THE FACTORS AFFECTING TURKISH SPEAKING CHILDREN’S ACHIEVEMENTS: THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN SUPPORTING THEIR CHILDREN’S PROGRESS.

by

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Abstract

This study explores the role of parents in supporting their children’s progress as a factor affecting Turkish speaking children’s achievements. My substantial experience working as a teaching assistant supporting Turkish speakers (TS), and working as a teacher teaching TS, in London was one of the main stimulating reasons for choosing the proposed study, where I had an opportunity to understand the central role of parents in students’ achievement. I believe this experience will guide me further understanding role of parents on TS’ achievement.

Two paradigms, qualitative and quantitative investigation methods were used, and data was gathered by means of in-depth interviews with parents and the use of questionnaires. Analysed data revealed the following findings:

Turkish-speaking pupils struggled in the British educational system. Although, the data relating to the existing Turkish community and its educational history in the United Kingdom are limited, a wide range of literature and government papers have been accessed to support relevant findings. The result of this extensive research shows that Turkish-speaking pupils when compared with other ethnic groups under-achieve in British schools. There are various factors such as language ability, culture, gender and schooling had a great effect on achievement. However, this research showed the degree of importance of parental involvement for Turkish parents in supporting their children achievement. The lack of parental involvement was one of the important factors in achievement and a majority of parents raised that they could not involve in their children’s learning because of various reasons explored in this research.
This dissertation is dedicated to

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II,

who believed in me,

for whom I have the utmost respect and admiration.
# Table of Contents

Abstract

1. **Introduction** ........................................................................................................... 6-8

2. **CHAPTER I** ............................................................................................................. 8-21
   2.1. Parent Involvement: General .............................................................................. 8-21
   2.1.1. What is parent involvement? ........................................................................... 8
   2.1.2. Types of parent involvement ......................................................................... 9-10
   2.1.3. Impact of parent involvement ....................................................................... 10-11
   2.1.4. The role of school in parent involvement ................................................... 11-12
   2.1.5. Importance of parent involvement ................................................................. 12-13
   2.1.6. Negative approach to parent involvement ................................................... 13-14
   2.1.7. Education level of parents and parent involvement ....................................... 14-15
   2.1.8. Parental socio-economic status ..................................................................... 15-16
   2.1.9. The role of home environment in achievement ............................................ 16-17
   2.1.10. Researches & surveys on parent involvement .............................................. 17-18
   2.1.11. Government strategies on parent involvement ............................................ 18-21

3. **CHAPTER II** ............................................................................................................ 21-24
   3.1. Background of the Turkish Community in the UK ........................................... 21-24

4. **CHAPTER III** ......................................................................................................... 24-40
   4.1. Educational attainment of Turkish Speaking students in the UK .................. 24-40

5. **CHAPTER IV** ......................................................................................................... 40-42
   5.1. Parental factors affecting Turkish Speaking students achievements .................. 40-42

6. **CHAPTER V** .......................................................................................................... 42-48
   6.1. Influence of other factors on achievement of Turkish pupils .......................... 42-48
   6.1.1. Impact of socio-economic status ................................................................... 42-44
   6.1.2. English as an additional language .................................................................. 44-45
   6.1.2.1. Plans for the ”Cold Spots” ...................................................................... 45-47
   6.1.3. Influence of related factors ............................................................................ 47-48

7. **CHAPTER VI** ......................................................................................................... 48-56
7.1. Research methodology .......................................................... 48-55
7.2. Ethical considerations ............................................................ 55-56

8. CHAPTER VII ......................................................................... 56-64
8.1. Main findings ........................................................................ 56-64
8.2. Preliminary Analyses and findings ........................................... 56-64

9. CHAPTER VIII ........................................................................ 65-68
9.1. Conclusion ........................................................................... 65-67
9.2. Suggestion for improvement .................................................. 67-68
References .................................................................................... 69-82
Appendices .................................................................................... 83-95
1. Introduction

Low attainment and underachievement of children from ethnic groups in the UK schools have been evident and cause for concern in the last few decades. Range of studies conducted, mainly at local level, led to two major government initiatives (i.e., Rampton Committee (1981) followed by the Swann Committee, 1985). The literature suggests that parental involvement, among other factors – such as race, religion, gender, socio-economic-status (SES), English as an Additional language (EAL), and school factors - may have a considerable impact, whether by intention or default, on students’ attainment. Findings from the evaluation of Excellence in Cities/Ethnic Minority Achievement, for example, confirm existing research as to some of the key factors necessary if schools are to narrow achievement gaps for students from ethnic groups including a strong focus on leadership, involving students and parents and local community as well as effective use of data (Cunningham et al., 2004).

The proposed research project aims to investigate the role of parents as factors on Turkish students’ (TS) attainment. Turkish Speaking Communities (TSCs) in the UK is a diverse group and comprises Cypriot Turks, mainland Turks and Kurds. Their background goes back to the 1950s when the first settlers arrived to the UK. However, until recently they have never been counted as “Turkish” in neither surveys nor in census. This made them invisible, and their diverse needs have not been considered. The situation has changed in 2005, since then, as a statutory requirement schools have been instructed to report to the DfES on ethnicity and guidelines on collection of such data had been issued dealing ethnic categories based on Pupil Level Annual Census (PLASC) ethnic codes (DfES, 2005) and since 2007, schools have also been able to collect information on students’ languages by selecting from an extensive list (Hansard, 2006). The collection of such
extensive data both on ethnicity and language is expected to contribute to the planning and implementation of equality and diversity strategies (e.g., Enneli, 2002); provide schools with a better understanding of the linguistic and cultural heritage of their pupils (e.g., Ali, 2001); and assist them building more inclusive schools for all (e.g., Lindsay et al., 2005). Such data would also support the analysis of students’ attainment at school, local and national level, and assist Local Authorities and schools in their use of ethnic background data (e.g., Enneli et al., 2005). It would therefore enhance the capacity of schools for self-evaluation, school improvement and effectiveness as well as information management and the appropriate targeting of resources.

The proposed research project aims to take a whole parental approach investigating the role of parents on TS’ underachievement. Doing so, I will be using mixed methodology to be able to make most of two paradigms (i.e., qualitative and quantitative) to gain better understanding of the subject matter. This analysis will not only inform me about attainment levels of such students but also will allow me to relate attainment with other key variables that may have impact on students’ attainment that referred earlier. It needs to be emphasised that the purpose of this research the concept of “attainment/achievement/underachievement” is used in terms of educational performance.

I believe my proposed research will have positive educational as well as economical implications. That is, better educational qualifications/outcomes lead to better employment opportunities. Based on findings of the proposed research, educational policy makers may take into account of factors affecting underachievement of TS and hence their expected poorer post-16 outcomes, and may take necessary precautions to minimise poor educational and employment prospects. This might bring new measurements in education system to
include ethnicity awareness and thus to minimise factors affecting underachievement. On the other hand, professionals in related fields might be informed and their support might be sought in order to enhance ethnic minorities’ achievement for the benefit of British economy.

CHAPTER I

Literature Review

2.1. Parent Involvement: General

2.1.1. What is Parent Involvement?

The aim of this review of the literature is to summarise what is parental involvement and what is known about it as well as its potential benefits in terms of educational achievement and success.

Defining the phrase ‘Parent Involvement (PI)’ is not an easy task because it includes a broad range of activities. The words involvement, participation, collaboration and engagement etc., are used synonymously to define the meaning of Parent Involvement. (PI) means the participation of parents in regular mutual and meaningful communication involving student learning and other a wide range of school activities. Chrispeels (1992) defines Parent Involvement as “the mutual collaboration, support, and participation of families and school staff at home or at school site in activities and efforts that directly and positively affect success of children’s progress in school” (p.2).


2.1.2. Types of parent involvement

The term “parental involvement” includes a number of different forms of activity some of which take place at home and some at school. Activities that parents involve themselves in at home encompass talking with their children, enhancing their children self-esteem and monitoring out of school activities such as supervising homework etc; and activities parents participate in at school include attending school events such as open days and parents days, working in the school in support of teachers such as helping with activities in the classroom, assisting in the governance of the school, and regular meeting with teachers to discuss their children’s progress etc.

As Epstein (1987) identified this might be in various forms: Parents may be involved with their children at home so that they are mentally as well as physically healthy and strong and such an environment supports learning; parents may be in contact with the school as often as possible to make sure they understand the school’s programmes, and follow their children progress in those programmes; parents might be involved actively in the school as tutors, classroom assistants and coaches; parents might be involved with their children’s assignments, providing support and assistance at home; and finally parents might be involved in school groups to provide direction for the school and its mission. Thus, parental involvement can extend to parents to take role as volunteers to support the school, either through activity within schools such as classroom support, on governing bodies, or community activities. For younger children, parents provide their children with school related skills such as basic reading and numeracy whereas for older pupils parents’ role is more about motivating their children and modelling aspirations.
Several other reviews of parental involvement have been made by authors such as Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) stating, “good parenting at home, including the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion, good models of constructive social and educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfilment and good citizenship; contact with schools to share information; participation in school events; participation in the work of the school; and participation in school governance” (p.2).

2.1.3. Impact of parent involvement

Sylva et al (1999) and Melhuish et al (2001) stated in their studies that the impact of parental engagement in learning activities in the home with better cognitive achievement, particularly in the early years. However, it was reported that parents took education more seriously when their children started secondary school (Mehmet Ali, 1997; Apitzsch, 1997).

It is likely that some parents have always been interested in their children’s attainment so they have been providing good parenting at home; visiting school to keep updated with their children’s progress; establishing good relationship with the school; discussing with the teachers relevant issues regarding their children; and also have been actively participating in activities which refers to a broad range of programmes in the school. This shows the parental aspiration and expectation on their children’s achievements which has a strong impact on results at school while the effect of supervision of their work is only marginal claimed by Fan & Chen (2001).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) emphasised the significance of the positive decision on the parts of the parents to be engaged as the
basis for parental modelling and feedback which are accepted as important for enhancing the child’s performance and progress. They state why parents make this decision: the perception or definition of their role and responsibilities for their children’s education; the parental sense of competence and self efficacy to help their children; and parents see themselves as being encouraged or welcomed by school staff for the supportive role.

