FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ADULT LEARNERS' PERSISTENCE

IN BASIC LITERACY PROGRAMS

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Işık Yılmaz, certify that

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ABSTRACT

Factors That Contribute to Adult Learners' Persistence

in Basic Literacy Programs

The aim of this study was to reveal factors that contribute to persistence of adult learners in basic literacy programs. A qualitative research methodology was chosen as the design of this study; 18 participants from 4 different public education centers were interviewed about individual, institutional, and external factors influencing their learning and helping them persist in the course. Female participants over 18-year-old and who completed Level-I Literacy courses and currently enrolled in Level-II Literacy courses were selected to understand factors affecting their persistence. Content analysis was conducted to analyze the interview data. As a result of this study, personal drives to participate and perception of having student role were found as individual factors contributing to persistence. Under institutional factors, sense of belonging and characteristics of adult education trainer were found as factors helping persistence of adult learners in basic literacy programs. Verbal support, people as student's guardian, and facilitation found to have a positive impact on persistence of adult learners as external factors. This study has a practical value that it may give insight to adult educators to understand who illiterate adult people are and how they can be supported through participating and persisting in the basic literacy programs. In addition to its practical value, this study may provide significant contribution to both national and international literature for with its conceptual framework, because there is a lack of research specific to persistence in basic literacy education.

ÖZET

Okuma-Yazma Kurslarına Katılan Yetişkin Öğrenenlerin

Programdaki Kalıcılığını Destekleyen Faktörler

Bu çalışmanın amacı, okuma-yazma kurslarına katılan yetişkin öğrenenlerin kalıcılığına katkıda bulunan faktörleri ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bu araştırmanın tasarımı olarak nitel araştırma yöntemi seçilmiştir; 4 farklı halk eğitim merkezinden 18 katılımcı ile öğrenmelerini etkileyen ve kursa devam etmelerine yardımcı olan bireysel, kurumsal ve dış faktörler hakkında görüşülmüştür. Kalıcılıklarını etkileyen faktörleri anlamak amacıyla, 18 yaş üstü ve I. Seviye Okuma-Yazma kursunu tamamlayıp II. Seviye Okuma-Yazma kursuna kaydolarak okuma-yazma eğitimine devam eden kadın katılımcılar seçilmiştir. Görüşme verilerinin analizinde içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın sonucunda, katılıma neden olan itici güçler ve yeni edinilen öğrenci rolü kalıcılığa katkıda bulunan bireysel faktörler olarak bulunmuştur. Aidiyet ve yetişkin eğitimcinin özellikleri, yetişkinlerin okuma-yazma programlarındaki kalıcılığına yardımcı olan faktörler olarak örgütsel faktörlerin altında yer almıştır. Sözlü destek, öğrenci velisi rolünü üstlenmiş yakınların var olması ve günlük yaşamda karşılaşılan sorunların yönetimi için destek olan sosyal çevre, yetişkin öğrenenlerin kalıcılığını olumlu yönde etkileyen dış faktörler olarak bulunmuştur. Bu çalışma, yetişkin eğitimcilere okuryazar olmayan kişilerin özellikleri, okuma yazma kurslarına katılımları ve kalıcılıkları konularında fikir sahibi olabilecekleri için pratik bir değere sahiptir. Pratik değerine ek olarak, bu çalışma, okuma-yazma kurslarındaki kalıcılık konusuna özgü araştırma eksikliği bulunduğu için hem ulusal hem de uluslararası literatüre kavramsal çerçevesiyle önemli katkılar sağlayacaktır.

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To my beloved parents and sister…

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Participation is one of the core concepts in adult education and it is related to the dropout and the persistence of their involvement. Accordingly, the participation in any adult education activity, is not an implication of completion of the program. The intention to take part in an adult education activity, can be affected by various factors; this intention, can result in non-participation at the beginning or the participation can be interrupted during the activity, that leads to the decision to drop out. A connection which arises in this context, is that factors impacting the participation, also lead adult learners to drop out from or persist in an adult education activity (Wikelund, 1992; US Department of Ed, 1998 as cited in Edwards, 2003). It indicates the importance of the relationship between participation and persistence, the reason for revealing why adult learners participate and how they persist in adult education.

According to Anderson and Darken Wald (1979 as cited in Edwards, 2003), strategies based upon more participation in adult education and less on the personal and social costs that arise from dropouts, cannot be well developed without understanding of participation and persistence reasons. Therefore, it is important to identify the factors that predict the participation and persistence from the viewpoint of both adult learners and those who offer adult education activities.

In case of participating but not persisting in the program, dropouts have become a crucial problem. The completion rate of programs is not as high as the participation rate. It has been found that, grown-ups who have participated in the

adult education programs each year in Turkey, the completion rate had decreased from 64% in 2016, to 51% in 2017 (Department for Monitoring and Evaluation [DME], 2016, 2017). According to the latest data, nearly half of the participants dropped out of the programs and they were unable to persist further (DME, 2017).

As the completion rate of adult education programs decreased in general; lower rates of completion and higher rates of dropouts are seen in the basic literacy programs. It is rather surprising, because the basic literacy program is one of the most demanded programs that public education centers offer (DME, 2017).

In Turkey, the ratio of illiterate adults is one of the major areas that, the national literature organizers try to decrease. This takes an important place within the policies of the Directorate of Lifelong Learning (GDLL) by offering basic literacy courses, through the public education centers, municipalities, penal institutions and nongovernmental organizations (Babayiğit & Gökçe, 2018; DME, 2017). Basic literacy programs provide standard literacy and numeracy skills and give a chance to the illiterate adults to take part actively within the society. Through the program they gain, social, personal, and educational advancement.

Attributions of adult learners who participate in basic literacy programs are different from adults participating in other programs. Hence, their characteristics, attitudes, social life and family situation should be emphasized first to understand who they are, their reasons for participating in the program and consequently, the factors that are helping them to persist.

The aim of this study is to identify the factors leading adult learners to decision to persist in basic literacy programs; the emphasis is on how adults persist, not why they drop out. Persistence may exist after enhancing adult learners' strengths, against conditions and factors, leading them to drop out. That is why, the

revealing factors which contribute to adult learners' persistence in basic literacy courses is significant.

In this study, factors helping adult learners persist in basic literacy programs, to the point where they get the certification will be investigated. This qualitative study is designed to explore adult learners' experiences and identify factors that promote adult learners to complete the course.

1.1 Research question

The main research question of this study is:

What are the factors contributing to persistence of adult learners in basic literacy programs?

Within this question, this study explores the following specific questions:

1. Do individual factors contribute to persistence? If so, how?

   a. Do sources of motivation contribute to persistence? If so, how?

   b. Do goals contribute to persistence? If so, how?

   c. Do attitude, perception and personal value contribute to persistence? If so, how?

2. Do institutional factors contribute to persistence? If so, how?

   a. Does learning environment contribute to persistence? If so, how?

   b. Does adult education trainer contribute to persistence? If so, how?

3. Do external factors contribute to persistence? If so, how?

   a. Do social relations contribute to persistence? If so, how?

   b. Does management of life demands contribute to persistence? If so, how?

4. Are there any other factors contributing to persistence?

1.2 Significance of the study

This study will provide significant contributions to both national and international literature, for its conceptual framework and practical value. There is a lack of research on persistence in basic literacy programs in the national and international literature. While persistence is mostly investigated in ESL (English as a Second Language) in Turkey, international studies are conducted to understand the persistence factors affecting learners in the programs covering literacy and numeracy skills - Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Education Development (GED). This study will contribute to both national and international literature, by identifying the factors affecting the persistence of adult learners in basic literacy programs.

This study has also practical value, because contributing factors affecting persistence will provide valuable information to those who offer basic literacy courses like, public education centers and municipalities. Identification of factors affecting persistence, would be precious to the adult learners participating in basic literacy programs, institutions that educate adult learners, and the community (Edwards, 2003). This study may help adult educators and adult education trainers, to prevent potential dropouts, develop strategies to keep them in the program, and make effective decisions, in order to, support the adult population. Hence, as to why, this study may contribute to the understanding of the adult population, who participate and persist in basic literacy programs.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, andragogy and principles of adult learning are given first and then,
literacy programs and characteristics of adult learners in these programs are
discussed under adult literacy. Persistence studies in formal education settings are
presented and this is followed by a summary of persistence factors impacting adult
learners in basic literacy programs. Persistence factors are discussed one by one
within the context of available literature in three broad categories namely individual
factors, institutional factors, and external factors.

2.1 Andragogy and principles of adult learning

Andragogy defined by Knowles (1980) as "the art and science of helping adults
learn," (p. 43).

Knowles proposed six assumptions about adult learners' characteristics to
show differences between pedagogy and andragogy which are the learners' self-
concept, the role of experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, the need to
know and motivation (Knowles, 1980; Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005).
Regarding concept of learner, andragogy claims that adults are not dependent human
beings and they have a need to be self-directing. Secondly, experiences of adult
learners have an important role in learning process; reservoir of experience of
learners provide a resource for their learning and they learn better by experience
rather than being passive. Another assumption is about readiness to learn; adults first
should experience a need to know something, that's why real-life tasks or problems

as learning materials are used in adult education environments. Orientation to learning, presents that adult learners want to apply their knowledge to their daily life and performance-centeredness gains importance in this context. The need to know means that adults must need to know first why they are learning to have a sense of volition. The last assumption, motivation, claims that adult learners respond to both external and internal motivators; even they learn by external motivators mostly, internal ones are more powerful (Knowles, 1980; Knowles et al., 2005; Rodrigues, 2012).

Since adult learners have different characteristics, assumptions explained above should be taken into consideration by designing learning experiences and providing learning environments.

2.2 Adult literacy

Adult literacy is one of the major areas in adult education. Gaining basic literacy skills is a necessity in modern societies, because illiteracy or low literacy is directly related to social and economic problems in terms of employment, poverty, and active citizenship. Basic literacy programs are important to enhance adults' literacy skills for their active participation in the society and economy. In addition, these programs provide an opportunity to be a good parent, employee, and citizen by breaking the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy (Edwards, 2003).

According to the latest available data revealed by Unesco Institute for Statistics (UIS, 2017), the global adult illiteracy rate was 14% in 2016. As for Turkey, current illiteracy rate of Turkish adults ages 25 and over is revealed as 4,8% by Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT, 2019), and 1,5% of Turkish male and 8,0% Turkish female adults lack the reading and writing skills.

In Turkey, half of the illiterate population is over 65-year-old, therefore reasons for illiteracy may stem from not participating in formal education. Early marriage, traditional patriarchal family structure, belief that girls should not go to school, and perceiving girls as housekeepers can be reasons for not to participate in formal education. In that point, illiteracy becomes an issue covered by women studies (Gökçe & Yıldız, 2018).

In the following sections, coverage of literacy programs and attributions of adult literacy learners is discussed.

2.1.1 Literacy programs

Educational programs have a significant role to improve literacy skills of adults and illiterate adults have a chance to participate in literacy programs to improve their life standards. Adult learners who receive literacy education have different purposes, needs, knowledge, skills, and experiences. This variety leads to difference in types of literacy programs they enroll such as ABE program, GED program, and programs in community colleges and training centers (National Research Council [NRC], 2012). Basic literacy programs are designed to provide literacy and numeracy instruction for adult learners (Edwards, 2003) as well as opportunities like developing living and social skills, and self-improvement (Holland, 2003).

In Turkey, literacy courses for adults are offered by public education centers, municipalities, penal institutions, and non-governmental organizations. Free of charge courses are given for illiterate adults who have not gone to school or dropped out of schools (Babayiğit & Gökçe, 2018). While basic literacy programs were developed, some principles regarding adult learners' characteristics and adult education were considered which indicate the differences among adults based on age,

gender, knowledge, skills, and attitudes, active participation of adults, needs of adult learners, and compatibility with formal education (Çağlayan, 2016). Goal of basic literacy courses developed in Turkey is offering basic reading, writing, and numeracy skills for social, personal, and educational improvements of adults to change their views regarding social, economic, and political life (Babayiğit & Gökçe, 2018).

Basic literacy programs consist of two levels as Level-I literacy program and Level-II literacy program in Turkey. While Level-I program covers basic literacy and numeracy skills; sciences and social sciences are also involved in Level-II literacy program (Çağlayan, 2016). Adults who completed Level-I literacy course successfully receive literacy certification and can be eligible to participate in Level-II course (Babayiğit and Gökçe, 2018), and adults who completed Level-II literacy courses can be eligible to enroll open elementary school (Çağlayan, 2016). However, even participation rate of adults in basic literacy programs is high, completion rates of both levels were around 50% in 2016 and 2017 (GDLLL, 2016, 2017), which means that one out of two adult learners drop out from basic literacy programs. Table 1 below indicates completion rates of learners from Level-I and Level-II year by year. In this point, it is important to understand characteristics of adult literacy learners before examining how adult learners persist and what helps them stay in program.

Table 1. Completion Rates of Basic Literacy Programs – Level-I and Level-II

Year	Completion Rate of Level-I Literacy Program	Completion Rate of Level-II Literacy Program
2016	48%	48%
2017	49%	55%

2.1.2 Adult learners participating in the literacy programs

Adult learners are different from students in formal education, this is the reason why adult learners have different characteristics and needs. They are volunteer learners with various experiences and knowledge, and they are mostly over 24-year-old individuals who have taken many social roles like student, spouse, parent and employee (Heath-Thompton, 2002; Taylor & Kroth, 2009). There are many variations of age, experience, values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge of adult learners (Idoko, 2018; Kapur, 2015).

Specific to literacy education, it is considered as a second chance to many adult literacy learners. Attributions of adults in literacy programs are different from adult learners participating in other adult education programs. In this section, demographic information about adult literacy learners (gender, age, marital status, employment status, family background, and prior schooling experience) and their influence on expectations, attitudes, and feelings of adults regarding participation or non-participation in literacy education will be reviewed.

Women are more likely to participate in literacy programs (Babayiğit & Gökçe, 2018; Çağlayan, 2016; Knight, 2000; Yıldız, 2011). While Turkish studies show that female learners over 30-year-old and mostly between 40 and 60-year-old participate in basic literacy programs (Babayiğit & Gökçe, 2018; Çağlayan, 2016; Yıldız, 2006), under 30-year-old participants are common in the international studies (Knight, 2000). Age of illiterate population is mostly over 30-year-old in Turkey; it is normal that age of adults participating in literacy courses is different in Turkey comparing with participation age of adult learners from other countries (Gökçe & Yıldız, 2018). Another influence of age on participation in literacy programs in Turkey is that education is thought as specific to children. Idea of participating in a

literacy program can be fearful for adults. Adults can feel that they cannot be successful because of their capabilities restricted by age (Yıldız, 2006).

Marital status of illiterate women participating in literacy courses is related to age, they are mostly married (Knight, 2000); reasons for participating in literacy education are generally escaping from home because of boredom and being an active member of the community (Knight, 2000). Women expressed that they decided to participate in literacy programs late, because they had so many responsibilities concerning children and housework so that literacy was not their prior concern (Yıldız, 2006).

Moreover, the ones who work usually do not have job security; these jobs are unstable and intensive such as farming, sewing, cleaning, and nursing (Yıldız, 2011).

Family background is an important factor affecting perception of literacy. According to the study of Yıldız (2006), parents of adult learners in basic literacy education are illiterate or primary school graduates, spouses are mostly literate, and children of literacy learners are literate and continuing their education.

Being dependent on others is an important characteristics of adult literacy learners, they need help of family members in same cases basic literacy skills needed. Gaining reading and writing skills in basic literacy programs helps adult learners decrease their dependency and feel more confident. Improving confidence leads to positive attitudes toward being a student (Reston, 1990; Reynold & Johnson, 2014). In addition, they have a limited social life consisting of family and neighbors; participating in a literacy program provides an opportunity to interact with a new people such as adult education trainers and other adult learners (Yıldız, 2006).

Attitudes toward literacy and participation in education are also shaped by family and surrounding social context of adult learners. Schooling experiences

develops personal values of adults which were shaped by family first (Pinder, 2011). History of literacy skills learning of adult learners are very important; past schooling experiences including negative beliefs about literacy skills, ineffective instruction, and being excluded because of low skills or background affects adult learner deeply, even they want to improve their literacy skills (NRC, 2012; Ziegler, Bain, Bell, Mccallum, & Brian, 2006). According to the studies conducted by Yıldız (2006, 2011) on adult literacy education, it is indicated that some adult learners did not enrolled any educational activities before, some of them dropped out of primary school, specifically first grade, and some of them enrolled in basic literacy programs two or three times that it raises the question of how effective literacy programs in Turkey are. This study indicates that prior formal schooling and adult learners' prior literacy education experiences may affect their attitudes toward literacy (Yıldız, 2006). Adult learners' expectations of literacy education are in accordance with those of prior schooling, if they have prior schooling experiences. Prior schooling experiences affect initial participation reason, expectations of literacy education and goals adults want to achieve (Knight, 2000; Pinder, 2011).

International studies indicated that expectations of literacy education of adult learners are ambitious at first, they assume big changes in their lives. However, they realize they need more time and effort to achieve their goals during the program and they learn how to adjust their expectations (Knight, 2000). However, Yıldız (2006) stated that expectations of adults participating in literacy education and understanding of literacy are limited; they want to learn literacy skills mostly to use public transportation and go to hospital easily.

