



# An evaluation of academic achievement of primary school, secondary school, and secondary education students with fragmented families on the basis of different variables<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The goal of this study; is to research success of primary school, middle school and college children who have broken families as academic, by different interchange. To have learned, analyzed interchanges which effect and to have given teachers and families of them information about this topic is so much important for our children's future. So 636 students who study in KOCAELİ/KÖRFEZ at various schools (primary school, middle school and college) is included to this research's scope. The students who have researched is choosen via random sampling. . In this study, to find academic success level, prepared "Students Who Have Broken Family with Different Interchanges Recognition Survey" is used by researcher. Data collection tool; is created by sex, old, which class is studying, mum and dad situations (dead or living), last term point average, mum and dad education level, mum and dad jobs (employed or unemployed), family monthly earnings, relationship situation between parents, who student stays with together, smoker or not, is student drinking alcohol. In this researching, when convenient data analysis technical has chosen, to find academically points of them is significantly changed whether or not, it is researched with t test, firstly hypothesis motion, by sex, mum and dad situations (dead or living), relationship situation between parents, family monthly earnings, smoker or not, is student drinking alcohol, mother's and father's jobs (employed or unemployed) of the students have broken families. To find, academically points of students; are changed whether or not, it is researched with ANOVA depending on students age groups, mother and father education level, father job situation, who student stay with, student education level interchange significantly. As result making variance analysis, F values calculated and to determine resources of inter-groups differences, is made "LSD Multi Comparison Test".

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## 1. Introduction

Family is the most important socio-cultural and psychological dynamism of history and of society. The dynamisms include such vital functions as the reproduction of population, being an economic system, cultural transmission, children's physical-sociological- psychological education, and preparing children to social life. Children gain these dynamisms and the five basic functions of the family system in the family atmosphere. The five

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basic functions are the resolution of problems, communication in the family, distribution of roles in the family, responding emotionally and involving in emotions, and behavioural control. Children raised in families achieving a balance in those five basic functions and in dynamisms, being able to display flexibility when needed, and adapting into changes generally receive good education, they socialise, and gain a healthy personality.

Fragmentation of the family due to such reasons as death, divorce or abandoning deeply hurt children - who need care, love, support and affection most. The most remarkable indicator of this faces us in preparing children to social life and in their gaining a physically, socially and psychologically healthy personality. Besides, children's world which was destroyed by fragmentation shakes their social functions (that is to say, possibility to live socially) considerably. Therefore, it would not be wrong to think that fragmentation – one of the hitches that families can encounter- and the negative environments caused by it can influence children's physical, social and psychological development in a negative way. Hence, the disintegration of families in a desired or undesired way results in children' experiencing developmental problems. This (physical-social-psychological problems), in turn, continues until school age, and affect children's academic achievement greatly in a negative way.

What children need most all through their lives is the parents' care and affection. Individuals demand these emotionally at every stage of their lives, regardless of their age. Remoulding of children's personality by an ideal family is mainly dependent on the condition that they are psychologically and mentally healthy. However, the number of destroyed families has been increasing nowadays. This hinders children in being psychologically and mentally healthy individuals (Tarhan, 2004).

The most determinant role in the parents and child relations basically depends on parents' attitudes. On examining adjustment disorders in children, it was found that insufficient and inappropriate child-parent relations in the early childhood cause many maladaptive behaviours (Yavuzer, 1994).

Children growing up in congenial relations, in a safe family environment with love and understanding becomes mature, and gains a healthy personality. The most characteristic factor in a mature personality and in guaranteed psychological health is a family environment with warm interactions. Therefore, being separated from the father or the mother is a case shaking the psychological health balance for children. In disintegrated or broken families it is more probable that children will suffer from the psychological reflections of this case (Armato, 1993; quoted by Büyükşahin, 2009).

