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Examining Instructional Leadership Behaviors of School Principals¹

Okul Müdürlerinin Öğretim Liderliği Davranışlarının İncelenmesi

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Examining Instructional Leadership Behaviors of School Principals

Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine the instructional leadership behaviors of school principals. Phenomenology design was used. Interviews were carried out with 14 school principals at primary and secondary schools. The participants were selected with a purposeful sampling method. The data were collected through a semi-structured interview form. All school principals emphasized the objectives of the school in parallel with the goals determined centrally. School principals gave importance to social and cultural studies to increase the students' motivation, and they organized out-of-school activities to motivate teachers. School principals generally control annual plans and community meetings, provide support for teachers in cooperation with teachers, show sensitivity to school problems, reward successful students, and reward successful teachers with social awards. In addition, it was understood that the school principals don't want to do the partake in activities that are not relevant to education. School principals focused on motivation, supporting school atmosphere, supply materials and rewards in terms of instructional leadership.

Summary

Experiencing rapid changes in today's educational system the role of principals is important in showing leadership in the school administration. Principals have a large share in the success of schools of all types and levels. A lot of emphasis is currently placed on the need for principals to be instructional leaders, primarily because this type of leadership has a stronger impact on student outcomes compared to types of leadership. The changing roles and duties of the school principal include ensuring the professional development of teachers, improving teacher leadership, ensuring school development and effectiveness, and strengthening organizational learning. School principals prepare students for social change, strengthening the bond between school and society (Mulford, 2003). School principals are seen to define their duties as creating a culture that can lead to the development of people in the organization, making sure a culture of accountability is dominant (Elmore, 2000) and focusing on easing teaching and learning in the school (Bartell, 1989). These new roles attributed to school principals place principals in the position of instructional leaders. Principals who are instructional leaders emphasize achievements, set instructional strategies, provide an orderly atmosphere for learning, evaluate student progress frequently, support teachers, articulate clear, and informed visions, establish goals, and intervene when necessary (Graczewski, Knudson and Holtzman, 2009; Ovando and Cavazos, 2004).

Instructional leadership has been dimensioned by different authors in various ways. There are differences and similarities between these dimensions. School principals with these skills are expected to perform



duties related to instructional leadership in the school (Şişman, 2014). Stating that instructional leadership has four dimensions, Andrews and Soder (1987) explain these dimensions as providing resources, being an instructional resource, being a model as a communicator and being visible all over the school. According to Hallinger & Murphy (1985), the three dimensions of instructional leadership are defining the school mission, managing the curriculum, and creating a positive learning climate. According to Şişman (2014), instructional leadership has six dimensions. These are "the management of the school's vision and mission, the management of learning and school's program, the monitoring and evaluation of student development, the development of school staff, the management of the school climate and culture, and the management of the school environment". In this research, Şişman's (2014) classification is taken into account. The research can be considered important because it is one of the few qualitative researches in the phenomenology pattern related to instructional leadership. In the light of the results from this study, which examined the instructional leadership behavior of school principals, the recommendations presented are expected to guide practitioners and policy makers who have a say in educating principals as teaching leaders.

The aim of this study is to examine the levels of displaying instructional leadership by school principals. The research was carried out with 14 school principals working in primary and secondary schools of the Ministry of National Education in Safranbolu and the central district of Karabük province in the 2018-2019 academic year. In this study, phenomenology design was conducted. The participants were selected from the school principals who were considered to have sufficient experience of the phenomenon being investigated in accordance with the criteria and convenient sampling method (the purposeful sampling method). The data were collected through semi-structured interviews form, and developed based on the literature of the research problem and the opinions of the field experts.

The following findings were obtained from the research: school principals working in primary and secondary schools mostly aim at academic achievement in the dimension of the school's vision and mission management. And they emphasize mostly the MoNE laws that explain principles for education and training. School principals adhere to teaching leadership behaviors in the implementation of the school curriculum, and to the management of learning regarding changes in the curriculum and program. In the dimension of monitoring and evaluation student development, secondary school principals follow their students' development more than the primary school principals. This is because secondary school students take national exams. In the aspect of professional development of the schools' staff, the behavior of supporting teachers'



professional development is not carried out by a small number of principals. School principals perform their instructional leadership roles and behaviors in the dimension of the management and culture of the school. It was observed that a certain part of the school principals fulfilled their instructional leadership behaviors in order to provide the support of the environment and the family in the dimension of the management of the school environment. On the other hand, it was observed that most of the school principals gave importance to social and cultural studies to increase the students' motivation, and the principals organized out-of-school activities to motivate teachers. It has been shown that school principals control annual plans and community meetings, provide support for teachers, show sensitivity to school problems, reward successful students, and reward successful teachers with social awards. In addition, it was seen that the school principals do not want to partake in activities that are not relevant to education

Keywords: Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Administration, School Principal, School Management.