While some adults decide to participate in literacy programs, some of them do not participate in literacy programs because of several reasons. Reasons for non-

participation are found as family responsibilities, no need for being literate, belief that having limited abilities to learn, working, and lack of self-confidence and fear of failure accordingly in the study of Gökçe and Yıldız (2018). Having no free time to participate in literacy courses because of housework, care of children and family members with health problems are some reasons for not participating in literacy courses. Close friends and family members can minimize the need of being literate. Adults can believe that they have limited cognitive abilities resulting from aging; they can forget easily, and they are not capable of understanding and perceiving the learning material. In addition, illiterate women, who participate in labor force, may show their work as a reason for not participating in literacy courses (Gökçe & Yıldız, 2018).

2.2 Persistence and persistence studies

It is necessary to operationalize the term persistence first. There are various definitions of persistence; in this study, persistence is used as a synonym of completion of the program which means "having met successfully the minimal academic and time requirements of the program" (Edwards, 2003, p. 12).

There are multiple concepts related to persistence such as retention, attrition, dropout, and stop out, and they must be defined to prevent confusion. While retention consists of enrollment and completion in the viewpoint of an educational institution, persistence is the decision of learner. Attrition means voluntary or involuntary departure of learners. While dropout is the decision to leave the currently enrolled course or program, stop out is defined as a temporary departure (Anderson 2011).

There are many multidimensional factors that adults can be affected as learners in any adult education program, and those can influence the learners' decision to complete the program or not. Persistence is a result of combination of different factors (Petty & Thomas, 2014) and these factors should be examined for in depth understanding of persistence.

Studies investigating persistence of adult learners within international literature are mostly conducted in formal education settings, specifically in higher education. All studies in this section are gathered under the higher education; they investigated persistence of different adults defined as undergraduates, non-traditional students, and online learning students. While these studies explored the same concept, researchers preferred investigating persistence in higher education from different perspectives.

Studies exploring persistence factors affecting adults in higher education and colleges will be presented first. Then, models of persistence will be compared and given in detail in a table in this section.

First persistence model was developed by Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) in adult education. He developed a student integration model in the post-secondary institutions to understand departure of students before graduation (as cited in Kemp, 2001). In this model, three components below interact with each other; if this interaction lead to academic integration and social integration of students, they decide to stay in the institution (Heath-Thornton, 2002):

1. Students' attributes (family background, skills, and prior schooling experiences),

2. Intentions and goals of the students, and

3. Institutional experiences involving academic and social system:

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a. Academic system (academic performance and interactions with staff), and

b. Social system (extracurricular activities and interaction with peers).

Bean and Metzner (1987) defined participants of their study as non-traditional students and explored persistence factors impacting a nontraditional student who are older than 24, mostly interested in courses and grades, not residents in campus, and have no interaction with social environment of the institution. While persistence model of Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) focused on adults' social and academic relations with the institution, student attrition model of Bean and Metzner (1987) involved external factors such as family obligations, employment, and support from outside the college community in addition to factors found in student integration model of Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993). Student attrition model of Bean and Metzner (1987) indicated that students decide to persist or not based on four variables (Brown, 2008):

1. Student's background variables include age, sex, ethnicity, being a part-time or full-time student, educational goals, and prior educational performance

2. Academic variables involve study habits and skills, academic advising, and absenteeism

3. Social integration variables contain membership in on-campus organizations, family contact and school friends, and

4. Environmental variables cover finance, hours of employment, outside encouragement, family responsibilities, and the opportunity to transfer to other institutions.

Rovai (2003) synthesized the persistence models of Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) and Bean and Metzner (1985) with the skills required by online students, their special needs and learning styles into a single model. This is a heuristic model for all learners whose characteristics and nature are like adult learners (Park & Choi, 2009). In this model, variables that influence dropout or persistence decisions of online learning students are examined as those affecting students prior to admission and after admission (Rovai, 2003):

1. Prior to admission variables cover student characteristics and skills:

    a. Student characteristics are student's background variables mentioned in the student attrition model (Bean & Metzner, 1987), and

    b. Student skills cover special student skills required for online learning like computer and information literacy,

2. After admission variables are categorized as:

    a. Internal factors consisting of integration and commitment indicated in the student integration model of Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993), academic and social integration variables in the study of Bean and Metzner (1987), student needs such as self-esteem, identification to school, and accessibility of services, and learning and teaching styles, and

    b. External factors include environmental variables stated in the study of Bean and Metzner (1987).

Donaldson and Graham (1999) also conducted a study on adult learning and persistence of adult learners in college that have parallel results with studies of Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) and Bean and Metzner (1987). Complexity of adults' lives, past experiences related to education, and training have key roles in this study (Alhassan,

2012). Donaldson and Graham (1999) stated six components influencing undergraduate adult students' persistence which are (Donaldson & Graham, 1999):

1. Prior experience and personal biographies involve experiences with formal schooling, internships, social and cultural contexts, and learning experiences,

2. Adults' cognition includes prior knowledge and knowledge structures, and learning processes,

3. Psycho-social and value orientation mean adults' evaluations of themselves as learners, commitment to the student role, social conditions, the psychological motivations, and the role expectations of adults,

4. Life-world environment consists of social settings outside the college and reinforcing agents who support adults to return higher education,

5. Connecting classroom covers development of a community of learners, college's academic climate, respectful and caring instructor, and social engagement, and

6. Learning outcomes involve cognitive, intellectual, and emotional development of adults.

The last study mentioned in this section is study of Anderson (2011) on satisfaction and retention. Besides exploring persistence factors, relationship between persistence and satisfaction was also investigated in this study by developing a model that shows interrelationships between the various factors, satisfaction, and persistence. As a result, four factors enhancing persistence of adults in college were found as having children, an educational goal of earning a bachelor's degree, a higher GPA, and academic advising (Anderson, 2011).

For ease of comparison, Table 2 displays the student integration model of Tinto (1993 as cited in Kemp, 2001), student attrition model of Bean and Metzner (1985), model for distance education online programs developed by Rovai (2003), model of college outcomes by Donaldson and Graham (1999), and study of Anderson (2011) on adult learner satisfaction and retention in detail by including the following factors:

- Academic Experiences (Being committed to graduating, academic success, GPA, instructional quality, student-adult education trainer relationships, academic advising)

- Social Experiences in the Institution (Bond to the institution, the college community, services, student activities, facilities, and the admission processes), and

- Encouragement/Support (Psychological, financial, moral and other support provided by members outside the college community).

2.3 Persistence factors in basic literacy programs

Persistence factors impacting adult learners from ABE and GED/pre-GED are presented in this section, since the terms ABE and literacy education are used interchangeably (Amstutz & Sheared, 2000). ABE and GED cover literacy and numeracy in its first levels and provide an opportunity for adults to improve their basic literacy skills (Thomas, 2011). Based on the literature on ABE, factors affecting adult learners' persistence can be categorized into three factors as individual factors (motivation, setting and reaching goals, and attitude, perception, and personal value), institutional factors (learning environment and adult education trainer), and external factors (family and friend support and life demands).

Table 2. Comparison of Persistence Studies/Models in Higher Education/Colleges

Persistence Models	Academic Experiences	Social Experiences in the Institution	Encouragement/Support
Tinto (1993 as cited in Kemp, 2001)	Eagerness to graduate, good grades, and quality of instruction are necessary components for student persistence.	Establishing a caring environment to increase students' commitment to the institution is necessary to decrease drop out.	Parental expectations have a direct impact on persistence.
Bean & Metzner (1985)	Academic advising, having low institutional commitment and poor academic performance are the reasons of drop out.	Course availability and membership in on-campus organizations are influential on persistence decision.	Environmental support is crucial; even students who have low academic performance remain in the institution because of support.
Rovai (2003)	Instruction covering the learning needs and styles of the students is required for online learners to persist.	Sense of community helps them persist, they need to develop interpersonal relationships with peers, faculty, and staff.	Family responsibilities and outside encouragement are important external factors affecting persistence.
Donaldson & Graham (1999)	Commitment to the student role and having a respectful and caring instructor are essential for persistence.	College's climate plays a significant role in both satisfaction and persistence of adults. Adults' commitment to the college and community of learners are essential to persist.	Support coming from outside the college community results in participation and persistence.
Anderson (2011)	Having an educational goal of graduating and GPA are academic factors predicting persistence. Moreover, academic advising is significant for adults to stay in the college.	Supportive and accessible faculty and staff has no effect on persistence.	Adult learners who have children are more likely to persist.

2.3.1 Individual factors

It is essential to understand individual factors affecting adult learners during adult education programs that are motivation, setting and reaching goals, and attitude, perception, and personal value.

Motivation of adults affects almost all stages of learning - before, during and after learning. Therefore, motivation gives a purpose to adult learner to participate in education, make choices about learning, keep in learning process and complete the learning (Wlodkowski, 2008).

Motivation derives from two sources as internal and external. Internal motivation is about determination of the adult learners; when feeling that they can take responsibility of their learning and achieve their goals is supported by other factors like supportive family, instructor, and learning environment, inner drive to persist becomes more effective than external motivation factors. Comparing with internal motivation, external sources like reward or threatening coming from family members to persist in the literacy program can result in stress and pressure that adult learners cannot manage to cope with problems (Gartner, 2005; Pinder, 2011).

Motivation is very important to make decision to participate in literacy programs or not. According to study of Reynold and Johnson (2014), source of motivation can be losing a job or making change in life; when they take opportunity to participation, adult learners can feel internal strength to succeed. Reasons for participation of adult learners in basic literacy programs include helping one's children, moving ahead in life, and obtaining a diploma (Comings et al., 1999). From a broader perspective, according to study of Beder (1990), motivating factors affecting adult literacy learners to participate in literacy education are "… Self-Improvement, Family Responsibility, Diversion, Literacy Development,

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Community/Church Involvement, Job Advancement, Launching, Economic Need, Educational Advancement, and The Urging of Others" (p. 208).

In Turkey, four themes were found which are to manage daily living, to read Qur'an, books, and newspapers, to deal with processes in the hospital, and not to be swindled according to the study conducted by Babayiğit and Gökçe (2018) on reasons for participating in literacy courses. Illiterate adults feel dependent, because they can need someone around to ask for help or communicate to manage their daily activities (making phone calls, using transportation, and voting) that make them feel ashamed in this point. Another reason for participating in literacy courses is to read Qur'an or religious books, and newspapers; because participants stated that they want to read and understand themselves instead of hearsay information. Handling with hospital processes is the third theme that involves following queue number, buying medicine, reading signs in the hospital, and not knowing which medicine they use. This theme is close to the managing daily activities, because adults need help of other people to handle problems they face in hospital or pharmacy. Fraud appears as the last theme of this study results. Elderly participants of this study stated that they want to learn reading and writing to have an advantage over swindlers and to be able to call police.

Effect of motivation on learning process is also an important aspect. Source of external motivation factors (test scores, approval and rewards) is one of the common ways to encourage learners in the learning process (Comings & Cuban, 2007 as cited in Idoko, 2018). However, internal satisfaction of reaching goals is more powerful (Redding, 2014) because individuals who are driven by internal motivation act or perform freely (Mkhwanazi, 2001).

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Regarding keeping in learning and completion of the program, if adults motivated to learn, they are less likely to drop out; also, understanding what motivates adults gives meaningful data about their persistence. Sources of motivation are various for adults. For example, according to the study of Spivey (2016) on persistence of adult learners in rural education programs, adults are motivated to persist because of developing trust, sense of belonging, bond to the learning community, and relationships with peers, adult education trainer, and staff (Spivey, 2016).

In addition to motivation, goals play a key role in persistence. There is a relationship between goals and educational participation of adults; highly motivated adult learners, who have goals which are realistic and clearly defined (Comings et al., 1999), overcome barriers to learning and have a great chance in completing programs because barriers depend on perception of individuals (Fagan, 1991).

Goal setting is a very important factor affecting adult literacy learners' persistence (Reynold & Johnson, 2014). It is significant to set definite goals and make progress toward the goal for adult learners. Goals must be set in conformity with learning ability, they must be realistic. Adult education trainers must help adults to set goals in congruent with their expectations and abilities by effective instruction and feedback (Gelagay, 2015; NRC, 2012). Setting unrealistic and ambitious goals would be devastating for adults who have just decided to participate in education (Reston, 1990). According to study of Garrison (1987), adult learners who have low scholastic abilities and self-confidence are more likely to set unrealistic goals because of their unrealistic expectations of literacy courses, adults should be supported to set realistic goals relevant to their abilities and time they devote (Reston, 1990). In comparison with persisted learners, goals of dropouts were found

as unrealistic in the study of Garrison (1985). In addition to setting goals, monitoring their progress toward the goal and having some achievements are factors that lead adult learners to persist (Edwards, 2003; Reynold & Johnson, 2014). Completion of the goals and making progress help adult learners believe themselves to succeed and consequently persist (Bujack, 2012; Reston, 1990).

Lastly, adult learners' attitudes, perceptions and personal values were key to complete a program (Quigley & Kuhne, 1997). Having a new role – the student role - can be an important source of stress or strength because it is related to attitudes and self-perception of adult learners. Adult learners who persisted in the program are more likely to integrate the student role into their lives (Gartner, 2005). According to study conducted by Donaldson and Graham (1999), not only commitment to the student role but also fear of being old and lack of confidence in academic abilities are important psychosocial and value orientations that influence persistence and achievement of adults.

Adult learners, who believe in their own potential and have positive statements about self, make effort to persist in the program (Ziegler et al., 2006). Within this context, examples of positive statement about self in the study conducted by Comings et al. (1999) are:

> Responses were coded as positive self if respondents said such things as "me," "myself," "will power," "desire," "the decision to make a commitment," "my own motivation," "my self-confidence," "I know I have to," "I'm the only one who can do it," "within myself, wanting to accomplish it," or "willingness to try." (p. 68)

According to Fagan (1991), considering something as a barrier or not depends on the individual's perception, degree of motivation, and realization of the goal. Meeting new people, low level of confidence, uncertainty, difficulty in concentrating, physical limitations, feelings of inadequacy, and lack of trust can be

examples of stressors originated from being student; they can constitute a barrier to persistence and lead learners to drop out (Leger, 1996), but they can be overcome through goal specificity and motivation (Fagan, 1991). From a different viewpoint; for example, meeting new people does not have to be a barrier, it can be a strength of adult learners have or low levels of confidence can rise to higher levels with other factors contributing to persistence.

2.3.2 Institutional factors

Being aware of adult learners' characteristics that mentioned in the adult learners in the literacy programs section can assist adult education trainers and adult educators in meeting adult learners' needs in the learning setting (Xie, Sen, & Foster, 2014). Institutional factors contributing to adult learners' persistence are learning environment and adult education trainer's competency. Persistence studies examined in the literature use teacher, trainer, and instructor interchangeably based on educational settings; adult education trainer is used to refer for all of them in this study.

Participation and persistence in adult education depend on adult learners' feelings about themselves and their interaction with educational environment (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999 as cited in Thomas, 2011). Creating and maintaining a safe, trusting and supportive environment and providing personal support are responsibilities of adult education trainers and staff in the institution for learners (Comings et al., 1999; Holland, 2003). Cooperation and understanding group dynamics are important to create supportive learning environments because they encourage learners to respect and trust each other mutually (Cohen & Geier, 2010).

Supportive learning environment maximizes adult learners' potential, because the climate of a learning environment influences learners' performance and behavior in addition to shaping the culture of the institution (Idoko, 2018). Culture is an important factor to develop a community; because stereotypes, culture of silence, and inferiority influence behaviors of adult learners negatively in the learning environment. Moreover, adults can drop out because of the ignorance of their backgrounds. That is why creating inclusion by taking into consideration of backgrounds of adult learners is very significant not to make them feel isolated. Lack of cultural relevance and understanding may result in alienation of adults from different cultures in the learning environment (Mkhwanazi, 2001; Thomas, 2011).

A positive learning environment involves sense of community and belonging; everyone can share his/her opinions and experiences with courage, and everyone value and respect viewpoints of others in turn (Gartner, 2005; Idoko, 2018). Respect and understanding are significant for adult learners because they want to feel valuable in the learning setting (Mkhwanazi, 2001). Sense of belonging in the learning environment is very important because of common and shared experiences and goals among adult learners (Reynold & Johnson, 2014). Adult learners are eager to share their experiences and problems; they help each other and exchange their ideas in the classroom. This cooperation makes adult learners feel supported and they persist in the program (İnce, 2008). However, study of İnce (2018) revealed that trainers mostly give importance to complete daily learning plan rather than allocate time for self-expressions not to fall behind the schedule, because exchanging ideas and expressing themselves take a long time.

Persistence of adult learners is affected by learning community, because interaction among learners and collaboration are important for increasing

engagement of adults. It is also important that adult learners are affected by peers more than adult education trainer in the learning environment (Reynold & Johnson, 2014). Personal interaction and availability of the instruction material in the learning environment motivate adult learners (NRC, 2012). Provision of resources for learning makes learners feel valued and supported. Active participation, ownership of learning and encouragement which come out in positive learning environments will improve adult learners' the ability of learning, performance, and motivation, and consequently persistence (Gelagay, 2015; Idoko, 2018; Mkhwanazi, 2001; Thomas, 2011).

In addition to supportive learning environment, adult education trainers have an important effect on persistence. Adult education trainers promote student engagement, and can they affect directly personal, academic, and social-emotional development of learners with quality of instruction and personal support (Allodi, 2010). Instruction, selection of the learning materials and strategies in the classroom in literacy education should be specific to adult learners' needs, purposes, age, and development that adult education trainers have a significant role to cover them all. Social and cultural context shaping adult literacy learners' life should be involved in the learning materials and activities to increase active participation of adult learners to learning (Belzer & Pickard, 2015). High quality instruction provided by adult education trainer and monitoring academic progress help adults make connections to their daily lives (Comings & Cuban, 2007 as cited in Idoko, 2018).

