

School Leadership Practices Professional Development Program Needs Analysis: In the Context of the Centralized Education System*

Selin TÜRKOĞLU ÖZDEMİR**
Sevilay ŞAHİN***

Abstract: While countries with decentralized education systems can take bolder steps in the professional development activities for school leaders' practices, those with centralized education systems face slower progress in such activities due to the bureaucratic constraints of the central system. One of these centralized countries is Türkiye. This study aims to determine the areas where school principals in the Turkish education system need professional development in leadership practices, based on the focal points of decentralized countries that conduct studies to enhance leadership practices. For this purpose, focus group interviews were conducted with 18 school principals, divided into 3 groups. A qualitative research method and phenomenological design were used. By examining the focus areas of countries that work on enhancing leadership practices, 18 topics were identified. Based on these topics, focus group interviews were conducted to assess the professional development needs of school principals. The data from these interviews were analyzed using descriptive and content analysis methods. The research findings include opinions on the need to develop all 18 leadership practices through professional development, especially Change Agency and Data Literacy Skills, as well as views indicating that some practices lack practical application due to the restrictive structure of central management or teachers' indifference to leadership practices because of ministry-granted personal rights. It is hoped that the findings will shed light on professional development efforts aimed at enhancing the leadership practices of school principals working in centralized education systems.

Keywords: School leadership practices, needs analysis for leadership practices, professional development

Okul Liderliği Uygulamaları Mesleki Gelişim Programı İhtiyaç Analizi: Merkezi Eğitim Sistemi Bağlamında

Öz: Merkeziyetçi olmayan eğitim sistemlerine sahip ülkeler okul liderlerinin uygulamalarına yönelik mesleki gelişim faaliyetlerinde daha cesur adımlar atabilirken, merkeziyetçi eğitim sistemlerine sahip ülkeler merkezi sistemin bürokratik kısıtlamaları nedeniyle bu faaliyetlerde daha yavaş ilerlemektedir. Bu merkeziyetçi ülkelerden biri de Türkiye'dir. Bu çalışma, liderlik uygulamalarını geliştirmeye yönelik çalışmalar yürüten ve merkeziyetçi olmayan ülkelerin odak noktalarından yola çıkarak, Türk eğitim sisteminde görev yapan okul müdürlerinin, liderlik uygulamalarında mesleki gelişime ihtiyaç duydukları alanları belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla, 3 gruba ayrılmış 18 okul müdürüyle odak grup görüşmeleri yapılmıştır. Nitel araştırma yöntemi ve fenomenolojik desen kullanılmıştır. Liderlik uygulamalarını geliştirmeye yönelik çalışmalar yapan ülkelerin odak alanları incelenerek 18 konu belirlenmiştir. Bu konulara dayanarak okul müdürlerinin mesleki gelişim ihtiyaçlarını değerlendirmek amacıyla odak grup görüşmeleri yapılmıştır. Bu görüşmelerden elde edilen veriler betimsel ve içerik analizi yöntemleri kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma bulgularında, özellikle Değişim Ajanlığı ve Veri Okuryazarlığı Becerileri olmak üzere 18 liderlik uygulamasının tamamının mesleki gelişim yoluyla geliştirilmesinin gerekliliği hakkındaki görüşlerin yanı sıra, merkezi yönetimin kısıtlayıcı yapısı ve bakanlık tarafından öğretmenlere verilen özlük hakları nedeniyle öğretmenlerin liderlik uygulamalarına ilgisiz kalmasına yönelik görüşler dikkat çekmektedir. Okul müdürleri bu nedenlerle liderlik uygulamalarının pratikte yer bulamadığına

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**Sorumlu Yazar, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Antalya-Türkiye, ORCID: 0000-0002-5010-6474, e-posta: selin.529@hotmail.com

*** Prof. Dr., Gaziantep Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, Gaziantep-Türkiye, ORCID: 0000-0002-7140-821X e-posta: ssahin@gantep.edu.tr

yönelik görüş bildirmişlerdir. Bulguların, merkezi eğitim sisteminde görev yapan okul müdürlerinin liderlik uygulamalarını geliştirmeyi amaçlayan mesleki gelişim çalışmalarına ışık tutması umulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul liderliği uygulamaları, liderlik uygulamalarına yönelik ihtiyaç analizi, mesleki gelişim

Introduction

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) of the 2010s and the increasing use of artificial intelligence technologies have become integral to all aspects of daily life. The diverse technologies and the growing interaction and mobility among people from different backgrounds are turning the world into a global village. This new era, which brings together various technologies and people, is significantly altering the labor market, increasing the demand for human capital capable of using time and cost saving applications (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development [OECD], 2021) and adapting to increasingly complex human relations (Awodiji & Naicker, 2023; Yasser, 2023). The first step toward cultivating the human capital that can meet the demands of the new era begins in schools (Boberiene, 2013; Goldin, 2003). Therefore, schools need leaders who can understand the new era, exhibit the required behaviors and skills, and reflect these in educational practices, thereby contributing to students' academic and social outcomes, rather than managers who are lost in daily administrative tasks.