Okul Müdürlerinin Öğretim Liderliği Davranışlarının İncelenmesi

Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı okul müdürlerinin sergilediği öğretim liderliği davranışlarını incelemektir. Araştırmada fenomenoloji deseni kullanılmıştır. Araştırma 2018-2019 eğitim-öğretim yılında Karabük ilinde Safranbolu ve Merkez ilçedeki ilkokul ve ortaokullarda görev yapmakta olan 14 okul müdürü ile yürütülmüştür. Katılımcılar amaçlı örneklem yöntemlerinden ölçüt ve kolay ulaşılabilir örnekleme uygun olarak araştırılan fenomene ilişkin yeterli deneyime sahip olduğu düşünülen okul müdürleri arasından seçilmiştir. Veriler yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formuyla toplanmıştır. Araştırma bulguları okul müdürlerinin zamanlarının büyük bölümünde okullarda öğrenme için gerekli olan ön şartları oluşturmakla (fiziksel, materyal v.b.) uğraştıklarını; eğitim ve öğretimi geliştirmek için öğretmen ihtiyaçlarını karşılayarak ve çeşitli sosyal etkinlikler düzenleyerek öğretmen motivasyonunu artırmaya çalıştıklarını, öğrenci öğrenmeleri için öğrenci başarılarını ödüllendirdiklerini, genel olarak destekleyici bir okul atmosferi oluşturmaya gayret ettiklerini göstermiştir. Diğer taraftan okul müdürlerinin öğretim liderliği kapsamında mesleki gelişimle ilgili olarak öğretmenleri sürekli öğrenmeye ve gelişmeye teşvik edici bir dil kullandıkları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Özet

Okul müdürlerinin sergiledikleri liderlik rolleri günümüz eğitim sistemlerinde oldukça önemli kabul edilmektedir. Her tür ve kademedeki okulların başarısında okul müdürleri büyük bir paya sahiptir. Okul müdürleri öğrenci çıktılarını üzerinde diğer liderlik türlerinden daha güçlü bir



etkiye sahip olduğu için öğretim liderleri olmasına önem verilmektedir. Okul müdürünün değişen rol ve görevleri arasında öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimini sağlamak, öğretmen liderliğini geliştirmek, okul gelişimini ve etkililiğini sağlamak ve örgütsel öğrenmeyi güçlendirmek sayılabilir. Okul müdürleri öğrencileri toplumsal değişimlere hazırlar, okul ile toplum arasındaki bağı güçlendirir (Mulford, 2003). Okul müdürlerinin rollerinin, örgütteki insanların gelişimlerini sağlayacak kültür oluşturmak, örgütte hesap verebilirlik kültürünü egemen kılmak (Elmore, 2000) ve okulda öğrenme ve öğretmeyi kolaylaştırmaya odaklanmak (Bartell, 1989) olarak tanımlandığı da görülmektedir. Okul müdürlerine atfedilen bu yeni roller müdürleri öğretim lideri konumuna getirmektedir. Öğretim lideri olan müdürler başarıları vurgular, yapısal stratejiler belirler, düzenli bir öğrenme ortamı sağlar, öğrenci gelişimini sık sık değerlendirir, öğretmenleri destekler, açık, şekillendirilmiş vizyonlar oluşturur ve gerektiğinde müdahale eder (Graczewski, Knudson ve Holtzman, 2009; Ovando ve Cavazos, 2004).

Öğretim liderliği farklı yazarlar tarafından çeşitli şekillerde boyutlandırılmıştır. Bu boyutlandırmalar arasında farklılık ve benzerlikler bulunmaktadır. Bu becerilere sahip olan okul müdürlerinin okulda öğretim liderliğiyle ilgili görevleri yerine getirmeleri beklenmektedir (Şişman, 2014). Öğretim liderliğinin dört boyutu olduğunu ifade eden Andrews ve Soder (1987) bu boyutları kaynak sağlama, öğretimsel olarak kaynaklık etme, iletişimci olarak model olma ve okulun her yerinde görünür biri olmak şeklinde açıklamaktadır. Hallinger ve Murphy'e (1985) göre öğretim liderliğinin üç boyutu okul misyonunu tanımlama, öğretim programını yönetme ve olumlu bir öğrenme iklimi oluşturmaktır. Şişman'a (2014) göre öğretim liderliğinin altı boyutu vardır. Bunlar, "okulun vizyon ve misyonunun yönetimi, okul programının ve öğrenmenin yönetimi, öğrenci gelişiminin izlenip değerlendirilmesi, okul kadrosunun geliştirilmesi, okul ikliminin ve kültürünün yönetilmesi ve okul çevresinin yönetimidir". Bu araştırmada Şişman (2014) sınıflandırması dikkate alınmıştır. Araştırma öğretim liderliği ile ilgili fenomenoloji deseninde yapılan az sayıdaki nitel araştırmalardan biri olması sebebiyle önemli sayılabilir. Okul müdürlerinin öğretim liderliği davranışlarını inceleyen bu çalışmadan çıkan sonuçlar ışığında sunulan önerilerin uygulayıcılara ve müdürlerin öğretim lideri olarak yetiştirilmesinde söz sahibi olan politika yapıcılara yol göstermesi beklenmektedir.

Bu araştırmanın amacı okul müdürlerinin sergilediği öğretim liderliği davranışlarını incelemektir. Araştırma 2018-2019 eğitim-öğretim yılında Karabük ilinde Safranbolu ve Merkez ilçede Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına bağlı ilkokul ve ortaokullarda görev yapmakta olan 14 okul müdürü ile yürütülmüştür. Araştırmada fenomenoloji deseni kullanılmıştır. Katılımcılar amaçlı örneklem yöntemlerinden ölçüt ve kolay ulaşılabilir örnekleme



uygun olarak araştırılan fenomene ilişkin yeterli deneyime sahip olduğu düşünülen okul müdürleri arasından seçilmiştir. Veriler araştırma konusunun alanyazınına ve alan uzmanlarının görüşlerine dayalı olarak oluşturulan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formuyla toplanmıştır.