Adult education trainers should understand learning differences between children and adults, and they must be trained about adult education and adult learners' characteristics to be an effective instructor. Adult education trainers must

know the assumptions about adult learners' characteristics which are discussed before (Knowles, 1980; Knowles, 2005; Rodrigues, 2012).

İnce (2008) expressed that adults have more responsibilities in their lives, need more time to learn literacy and numeracy skills, believe that learning literacy is hard, and they feel lack of self-confidence accordingly. As expressed in the study of İnce (2008) on evaluation of adult literacy programs in Turkey, adult education trainers working in public education centers mostly have a teaching certificate, they do not have any training on adult education. In addition, this study expressed that in-service training is not given to the trainers working in public education centers to provide information they need on adult education and principles of adult learning.

In addition to quality instruction, they are also representative of human support in the learning setting; existence of adult education trainer is very important for adults (Comings et al., 1999). The interaction between adult education trainers and students is one of the factors impacting persistence; because human connection is essential in the educational setting to encourage learners to stay and make them feel being cared about (Gelagay, 2015; Idoko, 2018; Reynold & Johnson, 2014). Adult education trainers must motivate adult learners to express themselves and perform the tasks and activities in the learning environment, because adults become motivated to persist and take responsibility of their own learning when they realize that they are making progress in literacy learning (Reston, 1990). Dubois (1989 as cited in Holland, 2003) found that supportive adult education trainers helped adults stay in the program. According to Butler and MacNeeley (1987 as cited in Holland, 2003), a caring and qualified staff in the institution is a good predictor to understand persistence of adult learners. Because if adult education trainer supports adults as

mentor; it leads that adults start caring about educational attainment of themselves, become self-directed learners and persist (Cohen & Geier, 2010).

Adult education trainers need to understand problems or challenges of adult learners and communicate with adults to help their improvement of educational and social development (NRC, 2012). Clark (1986 as cited in Holland, 2003) expressed that sociodemographic and situational variables affecting learners can help adult education trainers understand and identify who is at risk most to drop out. Adult education trainers have a significant role especially for those who have no support systems or less family supports; adult education trainer support is essential for them to persist (Dubois, 1989 as cited in Holland, 2003).

2.3.3 External factors

External factors are also influential in adults' learning and persistence. External factors are social relations involving support from friends and family, attitudes of family towards education, and influence of social groups, in addition to life demands including transportation, child care, finance, and health.

Social support is the most significant factor on persistence among all contributing factors (Comings, et al., 1999). Verbal encouragement by family members and friends is crucial in adult learners' persistence (Comings, et al., 1999) and members of social network, who participated in adult education programs before, encourage others' persistence more than the others (Bandura, 1986 as cited in Thomas, 2011). Social relationship is one of the most important motivators of adult learners. Just as encouragement by family and friends can have a positive impact on learners, discouragement can result in persistence as a barrier (Tinto, 1997; Hayes, 1988). Support from family members, spouses and children keeps adult learner

motivated to learn and attend courses of the program. On the other hand, lack of support from social network and family leads adult learners to drop out (Mkhwanazi, 2001).

Specific to families, structure of the family and influence of family members are important for adult learners, because they affect realization of goals and persistence. Structure of family influences how individuals experience their world; support of family members such as encouragement, acceptance, and helping adult learners persist have an important role in this context (Ford, 2016).

Children are found as the strongest supporters in adult learners' lives, because adult learners want to be a role model. In this context, helping children with their homework is one of the common goals of adults to participate and persist in literacy programs (Pinder, 2011; Reston, 1990; Terry, 2007). Making family members proud is very important for persistence of adult learners. In addition, female learners want to be a role model for their children; they participate in and persist literacy programs to help and give inspiration for their future goals (Reynold & Johnson, 2014).

In addition to social relations, life demands that occur in the everyday life of adults and affect adults to persist or drop out. Finances, transportation, economic status, childcare, employment, own/family's health, weather, and moving are some examples of life demands (Comings et al., 1999). It is important that most common reasons for dropout are related to everyday life barriers (Holland, 2003); while transportation and illness are the main reasons for dropping out of ABE, other factors are childcare problems, work schedule changes and moving (Leonard & Jackson, 1986 as cited in Holland, 2003).

Management of time and resources is very important to overcome everyday life barriers; it includes both attending the courses and doing house related works like

making plans for babysitting, travel time, and mealtime (Edwards, 2003; Gelagay, 2015). In that point, adults always need arrangements to overcome these life demands and persist in their courses (Comings et al., 1999; Cross, 1981 as cited in Holland, 2003). Adults who manage to overcome these barriers (being supported by a family member for childcare, for example) cannot identify them as obstacle anymore and they can persist in their program (Edwards, 2003). Some programs may provide access services to adult learners like childcare, transportation or counseling to support adult learners' participation and persistence (NRC, 2012).

2.3.4 Summary of persistence factors

Based on the literature review, persistence factors can be categorized into three factor categories as individual, institutional, and external factors.

Individual factors involve internal and external sources of motivation helping adult learners persist, effect of realistic goals on persistence, and attitudes, perceptions and personal values of adults that affect having the student role. Institutional factors emphasize both supportive learning environment and competent adult education trainers. Supportive learning environment and sense of community that adult education trainers and other staff create and maintain make adult learners feel valued and respected. Competency of adult education trainers includes quality of instruction, support of adult education trainer, and intervention strategies to keep adults in the program. The last category, external factors, consists of supportive family, friends, and social community and management of life demands including childcare, transportation, and health not to drop out from the program.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology that used in conducting this qualitative

study. It begins with conceptual framework of this study that consists of individual,

institutional, and external factor categories and their sub-factors. Then, a description

of the qualitative research design that used to collect and interpret data, followed by

the section describing the participants who took part in the study including the

criteria for their selection are given. Finally, data collection covering development of

interview form and data analysis methods is presented.

3.1 Conceptual framework

This study aims to identify factors contributing to persistence of the adult learners in

basic literacy programs. The study conducted qualitative approach to gain in-depth

understanding of adult learners' experiences and how they persist in the basic

literacy programs. Interviews with the selected adult basic literacy learners about

contributing factors to persistence constituted the main data of this study.

Figure 1 indicates the conceptual framework of this study found in

persistence studies in the literature review. This figure consists of three factor

categories and their sub-factors, which have positive impact on adult learners'

persistence in basic literacy programs.

Following sections in this chapter introduce the design of the study, selection

of participants, data collection and development of the interview form, and data

analysis. To remind, the main research question of this study as follows:

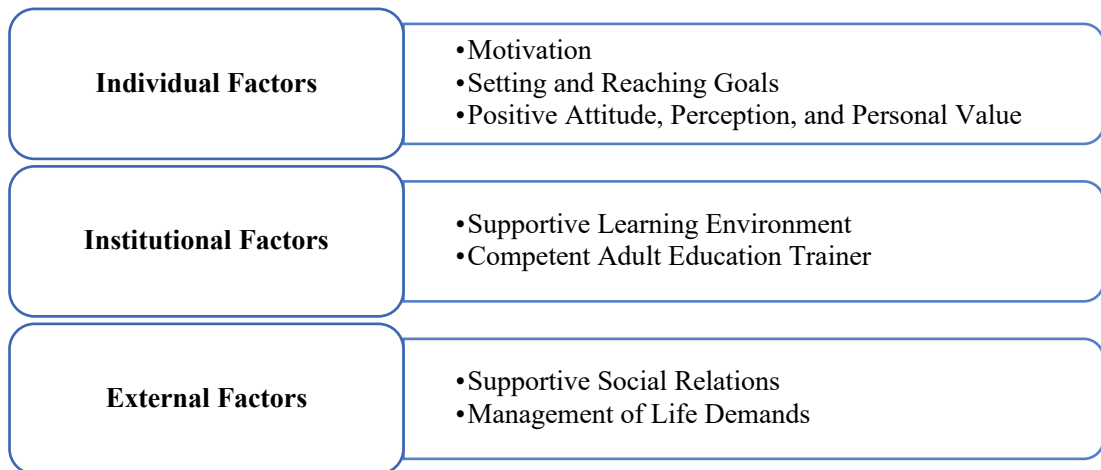| Individual Factors	• Motivation • Setting and Reaching Goals • Positive Attitude, Perception, and Personal Value
Institutional Factors	• Supportive Learning Environment • Competent Adult Education Trainer
External Factors	• Supportive Social Relations • Management of Life Demands

Figure 1. Conceptual framework indicating persistence factors

What are the factors contributing to persistence of adult learners in basic literacy programs?

Within this question, this study explores the following specific questions:

1. Do individual factors contribute to persistence? If so, how?

    a. Do sources of motivation contribute to persistence? If so, how?

    b. Do goals contribute to persistence? If so, how?

    c. Do attitude, perception and personal value contribute to persistence? If so, how?

2. Do institutional factors contribute to persistence? If so, how?

    a. Does learning environment contribute to persistence? If so, how?

    b. Does adult education trainer contribute to persistence? If so, how?

3. Do external factors contribute to persistence? If so, how?

    a. Do social relations contribute to persistence? If so, how?

    b. Does management of life demands contribute to persistence? If so, how?

4. Are there any other factors contributing to persistence?

3.2 Research design

This study utilized qualitative research design that is an approach used for exploring and understanding the attribute of individuals or groups to a problem, such as persistence of learners in adult education programs (Creswell, 2009 as cited in Thomas, 2011).

Conducting a qualitative study was chosen, because this research design is convenient to the research questions and the goal of this study; experiences of adult learners and meanings from these experiences were investigated for in-depth understanding of what or who contributed to adult learners' persistence behavior and how they persisted in basic literacy programs (Kappel, 2018). In addition, in-depth understanding of persistence factors affecting adult learners in basic literacy programs is more meaningful because there is a lack of research in this topic.

As Merriam (2009) stated, in qualitative studies, focus is on "… how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 6). The purpose is identifying individual, institutional and external factors influencing adult learners' persistence in basic literacy programs in this study. It is important to understand their personal, academic and social experiences inside and outside of the public education center setting. Descriptions and feelings of adult learners about their attitudes toward literacy learning, motivating factors, goals they set, learning environment of adult education center, and their relationships with adult education trainer, other adult learners, and family members are crucial to understand how they perceive their experiences and decide to persist.

Semi-structured interview conducted in this study and it is defined by Kvale (1996) and Merriam (1998) as asking predetermined questions but adding other

questions considering the flow of the conversation to take relevant information from the participant which can be useful for the deeper understanding of their experiences (as cited in Thomas, 2011). Semi-structured interview questions were developed by considering the factors and sub-factors indicated in conceptual framework and research questions of this study.

3.3 Participants

Selection criteria of participants and demographic information of sample are given in this section.

3.3.1 Participant selection

After receiving permissions from the Ethics Committee for Master and PhD Theses in Social Sciences and Humanities and Directorate of the Ministry of National Education (APPENDIX A and B), four different public education centers (Kadıköy, Üsküdar, Beşiktaş, and Şişli Public Education Centers) were visited to conduct interview with adult learners who enrolled in Level-II Literacy course from each center. Different adult literacy learning environments and trainers were included to the study by selecting four centers to see how different contexts would influence the persistence of adult learners. Each public education center selected according to information obtained from its staff as having an open Level-II Literacy course and number of adult participants enrolled.

Purposeful sampling technique was used since it allows the researcher to designate the criteria by which participants are identified according to the research questions and the purpose of the research (Merriam, 1998 as cited in Thomas, 2011). Criterion sampling is one of the purposeful sampling strategies and it was used to

select participants for comprehensive understanding in this study (Suri, 2011). As Patton (2002 as cited in Suri, 2011) stated "Criterion sampling involves reviewing and studying 'all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance' (p. 69)." Volunteer Literacy Level-II learners were selected as participants of this study. Four criteria used for selection of participants:

1. Being female – rate of female adult learners in literacy courses is higher than rate of male ones (Babayiğit & Gökçe, 2018; Çağlayan, 2016; DME, 2017; Yıldız, 2006), thus female participants selected to conduct this study with a homogenous group,

2. 18 years of age or older – who dropped out of primary school are accepted to Level-I and Level-II literacy courses (DME, 2017) and illiterate individuals over 15-year-old can enroll in basic literacy programs. However, studies conducted in Turkey found that adult learners in basic literacy programs are mostly over 30-year-old (Babayiğit & Gökçe, 2018; Çağlayan, 2016; Yıldız, 2006); that is why adult learners over 18-year-old selected in this study.

3. Currently enrolled in Level-II literacy course – participants from this course were selected because they have already persisted in Level-I literacy course and become eligible to enroll Level-II literacy course, and

4. Prior completion of Level-I literacy course – in addition to completers of Level-I literacy course, adults who dropped out of primary school are also accepted to Level-II literacy courses (DME, 2017); thus, Level-II literacy participants who completed Level-I course selected to understand factors contributing to their persistence in Level-I literacy course.

3.3.2 Participant profiles

As public education centers; Kadıköy, Üsküdar, Beşiktaş, and Şişli Public Education Centers were selected. In total, data was collected from six different learning environment and five different adult education trainers (same adult education trainer in two classes in Üsküdar) and 18 participants enrolled in Level-II literacy course in this study, participant profiles can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Participant Profiles

District	Trainers	Pseudonym Names	Number of Participants
Beşiktaş	T1	Ayşe, Bedriye	2
Kadıköy - Class 1	T2	Kadriye, Leman, Reyhan, Saadet	4
Kadıköy - Class 2	T3	Meral, Nermin, Zeynep, Pakize	4
Şişli	T4	Semra, Yasemin	2
Üsküdar - Class 1	T5	Canan, Cemile, Emel	3
Üsküdar - Class 2		Feride, Gonca, Halide	3
Total			18

Only the youngest participant is 23-year-old and other female learners are over 40-year-old in this study as can be seen in Table 4 below. Average age of the participants of this study is 51.

Occupations of participants are also given in Table 4; most of the participants of this study are working as cafeteria attendant and housekeeper.

In addition, in Table 4 it is shown that some participants dropped out from primary school (especially first grade), and some enrolled in literacy courses before two or three times. Moreover, there is also one adult who participated in Qur'an course in addition to Level-I Literacy course in this study. On the contrary, educational background of participants' children are higher than their mothers. Only one of the participants, Pakize, does not have children; all the other participants indicated that their children who are over 18-year-old are at least high school graduates.

Table 4. Age, Occupation, and Prior Education Level of Participants

Pseudonyms	Age	Occupation	Marital Status	Prior Education Level
Ayşe	49	Janitor	Married	Level-I (3 times)
Bedriye	54	Housewife	Married	Level-I
Kadriye	52	Housewife	Widowed	Level-I
Leman	52	Housekeeper	Married	Level-I (3 times)
Reyhan	62	Housekeeper	Married	Qur'an - Level-I
Saadet	40	Housekeeper	Married	Level-I (2 times)
Meral	47	Housekeeper	Married	Level-I
Nermin	55	Housewife	Married	Level-I
Zeynep	40	Cafeteria Attendant	Married	Level-I
Pakize	23	Cashier	Single	First grade - Level-I
Semra	60	Cafeteria Attendant	Widowed	First grade - Level-I
Yasemin	52	Cafeteria Attendant	Married	Level-I (2 times)
Canan	41	Housewife	Married	Level-I
Cemile	64	Storekeeper	Married	Level-I (2 times)
Emel	56	Housewife	Married	Level-I (3 times)
Feride	46	Housekeeper	Married	Level-I
Gonca	52	Cafeteria Attendant	Married	Level-I
Halide	68	Cafeteria Attendant	Widowed	Level-I

3.4 Data collection

First, a pilot interview conducted for assessment of the questions. The pilot study designed to gather feedback about the interview questions with two participants to probe questions and finalize the form. Participants were asked to give their overall assessment about the clarity of questions and problems that they had experienced. In conclusion, the participants indicated that questions were clear and they felt comfortable while responding; no change has been made in the interview question form.

Data collection took place during the spring 2019. All data collected with the informed consent of the participants. An interview form developed for the study by the researcher used as data collection instrument.

Participant Informed Consent Form, that informs them about their voluntary participation and provision of confidentiality, was given first (APPENDIX C and D). The interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the study participants. The

interviews took between 15 to 20 minutes and conducted in an available room or cafeteria in accordance with preference of the participants. Interview data transcribed and pseudonyms used instead of real names for protecting participants' identity.

The interview form included some demographic information about adult learners inquiring such as age, employment status, marital status, and educational attainment of the participants. Then, semi-structured interview questions followed to gather specific information about adult learners' experiences within themselves and with peers, adult education trainer and other staff in the public education center, and family members and friends. Interview question forms include the sub-factors regarding conceptual framework of this study are given in APENDIX E and F as Turkish and English versions of interview questions.

3.5 Data analysis

After interviews transcribed, data analyzed by using the content analysis method. According to Krippendorff (2004) "Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (p. 18).

Throughout the study, data was analyzed by using content analysis in inductive approach. Following steps were used: Open coding, coding sheets, grouping, categorization, abstraction and resulting (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). The data was coded according to the emerging themes and categories, after then they were grouped under a higher order category that included similar themes and coding. It was followed by formulating descriptions of categories and grouping them together until reaching main categories. Interview excerpts were identified and stated under

each theme to interpret the data and clarify connection between data and relevant

literature.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter, themes emerged from the data are presented under individual,

institutional, and external factors. Turkish narrations are in Appendix G.

4.1 Individual factors

Themes emerging under individual factors (in Table 5) that contribute to persistence

are personal drives to step into action and perception of having the student role.