2.1.4. The role of school in parent involvement

Pena (2001) concluded that the most effective way in improving parental involvement is to make the parents feel more welcomed; involving more direct communication with parents on the part of school staff; direct planning of parental activities; and a more positive and open approach towards parents by the staff. However, McGrane (2007) is concerned about the lack of practical advice about how to make these links between school staff and parents. She emphasises the importance of activities such as parents’ evenings, open days, and advice sessions about homework etc., with parents but she believes these types of engagements likely involve one-way communication. Because parents are largely listeners in such activities where the reports analysed about children’s progress are not very positive, and where there is a limited opportunity to discuss what strategies are being planned to enhance achievement and determine how parents may involve in such developments.

McGrane (2007) states that there is no such evidence to define the best strategies in terms of parent-school relations, she believes that the following issue might be included: the teacher and parent should be aware of the purpose of the meeting with an opportunity to share experiences and information; parents should be provided with the adequate knowledge and advice in order to help their children and the
staff should be open to gain and share information from the parents; parents should be equal partners in discussions; and finally the parents should be well presented in discussions about various school issues such as dealing with homework and behaviours of children. In order to achieve these, especially for those parents who are bilingual, “effective communication, using interpreters and translators as appropriate, between the school and parents/carers and where appropriate, social workers, is important in order to disseminate information about expectations and the school system, as well as to negotiate collaborative and creative solutions to problems” (McKenna, 2005, pp.23-24).

2.1.5. Importance of parent involvement

It is generally accepted that pupils need full support of their parents in order to maximise their potential in terms of skills, knowledge and achievement in school. Those who receive full support of their parents are likely to achieve better, and, in contrast, those students who are not supported by their parents are academically disadvantaged. According to the review of literature, parent involvement is crucial for peoples to achieve at the highest levels in schools. The literature has shown that parents need to become involved for their children to perform better.

Epstein (1985) argued that "the evidence is clear that parental encouragement, activities and interest at home, and parental participation in schools and classrooms positively influence achievement, even after the students' ability and family socio-economic status are taken into account." In addition, there may be evidence to support this approach that the most useful variety of parent involvement is the contact that parents have with their children in the
home when such contact is used to encourage and support school achievement.

However, it is argued that parents are not as involved in their children’s education as they should be. Researchers suggested possible reasons for lack of parental involvement in their children’s education: Epstein (1995) and Steinberg (1996) claimed that disengagement of parents is a cause whereas Rosow (1991) stated that parent illiteracy plays a part in this outcome; Barber and Patin (1997) argue that uninviting schools discourage parental involvement; and Miller (1995) argues that “cultural dissimilarities also account in part for the diversity of parenting strategies and parent-school relations associated with variations in student achievement patterns” (p.338). “Evidence also suggests that parents and carers from some minority ethnic communities are generally less involved” (McKenna, 2005, p.38) in their children’s education.

### 2.1.6. Negative approaches to parent involvement

Although parental involvement is accepted as a crucial factor for educational attainment, several studies showed that parental involvement influence on the achievement for older pupils was low: Catsambis (2001) found that parental involvement was not a factor in academic progress with 14-18 year old pupils. There is an important difference of parental involvement between secondary and primary schools because parents unlikely contact with schools as their children grow. This is because children want to be more independent but also because parents feel less capable of helping their children. This finding, however, does not deny that their involvement increased the chance of their children continuing with their education and deciding best study options for their future career. A number of studies also found that parental engagement in the school shows little or no real benefit on the
individual child (Okpala et al, 2001) and the parental involvement which takes the form of in school parental activity has little effect on individual learning outcomes (Ho Sui-Chu et al, 1996). Although it is accepted that parental engagement is valuable for the schools and parents in terms of having good relationships parents taking role in the school governing have no real contribution to academic achievement of individual learners.

Raffaele and Knoff (1999) further suggest that if a whole community approach is not taken to parental engagement in terms of teaching and learning strategy within the school the outcome of this will likely be minimal. In order to achieve the best result parental involvement should be fully integrated into the school development plan and a team should have responsibility for delivering this plan that included teachers and community members argued by Krieder (2000).

In addition, Mattingly et al (2002) found out that there is “little empirical support for the widespread claim that parental involvement programmes are an effective means of improving achievement or changing parent, teacher and student behaviour” (p.549). However, government reports such as Plowden (1967) report indicated that parental involvement in educational and community-based programmes is a positive influence on the child.

2.1.7. Education level of parents and parent involvement

In terms of level of education, Kohl et al (2000) found that the more educated the parent, the greater their involvement in their children education. It meant that some parents lacked the relevant skills to get involved. The research carried out by Hill et al (2005) showed that pupils from involved families with higher levels of parental education experiences less behavioural problems; and parental involvement from
parents with lower educational levels resulted in increased adolescent educational and career aspirations but did not improve behaviour or achievement.

Feinstein and Sabates (2006) claimed that there is a relation between the duration of mother’s full-time education and her attitudes and behaviours towards their child; for example, mothers who carried on their education after the compulsory schooling period are likely to demonstrate positive educational attitudes and behaviours to their children.

Whilst the educational effect of post-compulsory education on mother’s behaviour towards their children in terms of educational attainment is highly beneficial, however, it does not mean that simply increasing the duration of education will bring positive changes in attitudes and behaviours because this likely depends on the quality and nature of educational experience gained.

2.1.8. Parental Socio-economic status

The socio-economic status of parents has always been accepted to be a very important factor in the achievement of learner. Hill et al (2005) found out that the involvement by parents of higher socio-economic status was likely to create pupils modelling the positive achievements of their parents; and parents of lower socio-economic status were less likely to be involved in their children’s education and it generally appeared that this resulted in pupils modelling their parents’ lower achievements.

There is substantial evidence that student achievement is associated with parents’ socio-economic status. Previous studies of educational attainment have demonstrated that socio-economic status is associated
with achievement in secondary school and experiences in post-secondary education (Swell & Hauser, 1976). It is possible to argue that parents with high socio-economic status spend more time with their children in their homework and in learning related activities. There are variables in measuring socio-economic status such as mother’s education, father’s education, family income and father’s profession.

2.1.9. The role of home environment in achievement

It is clear that the family support is one of the factors in a child’s achievement. In relation to this, home environment which is often referred as the “curriculum of the home” has influence on the development of cognitive, emotional and attitudinal aspects of a child relevant to educational performance (Bloom, 1981). Homes where educational values are shaped with positive attitudes, knowledge and skills may take a considerable place in helping children to achieve at school (Aiken, 1976).

Although there are various methodologies to measure family environment, there is a range of dimensions which have been considered to be fundamental in the cognitive and academic development of children: parental aspirations; home literacy; collaborative parent-child activities and parental demand. White (1982) found that when these were combined with the family background factors, 53% of the difference in the achievement of students is recorded.

According to Hammer (2003), the home environment is as important as the school environment. Important factors include parental involvement in their children’s education, how much time parents spend in reading to their children, how much TV children are allowed to watch etc. Achievement does not only depend on what goes on once students get
into the classroom. It also depends on what happens to them before and after school.

2.1.10. *Researches & Surveys on parent involvement*

Williams et al (2002) surveyed parents of children aged 5-16 attending schools in England to find out their level of involvement in their children’s education. 29% of parents believed very involved. 35% strongly agreed that they wanted to be more involved. This also showed that 2% of the parents felt only the school should be responsible for education, whilst 58% stated that it should be equal responsibility. 72% of all parents agreed that they wanted more involvement. The 40% of the parents were somewhere between. When parents were asked about barriers to becoming involved in their children education, they stated that they faced some difficulties in their lives such as work commitments, demand of other children, childcare difficulties and lack of time.

In addition, Dougles (1964) research shows that children’s progress can be hindered by lack of parental involvement. The key findings were that children of those parents who showed a high level of interest achieved higher grades in tests at age 8 and 11; the grades of those children whose parents showed less interest became worse; the children with interested parents progressed well whatever their initial starting point was.

In 1995, Basic Skills Agency’s research showed that parents’ difficulties with basic skills are a barrier to being involved in their children’s education: 34% of parents had difficulties reading from a children’s book; and 18% of parents found it difficult to understand and recognise numbers.
Dave (1963) and Wolf (1964) studied relations between the family environment and measures of academic attainment and intelligence. A range of family processes such as parental aspirations, provisions for intellectual activity, home literacy and encouragement for language development was identified. These processes increased performance on academic achievement tests by 69%, and by 49% on intelligence test grades. Several researches also showed that family environments which are supported by high socio-economic status were more important than the school environments in encouraging girls’ achievement in secondary schools. While it is generally accepted that female learners even from high socio-economic status have lower aspirations than male learners, female learners have been observed to achieve high grades when economic factors are positive (Wilson & Wilson, 1992).

The School Standards and Framework Act (1988) declared the need for state schools to have home-school agreements by which it was aimed to explain the school’s aims and values, the school’s responsibilities towards its students, the responsibilities of parents, and the expectation of the school from its pupils. Parents were expected to sign these agreements which could contribute to establishing effective parental involvement.

2.1.11. Government Strategies on parent involvement

The government’s strategy towards parental involvement was first set out in 1997 in the UK: in the White Paper, “Excellence in Schools”, the strategy was described three important issues as providing parents with information; giving parents a voice; and encouraging parental partnerships with schools. Since than, this strategy has been followed through a wide range of activities including enhancing the role of parents as governor, and involving parents in inspections processes. In
the following year, 1998, the School Standards and Framework Act introduced the need for maintained schools to have home-school agreements. This would be a statement explaining the school’s aims and values, responsibilities towards its people, the responsibilities of parents, and what the school expects from the children.

In 2005, DfES published the Schools White Paper “Higher Standards, Better Schools for All – More Choice for Parents and Students”. In this paper, parents were placed at the centre of the issue to raise standards by emphasising upon their involvement in the education system. This policy claimed that parental engagement makes a significant difference to the achievement of young people and parents have a key role in improving educational standards.

