



# The Predictors of Success in Turkish High School Placement Exams: Exam Prep Courses, Perfectionism, Parental Attitudes and Test Anxiety\*

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## Abstract

The purpose of the current study is to determine to what extent the following four variables explain K-8 students' SBS success levels; these variables being attendance to private SBS preparation courses, multidimensional perfectionism, parental attitude types, and test anxiety. SBS is a nationwide, high stake, high school placement test taken by middle school students in the Turkish education system since the 2007-2008 school year. The sample of this study consists of 460 cluster sampled 8th grade students, of which 257 are girls and 203 are boys all from the city center of the province of Tokat, Turkey. The Multi-dimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS), Parental Attitude Type Scale, Westside Test Anxiety Scale, and a personal information sheet were used to collect data which was then analyzed using hierarchical linear regression, independent group t tests and chi square tests. According to the findings, the most effective variable in determining a student's level of success is attendance to private preparation courses. Other significant predictors of success on the SBS are the espousal of a perfectionist attitude by parents and a student's level of test anxiety. Moreover, the most effective factor influencing SBS scores of students who do not attend preparation courses is his parents' adoption of an authoritarian attitude. While the "Order" dimension of the MPS and "test anxiety" were negative predictors of students' success on the SBS, "responsibility-centered parents' attitude" was positively related to the students' scores. "Doubt from behaviors" was the most effective negative predictor explaining the SBS scores of students who did not attend private SBS preparation courses. The findings of the study suggest that as one's income level increases, so does the duration of time spent attending SBS prep courses, and this increased level of success can also be attributed to effective parent involvement in students' lives. However, family's income stands as a definite medium, explaining students' SBS success. As a result of the current study, SBS preparation courses has been found to be the most defining factor in students' SBS scores. According to the findings, student's success on large scale tests are mainly affected by extracurricular activities, such as courses or private lessons.

## Key Words

Parental Attitude Type, Private SBS Courses, Perfectionism, SBS, Test Anxiety.

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Regardless of a family's income and education level, parents try to do their best for their children. Although education provides opportunity for a high paying job and better life standard in terms of the things money can buy, high stakes tests complicate matters for students, making it difficult for them to enter high school or university. One such test used to determine which high school a student is to attend is the SBS (Level Attainment Exam for Middle school students), a national high stakes test having been implemented in Turkish middle schools at the end of each grade of middle school (through K6 to K8) between 2008 and 2011, then only to seventh and eighth graders in 2012, and finally only to eighth graders beginning in 2013. While some families take advantage of SBS preparation courses or private classes to provide their children with a better chance on this competitive exam, those children coming from low income families are becoming disadvantaged.

Puberty is a challenging period, lasting between the ages of 11 and 21, with rapid physical and psychological changes. During this period, friends' influences increase while tensions negatively affect adolescent's relations with family, also affecting students' academic success (Steinberg, 1996). Kılıççı (1981) states that the transition from a single classroom teacher setting in elementary schools to that of multiple teachers in middle schools, an adolescent's interest in his/her own body and an interest shift to the opposite sex, a lack of basic concepts and skills, as well as test anxiety may also be used to explain low academic achievement levels. Tension with family has a negative effect on adolescents, and the research suggests that there is a positive influence of family support in the academic achievement of adolescents (Satır, 1996). Adolescence is a sensitive period in which students' academic performance largely shapes his/her future life. Therefore, it is important to determine the factors affecting students' academic success during this period. Attitudes and behaviors of parents determine children's personality development to a large extent through his/her mental and emotional development and socialization (Özgülven, 2001). For this reason, it can be understood that both social environment and family shape children in tandem with each other. According to Cüceloğlu (1991), parents sometimes prevent their children from developing on their own way either by doing a lot for them or by doing little, with both causing patterns of inappropriate behavior. Özgülven (2002) states that many factors determine students' levels of achievement, such as motivation, anxiety, family

characteristics, socio-economic characteristics, inadequate schools and educational conditions, nutrition, and mental health conditions. Within the literature studying academic achievement, the following variables were found to be significant: exam anxiety (Koçkar, Kılıç, & Şener, 2002), sex (Özkal & Çetingöz, 2006), learning styles (Deniz & Kelecioğlu, 2005), and attitudes toward learning (Akbaba-Altun, & Çakan, 2008). There are also studies on the effect of teaching for large scale exams on achievement (McGaghie, Downing, & Kubilius, 2004; Popham, 2001).

