to the school is formed by the student's perceptions about respect, love and values they receive in the school. In the school environment where there is a perceived value and an emotional commitment, there will be a sense of security. Therefore, in such a school environment, students' attendance and participation increases.

Various studies aiming to identify the causes of absenteeism have been conducted in Turkey. These include reasons for elementary school level absenteeism (Kadi 2000; Ozbas, 2010; Yildiz ve Sanli Kula, 2012). Several studies examining the reasons for secondary school absenteeism (Pehlivan, 2006; Altinkurt, 2008; Gokyer, 2012) are also available. These studies are limited, given the importance and magnitude of the problem. These studies describe and explain the reasons of absenteeism in elementary and secondary level education through the evaluation of the participants' responses in different locations. In the literature, as highlighted by researchers, reasons for absenteeism are various and versatile (Eastman et al., 2007). They include many factors, such as student's perception of the school environment, student's commitment to school, student's family structure and student-family communication. Therefore, absenteeism and its causes should be examined against individual characteristics, such as gender of the student, and the level of maturity in interaction with the school and family system in order to solve the problems.

In a study conducted by the Education Reform Initiative (Egitim Reformu Girisimi - ERG) during the 2010-2011 academic year, the absenteeism rates in Burdur were found to be 36% in public high schools and 42% in the vocational-technical high schools. This rate is above the national average which is 28% in public schools and 35.7% in vocational technical schools. Rates for the high school students of Burdur seem to be quite high compared to the overall rate of the Turkish Mediterranean Region (25.4% in public schools and 34.5% for vocational technical schools). This study aims to determine the effect of individuals, family and school variables on the reasons leading to absenteeism in high schools.

Method

Research Sample

The research sample consisted of 10 high schools and 581 students in Burdur. The participants were included in the study group by randomly selecting one branch

from each grade with cluster sampling methodology. Two hundred three ninth grade (34.9%), 180 tenth grade (31%) and 198 eleventh grade (34.1%) students were surveyed. Senior students were excluded, since the reasons for absenteeism varies due to preparation for university. Three hundred twenty-four students (56%) were female and 255 (44%) were male.

Research Instruments and Procedure

The research instruments in the study consisted of five parts, including personal information, reasons for absenteeism, commitment to school, quality of life in the school, and parental control. The researchers developed the Reasons for Absenteeism Scale after an examination of the literature and under the guidance of the classifications provided. It consists of 45 items that were examined by experts and structured under three headings: individual, school, and family origin. Construct validity of the scale was tested by factor analysis. Items with low load factors and items showing high load or similar load to others under multiple dimensions were removed from the scale leaving 24 items later found to explain 47% of the total variance. The first factor, representing the reasons caused by the school, covered 24% of the variance. The second factor, representing the reasons caused by the family, covered 14%, and the third factor, personal reasons, explained the remaining 9%. Factor loadings of the items on the scale were between .743 and .54 and item-total correlations ranged from .67 to .43. The internal consistency reliability coefficient calculated for the observed factors, respectively, were .89, .77 and .74.

The Parental Behavior Control scale developed by Harma (2008), was built on Kerr and Stattin's (2000) parents' information and monitoring scale. The purpose of this scale is to measure parents' monitoring levels of children's behavior and actions. Eight items were removed from the original scale, which consisted of 24 items. The removed items were replaced by four more culturally appropriate factors. The scale consisted of two dimensions, knowledge and monitoring. The scale was applied separately for the mother and father. Options in the Likert-type scale vary between "never" to "always". Construct validity of the scale was tested with exploratory factor analysis. Items in the forms for mothers seem to explain 50.78%, and items in the form for fathers explained 51.86% of the variance. The internal consistency coefficients calculated from the scale ranged between .87 and .88.

