

An Investigation of the Perceptions of School Administrators Towards the Roles and Duties of School Counselors

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Abstract

Problem Statement: School administrators are the first responsible body for the implementation of the counseling and guidance program. For sharing this responsibility, school administrators should be in cooperation with school counselors. Administrators' perceptions on school counseling and guidance services show that school administrators have positive attitudes toward counseling services and they cooperate with the counselors at school. School administrators describe counseling services as necessary and successful activities. However, other studies show that school administrators are of the opinion that counselors should perform tasks that are not in their job descriptions. In short, school administrators' perceptions on school counseling and guidance services and the tasks and missions of school counselors vary greatly and there is no consensus among the administrators. It is important to investigate the perceptions and views of school administrators towards counselors. Therefore, the present study aimed to contribute to the current literature via offering suggestions to increase the productivity and effectiveness of school counselors.

Purpose of the Study: The aim of this study is to investigate the perceptions of school administrators who are important shareholders in carrying out school counseling and guidance services. The sub-aims of the study are to investigate the status of school counselors, and the school administrators' expectations of school counselors, both in terms of personal and professional qualifications and in terms of the status and duties of the counselors.

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Method: This qualitative study investigates the perceptions of school administrators towards school counselors in terms of their roles and duties. The current research utilizes a phenomenological design. The participants of the study were 13 school administrators who were working in primary and secondary schools in downtown Diyarbakır. A semi-structured interview, developed by the researchers, was used to collect the data. Gathered data were first analyzed in terms of descriptive analyses and then digitized.

Findings: Research findings show the administrators' positive perceptions of counselors being necessary and important in educational and instructional activities for every shareholder of education. School administrators listed a set of personal and professional qualifications for school counselors. In addition, school administrators are of the opinion that school counselors have some privileges apart from other teachers in terms of their status and role at the school. It is found that school administrators are well aware of the necessity and importance of school counselors, who serve as field experts at schools.

Conclusion and Recommendations: In this study it is found that school managers are very aware of and positive about the school counseling and guidance field and counselors' teaching duties and responsibilities. The quality and efficiency of school counseling services should be increased, and the counselors' job description should be clarified by the Ministry of Turkish National Education to prevent confusion. School administrators and other shareholders should support the creation of a common professional identity for school counselors.

Keywords: School counselors, school administrators, roles and duties

Introduction

Contemporary educational systems are expected to help students develop physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially. In other words, they are to help individuals develop as a whole. In the Turkish educational system, students are offered student personnel services, which allow them to make the most of their education and to improve in every aspect (Yeşilyaprak, 2009). As one of these services, "Guidance" contains a systematic and professional support process to help individuals get to know themselves, solve their problems, make decisions, improve their capacities, and put their decisions into action (Kepçeoğlu, 2001). Those who provide and maintain such professional psychological services are qualified experts and school counselors. Counselors, in general terms, establish a psychological support relationship with the individual to help him maintain his development and report his needs for making decisions and solving problems (Gibson & Mitchell, 1990).

Counselors at schools provide psychological guidance services to students in getting to know themselves in terms of their interests, talents, and professional values. Counselors also provide students with information on occupations, help them realize which occupations fit their personal characteristics, develop positive relationships with their environment, develop more productive working habits, and eliminate their problems and troubles [Ministry of National Education (MEB), Regulation of Psychological Counseling and Guidance Services, 2009].

The role of school psychological counselors in the process of education and in individuals' educational, personal, and vocational development is undeniable. As the development of students in every aspect and their preparation for social life are not feasible only via instructional activities, counselors' roles become more critical. Counselors support students to get to know themselves better and thus become sufficient in finding solutions for their own problems. Considering guidance as a supplementary part of the educational activities (Kepçeoğlu, 2001), psychological counseling and guidance services that are led by school counselors support learners and fulfill the needs that instructional activities cannot.

