

İLKÖĞRETİM OKUL YÖNETİCİLERİNİN 21.YÜZYIL İÇİN ÖRGÜTSEL VİZYONLARI

ORGANIZATIONAL VISIONS OF ADMINISTRATORS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS FOR THE 21st CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

The study is the researcher's third consecutive study aiming to identify vision development and leadership characteristics in elementary school administrators. The findings of the study are valid for schools in the metropolitan city of Ankara. The school administrators were asked to state a) five characteristics that they like in their schools and five characteristics that they dislike in their schools, b) the internal and external obstacles affecting the operation of the schools, c) the climate of the schools and d) their ideal schools. It was seen that school administrators perceive their schools similarly. The administrators depicted their ideal schools with the following characteristics, the schools had a trained managerial team, were managed locally, under no political pressure, providing quality education with a contemporary curriculum, having already solved economic and infra-structural problems, they were disciplined and the parents showed interest in the school and participated in school activities.

ÖZET

Bu araştırma yazarın ilköğretim okulu yöneticilerinin vizyon geliştirme ve vizyoner liderlik özelliklerine ilişkin olarak gerçekleştirdiği ardışık araştırmalardan üçüncüsüdür. Çalışmanın bulguları Ankara Büyükşehir Belediyesi sınırları içindeki ilköğretim okulları için geçerlidir. Okul yöneticilerinden okullarının a) beğendikleri, beğenmedikleri beş özelliği, b) okulun işleyişine etki eden iç ve dış engelleri, c) havasını, d) ideallerindeki okulu tanımlamaları istenmiştir. Okul yöneticilerinin okullarını benzer biçimde algıladıkları anlaşılmıştır. Yöneticiler yetişmiş yönetici kadrosu olan, yerinden yönetilen, siyasi baskıların olmadığı, çağdaş programıyla kaliteli eğitim veren, ekonomik ve fiziksel sorunları çözülmüş, disiplinli, ilgili ve katılımcı velileri olan bir okulu ideal olarak tanımlamışlardır.

Introduction

Having vision is one of the most important characteristics of leader school administrators. However, in Turkey there is an inadequacy of information about the proficiency levels of present school administrators in vision development. The writer, related to this problem of educational administration, has conducted two survey-type researches which followed one another.

The first study was conducted to identify the attitudes of the primary school administrators on "vision development" (Erçetin 1997:128). According to the results of the study conducted on 158 principals and 243 assistant principals working at the elementary schools of the metropolitan city of Ankara, 1) the attitudes of the elementary school principals and assistant principals on vision development are "affirmative", 2) status, sex and experience are not variables in vision development.

Depending on the findings of the above-mentioned study, the school administrators appear to have potential

in vision development and can reveal leadership characteristics to develop vision if they have external and internal support.

In overcoming the present problems of the educational administration, the necessity of school administrators with vision is emphasized and it is claimed that the affirmative attitudes of present Ministry of Education school administrators in this respect can be developed and they can be utilized to eliminate the above-mentioned problems.

The second study is related to the "personal" stage of of the vision development process. This study dealt with the school principals' and assistant principals' self development fields, leadership styles and values, and their assessments of their occupation and school. The most important three findings of this study are 1) the school principals and their assistants seem to be two different groups in determining their proficiencies, self-development fields and leadership styles, 2) they have complaints about the school climate, school-environment

relations and pressure of superior administrators, and 3) they perceive discipline as a value.

Depending on the findings of the study, the judgment reached was that the vision development potentials of the school administrators were significant enough among their present leadership characteristics, and it was recommended that the same population study the "organizational vision development" stage. Depending on the above recommendation, in this study the second stage of two consecutive stages of the vision development is focused on and the question "What are the organizational visions of the elementary school administrators?" is surveyed in the same population.