The importance of parental involvement was emphasised in the government publications such as “Every Parent Matters” (DfES, 2007). In this document the importance of parental engagement in achieving high standards and in improving educational performance was emphasised. This research was carried out as a part of an extensive developmental project, “Engaging Parents to Raise Achievement (EPRA)” funded by DfES. The aim was to find new approaches of engaging parents in schools, especially hard to reach parents. As a result, it was explored that engaging those parents had a positive effect on children’s achievement and behaviour. Epstein (1990) indicates that parent involvement will take place if the school has a policy and programmes for that purpose. Because it is suggested that the most significant of stakeholders in the school community is the parent (Fullan, 1991). Swap (1993) supports the above statement by suggesting that

"home-school partnership is no longer a luxury. There is an urgent need for schools to find ways to support the success of all our children. One
element that we know contributes to successful children and successful schools across all population is parent involvement in children’s education. When our focus is on improving the achievement of children at academic risk, partnership with families is not just useful—it is crucial” (p.1).

One of the projects was principally orientated towards the Turkish speaking community because the community was suffering from underachievement both in primary and secondary schools. The project named “Mothertongue GCSE (TGCSE) – Islington and Hackney” aimed at improving parental involvement and the development of family literacy. This would be achieved through the study of home languages and the preparation for a GCSE exam for parents as well as children. Thus, bilingual children would be given a chance to learn and use their native language in official exams such as GCSEs with the help of their parents. The project run between 2002 and 2003 was successful. Although it was limited to a small number of pupils, five children and their parents studied for a GCSE in Turkish and 90% of them achieved high grades in the GCSE exam (Carpentier & Lall, 2005).

The Mayor’s Board for refugee integration in London (now LSMP) focused on the education of refugee and asylum seeker children, including parental involvement, community links, good data and information collection, effective support services with a strong policy (Arnot & Pinson, 2005).

In 2008, a case study in “English as an additional language-reception class mother tongue project” was conducted in Islington by the National Assessment Agency. The aim of this study was to provide further support to practitioners who are in a position of assessing the achievement of bilingual children at foundation stage. The study results show significant gaps in attainment between children from identified
ethnic groups. In 2006, 50 percent of Kurdish children and 38.6 per cent of Turkish children in Islington were in the lowest 20 per cent of the overall foundation stage grades. It was aimed to find out whether assessing children in their mother tongue would improve the accuracy of the assessments made and to raise the grades of Turkish speaking children.

The teachers involved in the project stated that this project was a good opportunity to strengthen links with parents. As a result, the parents became confident to discuss their children’s progress with the class teacher; increased involvement with parents through informal and formal meetings had a positive effect on their willingness to be involved with their children’s life in the school; parents became more confident when discussing their children development and learning; parents became more receptive for information about how to support their children’s progress; parents became aware of the British education system; and parents’ involvement in school was positively affected.

CHAPTER II

3.1. Background of the Turkish Community in the UK

The Turkish community in the UK is very diverse and comprises several communities namely Turkish Cypriots, Turks from mainland Turkey and Turkish Kurds. There is a broad term used to describe them as “Turkish Speakers”. The history of migration to the United Kingdom differs for each of these groups. The first settlers who came to the country were the Turkish Cypriots between 1930 and 1950. Given that they arrived earlier than others, they are likely to be better established in many ways than the later immigrants. They were from a rural agricultural background with little knowledge of English and little formal education.
The second group of settlers arrived in between 1950 and 1970 that they were also Turkish Cypriots. The majority of these people had no formal education. Their English language skills were as low as the first immigrants from Cyprus. Thus, the characteristics of the Turkish-speaking pupils who came to Britain during these four decades remained unchanged, i.e. uneducated without proper English skills. This is an important issue to analyse, as there is a direct correlation between the pupils’ success at schools and their parents’ educational background. It is indicated that, a great quantity of evidence based on major national studies with huge samples shows that there is a very strong and positive relationship between the education of parents and the measured intelligence, academic achievement, and extracurricular participation of children in school or college. I will discuss this point in detail in the following chapters of the paper. The majority of Turkish and Kurdish people who chose Britain as their home country came since 1971 and settled under asylum and refugee status. In addition, there are small numbers of settlers who came for educational purposes but became resident in the UK. The main reasons for immigration of the Turkish people to the UK were political and economic.

At the time of the 2001 UK Census, almost 60,000 Turkish-born people were resident in the UK, although the total number of Turks including those born in Cyprus and those born in the UK with Turkish roots is unknown. Greater London Authority (2009) report shows that there is a lack of official statistical data on Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot communities in the UK, because they are categorised under broad ethnic group categories. Estimating the size of the Kurdish population is especially a problematic one as Kurdish people may come from Turkey or from other countries in the Middle East, such as Iraq. 2001 Census also showed that London is home to a large proportion of the Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot communities living in England and Wales,
including 60 per cent of those born in Cyprus and 74 per cent of those born in Turkey.

According to the Turkish Studies Center (Stiftung Zentrum für Türkeistudien) in Essen, there were 70,000 Turkish people in Britain in 2002.

*Figure 1 – Turkish Population and Naturalised Turks in the EU (in thousand), 2002*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Turkish origin</th>
<th>Turkish nationality</th>
<th>Turks EU naturalised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2.642</td>
<td>1.912</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other EU</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total EU</td>
<td>3.772</td>
<td>2.500</td>
<td>1.272</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, according to a piece of research carried out “it is estimated that there are 200,000 Turkish people including all the groups mentioned above living in the UK”. I believe this is something around 100,000 Turkish people. The General Consulate for Turkey in London declares that “the estimated number of Turkish nationals living in the
UK (students, au pairs, illegal immigrants are included) is around 150,000\textsuperscript{iv}.

CHAPTER III

4.1. Educational Attainment of Turkish Speaking Students in the UK

Educational attainment means the achievement of grades in other words successful performance of studying in school: this could mean “academic attainment or ability to excel in subjects taught to provide for the mind rather than the hand” (Capel et al, 1997, p.177). It may also mean “anything achieved, accomplished, won, a feat, or a victory or performance in standardised test” (Archibald & Newman, 1988, p.1). In the British education system, academic achievement may also refer to the attainment of grades in most subjects taught in English, and a numerical subject, mathematics, which is one of the core subjects. This can be defined by a national test of achievement, and the results can be classified as achievers and underachievers. In contrast, underachievement is the “school performance, usually measured by grades that is substantially below what would be predicted on the basis of the student’s mental ability, typically measured by intelligence or standardised academic tests” (McCall et al, 1992, p.54).

Underachievement of Turkish pupils has been under-researched and such issues are addressed in small-scale projects. Unlike some of the ethnic groups (e.g. West Indians) the underachievement of TS has not attracted much attention which shows the lack of efficient investigation on behalf of the government and its authorities to examine the findings of reports such as the Swann Report. There is very insufficient information regarding the educational achievement of TS’s. In 1980, ILEA Literacy Survey showed that among all the age groups of 8, 10
and 15 years, TS’s achieved the lowest scores compared with other ethnic groups such as West Indians, Greek Cypriots and Pakistanis. In the following year, ILEA Language Census (1981) was evidence that 41.1% of Turkish speakers were classified as “fluent” whereas the figure for Greek speakers was 58.1%. There is also very limited data giving ethnic breakdown of Turkish speakers in categories. Turkish Cypriots once were treated as a separate group in Southwark School Examinations Survey (1991-1992) which involved GCSE results. According to the survey, in 1991, the percentage of Turkish Cypriot students’ grades ranging between A-C was 10.8% compared with a regional average of 26.1%. In the following year, 1992, the results were better: this figure increased to 30.9% with a regional average of 28.5%.

Overall, attainment data on TS show that they are amongst the lowest achieving ethnic groups in the UK. For example, Mooded and colleagues (1997) found that TS were more disadvantaged than the most disadvantaged, the Bangladeshi, in terms of facility in English, educational qualifications, unemployment, occupational levels and earnings. Furthermore, a recent Ofsted report which evaluated test scores of students who spoke EAL, who make up a considerable proportion of English schools, found that Somali, Kurdish and Turkish students performed significantly worse than others (Ofsted, 2003).

Turkish-speaking pupils make up a significant portion of the overall number of pupils with EAL. Greater London Authority (2009) report shows that in Hackney, 8.1 per cent of secondary school students were recorded as Turkish/Turkish Cypriot; 1.8 per cent of primary school students; and 1.7 per cent of secondary school students were recorded as Kurdish. In Enfield, 5.5 per cent of people were recorded as Turkish, 3.5 per cent as Turkish Cypriot and 1.6 per cent as Kurdish. The proportions of Turkish and Kurdish pupils have been increasing since
1993. According to the CEA @Islington PLASC and language census (2004), in Islington 4.5 per cent of pupils were recorded as Turkish/Turkish Cypriot, 1.5 per cent Turkish and 1.1 per cent Kurdish.

However, their position according to their achievement amongst the other communities is remarkably poor. The 2001 census showed that adults born in Turkey and Cyprus were less likely than the general population to have gained higher level qualifications and far more likely to have no recognised qualification. I will analyse the following statistics and research results with the factors on achievement in the conclusion. According to the census carried out by the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) in 1989, 1,356 children, 4.4 % of the school age population, whose first language was Turkish spoke English as a second language. Turkish, after Bengali, was the second most spoken language in homes where English was a second language. In 2000, in the comprehensive survey of all London schools Turkish was found to be the sixth most frequently spoken language, spoken by 15,600 pupils (almost 2 per cent of the total) (Baker & Eversley, 2000). In 2004, the most commonly spoken language in Islington schools was Turkish (CEA @Islington, 2004).