The School Attachment Scale for Children and Adolescents was developed by Hill (2006) in order to determine the level of commitment of three dimensions: commitment to school, teachers and friends. The original scale had 5 items in each dimension, 15 items in total and each item had 5 Likert-type choices. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Savi (2011). Construct validity of the scale was tested with factor analysis. It was observed that items of the scale were grouped under three factors, commitment to school, teacher and friends, which collectively explained 58.69% of the total variance. However, two items were removed from the scale, since they reduced the internal consistency. The internal consistency coefficient obtained for the dimensions of the scale ranged from 0.71 to 0.85. The test-retest reliability coefficient was found to be 0.85 for the entire scale.

In order to measure the quality of the school environment, the teacher-student relationship and student activity dimensions of the Comprehensive School Climate Assessment Scale were used as well as the student-student communication and the school management dimensions of the High School Quality of Life scale. The Comprehensive School Climate Assessment was prepared in 1982 by the University of Michigan. Turkish adaptation, reliability and validity studies were prepared by Acarbay (2006). Teacher-student relationships dimension contained 11 items and the student activity dimension has four active items. The validity studies of the scale were completed using expert opinion. The internal consistency coefficient of the teacher-student relationship dimension was calculated to be .89 and the student activity dimension was calculated at .74. The School Quality of Life Scale that was developed by Sarı (2007) resulted in internal consistency coefficients of .86 and .80, respectively. The student-to-student communication dimension contained eight items and the school management dimension had four items. Both scales were Likert-type with options varying between "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

Structural equation modeling techniques were used in the study and the developed model was tested with the LISREL 8.3 program. The maximum likelihood approach was used in the estimation procedure.

Results

Using the developed model, it was identified that among high school students in Burdur, commitment to the school, school environment, and the control of the family are premises of absenteeism. Fourteen observed variables in the table define the following latent variables: school based absenteeism (SCA), family based absenteeism (FCA) and individual based absenteeism (ICA). Commitment to school (CTS), commitment to teachers (CTT) and commitment to friends (CTF) form latent variables of commitment to school. School management (MNG), teacher-student relationship (TSR), student-student communication (SSC) and student activities (STA) form latent variables of school environment. Mother's knowledge (MKN), mother's monitoring (MMO), father's knowledge (FKN) and father's monitoring (FMO) form latent variables of parents' control of behavior.

In examining the correlation coefficients among variables in Table 1, correlation coefficients between the observed variables defining the same latent variables appear to be positive and significant at a 0.01 level.

Table 1.*Intervariable Correlation Coefficients of Student Absenteeism in a High School Model*

	SBA	FBA	IBA	CTS	CTT	CTF	MNG	TSR	SSC	STA	MKN	MMO	FKN
FBA	.36**												
IBA	.59**	.47**											
CTS	-.26**	-.20**	-.18**										
CTT	-.31**	-.16**	-.15**	.54**									
CTF	-.09*	-.23**	-.12**	.49**	.44**								
MNG	-.07	.02	.05	.25**	.38**	.08							
TSR	-.25**	-.07	-.12**	.40**	.69**	.30**	.48**						
SSC	-.05	-.04	-.03	.15**	.18**	.16**	.08	.12**					
STA	-.14**	-.10*	-.13**	.39**	.48**	.37**	.32**	.52**	.21**				
MKN	-.26**	-.17**	-.17**	.17**	.24**	.23**	.08	.17**	.19**	.20**			
MMO	-.21**	-.10*	-.11**	.14**	.18**	.19**	.12**	.14**	.12**	.15**	.78**		
FKN	-.24**	-.19**	-.18**	.14**	.22**	.21**	.10*	.18**	.10*	.15**	.66**	.53**	
FMO	-.17**	-.11*	-.11**	.11**	.16**	.16**	.17**	.13**	.06	.11**	.54**	.69**	.79**

**p<.01 * p<.05

The fitness of student absenteeism in the high school model has been tested with two-level hierarchical structural equation modeling. In the two-level approach (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988) first the measurement model and then structured model is examined. Relationships of the absenteeism variables, commitment to school, the school environment and the parental control were examined with each other and then their relationships with the observed variables were examined using the measurement model. At the second level, these variables were tested with the combination of the student absenteeism variable. In addition, the results of a series of tests were examined to evaluate the suitability of the models (Table 2).