Methodology

Sample

The study was designed in the survey model. The population of the study consisted of 282 principals and 1088 assistant principals employed in elementary schools located in the borders of the metropolitan city of Ankara (MEB 1997). We tried to reach all of the principals, and for the assistant principals the sample range tables were used in selecting the samples (Çingir 1990: 274). In the sample range tables, 277 of 1088 assistant principals were selected to be samples in 0.95 reliability level and .05 significance level. 158 of 282 principals and 243 of 277 assistant principals were reached.

Instrument

A questionnaire developed by Edward W. Chance (Chance 1992:54-66) was adapted into Turkish and administered. Six open-ended questions defining the organizational vision development process comprised in the questionnaire. The schools administrators were asked to respond to the first, the second and the sixth questions with 5 items, the third and the fourth questions with 3 items and the fifth question with one item. The six questions forming the questionnaire are as follows:

1. What are the most important five characteristics of your school that you like?
2. What are the most important five characteristics of your school that you do not like?
3. What are the most important three internal obstacles that prevent your school from operating successfully?
4. What are the most important three external obstacles that prevent your school from operating successfully?
5. How do you describe the climate of your school?
6. What are the most important five characteristics describing your ideal school?

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data we considered that all 158

principals and all 243 assistant principals would give the maximum responses for every item. The total number of the questions was considered and this number was multiplied the probable number of the responses. For example, for items 1 and 2 the expected total number of the responses would be $158 \times 5 = 790$ and $243 \times 5 = 1215$. Similar responses were grouped and frequencies were computed. The rates of the items were put into order from high to low. The same process was applied for items 3,5,6 and 7.

Findings and Discussion

The Characteristics That Elementary School Administrators Like in Their Schools

The elementary school principals stated different characteristics that they liked. The characteristics were listed according to the percentages, and "the most important five characteristics" that the school administrators like were given in Table 1.

Table 1.The Characteristics That Elementary School Administrators Like in Their Schools

Principals (N=158)			Ass. Prin. (N=243)		
158x5=790			243x5=1215		
The Characteristics	f	%	The Characteristics	f	%
Discipline	144	18.22	Discipline	311	25.59
Positive Characteristics of the students	108	13.67	Positive Characteristics of the students	224	18.44
Status of the School	98	12.41	Status of the School	104	9.63
Proficiency of The teachers	88	11.14	Economic Situation of the school	117	8.56
Economic Situation of The school	58	7.34	Educational technology	92	7.57

The findings related to the most important five characteristics of their schools that the elementary school administrators like can be summarized as follows:

1. 62.78 % of the school principals and 69.78 % of the assistant principals, approximately two-thirds of them, focused on the first five characteristics within their own groups.

2. The school principals and the assistant principals seem to belong to two similar groups in identifying the characteristics that they like.

The findings reveal that school administrators perceive the important characteristics in their schools similarly. Among these characteristics the findings on

"discipline" show similarity with the findings of the formerly mentioned study which dealt with personal development of the school administrators. In the above-mentioned study, it was identified that the school administrators perceived discipline as a value. It is understood that the school administrators create an atmosphere in their schools consistent with the values they like.

The thoughts of both groups on students, status and economic conditions of their schools are positive. The reason for this may be the population of the study. It is noticeable that the administrators did not place the quality of the education, the performance of the students and the staff etc. in the most important five characteristics of their schools that they liked.

The characteristics that elementary school administrators do not like in their schools

The five most important undesired characteristics were put into order and given in Table 2.

Table 2.The Characteristics That Elementary School Administrators do not Like in Their Schools

Principals (N= 158)			Ass. Prin. (N= 243)		
158x5=790			243x5=1215		
The Characteristics	f	%	The Characteristics	f	%
School climate	115	14.55	School climate	158	13.00
Quality of the education	61	7.72	School Environment Relations	89	7.00
School-environment relations	61	9.24	Quality of the education	85	5.19
Indifference of the parents	60	7.59	Indifference of the parents	82	6.75
Inadequacy of the social activities	52	6.58	Inadequacy of the social activities	78	6.42

The findings related to the most important characteristics which the elementary school administrators do not like in their schools are as follows:

1. 44.16% of the principals and 40.5% of the assistant principals, approximately two-fifths of them, gathered in the first five characteristics within their groups.