"Virtually all the LEAs had significant numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers....In addition to the EAL support needs of developing bilingual pupils, the following groups were identified as needing a particular focus owing to low levels of achievement: Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and Turkish pupils, and Travellers, refugees and asylum-seekers more generally". Evidence that the achievement levels of the ethnic groups in Hackney schools is shown below.
**Figure 2 - Comparison of Achievement Levels of Turkish-speaking Pupils with Other Ethnic Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Key (%) 1997</th>
<th>Key (%) 1998</th>
<th>Key (%) 1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng/Scot/Welsh</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek/Cypriot</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurdish</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish/Cypriot</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>73</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be analysed by the table, Turkish-speaking pupils’ achievements levels are amongst the lowest. In addition, when each group is compared, it is clear that the Kurdish community is the lowest amongst all the ethnic minority groups at Key stage 4. This is followed by the Turkish/Turkish Cypriots who are the second lowest achievers. There is a slight difference at Key Stage 1 in 1998 as Turkish-speaking communities do better than the lowest achieving group, the Arabs. At this stage, the Kurdish community’s position remains the same, again
the most unsuccessful. Overall, the Turkish-speaking community is the lowest achieving community compared to other communities. This situation did not change in 2003. "Ofsted analysed test scores of people who spoke English as an additional language, who make up a tenth of students in English schools, and found that Somali, Kurdish and Turkish speakers performed considerably worse than others"\textsuperscript{ix}. The Commission on Race and Education at the Association of London Government (London Councils) reported a similar report in 2003: In Islington, Turkish and Turkish Cypriot pupils’ level fell down from a high level at Key Stage 1 to the lowest level at Key Stage 2 and GCSE; in Lambeth, their level improved from lowest level at Key Stage 1 to an average level at Key Stage 2 but second lowest at GCSE; in Lewisham, Turkish pupils’ level was at average for GCSE results; and in Walthamstow, Southwark and Enfield their level was low.

In the same year, the London Challenge Turkish Community Action Forum was set up by the Department for Education and Skills (DFES, now the Department for Children, Schools and Families) with the aim of obtaining information about the Turkish community in London to find out the reasons for underachievement of Turkish speakers, and how parents could be provided with support to help their children to improve their grades. Its report was published in 2004 in which a number of factors considered as affecting the under-achievement of pupils from Turkish, Turkish Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot communities were identified by the forum. These included family structure and cultural differences; lack of parental knowledge about the British education system; poor language skills of parents affecting their involvement and children’s learning; lack of support for parents and students from schools; low provision for bilingual education from schools; low expectations of Turkish, Turkish Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot children among teachers; lack of positive role models in the Turkish speaking community; limited access to information on the school in Turkish; the
shortage of bilingual Turkish and Kurdish speakers in schools; a poor understanding of the cultures of the Turkish speaking communities by teachers; pressures on parents, including financial issues, long working hours, uncertainty about immigration status, and living in temporary accommodation causing frequent movement.

The London Challenge Turkish Forum (2004) identified recommendations to improve the Turkish speaking pupils’ attainment, including: increasing parental involvement through raising awareness of the British educational system and the importance of education; providing parents with support for parenting skills; establishing parent association; providing translations for common educational terms; providing re-training opportunities to teachers with overseas qualifications and teaching assistants from Turkish, Turkish Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot communities; encouraging teaching as a profession within the Turkish communities; strengthening links between schools and Turkish community centres/groups/weekend and supplementary school; and providing teachers training to recognise and eliminate ethnic and religious differences.

The achievement level of the Turkish-speaking students in Islington schools in 2004 was not different either. According to the report which contains examination of many major reports published by DfES, Ofsted and so on since 2001, the Turkish-speaking students at Key stage 1 Writing, Reading and Maths achieved the lowest scores of all the other communities. Although there was a slight improvement in Maths, which was about 3%, their performance in Writing and Reading went down between 3 to over 10%. Turkish-speaking students in these subjects were the only ethnic group with a decrease in their developments from 2003-2004. When we look at the GCSE, 5 A* -C, results by gender in the same year, Turkish speaking boys were the second poorest
achievers after Black Caribbean. In addition, Turkish speaking girls were the lowest achieving group\textsuperscript{x}.

In post-compulsory education, Turkish-speaking students’ achievements did not differ either when it was compared with compulsory education. According to the Ofsted Enfield area inspection, Turkish pupils with other minority groups namely Black Caribbean, Black African, Black other and Greek pupils achieved least well at GCE A Level\textsuperscript{xii}. As a result of ‘...that 36\% of British Muslims are leaving school with no qualifications, while a fifth of 16 to 24 year-old Muslims in Britain are unemployed\textsuperscript{xiii}. The research carried out by Colin Alston from Hackney LEA showed that the higher number of passes in GCSEs the pupils from ethnic minorities achieved, the higher the percentage of the pupils continued the post-16 education.

*Figure 3* - GCSE achievements and post-16 destinations of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds (Data for Year 11, 2000)\textsuperscript{xiii}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Ethnic Groups in Hackney</th>
<th>No A*-C Passes</th>
<th>0 to 2.5 A*-C Passes</th>
<th>3 to 6.5 A*-C Passes</th>
<th>7 to 13 A*-C Passes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFRICAN</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BANGLADESHI</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARIBBEAN</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG/SCOT/WEL</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIAN</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TURKISH</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* indicates percentages based on raw numbers less than ten)
According to this table above, whilst 59% of Turkish-speaking students who could not achieve any A* to C grades in GCSEs continued their studying in post-16 education, the proportion increased to 74% for those who achieved at least three A* to C passes in GCSEs. When they reached the minimum seven good passes, almost all Turkish-speaking pupils stayed on post-compulsory education.

In contrast, Turkish-speaking pupils whether they were trained or not most likely went into employment, the other figure below shows in Hackney. The percentage of students going into employment for the trained Turkish-speaking pupils was very low and limited to boys.

**Figure 4 - Pupils with destinations in employment (with and without training) and Government-sponsored training, analysed by ethnic group and gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethic Group</th>
<th>% into Employment with Training</th>
<th>% into Employment with no Training</th>
<th>% Government Sponsored Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GIRLS BOYS</td>
<td>GIRLS BOYS</td>
<td>GIRLS BOYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFRICAN</td>
<td>0 4*</td>
<td>13* 0</td>
<td>5* 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BANGLADESHI</td>
<td>5* 0</td>
<td>13* 0</td>
<td>10* 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARIBBEAN</td>
<td>5* 9*</td>
<td>13* 0</td>
<td>35* 47*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG/ SCOT/ WELSH</td>
<td>43* 52</td>
<td>33* 60*</td>
<td>20* 20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIAN</td>
<td>14* 4*</td>
<td>0 20*</td>
<td>20* 7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TURKISH/CYPRIOT</td>
<td>0 4*</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = percentages based on raw numbers of pupils less than 10.
The literature regarding achievement of TS reveals a continuous trend of educational underachievement over the past thirty years (Issa, 2005; Dedezade, 1994; Reid et al., 1999). These findings were parallel to the earlier findings on reading performance of TS’s (MacDonald, 1975). The main factors related to TS’ underachievement found to be: poor reading skills, lack of well established home-school relations, lack of trained bilingual educators, teachers and support staff, and poor living and working conditions.

Teacher Training Agency surveys of newly qualified teachers (NQT) show that quite a high number of NQTs believe they have not really been trained to teach pupils with different ethnic backgrounds and those with English as an additional language. This is a serious issue, as pupils with EAL certainly need professional educators who are specialised in dealing with ethnic minority and special educational needs pupils. For example, all the pupils in a classroom may be Turkish speakers of some level but it is certain that they are not all the same. Even in a community language class there is a huge level of ethnic and linguistic diversity which needs to be approached sensitively. On the other hand, there is an untested assumption that native-speakers are inherently better teachers: so it could be argued that Turkish teachers are highly literate in Turkish so they can easily deal with Turkish-speaking students. They may all be able to understand the spoken word and teach Turkish. However, their literacy levels in Turkish can vary from excellent to nonexistent and this is to be considered.

In addition, Evans (2007) published a report on the Supplementary schools to which 2,500 children attend in Barnet. These schools were established to raise the educational attainment level of students from community groups that perform below the national average. They also aim to teach their own culture and history. This report outlined that there are clear gaps in Supplementary Schools provision particularly
within groups who underachieve in the state schools. Turkish community has been identified one of these groups. The report also shows the importance of parental involvement in achievement suggesting that some parents need to be taught how to support their children’s learning; cannot read or write and have difficulties communicating with the schools; and do not have a good understanding of, or are misinformed about the British education system.

The recent research on Turkish speaking children’s achievement shows that there are indications that achievement level of TSs is improving (Issa et al, 2008). This research is based on the data provided by four boroughs in London, namely Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington for the period 2002 – 2007, showing gender where possible with achievement at Key Stage 2 and 4 (please see Appendix A).

**Enfield:**

**Figure 5 - Key Stage 4: Percentage of pupils achieving 5 GSCE results, grade A*-C**

![Graph showing Key Stage 4: Percentage of pupils achieving 5 GSCE results, grade A*-C](image-url)
The tables above show that Turkish Cypriot students’ achievement level is very close to the LA average at Key Stage 4 with girls achieving better than boys. In general, Turkish children have shown a significant improvement in attainment between 2002 and 2007, with girls doing better than boys. Turkish On the other hand, Kurdish pupils’ performance has been the lowest since 2004 when first data was collected for this group. Although all these groups’ performances decline in 2007, the trend is upward, rising slowly in parallel with the LA average. For Key Stage 2, there was no data available to analyse.
Hackney:

Figure 7 - Key Stage 4: Percentage of pupils achieving 5 GSCE results, grade A*-C

![Graph showing percentage of pupils achieving 5 GSCE results, grade A*-C](image)
In Hackney, as seen above, data was available only for “Turkish or Kurdish speakers”. At key stage 2, pupils have very low achievement when compared to the borough averages. The difference was the highest in English and lower in mathematics. Starting from 2004, there is an indication that the gap in achievement in English seems to be closing, but remains steady in the other two subjects, mathematics and science. At key stage 4, a limited number of students are achieving 5 GCSE grades at A* to C level. However, there is a sign of an increase at this stage too. The overall result seems that there is an increase in achievement at both stages in Hackney.
Haringey:

**Figure 9 - Key Stage 4: Percentage of pupils achieving 5 GSCE results, grade A*-C**
The figures above depict that both Turkish and Turkish Kurdish pupils are achieving lower than the borough averages at key stage 2 but both groups show overall improvements. However, the gap between the both groups and the borough mean remains stable in all three subjects. Particularly, the Turkish Cypriot pupils’ data is inconsistent, and there was a significant decrease in achievement in 2007 in all three subjects. At key stage 4, Turkish and Kurdish students have performed well over six years although their performances are still lower than the borough average. In addition, the Turkish Kurdish pupils have shown significant improvements until 2007. In general, Turkish girls perform better than Turkish boys whereas Kurdish boys almost catch up with the girls. Turkish Cypriot pupils seem to be performing as well as the average in the borough and girls again outperform boys.
In Islington borough, there was not data reported for key stage 2. At key stage 4, the above data shows that the achievement levels of all the Turkish speaking pupils are very close to the borough average but the level of achievement in Islington is not high when compared to other boroughs’ attainment levels. Overall, the achievement levels of all the groups are improving in parallel to the level of improvement in the borough.