Family, composed of the father, the mother and children, forms a social and cultural tie between its members. This tie meets all the needs of individuals in this sense with no price. Family, which secures the continuation of the society, is the most fundamental unit that prepares children for social life, fulfils the transmission of culture, and ensures that individuals gain a healthy personality. Families need to meet all the materialistic and moral needs of children, as far as possible. The satisfaction of those needs support individuals' physical, intellectual and psychological development. Families give individuals the sense of being in a whole-part relation. Thus, families instil in them responsibility and stop them from individualising. Yet, disintegration of a family for any reason would influence mainly children, and also the spouses deeply. The influence causes a deep wound which will hardly recover in society in the whole-part relation (Şentürk, 2006).

The disintegration of the family due to death, divorce or abandoning causes interruptions in the socialisation process of children, in the preparation of them to social life, and in raising them as physically, mentally and psychologically healthy adults. Society expects families to raise children with healthy structure of personality. All this mishap (the break up of the family) inflicts deep wounds on children, and puts obstacles in front of their happiness and peace. Besides, these misfortunes remove the probability of an individual's living a healthy life.

Children tend to be the most influenced by a disintegrated or broken family. Consequently, they are the ones that are the most unhappy in the family. A child's world reaches tranquillity with his/her adherence to the mother and with confidence in the father. The comfort and happiness that are the result of a child's admiration for the father and the mother ensure that the individual is adaptive in his/her life. The development of children's physical and intellectual abilities in a positive way depend on the availability of parents and on effective communication and interaction in their presence. Children who feel that they are in a comfortable and safe family atmosphere attain success in social and cultural domains, and builds strong ramparts against the mishaps in life. Individuals can only keep away from such anomalies as crime, violence, loneliness, hopelessness, unhappiness and suicide with such

ramparts. However, the break up of the family can cause children to fail to build such a wall, and cause them to encounter social problems. The major role in getting out of those problems with the slightest damage or with no wounds at all is played by the family fulfilling the duties and responsibilities. Not fulfilling the duties and responsibilities results in disruptions in children's life functions and cause them to lead a problematic life (Şentürk, 2006).

On reviewing the relevant research studies, it was found that the risk of children coming from fragmented families to experience behavioural, psychological and educational problems was higher than those coming from families of married parents.

## 2. Method

The research sample was composed of 636 students- 328 of whom were girls and 308 were boys- attending the primary schools, secondary schools and secondary education schools in the Körfez district of Kocaeli province. "The Survey of Recognising Students coming from Fragmented Families in terms of Different Variables", which was designed by the researcher so as to determine their levels of achievement, was used in this research as the tool of data collection. In the analysis of the data, the SPSS 16.0 package programme was used.

The base of researching is achieved single scanning model. According to Karasar, scanning models are researching models which have done for determination formations as individual or sort. In this type approach, interested event, material, person, group, establishment, topic etc., unit and variables of the situation, it is tried to describe separately (Karasar, 2006, 80).

The Survey of Recognising Students coming from Fragmented Families in terms of Different Variables was applied to 636 students attending the above mentioned primary schools, secondary schools and high schools; and the differences between the variables were analysed through the t-test and one-way ANOVA. The findings obtained are as in what follows. Frequencies and percentages of students according to school types involved in this study are shown following Table 1.

Table 1. Frequencies and percentages of the students according to schools

Gender	Primary school	Secondary School	High School	Total	%
Female	74	127	127	328	51.57
Male	67	129	112	308	48.43
Total	141	256	239	636	100

As shown in Table 1, 51.57 % of the total students are female and 48.43 % of them male. According to school types, while most of the students are in the secondary schools, high school and primary school are following it, respectively.

