



Placement of students to high school in Turkey: Factors affecting student achievement in placement tests

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Abstract

The objective of the research is to identify factors that affect the degree the most successful and the most unsuccessful ten students get at their class levels and in their dwelling units in “Level Determination Examination” which is a form of placement test held at provincial levels in allocation of students from elementary to secondary education. The research was conducted in Sakarya Province. The sample of the research comprised of 420 6th, 7th and 8th grade students in total who ranked among the first and the last 10 groups in dwelling units in the examination held at provincial level. It was ascertained that 82% (Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.82$) of student’s ranking among the first most successful or the last most unsuccessful group of ten people in their own dwelling unit and at their own class level in the Placement Test could be predicted by TE, PA, BÇG, BY, SİD and Ç factors according to Stepwise logistic regression analysis. AKD, AİFK and AO are the variables which were not found to be meaningful in the last regression equation.

Keywords: Achievement goal orientations; locus of control; digital divide; school choice; inequality in school systems.

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Introduction

Education is in the center of debates surrounding social structure and social mobility because of its role in social justice and equality of educational opportunity. Since the publication of the Equality of Educational Opportunity Survey (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Weinfeld, & York, 1966), it has become a commonplace of educational debate that differences in school characteristics do not affect the educational attainment of their students. Today, debate continues with multiple dimensions. One dimension of the debates is schooling process and how students are placed to their schools since social justice and equal opportunity in education are significant both individually and socially. Yet appropriate policies that satisfy both have not been able to put in place.

In this sense, policies that are implemented by putting individual into the center shall be much more properly oriented. Therefore, educational system should get rid of the selective and eliminative structure it has, develop each individual and the skill he/she has to the full extent, leave all other factors except for individual's motivation level and efforts out of assessment and eliminate obstacles which prevent individual from realizing himself/herself. It should depend on individual's educational attainment, skill, motivation level, and endeavor. In this study, equality indicates the idea that we refer as the equality of educational success opportunities. According to praxis which is widespread among sociologists and educationalists (Shavit & Blossfeld, 1993), equality of educational success opportunities is defined as the lack of any statistical correlation between students' success indicators and social origin indicators. In compliance with this definition, identifying factors that affect student's success opportunities is important for evaluating the educational success opportunity in a country. It is thought that the effect of these factors becomes concrete most specifically in the transitional process between students' class and educational levels. Therefore, the current research was conducted based on the level determination examination results of elementary school students.

According to the structure that defined in the previous paragraph, educational success opportunities are affected by numerous variables. Thus, factors affecting educational success opportunities are restricted and factors promoted by the relevant literature and thought to affect students' exam performance are used in the research. The main objective of the study

is to designate the effects of these factors, on student placement to secondary education in the Turkish Educational System. In this context, the purpose of the research is to identify factors affecting the most successful and the least successful ten students at their class level and in their districts in the “Level Determination Examinations” held on provincial level in Turkey.

Material, Social, and Cultural Resources

Material resource explanations focus on the roles of poverty, income, and wealth. Explanations emphasizing the material resources contend that differential access to material resources generates differences in student performance. Wealthy families can “buy” educational success for their children by sending them to expensive elite schools, buying houses in desirable school districts, or paying for out-of-school tutors. In contrast, poor families may not be able to afford basic educational resources, such as a student desk and text books.

There is empirical evidence that income and wealth are related to student achievement and other educational outcomes (Orr, 2003; Pong & Ju, 2000). Teachman (1987) found that the level of educational resources was related to results in achievement tests, even when parental education and other factors had been taken into account. However, the effect of family income on test scores is generally weaker than that for parent’s education (Fejgin, 1995; Ganzach, 2000). However, in developing countries where sizeable proportions of students are deprived of basic resources, material resources are likely to be a more important component of socioeconomic inequality in education.

Schools Systems

In many countries, especially in Europe, similarly in Turkey as well, school systems are tracked; students are assigned to different school types officially on the basis of prior performance. These tracks range from purely academic tracks to vocational tracks and prepare students for different educational and labor market destinations (Marks, Cresswell, & Ainley, 2006; Reyes, 2010). Like many tracked educational systems, the sharpest break in students’ differentiation takes place in secondary school system in Turkish Educational

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System. Thereby, the process of allocation from elementary school to secondary school is of essence in terms of equal opportunity.