Countries aiming to enhance the leadership practices of school principals restructure leadership development programs in line with accepted standards and frameworks, considering their local contexts and needs (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2018; Yasser, 2023). However, while leadership practices are detailed in decentralized education systems, studies on how school leadership functions in centralized systems are quite limited (Uzun & Şişman, 2023). In decentralized systems, school principals can take more innovative and bold steps (Çimen, Belenkuyu & Aksu, 2023), but in centralized systems, their actions are often restricted by central management (Gümüş, Bellibaş & Esen, 2018). This disadvantage makes it difficult for school principals in centralized systems to meet the demands of the era and apply leadership practices effectively. Therefore, examining the needs of school principals in centralized systems can contribute to the growing literature on school leadership development and provide insights into supportive professional development programs for school principals in these systems. Thus, this research aims to identify the leadership needs of school principals working in Türkiye's centralized education system by drawing on the leadership development practices of other countries.

Development of School Leadership Practices

School principals, as leaders, are expected to collaborate with teachers using specialized learning experiences offered by artificial intelligence models like ChatGPT (Pradana, Elisa & Syarifuddin, 2023), read and interpret large-scale and small-scale data to monitor student achievements (British Council, 2017), manage crises stemming from global pandemics or local natural disasters like earthquakes (Karasavidou & Alexopoulos, 2019), and implement inclusive education practices in response to the rising number of refugee students (Arar, 2022). Furthermore, school leaders must respond to the unforeseen demands of the new era, potentially increasing their contributions to the quality of education and, by extension, human capital (Dennett, 2018). It is widely accepted that the expected competency of school principals is related to their ability to adapt to change and enhance their leadership practices throughout their careers (Awodiji & Naicker, 2023). This belief in the developmental nature of leadership, especially in response to changing demands, leads to continuous advancements in leadership practices (AITSL, 2018; Day & Sin, 2011; Gurr, 2015).

For instance, in 1996, the United States established standards for school leadership practices (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium [ISLLC], 1996), which were updated in 2008 and 2015 (ISLLC, 2008; National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2015) to reflect the needs of the modern era. In the following years, Day (2000) led the International Successful School Leadership Project (ISSPP), which developed 12 successful school leadership frameworks in various countries, and these frameworks have been continuously updated to meet current needs (Gurr, Drysdale & Goode, 2021). The seven strong claims proposed by Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) regarding successful school leadership have also guided the professional development and practices of school leaders through the Ontario Leadership Framework (Institute for Education Leadership [IEL], 2013). These claims were revisited in 2020 based on new research and understanding (Leithwood, Harris & Jopkins, 2020). Accordingly, leadership development is attributed to updated leadership standards and lifelong learning-oriented professional development programs (Afsouran, Thornton & Charkhabi, 2022; Day & Sin, 2011; Mero-Jaffe & Altarac, 2020; Lacerenza, Reyes & Marlow, 2017). In ensuring the consistency and sustainability of these professional development programs, frameworks that outline what school principals need to know, understand, and do in their practices play a crucial role (Alberta, 2023; OECD, 2009). These frameworks drive the professional development programs for school leadership practices (Southern Regional Education Board [SREB], 2008). However, while school leadership practices have many commonalities, the areas needing

improvement vary based on cultural values and local needs (AITSL, 2018; Yasser, 2023). Therefore, every country, including Türkiye, must structure professional development programs for school principals in line with contemporary approaches and within the context of its centralized education system.

A significant portion of the knowledge base regarding educational leadership and management models has been produced by four Anglo-American societies (USA, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Canada), where decentralized education systems prevail (Gümüüş, Esen & Bellibaş, 2016; Kovačević & Hallinger, 2020; Tian & Huber, 2021). Before planning professional development for school leadership at the national level, it would be beneficial to consider the focus areas of professional development efforts for school leadership in these countries, which are pioneers in studies on educational administration and leadership practices. Therefore, the conceptual framework of this study, which aims to determine the content of a professional development program for school leadership practices in Türkiye, is based on the common points emphasized in school leadership standards and professional development frameworks developed by the education organizations in the USA, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Canada. The conceptual framework considered in this study consists of 18 topics, including *understanding the nature of leadership*, *understanding and analyzing contextual factors*, *creating a shared vision*, *establishing strategic management processes*, *fostering a positive school culture*, *creating an effective teaching and learning environment*, *supporting teachers' professional development*, *fostering a collaborative culture with school stakeholders*, *effective use of resources*, *distributing leadership*, *establishing mentorship systems*, *ensuring school safety*, *demonstrating social justice leadership*, *exhibiting data literacy skills*, *acting as a change agent*, *using and developing communication channels*, *fostering professional ethics and values*, and *developing personal leadership resources* (AITSL, 2014, 2018; Alberta Education, 2023; American Institutes for Research [AIR], 2020; British Council, 2017; IEL, 2013; Los Angeles Human Resources Division [LHRD], 2023; National Association of Secondary School Principal [NASSP], 2023; NPBEA, 2015; OECD, 2009; Ontario Principals' Council [OPC], 2023; SREB, 2008; United Kingdom Government Department of Education [UKGDE], 2020; University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate [UCLES], 2019).