However, as stated earlier, none of the research projects took systemic account of whole parental approach including curriculum, management, leadership, school policy on achievement of TS, availability of Turkish role models, partnership with parents, school link with community,
availability and use of resources, staff related factors (training, attitudes, support staff) so on and so forth.

CHAPTER IV

5.1. Parental Factors Affecting Turkish Speaking Students Achievements

In 1985, the Swann Report suggested that the rural background of Turkish Cypriot students’ parents, their low educational levels, and lack of English language were possible reasons for the results of the learners. It was argued that these circumstances explain the “observed shyness” of the parents to approach teachers and lack of attendance to parents’ evenings, which were essential for obtaining feedback about the progress of their children and for gaining information about the British education system. In the same report, Turkish Cypriot students’ parents expressed their dissatisfaction with the British schools: they stated that there was lack of discipline in schools.

Bridgwood (1986) and Beetlestone (1982) argue that the aim of fathers is to work hard, set up a business and then to pass them to their children, so business comes before education. A similar approach towards girls by their parents is seen as Turkish Cypriot girls are given a short period of time for a higher education and a career until their marriage (Bridgewood, 1986). However, Taylor (1988) argues that Turkish Cypriots highly value education and have aspirations for their children.

Turkish Cypriots work long hours at work which generally means working during the weekends. Mothers usually work from home while trying to look after their children and the family. As a result, they end
up with limited time and energy to provide help with their children even they stay at home all day (Taylor, 1988).

A research carried out by DfES in 2002 shows that young people whose parents were from higher professional backgrounds were most likely to achieve 5+GCSEs A*-C (81 per cent compared with 32 per cent those from routine occupational backgrounds) in the UK\textsuperscript{xxiii}. From this point of view, in the first part of my paper, I mentioned the Turkish communities’ educational background and the impact of parental support on achievement. There is no doubt that the immigration of people overwhelmingly affects the need for literacy education in a country settled; and so opportunities for literacy learning should be provided to new immigrants. However, “the role of parents in helping children (re)discover the principles of literacy is crucial”\textsuperscript{xxiv} which is mainly the parents’ responsibility to help their children acquire literacy in their mother tongue as well as in the second language at home at early stage of learning.

In contrast, many Turkish-speaking parents are unfamiliar with the British Education system. They therefore have little understanding of choosing schools, Key stages, exclusions and special needs. Lack of English language also means that, they are unable to keep track of their children’s progress through school reports and are unable to adequately help or encourage their children with school work\textsuperscript{xxv}. Poor English has been particularly identified as a problem for women; The Community Engagement Project, in Hackney, in 2005 found that 49 per cent of the Turkish/Kurdish speaking women described their English as poor or average, compared with 26 per cent of the men (Turkish Speaking, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot Community Engagement Project, 2005).
In addition, it is argued in a report that many Turkish-speaking families cannot provide support for their children with home work tasks. This is because of difficulties with English and lack of understanding of the education system. This problem is enlarged by adding Muslim parents’ low status in the society, limited ambition and low income. According to another research carried out, one of the factors on pupils’ attainment was the ethnic background. The children from Turkish backgrounds were one of the lowest achieving groups in terms of reading attainment. They obtained the lower scores in reading than those who were of English background families. This was same for the Maths attainment.

CHAPTER V

6.1. Influence of other factors on achievement of Turkish pupils

6.1.1. Impact of Socio-Economic Status

One of the factors on achievement is assessing the number of people who are eligible for free school meals in mainstream schools in the UK. Many studies have been carried out in order to determine the direct correlation between free school meals (FSM) and achievement. For example, a bulletin published by National Statistics provides the statistical relationship between the eligibility for FSM and academic achievement. It is argued in the bulletin that “there is a strong link between achievement and the level of entitlement to free school meals: as the level of FSM entitlement increases, the level of achievement decreases”. The following table for percentages of 7-year-olds eligible for free school meals illustrates the level of deprivation in the Turkish-speaking communities:
Figure 12 - Percentages of Largest Ethnic Groups of 7-year-olds Eligible for Free School Meals in Hackney

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Percent Eligible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eng/Scots/Welsh</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish/Turkish Cypriot</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Groups</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Map Hackney-Interactive Mapping Application (the Turkish Cypriot community living in Hackney), 2000, p.10.

This figure shows that the Turkish-speaking community has the second highest percentage of 7-year-olds who are eligible for free school meals. This is evidence that FSM is strongly associated with low attainment among the children of Turkish communities’. Achievements were very low, as shown in the Figure 3 of this paper, in the Key Stage 1 national test at the age of 7.

Housing is another concern as regards achievement. Turkish-speaking families are often found to be living in overcrowded conditions. This is partly due to the fact that traditionally, families from Turkey live in extended family groups. They continue to live in the UK much the same way as they lived in Turkey. Recent arrivals also stay with their close relatives until they are provided with their own accommodation. It appears that the children of those families have been adversely affected by overcrowding and unsuitable housing. The children usually shared their rooms with their younger sisters and brothers who disturbed them. Lack of space at home with unsuitable conditions badly affected
the children’s achievement, as stated by many Turkish parents. This is because “Turkish families are often not suitably re-housed. Many are housed in temporary accommodation in which they continue to live for two or three years” such as hostels which offer a single room with other facilities shared.

Gender also has an effect on achievement. In most cases boys of the same background as girls under-perform at all Key-Stages. However, it is argued that improvement in female achievement is not shared by girls from low socio-economic backgrounds and it may not be apparent in some subjects. Attitudes towards gender at home, is an issue for Turkish-speaking pupils. Boys are traditionally allowed more freedom than girls who are strictly controlled by parents. This may also cause emotional problems. On the other hand, girls are encouraged to take up jobs which are considered by their parents to be ‘girls jobs’ or ‘more suitable’; for example secretarial, hairdressing or teaching occupations. In this case, girls have limited options to choose from for their future career, whereas boys have more freedom.

6.1.2. English as an additional language

EAL has been a concern for successive governments since 1966; that was the first year in which the government began funding for specialist staff to meet the needs of EAL pupils. The aim was to help pupils with ‘New Commonwealth’ backgrounds. Although, pupils from other countries, including the Turkish-speaking, had already established their life in Britain, they were not counted as EAL pupils. Therefore, LEAs were not given enough funding to support all ethnic minorities. It was not until 1993 that this funding was extended for all EAL pupils. In 1998, the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant (EMAG), was introduced to provide funds to support both EAL pupils and those from minority ethnic groups who have English as a mother tongue but are nationally
recognised as underachievers. In the academic year, 2004-2005, social and economic austerity has been taken into account by factoring in the number of pupils receiving free school meals. Some percentage of funding could also be used for a centralised language service. The Department for Education and Skills developed the ‘Aiming High’ strategy to raise the achievement of ethnic minorities in 2003. This was the first national strategy to tackle underachievement amongst minority ethnic pupils. The strategy focuses on mainstream programmes and targeted activity around narrowing the achievement gaps between all pupils. The aim is to ensure that all schools meet the needs of individual pupils by recognising and appreciating their diversity and by challenging underachievement.

Accordingly, some schools set different strategies to raise their ethnic minority pupils’ achievement. For example, some Turkish-speaking students at White Hart Lane School in Haringey begin year 7 science lessons in Turkish. This will continue with English teaching alongside the lessons in Turkish until the students reach year 11. Then Science GCSEs will be taken in English. This policy is now being extended to Somali students who will be able to study the subject in their own language, Somali\textsuperscript{xxxiii}.

\section*{6.1.2.1. Plans for the 'Cold Spots’}

Following the Aim High strategy set by the government, an integration plan for London North Aim Higher partnership was made for the period from 2004 to 2006. This included almost all types of educational establishments such as schools, colleges, higher education institutions as well as authorities like local London Skills Councils, in order to widen the participation of disadvantaged young people in higher education. The program has mainly focused on ‘hard to reach’ target groups in twenty venues named ‘cold spots’: “Consultation highlighted particular
needs among young offenders, teenage parents-fathers as well as mothers..., parents of low-achieving young people, and particular community groups, for instance those of Turkish or African Caribbean origin”.xxxiv

However, it is generally argued that the governments’ policies for EAL pupils have not been satisfactory. For example, there is no nationally recognised qualification in teaching EAL in England whilst according to DfES the great majority of teachers across the country may now expect to work with minority ethnic pupils at some point in their career.xxxv The same report indicates the finding of 2002 research that many teachers in mainly white schools are critical of the poor quality of their initial training with regard to teaching minority ethnic pupils, and are aware that this now needs urgent attention in their continuing professional development. In 2001, 39 local education authorities which have a higher proportion of ethnic minority students were inspected by Ofsted.xxxvi Its report concluded that many schools and LEAs among those surveyed, were not nearly as effective as they needed to be in tackling the under-achievement of many people from minority ethnic groups. In many LEAs there was uncertainty about how to improve attainment. There is insufficient awareness amongst staff of principles of good practice for helping pupils to acquire and use English as an additional language. It is therefore the schools that have a different approach to LEA pupils; whilst one school sets its own policy and attempts to improve attainment of the pupils, the other may have no policy at all.