Prep courses for large scale tests; such as the YGS, LYS, KPSS, and UDS, are all well-established supplementary sources in Turkish education system, being implemented since the 1980s. As explained above, it can be seen throughout the literature that many variables have been used to explain academic achievement. However, there exist an insignificant number of studies researching the effect of preparation course attendance on national large scale exams. In the current study, it is aimed to understand K-8 students' SBS success in relation with attendance to private SBS preparation courses, students' multidimensional perfectionism, parental attitude types, and test anxiety.

### Research Problem

The following question has been asked: What is the effect of preparation course attendance, perfectionism, parental attitudes, and test anxiety on middle school students' level of achievement on the SBS in Tokat?

The related literature on the above-mentioned variables, studied in the current project has been summarized below.

### Large Scale Tests and Prep Courses

Success is often understood as being one's Grade Point Average (Carter & Good, 1973). In Turkey, social-economical problems have directed families to seek education, equating school success with life success. Students are required to take the SBS at the end of middle school (8<sup>th</sup> grade) and the YGS-LYS after completing high school (12<sup>th</sup> grade). In order to provide their children with greater opportunities, families often take great strides to save enough money to facilitate their children's preparation for these large scale tests. Such preparation courses are designed for a specific exam, attended after school and on the weekends where students frequently

take trial exams and receive help from a counselor to construct a study program as well as vocational guidance to ascertain their strengths and weaknesses. Origlia and Ouillon (1987) stated that intellectual capabilities, student's interest, and motivation are also effective on student's academic success. There are also a number of studies emphasizing the effectiveness of preparation on high stakes tests (Beidel, Turner, & Taylor-Ferreira, 1999; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1999; McGaghie et al., 2004; Popham, 2001; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1992). Preparation courses are ubiquitous in Turkey, being found in almost every town for every nationwide exam.

**Perfectionism:** Perfect means a person or thing without any defects or flaws. As a personality trait in psychology, perfectionism corresponds to a person's starvation for perfectness, setting high standards for self, being overly self-critical and paying too much attention to what others think about his/her work. Factors such as work load and stress may interfere with the performance of an individual. Thereby resulting in the possible delay or inability to finish what one has already started (Slaney & Ashby, 1996, p. 393).

Perfectionism is expecting more than one's own or another's level of performance (Hollander, 1965, p. 103). Frost, Marten, Lahart, and Rosenblate (1990) define perfectionism as setting standards over performance and being intolerant to the idea of failing according to the standards one has placed for him/herself. According to Adler (1956), perfectionism is an innate characteristic that can be either healthy or unhealthy, having positive and negative dimensions that may bring success when a person sets high standards for him/herself (Roedell, 1984). Frost et al. (1990) looked at perfectionism under six dimensions: Organization, Concern over Mistakes, Personal Standards, Parental Expectations, Parental Criticism, and Doubts about Actions. Hamachek (1978) states that conditional acceptance, unsupportiveness, and inconsistent parental attitudes are factors that provoke the development of perfectionism in children. As such, children growing up in a family atmosphere espousing a perfectionist attitude feel the need to be perfect in order to receive their parents' approval.

The effect of personal standards on academic achievement has been studied by many researchers, and it has been stated that motivation positively predicts student's achievement (Accordino, Accordino, & Slaney, 2000; MacLellan, 2005; Pruett, 2004).

**Parental Attitude:** Family structure and family attitudes toward a child have a positive influence on the child's personality development as agreed upon by many theorists (Erkan, 1993). While those individuals growing up in a strictly controlling family environment have more need for control, children growing up in a loving and accepting home show more tolerance toward negative situations. The research on parental attitude types indicates that there are six parental attitude types, being: democratic, authoritative, disinterested/unresponsive, loose, unstable, and protective.

Democratic parents have sincere, deep, unconditional love for their children while they also have some rules around the house. Democratic parents supervise their children through logic and manipulation instead of pressure and force (Baumrind, 1966). According to Baldwin (1948), children growing up in democratic family environment are good at planning, creative and original thinking; therefore they are more open to investigation and trial.

Authoritarian parents are controlling, shaping and imposing their wishes to the child (Baumrind, 1966). Children growing up with this parental attitude are more aggressive and rebellious. Families who are not caring and who are neglectful may cause their children to have aggressive behaviors, low self-esteem, and problematic family relations (Ekşi, 1990).

The effects of parental attitudes' on academic achievement have been studied by many researchers (Baumrind, 1966, 1971; Dornbusch, Ritter, Liederman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989).