Among these topics, *Understanding the Nature of Leadership* emphasizes that school principals need to develop an *understanding of leadership fundamentals*. In *understanding and analyzing contextual factors*, they are expected to accurately analyze the school's physical and demographic structure, the expectations of surrounding institutions, the country's social, cultural, political, and legal framework, and the education required by the current era. In *creating a shared vision*, the focus is on principals taking steps toward collaboration, centered on student achievement and valuing the perspectives of school stakeholders. *Strategic management processes* involve principals setting strategic, measurable, achievable, and result-oriented short and long-term goals and defining tasks. *Fostering a positive school climate* requires principals to build warm, respectful, and trust-based relationships with school stakeholders and turn these into cultural norms. *Creating an effective learning environment* emphasizes the need for principals to build a high-performance learning culture focused on student success and adopted by all stakeholders. *Supporting teachers' professional development* requires principals to provide opportunities for teachers to improve their professional practices. In *fostering a collaborative culture with stakeholders*, principals are expected to turn stakeholders into active partners in school development and student learning. In terms of *effective resource management*, principals are expected to develop appropriate structures and systems for efficient use of financial, physical, technological, and human resources. *Distributing leadership* calls for principals to distribute leadership among teachers based on their interests and abilities, thus fostering a collective sense of responsibility. *Establishing mentorship systems* aims at improving school development and instruction by drawing support from experienced colleagues. *Ensuring school safety* involves principals demonstrating skills in identifying risks that may arise within or around the school and collaborating with staff to develop strategies to mitigate these risks. *Demonstrating social justice leadership* requires principals to develop inclusive practices, while *Data literacy skills* emphasize knowing which data to collect to improve the school. *Acting as a change agent* involves understanding both national and global changes and taking the lead in driving innovation within the school. *Using and developing communication channels* emphasizes creating communication structures characterized by effective communication and shared educational goals. *Professional ethics and values* call for principals to act in line with ethical and legal frameworks. Finally, *developing personal leadership resources* stresses the importance of principals possessing cognitive (e.g., pedagogical expertise, problem-solving), social (e.g., effective communication, emotional management), and psychological (e.g., self-awareness, resilience) competencies.

The Development Process of School Leadership Practices in the Context of Türkiye

In Türkiye's centralized education system, it is known that school principals are more often viewed in managerial roles focused on fulfilling tasks rather than as leaders. For this reason, the steps taken to implement professional development programs that enhance school principals' leadership practices have improved slowly. As a matter of fact, when examining the national education councils convened since the founding of the Republic, it can be seen that school principals were first considered as leaders in the 1980s (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 1982, 1993), and recommendations for

improving leadership behaviors were made in the 2010s (MoNE, 2014, 2021). Efforts such as the Primary Education Institution Standards (2009), School-Based Professional Development Model (MoNE, 2010), and the School Administrators' Professional Development Project in the Context of Inclusive Education (MoNE, 2022) have provided opportunities for principals to improve their leadership practices since the 2010s. When examining the studies evaluating these efforts, findings suggest that although there are strengths in these professional development efforts, they are not sufficiently functional in a centrally managed system (Akan, Yalçın & Yıldırım 2013; Balcı, 2021; Polat, Uğurlu & Aksu, 2018; Şahin & Çeper, 2013).

Yet, it has been documented that school principals in Türkiye face numerous challenges during a typical school day, including problems stemming from the school, students, teachers, parents, and administration (Aslanargun & Bozkurt, 2012). They are also under pressure regarding the school's academic performance (Marmara & Atmaca, 2023) and experience stress due to workload and bureaucratic processes. Additionally, they must manage crises in the education system resulting from unexpected natural disasters (Özdemir, Şahin & Türkoğlu-Özdemir, 2024) and support foreign students' integration into education and language learning following migration (Türkoğlu-Özdemir & Özkan, 2024). Moreover, they must navigate the impacts of global economic trends on the education system (Fidan, 2021) and manage changes in education resulting from global pandemics (Altunay & Erol, 2022). In light of these challenges, school principals need to develop 21st-century skills such as change management and time management (Çevik & Demirtaş, 2021). Therefore, it can be argued that school principals in Türkiye need professional development programs that improve their leadership practices to respond to these evolving roles and align with global trends (Aslan & Karip, 2014; Leithwood, 2013; Özkan & Turan, 2022; Polat et al., 2018; Şahin & Türkoğlu-Özdemir, 2024; Tamer, 2020; Turhan & Karabatak, 2015).

Based on all the information above, it is evident that school principals in Türkiye need a professional development program to enhance their leadership practices. This program should be structured in alignment with international leadership studies and tailored to the needs of Turkish school principals' leadership practices. Accordingly, this study aims to determine the necessary content of a professional development program that aims to improve the leadership practices of school principals in Türkiye by considering the commonalities in international studies and the needs of school principals. The following questions are sought to be answered:

1. What topics are necessary for a professional development program designed to improve the leadership practices of school principals?
 - How do school principals believe these topics will affect their leadership practices?

Method

In this research, the common aspects of studies conducted internationally on the professional development of school leaders form the conceptual framework, while the needs of school leaders working in Türkiye regarding leadership practices within this framework constitute the focus of the research. Therefore, in this research, which is based on the opinions of school principals, the qualitative method was adopted. Indeed, the qualitative research method, by its nature, attempts to explain phenomena through the meanings that people attribute to them in their natural settings (Merriam, 2018). The phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research methods, reaches the essence of individuals' experiences by combining the textual (what) and structural (how) descriptions of their experiences (Creswell, 2018). Accordingly, in this research, the phenomenological design was adopted to explore "what" the needs are in the school principals' leadership practice experiences and "how" meeting these needs would be reflected in leadership practices. The adoption of the post-positivist paradigm provided a basis for excluding prejudices from the research process and for conducting the process systematically and reporting it.