The National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC) provides a voice for EAL specialists and discusses the complexity of assessing pupils learning EAL. The English criteria are designed for monolinguals not for bilinguals. They do not reflect the stages of language acquisition particular to EAL pupils.xxxvii Joanna
McPake from Stirling University argues that “schools do not always appreciate the value of maintaining and developing language skills other than English”. Furthermore, a report found that support for more advanced learners is often inadequate and this can lead to underachievement. Many schools also lack experience of EAL pupils, and this can result in low expectations and their being put into inappropriate ability groups. Low expectations are a major handicap: low expectations for success leads to low motivation, resulting in poor performance. It was indicated that teachers were greatly influenced by the social background of the child in making streaming decisions even for children with comparable levels of general ability.

6.1.3. Influence of other factors

The underachievement of linguistic ethnic minority students in British education system can also be affected by teaching and administrative staff in schools as Creese (2003) suggests. His study investigates Turkish speaking students’ demonstrations against alleged racism and unfairness within a London secondary school, where the Turkish speakers are the largest ethnic groups. “These Turkish/Kurdish students feel that they are being treated differently and unfairly by their teachers due to their ethnic background, and thus perceive these teachers as racist and divisive” (Creese, 2003, p.67). The study shows that “other Turkish-speaking students in the school react to the demonstration differently because of differing ethnic and linguistic affiliations including Turkish mainlanders, Turkish/Cypriot islanders and Turkish/Kurdish refugees” (Creese, 2003, p.74). This research also suggests that “the school does not have much understanding of different cultural and historical backgrounds within and between the Turkish-speaking students, and thus teachers and administrators treat them as a collective group” (Creese, 2003, p.74). Finally, It is argued that “to treat students from differing ethnic and linguistic backgrounds equally
may require that they are not treated similarly (though fairly), in order to create inclusive education for all students” (Creese, 2003, p.75).

CHAPTER VI

7.1. Research Methodology

Methodology means a theoretical framework that derives from a research tradition. I believe that naturalistic methodology that limits itself to natural, physical, and material approaches and explanations that can be described as naturalistic applied better to my research than the other methodologies would do, like the positivistic methodology. Because, naturalistic methodology retains the notion that knowledge can be acquired only by understanding reality as it is seen by individuals. This can be discovered by studying real-world situations as they unfold naturally and without predetermined controlling on findings; behaviour and opinions of people. This is of far greater significance within a realistic environment. The aim is to look more closely at attitudes and to finding a solution to a given problem. There may be more than one solution depending on the context in which the problem occurs.

Guba (1978) defined naturalistic inquiry as a discovery oriented approach that minimises investigator manipulation of the study setting and places no prior constraints on what the outcomes of the research will be. In contrast, positivistic methodology assumes that the social world is amenable to the kinds of regularities that can be explained by using causal analysis. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have been strong advocates of naturalistic methodology to applied research. They contrast the naturalistic paradigm with the positive paradigm in social research as “the naturalistic enquirer eschews generalisation and
believes that the aim of enquiry is to produce working hypotheses and case-based knowledge” (p.37).

In terms of data analysis, as Robson (2000) recommends that I first gathered the information; went back to base to analyse the data; then I went back to the field to gather more information; then went back to analyse data. As Mills (1994) asserts that this type of data analysis method will act as a guide to further data collection. Marshall and Rosman (1990) state that “data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat.

In this research, I used two paradigms, qualitative and quantitative research methods; in other words mixed method studies that combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches into the research methodology of a single study: this was based on mainly qualitative study as I conducted the study “within a single dominant paradigm with a small component of the overall study drawn from an alternative design” (Creswell, 1995, p.177). Because I was seeking illumination and understanding, not aiming to establish a sample which is representative and can be used in a general manner. However, a broad picture of aspects of the role of schools and education system in Turkish minority children evidently demonstrates underachievement.

Qualitative research is generally defined that “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.17). Polit & Hunglar (1999) argue that qualitative data is very intensive process that requires insight, resourcefulness, creativity, conceptual sensitivity and absolute hard work; whereas quantitative method is seeking casual determination, prediction and generalisation of findings. I determine
that neither method could adequately describe my research situation but both helped me to better understand the factors mentioned above concerning underachievement. Thus, I used them to gain more in depth information, and to identify the variables that were tested quantitatively in my research. The quantitative part of my research will include namely pupil questionnaires, parent questionnaires, pupil achievement statistics, and pupil aspirations.

Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among other categories of data” (p.11). Rees (1997) states that rather than presenting the results in the form of statistics, qualitative research produces words in the form of comments and statements. Its aim is to find out people’s feelings and experiences from their own point of view rather than from that of the researcher. Because, “qualitative research is conducted through an intense and/or prolonged contact with a ‘field’ or life situation” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.6).

I believe I was fully aware of using “a variety of methods to gather information, rather than relying on a single source” (Ray, 1993, p.64) because triangulation of data increased my ability to counter bias, the purpose of qualitative research has been to find out contextual understanding rather to generalise. Thus it examined issues in descriptive narratives which represented parents’ experiences in supporting their children to progress in education. In other words, my research does not aim to establish cause and effect relationships under experimental conditions. However, it has been designed to be exploratory and descriptive and to find out what factors are affecting achievement of Turkish speaking children in terms of parental involvement.
I used various data collection methods which included interviews and the use of questionnaires. In terms of validity, I grounded my exploration in a broad range of information provided by previous researchers in the field of parental factors affecting achievement. My study has been built on the foundation established by prior researches. A number of studies have been examined and referenced in this research. I began with questionnaire survey covering all the Turkish speaking children groups namely Turkish speaking Turks (from mainland Turkey and Cyprus) and Turkish speaking Kurdish in the UK (please see Appendix B & C). Advantages of using questionnaire are that it can be used as a method in its own right; no prior arrangements are needed; and anonymity of respondent is possible. Gilham (2000) states that the use of questionnaires has a number of advantages over other data collecting strategies, including economy of time and money and collection of information from a lot of people very quickly. Thus, it provided me with a basis to obtain various samples for in-depth interviewing. However, there were some issues associated with the use of questionnaires, including concerns about completeness and accuracy and the reliability of the answers.

I followed three stages when designing the questionnaire: determining the questions to be asked, selecting the question type for each question and specifying the wording, and designing the sequence of the questions and overall layout. I mainly focused on using open-ended questions which allowed the respondent to write their answer in their own word providing an opportunity to express views that have not been considered by the researcher. Cohen et al (2000) and Robinson (2004) argue that the advantages of the open-ended questions include: the invitation of honest personal comment; the gathering of deeper information not available through a closed approach; obtaining authentic voices in response; they are useful when values are not known and how the respondent will respond is not assumed.
I kept my open-ended questionnaires short and left adequate space for respondents to make comments; this provided valuable information not captured by the response categories. I collected all answers from the open-ended questionnaires in terms of yes and not data. I put “yes answers” into one group and “no questions” into the other group. The other data obtained from questions asking the parents to describe their experiences and beliefs were recorded in another category. Once the questionnaire data have been collected I entered them into an Excel spreadsheet and word file. I then organised each response under a separate heading in recorded context.

The interview is kind of conversation with a purpose as well as flexible and adaptable way of finding things out. In other words, “an interview is a series of questions a researcher addresses personally to respondents” (Macionis et al, 1998, p.44); it offers the possibility of modifying the researcher’s line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives of the interviewees. Kvale (1996) suggests that interviews are interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest; based around a centrality of human interaction for knowledge production; and with an emphasis on appropriate research data.

I achieved my aim which was to contact a cross-section of 50 parents including their school age children. I selected these parents in the Turkish community. I also carried out interviews with the head teacher and the teachers in a Turkish mainstream school in London. In a set of interviews conducted with these professionals, they voiced concerns about the Turkish pupils’ low achievements. Both Turkish and English languages have been used during the interviews. The interviews have been mainly in Turkish language whereas my aim was to use English as well depending on the language skill and the preference of the parents.
As Robson (2000) states that this created comfortable and relaxed environment in which the parents felt safe to disclose their feelings, anxieties and experiences. This has also been enhanced by the provision of privacy and confidentiality. As a Turkish speaking researcher, the relationship between the Turkish speaking parents and myself has been an advantage because of the same background and mutual understanding; and the parents felt relaxed and this helped me to collect the adequate data.

The research instrument comprised both structured (the researcher asks clearly defined questions) and unstructured (the researcher allows some of their questions to be led by the responses of the interviewee) components designed to collect information on various dimensions of any issue, of parental factors in their children’s achievements in my cases.

Semi-structured interview allowed depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to explore and expand the interviewee’s responses that it provides room for negotiation, discussion and expansion of the interviewee’s responses. Bernard (1988) argues that the advantage of the semi-structured interview is that the interviewer is in control of the process of obtaining from the interviewee; and as Polit & Hunglar (1999) argue, semi-structured method offers the researcher flexibility in gathering information from the participants. Thus, the interviews I conducted have been conversational in naturalistic settings as my aim was to explain the participants’ perceptions of their children’s educational achievement without imposing any of my view, therefore achieving greater reliability. I determined what the parents understand under the term ‘parent involvement’. Thereafter, I intended to discover how themes related to one another, what parents emerge and what implications there are. Thus, the idea is to give opportunity to the Turkish speaking parents to
express their views, concerns or opinions as openly as possible through the semi-structured approach.

I have carefully selected the sample, but I did not assume that findings in my research would represent the overall Turkish-speaking pupils’ parents. There are two types of sampling techniques used by social researchers: probability and non-probability sampling. The first is based on the idea that the people or the events are chosen as the sample because the researcher has some notion of the probability that these will be representative cross-section of the people, the parents in my case in the whole community being studied. In contrast, non-probability sampling is used without such knowledge about whether those included in the sample are representative of the overall population.