**Test Anxiety:** According to Öztürk (2004), anxiety is the feeling stemming from a light nervousness which then continues to develop into a troubled feeling supposing that something bad will happen and may be experienced in the form of a nuisance, concern, and/or a state of panic. Anxiety is an intense state experienced when an individual feels that s/he is being evaluated or examined containing physiological, behavioral, and cognitive elements (Erkan, 1991). Factors like parent's attitudes toward a person in their adolescence, parental concern of academic success, examinations, and relationships with friends all have a reinforcing effect on teenager's conflicts and anxieties. Anxiety and fear are closely related, both which result in confusion. According to Cüceloğlu (1991), the conscious emotional reaction to a dangerous situation is called fear, whereas the unconscious reaction

against unidentifiable, internal dangers is defined as anxiety. The factors that cause anxiety vary from person to person and from society to society. Regardless of the factors causing it, anxiety affects one's ability to perform to his/her potential just as it negatively affects one's level of motivation. The most common anxiety is the type experienced during academic examinations. Spielberg divides anxiety into two categories: situational and constant anxiety (Anshel, 1994). Every person experiences anxiety and fear against dangerous situations, and this kind of anxiety is normal and temporal. Spielberger calls this type of anxiety *state anxiety*. However, when anxiety is not related with external dangers and when these factors result in perpetual qualms and stress creating an emotional state in which the person feels like his/her personal values are under threat, such anxiety is defined as *constant anxiety*. Taking the above statements into consideration, test anxiety should then be considered to be a form of state anxiety.

The results of the studies researching the relationship between academic achievement and test anxiety indicate that these two variables are negatively related to each other. The results of these studies support the notion that people with higher levels of test anxiety show a lower rate of success than those who experience less test anxiety (Bandura, 2001; Benjamin, 1991; Birenbaum & Nasser, 1994; Brown, 1999; Cassady, 2004; Cassady & Johnson, 2002; Culler & Holahan, 1980; Gündoğdu, 1994; Hancock, 2001; Hembree, 1988; Hollandsworth & Kirkland, 1980; McEwan & Goldenberg, 1999; Owens, 1996; Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1991; Sud & Parabha, 1995; Sullivan, 2002). Ergene (1994) states that individuals who experience a higher rate of test anxiety prefer low status professions that require lower levels of competition and evaluation due to their lack of exposed cognitive skills. In sum, it is clearly evident that test anxiety negatively affects students' achievement (Steinberg, 1996).

### Method

A correlational descriptive model has been used in the current study. A set of Likert type scales was used to collect data for the study. Data were gathered through cluster sampling and a hierarchical regression analysis, after which independent *t* tests and Chi Square analyses were carried out on the data. The study population consists of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from 29 elementary schools in the province of Tokat, Turkey. Through

cluster sampling, 540 measurement instruments were delivered to students coming from 14 of the 29 schools with a total of 1,609 students and 490 measurement sets being collected. The sample size was set considering the number of independent variables in the regression analysis. After the exclusion of incomplete and incorrect measurement sets, 460 completed measurement scales were entered into the data set. The valid scale rate is 93% (460/490) and the access rate to population is 67.5% (490/3308). Of the total population studied, 56% of the students were female and 44% male. The high majority (48%) of families earned a monthly income ranging from £500 to £1,500, and 11% of parents had an income level of under £500.

### Measurement Tools

A personal information sheet, the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS) (Frost et al., 1990), Parental Attitude Scale (Küçüküran, 2005), and Westside Test Anxiety Scale (Driscoll, 2007) were used to collect data. The Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale is a 35-item, 5 point Likert type scale (Agree Completely to Disagree Completely) developed to measure a person's level of perfectionism under six subscales (Organization, Concern over Mistakes, Personal Standards, Parental Expectations, Parental Criticism, and Doubts about actions). Scale validity was achieved through an exploratory factor analysis, and the scale's reliability was ascertained by using the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient. The MPS was adapted into Turkish by Mısırlı-Taşdemir (2003) and its validity and reliability was measured on a Turkish high school students' sample which was found to be consistent with the findings of the original scale. The Parental Attitude Scale is a 30-item, Likert type scale (Always to Never) developed by Küçüküran (2005) to measure parental attitude under two subscales, Responsibility/Acceptance and Authority/Supervision. These two subscales were determined as a result of an exploratory factor analysis, and each subscale was measured under the consideration of 15 items. The Westside Exam Anxiety Scale (WEAS), developed by Driscoll (2007) in order to measure students' exam anxiety, is an 11-item Likert type scale, ranging from Always Correct to Never Correct. The WEAS is adapted into Turkish by Totan and Yavuz (2009). A CFA confirming the single dimension of the scale was conducted in order to prove construct validity of the scale. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient, the Spearman Brown Split

half reliability analysis and test, as well as retest methods also indicated that this scale was a reliable instrument to use on Turkish university students'.