Table 2.*Inter-Factor Correlation Coefficients of Student Absenteeism in a High School Model*

Indexes	First Level	Second Level	Values	
χ^2	136.70	141.20	-	
Sd	60	61	-	
χ^2/sd	2.28	2.31	3	(Kline 1989)
p	0.00	0.00	>0.05	(Kline 1989)
CFI	0.98	0.98	>0.90	(Hu & Bentler, 1999)
NFI	0.96	0.96	>0.90	(Hu & Bentler, 1999)
SRMR	0.045	0.044	<0.08	(Browne & Cudeck, 1993)
RMSEA	0.047	0.048	<0.06	(Browne & Cudeck, 1993)
GFI	0.97	0.97	>0.80	(Doll, Xia, & Torkzadeh, 1994)
AGFI	0.94	0.94	>0.80	(Doll, Xia, & Torkzadeh, 1994)

In accordance with the results obtained from the first level modeling, it can be concluded that the measurement model is compatible with the data ($\chi^2=136.70$, $sd=60$, $p=0.00$, $CFI=0.98$, $NFI=0.96$, $SRMR=0.045$, $RMSEA=0.047$, $GFI=0.97$, $AGFI=0.94$). The χ^2/sd ratio is 2.28 and the model in question is found to be quite a good fit when compared with the recommended rate of 3.00.

As a result of structural equation modeling on the second level, as shown in Table 2, the configured model seems to have a good fit. ($\chi^2=141.20$, $sd=61$, $p=0.00$, $CFA=0.98$, $NFI=0.96$, $SRMR=0.044$, $RMSEA=0.048$, $GFI=0.97$, $AGFI=0.94$). χ^2/sd ratio of the model is 2.31.

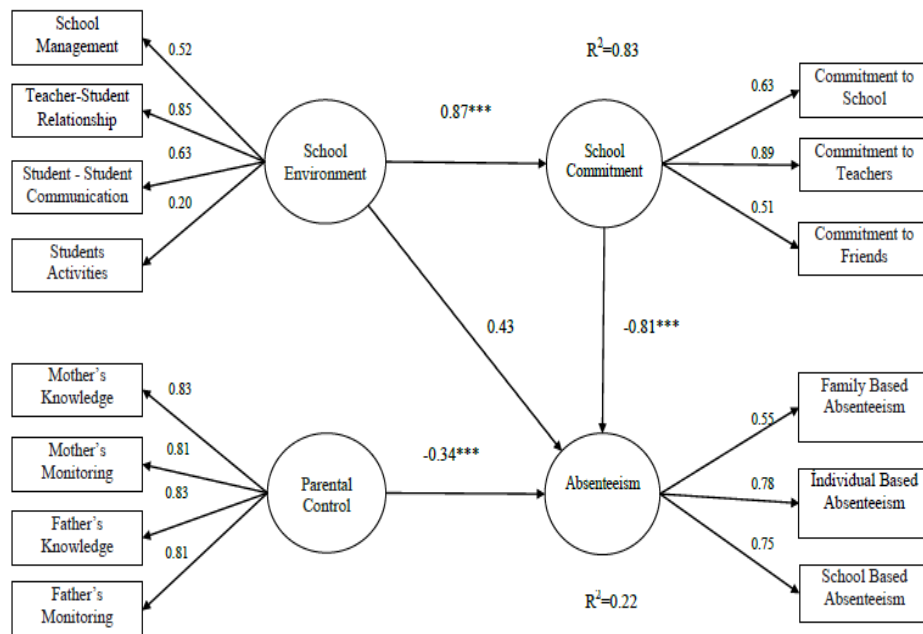


Figure 1. Student absenteeism in the high school model

In this model, among the students in high schools in Burdur, commitment to school ($\beta = -0.81$; $p < 0.01$) and parents' control ($\beta = -0.34$, $p > 0.01$) were found to have a negative and significant effect on absenteeism. While the effect of perceptions of students for the school environment with absenteeism is not significant ($\beta = 0.43$; $p < 0.05$), the effect of commitment to the school is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.87$, $p < 0.01$).