## 3. Results

Firstly, whether there is a difference between students' mean score according to age categories was determined. For this purpose, ANOVA test was used and the results of the test are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. ANOVA results of students' mean scores in terms of age group

Age Groups	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	P	Sig.
7-8 age	60	3.75	.77						1>4
9-10 age	80	3.66	.83	13.92	4.00	3.48	4.11	.00	2>4

11-12 age	122	3.49	.96	535.00	631.00	.85	3>4
13-14 age	134	3.25	1.05	548.92	635.00		
>15	240	3.50	.89				5>4
Total	636	3.49	.93				

The data analysis conducted demonstrated that there were no statistically significant differences between students in terms of academic scores they received on the basis of their age group. According to the results of the LCD test, which was done so as to find which ages had differences, the highest positiveness degree (3.75) was in the 7-8 age group while the lowest was (3.25) in the 13-14 age group. When the positiveness levels are ordered from the highest to the lowest, the ordering looks as such: 7-8 age group, 9-10 age group, 11-12 age group, and 13-14 age group.

Whether there is a difference between students' mean score according to education level was determined. For this purpose, ANOVA test was used and the results of the test are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. ANOVA results of students' mean scores in terms of education level

Education level	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	P	Sig.
Primary school	141	3.68	.81	10.30	2.00	5.15	6.05	.00	1>2
Secondary school	256	3.35	1.01	538.62	633.00	.85			
High school	239	3.51	.87	548.92	635.00				
Total	636	3.48	.92						

The fragmentation of the family due to such reasons as death, divorce or separation reduces children's educational success (Şentürk, 2006). Following the analysis of the data it was found that there were significant differences between students' academic achievement according to the level of school they attended. Accordingly, the positiveness level from the highest to the lowest is as in the following: students at the level of primary school, students at the level of high school, and students at the level of secondary school.

Whether there is a difference between students' mean score according to education level of their mothers was determined. For this purpose, ANOVA test was used and the results of the test are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. ANOVA results of students' mean scores in terms of education level of their mothers

Education level of mother	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	P	Sig.
Reader writer	210	3.21	.84						
Primary school	257	3.57	.92	32.25	3.00	10.75	13.15	.00	2>1
Sec. School	133	3.57	.93	516.67	632.00	.81			3>1
High school	36	4.11	.97	548.92	635.00				4>1, 4>2, 4>3
Total	636	3.48	.92						

Whether there is a difference between students' mean score according to education level of their fathers was determined. For this purpose, ANOVA test was used and the results of the test are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. ANOVA results of students' mean scores in terms of education level of their fathers

Education level of father	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	P	Sig.
Reader writer	24	3.00	1.10						
Primary school	259	3.35	.82	29.70	3.00	9.90	12.05	.00	
Sec. School	262	3.51	.94	519.21	632.00	.82			3>1,3>2
High school	91	3.94	.93	548.92	635.00				4>1,4>2,4>3
Total	636	3.48	.92						

Statistically significant differences were found between academic scores received on the basis of the level of father's education. According to the results of data analysis, it was found that students whose father was at the level of high school education had higher academic achievement scores while those whose father was at the level of literacy had lower academic achievement scores.

In consequence, no significant differences were found between girls' and boys' academic achievement scores. When seen from this perspective, whether the families are fragmented or not does not differ in terms of gender. The state of fragmentation influences all children, regardless of gender, equally in terms of academic development.

Data analyses showed that there were no significant differences between students' academic achievement on the basis of whether or not their mother was alive. The score average for those whose mother was not alive ( $X_{\text{mean}} = 3.54$ ) was more positive than those whose mother was alive ( $X_{\text{mean}} = 3.48$ ). This is a finding which might be interpreted as that there are no differences between score averages according to whether or not the mother is alive.

The score average for those whose father was alive ( $X_{\text{mean}} = 3.49$ ) was more positive than those whose father was not alive ( $X_{\text{mean}} = 3.47$ ). In consequence of the t-test which was conducted to see whether or not there were any differences between those score averages, no significant differences were found according to whether or not the father was alive on the dimension of the score average in the survey ( $t(634) = 0.28$ ,  $p < 0.21$ ). This finding can be interpreted as that there are no differences between score averages according to whether or not the father is alive.

No significant differences were available between students' academic achievement scores according to having a working or non-working mother. When seen from this perspective, whether the families are fragmented or not does not differ on the basis of having a mother who works or who does not work. The state of fragmentation and whether or not the mother works influence all children's academic development equally.

