

The Reasons For Leaving School of Foreign Pre-School Students on The Career Path

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
Publication: 28.12.2022	Purpose: This research; The study was carried out to determine the reasons for absenteeism and dropouts of foreign students in the pre-school education period and to develop suggestions for all stakeholders responsible for the student's school attendance in order to solve this problem.
Keywords: Education, Foreign students, School absenteeism, School dropout.	Material and Method: Interview technique, one of the qualitative research methods, was used as the data collection technique in the research. As a data collection tool in the research, a semi-structured interview form compiled from the research questions used in previous similar studies was used. In the research; By using homogeneous sampling method, 5 school administrators, 5 school counselors, 10 preschool teachers, 25 parents of students who have absenteeism and dropped out of school were interviewed, working in schools in regions where foreign students are concentrated in Meram district of Konya. The data obtained within the scope of the research were analyzed by content analysis technique. Findings: Within the scope of the research, it was determined that there were students who were absent from school and dropped out in all of the pre-school classes. All of the school administrators and preschool teachers who participated in the research stated that they were uncomfortable with the situation of students who were absent from school and dropped out, but they could not be insistent due to various social, economic and psychological problems experienced by foreign families and could not do anything but report the situation to the provincial and national education directorates. Similarly, it has been determined that although the families of foreign nationals are not satisfied with the situation, they face many problems, especially economic and social problems, and that they cannot give enough importance and support to the education of their children, especially in the pre-school period. Conclusion: It has been observed that there are significant absenteeism and drop-out problems in the pre-school period in schools with foreign students, and they cannot benefit from pre-school education at a sufficient level due to many reasons, especially economic, social and cultural reasons. Since it is understood that families will not be able to give due importance to the education and continuation of preschool children unless these problems are resolved, the necessary authorities should go to the solution of these basic problems and remove the obstacles to the attendance of preschool children to school



1. INTRODUCTION

In the system prepared for pre-school children, there are activities that are child-centered, taking into account the individual characteristics, abilities and wishes of the children. With these activities the activities, the active participation of children is ensured, and gains determined in accordance with the developmental characteristics of the child are provided through experiences (Mercan, 2020).

With the increase in the education level of individuals, progress is made in overcoming the problem of qualified workforce, thus paving the way for the acceleration of scientific and technological innovations. For this reason, it is of great importance for students to attend school both in order to develop healthier and more applicable policies and to achieve the desired goals of the education and training provided (Sönmez, 2019). Absenteeism, on the other hand, causes the student not to benefit from the learning opportunities and opportunities offered to him, and the effort spent by both the teachers and the school administration is wasted. This situation affects the learning and teaching process negatively for the student (Rumberger, 1997). Due to absenteeism from school, the duration of education and training is shortened. These students, who have less opportunity to learn, show lower levels of school success compared to other students, and they are faced with the risk of leaving the education and training process unfinished. For all these reasons, the problem of absenteeism is often a harbinger of school dropouts (Sönmez, 2019).

2. LITERATUR REVIEW

2.1. Pre-school Education

2.1.1. Definition of pre-school education

Pre-school education; It is a process that supports the cognitive, physical, emotional and social development of children, taking into account individual differences and abilities, and covers the period until the compulsory education period of children (MEB, 2013). Yeşilyaprak (2012) defines it as *"the level of education that provides the cognitive, physical, language and social development of children who have not reached primary school age in a planned environment and prepares them for primary school"*.

2.1.2. Purpose of pre-school education

The purpose of pre-primary education, which is optionally given to children in the 3-5 age group who have not reached the basic education, aims to help children develop their physical, mental and emotional development and acquire good habits, to prepare them for primary education, and to create a common environment for children coming from unfavorable environments. and to ensure that Turkish is spoken correctly and beautifully" (MEB, 2013). Education in this period is the process of helping the child grow up in the most positive way possible by supporting his/her development in all areas from birth to compulsory education period with a natural learning motivation (Kaya, 2002).

2.1.3. The importance of pre-school education

The period in which the child's brain development is the fastest is the preschool period. The results obtained in research on how the brain grows and how it works emphasize the importance of the first three years of a child's life and continuing preschool education (Bredenkamp, 2015). Preschool education creates a strong ground for all development areas such as brain development, physical, mental, social and language. Research on this subject; It shows that the developments in the pre-school education period are very important, the rich experiences that take place in this period prepare the environment for the child to develop a positive attitude towards learning and school in his later life, but in the opposite case, a situation that will negatively affect the whole education life can be experienced (Turaşlı, 2014; MEB, 2013; Uyanık ve Kandır, 2010; Yeşilyaprak, 2012).