Counselors are expected to be experts on their subjects and also have personal as well as professional qualifications. In this respect, among the personal qualifications the following may be listed: Success in inter-personal relations, love for humanity, having the high potential of intelligence, having a broader worldview, self-confidence, sensitivity, patience, tolerance, being happy with themselves, effectiveness, reliability, sincerity, being genuine and transparent. In addition to these personal characteristics, school counselors should also demonstrate the following professional qualities: being encouraging, critical, supportive, open to change, successful at work, objective, sensitive to others' problems, empathetic, an active listener, responsible, trustful, coherent, patient, and honest (Knoff, Hines & Kromrey, 1995; Kepçeoğlu, 2001; Corey, 2005; Hackney & Cormier, 2008). On the features contributing to the effectiveness of counselors, Halinski (2009) found that five personality traits are emphasized more commonly. These personality traits are being friendly and accepting, empathetic, flexible, self-reliant, and sincere. For school counseling and guidance activities to be successful, it is important that school counselors possess the personal and professional qualifications listed above. The cooperation of the shareholders who serve at schools with school counselors and carry out the services with a team mentality is another important factor contributing to the success of the services (Glossoff & Koprowicz, 1990).

As an accrediting body of the counseling programs in the United States, CACREP lists the main qualifications that school counselors must possess the knowledge and ability to consult with teachers, school administrators, families, and social groups, conduct counseling to improve the students' academic, professional, personal, and social development, prepare and implement developmental programs, and have knowledge and education. In this respect, having the support of school administrators is of utmost importance. Afterwards, the support and cooperation of the other shareholders are essential for school counselors to provide qualified services.

School administrators, teachers, parents, and other educational personnel are the people who school counselors cooperate with the most. Among them, school administrators have the most influence on the activities of school counselors (Owen, 2005). Thus, the status of the counselor at school, including his duties and responsibilities, should be known by school administrators and other shareholders. Otherwise, counselors may have to perform services that are not appropriate for their professional roles (Baker, 2000). According to the Primary and Secondary School Guidance Program of Special Education and Counseling Services Head Office in the Turkish Ministry of National Education (2006), some of the duties school counselors should maintain are consulting with classroom teachers who serve as counselors, providing necessary resources, material, and evaluation tools, completing the activities defined in the curriculum to be carried out by school counselor in person, evaluating the curriculum with other classroom teachers and determining any potential deficiencies, taking necessary precautions together with class counselors and school administrators, informing parents about the curriculum, and making necessary alterations to the curriculum regarding the needs and conditions of the school district.

Despite all these job definitions, school counselors sometimes have to do tasks that are not aligned with their professional responsibilities. The main reason for that is the prejudice of school administrators and teachers against counseling and guidance services, including lack of information and cooperation (Tuzgöl-Dost & Keklik, 2012). Some tasks that the American School Counselor Association [ASCA] (2014) determined to be unrelated to the counseling profession are enrolling the newcoming students, supervising during exams, signing the excuse papers of absentees, dealing with school discipline, sending home the students who violated dress code or uniform policies, attending courses in place of absent teachers, computing student grades, re-registering students, observing the halls of the school, and keeping secretarial records and doing administrators' paperwork. However, not being able to change the expectations of school administrators causes problems in serving a healthy counseling service in the school environment (Özabacı, Sakarya & Doğan, 2008).

Studies in which school administrators were found to lack sufficient information on school guidance services (Glossoff & Koprowicz, 1990; Güven, 2009; Hardesty and Dillard, 1994; Stickel, 1990) found that these uninformed administrators negatively affected the productivity of guidance activities. For school counselors to perform the counseling and guidance services in a trouble-free environment, it is expected that school administrators demonstrate an awareness on the tasks and status of school counselors, support them, and cooperate with them.

Some studies on the administrators' perceptions on school counseling and guidance services show that school administrators have positive attitudes toward counseling services and that they cooperate with the counselor at school (e.g., Ametea & Clark, 2005; Zalaquett, 2005; Meşeci, Özcan and Bozdemir, 2007; Owen, Owen & Ballestro 2009). School administrators describe counseling services as necessary and successful activities (e.g., Owen, 2005; Camadan & Sezgin, 2012).

However, other studies show that school administrators are of the opinion that counselors should do tasks that are not included in their job description (Fitch, Newby, Ballesterro & Marshall, 2001). In short, school administrators' perceptions on school counseling and guidance services and the tasks and missions of school counselors vary greatly, and there is no consensus among the administrators.