Assessments of high school students regarding the school environment explain 83% of the variance in the level of commitment to the school. Student's commitment to the school directly, their parents' control directly and the school environment indirectly explain 22% of the variance in absenteeism.

The model indicates the hypotheses "students' commitment to school has a negative impact on absenteeism" "control of student's parents has a negative impact on absenteeism" and "student's perceptions of school climate have a positive effect on commitment to the school" were accepted. However, "student's perceptions of school climate have a negative effect on commitment to the school" hypothesis has been rejected.

Discussion and Conclusions, and Recommendations

According to the models developed, among public high school students' in Burdur, commitment to school, control of the family and school environment have a significant impact on absenteeism. In the model, student's commitment to school, school environment and control of the families were found to be the premises of absenteeism. School caused absenteeism and family and individual caused absenteeism form the latent variables. Commitment to schools, teachers and friends form the commitment to the school latent variable. School management, student-student communication, teacher-student relationship and effective school environment and student activities form the school environment latent variable. Knowledge of mother, monitoring level of mother, knowledge of father and monitoring level of father form the latent variable behavioral control of parents.

The fitness of student absenteeism in the high school model has been tested with two-level hierarchical structural equation modeling. Using the model on students in high schools in Burdur, commitment to school was found to have a negative and significant effect. High school students' commitment to school is considered to have a more significant impact on attendance compared to the family's control. Attending school regularly is agreed to be an indicator of commitment to school (Taylor, 2008). There are various studies revealing the relationship between student's commitment to the school and student's success with the course as well as attendance to the school and classes (Akar-Vural, Yilmaz-Ozelci, Cengel & Gomleksiz, 2013; Altinkurt, 2008; Kablan, 2009; Nowicki, Doke, Sisney, Stricker & Tyler, 2004; Suh, Suh & Houston, 2007, Taylor, 2008). In this research, in a similar form, it is observed that the high school students' absenteeism rate decreases as the commitment to school increases.

In this research, commitment to school consists of three structures, namely commitment to teachers, commitment to friends and commitment to the school. Among these, the most powerful predictor according to the standardized structural coefficients in the model is commitment to the teacher. This predictor is followed by commitment to the school and commitment to friends in sequence. Research shows that commitment to the school begins with the teacher-student relationship (Marvul, 2012). Students of teachers who do not respect students, ignore the variety of needs of students and cannot manage the class have greater absenteeism. Insufficient recognition of the students' educational needs leads them to feel inadequate and daunted (Clark, 2008) or makes them feel classes and teaching methods are boring (Eastman et al., 2007). In either case the student does not want to go to the school.

One interesting finding of the research is the positive but not significant effect of the perception of high school students toward their school environment compared to the absenteeism. When considered through commitment to the school, it reinforces the negative effects of commitment to the school on student's attendance. In other words, while the direct effect of school variables forming the student perception, including the teacher-student relationships, student-student communication, school management and student activities, increases absenteeism, the indirect effects of enhancing commitment to the school reduce the students' absenteeism rate. At this

point, it can be concluded that the school variables alone are not sufficient to reduce absenteeism. When they exist together with the commitment to the school through being valued as a member of the school, having the belief to be respected, and having a sense of belonging to the school community (Savi, 2011), they can reduce absenteeism.

Assessments of students regarding the school environment explain variance in the level of commitment to the school in a very strong way. As stated by Hamm and Faircloth (2005), school-based positive relationships such as acceptance of managers, teachers and peers is an important source of experience supporting students' commitment to the school. In this regard, it can be concluded that the teacher-student relationship, student-student communication, school management, and participation in school activities substantially affect student's commitment to the school.