Table 5. Themes Under Individual Factors

Category	Themes	Number of Participants
Personal drives to step into action	Willingness	13
	Achieving goals	13
	Availability	7
	Request of employer	1
Perception of having the student role	Excitement	6
	Commitment	6
	Increase in self-awareness	3
Challenges of being an adult learner	Difficulties in daily life	10
	Fear of failure	6
	Aging	5
	Initial Anxiety	3

4.1.1 Personal drives to step into action

Personal drives to step into action consist of having time to concern about literacy,

request of employer, willingness, and achieving goals.

Seven participants expressed that their availability to participate in literacy

course is as an important factor to participate and persist in the course. Retirement,

marriage of children or having over 18-year-old children are reasons of being

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available and having time to participate and persist in literacy course. Saadet explained that she could not persist in the literacy course 10 years ago since she had a little kid:

> It's been 10 years, I went to a reading and writing course once, my son was so little and naughty. I took him to a lesson once because I couldn't find anyone to look after him. Then the teacher told me to never bring him again. Apparently, he distracted the classroom's attention. So, I left the course. Now he's all grown up, that's why I can come now. (Saadet, Appendix G, 4)

Semra (60) is retired and she has three children, all of them graduated from university and one of them is married. Her husband passed away two years ago. She only attended first grade in the primary school. She was married early and started working; she had no time to participate in literacy course:

> I was working, feeling so tired; it was difficult to do the housework and work. I didn't have time to do anything for myself. I would give all my energy to my home and children. I retired, got the children married off, now it's my turn, from now on I'm going to think of myself. (Semra, Appendix G, 5)

Halide (68) is the oldest participant of this study, she stated that only reason to participate in literacy course was a demand from her employer. She is working at a private language training center as a cafeteria attendant. She decided to participate in this course, since her employer asked her to learn reading and writing to keep the job.

Thirteen participants talked about how they were willing to learn and complete the course, because they were despised by their spouses, parents, or third parties and they could not have any schooling experience even though they wanted to go to school when they were children. They became a driving force to persist in literacy course. Being despised, feeling worthless and thinking about the negative experiences in the past made them more ambitious to complete the program. Canan's father and uncle did not let her go to school when she was a child, she said that being illiterate was not her fault at first:

> One time my husband shouted at me, calling me an ignorant woman, oh how I cried… It wasn't my fault though; my uncle and father didn't let me go, but they held the hands of their sons and registered them to school. I cried a lot then too. My father shouted at me saying, "Are you going to write letters to boys? No school for you!" (Canan, Appendix G, 6)

Leman (52) is working as a housekeeper at several places. She has three children, two of them are married, and other one is studying at university and working at the same time. Her husband is a construction worker and he did not want her to go to literacy course:

> My husband never wanted me to come to the course, he still doesn't want me to. We have fought many times, in the end, I told my son that if he wants, he can divorce me. After me saying this, my husband no longer says anything negative to me. I don't even care about what he thinks anymore, I'm going to continue to come. I have kept quiet and been patient up until this day, but him oppressing me throughout my whole life is enough already. (Leman, Appendix G, 7)

Zeynep (40) is working as a cafeteria attendant in a company. She has four daughters and they are all students. She was despised by her mother-in-law and this situation made her more ambitious to persist:

> I was newly married, the neighbors said to my mother-in-law, "Why don't you send your daughter-in-law to a course? Let her learn how to read and write." She said, "No, I don't want her to have an epiphany." and didn't send me. What an ugly thought! She probably thought that if I stay ignorant, I won't stand up to her or make her tell me what to do twice. Ever since that day she has always resented and insulted me. (Zeynep, Appendix G, 8)

Achieving goals is given as another reason to persist in the literacy course, all participants set at least one goal. Some of these goals are about directly to the course and they are short-term goals such as memorizing multiplication table, being able to understand what they read faster, passing the exam and obtaining the diploma.

Feride (46) is a housewife but she is sometimes working as a housekeeper secretly. She has six children; the youngest is 12, the oldest one is 25-year-old, and only the oldest one is working, others are students. Her goal is improving her literacy skills:

I can read now, most importantly I don't get lost. My greatest happiness is that I no longer depend on anyone else. (Feride, Appendix G, 9)

Halide stated that her goal is to improve her reading skills in order to read the history of our country:

I want to read faster and understand what I read. I want to read the history of our country, especially Atatürk. He has done many great things for us. He went through hardships but succeeded. My biggest dream is learning about what he has been through, in his own words. (Halide, Appendix G, 10)

Zeynep mentioned that her goal is to handle Mathematics:

I'm a bit nervous about the exam. I can read and write, but it's not enough. I can do addition and subtraction in Maths, but when it comes to multiplication or division I get confused. I need to memorize the times table, that's my goal for now. I have a little girl who goes to primary school, we memorize it at home together. (Zeynep, Appendix G, 11)

Six participants stated that they will participate in the literacy course next semester until they read fluently.

In addition to course-specific goals, other goals are related to gaining the diploma and things they can do with it such as obtaining driving license, enrolling secondary school to continue their education, and finding a better job. Goal of five participants is obtaining a driving license.

While some of the participants think that secondary school diploma is adequate after taking diploma from public education center because of their age, others want to go to high school also and even one of the participants wants to enroll in the university.

Yasemin (52) is working at a private language teaching institution as cafeteria attendant. She has two sons; both are working, and one moved to Japan. She went to literacy course 17 years ago; she started again because she still could not be able to read and write:

I want to go to middle school. We talked about this with the headmaster too. He said, "All you have to do is want it and we'll provide you with the opportunity to do so here." (Yasemin, Appendix G, 12)

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Saadet is the only participant of this study who has the highest educational

goal, she wants to go to university:

> Of course, I'm going to continue to go to middle school, then high school; in fact, I'm even going to go to university. I'm still quite young, I think that I can do it. I don't want to depend on anyone. I could study child development and work in kindergartens, for instance. (Saadet, Appendix G, 13)

Finding a job or a better job is another common goal of participants. Reyhan

(62) has four children, three of them are working abroad and other one has his own

business. Her husband is mukhtar (headman). She participated in Qur'an course

before. She is working as a housekeeper sometimes:

> I had gone for an interview to a hospital. It was going so well until I said that I was illiterate. They told me that it wasn't possible to hire me. That's why I can't face going to an interview again. (Reyhan, Appendix G, 14)

Pakize (23) is the youngest participant of this study. She studied until second

grade and then she had to drop out. She is working as a cashier in a shopping center:

> I want a better job; if I have a diploma, I'll have many opportunities ahead of me. (Pakize, Appendix G, 15)

There are also some private goals like writing a book, learning foreign

language, and teaching Qur'an. Emel (56) is housewife, and she has three children

and three grandchildren. She participated in literacy course three times before, but

she had to drop out. Her goal is:

> I have so many dreams, I want to be useful to mankind firstly, I want to produce. I believe that becoming literate will bring prosperity to my life. I want to write my life story down. Maybe I'll enlighten people, and they'll bring prosperity to their lives like me. (Emel, Appendix G, 16)

Because Halide is working at a private language teaching institution, her goal

was changed by her work environment:

> I aspire to be like my children [students in the private language teaching institution], they learn English so wonderfully, and I'm going to learn it too. I want to go to different places, to visit and see abroad too. I want to live my life. (Halide, Appendix G, 17)

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Cemile (64) is retired and she has a clothing store. She has three children, one is university graduate, one graduated from high school, and the other has his own business. She enrolled in literacy course before, but she had to drop out because she had a newborn baby. She told she is interested in religion:

> I can express myself through religion. I want to have students to teach them the Qur'an, so they can express themselves too. But first I must become literate, of course. (Cemile, Appendix G, 18)

To sum up, to be available to participate in literacy course is an important aspect; adult learners who are retired or have children over 18-year-old have more free time to concern about literacy as a prior concern. Only one participant of this study participated in the literacy course, because her employer requested it. In addition, adult learners persist in the program because they participated in the program with their free will, and they set some short-term and long-term goals to achieve.

4.1.2 Perception of having the student role

Under the second theme, perception of being student; themes are committing to the student role, excitement, and increase in self-awareness.

Regarding commitment, participants of this study stated that they are aware of their responsibilities as learners. Halide stated that attendance is very important for her:

> Having lessons twice a week is not enough for me. I leave work and come to class; I am tired but that's not an excuse for me not to come. I haven't missed any of my lessons to this very day. Even though I'm tired, I get happy that there's a lesson, I come running, if I could I'd even fly. (Halide, Appendix G, 22)

Meral (47) is working as a housekeeper. She has three children, all of them are university graduates. Meral stated that she is aware of her responsibilities, she feels uncomfortable when she could not come to the class:

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Dare I not come to a lesson, I have a headache all day long. (Meral, Appendix G, 23)

Another factor resulting in persistence of adult learners in the course is increase in self-awareness because of participating in the course. Gonca (52) is working at a hospital as a cafeteria attendant, and she has a son and a daughter both are university students. She expressed that she feels more self-confident now:

> In the beginning my husband was encouraging me, now he's saying, "You've changed." and wants me to quit. But I have made my decision, I'm going to get my diploma. I'm going to live my own life; I don't really care about what he thinks. (Gonca, Appendix G, 24)

Yasemin stated that coming to the class is the only thing she does for herself:

> I come here for myself. I feel so happy on days that I have my classes by thinking, "I have a lesson today!" We only come to the course for two days, it's too short. I wish we came to our lessons more often. I only do one thing for me, and that's only for two days. (Yasemin, Appendix G, 25)

Participants of this study expressed that being student is excited, because they envied their brothers or children who went to the school and it is their time to be a student. Ayşe (49) is janitor and working as nanny sometimes. She has three children and all of them are university graduates. She started to go to primary school but had to drop out because of her uncle and father. Ayşe stated that she turned into one of the kids who she envied once:

> We first came to the class, then the teacher took us out to the garden and all us grown women played "Ring around the Rosie" together. I felt great afterwards; as a child I would envy those who went to school, so I became a kid too. (Ayşe, Appendix G, 26)

Canan felt jealousy because she had no school memories; she is very excited about coming to the class right now to tell her children her day in the course:

> One time my children sat my husband down and asked him if he remembered his school number or not, wanting him to tell them about his school memories. I got so jealous of my husband, because I never had any memories of school. Now, whatever we do in our classes makes me happy, I have memories from now on. I go home and talk about every detail, saying, "Today we did this and this…" I love here a lot. (Canan, Appendix G, 27)

Kadriye (52) is a housewife. She has two daughters and a son, and she lives with his son because of divorcement. She decided to enroll in the course because his son encouraged her, and she wants him to be proud of his mother. She is also excited to be a learner; since she was in second level of literacy course, she assumed she is a second grader in primary school and stated:

> I am eight years old now, became a second grader. We grew up. (Kadriye, Appendix G, 28)

To sum up; commitment to the student role, increase in self-awareness, and excitement of learning are common for adult learners in the literacy course. Adult learners realized that they feel happier and confident after participating in the program.

4.1.3 Challenges of being an adult learner

Challenges of being and adult learner consist of difficulties in daily life, being despised by spouse, parents, or third parties, fear of failure, aging, and initial anxiety.

Ten out of 18 participants expressed that difficulties in their daily lives because of illiteracy were motivators leading illiterate people to participate in literacy courses. Troubles in using transportation, using phone, going to hospital, shopping, withdrawing money, going to bank, and handling notary public related works were some examples given by participants.

Canan (41) is a housewife and she has never gone to school. She has three children, the youngest is three and the oldest one is 18-year-old. She said that she decided to participate in the literacy course after leaving notary, since she had a headache for three days:

> My husband and I went to the notary together, he was going to sign over the house to me, I didn't sign anything since I was illiterate, I asked if I could stamp my finger. The notary officer really belittled me there and my husband

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was ashamed of me. After that, I decided to go on a course. I had always wanted to learn how to read and write, and this incident became the reason for me to take an action. (Canan, Appendix G, 1)

Nermin (55) was working in a hairdresser for three years, now she is not working. She has two daughters who graduated from university:

Whenever I had to go to the hospital, I would look for someone to come with me. I couldn't read the doctor's name, they'd give me papers, and I wouldn't understand what was written. It's hard on your own. I had to go alone once, I asked someone there, you know the screen above the doctor's door, I asked what it said, and he responded, "Are you blind?" I was so ashamed. Because I'm young, I don't think they suspected that I didn't know how to read or write, it was so embarrassing. (Nermin, Appendix G, 2)

Saadet (40) is working at a primary school as housekeeper. She has a daughter and a son; they are attending high school and secondary school respectively. She started literacy course twice but dropped out. Saadet is the only one who has not gone to school in her family, her father said preparing dowry chest was more important than reading for a girl. She explained how she decided to be literate:

One time my son's teacher gave him a parental consent form and said, "Go and get your mother to sign this.", but he couldn't say "My mum is illiterate," he got embarrassed. He brought the form home, gave it to my husband and said, "My teacher wants a signature, could you sign it? I'll tell my teacher that Mum went to Grandad's and wasn't at home." When my husband told me about this I cried, I don't have the right to do this to him. (Saadet, Appendix G, 3)

All participants expressed that they believe in themselves, but six of them stated that they also have a fear of failure:

Whenever I think that I can't succeed I say to myself, "Feride, look all the things you do, why wouldn't you be capable of doing this?" The moment I see a model, I can immediately draw the pattern and knit it quickly. Not everyone can do that. If I hadn't tried so many times, I wouldn't have been able to learn either. I mastered it through trial and error. I pump myself up by saying, "You can do it!" (Feride, Appendix G, 19)

Zeynep stated that she is afraid of failing the exam to take the diploma, since she gets nervous while when any question is directed to her:

Whenever the teacher asks a question to the whole class or someone else, I can answer it; correctly too. But when the question is directed to me, or when I'm asked to go to the board, I get so nervous, whatever I say comes out

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wrong. I keep thinking "What if I fail the exam?" I always tense up whenever I think about the exam. (Zeynep, Appendix G, 20)

Bedriye (54) is a housewife, and she has four children and three of them are high school graduates and one is a university student. She has never gone to school, she also could not have any courage to go to literacy course, but her neighbor persuaded her to participate. She has lack of trust in herself:

Whenever our teacher asks us something, I always wait for a "Well done!" after I answer. I don't have confidence in myself, I feel like everything I say is wrong. (Bedriye, Appendix G, 21)

Aging is one of the common problems of older adult learners. Visual impairment and problems with concentration are some problems that participants stated during the interview. Semra is 60 and Bedriye is 54, they talked about how their age affects their learning ability:

I can't concentrate and sometimes I don't get anything because of my age. (Semra, Appendix G, 29)

I can't give my mind to class after this age, my ability to see is also reduced. (Bedriye, Appendix G, 30)

Three participants expressed that they had an anxiety before participating in the program because of fear of failure, having the student role, and uncertainty. This initial anxiety was common for adult learners in literacy course and having mutual experiences led illiterate people to persist in literacy courses. Cemile was shy to say something at first, then she found out that they are all alike:

In the beginning, I was very nervous. I wanted to open up and say something, I got a bit shy to voice my opinion. I thought that if I said something wrong, they'd laugh at me. We began to talk to each other in between the breaks, then I realized that we are all alike. (Cemile, Appendix G, 31)

Like Cemile, Emel also realized that they have common experiences after taking some time together:

I'm not alone. They're like me. They were also left to be ignorant like me, they went through many hardships and were ridiculed. It's very important to

do things for ourselves, that's what we come here to do, it's really nice to not be by yourself. We shall learn together. (Emel, Appendix G, 32)

Feride stated that classmates who were nervous and who had less literacy skills made her relieved:

I have never been to school before, that's why coming here made me feel very uneasy at first. I saw that there were people who were even more nervous than me in the classroom. Some knew nothing, at least I knew the numbers, and I do my own shopping. I thanked my lucky stars. After that my uneasiness subsided anyway. (Feride, Appendix G, 33)

To sum up, daily life activities, which require to literacy and numeracy skills, such as using transportation, using phone, going to hospital, shopping, and bank are difficult for illiterate adult learners; because they need someone around them to help. Participants expressed that they fear about being unsuccessful and unable to learn. In addition, older adults struggle with some problems like visual impairment and reduce in cognitive abilities like concentration and perception. It is important that persisted adult learners mentioned these challenges and problems, even they could be reasons to drop out for other adults.

4.2 Institutional factors

During data collection, participants were selected from four different public education centers. Within these public education centers, data about six different learning environments and five different adult education trainers was collected from the participants.

Themes emerging under institutional factors (in Table 6) that contribute to persistence are sense of belonging and characteristics of the adult education trainer.

4.2.1 Sense of belonging

Sense of belonging consists of helping each other and socialization themes.