Araştırma bulguları ilkokul ve ortaokulda görev yapan okul müdürlerinin okulun vizyon ve misyonunun yönetimi boyutunda çoğunlukla akademik başarıyı hedeflediklerini, okul programının ve öğrenmenin yönetimi boyutunda öğretim programlarını ve programdaki değişiklikleri uygulamada öğretim liderliği davranışlarına uygun davrandıklarını, öğrenci gelişiminin izlenip değerlendirilmesi boyutunda öğrenci gelişiminin takibini ortaokul müdürlerinin ilkokul müdürlerinden daha çok yerine getirdiklerini, okul kadrosunun geliştirilmesi boyutunda öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimini destekleme davranışının az sayıda okul müdürü tarafından gerçekleştirildiğini, okul müdürlerinin okul ikliminin ve kültürünün yönetimi boyutunda öğretim liderliği rol ve davranışlarını yerine getirdiklerini göstermiştir. Okul müdürlerinin okul çevresinin yönetimi boyutunda çevrenin ve ailenin desteğini sağlamaya yönelik öğretim liderliği davranışlarını yerine getirdikleri görülmüştür. Diğer taraftan, okul müdürlerinin, öğrencilerin motivasyonunu artırmaya yönelik sosyal ve kültürel çalışmalara önem verdikleri, öğretmenleri motive etmek için okul dışı etkinlikleri düzenledikleri görülmüştür. Okul müdürlerinin yıllık plan ve zümre toplantılarını kontrol ettikleri, öğretmenlerle işbirliği yaparak araç gereç desteği sağladıkları, okul sorunlarına duyarlılık gösterdikleri, başarılı öğrencileri ödüllendirdikleri, başarılı öğretmenleri ise sosyal ödüllerle ödüllendirdikleri ortaya konmuştur. Diğer taraftan okul müdürlerinin satın alma, tadilat, bakım ve onarım gibi öğretim ile doğrudan ilgili olmayan işleri yapmak istemedikleri sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Liderlik, Öğretim Liderliği, Yönetim, Okul Müdürü, Okul Yönetimi.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the changes in every field have affected education systems as well, and the roles and responsibilities of teachers and administrators who are going to educate individuals the qualifications that are required to maintain the existence of societies, have been redefined. Schools are the most vital parts of education systems. The function of a school is to increase the effectiveness of teaching, through teaching, in order to differentiate individuals and to perfect the school.

Due to its impact on the development of the individual and society, the functions, individual and social outcomes of the school are directly and indirectly supervised by the society, and schools and teachers are held responsible for students' achievements (Sezgin, 2013). Teachers are professionals responsible for the job of teaching. It is the principals who direct and coordinate the efforts and labor of the teachers (Kılınç, 2016;



Özdemir & Sezgin, 2002). Principals are seen as one of the most important actors in ensuring student achievement, which has been one of the most important issues in recent times (Hoy & Miskel, 2015).

Principals have a large share in the success of schools of all types and levels. When the duties of school principals defined in the legislation are examined, it can be stated that school principals are expected to administrate rather than leadership and that instead of creating a standard for administration, areas of responsibility of school principals are listed. (Kılınc & Cansoy, 2017; Şişman, 2014). However, administrators are obliged to carry out many duties other than these duties and which are not specified in writing.

In most studies related to instructional leadership, there is an inexplicable relationship between the behavior of school principals and school outcomes and school effectiveness that increases the importance of instructional leadership behaviors of school principals. In this context, there is a consensus among researchers that teaching leadership is an important indicator in increasing student achievement and achieving school development. Most studies have shown that school effectiveness is high in schools with strong leaders who prioritize educational activities. In these studies, instructional leadership was found to be one of the most fundamental factors affecting school success (Gümüşeli, 2014).

It is seen that researches about instructional leadership have concentrated on the relation between instructional leadership and student success (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Short & Spencer, 1989; Sim, 2011), its direct and indirect effects on school effectiveness and student success (Heck & Hallinger, 2005), specifying levels of carrying out instructional leadership behaviors in terms of job behaviors (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), the relation of students' academic success with instructional leadership behaviors of principals and collaborative behaviors of teachers (Miller, Goddard & Goddard, 2010), its relation with supporting the professional development of teachers (Donkor & Asante, 2016), its effects on teachers (Blase & Blase, 1999), the effects of managing school programs by instructional leaders, on teachers' managing of the class (Manaseh, 2016), whether it differs according to the seniority of management, school environment and the academic success of the school (Şişman, 1997).

School principals who are seen as leaders of schools (MEB, 2000) are one of the most important determinants of student success. The changing roles and duties of the school principal include ensuring the professional development of teachers, improving teacher leadership, ensuring school development and effectiveness, and strengthening organizational learning. School principals prepare students for social change, strengthening the bond between school and society (Mulford, 2003). School principals take on the roles of budget planner, event manager, economist, public relations and Evaluation



Specialist (National Association of Secondary School Principal, [NASSP], 2007). School principals are seen to define their duties as creating a culture that can lead to the development of people in the organization, making sure the culture of accountability is dominant (Elmore, 2000), focusing on easing teaching and learning in the school (Bartell, 1989), providing the technical infrastructure for the school and developing teachers' knowledge and skills (Fullan, 2001). These new roles attributed to school principals place principals in the position of instructional leaders.

Instructional Leadership

The concept of instructional leadership first came into use in Western countries in the 1970s with research on influential schools (Şişman, 2014). The concept comes from North America. In the UK and some European countries, the concept of "learning-centered leadership" is used instead of the concept of instructional leadership (Bush, 2018).