Most secondary school systems maintain a distinction between academic and vocational education. The specifics may vary from place to place, but in most countries academic education prepares students for college or for a university whereas vocational education prepares them for immediate entry into the labor market (Shavit, & Blossfeld 1993). Schools may be involved in the socio-economic inequalities in education in a number of ways. Wealthy families can buy a superior education for their children by sending them to high-fee elite private schools or purchase homes in the catchment areas of high performing public schools. In countries with tracked school systems, the allocation of students to the more academic school tracks may be biased towards students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Within schools, school authorities may be more likely to allocate students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds to more prestigious curriculum tracks or academic locations (Marks et al., 2006; Shavit & Blossfeld 1993).

Allocation from elementary education to secondary education in developing countries such as Turkey is crucial in terms of the determination of channels, either vocational or academic, into which students shall enter in secondary education. In the Turkish Educational System, allocation of students from elementary to secondary education is carried out by an examination that is held from a single center by Turkish National Education. Since 2008, students had been placed into secondary schools by a single exam they took at the end of 8th grade. As of 2007/2008 academic year, the number of examinations has been increased to three. Thus, student “class score” is determined by adding students’ end-of-year success and behavioral points to the points they get from the central exam which they shall take at the end of 6th, 7th and 8th grades that are the last three years of elementary education. “*Class score is obtained based on 70% of that year’s level determination examination, 25% of end-of-year success point and 5% of behavioral point.*” (Tebliğler Dergisi, 2007). “*Score for Placement into Secondary Education (OYP) is obtained by adding 25% of 6th grade class score, 35% of 7th grade class score and 40% of 8th grade class score.*” (Tebliğler Dergisi, 2007). Students are placed into secondary schools with limited quotas with their scores calculated in the aforementioned manner. For this purpose, STS (Level Determination Examination) which is very similar to this exam was taken as a base in the research. STS is

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a tentative competitive examination held at provincial level in Turkey. Taking Level Determination Examinations is not compulsory but optional. However, it is seen that almost all students take the examination. Moreover, it is observed that some schools force their students to take the exam even though it is not legal. The reason is that schools use this exam as a criterion for comparing the education they offer with that of other schools. Especially private schools use high scores their students get from these examinations for the purpose of enrolling more students.

Students take Level Determination Examination in accordance with their class level and questions asked in the examination are fit for their class level. Thanks to this examination, students are able to compare themselves with other students with the same class level who take the exam as well according to scores they get and see their rank on provincial basis. Thus, they are able to shape their future educational programs. From this aspect, STS may be used as a tool for unofficially labeling students and schools and ranking them based on these labels.

Level Determination Examinations are very similar to Placement Tests (SBS) in terms of questions asked in STS, mode of implementation and the role STS plays. As a matter of fact, it is seen that this examination is parallel to the examination which formerly regulated the allocation to secondary education and is known as OKS (Examination for Secondary Education) in short. All records of the province were not examined and interviews were made with the directors of some elementary schools in the province. During these interviews, it was stated that the ranks of their students in STS were in fact same as the ones in OKS. Thereby, it is thought that results which shall be attained regarding Level Determination Examinations from this research shall be significant clues for the evaluation of SBS.

Digital Divide

The revolution in information and communication technologies (ICTs) has transformed both the economy and society (Castells 2000; Kotkin 2000). The ICT revolution has created new tools, such as personal computers (PCs) and the Internet, which have reinvented and, in many instances, improved the ways all societies communicate, learn, and earn a living today (Chakraborty and Bosman, 2005). Most of the analysts have presented convincing arguments

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over the past two decades as to how new computer and telecommunications technologies will transform countries into 'knowledge economies' and 'network societies'. The ability to use ICT has been heralded by politicians to be 'the indispensable grammar of modern life' and a fundamental aspect of citizenship in the prevailing information age (Gündüz, 2010).

Digital technologies have become the most preferred technologies in receiving information in the fastest way, preserving information in a fast and proper manner, disseminating and using information in a timely and intensely manner. On the other hand, having or not having and/or utilizing or not utilizing these technologies present a new situation both individually and socially. This situation is the restriction of individuals' ability of evoking their potentials due to factors except for themselves. This is inequality of opportunities based on digital divide (Karslı & Gündüz, 2002).