Based on the available literature, the authors have not come across any qualitative research on the perceptions of school administrators towards the roles and responsibilities of school counselors in Turkey. School administrators are the first responsible body for the implementation of the counseling and guidance program. For sharing this responsibility, school administrators should be in cooperation with school counselors. It is important to investigate the perceptions and views of school administrators towards counselors. Therefore, the present study aimed to contribute to the current literature via offering suggestions to increase the productivity and effectiveness of school counselors. The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of school administrators who are important shareholders in carrying out school counseling and guidance services. Sub-aims of the study are to investigate the status of school counselors, and school administrators' expectations of school counselors, both in terms of personal and professional qualifications and in terms of the status and duties of counselors.

Method

Research Design

This qualitative study investigates the perceptions of school administrators towards school counselors in terms of their roles and duties. The current research utilizes a phenomenological design. The phenomenological design is favorable when investigating concepts that we realize but for which we do not have a detailed and in-depth understanding (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). As the school administrators' perceptions and views on school counselors are the main concern, the phenomenological design, which enables in-depth analysis, is preferred.

Participants

The participants of the study were 13 school administrators who work at schools that have counselors on duty in the Diyarbakır city center. Being effective in revealing detailed information, the criteria sampling method for purposeful sampling was used in the study (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). For choosing school managers, the criterion was that they were to have a permanent psychological counselor staff at school. Two of the school managers were principals and eleven of them were assistant principals; all of them were male. Twelve of the participants had bachelor's degrees and one had a master's degree. Professional seniority varied between 10 and 30 years. The participants' ages varied between 36 and 58.

Development of the Interview Form and Data Collection

The semi-structured interview technique was used to investigate school administrators' perceptions towards the roles and duties of school counselors (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The most important feature that the semi-structured interview form provides is more systematic and comparable information, as the interview is carried out within a very specific protocol (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The reason for choosing the semi-structured interview technique in this study was the need for a form that would enable further questions and explanations in order to learn school administrators' views on school counselors' roles and duties.

In developing the semi-structured interview form, the experts were consulted. Related literature was investigated and interview questions were prepared. Before administering the draft form, three educational science experts were consulted and necessary adjustments were made. Interviewers asked about school administrators' views on the necessity of school counselors in educational activities, the features of an ideal counselor, the status of counselors compared to other teachers, and whether there is a need for adjustments for counselors' duties and status.

Data were collected between December 16th and 29th of 2014. Interview durations varied between 25 to 45 minutes. The interviews were carried out at the schools where the administrators were assigned, and all interviews were face to face. The school administrators were unwilling to be voice recorded so the interviews were recorded via taking notes. All data were recorded on papers.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis was used for analyzing the data. The aim of this analysis was to convert the data in a way that audiences can understand and use. In descriptive analysis, data can be presented in themes based on research questions. In this analysis, direct quotations were used to present the participants' views (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In composing a framework for descriptive analysis, the interview notes were itemized. The steps for the evaluation of the interviews were: 1) the themes in parallel with the purpose of the study were determined; 2) the answers for each question were analyzed, the school managers who stress the themes were determined, and common views were specified; 3) school managers' expressions were presented in direct quotations and interpreted; and 4) the first letters of "manager" and "assistant manager" were used for coding and the number was presented in parenthesis, e.g. (M2) or (AM9)

Validity and Reliability of the Study

The validity and reliability of the study increase the credibility of the study. Therefore, people who are interviewed and the durations of the interviews were recorded in tables. Other researchers' opinions were asked in coding the data and creating themes. Thus, researcher flexibility was ensured. The interviewers' detailed explanations were presented. The whole process has been explained to readers thoroughly (Odom, Brantlinger, Gersten, Horner, Thomson & Harris, 2005). To ensure the reliability of the study, five educational science experts were asked for

their opinions on whether the views, which were grouped under four sub-themes, represented the views of the participants. The researcher and expert views were compared and the number of “agreements” and “disagreements” was determined. Miles and Huberman’s (1994) formula was used to determine the reliability of the study. When the agreement between the expert and researcher evaluations was higher than 90%, expected reliability was ensured (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The reliability of this study was found to be 92%.