Table 6. Themes Under Institutional Factors

Category	Themes	Number of Participants
Sense of belonging	Socialization	11
	Helping each other	8
Characteristics of the adult education trainer	Personality	14
	Supportive behavior	6
	Teaching skills	3

Helping each other is a factor mentioned by eight out of 18 participants. Cooperation, helping each other, and encouragement are important aspects of persisting in literacy course in the institutional context. Nermin stated that the ones who know better should help the others in the class:

> We help each other here, if you know how to do something of course you're going to help. We have two friends in our class that have been to school before, they know much better than all of us, we ask them when we come across something we don't know. (Nermin, Appendix G, 34)

Leman talked about Saadet as her friend who supports and helps her to improve her literacy skills:

> I have Saadet, my guiding partner here. She reads faster than all of us, helps us, and says "You can do it sister!" I get sad when she doesn't come to class. I hope in the future I'll be like her too. (Leman, Appendix G, 35)

Emel indicated that she did not leave class during break times and her classmates help her when she gets stuck:

> I go over the texts we've read during class and try to do the equations again. Even though I don't ask for any help, my friends always come and ask me what I'm doing, they help me wherever I get stuck. (Emel, Appendix G, 36)

Pakize stated that they start debating over a question and help each other and she gave an example about it:

> Sometimes the teacher gives us an activity to do, tells us to do it and leaves the class. That's when we ask each other "What answer did you give to this question?" and all of a sudden start debating over the answer, saying "No, I don't think that's the answer, I think it's this…" It happens a lot, over reading comprehension questions. (Pakize, Appendix G, 37)

Another theme consituting sense of belonging is socialization. Making new friends is one of the important factors affecting persistence of adult learners in literacy course. Emel needed a change in her life because her husband was recently retired and she was bored at home, she wanted to socialize:

> My husband is at home all day, so I thought to myself, "I need a change in my life," and I registered myself to school. Engaging with people felt so good to me; I have a reason to leave home, and on top of that I made friends. (Emel, Appendix G, 38)

Zeynep mentioned her classmates as her siblings:

> I love my friends so much; we've become like siblings. We can talk about anything from our children, to our homes and jobs. Oh, and I talk a lot; sometimes I don't even let the teacher conduct the lesson. (Zeynep, Appendix G, 39)

Kadriye stated that they started meeting in the lounge, because only adult education trainer can take the key of the classroom and they had to wait for her:

> We started to chat whilst waiting for the teacher in the lounge, first of this and that, then about school and what's going on at home. Now we come early to school, we get some tea and have conversations before the lesson, it's become a habit. (Kadriye, Appendix G, 40)

Similar to Zeynep, Bedriye talked about her classmates and her adult education trainer as family members:

> We have known each other for two years. We come and go to have tea at one another's house. My teacher came to my house too; I had had an operation and she came for a visit. We've become like a family. (Bedriye, Appendix G, 41)

To sum up, adults feel that they belong to the class; even though they had an anxiety about expressing themselves at first, they realized that they are all alike. With the positive impact of socialization and helping each other, they feel themselves as a part of the class.

4.2.2 Characteristics of the adult education trainer

Another factor emerged from the interview data is characteristics of the adult education trainer. Themes under this factor are personality of the adult education trainer, supportive behavior of the adult education trainer, and teaching skills.

All participants complimented about their adult education trainer during the interviews, there was no negativity about the adult education trainers in the data. Personality of the adult education trainer is one of the important factors contributing to the persistence of adult literacy learners.

Gonca is from Rize, she has an accent specific to Black Sea region of Turkey and she mentioned her adult education trainer as a polite person:

> He's so polite, he always smiles. Mine are always wrong when I write them, but I can't even speak Turkish properly let alone write it. Funny things come out of my writings. He laughs, comes and corrects them, but what can I do? He has never raised her voice though, he's so polite. (Gonca, Appendix G, 42)

According to Kadriye, her adult education trainer is very attentive, and she appreciates her trainer's effort:

> She's so attentive, she wants us to learn. You can tell from the gleam in her eye just how much she wants us to learn. My own parents didn't spare as much effort for me, may God bless her. (Kadriye, Appendix G, 43)

Similar to Kadriye, Semra also appreciates her trainer's effort:

> He's perfect, I wish he was my primary school teacher, I would've been a professor by now. (Semra, Appendix G, 44)

Ayşe stated that her adult education trainer is like her friend, she is very kind and understanding:

> She's so kind, she doesn't look down on us, and she's like our friend. Every day before the lesson she asks us how we're doing and if we have any problems. She listens to us when we have troubles, she's such an understanding woman. We truly are very lucky, may God never take her away from us. (Ayşe, Appendix G, 45)

According to Cemile, her adult education trainer is the only reason for learning and catching up her classmates:

> He's just like my son; if it weren't for him I wouldn't have been able to learn anything. I started later than all the others, but thanks to the teacher, I've caught up to my friends. (Cemile, Appendix G, 46)

Participants expressed that encouragement coming from the adult education trainer is a very important reason to persist in the course. Reyhan stated that she could not persist in the course without support of her adult education trainer:

> I couldn't read nicely in class; when I got home, I said that "I'm quitting school, I'm never going again!" The teacher puts in so much effort for us to learn, she shows everything one by one, but I couldn't do it well. The next lesson my teacher called me. She said, "If you're close by, shall we wait for you? Where are you?" When I said, "I'm not coming again," she said, "I don't accept that at all, you're coming right now!" and convinced me. God knows, if I can read, she is the reason why. (Reyhan, Appendix G, 47)

According to Canan, her adult education trainer encourages her to be more confident about herself and her answers:

> Whenever I write an answer of a question, I show him and ask her if it's wrong; and every single time, he says, "Don't ask me if it's wrong, and ask me if it's right. That's when I'll take a look." (Canan, Appendix G, 48)

Pakize's adult education trainer encourages her to go to middle school and study more, according to Pakize:

> When I give the correct answer of a question, she says, "If you want, I'll always be by your side. We'll send you to middle school and even high school, keep going like this." She tells me to come to the other lessons in school too. She says that I can improve myself, but I work, so I can only make it to this class. (Pakize, Appendix G, 49)

Yasemin's adult education trainer encourages her by reminding which difficulties she faced and managed:

> Sometimes I get a feeling that tells me that I'm definitely not going to pass my class. I tell the teacher that I think I might not make it, too. Then he asks me so many things about the kids, work and housework, and asks me how I do all those. He says, "If you can do these, you can do the exam, there's nothing to it!" and I relax when he says so. He's such a good man. (Yasemin, Appendix G, 50)

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About teaching skills; storytelling and strategies for the usage of literacy skills are followed by adult education trainers as participants of this study told. Semra stated that her adult education trainer is a funny person and he told stories for each topic to attract their attention:

> The lessons are so fun; the teacher is such a hilarious person. He nearly has a story for every topic. He says, "Wait! There's actually a story about this…" and begins to tell us the tale. He tells us interesting things and he's funny, I laugh a lot. When I can't think of something, I ask myself, "What was the story of this?" and try to guess it from there. (Semra, Appendix G, 51)

Zeynep's adult education trainer has a strategy to improve adult learners' reading skills in the class:

> When you read a book and tell the teacher, she has a list, she puts a tick next to your name. She asks at the beginning of the lesson if anyone has read a book since the previous lesson. She then tells us who got how many ticks. Before, I couldn't read a lot of books; then I noticed I got faster and could understand. I realized that working hard is the key to success. (Zeynep, Appendix G, 52)

Ayşe's adult education trainer wanted them to write a diary to use writing skills in their everyday lives and adopt a habit:

> Our teacher said, "Write a diary, your writing skills will improve, you will have written every day. Then decorate it, draw pictures in it," and I write in it with utmost care. (Ayşe, Appendix G, 53)

To sum up, adult education trainer is also another important factor contributing to persistence of the participants. Adult education trainers were mentioned as kind, caring, smiling, and encouraging individuals during the interviews. In addition, how adult education trainers support and teach them affect persistence of the adult learners positively.

4.3   External factors

Categories emerging under external factors (in Table 7) are verbal support, adult learners' close surroundings as students' guardian, and facilitating life demands.

Table 7. Themes Under External Factors

Category	Themes	Number of Participants
Verbal support	Making someone proud	14
People as guardian	Helping with homework	6
	Active role in enrollment	5
Facilitating	Facilitating life demands	6

4.3.1 Verbal support

Fourteen participants stated that they receive verbal support from their family, friends, workmates, and other people composing their social environment. Saadet has a friend attending activities in public education center and her friend supports her to persist:

> I have a friend who comes to the public education center, she comes for the choir. She said, "You should go too, don't ever quit, keep going, I'm with you." She's very supportive of me. Like, we had another friend, she quit. So, she says, "For crying out loud, don't you quit!" (Saadet, Appendix G, 54)

> According to Feride, her children are proud of her:

> My children are proud of me. My son said to me, "Mum I'm so happy for you. You can take care of yourself, you don't need anyone's help anymore." He's even relieved about it; if something ever happened to me I wouldn't have been able to call the ambulance. He said it's good that I did this. I did something that would make them proud of me; you can't compare this happiness to another. (Feride, Appendix G, 55)

> According to Halide, students learning English at the private language

training center that Halide works in are supporting her verbally:

> My children [students in the private language teaching institution] say, "Go on and read this sentence," and get happy when I do. They say, "Halide, you're reading!" They encourage me by saying, "Read it again, read it faster." (Halide, Appendix G, 56)

> Yasemin's sister is also proud of her and she expresses her support verbally:

> My sister said to me, "You're the most ambitious woman I've ever seen in my life, I knew you could do this too, oh I'm so happy!" She's proud of me, she has always supported my decision and will carry on supporting me until I get my diploma. (Yasemin, Appendix G, 57)

Only Gonca does not receive any verbal support from her social environment except her adult education trainer and friends from the class, because only her family knows that she is illiterate, and her husband does not support her to go to the class.

4.3.2 People as guardian

Another theme is close surroundings as guardian involving receiving help to do homework and active role of people in decision making and enrollment. Six of the participants mentioned helping with homework as a social support coming from social environment. Meral's daughter is helping her:

> My youngest daughter helps me while I do my homework. When I'm studying how to write, she says "I'll read, and you write. Okay, mum?" Then she checks if I've written it correctly or if I have a mistake. (Meral, Appendix G, 58)

Bedriye's daughter-in-law is primary school teacher and she helps Bedriye:

> She checks my homework, ask if I need anything or if she can help me whenever they come to our house. The so-called "stranger", cares about me more than my own children. (Bedriye, Appendix G, 59)

In addition to help with homework; five participants stated that they were enrolled in the basic literacy course with the help of their children, spouse, neighbor, and the mukhtar. Kadriye's son registered her and came to public education center to talk to adult education trainer:

> My son said to me, "Mum would you like to go to the public education center, or shall I get you a private tutor?" I didn't want to be a burden on my son, I said I'd go to the public education center and he called here because it was so close to home. He took my hand and registered me. He came to the first day of school with me and talked to the teacher, gave her his number and said, "I am her guardian, if anything happens call me, she's all yours." (Kadriye, Appendix G, 60)

Similar to Kadriye, Zeynep's husband had an active role in enrollment and he met trainer:

> Because I was working, my husband had a look for me to find which public education center had evening classes. He came here with me twice; first to register me, then to meet my teacher. (Zeynep, Appendix G, 61)

Nermin received help of her neighbor to enroll and she had to talk to the muhktar to enroll in the course:

> I first came to the public education center with my neighbor's daughter. I wanted to get registered, but they said, "There is no more room, come and get registered next year." I went so many times to talk to them afterwards. I told them I wanted to join, but they said I couldn't. I cried so much that I wouldn't get in. In the end, I went to the muhktar and told him about the situation. Thanks to him immediately calling here, they registered me. (Nermin, Appendix G, 62)

4.3.3 Facilitation

Six participants stated that their lives are facilitated by some members of family and workmates that help adult learners with managing some daily responsibilities. According to Meral, her employer cares about her life and supports her in decision to go to basic literacy course:

> Bless her heart, the lady I work for always asks me if I have a lesson on that day or not. If I do, she lets me off early by telling me to leave early, rest and prepare for my lesson. (Meral, Appendix G, 63)

Pakize is working at a shopping mall as a cashier, her manager allows her to leave job for two hours and then she comes back to work:

> Even if the shopping mall is crowded or not, my manager always lets me off at the time of my lesson and my workmates cover my shift. As soon as the lesson ends, I go back and continue to work. (Pakize, Appendix G, 64)

Canan is receiving help from her mother and daughter for childcare:

> I have a son who is still young. My mother takes care of him; if she is busy, I come to school a little later than usual, because I wait for my daughter. When she comes home, I come to class. (Canan, Appendix G, 65)

Cemile has her own store and she must manage who will take care of the clothing store when she is at the course:

When I came to the class, I made an agreement with one of my friends to take care of the shop. Sometimes she gets busy, so before I come, I talk to others, to make sure someone suitable looks after the store. (Cemile, Appendix G, 66)

Feride is looking after her grandchild and sometimes she could not manage the situation:

Since my daughter works, sometimes I have to look after my grandchild. One time I brought him here too, but I couldn't focus on what the teacher was saying or what we were doing. Sometimes I don't come to look after him. (Feride, Appendix G, 67)

To sum up, external factors contributing to the persistence of the adult learners are being supported verbally by people in their social circle, existence of someone helping them and acting like student's guardian to make sure they are persisting in the course, and existence of people to facilitate management of life demands like childcare and work.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Findings of this study are discussed in this chapter through the contribution of individual, institutional, and external factors on persistence, of adult learners in the literacy course. This chapter discusses findings in relation to the literature.

Eighteen participants were interviewed, and data was collected through semi-structured interviews. To see how different contexts would influence the persistence of adult learners, participants who currently enrolled in Level-II Literacy courses were selected from four different public education centers.

5.1 Contribution of individual factors on persistence

Findings of this study under individual factors are, personal drives to step into action and perception of having the student role. This section discusses individual factors in relation to the literature. In addition, challenges of being an adult learner faced by persisted adults are discussed.

5.1.1 Contribution of personal drives to step into action

Personal drives to step into action, include answers of two specific research questions of this study; how the source of motivation and the goals that contribute to the persistence of the adult learners.

The reason for participating is one of the important individual factors that contribute to persistence; adult learners who persisted in the literacy course, keep in mind their reason to participate with Wlodkowski (2008).

While reasons for participation are examined, it is easily seen that only Halide's motivation to participate in the literacy course has an external source. She participated in the course because it was requested by her employer. Therefore, her source of motivation, was not to lose her job. However, during the interview she indicated that she loves coming to the class even when she is tired; she set some other goals and she believes in herself. She persisted in the course intrinsically, even though the source of her initial motivation was external. Internal motivation influences adult learners' persistence more than external motivation, because adults become more motivated when they understand personal value of what they learn (Mkhwanazi, 2001). According to Mkhwanazi (2001), persistence is inevitable when adults understand the value of learning and what they learn, because they are driven by an inner force to stay in the program. For example, Feride stated that, she is not getting lost anymore because she can read and Saadet said that, she wants to be independent by improving her reading and writing skills. These examples show that they understand the value of what they are doing.

According to Yıldız (2006); older adults participate in the literacy courses, because they had responsibilities, such as taking care of children and working, and they did not give priority to themselves. In line with the study, Yıldız (2006), Saadet and Semra expressed that, they had decided to participate in the literacy course, because they became concerned about their literacy.

While Knight (2000) indicated that, adults have drastic goals and great expectations about going on a literacy course; based on studies in Turkey, illiterate adults' have simple goals, like using transportation and going to the hospital because understanding of literacy is limited (Yıldız, 2006). However, there are both drastic and simple goals of participants in this study; they have course-specific (reading

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fluently, passing exam, and reading comprehension), diploma related (gaining driving license, enrolling in secondary and high school, and university, finding a job), and private goals (writing a book, learning English, or teaching the Qur'an). Similar to Comings et al. (1997) and Beder (1990); obtaining a diploma, self-improvement, seeking escape from boredom, and job advancements, are common goals affecting the participation and persistence of adult literacy learners, who participated in this study.

Goal setting should be in accordance within the learning ability of the adult learners, and expectations must be shaped in the learning environment, according to Gelegay, (2015). For example, Halide wants to learn English and go around the world after completing the literacy course. She is 68 years old and she expressed the difficulties she had, due to her age. Her goal does not seem realistic, even though she had high expectations about the course; however, she persisted in the course and she had never skipped any classes.

In addition to setting goals, making progress also affects the persistence of adult learners. Participants of this study are from the Level-II Literacy course and they persisted in the first level of the course. Their goal was to gain basic reading and writing skills at first, which they achieved and then they set even higher ones. During the interviews, the participants expressed that, they knew how to read and write, but they now wanted more. As Bujack (2012) and Reston (1990) indicated, achieving goals is an important factor in influencing the persistence of adult learners; because making progress results in, believing in themselves and having positive attitudes towards playing the student role.

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5.1.2 Contribution of perception of having the student role

Perception of the student role emerged when the research question was answered: "Do attitude, perception and personal value contribute to persistence? If so, how?"

Participants who believe in themselves, made positive remarks about their self-worth, which is in line with studies of Ziegler et al. (2006) and Comings et al. (1999). Gonca, Leman, Feride, and Yasemin, all had positive statements about themselves during the interview. Gonca stated that, she feels more confident, Leman said, she made her decision, Feride believes that, she can do anything she wants to and supports her idea with the example of knitting, while Yasemin said that, coming to the class is the only thing she does for herself.

According to Reston (1990) and Reynold and Johnson (2014), gaining literacy skills lowers adults' dependency to other people and it leads to the increase in self-confidence, it results in positive attitudes and perception regarding being a student in turn. Gonca indicated that, she feels more confident after participating in the literacy course. In addition, Yasemin said that, coming to the class makes her day happier and she wished to have more classes per week.