For all this reason, the education given to the child in this period, which is the first years of his life, should be planned and carried out by taking into account the developmental characteristics, interests and needs of the child. With the education carried out during the pre-school education period, a

healthier basis for the child's life in the future is provided, and this will benefit the child, his family, and therefore the society (Gültekin Akduman, 2015).

2.2. School Absenteeism and Dropout

2.2.1. School absenteeism

The students' acquisition of these desired knowledge and skills is measured by their academic success. The basic requirement for achieving the desired academic success is not to be absent (Sönmez, 2019). Absenteeism prevents the student from being involved in the education and training process, and as a result, it reduces the quality of the education and training that the student receives. Each day of absence from school shortens the amount of education and training a student is expected to complete. As a natural consequence of absenteeism, academic success cannot reach the desired level. The duration of continuing education and training does not only affect student success, but as the duration of absenteeism increases and the duration of school attendance decreases, the risk of leaving school also increases (Sönmez, 2019).

2.2.2. School dropout

In the simplest sense, early leaving is untimely leaving school (Patrick, 2012). In general terms, early leaving is defined as leaving the school before the student completes his/her education, that is, without graduating from the school he/she studied (McWhirter et al., 2004). School dropout (Taylı, 2008), which is one of the important problems in the education and training process, is to stop attending school completely due to one or more reasons, unlike intermittent absenteeism (Garrison, 1985).

The problem of early leaving is a global problem facing the education industry all over the world (Patrick, 2012). In previous studies, emphasizes that early leaving is a global problem (Mohsin et al., 2004; De Cos, 2005; Bridgeland et al., 2006; Oghuvbu, 2008) and as expected, it was stated that the dropout rate in underdeveloped countries is higher than in other countries (Yorğun, 2014).

3. METHOD

3.1. Model of the Research

This research; The study was carried out to determine the reasons for absenteeism and dropouts of foreign students in the pre-school education period and to develop suggestions for all stakeholders responsible for the student's school attendance in order to solve this problem.

3.2. Population and Sample of the Research

The universe of the research; Foreign students studying in Konya city center, their parents, school administrators and teachers.

In the research; By using homogeneous sampling method, 5 School Administrators (SA), 5 Guidance and Psychological Counseling Teacher (GPCT) and 10 Pre-school Teachers (PT) working in public schools operating in regions where foreign students are concentrated in Meram district of Konya province, and 25 students with absenteeism problems and dropouts. The student's parent (SP) was interviewed.

3.3. Data Collection Tools and/or Techniques

Interview technique, one of the qualitative research methods, was used as the data collection technique in the research. As a data collection tool in the research, a semi-structured interview form compiled from the research questions used in previous similar studies (Mercan Uzun and Tüm, 2015; Ertekin, 2019; Mercan, 2020; Sarier, 2020) was used.

3.4. Analysis of Data

The data obtained within the scope of the research was used content analysis method and the obtained data were analyzed in four stages: naming stage, coding and sorting stage, theme development stage, validity-reliability provision stage and reporting stage.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Demographic Information on Participants

A total of 45 people, 62.2% female and 37.8% male, participated in the research. When the demographic information of the participants who volunteered within the scope of the research was examined; It was determined that 4.4% of the participants were school principals, 6.7% were vice principals, 11.1% were counselors, 22.2% were kindergarten teachers and 55.6% were parents of students. When the educational status of the participants is examined; It was determined that 28.9% of the participants were primary school graduates, 11.1% were secondary school graduates, 6.7% were high school graduates, 44.4% were undergraduate and 8.9% were graduates (Table 1).

Tablo 1. Demographic Information

	n	%
Gender		
Female	28	62.2
Male	17	37.8
Job		
Manager of School	2	4.4
Manager Assistant of School	3	6.7
Guidance and Psychological Counseling Teacher	5	11.1
Preschol Teacher	10	22.2
Parent of Student	25	55.6
Educational Status		
Primary school	13	28.9
Secondary school	5	11.1
High school	3	6.7
University	20	44.4
Master/PhD Degree	4	8.9
TOTAL	45	100.0

4.2. Reasons for Absence from School of Foreign Students

When the reasons for absenteeism of foreign students are examined; It has been determined that it can be grouped under five sub-dimensions: school-related reasons, familial reasons, socio-cultural reasons, socio-economic reasons, and health reasons (Table 2).