I used the forms of non-probability sampling as the basis for selecting the sample as Streubert & Carpenter (1999) points out that there is no need to randomly select individuals because my research purpose was not to manipulate or control the overall findings. Thus, I used purposive sampling as a form of non-probability sampling to select the parents. With this type, the sample has been hand-picked and as I had some knowledge about the Turkish speaking community in the UK, I deliberately selected Turkish speaking parents because I have seen them as instances that would likely to produce the most valuable data.

Dane (1990) argues the advantage of purposive sampling is that it allows the researcher to home in on people or events will be critical for the research. I believe that with a non-probability sampling methods it would not be feasible to include a sufficiently large number of examples in my study.

The interviews vary in length depending on the size of the research. Blaxter et al (1996) argue that an hour long interview should be
sufficient to gain the information needed: less than half an hour interview is unlikely to be valuable whereas longer than an hour one could have an effect on reducing the number of individuals willing to participate. It is important to inform the parents about the length of the interview as they will need to make arrangements accordingly. I contacted them via the telephone to confirm arrangements. I conducted the interviews in the selected parents’ home ensuring that privacy has been maintained and disruptions prevented. I have also taken into considerations the external variables which might cause disruption as well. The advantages of having home interviews are that it would be possible to clarify any misunderstood questions with full control over the order of questions and it would be a good opportunity for me as a researcher to observe the level of interaction during the interviews.

I incorporated tape recording in the interviews which has helped me to concentrate on the process of the interview, to focus the attention on the interviewee and to engage in an appropriate eye contact and non-verbal communication. Through explanation and assurance I believe that the participants have not been anxious for the interview being tape recorded.

7.2. Ethical Considerations

I am aware of the confidentiality and of ethical issues concerning responsibility and trust in relation to my research. “Confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying the subjects will not be reported” (Kvale, 1996, p.114). My aim was to protect the dignity and privacy of every individual who, in the course of the research work carried out, has been requested to provide personal information about themselves. Before the parents who I visited for interview became a subject of my research, they were notified of the aims, methods, expected benefits and potential hazards of the research; they will be
notified of their right to withdraw from participation in the research and their right to terminate at any time their participation; and the confidential nature of their replies. Thus, participants involved in my research were aware of and agreed to the principles of my research beforehand. In addition, the interview questions were given to the selected parents sometimes before the interview to follow them time to consider the questions. I observed that advanced reading helped the parents to think in depth of the unknown questions. Interview sessions lasted no longer than an hour and were conducted at the parents’ houses.

No individual became a subject of my research unless he/she was given the notice of my intention and gives permission. There was no means of pressure applied to encourage an individual to become a subject of research. The identity of individuals from whom information is obtained in the course of the research has been kept strictly confidential. No information regarding the identity of any individual has been included in the written content of the research. When children were involved in the research, I was aware of that special care needs to be taken to ensure that their participation to be undertaken in accordance with high ethical standards. Therefore, children have not been allowed to participate unless their parents or guardians have been consulted for their permission.

I used English and Turkish as the medium for the interviewing which helped me to establish an atmosphere in which selected Turkish parents felt safe enough to talk freely about their experiences and feelings. My previous researches and observations showed that most Turkish speakers have limited English skills and so small number of Turkish speakers was fluent in English. I thus considered the language ability of the interviewees during the selection process.
CHAPTER VII

8.1. Main findings

An examination of the responses collected from the Turkish parents suggests the following:

8.1.1. Preliminary analyses and findings

Descriptive data:

Table 1. Percentage of responses given by parents to the question of “How long have you been in the UK?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5 years</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 years</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ years</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 1 illustrates about 60% of parents have been in the UK for not a long period of time when compared to other communities in the UK such as West Indian and Caribbean communities. This is a disadvantage for the Turkish speaking parents in terms of having knowledge about the British education system.

Table 2. Percentage of responses given by parents to the question of “How do you rate your English?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 illustrates the percentage of type of responses given to the question about the parents’ level of English. None of the respondents rated their English level “good” or above but all parents rated their
English level either “low” or “very low”. My findings support other research findings and the literature used in this study as among the Turkish speaking parents, low levels of proficiency in English language were most frequently stated as the key factor to involvement of parents in their children attainment.

Table 3. Percentage of responses given by parents to the question of “What is your educational background?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University graduate %</th>
<th>High school/College graduate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary school %</th>
<th>No school %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. gives the outcome of percentage of parents response to the question regarding to their educational background. 80% of parents have no university level education and 60% of them have secondary school education. This result also supports previous findings as lack of academic ability as well as low level of education prevents the parents in helping their children. Because they do not know how to help them, although they want to spend some time with their children.

Table 4. Percentage of responses given by parents to the question of “Where did you have your compulsory schooling?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turkey %</th>
<th>UK %</th>
<th>Another %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 4. illustrates that a majority of parents had their schooling in Turkey so they do not understand the curriculum in the UK which is completely different in Turkey.
Table 5. Percentage of responses given by parents to the question of “Are you satisfied with the level of education your children are provided with?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes %</th>
<th>No %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 5. shows that 55% of parents are happy with the level of education their children receive at the school.

Table 6. Percentage of responses given by parents to the question of “Are you happy with the material your children are learning?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes %</th>
<th>No %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 6. shows that 53% of parents are happy with the material their children are learning.

Table 7. Percentage of responses given by parents to the question of “Which language(s) do you speak at home?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turkish %</th>
<th>English %</th>
<th>Both, Turkish and English %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 7. shows that almost 90% of parents speak only Turkish at home.

Table 8. Percentage of responses given by parents to the question of “Do you monitor your child’s out of school activities?”
Yes %  No %  
89   11

The table 8. illustrates that almost 90% of parents monitor their children’s out of school activities, although they do not know how to support them. This shows their interest in their children’s attainment.

Table 9. Percentage of responses given by parents to the question of “Do you supervise your child’s homework?”

Yes %  No, why? %  
70   30

The table 9. illustrates that 70% of parents supervise their children’s home work whereas 30% of parents state that they lack of English; work long hours so can not find time; and believe that their children can take responsibilities so they do not need their support.

Table 10. Percentage of responses given by parents to the question of “Do you talk to your child to enhance their self-esteem?”

Yes %  No %  
93   7

The table 10. shows that almost all the parents talk to their children to enhance their confidence.

Table 11. Percentage of responses given by parents to the question of “Do you visit your child’s school?”

Yes, how often %  No, why not? %  
100   0
The table 11. illustrates that all the parents visit their children’s school. However, some parents state that they sometimes visit or when they are called. There are also parents who regularly visit their children’s school, every two weeks or every month.

Table 12. Percentage of responses given by parents to the question of “What is the purpose of visiting your child’s school?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>% of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*To meet with teachers to discuss their children’s progress</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*To take part in their children’s education through Classroom participation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn more about curriculum and teaching</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 12. shows that the main purpose of the school visit of the parents is to meet with the teachers. The rest of the parents visits either to take part in the school activities or to learn more about the teaching content.

Table 13. Percentage of responses given by parents to the question of “Have you ever thought to become a parent governor in your child’s school?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes %</th>
<th>No %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 13. shows that a majority of parents have never thought to take role as a governor in their children’s school. Again, the lack of
English was shown as a reason by the parents as well as lack of knowledge on how school is run.

Table 14. Percentage of responses given by parents to the question of “Do you give more freedom to your son than your daughter in terms of what career and job to choose?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, why? %</th>
<th>No %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 14. shows that for a majority of parents the gender is not an issue. They are happy whatever their children decide about their future career and profession.

I asked Turkish, Turkish Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot parents to identify the factors that they believed had influence on their children’s achievement. In order to deal with my query, a key question was to what extent do Turkish parents engage with their children’s schools? What I found out was that the parents I had interviews with stated they could not support their children in their learning as much as they wanted. They stated some of the key factors preventing their involvement in their children’s education. The main issue raised by the parents was that English was a barrier to involvement in their children’s learning:

"Language is the problem for me. I do not know how to help my child at home. I can only encourage him to do his home work, that’s it. When I go to the school to talk about the progress of my child I use an interpreter but it does not help in face to face communication. I am not provided with the information I look for especially about the education system in this country. There is also no Turkish staff working in the school so it is not possible to communicate in my mother tongue,"
Turkish. My child also does not tell anything about how he is doing in the school when I ask questions. I really do not know how I can help my child who needs my support” (Turkish parent).

Another parent explained her difficulties in helping her child:

"I know I can not help my child in his home work because I do not speak English. Although I am an educated person who studied in Turkey, and do try to get help from the school, I can not communicate with my child’s teachers. The school does not support us, the parents” (Turkish parent).

However, another participant commented that

"I and my wife regularly monitor our children. We both are well educated and fluent in English. We always attend the school days and communicate with the school and the teachers. If it is urgent I can even communicate with the teachers via e-mails. We help our children with their home work and encourage them to use the internet for their study. We also set reading sessions with our children at home which really helps them in their progress” (Turkish parent).

Teachers reported greater understanding and insight into the relevant factors of Turkish speaking students’ underachievement and how these factors can be eliminated for success. Teachers also reported confidence in their understanding and an increased awareness of parental factors in achievement, saying that the increased involvement of parents in their children’s attainment in school is crucial.
My interviews with the Turkish teachers suggested that:

“Lack of English is the main factor for Turkish parents in supporting their children at home. I am having regular meetings with them and this has always been raised as the main problem for them. I have also realised that most of the parents work very long hours so they can only see their children once a week. The father usually works in catering sector for all day or night and mother has no power on their children at home. Parents, who lack of English, also reluctant to go to the school for getting information about their children’s progress. These parents also lack of education. However, their expectations in terms of achievement are high. In contrast, the children’s expectations are low because they believe they do not need education as their father working hard for them so their future is guaranteed” (Head teacher of a Turkish mainstream school).

