

Türk ve Amerikan Okul Müdürlerinin Profilleri Üzerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir Araştırma

SELAHATTİN TURAN
Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi

TAK CHEUNG CHAN
Kennesaw State University

Özet: Eđitim bütün dünyada bir deđişim geçirmektedir. Her iki ülkede, Türkiye ve ABD, kendi özgün koşullarına uygun olarak eđitimde ciddi deđişimler yaşamaktadırlar. Bu makalede iki ülkenin okul müdürlerinin kendi özgün koşullarındaki çalışma ve iş becerileri deđerlendirilmektedir. Okul müdürlerinin deđişimdeki rolü öteden beri literatür de tartışılan bir konudur. Eđitimde reform çabaları, okul müdürlerinin rol ve becerileri de deđiştirmiş bulunmaktadır. Bu araştırmada iki ülke okul müdürlerinin yedi liderlik alanı karşılaştırılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu alanlar: Karakter, mesleki bilgi, mesleki beceri, yönetim stili, idari görevler, personel yönetimi ve öğrenci işlerinin yönetimi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul müdürlerinin rolü, Türk okul müdürleri, Amerikan okul müdürleri, eđitimde politika ve reform.

Profiles of Elementary School Principals: Comparing Turkey and the United States

Abstract: Education systems in many countries are in a state of dramatic change. Two countries, Turkey and the United States, have faced new and similar challenges brought about by recent changes in policy and economic conditions. Both countries have undergone critical transformations in how schools serve their citizens and how the public finances the educational programs. At the heart of these changes is the role of the school principal. The role has increased in complexity and requires new skills and ways of working. This paper attempts to address the similarities and differences between school principals in two very different cultures through seven leadership areas: character, professional knowledge, professional skill, administrative style, administrative duties, personnel management, and student affairs management.

Key Words: Principal's role, Turkish principals, United States principal, policy and reform

Literature about elementary school principals in Turkey and the United States show significant differences both from cultural and political perspectives. While the study of school administration has been developed for decades in the United States, it has only recently been put on a scientific footing in Turkey (Gümüşeli, 2009). Many elementary principal positions in the United States are assumed by females whereas sex discrimination against female is still the issue in Turkey (Gökçe, 2009). Through years of trial and error, the United States has made remarkable progress in school administration. However, school administrative qualities in Turkish schools are still considered poor (Gümüşeli, 2009). Current issues confronted by elementary school principals of both countries include dealing with bureaucracy and managing schools with limited budget (Baker, Green and Richards, 2008; Gökçe, 2009). School leaders from both countries have much to learn from each other's experiences to enrich their capability of managing their own schools.

School Principalship in Turkey

Turkish Public Schools are administered by principals appointed by the National Education Directorate (NED) in provinces all over the country. Since the Turkish education system is centralized as a reflection of public management, NED is the basic authority to set the standards of principalship for each administrative structure in the education system (Turan, 2009). As described by the Turkish Official Gazette (2006):

The principal is authorized for organizing, executing and supervising all works of the school in compliance with the law, statute, regulation, directive, curriculum and instructions. The principal is responsible for administration, evaluation and development of the school in compliance with quality educational management.

Assistant to the principal with respect to school operations is the deputy principal and he/she is responsible to the principal for daily functioning of the school and regular execution of administrative work. In general, public school principals are paid not much more than teachers (averagely between 1000 to 1250 Euros). In addition to administrative duties, they are required to teach at least six hours in a week. In spite of the huge responsibilities principals are loaded with, they are not given the authority to recruit teachers nor to fire incapable ones (Aslanargun, 2009; Gümüşeli, 2009).