With the model, control of the parents of high schools students in Burdur was found to have a negative and significant effect on absenteeism. Studies (Corville-Smith et al., 1998; Rumberg & Larson, 1998; Marvul, 2012) also reveal that the interest of school is not enough by itself to solve absenteeism issues; family and circles of friends are also important. The effect may be due to parents creating a supportive environment for motivating success in attending school by monitoring the children, putting forth an effort to communicate and gathering knowledge about their daily activities at school and outside of school. On the other hand, the family attitude itself can be a major obstacle against absenteeism.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study examined the effects of individual, family, and school variables on students' absenteeism. Tested models found students' commitment to their school and family's monitoring level to be a negative and significant effect on the absenteeism of high school students in Burdur. While the effect of students' perceptions of the school environment to absenteeism is positive but not significant, its effect on commitment to the school is positive and significant.

In this regard, based on the results of the research, it is recommended that high schools focus on increasing students' commitment to school in order to reduce student absenteeism. Efforts must be in a direction to convey the message that students at the school are considered important as students as well as individuals. Thus their attendance level will increase, unwanted behaviors will decrease and academic success will improve. School administrators' and teachers' empathetic approaches to the students and their positive attitudes will facilitate students to feel connected to the school. Students' establishment of positive relationships with teachers will increase commitment to the school and will play a role in the reduction of absenteeism. One effective way of reducing absenteeism is to encourage students to participate in school activities. Thus, both the responsibilities they assume in school activities and positive friendship relationships experience through school activities will increase the commitment to school and will ensure continued attendance. School management should attempt to ensure participation of parents in

order to ensure that students attend school. Parents of children should be informed about the importance of good attendance for achieving success and for providing protection for risk factors not only in school life but also in the future. Therefore, they must cooperate in solving the attendance problem. In future research, school practices regarding prevention of absences can be examined.

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Liselerde Öğrenci Devamsızlığının Nedenleri ile İlişkili Faktörler

Atf:

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Özet

Problem Durumu: Ortaöğretim düzeyinde, öğrenci başarısını doğrudan ve dolaylı olarak etkileyen birçok faktör vardır. Bu nedenle ortaöğretimin niteliğini ve öğrencilerin akademik başarısını artırmak için öğretim yaklaşımları, öğrenme stilleri, öğretim programları, öğretmen yetiştirme gibi pek çok alanda çalışmalar yapılmakta, yeni yaklaşımlar ve bunlara dayalı uygulamalar geliştirilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Öğrenci başarısında önemli etkiye sahip değişkenlerden biri de öğrencinin okula devamıdır. Devamsızlığın bireye, okula, ailelere ve topluma doğrudan ve dolaylı maliyeti son derece yüksektir. Devamsızlık öğrencinin öğrenmesi ve akademik başarısının yanı sıra, geleceğine ilişkin birçok risk faktörünün yordayıcısı olarak görülmektedir. Önlem alınmadığında akademik başarısızlıktan okulu bırakmaya kadar uzanan bir sürecin başlangıcı olabilir. Diğer yandan özellikle ortaöğretim kademesinde devamsızlık oranlarının diğer kademelere göre çok daha yüksek olduğu görülmektedir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bu çalışmada, Burdur il merkezinde birey, aile ve okul değişkenlerinin, liselerde öğrencilerin devamsızlık yapmasına yol açan nedenlere etkisinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Araştırmanın çalışma grubu, Burdur il merkezindeki 10 lisede öğrenim görmekte olan 581 öğrenciden oluşmaktadır. Araştırmanın katılımcıları, küme örnekleme yöntemiyle her sınıftan birer şube çalışma grubuna dahil edilmiştir. Araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin 203'ü dokuzuncu sınıf (%34.9), 180'i onuncu sınıf (%31) ve 198'i onbirinci sınıf (%34.1) öğrencisidir. Dördüncü sınıf öğrencilerinin devamsızlık nedenleri üniversiteye hazırlık nedeniyle bu yıla özgü farklılıklar içerdiğinden bu sınıflar çalışma grubuna dahil edilmemişlerdir. Öğrencilerin 324'ü (%56) kız, 255'i (%44) erkektir.