2.The school administrators have a similar tendency to determine the things with which they are not pleased in their schools.

The findings indicate that school administrators have a consensus on the characteristics with which they are pleased or displeased in their schools. In the first place,

the school climate is found. This finding teaches us that the school climates at elementary schools in the study are open. In a way, this result can explain the inadequacy of the quality of education, school-environment relations, cooperation with parents and social activities. It is known that quality of the education is decreasing, social activities are going down and the school-environment relations are problematic. There is another well-known situation that these undesired and problematic characteristics of the schools are results of practices of administrative staff who favor discipline based on power, authority, hierarchy and close control (Miner 1988; Lunenburg and Ornstein 1991). At the same time, this finding also reflects the experienced contradictions arising from school climates created by the administrators accept who discipline as a value.

The internal obstacles of the successful operation of the schools

The three most important internal obstacles preventing the successful operation of the schools according to the views of the school administrators are listed in Table 3.

Table 3.The Internal Obstacles of The Successful Operation of The Schools

Principals (N= 158)			Ass. Prin. (N= 243)		
158X3=474			243X3=729		
Internal Obstacles	f	%	Internal Obstacles	f	%
School Climate	85	17.93	School Climate	114	15.64
Physical conditions of The school	83	17.51	Physical conditions of The school	108	14.81
Economic Problems of the staff	74	15.61	Economic Problems of the staff	103	14.13

The findings related to the internal obstacles preventing successful operation of the schools are as follows:

1.51.35 % of the principals and 44.58 % of the assistant principals gathered in the first three obstacles.

2.The administrators perceive the internal obstacles of the operation of the schools similarly.

Findings once more reveal that the school climate is significant enough to become an obstacle for the better operation of the schools. This result is consistent with previously presented findings and reached judgments. It calls attention to the poor physical conditions of the schools in metropolitan Ankara that appear to be an obstacle for the successful operation of the schools. The existence of some problems in organizing the internal and external conditions of the schools in Turkey are known

and subjected to debate. The finding shows the inadequacy of applied and theoretical studies in relation to this topic even in the capital city. It is understood that the economic condition of the staff is one of the internal obstacles to the better operation of the schools. The school personnel are members of a group with a fixed income. From the aspects of working hours in relation to educational services, it is known that they have opportunities to have extra jobs and this is the case in practice. A decrease can be expected in the motivation and performance of a person who has to find extra work to meet his basic needs, and as a result of this, his contribution to the operation of the organization is also expected to decrease.

External obstacles to the successful operation of the schools

The three most important external obstacles to the successful operation of the schools according to elementary school administrators are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The external obstacles to the successful operation of the schools

Principals (N= 158)			Ass. Prin. (N= 243)		
158X3=474			243X3=729		
External Obstacles	f	%	External Obstacles	f	%
Political Pressure	98	20.68	Political Pressure	114	15.64
Subjective attitudes of the superior Administrators	92	19.41	Subjective attitudes of the superior Administrators	113	15.50
Indifference of Parents	66	13.92	Indifference of Parents	112	15.36

The findings related to the external obstacles to the successful operation of the schools according to elementary school administrators are presented below:

1.54.01% of the principals, more than half, and 46.5% of the assistant principals, approximately half, gathered in the first three factors

The administrators perceive the external obstacles to the successful operation of the schools similarly.

Political pressures and the subjective attitude of the superior administrators are the first two most important obstacles to the successful operation of the schools. The situation is debated in different arenas with cause-effect relations. It is emphasized in these debates that the reason for most of the discomfort which the administrators experience or face is their inability to act free from their political tendencies. It is also claimed that there is a relationship between inadequacy and political subjectivity of the administrators. This situation is assessed as a result of the behavior of the politicians and

the general attitude of the superior educational administrators (Bursalıoğlu 1991). The findings of this study support these judgments.

The indifference of the parents can be assessed as the result of the operation and understanding related to school-family cooperation in the Turkish Educational System. In the center of this general understanding and operation there is a thought which perceives the parents as only a financial resource.