### Analysis and Results

First, the current researchers analyzed whether there existed any significant differences in student scores depending on their attendance to a private SBS preparation course through a set of independent *t* tests. There were significant differences observed in 6th and 7th grade SBS scores based on their attendance (or lack thereof) in a private SBS prep course, with those attending receiving higher scores. On the *Parental Criticism* and *Doubts about Actions* subscales of the MPS, those students who did not attend preparation courses scored higher. Responsibility centered parental attitude were perceived to be significantly higher by students who attended preparation courses. Students who did not attend these courses also had higher exam anxiety levels than those students who did.

After having completed the above analysis, the relative importance of multidimensional perfectionism, parental attitudes perceived by students, and test anxiety levels on explaining students' SBS score were researched through a set of Hierarchical Multiple Regression analysis. Chi-square analyses were conducted in order to ascertain the relationship between SES (Socio Economic Status), measured in several intervals, and attendance in SBS preparation courses. Also, the relationship between length of attendance, in terms of years, and family SES level is tested through a Chi-Square analysis.

Before the analysis, outliers were searched for within the data. Tabachnick and Fidel's (2007) criteria for an outlier (standard score  $> \pm 3.29$ ) was used to detect potential outliers, and four observation were deleted accordingly. Stevens (1996) suggested using Mahalanobis distances to determine multivariate outliers, and accordingly, three observations whose MD value was higher than 32.91 were removed. Standardized errors ranged between  $\pm 3$  bands, and there were no Cook distances over 1. Based on these findings, it was concluded that further research was not required.

Through independent *t* tests, whether there existed differences between students SBS scores, multidimensional perfectionism levels, parental attitudes, and test anxiety level based on attendance to SBS prep courses was sought. The results indicated that there were differences in students' scores for

the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale items of *Doubt from Behaviors* and *Family Expectations*, with students attending SBS preparation courses scoring higher. Responsibility based family attitude scores were significantly higher for students' who attended preparation courses, indicating that students who did not attend these courses had higher test anxiety levels. Students who attended preparation courses also scored significantly higher on their 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade SBS exam with there being a 60 point difference between those who attended and those who did not. Considering that decimals makes a difference on which school students will be placed, 60 points is a huge mark on favor of students who attended SBS private courses.

It was therefore decided that multidimensional perfectionism, family attitude and test anxiety might be significant predictors of SBS scores.

### What is the Relative Importance of Attendance to Private SBS Preparation Courses, Multidimensional Perfectionism, Family Attitude, and Test Anxiety Level on 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Students' Grade SBS Scores?

The findings indicate that the following factors help to explain 6<sup>th</sup> grade students' SBS scores: attendance in SBS preparation courses, organization, doubts about actions, parental criticism, and personal standards with attending in SBS preparation courses being the most significant factor behind students' SBS success. Özgüven (2002) also states the importance of high stake exam preparation courses on academic achievement.

### What is the Relative Importance of the Following Factors on 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Students' SBS Scores: Attendance in Private SBS Preparation Courses, Multidimensional Perfectionism, Family Attitude, and Test Anxiety?

According to the findings, the following factors are the positive factors explaining 7<sup>th</sup> grade students' SBS scores: attending private SBS preparation courses, personal standards, and responsibility/acceptance parenting styles. The negative factors are as follows: organization, doubts about actions, and parental criticism.

For further analysis, by splitting the data for the attendance variable, multiple hierarchical regression analyses were run in order to ascertain the relative importance of multidimensional perfectionism, parental attitudes, and test anxiety

to predict students' levels of success as measured by 6th and 7th grade SBS scores.

#### **What is the Relative Importance of the Following Factors on SBS Success Levels of Students Attending Private SBS Preparation Courses: Multidimensional Perfectionism, Family Attitude, and Test Anxiety?**

Results indicate that organization, the responsibility/ acceptance parenting style, and test anxiety are among the important factors in explaining the SBS score of students attending preparation courses. Of these three factors, organization is the most important.