New requirements for principal certification have become effective since 2009. Certificate applicants need to have served a minimum of three years in full time school teaching positions and an additional three years in full time deputy principal positions. They will then need to pass the NED Administrator Selection Examination on the subject of Turkish Language, History of Turkish Republic and legal documents about education (Işık, 2002, Turan, 2009). Principalship is a tenure-track position. It is very difficult if not impossible to depose someone from a principal's position (Turkish Official Gazette, 2006). Considerations have been made to tighten up the criteria for principalship qualifications. Among all the discussions is the improvement of principal preparation programs at the university level to include broadening the horizon of principalship knowledge base. (Çelik, 1990; Turan and Şisman, 2000; Şişman and Turan, 2004). On the other hand, informal principal mentoring program is also taking place in many Turkish schools (Yirci, 2009).

School Principalship in the United States

School reforms in the United States have continued since the Mid-20th Century with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. School principals were asked to implement effective science and mathematics programs in schools. In the early 80's, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) published its landmark report, *A Nation at Risk*, and launched the school reform movement to the present. The reform has focused on educational accountability of school leaders putting pressure on schools to improve their student achievement.

With the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, the standards of accountability for educational outcomes have become more stringent. While the legislation increases the authority of the federal government in education, the roles of school principals in school administration also change accordingly. The responsibilities associated with this change in leadership at the school level brought about other changes in the way principals performed their duties. As developed by the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC), the ELCC Standards identify six areas to evaluate school leaders. These standards are:

- (1) facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school vision of learning;
- (2) promoting a positive school culture, providing an effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning, and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff;
- (3) managing the organization, operations, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;
- (4) collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
- (5) acting with integrity, fairly, and in an ethical manner; and
- (6) understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.
(National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2002)

In addition, the Southern Regional Education Board has also developed the competencies of successful school principals as follows:

Competency I: Effective principals have a comprehensive understanding of school and classroom practices that contribute to student achievement.

Competency II: Effective principals have the ability to work with teachers and others to design and implement continuous student improvement.

Competency III: Effective principals have the ability to provide the necessary support for staff to carry out sound school, curriculum and instructional practices (Southern Regional Education Board, 2007).

In its school leadership performance appraisal system, the State of Georgia has developed the School Keys which describe a school administrator's duties and responsibilities in Ten Strands: (1) Curriculum, (2) Assessment, (3) Standard-based Instruction, (4) Data Analysis, (5) Organizational Culture, (6) Professional Learning and Development, (7) Performance Management and Process Improvement, (8) Managing Operations, (9) Leading change, and (10) Relationship Development (Georgia Department of Education, 2009).

The demand for changes kicked off at a time when the country's economy started to slow down. When the government sets high standards for educational improvement, at the same time, there have been outcries for severe cuts on budgets and educational spending. Furthermore, public mistrust in public education in the last two decades has led to the introduction of charter schools and the voucher programs in some states. Clearly, the changes forced school leaders to take on additional and more complex responsibilities in leading their schools (Office of Economic Cooperation and Development, 2001). That answers the question of why many leadership-certified teachers prefer to remain in the classrooms. School principalship is still in great shortage at all levels of schools in the United States (Chan & Richardson, 2003).

Issues in School Principalship of Turkey and the United States

The current description of the principal's role is one that is complex and demanding (Whitaker, 1995). Increased responsibilities and administrative mandates with limited authority and resources have made principals' jobs most challenging in both countries. Because of historical and cultural differences, it is anticipated that profiles of principals in one country would be different from those of another. For example, results in an international comparison of school principals' roles and responsibilities by McAdams (1998) that includes England, Germany, Denmark, Japan, and the United States found that U.S. principals had a more frenetic work day than their international colleagues. The structure of this study is along a similar research track with predetermined elements for comparison.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine if elementary school principal profiles in Turkey were significantly different from those of the United States. Principal profiles were examined in seven leadership areas:

character, professional knowledge, professional skill, administrative style, administrative duties, personnel management, and student affairs management.

Research Questions

1. Is there a significant difference in the profiles of elementary school principals between Turkey and the United States?
2. How do U.S. elementary school principals perceive themselves in the seven profile areas of principalship?
3. How do Turkish elementary school principals perceive themselves in the seven profile areas of principalship?
4. Is there a significant difference in the major responsibilities, challenges, and job fulfillment between Turkish and U.S. elementary school principals?