“There are various factors affecting achievements. The main barrier for the Turkish parents preventing them to involve in their children learning is English. Although most Turkish parents aware of this and make complaint about it, they spend their time watching Turkish TV channels all day. This does not help them!” (Teacher of a Turkish mainstream school).
CHAPTER VIII

9.1. Conclusion

In this paper the relationship between the role of parents and Turkish speaking children achievements have been examined. This was achieved through considering related factors but mainly the parental factor within the educational experience which have an impact on achievement.

The findings clearly indicate that Turkish-speaking pupils underachieve in British schools when compared with other minority ethnic groups. Whilst the Turkish community has a migration history spanning more than 70 years in the UK, it was mainly the lack of education and skills on the part of the parents which affected their children’s attainment in schools.

The absence of educational experience for many Turkish parents and lack of language support (including in their mother tongue) had a considerable impact on the students learning outcome. The learners could not find adequate opportunities to develop literacy in their mother tongue, Turkish, starting from an early age. It was true that they were bilingual and able to communicate in both languages, but this was at a lower level of fluency and accuracy. Therefore, Turkish-speaking pupils struggled in learning and in developing English at an appropriate level allowing them to proceed further in their education without a support for structured development in Turkish. Most parents could not provide any help to their children at home and the children were left without guidance in completing their homework. The parents neither knew the British education system nor could involve themselves in any school work. Thus, it was really hard to talk about the effective link between
the parents and schools as they were not even able to check their children’s school performance by contacting the schools.

In addition to the role of family in achievement, there was no government support for EAL pupils, except the Turkish Cypriots who were regarded as citizens of a commonwealth country, until 1993. Although funding became available after this year, Turkish-speaking pupils were mostly categorised as ‘others’ in census lists. They were counted as monolingual pupils at schools. Turkish-speaking pupils (with others from all minority groups) were considered as natural speakers of English. Only one school in London recognised its Turkish-speaking pupils’ needs, and so began teaching in Turkish. Their ethnic background was not listed and their diverse needs could not be measured properly. Though they are the highest affected ethnic group among other minorities, their situation has not changed so far in most schools.

Until recently many schools in Britain have failed in sorting out the under-achievement problem of ethnic minority pupils in the country. Most schools had no policy on how to deal with them either. Furthermore, newly qualified teachers believe that they did not acquire the skills during their teacher training programmes to teach ethnic minority pupils; their initial training was therefore poor. Other factors also had negative effect on Turkish-speaking pupils’ achievement, namely belonging to a different cultural background, living mostly in unsuitable housing conditions, receiving different treatment from the parents depending on gender, and receiving free school meals, which was also an indication of their parents’ financial circumstances.

In my interviews with the Turkish parents and the teachers from a Turkish mainstream school I have identified areas that affected educational achievement of Turkish children. These areas are explored
under different categories in relevant sections of this research, and are supported by the relevant literature and previous findings of other researchers in this field. I asked Turkish, Turkish Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot parents to identify the factors affecting their involvement in their children’s learning. My aim was to find an answer to “to what extent do Turkish parents engage with their children’s schools?”. My findings showed that many parents stated that they were unable to help or become involved in their children’s learning although they would have wished. The main problem appeared as the level of English language competence which prevents parents to assist in their children’s learning. This could be attributed to lower levels of education of the parents as most parents interviewed had low level of education. My findings suggested that there were also other factors, namely lack of knowledge of the education system in the UK; lack of knowledge of curriculum; communication problems between the parents and the teachers in school meetings; lack of participation of parents in school activities; long working hours; lack of bilingual materials; and reluctance of children in reporting their school experiences and needs to their parents.

9.2. Suggestions for Improvement

Based on our findings, the suggestions for improving the situation for Turkish speaking pupils in the UK include the following:

• A national survey should be carried out to find out how many Turkish-speaking pupils live in the UK including their educational background and language skills.
• All Turkish-speaking pupils’ parents should be given appropriate literacy training considering their language proficiency in both languages. For training in Turkish, a project should be prepared in conjunction with the Turkish educational authorities in Turkey.
• Teachers and support staff should be trained to support pupils with English as an Additional Language.

• The pupils from different minorities should be given bilingual language training starting from early age.

• Pupils’ diverse needs should be considered in preparing learning strategies.

• The links should be strengthened between Turkish parents and the schools, and the parents should be encouraged to become involved in activities at schools.

• The parents should regularly be provided with their students’ learning progress by the schools.

• All the ethnic minorities should be encouraged to get involved in the government’s Ethnic Minority Achievement Project.

• Schools with Turkish speaking pupils should employ more Turkish-speaking teachers and support staff.

• Teaching in Turkish as well as in English should be encouraged at schools where the Turkish-speaking pupils are attending in large numbers.
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE
The Factors Affecting Turkish Speaking Students’ Achievements: The Role of Parents in Supporting Their Children Progress

1. What is your age group?
   □ 20-30 □ 31-40 □ 41-50 □ 51-60
   □ 61-70

2. What is your occupation?

   ..........................................................

3. Are you a single family?
   □ Yes □ No

5. What is your profession?

6. How many children do you have?
   □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6

7. How long have you been in the UK?
   □ 1-5 years □ 6-10 years □ 10+ years

8. How do you rate your English level?
   □ Proficient □ Very good □ Good □ Low
   □ Very low

9. What is your educational background?
   □ University graduate □ High School/College graduate
   □ Secondary school □ No School

10. Where did you have your compulsory schooling?
    □ Turkey □ UK □ Another, please state which country
11. Are you satisfied with the level of education your children are provided with?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

12. Are you happy about the material your children are learning?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

13. Which language(s) do you speak at home?

☐ Turkish  ☐ English  ☐ Both, Turkish & English

14. Do you monitor your child’s out of school activities?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

15. Do you supervise your child’s homework?

☐ Yes  ☐ No, why?

16. Do you talk to your child to enhance their self-esteem?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

17. Do you visit your child’s school?

☐ If yes, how often?  ☐ If no, why not?

18. If you visit your child’s school, what is the purpose of doing?

☐ To meet with teachers to discuss your child’s progress

☐ To take part in your child’s education through classroom participation

☐ To learn more about curriculum and teaching

☐ Other, please explain

19. Have you ever thought to become parent governor in your child’s school?
20. Do you give more freedom to your son than your daughter in terms of what career and job to choose?

☐ Yes    ☐ No

☐ If yes, why?    ☐ No
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE
Türkçe konuşan öğrencilerin başarlarını etkileyen faktörler: Çocuğun gelişimini desteklemede ailenin rolü

1. Yaş grubunuz nedir?
   □ 20-30 □ 31-40 □ 41-50 □ 51-60
   □ 61-70

2. İşiniz nedir?
   ........................................

3. Tek kişilik bir aile misiniz? (Anne ya da babadan biri ve çocuk)
   □ Evet □ Hayır

5. Mesleğiniz nedir?
   ........................................

6. Kaç çocuğunuz var?
   □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6

7. Ne kadar süredir İngiltere’de yaşamaktasınız?
   □ 1-5 yıl □ 6-10 yıl □ 10+ yıl

8. İngilizce seviyenez nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
   □ Ana dilim gibi □ Çok iyi □ İyi □ Zayıf
   □ Çok zayıf

9. Eğitim geç申し込み nedir?
   □ Üniversite mezunu □ Lise veya Kolej mezunu
   □ Ortaokul mezunu □ Okula gitmedi

10. Zorunlu olan eğitimınızı nerede tamamladınız?
    □ Türkiye □ İngiltere □ Diğer, hangi ülkede lütfen belirtiniz
11. Çocuğunuzla okulda verilen eğitimden memnun musunuz?

□ Evet □ Hayır

12. Çocuğunuzun okulda öğrendiği derslerden memnun musunuz?

□ Evet □ Hayır

13. Evde hangi dili konuşuyorsunuz?

□ Türkçe □ İngilizce □ İkisini de, Türkçe & İngilizce

14. Çocuğunuzu okul dışındaki aktivitelerini (yaptıkları) gözlemliyor musunuz?

□ Evet □ Hayır

15. Çocuğunuzun ev ödevlerini kontrol ediyor musunuz?

□ Evet □ Hayır, Neden?

16. Çocuğunuzla kendine olan öz güvenini kazanması konusunda konuşuyor musunuz?

□ Evet □ Hayır

17. Çocuğunuzun okulunu ziyaret ediyor musunuz?

□ Evet, Ne kadar sıklıkla? □ Hayır ise, Neden?

18. Eğer çocukunuzun okulunu ziyaret ediyorsanız, ziyaret sebebiniz aşağıdakilerden hangisi?

□ Çocuğunuzun gelişimini görüşmek üzere öğretmenleriyle toplanmak

□ Çocuğunuzun sınıf içerisindeki eğitiminde derslerde aktif olarak rol almak için

□ Eğitim planı ve öğretim hakkında bilgi sahibi olmak için

□ Diğer sebepteb, lütfen açıklayın
19. Çocuğunuzun okulunda aile yöneticisi (parent governor) olmayı hiç düşününüz mü?

☐ Evet  ☐ Hayır

20. Meslek ve iş seçiminde oglunuza kızınıza göre daha fazla özgürlük veriyor musunuz?

☐ Evet, Neden?  ☐ Hayır
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77


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86


5 ILEA was abolished in 1990 and replaced by 13 separate local education authorities (LEAs).

6 Map Hackney-Interactive Mapping Application (THE TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITY LIVING IN HACKNEY) 2000, p.3.

7 www.map.hackney.gov.uk/Mapgallery/ethnicity%20documents/turkish%20cypriot.doc


10 www.map.hackney.gov.uk/Mapgallery/ethnicity%20documents/turkish%20cypriot.doc

11 Please see Appendix C for Aiming high: managing ethnic minority achievement in Islington in 2004 statistics.


14 Making the Connexions: New evidence on the links between pupils’ GCSE results and their post-16 destinations, by Colin Alston, Hackney LEA, p.34.


16 Issa, T., Allen, K. & Ross, A. (2008), Young People’s Educational Attainment in London’s Turkish, Turkish Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot Communities, A Report for the Mayor of London’s Office, London Metropolitan University.

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