#### **What is the Relative Importance of the Following Factors on SBS Success Levels of Students Attending Private SBS Preparation Courses: Multidimensional Perfectionism, Family Attitude, and Test Anxiety?**

The findings indicate that doubts from behaviors and organization are negative, it was also found that the authority/supervision parenting style and test anxiety are positive predictors of SBS success for students who do not attend SBS preparation courses.

#### **Are There Differences in Students' SBS Scores Based on the amount of Time They have Attended SBS Preparation Courses?**

Results of the one-way ANOVA indicated that differences exist on students' SBS scores based on their length of attendance in SBS preparation courses ( $F(3, 313) = 22.42; p < .01, \eta^2 = .18$ ; ( $F(3, 313) = 18.51, p < .01, \eta^2 = .15$ ). According to Benforroni comparisons, scores were significantly higher for those attending for longer periods of time in all comparisons.

Yigit and Akdeniz (2001) have explained that students attend these courses in order to achieve higher scores in high stake courses. There are also a number of studies stating that students who attend such courses score higher on high stake tests as compared to those who do not attend such preparation courses (Baştürk, 2003; Morgil, Yılmaz, & Geban, 2001; Okur ve Dikici, 2004). Kanat (2005) gave the rate of success for such private institutions at 90% for the year 2004.

#### **Is There a Relationship between Family Income and Attendance in SBS Preparation Courses?**

According to Chi-Square test results, there was a significant relationship between students' family income level and attendance in SBS Preparation Courses ( $\chi^2 = 130.73, p < .01; \phi_c = .29$ ), and this relationship was found to be meaningful. Findings further indicate that families of students who do not attend these courses come from low income families and that there is a rapid change in the rate of attendance in private courses as family income increases.

Köse (1999) concluded that families make their best effort to send their children to these courses in order to give them the tools to have greater opportunities in life. Tansel and Bircan (2005) have also concluded that as parents' education and income level increase, so do students' opportunities to receive private lessons. Arda (1991) stated that there is a relationship between family income level and students' level of success. Therefore, it can be concluded that high stakes test preparation courses provide significant advantages for those who can afford, as much as this is fact goes against the right to equal education.

These findings suggest that attendance to preparation courses may not be the sole factor in predicting students' levels of success. In fact, based on the findings, family income is another mediating factor in this relationship. Coleman (1988) states that as family income increases, so does it bring many advantages to the family's offspring; be it in the form of books, better housing, furniture and social environment. Maybe having financial sources make parents more relax and they focus on their children's education, value their academic success along with being able to provide opportunities for sports and social adventures. According to Özcan (1996) income is closely related with education level. Hamrick and Stage (2004) also stated the importance of family background, socio-economic status, and family education level on student success.

#### **Discussion and Suggestions**

According to the results of this study, the most effective variable in explaining SBS scores of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students attending preparation courses is MPS's Organization sub-dimension, which is negatively correlated with SBS scores. A second important factor for 6<sup>th</sup> graders, which is present as a positive predictor, is the responsibility-centered

parent attitude followed by exam anxiety for both grade levels, which is negatively correlated with SBS scores. According to the literature on exam anxiety, there is a negative correlation between academic success and exam anxiety. However, in the present study, while it has been found that test anxiety is a negative predictor of SBS scores for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students attending preparation courses, it has been found to be a positive predictor for those who do not attend such courses. Since students who do not attend prep courses experience lower levels of exam anxiety, a little increase in their exam anxiety might have positively affected their success. However, considering that students who attend prep courses have medium anxiety level, even a little increase in their anxiety level might have negatively contributed to their success. This may be explained by the Reverse U Hypothesis, named as Yerkes-Dodson Law. According to Yerkes-Dodson Law, there is a bell shaped relation between level of stimulation and students' performance level (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908). Austin and Partridge (1985) stated that higher exam anxiety negatively affects academic success and that it may even cause students to abandon their educational career. In this study, the sub-dimensions of perfectionism has been found to be negatively correlated with students' SBS scores. Frost et al. (1997), in their study investigating perfectionism, stated that those who desire to micro-manage and organize every aspect of their live, both within and without their immediate control are unable to finish their work within the time allotted. In the present study, it has also been noted that personal standards are another important sub-dimension of perfectionism which are positively correlated with academic success. Accordino et al. (2000) stated that students' setting personal standards has a positive effect on academic success. In another study with similar results, Schuler (2000) found that most academically successful 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, show indices of positive perfectionism. While these students earn higher scores on the scale's dimensions of order and personal standards, students with negative perfectionist attitudes earn high scores on the dimension excessive concern for actions. According to the results of the present study, it has been found that test anxiety is negatively correlated with SBS success for those students attending preparation courses. The variable test anxiety is a negatively correlated indicator of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade SBS scores when considered together with parent attitudes and MPS. In the study conducted by Frost, Lahart, and Rosenblate (1991), it was found