Study Group

The study group of the research consisted of 18 school principals working in Gaziantep province during the 2023-2024 academic year. A number of criteria are considered when forming the study group for focus group discussions in the literature. Focus groups consist of individuals with similar backgrounds and experiences (Maynard-Trucker, 2000; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), and each group typically includes between 6 and 10-12 participants (Patton, 2018). According to Patton, the participants in the groups should be purposefully selected to provide the richest data in line with the research objectives. It is recommended to conduct interviews with at least three different groups for each study (Morgan, 1997).

The study group of the research was determined by considering the criteria in the literature and using criterion sampling and maximum variation sampling, which are among the purposive sampling methods. The criterion selected for purposive sampling directly reflects the purpose of the study and provides a rich source of data (Merriam, 2018). Maximum variation sampling allows for the inclusion of participants with different characteristics, enabling a strong description of the common phenomenon (Patton, 2018). To ensure that they could provide rich data for the research, some criteria were taken into account that school principals had been in their positions for at least two years, meaning

they had gained sufficient experience, and that they had completed a master's degree in educational administration, meaning they had acquired sufficient awareness in the field of leadership. In order to obtain strong descriptions related to the research topic, maximum variation was ensured by including school principals working at different levels, such as primary, secondary, and high schools. In line with this, 24 school principals were contacted by phone, informed about the research, and invited to participate in focus group discussions. Eighteen school principals agreed to participate in the interviews. The 18 school principals in the study group were divided into three groups of six participants each, and attention was paid to the homogeneity among the groups. The demographic information of the 18 school principals in the study group is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Demographic Information of Participants

Groups	Code	Gender	Age	Marital Status	School Level	Experience as a School Principal
1. Focus Group	P1	Male	37+	Married	Secondary School	16-20 Years
	P2	Male	32-36	Single	Secondary School	1-5 Years
	P3	Male	32-36	Married	Secondary School	1-5 Years
	P4	Male	37+	Married	Primary School	1-5 Years
	P5	Female	32-36	Single	Primary School	1-5 Years
	P6	Male	32-36	Married	High School	1-5 Years
2. Focus Group	P7	Male	27-31	Single	Secondary School	1-5 Years
	P8	Male	32-36	Married	Secondary School	1-5 Years
	P9	Male	32-36	Married	Primary School	1-5 Years
	P10	Female	37+	Married	Primary School	6-10 Years
	P11	Male	37+	Married	Primary School	1-5 Years
	P12	Male	32-36	Married	High School	1-5 Years
3. Focus Group	P13	Male	37+	Married	Secondary School	16-20 Years
	P14	Male	27-31	Single	Secondary School	1-5 Years
	P15	Male	32-36	Married	Primary School	1-5 Years
	P16	Female	32-36	Single	Primary School	1-5 Years
	P17	Male	37+	Married	Primary School	6-10 Years
	P18	Male	37+	Married	High School	1-5 Years

When examining the demographic information of the participants in the study, it is observed that half (50%) are in the 32-36 age range, the majority are male (83%), married (72%), have 1-5 years of experience as a school principal (78%), and work at different school levels including primary school (44%), middle school (39%), and high school (6%). It is also noted that homogeneity was considered as much as possible in the demographic distribution of the groups.

Data Collection Tool

The data collection tool used in the research consists of two sections: a personal information form and a semi-structured interview form. The personal information form includes demographic information such as age, gender, marital status, years of experience, and the school level at which participants work. The semi-structured interview form, designed to reveal which leadership practices school principals need to develop, was prepared by examining the leadership standards set forth by educational organizations in various countries and the common themes (*understanding the nature of leadership, understanding and analyzing contextual factors, creating a shared vision, establishing strategic management processes, fostering a positive school culture, creating an effective teaching and learning environment, supporting teachers' professional development, fostering a collaborative culture with school stakeholders, effective use of resources, distributing leadership, establishing mentorship systems, ensuring school safety, demonstrating social justice leadership, exhibiting data literacy skills, acting as a change agent, using and developing communication channels, fostering professional ethics and values, and developing personal leadership resources*) that professional development efforts for school leadership focus on (AITSL, 2014, 2018; AIR, 2020; Alberta Education, 2023; British Council, 2017; IEL, 2013; LHRD, 2023; NASSP, 2023; NPBEA, 2015; OECD, 2009; OPC, 2023; SREB, 2008; UCLES, 2019; UKGDE, 2020). The questions in the semi-structured interview form were structured around the 18 themes previously mentioned. Each structured theme expresses the leadership practices of school principals. The questions directed to school principals were prepared to reveal whether they need professional development for each leadership practice and how receiving training on the leadership practice they need to develop would affect the processes related to their practices.

Data Collection Process

Before starting the data collection process, necessary permissions were obtained from the relevant university. The research data was collected using the focus group interview technique after obtaining the necessary permissions for the research. Three different focus groups, each consisting of six participants, were formed for the research. The interviews with these groups were conducted at the Faculty of Education at Gaziantep University's main campus, based on the availability of the participants. Each interview lasted approximately 96 minutes. The interviews were conducted in a U-shaped setting, where participants could freely express their thoughts, with the first researcher acting as moderator and the second researcher as an observer. The moderator is a doctoral student in the field of educational administration, while the observer is a professor in the same field. During the research process, the moderator's role was to manage the group and the discussion, while the first researcher was responsible for taking detailed notes, ensuring that the audio and video recording devices were functioning properly, and addressing any participant needs. To minimize the limitations of the focus group interview method, it was ensured that participants were not friends or relatives, to encourage participants to be less shy, and to give all participants sufficient time to express their opinions. To ensure the effectiveness of the interview process, Krueger's (1998, p. 15) recommendations for the steps to follow in focus group interviews (Warm-up, Introduction to Focus Discussion, Transition Questions, Key Questions, Research Questions, Closing Question, Final Question, Thank You and Gifting, Organizing and Analyzing Data) were considered.