Methodology

Research Design: This study took a descriptive design with the use of survey questionnaires. Quantitative and qualitative survey data were collected through soliciting responses from current elementary school principals in Turkey and the United States.

Research Participants: Randomly selected elementary school principals (80) in the United States (from the states of Georgia and South Carolina) participated in this study. Elementary school principals (55) from Turkey were selected by convenience sampling method which proved to work in data collection.

Instrumentation: A thirty-item Likert-scale questionnaire was designed by the researchers to survey school principals in seven leadership areas: character, professional knowledge, professional skill, administrative style, administrative duties, personnel management, and student affairs management. The questions were derived from current literature of school principalship and tested for validity through a panel of ten school principals who critically reviewed its contents, format, and language. Internal consistency of the instrument was tested by using Cronbach Alpha Test (Overall Alpha = .854). In addition, a questionnaire with three open-ended questions was also constructed to solicit principals' perceptions on their major responsibilities, their challenges, and the fulfillment in their positions. The instrument was first created in English language and was translated by language professionals to Turkish language for data collection.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected from the survey were analyzed in general and by subsets of character, professional knowledge, professional skill, administrative style, administrative duties, personnel management, and student affairs management to determine the extent of the school principals' responses. Data from principal profiles of Turkey and the United States were compared by using Multivariate Analyses of Variance. A parallel comparison of qualitative data collected from the survey was based on answers to the three open-ended questions. Responses of Turkish principals to open-ended questions were translated into English by language professionals. Observation was made to consistencies in themes and patterns as prevailed among the principals' responses.

Results

Quantitative Data Analysis: Data collected from Turkey and the United States were analyzed by each of the seven profile areas and by total average responses. Multivariate Analysis of Variance was used to analyze the data with principals' age employed as covariate to minimize the possible effect age had on the responses. Results of data analysis indicated that significant differences were detected in elementary principals' profiles between Turkey and the United States. The average mean responses of Turkish principals (4.33) and U.S. principals (4.40) were not significantly different from each other ($F = 1.163$; $p = .283$). Of the seven profile areas examined, two areas were found to have significant differences between the Turkish and the United States elementary principals ($p < .01$). The two areas were character (Turkish mean = 4.39; U.S. mean = 4.64; $F = 6.588$) and administrative duties (Turkish mean = 4.32; U.S. mean = 4.55; $F = 8.773$). No significant difference was found in the other five profile areas: professional knowledge (Turkish mean = 3.90; U.S. mean = 4.05; $F = 2.208$), administrative skills (Turkish mean = 4.39; U.S. mean = 4.41; $F = .321$), administrative style (Turkish mean = 4.58; U.S. mean = 4.51; $F = .856$), personnel management (Turkish mean = 4.42; U.S. mean = 4.38; $F = .440$), and student affairs management (Turkish mean = 4.28; U.S. mean = 4.23; $F = .763$). (See Tables 1 and 2)

Table 1.

Multivariate Analyses of Variance –Areas of Profile between Principals of Turkey and the United States

Source	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Country	Character	1.790	1	1.790	6.588 **
	Knowledge	.554	1	.554	2.208
	Skills	.052	1	.052	.321
	Style	.204	1	.204	.856
	Duties	1.401	1	1.401	8.773 **
	Personnel	.105	1	.105	.440
	Student Affairs	.187	1	.187	.763
	Total Average	.120	1	.120	.283

** $p < .01$

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics – Means of Principals' Profiles

	Country	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference (Turkey – U.S.)	N
Character	Turkey	4.39	.630		54
	U.S.	4.64	.420	-.253	79
Knowledge	Turkey	3.90	.477		54
	U.S.	4.05	.510	-.152	80
Skills	Turkey	4.39	.393		54
	U.S.	4.41	.420	-.021	79
Style	Turkey	4.58	.493		54
	U.S.	4.51	.476	.070	76
Duties	Turkey	4.32	.469		54
	U.S.	4.55	.336	-.227	76
Personnel	Turkey	4.42	.502		54
	U.S.	4.38	.476	.037	77
Student Affairs	Turkey	4.28	.507		54
	U.S.	4.23	.488	.050	75
Total Average	Turkey	4.33	.353		54
	U.S.	4.40	.292	-.076	71

Qualitative Data Analysis: Analysis of qualitative data indicated that there were similarities and differences between principals of Turkey and the United States in their identification of major responsibilities.