There are numerous definitions of instructional leadership that emerged with the influential school movement (Short & Spencer, 1989). According to Şişman (2014), instructional leadership is defined as the power of principals, teachers and supervisors to influence individuals and events in the school, and is distinguished from other leadership concepts by its focus on learning and teaching processes in the school. According to Özdemir & Sezgin (2002), instructional leadership is a clear presentation of the school's reason for existence and the school policy.

Hallinger (2003) states that instructional leaders take on a more difficult task than school principals who are not qualified as instructional leaders. School principals who are instructional leaders take responsibility for the students' academic success, paving the way for teachers to use new techniques and gain in-depth knowledge in increasing success (Graczewski, Knudson & Holtzman, 2009). Instructional leadership is the strengthening of school culture and the implementation of teaching management, in order to improve student learning outcomes (Ovando & Cavazos, 2004). In these definitions, the instructional leadership of the school principal includes the behaviors that the school principal has to fulfill in order to improve learning within and outside the school.

Instructional leadership has been dimensioned by different authors in various ways. There are differences and similarities between these dimensions. School principals with these skills are expected to perform duties related to instructional leadership in the school (Şişman, 2014). Weber (1989) defined the dimensions of instructional leadership as defining the school mission, managing the curriculum and teaching, creating a positive school climate, monitoring and providing feedback to teachers, and evaluating the curriculum. According to Krug (1992), instructional leadership consists of the dimensions of defining the school mission, supervision and management of teaching, management and evaluation of the curriculum, monitoring of student development, and improving the



teaching climate. Stating that instructional leadership has four dimensions, Andrews and Soder (1987) explain these dimensions as providing resources, being an instructional resource, being a model as a communicator and being visible all over the school. According to Hallinger & Murphy (1985), the three dimensions of instructional leadership are defining the school mission, managing the curriculum, and creating a positive learning climate. The dimension of defining the school mission consists of the sub-dimensions of determining school objectives and communicating the objectives to the stakeholders. In the management dimension of the curriculum, there are sub-dimensions of supervision and evaluation of education, coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student development. The dimension of creating a positive school environment consists of the sub-dimensions of preserving teaching time, supporting professional development, being a visible leader in the school, encouraging teachers, developing the academic standards and encouraging learning. According to Şişman (2014), instructional leadership has six dimensions. These are "the management of the school's vision and mission, the management of learning and school's program, the monitoring and evaluation of student development, the development of school staff, the management of the school climate and culture, and the management of the school environment". In this research, Şişman's (2014) classification is taken into account.

In this study, it is aimed to examine the instructional leadership behaviors exhibited by school principals within the context of Şişman's (2014) conceptual model and through their own perceptions. Research findings that there is a relationship between instructional leadership behaviors of school principals and the professional development of teachers, academic achievement of students and the management of instruction programs that cannot be explained by chance. For example, Andrews and Soder (1987) found a significant correlation between strong instructional leadership and the increase in math and reading achievement of particularly low-achieving students. Campbell, Chaseling, Boyde & Shipway (2018) in their study of school principals' views on instructional leadership concluded that there is a positive relationship between instructional leadership and promoting professional development, monitoring student development, and analysis of student data.

Heck and Hallinger (2005), in their research that showed school principals' leadership styles have direct and indirect effects on school effectiveness and student achievement, concluded that the school principal and the school's leadership team have the capacity to improve school learning outcomes. There is evidence in the literature that instructional leadership is an important factor that positively affects school outcomes. However, in order to benefit from instructional leadership as an element that will improve education in the school, it is necessary to demonstrate how the concept is



perceived by the school principals and their exemplary practices. In this sense, there are limited studies investigating the instructional leadership behaviors of school principals according to their perceptions.

The research can be considered important because it is one of the few qualitative researches in the phenomenology pattern related to instructional leadership. In the research conducted by Polatcan & Cansoy (2018), it is emphasized that 25 of the 35 article studies between 2005 and 2017 were done by quantitative method, 2 by mixed method and only 8 by qualitative method. It is thought that the research will make an important contribution to the literature by analyzing the phenomenon of instructional leadership in depth based on the experiences of school principals (Bellibas et al., 2016; Hallinger et al., 2020). In the light of the results from this study, which examined the instructional leadership behavior of school principals, the recommendations presented are expected to guide practitioners and policy makers who have a say in educating principals as teaching leaders.

2. Method

2.1. Research Model

This research is based on qualitative research method and phenomenology. The philosophy of phenomenology emphasizes experience and the transformation of experience into consciousness. In this respect the phenomenological approach is an appropriate approach for studying intense human experiences (Merriam, 2015). In this research, it was aimed to determine the perceptions of school principals about the phenomenon of instructional leadership and how their experiences related to this phenomenon affect teaching. For this research an Ethics Committee permission dated 10.05.2018 and numbered 2018/06 was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Karabük University Institute of Social Sciences.

2.2. Participants

Criteria and easily accessible sampling were used in determining the participants of this study. Criteria are created by the researcher and the individual, object or event that meets these criteria is selected (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2017). In this research, the criteria used in the selection of the participants is to have served at least 4 years as an administrator in primary and secondary schools in Safranbolu or the Central District of Karabük province. This is because school administrators are appointed every 4 years and this period is thought to be sufficient to gain sufficient experience of the phenomenon being investigated. In the intended sample, the researcher selects individuals and places. Selected individuals voluntarily provide insights into the understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Within the scope of the research, school principals working in 8 primary schools, 4 secondary schools and 2 working in both primary and secondary schools, 14 schools in total, were designated. In accordance with the purpose of the research, school principals who have



different branches in different school types have at least 13 years of professional seniority and at least 6 years of administrative seniority. In other words, school principals have sufficient managerial experience with the phenomenon being investigated.

