

RESEARCH INTO THE FACTORS LEADING TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF HONOUR STUDENTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

The reinforcement of the right behaviour, the desire to learn and the enthusiasm for learning in the student through rewarding, and gaining the habit of studying in a regular way are the key to academic success. In the study, we aimed to determine what make honour students in the department of Music Teaching successful in their courses. We used focus group interviews, one of the qualitative research methods, to obtain necessary data. We interviewed with 12 honour students in the department of Music teaching to find out their learning styles and what make them successful and honour students. We obtained the data through face to face interview with the participant students. The data were analysed in terms of gender, the students' learning styles, the effect of their parents on their success, their interest in music, environment and job preference. We concluded that the gender, parents, interest in music, learning styles such as auditory and visual learning could play important roles in academic success of the honour students at the department of music teaching in higher education.

Key Words: Music teaching, Academic success, Honour student, Learning style

1. INTRODUCTION

The academic success or failure of the student is very important for the student himself, his family and the society in which he lives. Academically successful and qualified labour potential is considered to be the most fundamental force in the development of a society. Failures in academic terms reduce the self-confidence of the individual in situations such as abandoning school and create a sense of uselessness in the individual and hinder his participation in the development of society in terms of labour potential (Yıldırım, 2000). Success in education is an important part of the agenda of the families, teachers and students. The academic achievement in primary education ensures that the student will be educated in a good school in secondary education and the academic achievement in secondary education enables the student to complete his/her higher education in a section of his/her dream. Students' academic achievements from primary education affect their choice and academic achievement in their next higher education institutions, thus providing them with successful and happy future (Bahçetepe and Giorgetti, 2015).

1.1. Academic Success

Academic Success can be defined as the average of the grades taken by the student as a result of the measurements and assessments carried out in order to check whether the course or the courses that have been given during the education at any level of education has reached its goals or not (Onuk, 2007). Elias et al. (1997) and Kayalar (2017) argue that schools are most successful in their educational mission

when they integrate efforts to promote children's social, emotional learning and academic achievement through self-directed learning.

There are many variables that affect academic success of the students; parents, learning style of student, interest in learning, and school environment. The factors such as the socioeconomic level of the family (Yavuzer, 1996; Çelenk 2003), the attitudes and behaviours of the parents (Çitil et al, 2006; Sama and Tarım 2007), education and disciplinary understanding are argued to effect academic achievement. While the family is an important determinant, it is not the only determinant. The student's mental-emotional-social development level, motivation, study habits, and school perceptions are also influential on academic achievement. For individual to discover his or her own learning style is quite important for academic achievements, bringing many benefits (Kayalar and Kayalar, 2017)

In a study carried out by Adelman and Taylor (2000), it is argued that schools may focus only on academic instruction and school management in their efforts so that students can attain academic success, however they will likely fall short of their goals. They maintain that enabling component should be taken into account. This component includes activities such as resource coordination, classroom-focused enabling, support for transitions, and home involvement in schooling.

Table 1. The Factors Bringing Academic Success and Causing Academic Failure

| The Factors Bringing Academic Success | The Factors Causing Academic Failure |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending school activities and participating in activities with friends, • Taking notes during the course, • Focusing attention on the subject during the course • Confident, believing in success, • Good communication with parents, teachers and friends • Choosing the path of learning by searching instead of getting ready for information, • Ability to take lessons from the events, • studying, researching as after-school activities, • Ambition of success • Always searching for information, • Repeating what have been learned to make them permanent, • Taking advantage of libraries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reluctance to go to school, • Preparing for the exam through the notes of others instead of taking notes in the course • Trying to keep in mind the information learned over the course of an entire term the night before the exam, • Having an irregular studying pattern, • Lack of interest in the course, • Unaware of the techniques of efficient course work, • Accustomed to getting ready information instead of searching it • Not choosing the path of learning by research, • Inability to use time well, • Poor communication with parents, teachers and friends • Family problems, • Lack of concentrate while listening, • Lack of study plan and program |

Kayalar and Kayalar (2017)

1.2. Rewarding and Honoured Students

Rewarding has implications for motivation, and the students who have the feeling or confidence in which their efforts are rewarded by the management will be more vigorously involved in learning process (Hafiza et al., 2011, Bulut and Çavuş, 2015; Kayalar, 2016). Rewarding and appreciation for success contribute to promoting students' motivation in learning, thus achieving academic success. Reward system by institutions and organizations is argued to hold the right people in the right time for the right job, and for the roles, by giving the prize to appreciate the best so that they can be motivated to participate in learning process using their highest capacities (Usta and Küçükaltan, 2012). The awarding system also promotes the success of the institution. The increase in rewarding increases the commitment to the institution.