Principals of both countries believed in efficiency of leadership in school management.

Principals in the United States claimed:

The major responsibility of the school principal is to see that the school runs efficiently.

Take the lead of the school by leading school activities.

Principals in Turkey responded by stating:

There is a need to show the effective performance as an educational leader.

The main job is to provide leadership and coordination in school management.

To manage the school in an effective and efficient way.

Principals in both countries did show differences in their perceptions of major roles as school principals. Principals in the United States focused on academic progress and safety of students as their major responsibilities. As stated by the U.S. principals:

The focus has to be on student achievement and school safety.

The major responsibility of a school leader is to provide a SAFE, nurturing, and accepting environment for effective academic, emotional, and social progress.

However, some of the principal's major responsibilities as perceived by Turkish principals were maintaining professional integrity to enhance the quality of education. Turkish principals' responses were quoted as:

A principal has to be honest, hardworking and dependable to be successful.

Principals need to adhere to principles and act fairly.

School principals have the job to motivate students and teachers to enhance the quality of education.

In response to the challenges they were facing, school principals in Turkey and the principals in the United States agreed on financial issues as their common challenge. This was exemplified by the responses of Turkish principals as follows:

There is serious shortage of teachers, tools and supplies.

The appropriation of personnel support is insufficient, so as resources.

Financial problems: lack of learning space, technical support and school maintenance.

In the same financial issues, U.S. principals reflected their opinions in the following:

Perhaps, the biggest challenge to a principal is to maintain the high level of faculty enthusiasm with a less than reasonable budget.

Maintaining an efficient team of faculty and staff in a year of budget cuts is not an easy job. You hate to lose them.

At the same time, principals from Turkey and the United States identified challenges that were unique to them. U.S. principals perceived challenges as issues associated with meeting Academic Yearly Progress (AYP) of students. Some of their responses are in the following quotations:

No Child Left Behind is imposing unreasonable mandates and expectations. These laws have the effect of setting up public education for failure.

Principals are getting pounded with standardized testing and AYP pressures.

On the other hand, Turkish principals perceived their unique challenge as bureaucratic lack of authorities and school community connections. Some of the challenges expressed by Turkish principals are displayed in the following statements:

Principals have many responsibilities but too little authority.

Principals are given excessive responsibilities and limited opportunities to work with.

Insufficient communication between parents and schools negatively impact student learning.

Parents' careless attitude is a concern.

In the fulfillment of a school principal's job, school principals in Turkey and the United States shared the same opinion. Most of them highlighted their greatest fulfillment in seeing student achievement, working with professional faculty and staff, and gaining community support. Principals in the United States had the following to say:

The fulfillment is spending time with students, seeing them mature and grow academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

It is satisfying to see teachers that you hire really do a good job and become effective educators.

Turkish principals were also enthusiastic about student achievement, faculty advancement, and improved learning environment their schools. Their excitement can be seen in the following paragraphs:

It is a joy to see students making higher grades and graduates getting better jobs.

Seeing student achievement is the greatest reward for teachers and principals.

It is exciting to witness educational quality improvement through efficient management.

Discussion/Implication

Despite cultural differences, school principals in Turkey and the United States confront similar problems in the daily operation of their schools. School safety, student achievement, continuous changes in rules and regulations, budgetary constraints, and curriculum updates are some of the most common issues in schools of Turkey and the United States. As Turkey opens itself to more international education ideas, the beliefs across the two countries regarding school administration may become closer. One current example resulting from this study is the sharing of viewpoints by principals of the two countries regarding the professional responsibilities and fulfillment of their principalship. The significant difference in principal's character between the two countries is probably due to the fact that principals in Turkey are all tenured while principals in the United States are not. In addition, principals in the United States continue to be scrutinized more and more stringently in professional accountability under new legislatures. In administrative duties, the difference between principals' perceptions between the two countries could lie in the fact that principals in the United States are under pressure as part of the No Child Left Behind mandates to demonstrate progress in student achievement. Therefore, principals in the United States tend to examine all aspects of school operation that could possibly link to student achievement.