Findings

Necessity in Educational and Teaching Activities

The first question of the study is “What do you think about the necessity of school counselors in educational and teaching activities?” The participants’ answers to this question are presented, along with with the conceptual theme and sub-themes, in Table 1.

Table 1.
Theme, Sub-Themes, and Frequency Table on the Necessity of School Counselors in Educational and Teaching Activities

Theme	Sub-theme	<i>f</i>
Necessity in educational and teaching activities	Field expert	8
	Indispensable	4
	Guide and support for education shareholders	9
	Route for educational studies	1

In Table 1, all school administrators agreed that school counselors are necessary for educational and teaching activities. The participants expressed the need for counselors in solving the main problems observed at schools. The views of the administrators on this topic were as such:

AM1: “They’re an indispensable part of the school. The school that has a powerful counseling and guidance service is a safe one in every aspect.”

AM3: “Counseling and Guidance teachers are necessary for every school. Today, we face much more complicated problems compared to the past. For overcoming these problems, expert support is a must.”

AM4: “Those who know the best methods and techniques about how to communicate with students – they are backbones of the school and students.”

In addition, the participants point out that school counselors are necessary and should inform school administrators, teachers, and parents. The opinions of the participants on this topic are:

AM4: "As the counseling teacher has constant communication with the teacher, students, and the parents, he is the most important person in gaining desired behaviors and abolishing unacceptable behaviors."

AM13: "We [the administrators] do not know what to do for some student behaviors. They [the counselors] are very helpful to us."

AM5: "All teachers should consult with the counseling teachers. Teachers and students should be informed on orientation, guiding, study techniques, preparing for higher education, assessment and evaluation."

The Characteristics of an Ideal School Counselor

The second question of the study was "What are the characteristics of an ideal school counselor?" The answers of the participants for this question were analyzed in two sub-themes as personal features and professional features. The data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
School Administrators' Views on the Characteristics of an Ideal School Counselor

Theme	Sub-theme	f	
Ideal features of a school counselor	Communication skills	7	
	Cheerful and friendly	12	
	Reliable	4	
	Social	8	
	Personal	Dedicated	8
	İdeal Model	4	
	Fair	3	
	Good looking	2	
	Empathic	2	
	Professional	Experienced in field	7
		Improving himself	5
		Expert	6
		Distributing knowledge	1
		Active	1
Guiding		1	

According to school administrators, as seen in Table 2, the features of an ideal school counselor were having communication skills, being cheerful and friendly, being social, dedication, and ideal. The expressions of some school administrators on this topic are:

AM10: "School counselors should be social, positive, and have strong communication skills."

AM12: "Counselors should have good dialog with the society, be ideal and friendly to people."

AM1: "They should be social and sharing; they also should cooperate with others (parents, teachers, families) at school."

AM4: "[A counselor] should be a good example with his behaviors, should be ethical and accepted by the society."

AM2: "Counselor teacher must be cheerful, dedicated, and hard-working."

For school administrators, the professional features of school counselors are possessing knowledge necessary for the field expertise, following the recent developments in the field, and improving him- or herself. Some of the opinions in this respect are:

M4: "Counselors must be well-qualified experts. Other people should need counselor's information, not the other way round."

AM8: "Counselor must be someone well-qualified. He is like a doctor. He must be qualified in every aspect."

AM13: "He must be competent at work. He should not stay with a bachelor's degree. He should learn all the time, thereby improving himself."

Having a Different Status from Other Teachers at the School

The third question of the study was "What do you think about counselors' different status from other teachers at schools?" The answers of the participants to this question are presented, with conceptual theme and sub-themes, in Table 3.

Table 3.
Theme, Sub-Themes, and Frequency Table on Administrators' Views about Counselors' Different Status from Other Teachers at School

Theme	Sub-theme	<i>f</i>
Having a different status from other teachers or Being exempt from some duties	Positive	
	Doing his job in comfort	5
	Dealing with students personally	5
	Support for teachers	2
	Negative	
	A negative impression	2

In Table 3, it is seen that administrators agreed that counselors might be exempt from some directorial works, as school counseling and guidance services are crucial. Administrators thought that this was not a privilege for counselors. In contrast, it

was a necessity for them to carry out their responsibilities. In this regard, some of the statements were as follows:

AM13: "Counselors should be in a different position from other teachers. I think they are not like any other teachers. Not only the students but also we as administrators need their support. I personally get counselor teachers' help and support. They should not be considered the same as other teachers."