Digital divide is the economic, social and cultural differences between the ones who have and do not have media such as computers, telephone and internet connection and the opportunity to use new technologies. From this point of view, digital divide is a strategic concept that brings gains and losses to forefront in terms of people who have and does not have media such as computers, telephone and internet (Irving, 2001). Digital divide is a difference made by having or not having digital technology in individuals or societies of different income and educational levels, in groups based on different ethnicities or races, in young or old people, in families comprising of merely a mother or a father or both of them (McConnaughey, 2001).

Digital divide is a reality that we experience and has gradually become widespread. Ignoring or denying digital divide has the potential of handing down a bigger peck of problems to societies which they shall have difficulty in solving in the future. Possessing digital technologies is increasingly becoming much critical in economic and educational development and consequently in social participation (Rose, 2001). Because groups or individuals possessing digital media appear in society's upper or middle classes. In this regard, digital media maintain the present structure and deepen the gap in between (McConnaughey, 2001). Thanks to digital media they have, these groups become more advantageous in society. Possessing digital media has a cultural characteristic as well as

having a certain economic power. From this aspect, it is affected by students' socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

Locus of Control

The concept of locus of control was structured within the frame of social learning theory, defined as a personality trait and used by Rotter (1966) for the first time. Locus of control is an individual's belief about what controls incidents this individual experiences (Strauser, Ketz & Keim, 2002). In a sense, in the event that environmental conditions cannot account for individual's achievements, failures or other experiences, locus of control belief arises as a chronic method in order to explain those. Individuals who believe that their behaviors or incidents they experience are determined by external powers rather than themselves are defined as externally controlled according to the degree of these beliefs. On the other hand, the belief of locus of control an individual who perceives incidents and situations according to his/her own behavior or relatively his/her permanent traits has is defined as internal control (Taylor, Peplau, & Sears, 2006).

When individuals with internal locus of control are unhappy about any part of their lives, they believe that they can change it with their own efforts. However, individuals with external locus of control are apt to be desperate for guiding their lives and believe that some awards in their lives do not arise from their efforts but are merely coincidences resulting from being in the right place at the right time (Solmuş, 2004).

A correlation between success and internal control was found out. Researches indicated that successful students attributed their achievements to internal causes while unsuccessful students attributed their failure to external causes. Internal causes are perceived as controllable and changeable causes while external causes are considered as uncontrollable and unchangeable (Yüksel, 2004). Thereby, it is thought that students' locus of control perceptions shall affect their behaviors regarding learning and studying and this situation shall be reflected in their exam performances.

Achievement Goal Orientations

Ames (1992) defined achievement goal orientations as “emotions, attributions and beliefs determining the goals of behavior”. In brief, the concept of achievement goal orientation connotes students’ personal viewpoints that affect their cognitive, emotional and behavioral reactions in learning. Achievement goal orientations provide a framework explaining how a student interprets events and his/her self sufficiency and how he/she reacts to them, and resulting in different patterns of cognition, emotion and behavior (Akin, 2006).

Generally two achievement goal orientations which are denominated differently are suggested in researches, namely “learning orientation” and “performance orientation”. However, in new approaches concerning the subject, it was stated that evaluations would be more useful if approach and avoidance sub-dimensions were added to both dimensions. Thus, scale turned into 2X2 and four sub-scales. Consequently, students’ achievement goal orientations are discussed as learning-approach, learning-avoidance, performance-approach and performance-avoidance (Akin, 2006).

Learning orientation is associated with student’s desire for learning a material completely and having comprehensive knowledge of the subject during learning process. Student with learning orientation evaluates his/her sufficiency level on his/her own, concentrates upon progress and does not have interest in how other students perform in the same duty of learning. Social comparison knowledge is not necessary for this student’s evaluation of his/her own sufficiency. Additionally, students with learning orientation do not concentrate on the knowledge required for normal performance; they concentrate on the knowledge about how they shall fulfill the duty in the best possible way and prefer their personal norms rather than social norms in the interpretation of achievement (Jagacinski & Strickland, 2000). Learning-avoidance oriented students concentrate on avoiding situations such as not being able to learn lessons completely, forgetting subjects learned, misunderstanding subjects and making mistakes. Some students who are more perfectionists may set standards directed towards not learning a wrong thing or not fulfilling the duty of learning in a wrong way. These students avoid making mistakes not because of making comparisons with others but of their own high standards (Pintrich, Conley, & Kempler, 2003).