Data Analysis

The video recordings of the focus group interviews were carefully reviewed, and the participants' views were transcribed into a 30-page, 12001-word document in Microsoft Word, formatted in 12-point Times New Roman, justified alignment. The transcribed statements of the participants were coded as P1, P2 (Participant1, etc.). The transcribed data were analyzed using descriptive and content analysis techniques, which are among qualitative analysis methods. In the descriptive analysis technique, the data can be organized based on the conceptual framework or questions within the research scope (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). At the same time, direct quotations from the participants' statements can be used to reflect the reality of their emotions and thoughts. In content analysis, concepts that are related to each other are given code labels to reach a meaningful whole (Merriam, 2018). In the descriptive analysis stage of the research, the data were organized under the 18 question headings from the semi-structured interview form, based on the research's conceptual framework, without considering which group the data came from. In addition, direct quotations from the participants' views were included in the research findings. Then, the commonalities in the data organized under each heading were coded, categorized, and thus the steps of content analysis were followed.

Validity and Reliability

Lincoln and Guba (1986, pp. 76-77) referred to internal validity as credibility, external validity as transferability, and reliability as consistency in research conducted using qualitative methods. Creswell (2018, pp. 250-254) emphasizes that a series of strategies must be followed to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative research. To establish the credibility of the conducted research, the criteria found in the literature were fulfilled during the phases of forming focus groups (Maynard-Trucker, 2000; Patton, 2018; Ritche & Lewis, 2003) and implementing the interviews (Krueger, 1998). The obtained data were supported by various sources in the literature, thereby increasing credibility and achieving triangulation of the information (Creswell, 2018, p. 251). To ensure the transferability of the research, Creswell's recommendations were taken into consideration, and the research process was described in detail, with the findings presented in tables to enhance clarity. To ensure consistency in the research, the data were transcribed exactly as they were, and both researchers controlled the process to prevent data loss. During the coding process, codes were revealed by marking the common aspects of the statements that came to the fore, taking into account Silverman's (2005) suggestions, and then using the inter-coder consensus strategy, the data that was semi-coded separately by the researchers was compared. The codes included in the research findings were examined and a consensus was reached on the codes. Additionally, the findings were revisited with participants to confirm whether they reflected their views, as recommended by Patton (2018, p. 560), and the findings were reorganized based on their feedback.

Findings

1. Findings Regarding the Topics School Principals Need to Develop Their Leadership Practices

Table 2.

Professional development needs regarding the nature of leadership

Theme	Category	Code
	Necessary	Distinguishing Between Leadership and Management Utilizing Colleague Feedback in Training Adapting to Changing Conditions

1. Understanding the Nature of Leadership	Continuous Updates in Technology	
	Not Necessary	Lack of Practical Application Sufficiency of Master's Degree Education The Belief That Leadership Develops Through Experience
	Effect	Increasing Leadership Capacity Feeling Safe Understanding the New Generation Making Correct and Radical Decisions Achieving Consistency in Actions Improving Human Relations

When examining the table, it is observed that school principals believe they will better understand the background of leadership through the course and, as a result, will be able to take more confident steps. However, some school principals also believe that they may not be able to apply the competencies they have acquired in practice and that their leadership will develop through experience even if they do not take a course. Some participants have addressed the following points regarding the topic:

"I think it's necessary; I am a manager too, and we must adapt to changing conditions and technology. If I keep myself updated, I feel safer." (P1).

"As a leader, you want to initiate something, but unfortunately, there is a blockage; teachers have a standard and they don't want to step outside that standard. As long as this mentality in our country does not change, I think there is no need." (P10).

Table 3.

Professional development needs regarding contextual factors

Theme	Category	Code
2. Understanding and Analyzing Contextual Factors	Necessary	Differentiated Demographic Environments Continuously Changing National and Universal Factors Continuously Changing Interests and Needs Inability to Determine What to Analyze National Education's Ability to Set a Common Direction
		Sufficiency of Master's Degree Education Sufficiency of Ministry of Education Seminars
	Effect	Looking More Systematically and Professionally Understanding Teachers and Students Understanding People from Different Demographic Backgrounds Being Informed About Educational Trends Staying Updated on Changing Information and Technology Coping with Changing Conditions

When the table is examined, it is understood that school principals are in need of understanding, analyzing, and responding to the changes in their surroundings, while some principals consider themselves sufficient in this regard. Below are the highlighted thoughts of school principals on the topic:

"It is believed that this course is necessary. For example, I live in Seyrantepe, and the behavior of students and parents is not the same as in İbrahimli, so I observe and act accordingly. We could approach this more systematically and professionally." (P2).

"A person who is conscious of understanding the nature of leadership already observes the environment. Especially after taking master's courses in educational management, I am aware of what can be done and how to adapt to the environment." (P4).

Table 4.