Conclusion

Differences in the school principal profiles of Turkey and the United States are inevitable despite increasing contacts between the two countries. These differences, though narrowed in recent years, will continue to exist because of basic differences in cultural orientation, political views, and developmental needs of the two countries. Principals in Turkey and the United States confront many similar problems in their daily school functions. However, unique political infrastructures of their locations determine how they address these problems to meet the individual

demands of their own societies. Understanding of common challenges and emerging roles of principals in changing social and political settings provide educational leaders of both countries the opportunities to share their experiences, and success stories. The results can be beneficial for educators in both countries and across the world (Flanary and Terehoff, 2000; Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008).

Recommendations for Future Studies

The exciting findings of this study simply unveil possibilities of future studies to investigate further the similarities and differences between school principalship between Turkey and the United States. Future research is needed to examine principals' roles and responsibilities at the secondary school level. Because of differences in educational policies, program area emphasis and complexity of daily duties, secondary school principals of Turkey and the United States may be different in some perspectives while similar in others. Furthermore, the researchers feel that future research may take a more qualitative approach to interview school principals face-to-face to solicit their points of view in exercising strong leadership of their schools. This holistic approach of data collection is promised to be rich and fulfilling.

References

- Aslanargun, E. (2009). *Okul Mudurlerinin Yonetimde Basvurdukları Guç Turleri* [Principals' Sources of Authority in Administration of Schools]. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Ankara University. Ankara: AUEBE.
- Baker, B. D., Green, P., & Richards, C. E. (2008). *Financing education systems*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson – Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Celik, V. (1990). Egitim Yoneticisinin Yetistirilmesi [Preparation of Educational Administrators]. *Eğitim ve Bilim*, 14 (75), 45–49.
- Chan, T. C., & Richardson, M. D. (2003). Addressing teacher and administrator shortage: The Georgia way. *Journal of School Business Management*, 15(2), 8-12.
- Flanary, R. A., & Terehoff, I. I. (2000). The power of leadership in a global environment. *NASSP Bulletin*, 84(617), 44-50.
- Georgia Department of Education (2009). *Leadership keys: A leadership performance appraisal system*. Atlanta, GA: Author.
- Gokce, F. (2009). Behaviour of Turkish elementary school principals in the change process. *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, 37(2), 198-215.
- Gumuseli, A. I. (2009). Primary school principals in Turkey: Their working conditions and professional profiles. *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(4), 239-246.
- Isık, H. (2002). *Okul Mudurlugu Formasyon Programları ve Okul Müdürlerinin Yetistirilmesi* [Certification and Preparation Programs of Principals. Ankara: Ankara University Press.
- McAdams, R. P. (1998). The principalship: An international perspective. *Principal*, 77(3), 10-12, 14, 16.
- National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2002). *Standards for advanced programs in educational leadership*. Reston, VA: Author.
- No Child Left Behind Act (2001). Retrieved March 29, 2010 from <http://ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>
- Office of Economic Cooperation and Development (2001). *New school development approaches: What works in innovation in education*. Retrieved March 29, 2010 from <http://browse.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/pdfs/browseit/9601041E.PDF>

Pont, B., Nusche, D., & Moorman, H. (2008). *Improving school leadership*. Paris, France: Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development.

Sisman, M., & Turan, S. (2004). *Egitim ve Okul Yonetimi* [Education and School Administration]. In Y. Ozden (Ed.), *Eğitim ve Okul Yöneticiliği El Kitabı* [pp. 99-146]. Ankara: Pegem A.

Southern Regional Education Board (November 2007). *SREB Learning-centered leadership program*. Atlanta, GA: Author.