Before starting the research, Karabük University Institute of Social Sciences was applied to, to get the required ethical permission, and the research began after the permission was taken. During the research, the participants, in the light of ethical rules, were asked if they were willing to participate in the research, and were informed that they could leave the interview anytime they wanted.

2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

In this research, data were collected by a semi-structured interview form which was formed according to the relevant literature and expert opinions. This technique, which has a certain level of standard and flexibility, is considered more appropriate in educational research (Türnüklü, 2000). The interview form consists of two parts. In the first part, information on the characteristics of the participants was included. In the second part, there were open ended questions. While collecting data for the research, an interview protocol has been prepared and the participants have been asked for permission for the usage of a voice recording device.

The questions were directed to 2 school principals who were not included in the study group and they were asked to answer the questions, asking permission to use a voice recorder. Each interview has been held in each participant's own offices, and, when necessary, questions that were not originally in the list have been asked, to ensure that the participants give more detailed information. The participants were reminded that their identities would be kept confidential and that they could pause the interview at any time.

The identities of the participants were kept confidential and code names such as P1 and P2 were used. To ensure the dependability of the research, the interviews have been held for long periods of time and the data have been included in direct quotations. Since reaching a number of participants appropriate and adequate for the process of data gathering increases the credibility of the research, while determining the quantity of the participants, they have been interviewed until the data would not reveal any more information. The interview transcript has been examined by an expert and adjustments have been made regarding the feedback. To increase credibility, confirmations from the participants were received. The participant confirmation is to validate if the texts formed after the interview, felt right (Merriam, 2015). The interviews lasted 45-80 minutes. The audio recordings were transcribed by the researcher and 131 pages of data were obtained. To ensure the transferability of the research, literature scans



related to the subject were made both country-wide and in a global scale, and a conceptual framework was created. Thereby it was aimed to identify and clarify the area in which the findings can be generalized. In this respect, descriptive analysis has been carried out and a framework has been created for content analysis. The interviews were analyzed via content analysis and descriptive analysis. The data obtained were collected and interpreted under previously determined headings. In content analysis, data are combined with common concepts and themes and interpreted in a way that the reader can understand (Saban & Ersoy, 2017). Content analysis is a systematic process used to describe content communication. In the analysis of data, Merriam's (2015) recommendations for managing the data analysis process are taken into account. The credibility of the research comes from the consistency between the findings and the data. All the stages of this research were recorded. The degree of consistency between the results of the research and the data that has been gathered, was analyzed and the deductions showed consistency. In order to support the findings or highlight important points in the study, participants' statements were directly included in the appropriate sections. The data were interpreted based on the literature and the findings of the research were reached.

3. Findings

In this part of the study, the answers of the participants were analyzed by content analysis and descriptive analysis. Findings and interpretations of the determined dimensions and themes are given.

The data are presented according to the dimensional classification of Şişman (2014). In this instructional leadership model, data were collected under 6 dimensions and 14 themes. The themes created in this context are classified as follows: adopting the objectives set out in the fundamental law of The Ministry of National Education in the dimension of managing the school mission and vision, raising individuals with national, spiritual and moral values, targeting the promotion of academic achievement and sharing the objectives through healthy communication; to have sufficient knowledge of curriculum change and to follow the process of the curriculum, in the dimension of managing the curriculum and learning; monitoring student achievement in the dimension of monitoring student development and rewarding successful students; in the dimension of developing school's staff, supporting teachers who are studying masters and doctorates and rewarding teachers' efforts; in the dimension of the management of school climate and culture, to have a healthy communication with the teachers and to treat them equally and fairly; in the dimension of the management of school environment, visiting institutions, organizations and individuals and establishing school-parent cooperation.

3. 1. Management of School Mission and Vision

Adopting the objectives stated in the Fundamental Law of the Ministry of National Education: School principals have stated that they have adopted



the aims of Turkish National Education stated in the Fundamental Law of the Ministry of National Education (MEB, 1973) and that they are trying to realize the objectives of the school in parallel with the goals determined centrally. One participant stated this situation as:

"The aim of our school is to train individuals connected to national and spiritual values in parallel with the aims of the Ministry of National Education." (P13)

Raising individuals with national, spiritual and moral values: school principals emphasize the themes of having national, spiritual and moral values and being connected to their homeland and nation in relation to determining the aims of the school. This can be attributed to the fact that throughout history education has been seen as a means to ensure the survival of the state and to adopt its values and ideology. The participants expressed the aim of instilling national, spiritual and moral values and love of homeland and nation in the following words:

"Our legislation is clear. To carry out educational activities in line with the objectives determined by the Ministry, and also to support our students to grow up in their homeland, loving their flag, believing in their traditions and customs." (P9)

Targeting the achievement of academic achievement: School principals consider academic achievement, which is the main function of the school, in other words, teaching activities as the main purpose of the organization. One participant expresses this view with the following words:

"As school principals, we keep academic success in the foreground. I thought that in order for successful students to come to our school, we should definitely take academic success to the foreground. We have concentrated all our efforts in this area." (P3)

Sharing objectives through healthy communication: Sharing the objectives with teachers is important in achieving the objectives of the organization. It is expected that the adoption of the goals of the school by the teachers will facilitate the achievement of the goals. A participant saying "...at the beginning of the year we speak of the outcomes of the realization of our determined objectives to us and to the society and we ensure that they are adopted by talking about this subject. (P5) points to the importance of sharing the objectives with the stakeholders and ensuring that they are adopted, in order to reach the goals.