AM5: "Counselors should have a different status because counseling is a special service and it must be confidential. Counseling requires expertise. Counselors need special rooms to help students who have problems."

AM4: "If they are doing their work perfectly, they should have some privileges. They understand students' psychology and they sometimes have to work with students and parents individually. Considering all these factors they need different conditions from other teachers."

In Table 3, two of the school administrators thought that when some counselors did not carry out their responsibilities properly, it created a wrong perception in the society. School administrators' views on this topic were:

AM1: "I'm not in favor of counselors' privileges, because when the facilities provided for them are not used properly that creates problems and they are seen as not working but just wasting time."

AM12: "Some counselors are not field experts as they graduate from other programs. So having privileges while not being an able one in the field creates a negative attitude towards them."

Desired Changes

The fourth question of the study was "Imagine you were authorized by the Ministry of Turkish National Education; would you think to make changes related to the status and duties of school counselors? Why?" The answers of the participants for this question are presented with conceptual theme and sub-themes in Table 4.

Table 4.
Theme, Sub-Themes, and Frequency Table on School Managers' Views on Changes to Be Made

Theme	Sub-theme	f
Desired changes to be made	Not employing counselors who are not field experts	4
	Attending courses	5
	Activities with students for integration	3
	Increasing number of counselors	7
	Improving working conditions	3
	Giving seminars to parents and teachers	3
	Helping the school management	2
	Supervising	2
	Preventing work for extra institutions	1

According to Table 4, school administrators stated that they would want to make changes related to school counselors' duties if authorized. School administrators expressed that student-counselor integration was the most important change to be made. The reason for this change was to enable counselors with the ability to observe students in the classroom environment, allowing them to be able to determine and define the students' problems and prevent them before they become severe. The school managers' ideas on this were:

AM1: "Counseling teachers should attend the classrooms for absent teachers. If not, they cannot determine the problems in point. Students who need counseling and guidance teachers' support are easy to identify in the classroom environment. If counseling teachers do not attend courses, they cannot identify those students and they are far from solving the problem. They should have exam supervising and garden watch duties; thus they spend time together with the students."

AM5: "Counseling teachers should lead classrooms that can be as a separate class hour like 'counseling and guidance' or in some other form."

AM10: "Counseling teachers should have a different status. But they should try harder to be successful. At first sight they seem like they are doing nothing. To change this perception they should work more actively with students."

AM11: "They should attend courses regularly on a specific schedule, not only when needed. I would ask them to be with students more and to talk to them at break times."

In addition, school administrators were of the opinion that the number of school counselors had increased, but while doing this, teachers who were not field experts should not have been appointed as a school psychological counselor. Some of the ideas were:

AM3: "I would increase their numbers. As there are many problematic students, they are not productive."

AM5: "It is not appropriate to appoint other faculty teachers [to counseling positions]. Other faculty teachers are inefficient when professionalism is needed. If someone has problems and questions about homosexuality, how can the other faculty teachers help him?"

AM9: "They are insufficient. We have only one counseling teacher when we need four actually. For some students we are hopeless. Only the psychological counselor can help them. Counselor teachers are very supportive at school. We as other teachers try but we cannot be as effective as them."

To sum up the findings of the research, school administrators thought school counselors had an important role in schools as field experts and that they were a complementary part of the educational system for supporting the shareholders of education. In addition, an ideal school counselor was deemed to be cheerful with good communication skills, friendliness, social skills, dedication, and ideal in terms of personal features. Regarding the counselors' professional features, school

administrators thought that an ideal counselor should be well-qualified, experienced, and open to self-improvement. School administrators were supportive about counselors' privileges such as flexible work hours, not supervising classrooms as other teachers do, having a separate office, and not supervising students at break times. Teachers seemed to think that these responsibilities were part of their own jobs. Finally, among the changes to be made in counselors' duties, administrators stated that the number of counselors should be increased, teachers who are not field experts should not be appointed as counseling teachers, counseling teachers should spend more time with students, and the counselors should give seminars to parents and other teachers.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Suggestions