In higher education, academically successful students are awarded with the title of High Honoured Student and Honoured Student Students who have taken at least 30 ECTS credits from the registered students and who are successful in all the courses they have received and whose Grade Point Average (GPA) is 3.50 or above are considered as High Honour Students and those with a GPA between 3.00 and 3.49 are considered as Honorary Students. However, students who take disciplinary penalties or have FF, YZ, DZ and EK grades will not be considered as High Honour Students or Honorary Students even if they have achieved their GPAs. The students are graduated as High Honour Student through 3.50 or higher points of Grade Point Average and Honour Student through 3.00 to 3.49 points of Grade

Point Average. However, even if the students who take disciplinary punishment can achieve the stated GPA, they cannot graduate as High Honour Student or Honour Student.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Problem Statements

In the study we aimed to determine the factors that lead to academic success of honour students at the Department of Music Teaching in the Faculty of Education, Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University. For this reason, we tried to find answers to the questions such as “What are the main factors for the academic achievement of honour students?”, “What are the learning styles of the honour students?”, “What is the role of gender for academic success of honour students?”, “What are the roles of learning styles of the honour students?”

2.2. Methods and Research Design

The study was carried out using qualitative research method to find out the factors leading to academic success of honour students at the Department of Music Teaching. Focus group interview model was applied, as the only honour students made up the universe of the research. This kind of methodological approach enables researchers to interpret and make judgement about immeasurable data (O’Tool and Beckett, 2010, p.28). As the content of the research depends on the statements of the participants through face to face interview we chose this kind of method and research design.

2.3. Participants

The participants were twelve honour students at the Department of Music Teaching, the faculty of education, Erzincan B. Y. University. In the academic year of 2017/2018, twelve students proved to be the best in the department and took the title of Honour Students, which indicates that they are the most successful and top students in the department. Half of the participants were male, and the others female. We obtained the data from 12 Honour Students who admitted to be involved in the interview for the research. The participants were asked whether they were contented to answer to the questions, and then we applied the tool. The names of the teachers are coded with numbers.

2.4. Research Instrument

In the study, the tool with semi structured interview form was used to gather data from honour students at the Department of Music Teaching. In the interview form were the questions of “What are the main factors for the academic achievement of honour students?”, “What are the learning styles of the honour students?”, “What is the role of gender for academic success of honour students?”, “What are the roles of learning styles of the honour students?”. The honour students were interviewed face-to-face and then asked to answer to the questions in the form. The questions were created through the supervision of the academic experts in this field.

2.5. Data Analysis

We obtained the data through the interview with the honour students, asking four questions on the factors leading their academic success during the academic year of 2017/2018, and the data were then matched with each other. The topics were determined as Learning style, Parents, Interest in Music, Interest in Department, Environment, and Choice of Job. Content analyses with the percentage and frequency values were used in the study.

3. FINDINGS

Having analysed the data obtained from the participant students, we showed the findings and the explanations under the topics with the tables as follows.

3.1. Finding and Discussion in Terms of the Sub-Problem “What Are the Factors Leading to Academic Success?”

When Table 2 is examined, the factors that lead to the academic success of the honour students have been found to be the family, the environment, the style of studying, the choice of profession, the interest in the department and the interest in the music.

Among the factors that lead to academic success, 75% of the participants emphasize the family and interest in music. Although the family and interest in music are the same as the percentage ratio, the participants stated that family members were more important in terms of achieving academic achievement by expressing more opinions on the importance of the family.

While the study style was thought to have a 50% effect on the academic study, participants stated that the factors of environment, interest in the department, and occupational choice do not affect academic success very much.

Table 2. The Factors Leading to the Academic Success of the Participants

| Participants | Parents | Interest in Music | Style of Study | Interest in Department | Environment | Choice of Job |
|---------------------------|---------|-------------------|----------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1 | * | * | * | * | | |
| 2 | | * | * | * | | |
| 3 | | * | * | | * | |
| 4 | * | | | | * | * |
| 5 | * | * | * | | | |
| 6 | * | * | * | | | |
| 7 | * | * | | | | |
| 8 | | * | | | | |
| 9 | * | * | | * | | |
| 10 | * | * | | * | * | |
| 11 | * | | * | | | * |
| 12 | * | | | | | |
| Percentage of the factors | % 75 | % 75 | % 50 | % 33 | % 25 | % 16 |

3.2. What are the Conditions That Lead to the Academic Success of Honour Students Findings and Comments Related to the Sub-Problem

When the Table 3 is examined, it is observed that the number of participants is 12, 6 of whom are female and the others are male.

According to the gender type, 1 male and 1 female participant showed a 66% of similarities in the family, interest in department and interest in music, while differences in environment and style of studying. Of the male participants, only two stated their academic success was related to family and interest in music.

With the gender type being analysed in terms of academic achievement, it was found that the female participants (51,6%) 38.5% were found to have more varieties of factors affecting the academic achievement compared to the male participants.