Some school principal's point out that school objectives should also be shared with parents. The reason that school principals share the goals of the school with parents may be the belief that stakeholders with the same goal can work collaboratively and achieve the goals in a shorter period of time. *"We share our goals with our teachers and parents. I'll tell the teachers at meetings.* (P13) a participant stated, pointing out that they also share their goals with the parents.

3. 2. Management of Curriculum and Learning

Having sufficient knowledge about curriculum change: Findings show that school principals care about their own knowledge first in order to inform teachers. However, it is noteworthy that this information is to the extent and in the manner requested by the ministry. This is because principals expect teachers who are practitioners of the curriculum to have more knowledge than themselves and to apply this knowledge in the best way in the classroom. The following statements of a participant confirm this view:

"I look at the legislation every day. I know what is new and what has changed. If we get notified of a change by an official letter, I would notify the teachers of the letter. I need to know the details of the change first so I can pass it on to the teachers. We implement curriculum changes within the framework of the trainings we receive. We examine textbooks and plans. We definitely talk about what we will do and plan about it." (P13)

Following the course process: The school principals stated that they check the annual plans, group meetings and class books and follow up the courses for auditing purposes. School principals implement the curricula by controlling the plans and meetings, ensuring the operation is in line with the plans and minimizing the differences between the groups. In the 2018-2019 academic year, the teachers started to make daily plans again due to the fact that teachers were not given a guide book and conducted their lessons in accordance with this plan. One participant expressed this as follows:

"Last year colleagues who taught first class students, have prepared a daily plan because they would not receive a guidebook. When the ministry representative confirmed this, we prepared a daily plan." (P6)

3. 3. Monitoring Student Development

Following student success: School principals state that they follow student success and keep statistics about student success. It is understood from their



own statements that the principals who follow student achievement regarding their exam results do so through "E-okul". Regular entry of exam dates and exam results into the "E-okul" system makes it easier for school principals to follow up their grades. In addition, only the fourth grade students are evaluated by grade, while the first three grades are evaluated by "very good", "good" and "should improve". Therefore, principals in primary school level check up on the fourth grade students through the system and focus less on the academic success of the first three classes. One participant expressed this situation in the following words:

"It seems a little difficult to determine the academic success levels of primary schools in that respect. Well, you do it according to what. What are you going to check? You can't grade the first 3 grades anyway. Grades given in the fourth grade can be a criterion." (P4)

Rewarding successful students: It is observed that all school principals use rewarding students as a means of reinforcing success in increasing academic success. A participant who thinks that the rewarded students will be followed by other students gives the reasoning of his rewarding behaviors as following:

"The kids are so happy with these awards, they're all working harder to be successful." (P9)

Organizing activities to increase student motivation: School principals regard activities that increase motivation to increase academic achievement as part of the measure. School principals organizing various activities, competitions and cultural trips may be that they think of low student motivation as a factor that reduces success. Some of the school principals' views on this issue are as follows:

"...to ensure that students are socially and culturally active, to prepare an environment for students to play a sport that they love with their friends at school, various competitions, activities, trips these are things that increase the student's success and enable them to have positive thoughts about the school." (P7)

"I believe that extracurricular activities are also part of education. In other words, social and cultural activities, sports activities are activities that increase students' success. When



students participate in such activities, they can control their own behaviors in a healthier way." (M9)

3. 4. Development of School Staff

Supporting teachers who are studying master's and doctorates: School principals stated that they provide the necessary facilitation to support teachers who are studying master's and doctorates. One participant saying that *"We had a teacher who was studying master's last year. We planned their schedule according to that. They had no problems. We do our job professionally."* (P9) can explain how school principals support teachers who want to improve themselves.

Rewarding teachers' efforts: School principals have stated that they reward teachers' efforts, but this rewarding is in the form of thanking them at ceremonies, affirmative discrimination and presenting their own certificate of thanks. The lack of authority for school principals to reward teachers may have pushed principals who did not want to overstep their authority to act in this way. Direct quotations from the following participants support this argument:

"I give the successful teachers a certificate of gratitude, even though it has no official validity. A teacher of ours received a certificate of gratitude from the district officials. I also gave them on a Friday ceremony on behalf of the school in front of the parents." (P12)

"We can't help but thank our teachers. We have no authority give out awards." (P14)

3. 5. Management of School Climate and Culture

Healthy communication with teachers: It can be said that school principals try to create a positive school climate by using communication channels with teachers in a healthy way and behave in accordance with instructional leadership. The following statements serve as an example:

"In order to create a positive learning climate in our school, we need to solve the problems we face in the school year immediately and we do so. This requires a good communicator. Otherwise, education will be disrupted." (P9)

"Yes, there is a good and positive learning climate in the school. I think that we create this climate by paying attention to human relations, establishing a healthy communication and spending the opportunities of the school for education. (P13)



Treating teachers equally and fairly: It is clear from these statements that school principals who say they treat teachers equally and fairly in order to create a positive school climate are very sensitive about this issue:

"I strive to treat every teacher equally and in accordance with the legislation. I don't separate anyone from anyone. I help everyone objectively. The important thing is keeping their morales up and having them help the students at the highest level. A distressed environment affects the performance of our teachers." (P9)