Table 2. Opinions on the reasons for absenteeism of foreign students from school

	f	%
School Related Causes		
Preschool class inadequacy	21	46.7
Insufficient/absence of interpreters at school	12	26.7
School entrance and exit times	9	20.0
School physical conditions are not suitable for students with disabilities	3	6.6
Familial Reasons		

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Disruption of family integrity	15	33.3
Families with many children	12	26.7
Not having someone at home to take the student to school because the parents are working	11	24.4
Other family problems	7	15.6
Socio-Cultural Reasons		
Families do not attach importance to pre-school education	15	33.3
Directing students to education centers of informal or other institutions providing religious education	12	26.7
Inability to get help from family to solve language problem	8	17.8
Low socio-cultural level of families	6	13.3
The fact that families live in socio-culturally disadvantaged areas of the region they live in	4	8.9
Socio-Economic Causes		
School fees forcing the family economically	18	40.0
Inability of families to solve their general economic problems	15	33.3
Thinking that preschool education is expensive	12	26.7
Health Causes		
Students have physical disabilities	17	37.8
Students with mental disabilities	15	33.3
Students with chronic diseases	13	28.9

When the opinions of school management, teachers and parents regarding the reasons for absenteeism of foreign students are examined; 46.7% of them are due to school-related reasons "preschool class inadequacy", 33.3% of them are "deterioration of family integrity" due to family-related reasons, 33.3% of them are socio-cultural reasons "families do not attach importance to pre-school education", 40.0% are socio-cultural reasons. - it was determined that "school fees force the family economically" due to economic reasons and 37.8% of them emphasized that "students have physical disabilities" due to health reasons (Table 2).

The statements of the participants regarding the reasons for absenteeism of foreign students are as follows;

- There are 2 classes in our school, one morning and one afternoon. We can accept 25+25=50 students in these classes. Our primary school 1 class enrollment is close to 180-190 students on average. We have to reject incoming student families. Unfortunately, the number of our classes is insufficient (SA1-56; SA3-33; SA4-36; GPCT1-29; GPCT2-25; GPCT4-41).

- Even though it's been 2 terms, we still have a shortage of translators and we can't get along with families. We are experiencing communication difficulties, especially with the families of Afghan students who have increased this year (PT1-28; PT2-32; PT5-39; PT8-26; PT10-23).

- There is dual education in our school, many families want to enroll their children as junior students. We try to be fair by determining our lists by drawing. For this reason, school dropout and absenteeism problems are experienced especially in the morning period (PT3-44; PT4-41; PT6-31; PT7-45; PT9-29; SA2-25; SA5-57; GPCT3-33; GPCT5-55).

- Our school is a historical school. The kindergarten is on the 1st floor and unfortunately we do not have a school elevator (PT5-39; GPCT2-25; GPCT5-55).

- Our school student toilets are in the school yard and therefore can pose a problem for our children with physical disabilities and chronic diseases. This situation can cause dropout and absenteeism (PT1-28; PT7-45; PT10-51; GPCT1-29; SA3-33; SA5-57).

- Families with preschool children from different cultures, unfortunately, do not realize the importance of pre-school education yet (PT2-32; PT7-45; PT10-23; GPCT2-25).

- Although our primary school 1st grade teachers state that their students who receive pre-school education are at a better level in many fields, especially in Turkish, than those who do not receive pre-school education, unfortunately, some families have not yet realized the importance of this (PT1-28; PT4-41; SA5-57; GPCT5- 55; SA3-33; SA5-57).
- We learn that families who have registered to our school before and who are absent or drop out send their children to informal institutions that provide Qur'an education (PT2-32; PT5-39; PT7-45; PT9-29; GPCT1-29; GPCT5-55).
- Families of foreign students who come to our school for registration find our fees high, or families with low economic levels decide not to send their children to school when they see the need list (PT1-28; PT2-32; PT6-31; SA1-56; SA5-57).
- My son is physically disabled and cannot walk, there is no elevator in the school. In addition, my child had to drop out of school because the school toilets were in the school yard (SP2-33; SP15-41; SP23-37).
- I sent my child to a course attended by Syrian children to study the Qur'an. I wanted him to receive religious education there (SP4-27; SP7-30; SP16-30; SP19-29; SP24-45).
- I took my child for registration, but there is a fee. It was also said that there were kindergarten items to buy. Since I could not afford these every month, I could not send my child to school (SP6-32; SP18-44; SP25-35).
- My son is mentally handicapped and can sometimes have seizures. Unfortunately, there is no toilet training. Therefore, I cannot send it to pre-school education (SP1-26; SP5-34; SP14-24; SP21-30).
- At the school I went to for registration, there were 2 periods in the morning and in the afternoon. However, it was said that there was no place in the noon period and it was possible to register for the morning session. The morning period starts at 07.30, at this time I cannot send my child to school every day (SP3-44; SP10-36; SP11-27).