How the elementary school administrators describe the climate of the schools

The elementary school administrators were asked to describe the climate of their schools with one item. Putting the items into order, the school administrators stated that they described the climate of their schools as "bureaucratic" in the first place. This finding looks consistent with the other situations which they share and like. The discipline is liked as a common and most shared value. This value includes authority, power and hierarchy. In such cases, it is natural to describe the climate as bureaucratic. However, the contradiction in this description is a result of the content of the bureaucracy concept described in theoretical dimensions. In reality, the organizations defined as bureaucratic have proficiency, rules for all and objectivity. With this appearance of bureaucracy, we can claim a pathological operation of bureaucracy at schools. The school may be bureaucratic in some ways but because of the services that they produce they are expected to be more informal.

The characteristics of the elementary school administrators' ideal schools

The characteristics describing the ideals of the school administrators and taking part in the first five are given in Table 5.

Table 5. The characteristics of the elementary school administrators' ideal schools

Principals (N= 158)			Ass. Prin. (N= 243)		
158x5=79			243x5=1215		
Characteristics	f	%	Characteristics	f	%
Locally Administered	55	6.96	Having teams of the trained administrative staff	90	7.41
No political pressure	55	6.96	Having an open climate	86	7.08
No economic problems	54	6.84	Having contemporary curriculums	86	7.08
Having suitable Physical Conditions	51	6.46	Having good relations with the environment	85	7.00
Having open climate	50	6.33	Serving a quality education	83	6.83

According to the findings related to the characteristics of the ideal schools of the primary school administrators, 33.55 % of the school principals and 35.4 % the assistant principals gathered in the first five characteristics. The findings reveal that the administrators define their ideal schools with different characteristics. In the ideals of the principals we see principals with more authority and independence, schools no political pressures, no economic or infra-structural problems and with an open climate. The assistant principals imagine schools with a trained administrative staff, contemporary curriculum, open climate and better relations with the environment and quality.

It can be said that the principals who desire to have more authority have focused on economic and physical problems and climate. However, their assistants see the quality of the education, the school climate and the environmental relations as more important. The findings show that, as an administrative team, school administrators' description of their ideal school separately makes the image of the ideal school as a whole.

The ideal school described by the school administrators has the characteristics of popular values of educational administration including open organizational climate, environmental relations, contemporary curriculums and local and adequate administration. The school principals and assistant principals can be accepted as two different groups compensating each other in terms of vision development. This can be valued as an opportunity to develop and realize the organizational vision. However, at this point, overcoming the dilemmas created by the traditional values like discipline is a precondition to make use of such an opportunity.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations of this study can be listed as follows:

1. The common characteristics approved by the school principals and the assistant principals are "discipline, the positive aspects of the students, the status of the schools and their economic conditions". Additionally, they also emphasized some other characteristics different from each other like the "adequacy of the teachers" emphasized by the assistant principals.

2. The administrators as a team do not like "the climate", "the quality of the education", "the environmental relations", "the indifference of the parents" and "the lack of the social activities" in their schools.

3. The administrators as a team stated "the climate,

the physical conditions and the economic problems of the personnel" as the internal obstacles to the successful operation of schools and "political pressure, the subjective attitude of the superior administrators and the difference of the parents as the external obstacles of the successful operation of the schools.

4. The administrators describe the climate of their schools as "bureaucratic".

5. There is a school in the ideals of the school principals which is locally governed, has no political pressures, has already solved economic problems, and has proper physical conditions. The assistant principals described their ideal school with trained administrative staff, contemporary curriculums, good environmental relations and qualified education. The common characteristic of the ideal schools of the administrators is an "open school climate".

The following recommendations can be inferred from the results of the study.

For the school administrators to develop vision and realize it,

1. the administrative structure of the elementary schools should be more localized,

2. the school administrators are required to develop skill to cope with political pressures,

3. their sensitivity should be increased in terms of public relations, and

4. the school administrators should develop consciousness about the qualified education.

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