Students with performance orientation attach importance to social comparison, carry out their studies by taking others as a reference and trying to outperform them, try to appear to be more clever and talented and avoid appearing to be untalented. For students with performance orientation, social comparison knowledge is of essence since these students cannot decide whether they are successful or not without comparing themselves with other students (Jagacinski & Strickland, 2000). Thereby, it is possible to remark that students with performance orientation act in contemplation of winning the praises of individuals around them. Nonetheless, it is possible to say that students acting with the idea of performance-avoidance try not to receive negative evaluations from people around them.

Methodology

Sampling

This research was carried out in 7 districts comprising Sakarya city center and 6 counties including 375 elementary schools in Sakarya city center and 12 counties it has and 7 of them are private elementary schools. 117730 students study in these schools. 56110 of these students (%47.6) receive education in the schools located at the city center while 61620 of them (%52.4) in the schools located in counties.

Purposive sampling method was used in the research. While determining the dwelling units which would take place in the sampling, characteristics such as their socioeconomic, cultural and geographical characteristic and their distance to the province were taken into consideration as independent variables. By making use of learned opinions, 6 of 12 counties in total were included in the research. Thus, the study group of the research comprised of students who received education in Adapazarı, Hendek, Sapanca, Akyazı, Kocaali, Taraklı and Kaynarca counties and took the first and the last ten places in the ranking in the dwelling units where they lived in the Level determination examination (STS) held throughout the province centrally in 2008. Since students took these examinations at class level, students who were 6th, 7th and 8th grade students of each dwelling unit and took the first and the last

ten places in the ranking at their own class levels and in their own dwelling units were taken into account while determining the study group of the research. Thereby, in total 420 students from seven dwelling units composed the study group of the research.

Instrument

Data was gathered by three different scaling instruments. The first scaling instrument is a questionnaire comprised of 55 questions developed by the researcher. The variables which are directly related to school such as students' annual grade point averages, how many schools or teachers they changed until then, their educational expenses and how they meet them, if they get educational scholarship or not, the school type they attend, their expectations regarding the future, their career plans, if they get external support education or not, have part in this questionnaire along with the variables such as parents' educational levels, their professions, their being alive or dead, their being divorced or together, if they have social security or not, their monthly income, their way of passing their holiday, if they have a house and/or a private car on their own or not, the studying environment in their home, if they work in another occupation out-of-school or not, their style and level of having or utilizing digital technologies, which can be used as indicator with regard to students', hence, families' socio-economic conditions. Apart from these, the variables regarding their out-of-school life such as their status of following the daily newspapers or magazines, the number of books which they read monthly, their hobbies, the people whom they take as models.

The second instrument is "achievement goal orientations" scale was developed by Midgley and others (1998) and adopted to Turkey by Akın (2006) for the Purpose of measuring students' learning approaches. Accordingly, students' approaches towards learning are determined by four sub-scales, namely learning-approach, learning-avoidance, performance-approach and performance-avoidance. In the scale including 47 items in total, item distribution according to four sub-scales is as follows: ÖYBY 15, ÖKBY 9, PYBY 13 and PKBY 10. In order to determine which achievement goal orientation an individual adopts, total point obtained from each sub-dimension should be divided into the number of items that sub-dimension includes. Cronbach Alpha value of the scale was found as .92 while the factor of safety as .86.

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The third measurement tool is *Rotter's Locus of Control Scale*. *Locus of Control Scale* was developed by Rotter (1966) and adopted to Turkey by Dağ (1991). The scale consists of 29 items. The scale is designed to measure the degree to which an individual believes his/her reinforcements are controlled by internal or external factors. Cronbach Alpha value of the scale was found as .77 while the factor of safety as .75.