5.1.3 Challenges of being an adult learner

Some of the challenges that illiterate people face in their daily lives, are the fear of failure and the problems related to age. There are no factors that contribute to the persistence; there are challenges that illiterate adults bring from their own personal backgrounds (Rovai, 2003). Even if they have negative experiences, problems or thoughts that some learners have, the adult learners tend to cope with their negative effects, due to other factors contributing to persistence, as can be seen in Figure 2.
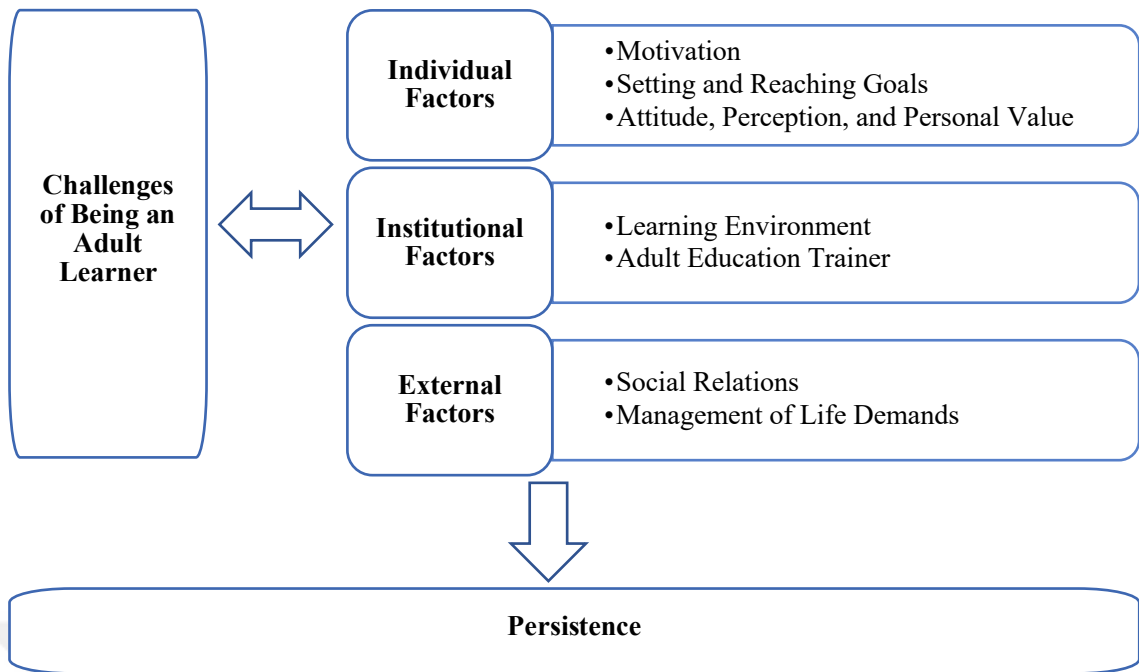
Figure 2. Interaction between challenges of being and adult learner and persistence

In this study, participants mentioned that using transportation, going to the doctors, or the bank or the notary, these are difficult activities for illiterate adults. As Canan, Nermin, and Saadet pointed out, they had difficulties of being illiterate in daily life and their common experiences are related to being ashamed of their illiteracy. Reston (1990) and Reynold and Johnson (2014) indicated that being dependent on others is one of the characteristics of illiterate adults. They are always in need of someone, who can read and write, to manage their daily lives, like going to hospital, using transportation, and making phone calls. In addition, one of the findings of the study conducted by Babayiğit and Gökçe (2018) indicated that, managing daily life is a common participation problem in Turkey, because they must continually ask for help and may even feel ashamed in return.

Donaldson and Graham (1999) stated that, the lack of trust in academic abilities is an important factor affecting the persistence of adult learners. While some participants believe in themselves, others have some negative thoughts about learning, or becoming a student from time to time. It is related to the integration of

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the student role, into life (Gartner, 2005). According to Fagan (1991) and Leger (1996); meeting new people, having the lack of concentration, the lack of trust and uncertainty, are some stressors originated from being a student. These stressors can be handled through motivation and goals. Even though Canan, Zeynep, and Bedriye are afraid of failure and the lack of trust, they persisted in the course. Furthermore, findings of this study also showed that anxiety which existed at the beginning of the course, can be overcome by understanding that they are not alone. There are other people having common experiences regarding being illiterate as stated by Cemile, Emel, and Feride. As Reynold and Johnson (2014) stated, adults feel that they belong to the learning environment, because adult learners have common and shared experiences and goals.

The study conducted by Gökçe and Yıldız (2018) on reasons for non-participating in the literacy programs, indicated a decrease in mental abilities, because of aging and being employed are reasons for non-participation. However, even though some participants expressed that they have physical and mental problems (visual impairment and lack of concentration) due to aging and 13 out of 18 participants are actively working, they persisted. This inference can imply that persistence cannot emerge because of a single factor, it needs an interaction between different factors.

5.2 Contribution of institutional factors on persistence

Findings of this study under institutional factors are having the sense of belonging and the characteristics of an adult educational trainer. This section discusses institutional factors in relation to the relevant literature.

5.2.1 Contribution of sense of belonging

Sense of belonging emerged as the answer to one of the research questions, of how the learning environment contributes to the persistence of adult learners, in basic literacy programs.

Sense of belonging, bond with the learning community, relationships with adult education trainer and the peers. These factors affect the persistence of adult learners, according to the study of Spivey (2016). Themes found that under the institutional factors in this study, it covered the findings of Spivey's (2016) study.

Yıldız (2006) indicated that having a limited social life is one of the characteristics of unemployed illiterate adults, especially for women; participating in a literacy course can be seen as an opportunity to make new friends. Socialization has a contributing impact on persistence said Emel, Zeynep, Kadriye, and Bedriye. They stated that they are family; they know each other, and they can talk about everything. Emel also mentioned that, she was bored at home and making new friends is one of the reasons to keep her coming to the course.

İnce (2008) indicated that adults in the literacy course are eager to share their experiences, exchange ideas, and help each other. In line with İnce (2008), this study showed that socialization is one of the factors impacting persistence. Emel stated that being involved in society is very important. Kadriye mentioned how they exchange their ideas and talk about their lives. Zeynep and Bedriye expressed that they become family. In addition, Bedriye said that they are not only peers in the classroom, they also visit each other in their private lives.

Support from peers is influential to persist in the course and achieve their goals. Developing interpersonal relations and being committed to the community of learners, are essential for persisting according to Rovai (2003) and Donaldson and

Graham (1999). Regarding helping each other; participants thought that the one who knows should help the others, and all participants mentioned, the importance of help in the learning environment. Interaction among adults in the classroom and cooperation increase engagement of adults (Reynold & Johnson, 2014).

5.2.2 Contribution of characteristics of adult education trainer

Characteristics of the adult education trainer emerged as the answer of one of the specific research questions which was, "Do adult educational trainers contribute to persistence? If so, how?"

Adult education trainers should be aware of instructing adult learners and their different needs, goals, and experiences comparing to primary school children. Plus, they should know the characteristics of adult learners (Knowles, 1980; Knowles et al., 2005; Rodrigues, 2012). Adults have more responsibilities in their lives, and they can be demotivated by some factors (İnce, 2008). Participants expressed that their adult education trainers are kind, caring, and they can understand their reasons for not being able to carry out some responsibilities of being a student, due to occupations, childcare, and house related jobs.

Support from an adult education trainer is one of the most important factors impacting the persistence of adult learners. As Gelegay (2015) indicated that, adult education trainers have an important role to play in for shaping the expectations and goals of adult learners, by instruction and feedback. For example, Pakize's adult educational trainer, gives her feedback, so that she will support her to go into secondary school and high school.

Bedriye's relationship with her adult educational trainer, waits for the "Well done!" praise, after giving an answer in class, is in line with this study of Idoko

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(2018) that mentioned, showing approval is a way to encourage learners, in the learning environment. It shows that external motivation used by the adult education trainer is also important to keep learners in the process.

Making connections with daily life is one of the responsibilities of the adult education trainer (Idoko, 2018; Knowles et al., 2005) and it is in line with the adult education trainer, who suggests participants should keep a diary. With the help of this suggestion, adult learners use writing skills in their daily lives, if diary keeping is adopted as a habit.

Motivation, practice, and time management are important aspects of instruction (Gartner, 2005). For example, Canan expressed that her adult education trainer invites her to attend other Level-II Literacy courses as well, in the Üsküdar Public Education Center, to practice and learn faster; because adult learners need more time to learn literacy skills (İnce, 2008).

Creating and maintaining a supportive environment is one of the responsibilities that adult education trainers and staff in the institution should have according to Comings et al. (1999) and Holland (2003). For example, Ayşe, Bedriye, and others played "Ring around the Roses", together with their adult education trainer on their first day; this play made Ayşe happy to be there. This activity functioned as an icebreaker in the process of creating a positive learning environment.

Another essential responsibility for the adult education trainer to keep the adults motivated, is to support them when they have no social support, according to Dubois (as cited in Holland, 2003). Because just as nobody knew that Gonca is going on a literacy course and her husband wants her to drop out; she has no support from

her social environment. During the interview she stated that, she is only encouraged by her adult education trainer.

It is important that adult learners want their adult education trainer to care about them (Donaldson & Graham, 1999; Gelagay, 2015; Idoko, 2018; Reynold & Johnson, 2014). Reyhan stated that, her adult education trainer calls up the adult learners when they do not show up in the class. The trainer even called Reyhan to change her decision from dropping out. Ayşe told us that, her adult education trainer asked about their lives and her education trainer visited her home, when Ayşe had an operation. Kadriye said that, her own mother has not cared about her like her adult education trainer has.

5.3 Contribution of external factors on persistence

Findings of this study under external factors are, verbal support, people as guardians, and facilitation of responsibilities. This section discusses external factors in relation to the literature.

Two categories named as verbal support and people as guardians emerged as answers of the research question that, "Do social relations contribute to persistence? If so, how?"

5.3.1 Contribution of verbal support

Social support, that is encouragement by friends and family, is one of the motivators helping adults persist on the literacy course (Comings et al., 1999; Donaldson & Graham, 1999; Ford, 2016; Mkhwanazi, 2001; Rovai, 2003); participants mentioned how they are supported by their families, friends, workmates, neighbors, and managers during the interviews.

As Comings et al. (1999) indicated, that verbal encouragement is a very important factor; it is in line with this study, verbal support from spouses, children, neighbors, and workmates are one of the external factors affecting persistence. Receiving verbal support from the social environment, makes the participants of this study happy and more powerful to move on. Verbal support coming from the social environment is also about making someone proud.

It is very important for adults to hear that their family are proud of them (Reynold & Johnson, 2014). For example, Yasemin's sister thinks that, Yasemin is an ambitious woman and she can accomplish anything she wants. Children are the strongest supporters in adult learners' lives, because adults want to be a role model for their children according to Anderson (2011), Pinder (2011), Reston (1990), and Terry (2007). Similarly, Saadet expressed that, she wanted to be literate in order not to embarrass her child; Zeynep is studying with her daughter at home; or Kadriye enrolled in the course because she wants her son to be proud of his mother. Feride's son told his mother that, she does not need anyone and she is independent now, plus he is proud of his mother. Her son also stated that, he is no longer concerned about his mother, because she is able to call an ambulance on her own if needed.

In addition, students in the English Language Training Center and her friends from work, encouraged Halide to practice literacy skills more.

According to Bandura (as cited in Thomas, 2011); friends, who participated in adult education activities before, encourage adults to persist more than others, because they know the value and the positive outcomes of learning. Similar with this study, Saadet has a friend who participates in the chorus activity, in a public education center and Saadet stated that her friend supports her all the time to keep on going.

5.3.2 Contribution of people as guardian

In addition to the verbal support; there are other supports given by family and friends, like helping with homework, being in the decision-making process of adults to participate in the course and taking participants to the public education center to enroll in the program. There are important external factors helping them persist in the literacy course. However, there were no findings related to this theme, specifically mentioning helping with homework and having an active role in enrollment, within the national and international literature.

5.3.3 Contribution of facilitation

Facilitation emerged as an answer of the specific research question under the external factors on how management of life, demands contribute to persistence.

With regards to the management of life demands, such as, finances, employment, health issues, and childcare; there are reasons to drop out if they are not managed, according to Comings et al. (1999) and Holland (2003). Similarly, childcare and employment are common life demands stated by participants of this study. Some participants mentioned that, they participated in a literacy course once or twice before, but they had to drop out because of their children, workload, and health issues. In addition, some participants have problems related to childcare and work currently. However, they found a way to manage them and so that they can continue on.

The ones who could not manage their life demands, participated in the course again, after their children become grown-ups; for example, Saadet said that she could not find someone to take care her child and she took his son to the class, but her adult

education trainer did not allow it. So, she had to drop out from the course. Now, her sons are 18 and 22 years old, and she can attend the course.

Managers or employers of the participants who are employed are also very supportive; they help their employees to handle the problems related to their work. Even the shopping center that Pakize works in, is very crowded; Pakize's manager sends her to the course while her workmates compensate her work place. Meral's employer also supports her. She allows Meral to leave early, get some rest and study before the course.

According to Comings et al. (1999), Edwards (2003), Gelegay (2015), and Holland (2003); adults need to arrange time schedules for everyday barriers, like making plans for mealtime, doing homework, doing house related works, and finding someone for childcare. Some participants stated that, they have to manage life demands day to day. Canan has a three-year-old son and she must plan for who is going to take care of him. She asks for help from her mother, but if her mother is busy, she then asks for help from her daughter and waits at home until she comes. Canan manages this problem by going to the course late. Another example is that Cemile has a clothing store and she needs someone to stay at the store. Even though she made an agreement with one of her friends on taking care of the store, when she is attending the course, she has to find someone else as a backup.

In this chapter, the contribution of the individual, institutional, and external factors are discussed in relation to the relevant literature. Findings of this study are not very different from those of persistence studies conducted in higher education and basic literacy programs, which are covered in the literature review.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND FINAL REMARKS

This study was conducted to find out factors that contribute to persistence of adult learners in the literacy course. Since one out of two adult learners drop out from literacy programs, it is important to reveal which factors help them stay in the program. In this context; adult literacy, literacy programs and characteristics of adults participating in these programs were reviewed at first. Then, persistence and persistence factors impacting adult learners in the literacy courses were discussed within the available literature. A semi-structured interview was conducted with 18 participants from different adult education centers to understand which factors affected their persistence.

The main research question of this study, had several specific questions regarding the contribution of individual, institutional, and external factors, for the persistence of adult learners in basic literacy programs.

Under individual factors, it is found that the source of motivation, contributes to the persistence of adult learners. Having a personal desire to participate in the program, reminds adult learners about their reason, for making the decision to be literate and contribute to their persistence in the program; participation motives are highly related to be persistence. Firstly, these drives help to persist the adults in the program, to care about themselves, resulting from being retired, to having grown-up children, to the request of the employer who all will to learn literacy skills. Secondly, goals contribute to the persistence of adults in the basic literacy programs, because adults make up their decision to participate and persist on achieving their own goals.

Lastly, having a positive attitude and perception, plus personal value, all contribute to persistence. They are aware of their responsibilities as a learner, they realize that they are more confident after participating in the course, and they have an excitement about learning and being involved in the class. In this context, characteristics of adult learners in basic literacy programs and their experiences are very important to understand how they persist.

The challenges of being an adult learner are, personal background characteristics, like aging, having negative feelings and experiences about being illiterate, have an important role in persistence; although these factors lead to dropping out, they could be overcome by the help of other factors contributing to persistence. Adult learners in the literacy course may have a fear of failure and lack of trust. However, these feelings motivate them to study more and more to succeed. In addition, older participants expressed that they have some physical and cognitive problems related to aging; yet, this is also not a factor hindering their persistence. Adults expressed that they had an anxiety before the course, but it had gone after understanding that they have more common and shared experiences. As a recommendation, to provide access to services for guidance may have an important role to help adults coping with these challenges (National Research Council, 2012).

Institutional factors contributing to having more persistence, are found as a sense of belonging and the character of the adult education trainer. Supportive learning environment contributes to the persistence of adult learners. Sense of belonging motivates adults to persist in the course through interacting with other adults in the class. In addition to this, their similarities, help one another and socialization is an important aspect of being a part of the learning community.

Secondly, competence from the adult education trainer contributes to persistence, because adult learners mentioned about their adult education trainer's personality, how supportive they are, and how they teach, with regards to how they persist in the course. Principles of adult learning has an important place in this context. Teachers working in public education centers, may be trained about adult learning. Some implications for adult education and adult learning regarding competency of the adult education trainer is (Cochran & Brown, 2016):

- Making class activities more relevant by connecting life experiences of adults and learning material.

- Designing activities that attract adult learners' attention.

- Encouraging adult learners to share their experiences and to speak up.

- Motivating and encouraging adults for collaboration with peers.

- Addressing expectations of adults to understand their readiness and to provide support to set goals.

- Keeping adult learners engaged and supporting them to practice what they have learnt to their lives.

- Creating a learning environment where adult learners feel valued, cared, and respected.

Under external factors helping adult literacy learners to persist, it is found that the supportive social relations contribute to the persistence. Thus, by making people proud of learning literacy skills and having feedback about it, plus having people around who helped them enroll, in the course and who helped them with their homework. Secondly, the management of life demands, contributes to the persistence of people who handle their personal issues, such as childcare and work. In that sense,

public education centers may support adult learners, by offering childcare service (National Research Council, 2012).

In the following sections, limitations of this study and recommendations for future studies are discussed.

6.1 Limitations

The limitations of this study can be:

- In this study, it was planned to conduct interviews between 45 minutes to one hour. However, interviews took maximum 20 minutes; since participants claimed that they had no time for a longer interview.

- Data collection was done within Ramadan dates, most of the participants stopped coming to the courses that resulted in fewer interviews than planned.

- Data collection was done at the end of the semester, because it was planned to collect data from adult learners, who persisted in the Level-II Literacy course; however, the range of dates of the courses was different from center to center. Only courses that were going to be completed soon, were chosen during data collection that limited public education centers which were in Beşiktaş, Kadıköy, Şişli, and Üsküdar districts were visited.

6.2 Recommendations for future studies

It is important to understand which factors contribute to the persistence of adult learners in literacy programs. Recommendations for further studies can be:

- Data from observations and interviews with an adult education trainer, can be used to reach more comprehensive findings, in addition to the data from interviews, with persisted adult learners.