Turan, S., & Sisman, M. (2000). *Okul Yöneticileri İçin Standartlar: Eğitim Yöneticilerinin Bilgi*

Temelleri Üzerine Düşünceler [Thoughts about Educational Administrators' Knowledge Base]. *Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 3 (4), 68-87.

Turan, S. (2009). Centralization Paradigm of Tradition versus Decentralization as the Imposition of Modernity in Turkish Educational System. In A. Nir (Ed.), *Centralization and School Empowerment: From Rhetoric to Practice* [pp. 45-59]. NY: Nova Books.

Turkish Official Gazette. (2006). *Okul Müdürünün Görev ve Sorumlulukları* [Roles and Responsibilities of School Administrators]. [20.02.2006 / 26086, 17].

U.S. Constitution. Retrieved on March 29, 2010 from <http://www.usconstitution.net/const.html#Am10>

Whitaker, K.S. (1995). Principal burnout: Implications for professional development. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, 9, 287-296.

Yirci, R. (2009). *The use of mentoring in education and a new model proposal to train new principals in Turkey*. Unpublished Master Thesis, University of Firat, Elazığ, Turkey.

Appendix

PROFILE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

School: Elementary_____ Secondary_____

Gender: Male _____ Female _____

Age: 21-30_____ 31-40_____ 41-50_____ 51-60_____ 61-70_____

Years in education: 1- 5 _____ 6 -10 _____ 11-15 _____ 16-20 _____ 21 or more _____

Part I. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements inside the parenthesis of the corresponding statement. Use the following rating scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = No opinion
4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

A school principal:

CHARACTER

1. () leads the school with strong ethical standards.
2. () models ethical behavior in his/her daily administrative duties.
3. () establishes his/her creditability at work.

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

4. () understands the politics of working successfully with government agencies.
5. () applies educational philosophies in assisting student academic development.
6. () has a strong background in strategies that improve student academic achievement.
7. () does not need administrative preparation to lead a school.
8. () improves his/her leadership skills by pursuing professional development opportunities.

PROFESSIONAL SKILL

9. () assigns faculty and staff to responsible positions compatible with their abilities.
10. () coordinates the work of different departments in the school.
11. () possesses strong analytical skills to manage daily school business.
12. () makes effective decisions for school improvement.
13. () manages his/her time appropriately to achieve the highest work efficiency.

ADMINISTRATIVE STYLE

14. () promotes democracy in school by involving stakeholders in shared decision-making.
15. () conducts self-evaluation of his/her performance.

ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

16. () develops attainable goals and objectives for school improvement plans.
17. () places instructional activities as a first priority.
18. () prepares his/her school to meet future challenges.
19. () manages all school resources to support instructional activities.
20. () implements educational policies by thoroughly understanding their significance.
21. () develops the curriculum based on developmental stages of the students.
22. () creates and supports a conducive environment for learning.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

23. () encourages faculty and staff to continually improve their areas of specialization.
24. () assists faculty and staff to accomplish their professional goals.
25. () encourages faculty and staff to actively participate in managing the school's resources.
26. () assists professional development of faculty and staff by evaluating their performance.

STUDENT AFFAIRS MANAGEMENT

27. () develops a counseling program to assist students with their academic needs.
28. () Develops a positive school-wide student behavior management plan and enforces it consistently.
29. () promotes positive learning attitudes among students.
30. () develops student interest in responsible citizenship and civic affairs.

Part II. Please respond to the following questions about school principalship:

What do you perceive as the major responsibility of a school principal

What are the major challenges of a school principal today?

What is fulfilling about the work of a school principal

Other comments:

İletişim-1:

Selahattin Turan

Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi

Eğitim Fakültesi 26480 meşelik, Eskişehir, Türkiye

E-Posta: sturan@ogu.edu.tr

İletişim-2:

Tak Cheung Chan

Kennesaw State University

1000 Chastain Road Kennesaw, GA 30144-5591, USA

E-Posta: tchan@kennesaw.edu