Data Analysis

Factor analysis was used to variables which were acquired for the purpose of determining general characteristics that might be relevant to students' ranking among the first or the last ten in the examination. In order to get eliminate irrelevant dimensions, varimax rotation technique was used in principle components analysis. In factor analysis, only factors with Eigen values above 1 were taken into consideration (the Kaiser criterion). Furthermore, factor analysis applied to personal variables was used for the purpose of obtaining orthogonal factor scores regarding individuals' general characteristics. Besides, these general characteristics were used as the regressive tool of examination performance in logistic regression analysis. Logistic regression analysis was conducted in order to designate general characteristics effective on students' ranking among the first or the last ten in the local dwelling unit in Level Determination Examinations held at national scale.

Findings

Factor Analysis

In factor analysis implemented to students' personal characteristics, 9 main dimensions explaining 41% of the variability in data set were identified. Explained variability rates, in percentage terms, are 9.83 for the first dimension, 5.61 for the second dimension and respectively 4.60, 4.45, 4.34, 3.82, 3.50, 3.02 and 2.76 for other dimensions. Factor loadings in 9 dimensions of the variables collected are given in Table 1. Factors were denominated by examining variables with higher loadings. Accordingly, the first dimension was called "Technological and Economic Factors" (TE), second dimension as "Psychological and Academic Factors" (PA), the third dimension as "Family's Culture Status" (FCS), the fourth

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as “Individual Efforts and Motivation” (IEM), the fifth dimension as “Achievement Goal Orientation” (AGO), the sixth as “Physical Conditions Regarding the Family” (PCRF), the seventh dimension as “Domestic Environment” (DE), eighth dimension as “Condition in the Classroom” (CC) and the ninth dimension as “Environmental Factors” (E).

Logistic regression analysis

The independent variable of this research is Level Determination Examination results belonging to Sakarya province. This examination is held almost in every province in Turkey yet each province carries out the examination independently by its own provincial directorate of national education. However, scores obtained from Level Determination Examination were not used; students ranking among the first and the last ten in their own dwelling units in Level Determination Examination was taken into account. In total, there are 210 students ranking among the first ten and 210 students ranking among the last ten. In order to designate characteristics effective on students' ranking among the first or the last ten, factor scores obtained as a result of factor analysis were used. Individual factor scores belonging to 9 factors acquired were taken as the independent variables of logistic regression analysis.

Stepwise logistic regression analysis findings are given in Table 2. Meaningful models were tested starting from the most significant variable in Stepwise logistic regression analysis. Variable was found to be meaningful in the final logistic regression model. In the regression equation these variables form, chi-square statistic is meaningful; it indicates that these factors can predict taking place in the ranking of first-last 10 in Level Determination Examination ($\chi^2(1)=398,37, p<.001$). Logistic coefficients (β) may be interpreted as the change at the values of log-odds in a one unit change in independent variables. Wald test logistic indicates the meaningfulness of coefficients. As clearly seen in the Table, TE, PA, IEM, AGO, CC and E were found meaningful as variables affecting students' exam performance. However, FCS, PCRFB and DE are the variables which were not found meaningful in the last regression equation. As seen in Table 2, Nagelkerke R^2 value of the last regression equation was designated as 0.82.

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Table 2.