This study was carried out with 13 school administrators in the Diyarbakır city center. Administrators were interviewed about their perceptions on school counseling services and their expectations of counselors, in terms of both personal and professional features. In addition, school administrators' views on school counselors' duties and status at school, based on the current findings, were that school counselors are crucial and necessary for students. This finding matches up with earlier research findings and conclusions (Ametea & Clark, 2005; Zalaquett, 2005; Meşeci, Özcan, & Bozdemir, 2007; Camadan & Sezgin, 2012; Özabacı, Sakarya, & Doğan, 2008). School administrators also emphasized that school counselors need to be experts in the field to solve problems, should prepare plans to coordinate with other shareholders at school, and should provide support to managers, teachers, and parents (Camadan & Sezgin, 2012; Camadan & Kahveci, 2013).

Glossoff and Koprowicz (1990) highlight the importance of teamwork in counseling programs and the role of school counselors in creating teams. CACREP explains that counselors are expected to be able to carry out consultations with teachers, managers, and parents. They should also be competent in counseling subjects to enhance their academic, professional, and social development. With regard to this competence, another finding of the study is that school administrators expected school counselors to have certain personal and professional features. Being social and cheerful, easy to communicate with, friendly, empathic, moral, and dedicated were among the personal features. Some of the professional features were having qualifications and expertise in the field, following the recent developments in counseling, and doing their jobs professionally. In this context, the features that school administrators expect from an ideal school counselor are consistent with the existing literature (Kepçeoğlu, 2001; Knoff, Hines & Kromrey, 1995; Halinski, 2009). If school counselors possess the necessary personal and professional competences, they will be able to cooperate with school administrators and get their support. Thus, they will be able to do their jobs more effectively and professionally.

The Ministry of Turkish National Education has been doing some adjustments to provide proficient and efficient counseling services. For this purpose, regulations have been put in place, including adjustments and changes for organizing,

managing, and maintaining counseling services, since the 1950s (Ministry of Education Psychological Counseling and Guidance Services Regulation 2009). With the assumption that school administrators are authorized by the Ministry of Education to make changes and adjustments related to counseling services, intriguing findings have been reached. Among them are teachers' ideas to increase the number of school counselors and not appoint faculty teachers who are not field experts. The reason for this is that school counseling is a specific field and should be done by professionals. It is already well known that the number of counselors at schools is not enough. The insufficient number of counselors affects the quality of counseling services adversely (Camadan & Sezgin, 2012). In meeting the demand for counseling teachers, it is important not to appoint other faculty teachers who are not field experts (Turkish Psychological Counseling Association, 2013). As counseling and guidance services are jobs that entail professionalism, appointing people who lack the necessary education for counseling will affect the quality of the service adversely (Pişkin, 2006). In regard for the continuum of schools' psychological counseling and guidance services, the number of counselor teachers should be increased and other faculty teachers should not be appointed, as they are not field experts.

Another finding of the study is that school administrators expect school counselors to attend classes with students and do different activities with them. This is because school administrators think that observing students in the classrooms will be very useful in determining, understanding, preventing, and solving problems. In parallel to this, according to Güven (2009), if counselors spend most of their time in their separate office, they will not be able to follow the recent developments in the field and will not be able to find solutions to the problems. It can be said that student-counselor integration with in- or out-of-class activities might have a positive effect on counseling and guidance services. Moreover, school administrators are well aware that school counseling services are crucial. Thus, school counselors should have somewhat different privileges from other teachers.

In conclusion, the quality of school counseling services depends on many factors. The very first is school administrators. School administrators have important roles in adopting the school counseling program and the success of the counselors. In this study it was found that school managers are very aware and positive about the school counseling and guidance field, and about counselor teachers' duties and responsibilities. The quality and efficiency of school counseling services should be increased, and the job description of the counselors should be better clarified by the Ministry of Turkish National Education to prevent confusion. School administrators and other shareholders should support the process for creating a common culture about the professional identity of school counselors. Further studies can be done with bigger samples, using techniques such as observation, questionnaires, or other data collection methods to better reflect school administrators' perceptions.