Araştırmada veri toplama araçları kişisel bilgiler, devamsızlık nedenleri, okula bağlılık, okul yaşam kalitesi ve anne-baba kontrolü olmak üzere beş bölümden oluşmaktadır. Devamsızlık Nedenleri Ölçeği, araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilmiştir. Toplam 24 maddeden oluşan ölçeğin birey, okul ve aile kaynaklı nedenler olmak üzere üç boyuttan oluşmaktadır. Ebeveynin Davranış Kontrolü Ölçeği, ebeveynlerin çocuklarının davranış ve eylemlerini izleme düzeylerini ölçmek amacıyla geliştirilmiştir. Ölçek ebeveyn bilgi ve izleme olmak üzere iki boyuttan oluşmakta, anne ve baba için ayrı ayrı uygulanmaktadır. Çocuk ve Ergenler İçin Okula Bağlanma Ölçeği, çocuk ve ergenlerin okula bağlanma düzeylerini belirlemek amacıyla geliştirilmiştir ve öğretmen, arkadaş ve okula bağlanma olmak üzere üç boyuttan oluşmaktadır. Okul ortamının niteliğini ölçmek için Kapsamlı Okul İklimi Değerlendirme Ölçeği'nin öğretmen- öğrenci ilişkisi ve öğrenci etkinleri boyutları ve Lise Yaşam Kalitesi Ölçeği'nin öğrenci-öğrenci iletişimi ve okul yönetimi boyutları kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada yapısal eşitlik modellemesi teknikleri kullanılarak geliştirilen model LISREL 8.3 programı ile test edilmiştir. Tahmin prosedüründe Maksimum Olabilirlik Yaklaşımı kullanılmıştır.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Geliştirilen modelde Burdur ilindeki resmi lise öğrencilerinin okula bağlılıkları, okul ortamı ve ailelerinin kontrolü, devamsızlıklarının öncülü olarak yer almaktadırlar. Sözkonusu dört gizil değişken okul kaynaklı devamsızlık , aile kaynaklı devamsızlık ve birey kaynaklı devamsızlık değişkenleri devamsızlık; okula, öğretmene ve arkadaşlara bağlanma değişkenleri okula bağlanma; okul yönetimi, öğretmen-öğrenci ilişkisi, öğrenci-öğrenci iletişimi ve öğrenci etkinleri okul ortamı ve anne bilgi, anne izleme, baba bilgi ve baba izleme ebeveynin davranış kontrolü olmak üzere 14 gözlenen değişkenle tanımlanmıştır.

Liselerde öğrenci devamsızlığı modelinin uygunluğu iki düzeyli hiyerarşik yapısal eşitlik modellemesi ile test edilmiştir. Öncelikle devamsızlık, okula bağlılıkları, okul ortamı ve ebeveyn kontrolü değişkenlerinin birbirleriyle ve gözlenen değişkenlerle ilişkileri ölçme modeli ile incelenmiştir. İkinci düzeyde ise bu değişkenlerin birlikte öğrenci devamsızlığı değişkenini açıklaması üzerine oluşturulan yapılanmış olarak test edilmiştir.

Ayrıca modelin uygunluğunu değerlendirmek için bir dizi testin sonuçları da incelenmiştir. Birinci düzeydeki modellemeden elde edilen sonuçlar doğrultusunda, ölçme modelinin veriler ile uyumlu bir model olduğu söylenebilir ($\chi^2=136.70$, $sd=60$, $p=0.00$, $CFI=0.98$, $NFI=0.96$, $SRMR=0.045$, $RMSEA=0.047$, $GFI=0.97$, $AGFI=0.94$). Modelin χ^2/sd oranı 2.28'dir ve önerilen oran olan 3 ile karşılaştırıldığında oldukça iyi bir uyumun söz konusu olduğu söylenebilir. İkinci düzeydeki yapısal eşitlik

modellemesi sonucunda da yapılandırılmış modelin de iyi uyuma sahip bir olduğu görülmektedir ($\chi^2=141.20$, $sd=61$, $p=0.00$, $CFA=0.98$, $NFI=0.96$, $SRMR=0.044$, $RMSEA=0.048$, $GFI=0.97$, $AGFI=0.94$). Modelin χ^2/sd oranı 2.31'dir.