Logistic Regression Coefficients and Wald Test Values

| Variables in the Equation | B | S.E. | Wald | Exp(B) | 95.0% C.I.for EXP(B) | | Nagelkerke R ² |
|---------------------------|-------|------|-----------|--------|----------------------|-------|---------------------------|
| | | | | | Lower | Upper | |
| Step1(a) PA | -2,55 | 0,24 | 112,23*** | 0,08 | 0,05 | 0,13 | .61 |
| Constant | -0,09 | 0,14 | 0,42 | 0,91 | | | |
| Step2(b) TE | 1,25 | 0,18 | 49,89*** | 3,49 | 2,47 | 4,94 | .72 |
| PA | -3,08 | 0,30 | 104,39*** | 0,05 | 0,03 | 0,08 | |
| Constant | -0,27 | 0,16 | 2,62 | 0,77 | | | |
| Step3(c) TE | 1,37 | 0,19 | 50,04*** | 3,92 | 2,68 | 5,72 | .76 |
| PA | -3,31 | 0,33 | 99,42*** | 0,04 | 0,02 | 0,07 | |
| IEM | 0,93 | 0,19 | 24,07*** | 2,52 | 1,74 | 3,65 | |
| Constant | -0,39 | 0,18 | 4,70 | 0,68 | | | |
| Step4(d) TE | 1,47 | 0,21 | 47,14*** | 4,34 | 2,86 | 6,61 | .79 |
| PA | -3,55 | 0,37 | 94,29*** | 0,03 | 0,01 | 0,06 | |
| IEM | 1,08 | 0,21 | 25,73*** | 2,94 | 1,94 | 4,46 | |
| CC | 0,98 | 0,21 | 21,69*** | 2,65 | 1,76 | 4,00 | |
| Constant | -0,32 | 0,19 | 2,75 | 0,73 | | | |
| Step5(e) TE | 1,45 | 0,22 | 44,34*** | 4,24 | 2,77 | 6,49 | .81 |
| PA | -3,52 | 0,36 | 95,41*** | 0,03 | 0,02 | 0,06 | |
| IEM | 1,06 | 0,22 | 22,89*** | 2,90 | 1,87 | 4,48 | |
| CC | -0,70 | 0,20 | 12,33*** | 0,50 | 0,33 | 0,73 | |
| AGO | 0,90 | 0,22 | 16,73*** | 2,47 | 1,60 | 3,80 | |
| Constant | -0,14 | 0,20 | 0,48 | 0,87 | | | |
| Step 6(f) TE | 1,52 | 0,23 | 43,82*** | 4,56 | 2,91 | 7,14 | .82 |
| PA | -3,58 | 0,37 | 95,46*** | 0,03 | 0,01 | 0,06 | |
| IEM | 1,07 | 0,23 | 22,22*** | 2,92 | 1,87 | 4,55 | |
| CC | -0,73 | 0,20 | 12,85*** | 0,48 | 0,33 | 0,72 | |
| AGO | 0,88 | 0,22 | 16,54*** | 2,41 | 1,58 | 3,67 | |
| E | 0,49 | 0,21 | 5,30* | 1,63 | 1,08 | 2,48 | |
| Constant | -0,12 | 0,20 | 0,32 | 0,89 | | | |

* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

The consistency between the observed and predicted rankings of the last equation in students' first-last 10 ranking was 83% when only 2nd Factor was included, increased to 86% when 1st Factor was added, increased to 88% when 4th Factor was added, increased to 91% when 5th Factor was added, increased to 92% when 6th Factor was added yet remained by 91% when 9th Factor was added. Accordingly, the furthest contribution for correct ranking was provided by Factor 2. Contributions of Factor 1, Factor 4, Factor 5 and Factor 8

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followed Factor 2. However, it is evident that Factor 9 does not have any contribution to the ranking.

Table 3.
Correct ranking rates of Stepwise regression equations

| | Observed | | Predicted | | Percent Correct |
|-------|--------------------|----------|-----------|---------|-----------------|
| | | | First 10 | Last 10 | |
| Step1 | First-Last 10 | First 10 | 173 | 37 | 82.4 |
| | | Last 10 | 35 | 175 | 83.3 |
| | Overall Percentage | | | | 82.9 |
| Step2 | First-Last 10 | First 10 | 176 | 34 | 83.8 |
| | | Last 10 | 25 | 185 | 88.1 |
| | Overall Percentage | | | | 86.0 |
| Step3 | First-Last 10 | First 10 | 180 | 30 | 85.7 |
| | | Last 10 | 22 | 188 | 89.5 |
| | Overall Percentage | | | | 87.6 |
| Step4 | First-Last 10 | First 10 | 188 | 22 | 89.5 |
| | | Last 10 | 16 | 194 | 92.4 |
| | Overall Percentage | | | | 91.0 |
| Step5 | First-Last 10 | First 10 | 194 | 16 | 92.4 |
| | | Last 10 | 17 | 193 | 91.9 |
| | Overall Percentage | | | | 92.1 |
| Step6 | First-Last 10 | First 10 | 191 | 19 | 91.0 |
| | | Last 10 | 17 | 193 | 91.9 |
| | Overall Percentage | | | | 91.4 |