4.3. Reasons for Dropping Out of Foreign Students

When the reasons for dropout of foreign students are examined; It has been determined that it can be grouped under seven sub-dimensions: school-related reasons, student-related reasons, familial reasons, socio-cultural reasons, socio-economic reasons, health reasons and other reasons (Table 3).

When the opinions of school administration, teachers and parents regarding the reasons for dropout of foreign students are examined; 37.8% of them stated that “there is no sanction to attend pre-school class” due to school-related reasons, 57.8% of them stated that “student does not like school” due to student-related reasons, 64.4% did not understand the importance of pre-school education due to family-related reasons, 31.1%. (Table 3).

Table 3. Opinions on the reasons for dropout of foreign students

	<i>f</i>	%
School Related Causes		
Lack of sanction to attend pre-school class	17	37.8
High number of pre-school class students	15	33.3
Insufficient/absence of interpreters at school	13	28.9
Student-Based Reasons		
Student dislikes school	26	57.8
The student does not understand the importance of school	10	22.2
Peer influence	9	20.0

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Familial Reasons		
Families do not understand the importance of pre-school education	29	64.4
Other family problems	16	35.6
Socio-Cultural Reasons		
Directing students to education centers of informal or other institutions providing religious education	14	31.1
Perspectives of foreign nationals towards education	13	28.9
Low socio-cultural level of families	11	24.4
Inability to get help from family to solve language problem	7	15.6
Socio-Economic Causes		
School fees forcing the family economically	18	40.0
Inability of families to solve their general economic problems	15	33.3
Thinking that preschool education is expensive	12	26.7
Health Causes		
Students with physical and mental disabilities	28	62.2
Students with chronic diseases	17	37.8
Other Causes		
Moving the residence of the family from the region where the school is located to another region	31	68.9
Migration of the family to their own country or to a different country	14	31.1

For socio-cultural reasons, “the students are directed to the education centers of informal or other institutions that provide religious education”, 40.0% of them are due to socio-economic reasons, “the school fees force the family economically”, 62.2% of them are “the students have physical and mental disabilities” due to health reasons. and 68.9% of them emphasized that “the family has moved their residence from the region where the school is located to another region” for other reasons (Table 3).

The statements of the participants regarding the reasons for dropping out of foreign students are as follows;

- Our families of foreign nationals usually have many children and pre-school students have at least 1 and usually more siblings. Families with infants have problems while bringing their children to school and this causes absenteeism and dropout (SA2-25; SA3-33; SA5-57; GPCT2-25; GPCT3-33; GPCT5-55; PT1-28; PT 2-32) ; PT4-41; PT5-39; PT7-45; PT8-26; PT9-29).
- Due to the Covid -19 epidemic that has been going on for 2 years, student families with chronic diseases, especially heart disease and diseases related to the immune system, do not send their children to pre-school education (SA1-56; SA4-36; GPCT1-29; GPCT4-41; PT3-44; PT6-31; PT10-23).
- When we came to the school for registration, they said that the classes were full and therefore no registration was made and the registrations were closed. I could not enroll my child in school (SP4-27; SP15-41; SP18-44; SP24-45; SP25-35).
- I went to enroll my child in school, but I could not negotiate and agree on enrollment. Since there was no Afghan translator, I could not find out when the school started, and I could not enroll my child in the school because the registration period expired when I went (SP1-26; SP6-32; SP7-30; SP11-27; SP17-35; SP22-46).

- When my child started school, his father left the house and we had a lot of trouble because my son was very fond of his father and he did not want to go to school, I had to pick him up from school (SP8-28; SP12-30; SP13-39; SP20-35).