Professional development needs regarding creating a common vision

Theme	Category	Code
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3. Creating a Common Vision	Necessary	Ability to Set Realistic Goals Knowing How to Act in Challenging Conditions Thinking That Different Examples Will Be Beneficial Inability to Include Uninterested Parents in the Vision Encountering Different Demographic Structures
	Not Necessary	Adequacy of Stakeholder Opinions Feeling Adequate Lack of Practical Application
	Effect	Setting Functional Goals Being Able to Look at Vision Creation Technically Developing Long-Term Applications Being Able to Look from a Broader Perspective Being Able to Advocate Better Making Healthy Decisions

The table includes the concerns of school principals regarding how to create a common vision in differentiated regions and sometimes their frustrations about parents' indifference toward the vision. Some school principals have expressed that they possess the necessary competencies on the subject but believe they cannot act based on the knowledge they have gained within the system they are in. The following quotes relate to these statements:

"I think this course will be beneficial in places where educational conditions are challenging. In places with good conditions, there is usually no reason to loosen this." (P7).

"I believe I possess sufficient knowledge on this matter. Furthermore, having a vision has no value for us; in Türkiye, those with a vision face trouble. Due to the centralized system, I do not think this course will be functional even if I take it" (P11).

Table 5.

Professional development needs related to strategic management processes

Theme	Category	Code
4. Creating Strategic Management Processes	Necessary	Effectively Managing Goal-Setting Processes Being Able to Materialize Management Processes Preventing Potential Problems Correctly Analyzing School Staff Effectively Managing Time Knowing How to Act in Different Schools
	Not Necessary	Feeling Adequate Goals Set by the Ministry of Education Sufficiency of Master's Education
	Effect	Setting Achievable Goals Setting Student-Centered Goals Flexibly Adjusting Goals According to Demographic Structure Evaluating the Goal-Setting Process Maximizing School Performance Creating a Functional Culture in the School

When examining the views of school principals presented in the table, it is understood that they focus on goal setting within strategic management processes and believe that, following a course on the subject, they could set effective goals in different demographic environments to enhance school performance. However, some school principals have stated that the general goals set by the ministry are sufficient in addition to their own competencies. Notable quotes regarding this topic are as follows:

"We do not know how to set a goal when determining one in schools. I believe it would be much better if we were taught to set goals according to the school's resources." (P18).

"I do not feel the need for such training because the ministry's goals are clear; the goals of national education are known, both short-term and long-term, and the goals of the institution are adjusted according to its characteristics." (P6).

Table 6.*Professional development needs regarding positive school culture*

Theme	Category	Code
5. Creating a Positive School Culture	Necessary	Making Stakeholders Feel That They Can Trust
		Establishing a Culture of Collaboration
		Experiencing Issues with Parents
		Having Groupings Among Teachers
		Teachers Experiencing Psychological Issues
		Teachers Showing Resistance in Communication
		Disruptions Caused by Female Teachers
	Not Necessary	Feeling Adequate
	Effect	Demonstrating Professional Development
		Increasing Organizational Commitment
		Creating a Safe and Warm Environment
		Improving Communication Channels with Teachers
		Meeting Teachers' Social Needs
		Supporting Teachers' Psychological Issues
		Approaching Parents Appropriately
		Understanding Female Teachers' Problems

According to the views of school principals presented in the table, it is understood that they want to overcome problems with parents in creating a positive school culture, and they often wish to support teachers with social and psychological issues. Additionally, there are principals who consider themselves sufficient in this regard. Examples of notable quotes regarding these views are provided below:

“A parent came to school very angrily; I was at another school during that incident, and a vice principal managed the situation in such a way that he encouraged the parent to sit down and take a breath first. I thought to myself that I would never behave like that, so it seems this is my shortcoming.” (P17).

“I do not feel the need for training on this matter; I am receiving positive feedback from my teacher colleagues, and I believe the school culture is being formed.” (P14).

Table 7.*Professional development needs related to an effective learning-teaching environment*

Theme	Category	Code
6. Creating an Effective Learning-Teaching Environment	Necessary	Changing Ways to Access Information
		Advances in Technology and Artificial Intelligence
		Changes in Learning and Teaching Materials
		Desire to Improve Teaching Methods and Techniques
		Need for Inspiration from Successful Examples
		Learning-Teaching Needs of School Stakeholders
		Parents' Indifference to Learning-Teacher Processes
		Teachers' Indifference to Learning-Teacher Processes
	Not Necessary	Sufficient Material Needs
		Feeling Adequate
		Having Made Learning a Cultural Norm
	Effect	Following Change and Technology
		Acting in Line with the Needs of School Stakeholders
		Increasing Students' Academic Success
		Helping Students Develop Positive Feelings Towards School
		Increasing Teacher Motivation
		Supporting Parents in the Learning-Teaching Processes

According to the table, school principals have expressed that the course would be beneficial for keeping up with the innovations brought by the times in education and teaching, as well as for better analyzing the learning and teaching needs of the school's stakeholders. They believe that this way, they could support the academic and social development of students. However, there are also principals who state that they have already acquired these skills and possess sufficient qualifications. Notable quotes from the principals regarding their views are provided below:

“We judge and get angry at the student, but we find out that their family life is completely different; they might have a shattered family, or there could be someone sick in the teacher’s family. For example, we decide not to assign that class to them that year. I think the key word here should be the needs of the teacher and the student.” (P1).

“We are already supporting our colleagues, but as the friends mentioned, artificial intelligence has emerged, and we are handling everything from there.” (P15).