Conclusion and Discussion

As a whole, it is ascertained that 82% (Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.82$) of the factors affecting student's ranking among the most successful or the most unsuccessful group of ten people in their own dwelling units and at their own class levels in the Level Determination Examination can be predicted by TE, PA, IEM, AGO, CC and E factors according to Stepwise logistic regression analysis. Moreover, it is seen that ranks students acquire in their own dwelling units and at their own class levels in the Level determination examination are predicted by 61% by PA factor from the variables grouped in accordance with factor analysis. It is clear that this finding is consistent in literature (Akın, 2006; Aypay, 2003; Ganzach, 2000; Marks et al., 2006 ; Teachman, 1987; Yüksel, 2004). While students' grade

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point averages belonging to previous year is an indicator of their performances at school (Aypay, 2003), learning orientation is relevant to student's desire towards learning a material completely and having comprehensive knowledge of the subject during learning process (Akın, 2006). On the other hand, locus of control refers to his/her loadings regarding his/her achievement or failure (Yüksel, 2004).

When TE factors are added to the analysis, 72% of the ranks students acquire in their own dwelling units and at their own class levels in the Level determination examination is predicted. The effect of these variables on individuals' educational attainments have been discussed and set forth nearly in all educational equal opportunity literature (Dupriez & Dumay, 2006; Groß, 2003; Marks & others, 2006; Schreiber, 2002). It is thought that TE factors remain in the background of PA factors. They hand down superiorities advantageous families have to their children both psychologically and academically (Lucas, 2001). Accordingly, even though PA variables are perceptibly seen in the determination of students' places in the examination, TE variables appear in their background depending upon the socioeconomic backgrounds of families.

When IEM factor is added to the analysis, it is clear that ranks students acquire in their own dwelling units and at their own class levels in the Level determination examination is predicted by 76%. The fact that these factors appear in the third step in explaining students' places in the Level determination examination and provide an additional 4% increase to predicting students' places in the exam is worth discussing. According to the praxis which is widespread among sociologists and educationalists (Shavit & Blossfeld, 1993), equality of educational success opportunities is defined as the lack of any statistical correlation between students' success indicators and social origin indicators (Dupriez & Dumay, 2006). In other words, educational differentiation between students should depend on IEM variables. This situation implies the inequalities within the stratified structure of Turkish educational system.

When CC variables comprising of how many schools students has changed thus far, whether he/she has any illness and the his/her class level are added to the analysis, it is seen that 79% of the factors affecting ranks students acquire in the Level determination examination is predicted. It is possible to state that these results comply with expectations. Hopper (1971) points out that educational success equality is affected by the time when the students are

accepted to the examination. Furthermore, he indicates that educational success inequality increases when students are divided into educational tracks in the first years of their school life. On the other hand, it is thought that changing so many teachers in elementary education shall affect student's success.

When AGO factor is added to the analysis, it is seen that ranks students acquire in their own dwelling units and at their own class levels in the Level determination examination is predicted by 81%. Achievement goal orientation implies students' personal viewpoints affecting their cognitive, emotional and behavioral reactions in the context of learning (Akın, 2006). In this sense, variables in AGO factor may explain students' behaviors in learning process and viewpoints about learning regarding their personality traits. From this aspect, it is meaningful that this factor is seen effective in explaining students' ranking in the examination. However, the fact that AGO factor provides an additional clarification of only 2% for explaining students' places in the examination implies the inequality in Turkish educational system. This factor is expected to affect students' educational performance further together with locus of control in an educational system in which educational equal opportunity is ensured.

When E factor is added to the analysis it is explicit that 82% of the factors affecting the ranks students acquire in the Level Determination Examination is predicted. These results comply with literature. (Aypay, 2003; Dupriez & Dumay, 2006; Marks et al., 2006; Teachman, 1987). These variables are included in the variable group which is predominantly used both on tracking researches and educational transition and educational equal opportunity researches (Lucas, 2001).

FCS factor, PCRFB factor, and DE factor which were not found meaningful in the final regression equation. These results do not comply with literature. Furthermore, they are not consistent with the findings of the researches which have been conducted in Turkey (Aypay, 2003) and abroad lately (Dupriez & Dumay, 2006; Marks et al., 2006). It is thought that this situation arises from the fact that students' situations concerning variables are homogenous. For instance, it is seen that most of the mothers are housewives (82%), almost all students' fathers (95%) and mothers (98%) are own, and mothers and fathers (96%) are together.

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Thus, FCS, PCRFB and DE variables are not thought to be meaningful in affecting students' place in the Level Determination Examinations.

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