"Where there is no trust, there is no sincerity. We need to trust each other. I try to treat people equally and decently in order to create this environment. I try to stand at equal distance to everyone." (P14)

3. 6. Management of School Environment

Visiting institutions, organizations and people: School principals stated that they visited institutions, organizations and people around the school from time to time. It is understood from the opinions of the principals that the visits of the school principals to the institutions, organizations and people are expected to contribute to the functioning of the school. "*We don't see much of our community unless we need to. If there is something that needs to be done, that is to say, we need our community's help.*" (P11) community visits being expressed this way is noteworthy for their clear contact with this point. However, this contribution is not always of a financial dimension and includes contributions to school processes such as balancing the pressure groups in the environment. The school principals stated that in these visits, they made requests about the shortcomings of the schools. The following direct quotes from the participants will help explain this situation:

"Our school is in a neighborhood and it's a neighborhood school. So we have a constant interaction with the people who live in this neighborhood. We often meet with our neighborhood headman. They visit our school. At some events, we invite them to our school. We also visit them. We also have demands on our shortcomings. We want them to support us." (P1)

Establishing School-Parent cooperation: The school principals have stated that they are working to establish school-parent cooperation. School principals believe that cooperation with parents will contribute to school



processes. The participants, believing that this cooperation will contribute to both sides, stated:

"I think co-operation with parents is definitely a positive contribution to the school. They help us in the process of improving the physical environment and also feel valued when we take their ideas and add them to the work to be done at the school and contribute their ideas." (P9)

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study show that school principals are inadequate of demonstrating instructional leadership behaviors in some dimensions of instructional leadership, while in some dimensions they perform the role of instructional leadership. In this section, the findings are discussed in detail.

In the dimension of **the management of the school's vision and mission** it is seen that the themes of adopting the objectives set out in the Fundamental Law of National Education, raising individuals with national, spiritual and moral values, targeting the promotion of academic success and sharing the objectives through a healthy communication, appear. School principals take the adoption of the objectives set out in the Fundamental Law of National Education as a criterion in determining the goals of the school. The aims of the Turkish education system are determined by the central organization in the Fundamental Law of National Education (MEB, 1973). It was observed that the school principals acted according to the relevant law and within the bureaucratic structure in determining the aims of the school and showed the behavior of accomplishing the pre-determined objectives. The overlapping of the aims of the school with the objectives organized by the central organization may be due to the centralized structure of the Turkish National Education system, the fact that the school principals do not want to go beyond the limits set out in determining the aims of the school and do not have enough autonomy.

The reason for raising individuals with national, spiritual and moral values to be within the aim of the schools may be due to the fact that it is in the general purposes of the legislation and because of the traditional structure of Turkish society.

School principals aim to improve students' academic achievements and demonstrate instructional leadership behaviors in following student achievements. It may be the perception that the school's success is assessed by the academic success of the students, that the school principals feel responsible for the student's academic success even though they are not actively participating in the students' courses. Heck and Hallinger (2005) explain the evaluation of the school performance indicator based solely on academic achievement when it can be examined according to many variables, with the accountability and leadership implications of the school principal.



In the dimension of managing the school's vision and mission, school principals share their goals mostly with teachers, and less with parents and students in sharing the goals through healthy communication. These results can be explained by the fact that school principals hold teachers the most responsible for the education in the school. These results are in line with the research results of Aksoy & Işık (2008). It is clear from the research findings that participating school principals do not fully exhibit instructional leadership behaviors in sharing goals and objectives with teachers and especially with students. Similarly, Bayar & Önder (2016) stated that most of the teachers have stated that the school principals set goals and objectives about the school but they did not inform them, and they understood this from the principals' words.

In the dimension of **the management of learning and school's program** it is seen that the themes of having sufficient information about curriculum changes and following up the process of curriculum are emerging. Gümüşeli (2014) states that the management of the curriculum is the most comprehensive and complex task of the school principals and that the functioning of the school depends on the effective management of the curriculum. Even though they do not play an active role in the preparatory phase, the school principals are responsible for examining the program, transferring it to teachers and controlling the implementation phase. The lower level of transferring this knowledge to teachers, despite having sufficient knowledge about changing programs, can be explained by the fact that teachers are expected to investigate and learn the changes through their own means. In Aktepe & Buluç's (2014) research, the perception that school principals do not have enough information about their teaching programs according to teacher perceptions appears to be contradictory to the current research result. However, it is natural to have differences in teacher perceptions and principals' own statements. Because it is possible for people to act biased when expressing themselves.

As regards the implementation of school programs, school principals make classroom visits for supervision purposes and check annual plans and class books. The fact that the duty of supervision has been left to school principals in recent years (Dönmez, 2018) explains the high proportion of classroom visits for auditing purposes. Auditing, on the other hand, is an act that by its very nature has difficulties. School principals can be expected to act shyly in auditing teachers with whom they have worked together for many years and engage in various social relationships. The large number of school principals who frequently make class visits contradicts research results by Manaseh (2016), which stated that school principals tend not to enter classes due to concern that they will be perceived as distrustful, according to teacher perceptions. In addition, school principals with a large number of teachers are required to attend two or more teachers' courses per week, which takes a lot of time for school principals who have to deal with



responsibility areas such as the school building, environment and bureaucratic works. In this context, the results of the research are supported by the results of Aktepe & Buluç (2014), which stated that school principals who devote more time to administrative than educational work do not adequately assist teachers in the management of the curriculum and process.