Table 8.

Professional development needs regarding the professional development of teachers

Theme	Category	Code
7. Supporting the Professional Development of Teachers	Necessary	Inability to Break Teachers' Resistance to Professional Development Lack of Motivation in Teachers for Self-Improvement Teachers Struggling with Classroom Management Ability to Guide Teachers for Their Professional Development
	Not Necessary	The Sufficiency of Ministry of Education Seminars Teachers Actively Improving Themselves The Ineffectiveness of External Motivation
	Effect	Creating Professional Development Awareness in Teachers Improving Teachers' Classroom Management Skills Increasing Teachers' Contribution to the School Teachers Feeling Valued Increasing Teachers' Organizational Commitment

According to the statements of school principals presented in the table, they believe that teachers need technical and psychological support to develop professionally. They express that through the course, they can provide the necessary support to teachers, thereby creating awareness and self-confidence among them, which could turn professional development into a culture. However, some school principals have stated that teachers are already developing themselves through seminars or their own efforts, and therefore, they do not feel the need for the course content. Below are some quotes from the narratives:

“One of our teachers said to me, ‘I cannot manage this class.’ I asked what the problem was, and I saw that our teacher was having difficulties with classroom management. If you want to improve yourself as a school administrator, it will contribute to the administrator.” (P8).

“I do not need this course because there is no one implementing it. I do not think I can open up our teachers' vision myself.” (P10).

Table 9.

Professional development needs regarding the creation of a collaborative culture with the school's stakeholders

Theme	Category	Code
8. Creating a Collaborative Culture with the School's Stakeholders	Necessary	Difficulty in Communicating with Individuals and Institutions Inadequacy of the Guidance Service Need for Different Ideas in Problem Solving Lack of Parental Participation in School Activities
	Not Necessary	Feeling Adequate Ignoring the Demands of Institutions Lack of Communication with Institutions Outside Political Channels
	Effect	Demonstrating the Courage to Collaborate with Different Institutions Solving Problems Quickly Involving Parents in School Activities

According to the table, school principals express that they wish to develop themselves primarily in communication with parents and institutions to create a collaborative culture with school stakeholders. They believe that if they improve themselves, they can solve problems more quickly and foster cooperation. However, some school principals feel sufficient in their current abilities and indicate that even if they were to develop themselves, the communication channels from institutions to them are already closed. Below are quotes from the principals regarding the points they raised:

“I think that when we visit other institutions, problems can be solved more quickly. Or when we go to schools that are better than ours, we don’t lose anything. I also think this is necessary.” (P16).

“There is a small area in my school that needs to be paved, and I have been struggling for 2.5 years and cannot get it done. I have talked to the mayors and organized the parents, but it doesn’t work.” (P8).

Table 10.

Professional development needs regarding resource utilization

Theme	Category	Code
9. Effective Utilization of Resources	Necessary	Restriction of Expenditures on Certain Budget Items
		Inability to Establish a Spending Balance
		Avoiding Responsibility in Official Expenditures
		Lack of Transparency
		Waste Observed in Public Institutions
	Not Necessary	Feeling Adequate
		Receiving Support from the Purchasing Commission
		Complying with the Ministry's Instructions
	Effect	Effective Use of Limited Resources
		Developing Cost-Saving Measures
		Ability to Analyze the School's Priority Needs
		Improving Accountability

According to the table, it is observed that school principals have only provided feedback regarding financial resources in relation to the "Effective Resource Utilization" course. The statements of the school principals indicate that they feel a need for technical support in the use of allocations provided to schools by the ministry, and they believe that after the course, they would be able to make more transparent and accurate decisions regarding resource usage. However, some school principals feel that the ministry's directives are sufficient and do not see a need for the course. Below are notable quotes from the principals:

“I also feel the need to understand how I can use resources more efficiently. For example, I think this course will be useful to view things from different perspectives, such as how we can assess a broken photocopier.” (P12).

“I don’t feel the need for this course because when allocation procedures come, we have a procurement committee where we gather our colleagues.” (P15).

Table 11.

Professional development needs regarding distributing leadership

Theme	Category	Code
10. Distributing Leadership	Necessary	Not Knowing the Limits of Delegation
		Seeing the Distribution of Leadership as a Loss of Power
		Inability to Take Initiative
		Inability to Break the Habit of Individually Shouldering All Responsibilities
		Teachers' Inability to Assist Students in Different Areas
	Not Necessary	Teachers' Failure to Take Responsibility
		Feeling Adequate
	Effect	Better Managing the Distribution of Leadership
		Identifying Teacher Leaders
		Teachers Feeling Valued
		Increasing Teachers' Engagement
		Creating Units Addressing Student Needs
		Increasing Students' Sense of Belonging
		Reducing Stress Levels

It is understood that school principals are hesitant about the topic of Distributed Leadership and feel a need for technical support. Some principals complain about teachers' avoidance of taking responsibility in any context and do not find the course necessary for this reason. Below are notable quotes from the principals:

“We distribute leadership, but there are conflicts related to ego in the background; ultimately, the tasks you assign are not equal, which causes particular difficulties, especially for women. We do distribute the responsibilities, but I think we need support in terms of management.” (P9).

“I realized that I am taking all the responsibility upon myself while trying to keep up with everything. I believe that by distributing leadership, I can ease this burden and do more effective work by sharing my responsibilities.” (P14).