Table 3. Academic Success in Terms of Participants' Gender

| Participants | Gender | Parents | Environment | Style of Studying | Choice of Job | Interest in department | Interest in Music | Percentage of academic succes bounded |
|----------------------------|--------|---------|-------------|-------------------|---------------|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | F | * | | * | | * | * | % 66 |
| 2 | F | | | * | | * | * | % 50 |
| 3 | F | | * | * | | | * | % 50 |
| 4 | F | * | * | | * | | | % 50 |
| 5 | M | * | | * | | | * | % 50 |
| 6 | F | * | | * | | | * | % 50 |
| 7 | M | * | | | | | * | % 33 |
| 8 | M | | | | | | * | % 16 |
| 9 | F | * | | | | * | * | % 50 |
| 10 | M | * | * | | | * | * | % 66 |
| 11 | M | * | | * | * | | | % 50 |
| 12 | M | * | | | | | | % 16 |
| Total Percentage of gender | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Female (F) | Male (M) |
| | | | | | | | % 51,6 | % 38,5 |

3.3. What are the Learning Style Situations That Lead to the Academic Success of Honorary Students? Findings of Sub-Problem and Comments

When Table 4 was examined, it was found that the participants reported different views of learning styles as visual learning style, auditory learning style, brain-based learning style, emotional learning style and kinaesthetic learning style that lead to academic achievement. The participants reported that they used at least one and at most four of 5 different learning styles.

In terms of the academic success, it was found that 66% of the participants had visual learning style and auditory learning style, 50% were brain-based learning style and emotional learning style and 33% had kinaesthetic learning style.

Table 4. Learning Style of the Participants in Terms of Academic Success

| Participants | Visual | Audial | Brain-based | Emotional | Kinaesthetic |
|--|--------|--------|-------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1 | * | | * | | |
| 2 | | * | * | * | |
| 3 | | * | * | | * |
| 4 | | | * | * | * |
| 5 | * | * | * | * | |
| 6 | * | | * | * | |
| 7 | * | * | | * | |
| 8 | * | | | | |
| 9 | * | * | | * | * |
| 10 | * | * | | | * |
| 11 | * | * | | | |
| 12 | | * | | | |
| Total Percentage in terms of Learning Styles | % 66 | % 66 | % 50 | % 50 | % 33 |

3.4. What are the learning style situations that lead to Academic Achievement of Honorary Students in terms of Gender? Sub-Problem Findings and Comments

When the Table 5 is examined, it is seen that the number of participants is 12, 6 are female and 6 are male.

Although 80% of male and one female participants were similar with visual, auditory and sensory learning styles according to gender, there is a difference in brain based and kinesthetic learning style. It was found that female participants were using more types of learning style than male participants.

When the gender type is examined in the total of learning style in academic achievement, 60% of female participants and 46.6% of male participants have used the learning style in academic achievement, and female participants have found a high degree of learning style in terms of learning style affecting male students.

Table 5. Learning Style Conditions for the Academic Achievement of Participants in Terms of Gender

| Participants | Gender | Visual | Auditory | Brain based | Emotional | Kineasthetic | Individual percentages in terms of learning styles |
|--------------|--------|--------|----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|--|
| 1 | K | * | | * | | | % 40 |
| 2 | K | | * | * | * | | % 60 |
| 3 | K | | * | * | | * | % 60 |
| 4 | K | | | * | * | * | % 60 |
| 5 | E | * | * | * | * | | % 80 |
| 6 | K | * | | * | * | | % 60 |
| 7 | E | * | * | | * | | % 60 |
| 8 | E | * | | | | | % 20 |
| 9 | K | * | * | | * | * | % 80 |
| 10 | E | * | * | | | * | % 60 |

| Participants | Gender | Visual | Auditory | Brain based | Emotional | Kineasthetic | Individual percentages in terms of learning styles | |
|-------------------------------|--------|-----------|----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|--|--|
| 11 | E | * | * | | | | % 40 | |
| 12 | E | | * | | | | % 20 | |
| Percentage of Learning Styles | | 66% | 66% | 50% | 50% | 33% | Total Percentages in terms of gender | |
| | | Female(F) | | Male (M) | | | | |
| | | % 60 | | % 46,6 | | | | |

4. RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Examining the situations leading to Academic Achievement of Honour Students reveals that the family factor is important. The honour students who participated in the research stated that their parents were constantly supporting them both financially and spiritually. The family supports the feelings and thoughts of individuals positively, which results in the academic success of the students.

In addition, it has been concluded that interest in music has a positive impact on the honour students' academic success, which is their favourite area in terms of their academic success, and that they are successful in their courses.

When the totals of the academic achievement status of the participants were examined, it was concluded that the female participants were able to get effective learning by using more learning styles in relation to the situations affecting the academic achievement than the male participants.

When examining the learning style situations that lead to the academic achievement of the Honorary Students, it is observed that although individuals have realized learning by creating different learning approaches for themselves, they have achieved success with the learning style mainly in the visual and auditory direction, and that the female participants have stated that they have a higher degree of learning style in terms of the learning style affecting the academic achievement than the male participants.

As a result, it is possible to say that there are more than one factor affecting the academic achievement of honour students.

According to the results of the research, we recommend that, so as to achieve academic success, the students should be supported in a spiritual way by providing school-family cooperation, the students should be provided with help through identifying the negative situations that will affect the student's academic success, they should be provided with help in order to develop awareness of their learning style and success by conducting tests according to which students use the learning style in terms of academic success.

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