Modelde Burdur ilinde bulunan liselerde öğrencilerin okullarına bağlılıkları ($\beta=-0.81$; $p<0.01$) ve ebeveylelerinin kontrolünün ($\beta=-0.34$; $p>0.01$) devamsızlıklarına negatif ve anlamlı etkisinin olduğu saptanmıştır. Öğrencilerin okul ortamına ilişkin algılarının devamsızlığa etkisi pozitif ve anlamlı değil iken ($\beta=0.43$; $p<0.05$), okula bağlılığa etkisi pozitif ve anlamlıdır ($\beta=0.87$; $p<0.01$).

Lise öğrencilerinin okul ortamına ilişkin değerlendirmeleri okullarına bağlılık düzeylerindeki varyansın %83'ünü açıklamaktadır. Öğrencilerin okullarına bağlılıkları ve ebeveylelerinin kontrolünün doğrudan, okul ortamının dolaylı etkisi birlikte devamsızlıklarındaki varyansın %22'sini açıklamaktadır.

Araştırmanın Sonuç ve Önerileri: Birey, aile ve okul değişkenlerinin liselerde öğrencilerin devamsızlık yapmasına yol açan nedenlere etkisinin incelenmesi amaçlanan bu çalışmada, test edilen modelde Burdur ilinde bulunan liselerde öğrencilerin okullarına bağlılıkları ve ebeveylelerinin kontrolünün devamsızlıklarına negatif ve anlamlı etkisinin olduğu saptanmıştır. Öğrencilerin okul ortamına ilişkin algılarının devamsızlığa etkisi pozitif ve anlamlı değil iken, okula bağlılığa etkisi pozitif ve anlamlıdır.

Bu doğrultuda araştırmanın sonuçlarına dayalı olarak liselerde öğrenci devamsızlığını azaltmak için öğrencilerin okula bağlılıkları artırma yönünde çalışmalar yapmaları önerilmektedir. Bu uygulamalar öğrencilere okulda hem bir birey hem de bir öğrenci olarak önemsendiklerini mesajını verecek yönde olmalıdır. Böylece okula devamları artıp, istenmeyen davranışları azaldığından, akademik başarıları da yükselecektir. Okul yöneticisi ve öğretmenlerin, öğrencilere empatik bir yaklaşım içinde olmaları, öğrenciye yönelik olumlu tutumları, öğrencilerin okula bağlanmalarını kolaylaştıracaktır. Dolayısıyla öğrencinin öğretmenleriyle kurduğu olumlu ilişkiler, okula bağlılığı arttırarak, devamsızlığın azalmasında rol oynayacaktır. Devamsızlığı azaltmada etkili olabilecek yollardan biri de öğrencileri etkinliklere katılmaya özendirme. Böylece hem etkinliklerde aldığı sorumluluk hemde etkinlikler aracılığıyla okul arkadaşları ile kuracağı olumlu arkadaşlık ilişkisi okuluna bağlılığını arttırarak, istekle devam etmesini sağlayacaktır. Okul yönetimi, öğrencilerin okula devamını sağlamak için, ailenin katılımını sağlanmaya çalışılmalıdır. Veliler, okula devamın çocuklarının sadece okul yaşamında değil, gelecekteki başarısı ve risk faktörlerden korunmadaki önemi konusunda bilgilendirilerek, devamsızlık sorununun çözümünde işbirliği yapılmalıdır. Gelecekteki araştırmalarda bu çalışmanın bulguları ışığında, okullardaki devamsızlığı önleme uygulamalarının incelenmesi önerilir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Devamsızlık, okula bağlılık, aile kontrolü, okul yaşam kalitesi