- I have 2 other younger children at home. I could not take my child to school in the early hours because the registration was left in the morning period and we had to drop out of school (SP2-33; SP5-34; SP9-36; SP10-36; SP14-24; SP16-30; SP19-29; SP23-37).

- My daughter is a heart patient, she started to get sick frequently because of the Covid epidemic period, and because the school toilets are in the school garden, my daughter goes to the toilet frequently due to the effects of the drugs she uses. He got very tired going up and down stairs and I had to pick him up from school (SP3-44; P21-30).

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

When the findings obtained as a result of the research are examined; Within the scope of the opinions of school management and teachers and the opinions of students' parents regarding the reasons for absenteeism of foreign pre-school education students, they were evaluated in five sub-dimensions: school-related reasons, familial reasons, socio-cultural reasons, socio-economic reasons, and health reasons; Within the scope of the opinions of the school administration and teachers and the opinions of the students' parents regarding the reasons for dropout of foreign pre-school students, there are seven sub-categories: school-related reasons, student-related reasons, familial reasons, socio-cultural reasons, socio-economic reasons, health reasons and other reasons. size was evaluated. When the literature is examined, the results of previous similar studies support the results of this research (Özbaş, 2010; Köse, 2014; Aküzüm et al., 2015; Balantekin & Kartal, 2016; Mercan, 2020).

As a result of the findings obtained in the research; It was concluded that while familial reasons, socio-economic reasons and environmental reasons are effective in the absenteeism of foreign national preschool education students, familial and socio-economic reasons and other reasons are effective in the reasons of these students' dropout. When the literature is examined, the results of previous similar studies support the results of this research (Adıgüzel & Karadaş, 2013; Aküzüm et al., 2015; Ertekin).

5.2. Suggestions

Suggestions developed to prevent the causes of absenteeism and dropout of foreign pre-school education students and to ensure that these students attend school regularly can be examined in four sub-dimensions.

1. Recommendations for Education Practitioners

1.1. School absenteeism of foreign national preschool education students should not only be a problem of the school they are enrolled in, school administration, teachers and student families, they should be discussed in a commission to be established with the participation of education experts, academicians specialized in this field and ministry administrators regarding the solution of these problems, and education policies in this direction should be discussed. should be developed.

1.2. The school dropout problems of foreign pre-school students should be handled by the same commission and education policies should be developed in this direction.

1.3. Projects should be prepared by the directors of the Ministry and academicians who are experts in their fields, in which the school administration, teachers and student families will be involved in order to solve or minimize the problem of absenteeism and dropout of foreign national preschool students.

1.4. Families of foreign national preschool education students should be trained on these issues.

2. Suggestions for School Administration and Teachers

- 2.1. In-service trainings should be organized for school management and teachers to change the behaviors of foreign pre-school education students about absenteeism and school dropout.
- 2.2. School administrators and teachers working in regions with high school absenteeism or drop-out rates should be informed about this issue and foreign national pre-school education students should be encouraged to engage in activities (such as social trips, club activities) to encourage them to school.
- 2.3. Teachers who have foreign pre-school education students in their class should try to increase their commitment to the school by encouraging these students to participate more actively in the lesson.
- 2.4. School administrations are required to cooperate with local administrations or law enforcement in order to prevent the occurrence of undesirable activities or businesses that increase the absenteeism of foreign pre-school education students and increase school dropouts around their schools.
- 2.5. It is necessary to determine the parents who do not want to send their children to school, to ensure that the importance of the school is understood by the parents, and the reasons for not wanting to send their children to school should be investigated.

3. Suggestions for Parents

- 3.1. Parents who do not want to send their children to school should raise awareness of the importance of pre-school education and solve the reasons for not sending them to school.
- 3.2. Parents of foreign students should be encouraged to participate in social activities to increase Turkish language learning and to use communication tools such as books and TV channels that increase Turkish language teaching to children.
- 3.3. Parents of foreign students should be encouraged to attend Turkish reading and writing courses organized by government institutions and various non-governmental organizations.

4. Recommendations for Academicians

- 4.1. The reasons for absenteeism and drop-out of foreign national preschool students should be investigated in more depth.
- 4.2. Research to be done should be spread throughout the country.
- 4.3. The obstacles that prevent these students from regularly participating in school life should be determined and necessary measures and suggestions should be developed to overcome these obstacles.
- 4.4. The findings obtained as a result of the research should be presented to the relevant ministries, local administrations and non-governmental organizations and necessary support should be obtained.

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