Additionally, there were not significant differences between students' academic achievement scores on the basis of father's working status. Therefore, when seen from this perspective, whether the family is fragmented or not does not differ according to the father's working status. The state of fragmentation and the father's working status influence all children's academic development equally.

Whether or not the students included in the research had fragmented family does not differ on the basis of average monthly income. This is a finding which can be interpreted as that there are no significant differences between score averages according to the levels of monthly income.

No significant differences were spotted between the academic achievement scores of children with divorced parents and of those with parents living in separate homes. Thus, whether the family is broken or not does not differ in terms of parents' state of relations, divorce or separation. The state of fragmentation and parents' state of relations influence all children's academic development equally.

No significant differences were found in academic achievement scores between children living with their mother, children living with their father and children living with a close relative. Hence, whether the family is fragmented or

not does not differ on the basis of the person or group they live with. Consequently, the state of fragmentation and the person or group that they live with influence all children's academic development equally.

Apart from that, no significant differences were found between the academic achievement scores of smoking students and non-smoking students. When seen from this perspective, whether the family is fragmented or not does not differ according to whether the student is smoker or non-smoker. Thus, the state of fragmentation and whether or not students smoke influence all children's academic development equally.

There were no significant differences between students drinking alcohol and those who do not drink alcohol in terms of their academic achievement scores. Therefore, whether the family is fragmented or not, does not differ according to whether the student drinks alcohol or not. Thus, the state of fragmentation and whether or not students drink alcohol influence all children's academic development equally.

#### **4. Recommendations**

That students with fragmented families due to such causes as divorce, abandoning or death experience unsuccessful at school and that they display several negative behaviours (such as anger, introversion, aggressiveness, anti-social behaviours, etc) is an undeniable fact. The most important point in the process of experiencing such natural responses is that parents should increase their relations and interactions with school staff (that is to say, teachers and administrators); because the prerequisite for passing through such a negative process as disintegration with the least damage is to be in close relations with children and to follow their cognitive, social, and psychological state regularly.

The safeguarded structure of psychological health in a society is built through healthy and strong children and youth raised by the members of the society. The precondition of raising healthy individuals is that parents should be aware of the dynamics of their interactions with one another personally; because this awareness of parents occupies an important place in overcoming the negative processes that they caused their children to experience. Therefore, community mental health centres should function actively and those centres should set up continuous relations with families.

It was found that children's academic achievement rises in parallel to the rise in the level of parents' education. Considering this finding, it is thought that holding family education sessions by municipalities, district governorate, district directorates of national education and by foundations within the scope of social volunteering would be beneficial.

The scope of family education programmes should be extended by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Family and Social Policies in schools in association with municipalities and foundations. Such educational programmes are extremely important for preventive guidance and for parents and children to overcome the traumatic processes with the least damage.

The psychological counsellors doing preventive guidance work should be in close contacts with teachers of all grade levels in the school, and act together; because those psychological counsellors should prepare various programmes for students facing negative conditions in life, and should help them to hold on to life. Besides, they can also present support and assistance services to such students to raise their health and strength.

Individuals were occasionally observed to hide the hard and problematic situations that they experienced in fragmented families from neighbourhood and from their teachers at school; and they were also observed that they had difficulties in establishing relations, and thus they avoided interactions. Therefore, it is believed that organising individual and group activities with children and adolescents will both comfort them and increase their social relations. It is also thought that performing interviews with such children and adolescents by school counsellors in accordance with the principles of individual and group counselling would help to reveal the life dynamics of children and adolescents.

It is also believed that organising seminars and information-giving meetings on the impacts of fragmentation of families on children and on what to do as parents in these cases would be useful. Moreover, giving group guidance and orientation to the members of such families and thus ensuring that they feel they are the members of a group,

that they state themselves clearly, that they share, and that they gain the ability to accept their situation would also bring benefits.

In line with the preventive and protective functions of psychological counselling, support work should be done so as to be able to notice earlier the children and adolescents with fragmented families and to prevent the problems to become chronic.

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