In the dimension of **monitoring and evaluating student development**, it is observed that the themes of following student success and rewarding successful students have emerged. The results of the research show that the school principals perform instructional leadership behaviors regarding the evaluation of students. Some of the participants follow the success of the students from the exam results and some of them follow the success of the students by following the results of the trial exams and making observations in the classroom. Evaluating student achievement is not just about measuring student's achievements. It also provides an opportunity to evaluate the gains, content, methods and techniques, tools and materials of the teaching process (Ünsal, 2017). In this context, evaluating student achievement may seem like the duty of the teacher, but it is also one of the roles of instructional leadership for the school principals who want to evaluate the teachers and the techniques they use. It can be stated that the results of the research overlap with researches that ended up with the conclusion that in the dimension of monitoring student development, school principals mostly exhibit instructional leadership behaviors (Şişman, 1997; Aksoy & Işık, 2008; Tabancalı & Cengiz, 2018; Ayık & Şayir, 2014; Baş & Yıldırım, 2010; Harris, Jones, Cheah, Devadason & Adams, 2017).

All school principals use the rewarding system to increase and reinforce success. Rewards can be of low financial value, as well as social awards such as appreciation and gratitude. In order to increase academic success, approximately half of the participants communicate and collaborate with families, teachers and guidance services. In recent years, there has been a consensus in leadership research that the principal has an indirect effect on student achievement (Özdemir & Kavak, 2017).

In the dimension of the **development of school staff** it is observed that the themes of supporting teachers who are studying master's and doctorates and rewarding teachers' efforts emerge. School principals support teachers who are studying master's and doctorates but do not act directly to encourage them. This is supported by the fact that a participant stated that primary school teachers and especially first year teachers in primary schools had great difficulties in finding teachers to fill the course on the days when they should be considered to be allowed for master or doctorate education. The fact that school principals do not engage in an attitude to prevent teachers from pursuing a master's or a doctorate degree can be explained by the perception, from their side, that they support teachers, which is not very accurate. Because not to be oppose or to accept as compulsory does not mean supporting. The school principal may be reluctant to encourage teachers for an education that he or she has not received. In addition, they may not want to face the challenges of leading a staff that is more educated



then they are. In this context, school principals do not interfere with teachers who are studying master's or a doctorate and plan their schedules accordingly, but they do not insist on having a master's degree or a doctorate. Especially, studying master's or doctorates in another city is not approved by school principals because of the length of transportation. Research findings show that most school principals act in accordance with the instructional leadership role in rewarding teachers' efforts. However, it is important to note what kind of reward is involved here. Few school principals express that they reward teachers' efforts in writing, while many school principals express that they thank the teachers and discriminate positively in their assignments. It is under the authority of the governor in provinces and district governors in districts to give teachers certificate of achievement and certificate of superior achievement (MEB, 2013). Therefore, school principals understand the importance of rewarding, but do not prefer to act beyond their authority, they prefer to reward teachers with behaviors that can be called social awards. In places such as Turkey, where the central aspect of the education system is weighted, rewarding behavior is not left to school principals. There are occasional studies in which school principals occasionally appreciate the efforts of teachers in writing (Aksoy & Işık, 2008), as well as studies that find that the rewarding of the school staff is carried out by very few principals (Bayar & Önder, 2016). The result of the research is confirmed by the research (Sağır & Emişoğlu, 2013), which states that although the rate of rewarding teachers with social rewards is high, lack of resources and authority prevents them from displaying instructional leadership behaviors in rewarding teachers.

In the dimension of **management of school climate and culture** it is seen that themes of healthy communication with teachers and treating teachers equally and fairly emerge. In order to create a positive and open learning climate, most school principals place an emphasis on communicating with teachers. It is understood that this communication includes teaching and learning but is more comprehensive. Continuous interaction with teachers at the school is thought to be effective in increasing teachers' loyalty to the school, meeting their expectations and achieving the goals of the organization. It may be possible with good communication to minimize conflicts between individuals and groups and to prevent employees from being affected by these conflicts. As a matter of fact, the study that explores the relationship of instructional leadership behaviors with organizational climate, reveals that principals support teachers and interact with teachers in order to protect the school from conflicts and increase student achievement (Baş & Yıldırım, 2010).

In order to contribute to the development of a positive learning and teaching climate, most school principals place an emphasis on treating teachers equally and exhibiting behaviors that establish a team spirit. These results are consistent with research results (Sim, 2011) that found that school



principals are prone to collaboration and team spirit in creating a positive learning and teaching climate.

In the dimension of the **management of the school environment** it is seen that the themes of providing the support and attendance of school's environment and providing the support and attendance of families, emerge. School principals visit institutions, organizations and individuals to ensure the support of the environment to the school and support the activities of the PTA (Parent-teacher association) The idea that the institutions, organizations and people around the school will contribute to the functioning of the school may be the reason for these visits. School principals may need the help of the environment in meeting the school's various needs. School principals may want to communicate with families to recognize social and environmental values. The quality of communication with the family varies according to school level. Because primary school students' parents come to school more often and meet with teachers and administrators whenever they want, this rate falls in secondary school. This may be due to the fact that primary school students need families to meet their social, physical and self-care needs. Parents who visit the school more often can contribute to better engagement with stakeholders by being more involved in the teaching and learning process. It may be for the school to achieve its aims that school principals who demonstrate instructional leadership behaviors work in cooperation with all stakeholders, including parents and the school environment.

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