- In addition to persisted adult learners, data from the interviews with the ones who dropped out from the course, can also be useful to reveal the strategies to keep them in the course.

- Studies using an ethnographic method, can provide more rich and in-depth data to understand the persistence of adult learners and prevent them from dropping-out.

APPENDIX A

ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

T.C.

BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ

Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Yüksek Lisans ve Doktora Tezleri Etik İnceleme Komisyonu

Sayı: 2019-28

28 Mart 2019

Işık Yılmaz

Eğitim Bilimleri

Sayın Araştırmacı,

"Okuma-Yazma Kurslarına Katılan Yetişkin Öğrenenlerin Programdaki Kalıcılığını Destekleyen ve Engelleyen Faktörler" başlıklı projeniz ile ilgili olarak yaptığınız SBB-EAK 2019/34 sayılı başvuru komisyonumuz tarafından 28 Mart 2019 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi İnci Ayhan

Prof. Dr. Feyza Çorapçı

Doç. Dr. Mehmet Yiğit Gürdal

Doç. Dr. Ebru Kaya

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şebnem Yalçın

APPENDIX B

DIRECTORATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

APPROVAL

T.C.
İSTANBUL VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 59090411-20-E.7698536   16/04/2019
Konu : Anket ve Araştırma İzin Talebi

VALİLİK MAKAMINA

İlgi: a) 11.03.2019 tarihli ve 5120892 Gelen Evrak No'lu dilekçe.
     b) MEB. Yen. ve Eğ. Tk. Gn. Md. 22.08.2017 tarih ve 12607291/ 2017/25 No'lu Gen.
     c) Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü Araştırma ve Anket Komisyonunun 16.04.2019 tarihli tutanağı.

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü yüksek lisans öğrencisi Işık YILMAZ'ın **"Okuma Yazma Kurslarına Katılan Yetişkin Öğrenenlerin Programdaki Kalıcılığını Destekleyen ve Engelleyen Faktörler"** konulu tezi kapsamında, ilimiz genelinde bulunan Halk Eğitimi Merkezlerinde; görüşme soru formunu uygulama istemi hakkındaki ilgi (a) dilekçe ve ekleri Müdürlüğümüzce incelenmiştir.

Araştırmacının söz konusu talebi; bilimsel amaç dışında kullanılmaması, **uygulama sırasında bir örneği müdürlüğümüzde muhafaza edilen mühürlü ve imzalı veri toplama araçlarının kurumlarımıza araştırmacı tarafından ulaştırılarak uygulanılması, katılımcıların gönüllülük esasına göre seçilmesi, araştırma sonuç raporunun müdürlüğümüzden izin alınmadan kamuoyuyla paylaşılmaması koşuluyla, okul idarelerinin denetim, gözetim ve sorumluluğunda, eğitim-öğretimi aksatmayacak şekilde ilgi (b) Bakanlık emri esasları dâhilinde uygulanması, sonuçtan Müdürlüğümüze rapor halinde (CD formatında) bilgi verilmesi kaydıyla** Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmektedir.

Makamlarınızca da uygun görülmesi halinde olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Menderes KAYA
İl Milli Eğitim Müdür V.

Ek:
1- Genelge.
2- Komisyon Tutanağı.

OLUR
16/04/2019

Ahmet Hamdi USTA
Vali a.
Vali Yardımcısı

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Bu evrak güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır. https://evraksorgu.meb.gov.tr adresinden 74da-25c4-3305-8803-1d9b kodu ile teyit edilebilir.

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Supporting Research Institution: Boğaziçi University

Name of the Research: Factors that contribute to persistence of adult learners in the basic literacy programs

Project Director: Assistant Professor Ayşe Caner (Phone: 0212 359 4615, E-mail address: caner@boun.edu.tr)

Name of the Researcher: Işık Yılmaz (Phone: 0538 241 3100, E-mail address: ylmaz.isik@gmail.com)

Dear Participant,

As a graduate student at Boğaziçi University Educational Sciences/Adult Education program, I am conducting a thesis on Factors That Contribute to Persistence of Adult Learners in Basic Literacy Programs. The aim of this study is to find the factors that affect adult students' persistence in the basic literacy programs. The study was approved by The Ethics Committee for Master and PhD Theses in Social Sciences and Humanities and the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education. The Director of the Public Education Center, Assistant Principals and your adult education trainer were informed about the study.

If you agree to participate in this research, interviews about your experiences in the literacy course that will take forty-five to sixty minutes will be conducted in a cafeteria of the Public Education Center, in an available room or in a meeting place in accordance with your preference. Interview will be tape recorded with your permission and interview notes will be taken.

In this study, your personal information will be kept confidential, your personal information will not be included in the publications or presentations of the research results at the end of the study. All data obtained after the interview will only be used for scientific purposes and will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw your consent at any stage of the work; if you withdraw, the data collected from you will be destroyed and the tape recordings will be deleted.

If you would like to receive additional information about the research, please contact Assist. Prof. Ayşe Caner (Phone: 0212 359 4615, E-mail address: caner@boun.edu.tr). You may consult with The Ethics Committee for Master and PhD Theses in Social Sciences and Humanities.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign the form.

……………………………….

I understood what was told and what was written above. I got a sample of this form. I agree to participate in the study.

Name and Surname: ……………………………...

Signature: ……………………………………...…

Date (day / month / year): ..../.........../............

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM (TURKISH)

Araştırmayı destekleyen kurum: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi

Araştırmanın adı: Okuma-yazma kurslarına katılan yetişkin öğrenenlerin

programdaki kalıcılığını destekleyen ve engelleyen faktörler

Proje Yürütücüsü: Doktor Öğretim Üyesi Ayşe Caner (Telefonu: 0212 359 4615, e-

posta adresi: caner@boun.edu.tr)

Araştırmacının adı: Işık Yılmaz (Telefonu: 0538 241 3100, e-posta adresi:

ylmaz.isik@gmail.com)

Sayın katılımcı,

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri/Yetişkin Eğitimi programı yüksek lisans

öğrencisi olarak "Okuma-Yazma Kurslarına Katılan Yetişkin Öğrenenlerin

Programdaki Kalıcılığını Destekleyen ve Engelleyen Faktörler" başlıklı tez

çalışmasını yürütmekteyim. Bu çalışmanın amacı, yetişkin öğrencilerin temel

okuryazarlık programlarına devam etmelerini etkileyen faktörleri bulmaktır.

Araştırma ile ilgili Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimler Yüksek Lisans ve

Doktora Tezleri Etik İnceleme Komisyonu'ndan (SOBETİK) ve İstanbul İl Milli

Eğitim Müdürlüğü'nden onay alınmış; Halk Eğitimi Merkezi Müdürü, Müdür

Yardımcıları ve kurs eğitmeniniz araştırma konusunda bilgilendirilmiştir.

Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz, sizinle okuma-yazma kursunda yaşadığınız

deneyimler ile ilgili yaklaşık kırk beş-altmış dakika sürmesi planlanan bir görüşme

yapılacak, görüşmelerde izninizle ses kaydı alınacak ve görüşme notu tutulacaktır.

Görüşme, sizin tercihiniz doğrultusunda Halk Eğitimi Merkezi kafeteryasında, boş

bir sınıfta veya önereceğiniz görüşmeye uygun bir yerde gerçekleştirilecektir.

Bu araştırmada kişisel bilgileriniz gizli tutulacaktır, çalışma sona erdikten sonra araştırma sonuçlarından yapılacak yayın veya sunumlarda kişisel bilgileriniz kesinlikle yer almayacaktır. Yapılan görüşme sonrasında elde edilen tüm veriler yalnızca bilimsel amaçlarla kullanılacak ve araştırma bittikten sonra imha edilecektir.

Çalışmaya katılımınız tamamen isteğinize bağlıdır. Sizden ücret talep edilmeyecek ve size herhangi bir ödeme yapılmayacaktır. Çalışmanın herhangi bir aşamasında onayınızı geri çekebilirsiniz; geri çekildiğiniz takdirde o ana kadar sizden toplanmış olan veriler kâğıt öğütücüden geçirilerek yok edilecek, ses kayıtları silinecektir.

Araştırma hakkında ek bilgi almak istediğiniz takdirde Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü Doktor Öğretim Üyesi Ayşe Caner ile temasa geçebilir (Telefon: 0212 359 4615, e-posta adresi: caner@boun.edu.tr), araştırma ile ilgili haklarınız konusunda Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimler Yüksek Lisans ve Doktora Tezleri Etik İnceleme Komisyonu'na (SOBETİK) danışabilirsiniz.

Eğer bu çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorsanız, lütfen formu imzalayınız.

………………………………

Bana anlatılanları ve yukarıda yazılanları anladım. Bu formun bir örneğini aldım. Çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorum.

Katılımcı Adı-Soyadı: …………………………...

İmzası: …………………………………...…

Tarih (gün/ay/yıl): ..../.........../............

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How old are you?

2. Are you working?

3. Are you married?

   If yes, what is your husband's profession? What is his educational status?

4. Do you have children?

   If yes, what are their ages? Are they working? What are their educational

   backgrounds?

5. Have you ever been to school or participated in any adult education course?

   If yes, how long did you go to school? Why didn't you persist? If you

   participated in the course, which course or courses did you participate in?

6. Why did you want to participate in the literacy course?

   Additional questions: What was your intention to participate in literacy

   course? What were the reasons that led you to participate in the course? Can

   you explain that?

7. Have you reached this goal after participating in the course?

   Additional questions: If yes, what have you reached, can you explain with

   examples? If partially, what have you reached, what have you not reached?

   Can you explain with examples? If not, why do you participate in the course

   even if you are not?

8. You persisted in the course while some participants drop out. What are the

   main reasons for not dropping out of the course? Could you explain that,

   please?

9. How does it feel to be a student? Were you worried about being a student before you started the course?

   Additional questions: If yes, can you explain why? Have your concerns changed after you started the course? What was your belief that you would succeed as a student? Did you believe you could succeed? If yes, why? If not, why? Can you explain that?

10. How is the learning environment in the course? Positive or negative?

    Additional questions: How is your relationship with friends? Do you see yourself as part of the course environment? Does this make you feel that you are valuable? Can you share your opinions and thoughts with ease? Could you please explain with examples?

11. How is your relationship with the adult education trainer in the course?

    Additional questions: Does your adult education trainer show you that he or she believes that you support and can do it? Can you explain with examples? Do you find your adult education trainer successful in teaching to read and write? Did he or she make it easier for you to learn to read and write? How?

12. Have your family, spouse, children, friends, and relatives supported you to participate in the literacy course? What did they say or do? Can you explain with examples?

13. Have you had any difficulties in your life since you participated in the literacy course? What have you experienced? Can you explain with examples?

    Additional questions: If yes, in which areas of your life did you have problems (such as housework, child care, other responsibilities)? How did you deal with these problems?

14. Were there other factors that allowed you to persist without dropping out of the course? What was it? Would you please explain?

15. Are there any other things that you would like to say, to add on this topic? If so, please specify.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (TURKISH)

1. Kaç yaşındasınız?

2. Çalışıyor musunuz?

3. Evli misiniz?

   Evet ise, eşinizin mesleği nedir? Eğitim durumu nedir?

4. Çocuğunuz var mı?

   Evet ise, yaşları nedir? Çalışıyorlar mı? Eğitim durumları nedir?

5. Daha önce okula gittiniz mi ya da kursa katıldınız mı?

   Evet ise, okula ne kadar süre gittiniz? Neden devam etmediniz? Kursa katıldı

   ise hangi kursa katıldınız?

6. Neden okuma-yazma kursuna katılmak istediniz?

   Ek sorular: Okuma-yazma kursuna katılma amacınız neydi? Sizi kursa

   katılmaya iten nedenler nelerdi? Açıklar mısınız?

7. Kursa katıldıktan sonra bu amaçlarınıza ulaştınız mı?

   Ek sorular: Evet ise, nelere ulaştınız, örneklerle açıklar mısınız? Kısmen ise,

   nelere ulaştınız, nelere ulaşamadınız? Örneklerle açıklar mısınız? Hayır ise,

   ulaşamadığınız halde neden kursa devam ediyorsunuz?

8. Bazı katılımcılar kursu bırakırken siz devam ettiniz. Kursu bırakmayıp devam

   etmenizin temel nedenleri nelerdir? Açıklar mısınız lütfen?

9. Öğrenci olmak nasıl bir duygu? Kursa başlamadan önce öğrenci olmak sizi

   kaygılandırmış mıydı?

   Ek sorular: Evet ise, neden, açıklar mısınız? Kursa başladıktan sonra bu

   kaygılarınız değişti mi, nasıl? Öğrenci olarak başarılı olacağınıza dair

inancınız nasıldı? Başarabileceğinize inanıyor muydunuz? Evet ise, neden? Hayır ise, neden? Açıklar mısınız?

10. Kurstaki öğrenme ortamı nasıl? Olumlu mu, olumsuz mu?

Ek sorular: Kurstaki arkadaşlarınızla ilişkiniz nasıl? Kendinizi kurstaki ortamın bir parçası olarak görüyor musunuz? Bu ortam değerli olduğunuzu size hissettiriyor mu? Rahatlıkla görüşlerinizi ve düşüncelerinizi paylaşabiliyor musunuz? Lütfen örneklerle açıklar mısınız?

11. Kurstaki öğretmeninizle ilişkiniz nasıl?

Ek sorular: Sizi desteklediğiniz ve yapabileceğinize inandığını size gösteriyor mu? Örneklerle açıklar mısınız? Kurs öğretmeninizi okuma-yazmayı öğretme konusunda başarılı buluyor musunuz? Okuma-yazmayı öğrenmenizi kolaylaştırdı mı? Nasıl?

12. Aileniz, eşiniz, çocuklarınız, arkadaşlarınız ve akrabalarınız okuma-yazma kursuna katılmanızı ve devam etmenizi destekledi mi? Neler söylediler ya da yaptılar? Örneklerle açıklar mısınız?

13. Okuma-yazma kursuna katıldığınızdan dolayı hayatınızda birtakım zorluklar yaşadınız mı? Neler yaşadınız? Örneklerle açıklar mısınız?

Ek sorular: Evet ise hayatınızın hangi alanlarında (ev işleri, çocuk bakımı, diğer sorumluluklar gibi) sorunlar yaşadınız? Bu sorunlarla nasıl başa çıktınız?

14. Burada söyledikleriniz dışında sizi kursu bırakmadan devam etmenizi sağlayan başka etmenler var mıydı? Varsa nelerdi? Lütfen açıklar mısınız?

15. Bu konuştuklarımız konuda eklemek, söylemek istediğiniz başka şeyler var mı? Varsa lütfen belirtiniz.

[1] Eşimle birlikte notere gittik, evi benim üzerime yapacaktı, okumam yazmam olmadığı için imza atmadım, parmak bassam olur mu dedim. Beni çok ezdi orda. Kocam da benim yüzümden utandı. Sonrasında kursa kaydolmaya karar verdim. Okuma yazma öğrenmeyi hep istemiştim, bu olay da bana harekete geçmem için sebep oldu. (Canan)

[2] Ne zaman hastaneye gitmem gerekse benimle gelmesi için birilerini arıyordum. Doktorun adını okuyamıyorum, kağıt veriyorlar ne yazıyor anlamıyorum. Tek başına zor. Bir kere yalnız gitmek zorunda kaldım, oradaki birine ekranda ne yazıyor diye sordum, "Kör müsün?" diye tepki verdi, çok utandım. Yaşım genç çünkü, okuma yazma bilmediğimi kestiremedi bence, çok utanç vericiydi. (Nermin)

[3] Bir keresinde oğlumun öğretmeni izin kağıdı vermiş git annene imzalattır demiş, annemin okuma yazması yok diyememiş, utanmış. Getirip kocama vermiş, öğretmenim imza istiyor sen atar mısın, öğretmenime annem dedemlere gitti yoktu evde derim demiş. Kocam anlatınca çok ağladım, ona bunu yapmaya hakkım yok. (Saadet)

[4] 10 yıl oldu ben okuma-yazma kursuna gittim bir sefer, oğlum çok küçüktü, yaramazdı. Ona bakacak kimseyi bulamadığım için derse götürdüm bir sefer, sonra öğretmen bana bir daha getirmememi söyledi, sınıfın dikkati dağılıyormuş. Bıraktım ben de kursu. Şimdi büyüdü, o yüzden gelebiliyorum şimdi. (Saadet)

[5] Çalışıyordum, kendimi çok yorgun hissediyordum, hem ev işleri hem de çalışmak zordu. Kendim için bir şey yapmaya zamanım olmuyordu. Tüm enerjimi evime ve

çocuklarıma veriyordum. Emekli oldum, çocukları evlendirdim, şimdi sıra bana geldi, artık kendimi düşüneceğim. (Semra)

[6] Bir keresinde kocam bana cahil kadın diye bağırdı, bir ağladım sorma. Benim hatam değildi ki, amcamla babam göndermediler beni; ama oğullarını ellerinden tutup okula yazdırdılar. O zaman da çok ağlamıştım. Babam erkeklere mektup mu yazacaksın, okul falan yok diye bağırmıştı bana. (Canan)

[7] Kocam kursa gelmemi hiç istemedi, hala da istemiyor. Birçok kez kavga ettik, en son oğluma dedim ki istiyorsa boşasın, bu lafımdan sonra artık olumsuz bir şey demiyor. Ne düşündüğü de umurumda değil artık, ben gelmeye devam edeceğim. Bugüne dek sustum, sabrettim ama artık yeter ömrüm boyunca zulmettiği bana. (Leman)