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Okul Yöneticilerinin Okul Psikolojik Danışmanlarının Rol ve Görevlerine İlişkin Algılarının İncelenmesi

Atf:

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Özet

Problem Durumu: Günümüzde okul psikolojik danışmanlarının eğitim öğretim faaliyetlerindeki yeri ve bireylerin eğitsel, kişisel ve mesleki olarak gelişebilmesindeki aldığı rolün önemi artık yadsınamaz bir durumdur. Öğrencilerin her yönüyle sağlıklı şekilde gelişebilmeleri ve sosyal hayata hazırlanabilmeleri sadece öğretim etkinlikleri ile gerçekleştirilemeyeceği için psikolojik danışmanların öğrencilerin kendi kişiliklerini daha iyi anlamaları ve problemlerine çözüm bulmada kendilerine yeter bir duruma gelmelerine yardımcı olurlar. Rehberlik eğitim faaliyetlerinin tamamlayıcı bir parçası olarak düşünüldüğünde okul psikolojik danışmanının öncülüğünde yürütülen rehberlik ve psikolojik danışma hizmetleri öğretim etkinliklerinin sağlayamayacağı eksiklikleri gidermekte ve öğrenenlere destek olmaktadır. Psikolojik danışmanların okul rehberlik ve psikolojik danışma hizmetlerini yürütüyorken en fazla işbirliği içerisinde oldukları kişiler yöneticiler, öğretmenler, veliler ve diğer eğitim çalışanlarıdır. Bu gruplar içinde psikolojik danışmanın yapacağı etkinlikleri en fazla etkileyen kişiler ise okul yöneticileridir. Bunun için okul psikolojik danışmanlarının okul içi konuları, görevleri ve sorumluluklarının başta okul yöneticileri olmak üzere diğer paydaşlar tarafından iyi bilinmesi gerekmektedir. Aksi takdirde psikolojik danışmanlar bazen aldıkları eğitime, profesyonel olarak belirlenmiş rol ve etkinliklere uygun olmayan görevleri yerine getirmek durumunda kalabilirler. İlgili alan yazından edinilen bilgilerin ışığında, son zamanlarda Türkiye’de okul yöneticilerinin okul psikolojik danışmanların rol ve görevlerine ilişkin algılarını inceleyen ve görüşleri belirleyen nitel araştırma yapılmıştır. Okul yöneticileri rehberlik ve psikolojik danışmanlık programının uygulanmasından birinci derecede sorumludur. Bu sorumluluk bağlamında okul yöneticileri okul psikolojik danışmanlarla işbirliği halinde olması gerekmektedir. Bu anlamda, okul yöneticilerinin işbirliği kuracakları okul psikolojik danışmanların okul içi konumu, kişisel ve mesleki beklentileri ve eğitim-öğretim çalışmalarında etkililiğinin artırılması gibi konularda algılarını ve görüşlerinin incelenmesi önemli görülmektedir. Alınan görüşler doğrultusunda ülkemizde rehberlik ve psikolojik danışmanlık hizmetlerinin başarıya ulaşabilmesi ve okul psikolojik danışmanların etkililiğinin ve verimliliğinin artırabilmesi adına birtakım önerilerle ilgili alan yazına katkı getirmesi hedeflenmektedir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Okul rehberlik ve psikolojik danışmanlık hizmetlerinin yürütülmesinde önemli paydaşlardan olan okul yöneticilerinin okul psikolojik danışmanların rol ve görevlerine ilişkin algıları incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın alt amaçları ise; okul yöneticilerine göre okul psikolojik danışmanlarının eğitim öğretim çalışmalarındaki yeri, okul psikolojik danışmanlardan kişisel ve mesleki özellikler olarak beklentileri, okul psikolojik danışmanların okul içi statüsü ve görevlerine ilişkin görüşlerinin açığa çıkarılması gerektiği düşüncesiyle bu araştırma gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Bu çalışmada okul yöneticilerinin okul psikolojik danışmanların rol ve görevlerine ilişkin algılarının belirlenmesine ilişkin durum incelenmesi niteliğinde betimsel bir çalışma olup çalışmada nitel araştırmadır. Bununla