that negative perfectionists held higher personal standards and that they were more concerned with familial expectations and criticisms while also having more self-doubts when gathering with other people. Positive perfectionists on the other hand, preferred higher standards together with order. These students expressed that they felt less doubt about themselves and received less amounts of criticism from their families. Positive perfectionists are orderly, careful, goal-oriented, and compatible with people; whereas negative perfectionists are restless, socially-unconnected, and volatile.

The results of the present study show that, in terms of perfectionism, the sub-dimensions of family criticism and doubt from behaviors are negative predictors of academic achievement. When the variables indicating the SBS scores of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders not attending preparation schools are compared, the MPS's sub-dimensions of order and doubt from behaviors for 6<sup>th</sup> graders are found to be a negative indicator of SBS scores. For 7<sup>th</sup> graders, the MPS's sub-dimensions of order and excessive concern for mistakes are negative predictors of SBS scores. Considering in terms of parental attitudes, while the responsibility-centered attitude is a positive predictor of SBS success for those attending preparation courses; for those who do not attend preparation courses, the MPS's subscale of doubt from behaviors is a negative predictor. Gökçedağ (2001) stated that students with authoritarian parents have lower levels of self-confidence and academic success, while also having higher levels of both general anxiety and test anxiety. Moreover, a correlation between a family's economic conditions student attendance in preparation courses has been found. In a similar vein, the relation between the economic conditions of a family and length of attendance to preparation courses has been found to be significant. Parents with an above average income maybe more concerned with their children's education. This can be the explanation of why the children coming from higher SES attend prep course for longer period of time and receive higher marks on SBS. On the other hand, it is a common knowledge that when students spend play time on studying, a serious barrier is created keeping them from being healthy and happy individuals. Such an understanding leads to a generation which thinks that life is composed solely of academic success.

In conclusion, teaching according to tests, not only the SBS, by means of private preparation courses is a common path used by parents in Turkey. However, students' placement in a more highly renowned

school should be based more on students' abilities, intelligence, and interests than solely on their performance on a test for which they have long been prepared in an inorganic educational setting, as is the current state of affairs.

Considering how common it is for students to attend these preparation courses, the reliability of the decisions based on such large scale exams as the SBS is questionable. If the main purpose of these tests is to predict future success then there should be no other factors leading to the same prediction. For sure, there will be differences among students as they all have different potentials, capabilities, and interests. However, the schools should be held responsible for the accountability of the education they provide.

On September 4th of 2013, the National Education Minister of Turkey, Nabi Avcı reported that there will be a new system starting in 2014 to place students into high schools ("Nabi Avcı yeni", 2013). The purpose of the new system is to base high school placement in the Turkish education system on students' school performance rather than on a single high stakes test. For this purpose, students are required to take six nationwide tests on Math, Science, Turkish, History, Foreign Language, and Religion and Ethics in each semester of sixth, seventh and eighth grade. Sixty percent of students' scores for the semester will be gathered on the six nationwide tests to be given throughout the semester and 40% from teacher assessments. The

question needs to be addressed here is whether it is possible to depend on teacher assessments on such an important decision, considering the current school conditions of crowded classrooms and heavy teacher workload. In this case, it will be very difficult to measure the reliability, and therefore prove the validity of teacher assessments.

Based on the results of the present study, we can make the following suggestions:

Seminars could be given to students, families, teacher, and principals based on these findings. The importance of parental attitudes and education should be emphasized as the sources shaping character and behaviors of children in their social, emotional, and mental development through curriculum development studies. It is thought that these findings regarding the relation between parent attitudes, perfectionism, and test anxiety can be important clues in parents' education and seminars for this purpose. Parents and educators should be informed of the importance of parental attitudes, perfectionism, and test anxiety on students' success. The quality of public schools also needs to be reevaluated in order to diminish the need for attendance to prep courses. Since there are many prep courses nationwide, these courses can be transformed into government sponsored charter schools and be an addition to public education system. IQ and creativity tests can be used to select these students.



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