[8] Ben yeni evlenmiştim, komşular kaynanama göndersenize gelini kursa okuma-yazma öğrensin dediler. Olmaz, gözü açılmasın dedi, göndermedi beni, düşüncenin çirkinliğine bak. Cahil kalırsam kafa tutamam, dediklerini ikiletmeden yaparım diye düşündü herhalde. O günden sonra da hep hor gördü beni, aşağıladı. (Zeynep)

[9] Okuyabiliyorum artık, en önemlisi kaybolmuyorum. En büyük mutluluğum, artık kimseye muhtaç olmamam. (Feride)

[10] Daha hızlı okumak ve okuduklarımı anlamak istiyorum. Ülkemizin tarihini okumak istiyorum, Atatürk'ü özellikle. Çok iyi şeyler yaptı bizim için, sıkıntılar yaşadı, ama başardı. Yaşadıklarını onun ağzından öğrenmek en büyük hayalim. (Halide)

[11] Sınav konusunda biraz gerginim. Okuyup yazabiliyorum ama yeterli değil. Matematikte toplama çıkarma yapabiliyorum ama iş çarpmayla bölmeye gelince karıştırıyorum. Çarpım tablosunu ezberlemem lazım, şu an için önümdeki amacım bu. Küçük kızım var ilkokula gidiyor, onunla evde ezberliyoruz. (Zeynep)

[12] Ortaokula gitmek istiyorum, müdürümle de konuştuk, sen iste biz sana fırsat yaratırız burada dedi. (Yasemin)

[13] Tabii ki ortaokula devam edeceğim, sonra liseye, hatta üniversite de okuyacağım. Daha yaşım genç, yapabilirim diye düşünüyorum, kimseye muhtaç olmak istemiyorum. Çocuk gelişimi okuyup anaokullarında çalışabilirim mesela. (Saadet)

[14] Hastaneye iş görüşmesine gitmiştim, gayet güzel geçiyordu ta ki ben okuma yazma bilmediğimi söyleyene kadar. Beni almalarının mümkün olmadığını söylediler. Bu yüzden görüşmeye gitmeye yüzüm yok. (Reyhan)

[15] Daha iyi bir iş istiyorum, diplomam olursa önümde daha çok fırsatım olur. (Pakize)

[16] Çok hayalim var, insanlara faydalı olmak istiyorum ilk önce, üretmek istiyorum. Okuryazar olmak hayatıma bereket katacak inanıyorum. Hayatımı kaleme dökmek istiyorum, belki birilerine ışık olurum, onlar da benim gibi hayatlarına bereket getirir. (Emel)

[17] Çocuklarıma çok özeniyorum, ne güzel İngilizce öğreniyorlar, ben de öğreneceğim. Ben de farklı yerlere gitmek, gezmek, yurtdışını görmek istiyorum. Hayatımı yaşamak istiyorum. (Halide)

[18] Kendimi dinle ifade edebiliyorum. Öğrencilerim olsun, onlara Kuran öğreteyim istiyorum, onlar da kendilerini ifade edebilsinler. Tabii önce okuryazar olmam lazım. (Cemile)

[19] Başaramayacağım diye düşündüğümde kendi kendime diyorum, Feride sen neler yapıyorsun, bunu mu yapamayacaksın. Bir model gördüm mü hemencecik çıkarabiliyorum, örüyorum hemen, herkes yapamaz. Çok denemeseydim öğrenemezdim ben de, deneye yanıla ustalaştım. Yaparsın sen diyorum, gaza getiriyorum kendimi. (Feride)

[20] Öğretmen tüm sınıfa ya da bir başkasına soru sorduğunda cevabı söyleyebiliyorum, doğru da çıkıyor. Ama direkt bana sorduğunda ya da tahtaya kaldırdığında çok heyecanlanıyorum, söylediklerim yanlış çıkıyor. Ya sınavdan kalırsam diye düşünüp duruyorum, çok geriliyorum sınavı düşündüğümde. (Zeynep)

[21] Öğretmenimiz ne zaman bir şey sorsa cevabı verdikten sonra bekliyorum aferin diyecek mi diye. Kendime güvenemiyorum, söylediğim her şey yanlışmış gibi hissediyorum. (Bedriye)

[22] Haftada iki gün ders bana hiç yetmiyor. İşten çıkıp geliyorum derse, yorgun oluyorum ama gelmeme engel değil bu. Hiçbir dersimi kaçırmadım şimdiye. Yorgun olsam bile ders var diye mutlu oluyorum, koşarak geliyorum, elimde olsa uçacağım. (Halide)

[23] Hele derse bir gelmeyeyim, tüm gün başım ağrıyor. (Meral)

[24] Kocam beni ilk başta destekliyordu, şimdi değiştin diyor, bırakmamı istiyor. Kararımı verdim ama ben, diplomamı alacağım. Kendi hayatımı yaşayacağım, ne dediği çok da umurumda değil. (Gonca)

[25] Buraya kendim için geliyorum. Dersimin olduğu günler kendimi çok mutlu hissediyorum, bugün dersim var diye. Kursa iki gün geliyoruz, çok kısa. Keşke daha çok gün gelsek derse, kendim için tek bir şey yapıyorum, o da sadece iki gün. (Yasemin)

[26] Derse ilk geldik, öğretmen bizi bahçeye çıkardı, yağ satarım bal satarım oynadık koca koca kadınlar birlikte. Kendimi çok iyi hissettim sonra, çocukken okula gidenlere çok özenirdim, ben de çocuk oldum. (Ayşe)

[27] Bir keresinde çocuklarım aldı babalarını karşılarına, okul numarasını hatırlayıp hatırlamadığını sordular, okul anılarını anlatmasını istediler. Çok kıskandım eşimi, benim hiç okul anım olmadı çünkü. Şimdi sınıfta yaptığımız her şey beni mutlu

ediyor, anılarım var artık, eve gidip detaylı detaylı anlatıyorum, bugün bunları bunları yaptık diye. Çok seviyorum burayı. (Canan)

[28] Sekiz yaşıma bastım, ikinci sınıf oldum. Büyüdük. (Kadriye)

[29] Odaklanamıyorum, kafam almıyor bazen, yaşlılıktan hep. (Semra)

[30] Kafamı derse veremiyorum bu yaştan sonra, gözlerim de iyi görmüyor hem. (Bedriye)

[31] Başlarda çok gergindim. Ağzımı açıp bir şey söylemek istemiyordum, çekindim azıcık sesimi çıkarmaya. Yanlış bir şey söylersem gülerler diye düşündüm. Aralarda konuşmaya başladık, sonra baktım birbirimize benziyorum hepimiz. (Cemile)

[32] Yalnız değilim, benim gibiler. Onlar da cahil bırakılmışlar benim gibi, çok çekmişler, ezilmişler. Kendimiz için bir şeyler yapmak çok önemli, buraya bunu yapmaya geliyoruz, tek başına olmamak çok güzel. Birlikte öğreneceğiz. (Emel)

[33] Daha önce okula hiç gitmedim, bu yüzden buraya gelmek beni çok gerdi ilk başlarda. Sınıfta benden daha gergin insanlar olduğunu gördüm. Bazıları hiçbir şey bilmiyor, ben en azından sayıları biliyorum, kendi alışverişimi kendim yapıyorum. Şükrettim halime. Sonra zaten gerginliğim geçti. (Feride)

[34] Birbirimize yardımcı oluyoruz burada, biliyorsan tabii ki yardımcı olacaksın. İki arkadaşımız var sınıfta daha önce okula gitmişler, onlar hepimizden iyi biliyorlar, onlara soruyoruz bilemediğimiz şeyler olduğunda. (Nermin)

[35] Saadet var, yol arkadaşım burada. Hepimizden hızlı okuyor, yardımcı oluyor bize, yaparsın abla diyor. Derse gelmeyince üzülüyorum ben. Umarım ben de onun gibi olurum ilerde. (Leman)

[36] Derste okuduğumuz yazıları tekrar tekrar okuyorum, işlemleri tekrar yapmaya çalışıyorum. Ben yardım istemesem bile, mutlaka arkadaşlarım yanıma gelip ne yapıyorsun diyor, takıldığım yerlerde yardımcı oluyorlar. (Emel)

[37] Öğretmen bazen bize alıştırma veriyor, yapın deyip sınıftan çıkıyor. O zaman soruyoruz birbirimize şu sorunun cevabını ne yaptın diye. "Yok, bence öyle değil, bence cevap bu," diye bir anda sorunun cevabını tartışmaya başlıyoruz, okuma anlama sorularında çok oluyor. (Pakize)

[38] Kocam tüm gün evde, dedim bir değişiklik lazım bana, kaydoldum okula. İnsanlara karışmak bana çok iyi geldi, evden çıkmak için bir sebebim var, üstüne bir de arkadaşlarım oldu. (Emel)

[39] Arkadaşlarımı çok seviyorum, kardeş gibi olduk. Çoluk çocuktan, evden, işten, her şeyden konuşabiliyoruz. Ben bir de çok konuşurum, bazen dersi bile işletmiyorum öğretmene. (Zeynep)

[40] Ortak alanda öğretmeni beklerken sohbet etmeye başladık, önce havadan sudan, sonra okuldan, evde ne oluyor ne bitiyor. Şimdi erken geliyoruz okula, çay alıyoruz dersten önce konuşuyoruz, alışkanlık oldu. (Kadriye)

[41] İki yıldır tanıyoruz birbirimizi, evlerimize çaya gidip geliyoruz. Öğretmenim de geldi evime, ameliyat olmuştum ben, ziyarete geldi beni. Aile gibi bir şey olduk. (Bedriye)

[42] Çok kibar, hep gülümsüyor. Yazarken hep yanlış oluyor benimkiler, ama kızım ben Türkçe konuşamıyorum ki tam, öyle yazayım. Komik şeyler çıkıyor, gülüyor, gelip düzeltiyor, ama napayım. Hiç sesini yükseltmedi ama, kibar çok. (Gonca)

[43] Çok ilgileniyor bizimle, öğrenmemizi istiyor. Gözünden anlaşılıyor bizim öğrenmemizi nasıl istediği. Anam babam bu kadar emek harcamadı benim için, Allah razı olsun. (Kadriye)

[44] Mükemmel biri, keşke ilkokul öğretmenim o olsaydı, şimdiye profesör çıkmıştım. (Semra)

[45] Çok kibar, hiç bize yukardan bakmıyor, arkadaşımız gibi. Her gün sorar dersin başında nasılsınız, bir sıkıntınız var mı diye. Derdimiz sıkıntımız olduğunda dinliyor, çok anlayışlı kadın. Vallahi çok şanslıyız, Allah başımızdan eksik etmesin. (Ayşe)

[46] Oğlum gibi, o olmasa hiçbir şey öğrenemezdim. Ben hepsinden geç başladım buraya, ama öğretmen sağ olsun, yetiştim arkadaşlarıma. (Cemile)

[47] Derste okumayı güzel yapamadım, eve gidince de dedim ki bırakıyorum okulu, bir daha gitmeyeceğim. Öğretmen çok uğraşıyor öğrenelim diye, tek tek gösteriyor her şeyi, ama ben beceremedim. Sonraki ders öğretmenim aradı beni, yaklaştıysan bekleyelim seni, neredesin dedi. Ben gelmeyeceğim bir daha deyince, asla kabul etmiyorum, hemen geliyorsun dedi, ikna etti beni. Allah biliyor, okuyabiliyorsam sebebi odur. (Reyhan)

[48] Ne zaman bir sorunun cevabını yazsam, gösterip yanlış mı diyorum. O da her seferinde yanlış mı diye değil, doğru mu diye sor, o zaman bakacağım diyor. (Canan)

[49] Bir sorunun cevabını doğru söylediğimde, bana sen iste ben hep yanında olurum senin, ortaokula da göndeririz seni liseye de, böyle devam et diyor. Bana okuldaki diğer derslere de gelmemi söylüyor, kendini geliştirirsin diyor, ama çalışıyorum, sadece buna gelebiliyorum. (Pakize)

[50] Sınıfı geçemeyeceğim kesin diye bir his geliyor bazen bana. Öğretmene de diyorum, olmayacak galiba diye. O zaman bana çocuklarla ilgili, işle ilgili, ev işleri falan bir sürü şey soruyor, nasıl yapabiliyorsun bunları diye. Bunları yapabiliyorsan sınavı da yaparsın, ne var bunda diyor, rahatlıyorum böyle dediğinde. Çok iyi adam. (Yasemin)

[51] Dersler çok eğlenceli, komik biri öğretmen. Neredeyse her konu hakkında bir hikayesi var, durun bunun bir hikayesi var deyip başlıyor anlatmaya. İlginç şeyler

anlatıyor, komik de, gülüyorum ben çok. Aklıma gelmeyince hikayesi neydi bunun deyip oradan çıkarmaya çalışıyorum. (Semra)

[52] Kitap okuyup öğretmene söylediğinde, listesi var bir tane, orda adının yanına artı koyuyor. En son dersten sonra kitap okuyan var mı diye soruyor dersin başında, sonra kim kaç artı almış onları söylüyor. Ben çok kitap okuyamıyordum, okumam zayıftı, bir de anlamıyordum çok iyi. Artı almak için okumaya başladım kitap, sonra baktım hızlandım okurken, anlıyorum da. Her şey çalışmakla oluyormuş. (Zeynep)

[53] Öğretmenimiz günlük yazın dedi, yazınız gelişir, her gün yazmış olursunuz dedi. Süsleyin sonra, resimler çizin dedi. Özeniyorum ben de yazarken ona. (Ayşe)

[54] Halk eğitime gelen bir arkadaşım var, koroya geliyor o. Git sen de, aman sakın bırakma, devam et, ben senin yanındayım dedi. Çok destek oluyor bana. Bir arkadaşımız daha vardı, bıraktı o mesela, sen bırakma aman ha diyor. (Saadet)

[55] Çocuklarım benimle gurur duyuyor. Oğlum bana dedi ki anne dedi çok mutluyum senin için. Kendi başının çaresine bakabilirsin, kimsenin yardımına ihtiyacın yok artık. Bir de rahatlamış, başıma bir şey gelse ambulansı arayamazdım mesela, iyi oldu diyor, benimle gurur duyacakları bir şey yaptım, mutluluğu başka. (Feride)

[56] Şu cümleyi okusana diyor çocuklarım, okuyunca da mutlu oluyorlar, okuyorsun Halide diyorlar. Bir daha oku, daha hızlı oku diyorlar, cesaretlendiriyorlar beni. (Halide)

[57] Kız kardeşim bana dedi ki sen hayatımda gördüğüm en hırslı kadınsın, bunu da başaracağını biliyordum, ay nasıl mutlu oldum. Gurur duyuyor benimle, kararımı hep destekledi, diplomayı alana kadar devam diyor. (Yasemin)

[58] En ufak kızım yardım ediyor bana ödevlerimi yaparken. Yazma çalışırken, ben okuyayım sen yaz, olur mu anne diyor. Bakıyor sonra doğru yazmış mıyım, hatam var mı diye. (Meral)

[59] Ödevlerimi kontrol ediyor, bir şeye ihtiyacın var mı, yardım edeyim mi diye soruyor ne zaman bize gelseler. Sözde el, kendi çocuklarımdan daha çok ilgileniyor benimle. (Bedriye)

[60] Oğlum bana dedi ki, anne halk eğitime mi gitmek istersin, özel öğretmen mi getirteyim eve. Yük olmak istemedim oğluma, dedim giderim halk eğitime, burayı aradı eve çok yakın diye. Tuttu elimden, kaydettirdi beni. Okulun ilk günü geldi benimle, öğretmenle konuştu, numarasını verdi, velisi benim, bir şey olursa arayın, eti sizin kemiği benim dedi. (Kadriye)

[61] Çalıştığım için, kocam baktı, hangi halk eğitimde akşam kursu var diye aradı taradı. İki kere geldi benimle buraya, bir beni kaydettirmek için, bir de öğretmenimle tanışmak için. (Zeynep)

[62] Komşumun kızıyla geldim halk eğitime ilk, kaydolmak istedim ama kontenjan yok seneye gelin kaydolun dediler, sonrasında çok gittim konuştum, istiyorum dedim, yok olmaz dediler. Çok ağladım olmayacak diye. En son kalktım muhtara çıktım, anlattım durumu dedim böyle böyle, sağ olsun aradı hemen burayı, kaydettiler beni. (Nermin)

[63] Yanında çalıştığım kadın o gün dersim var mı yok mu diye mutlaka sorar, sağ olsun. Dersim varsa, erken çık, dinlen, hazırlık yap dersine deyip beni erkenden gönderiyor. (Meral)

[64] Alışveriş merkezi kalabalık olsa da olmasa da, ders saati beni mutlaka gönderiyor müdürüm, arkadaşlarım da yerime bakıyorlar. Ders biter bitmez de gidiyorum, çalışmaya devam ediyorum. (Pakize)

[65] Oğlum var küçük daha. Bazen annem bakıyor ona, işi varsa da okula biraz geç geliyorum, kızımı bekliyorum çünkü. O gelince eve, derse çıkıp geliyorum. (Canan)

[66] Ben kursa geldiğimde dükkanla ilgilensin diye bir arkadaşımla sözleşmiştim, bazen onun işi çıkıyor, ben de gelmeden önce başkalarıyla konuşuyorum, uygun olan biri dükkana göz kulak olsun diye. (Cemile)

[67] Kızım çalıştığı için toruna bakmak zorunda kalıyorum bazen. Bir kere getirdim onu da buraya ama dikkatimi veremedim hiç öğretmen ne anlatıyor, ne yapıyoruz. Bazen ona bakmak için gelmediğim oluyor. (Feride)

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