birlikte görüngübilimsel (fenomenolojik) bir desene sahiptir. Bu çalışmada okul yöneticilerinin okul psikolojik danışmanlarının rol ve görevlerine ilişkin algı ve görüşleri konu edinildiği için, derinlikli çözümlemelere izin veren görüngübilimsel desen tercih edilmiştir. Araştırmanın katılımcılarını Diyarbakır merkez okullarında okul psikolojik danışmanı bulunan 13 okul yöneticisi oluşturmaktadır. Araştırma verilerinin çözümlenmesinde betimsel analiz tekniği kullanılmıştır. Betimsel analiz için çerçeve oluşturma aşamasında, okul yöneticileriyle yapılan görüşme notlarının dökümü yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın güvenilirliğini sağlamak için, çalışmada ulaşılan 4 tema altında verilen görüşlerin söz konusu temaları temsil edip etmediğini teyit etmek amacıyla 5 Eğitim Bilimci uzmanın görüşüne başvurulmuştur.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Okul yöneticileri okullarda görev alan okul psikolojik danışmanlarının alan uzmanı olarak önemli bir role sahip olduğu ve eğitim paydaşlarına destek olması açısından eğitimsel ve öğretimsel çalışmaların tamamlayıcı bir ögesi olarak görmektedirler. Ayrıca, ideal bir okul psikolojik danışmanından iletişim becerisine sahip, güler yüzlü ve cana yakın, sosyal, özverili, örnek bireyler olmasını beklerlerken, mesleki özellikler olarak ise alanında donanımlı, birikimli olması ve sürekli güncel kalması gerektiğini ifade etmektedirler. Okul psikolojik danışmanların mesai saatlerindeki esneklik, nöbet tutmamaları, derslere girmemeleri, özel odalarının olması gibi diğer branş öğretmenlerine göre tanınan birtakım ayrıcalıklar hakkında ise, okul yöneticilerinin çoğu yaptıkları işin gereği olumlu düşünmektedirler. Son olarak, okul yöneticilerinin okul psikolojik danışmanların görevlerine ilişkin değişiklik ve düzenleme yapmak istedikleri konular ise; psikolojik danışmanlarının sayısının artırılması, alan dışı atama yapılmaması, okul psikolojik danışmanlarının öğrencilerle iç içe olabilmesi amacıyla birtakım etkinlikler düzenlenmesi, fiziki çalışma koşullarını iyileştirilmesi ve aile ve öğretmenlere seminer verilmesi yönünde değişiklik ve düzenleme yapılması gerektiğini dile getirmektedirler.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Rehberlik ve psikolojik danışmanlık hizmetlerinin nitelikli ve kaliteli olması birçok etkene bağlıdır. Bu etkenlerin başında okul yöneticileri gelmektedir. Okul yöneticileri tarafından rehberlik programının benimsenmesi, programın etkililiğine ve başarılı olmasına zemin hazırlayıcı rolleri vardır. Bu çalışmada rehberlik ve psikolojik danışmanlık hizmetlerinin önemli

paydaşlarından biri olan okul yöneticilerinde rehberlik ve psikolojik danışmanlık alanına ve okul psikolojik danışmanlarının görev ve sorumluluklarına ilişkin olumlu farkındalık oluştuğu görülmektedir. Okul psikolojik danışmanının sorumluluğunda yürütülen rehberlik ve psikolojik danışmanlık hizmetlerinin kalitesi ve etkililik düzeyinin artırılması, olası sorunların önlenmesi için yetkili bakanlık tarafınca okul psikolojik danışmanlarının görev ve sorumluluklarına ilişkin görev tanımları netleştirilmelidir. Ayrıca, okul psikolojik danışman mesleki kimliğine ilişkin okullarda ortak kültürün yayılması için okul yöneticileri başta olmak üzere tüm paydaşlar tarafından benimsenmesi ve uygulanması için destek sağlamalıdır. Gelecekte yapılacak benzer araştırmalar için, daha büyük örneklemelerle okul yöneticilerinin okul psikolojik danışmanların rol ve görevlerine ilişkin algılarını etraflıca yansıtabilecek görüşme, gözlem, anket gibi veri toplama araç ve yöntemleri kullanılarak yapılabilir.