Table 12.*Professional development needs regarding mentorship*

Theme	Category	Code
11. Establishing a Mentorship System	Necessary	Lack of Adoption of the Ministry's Consulting Practices
		Insufficient Technical Knowledge
		Teachers Experiencing Fatigue
		Seeing the Sociological Results of Mentorship
		Seeing the Psychological Results of Mentorship
	Not Necessary	Experienced Teachers Not Feeling the Need
		Feeling Adequate
	Effect	Making Mentorship a Culture Among Teachers
		Making the Teachers' Room More Active
		Organizing Knowledge Sharing
		Feeling Technically Equipped
		Experience Shedding Light on Problems

It is understood from the table that teachers experiencing professional burnout need support, and school principals believe that the course content would be beneficial in providing this support. Additionally, some principals have expressed that experienced teachers do not seek support for mentorship. Below are quotes that highlight these perspectives:

“I need to exchange ideas with experienced colleagues; it sheds light on problems we will face in the future. It would be beneficial for both us and the teachers, and over time, I think this practice will be adopted.” (P9).

“The audience on the other side is also important; when you look at the person in front of you, they may be approaching retirement and have nothing left to do. I don't feel a need for support.” (P10).

Table 13.*Professional development needs regarding school safety*

Theme	Category	Code
12. Ensuring School Safety	Necessary	Presence of Students Exhibiting Risky Behaviors
		Understanding Students' Psychological States
		Students Leaving Late Being at Risk
		Parents with Violent Tendencies
		Presence of Substance Use Around the School
		Incidents of Harassment Around the School
	Not Necessary	Adequacy of the School Counselling Service
		Division of Labor for Security
		Perception of Sufficient Presence of Law Enforcement
		Avoiding Security Issues
	Effect	Preventive Behavior Towards Risks
		Preventive Behavior Towards Substance Use
		Ability to Distinguish Criminal Offenses
		Knowledge of Sanctions and Procedures for Criminal Offenses
		Ability to Effectively Intervene in Crisis Situations
		Ability to Guide Withdrawn Students

According to the table, it is understood that school principals need a course on Ensuring School Safety to effectively take the necessary precautions against security risks arising from internal and external factors, to intervene in these risks, and to support students facing these issues. However, some principals have stated that they receive the necessary support for safety measures from both inside and outside the school. Below are notable excerpts from the principals' comments on the subject:

“One of our students couldn't lift his head to look at the teacher; his parents are divorced, and for the last three years, he has had a troubled family life, which has made him perceive the world very negatively. Therefore, I believe I need training similar to that of a psychological counselor to help this child.” (P11).

"I think this issue is the responsibility of law enforcement. The security measures are in place; there is a supervising teacher, and I don't think this course is necessary because these roles exist. I can only handle the necessary correspondence." (P6).

Table 14.

Professional development needs regarding ensuring social justice

Theme	Category	Code
13. Ensuring Social Justice	Necessary	Need to Listen to Stories of Experiences in Ensuring Social Justice Ability to Create a Democratic School Environment Understanding Disadvantaged Students (refugees, disabled, etc.) Ability to Develop Practices for Disadvantaged Students Overcoming the Desire to Avoid Problematic Parents Overcoming the Tendency to Favor Parents Who Contribute to the School
	Not Necessary	A Well-Developed Sense of Justice
	Effect	Gaining Awareness of Social Justice Development of a Sense of Justice Protecting the Rights of Disadvantaged Students Contributing to Social Justice Increasing Teachers' Willingness to Work

According to the table, it is understood that school principals need to develop themselves to provide support for disadvantaged students and ensure fairness in their judgments regarding parents in order to create a democratic school environment. However, some principals have stated that they do not feel the need to take a course due to their belief that their sense of justice can provide all these skills. Below are some excerpts from the principals' statements:

"In a democratic environment, everyone feels comfortable and wants to work wholeheartedly. Where there is no democracy, everyone wants to leave as soon as possible; this applies to both students and teachers. Therefore, taking this course will contribute to creating a democratic environment." (P3).

"If the parents are good and can contribute to the school, we inevitably develop a certain sympathy for them; if they have problems, we tend to distance ourselves. For this reason, I would like to further develop myself, enhance my sense of justice, and engage with related books or films." (P11).

Table 15.

Professional development needs regarding data literacy

Theme	Category	Code
14. Demonstrating Data Literacy Skills	Necessary	Understanding Data Collection Systems Ability to Read Data-Driven Graphs Ability to Read Large-Scale Data Ability to Conduct Data-Driven Needs Analysis Knowledge of Advanced Statistical Programs
	Not Necessary	-
	Effect	Making Accurate Interpretations About Data Setting Data-Driven Strategic Goals Acting in a Scientific and Results-Oriented Manner Correctly Reading Data Related to Exam Results Taking Data-Based Actions to Meet the School's Needs

The principals involved in the study all express a need to improve their skills in data usage. Below are excerpts from the prominent statements made by the principals regarding this need:

"I am from the IT department, but I still feel inadequate when it comes to data usage. Sure, we receive the results of the practice exams, but it's essential to understand how progress has been made in specific areas. Knowing SPSS would be necessary as a higher level of expertise." (P1).

"When we determine the general objectives, we base our approach on the existing data at hand. If we aim to present something scientific and results-oriented, we need to understand and analyze the systems that allow us to gather this data well." (P18).

Table 16.*Professional development needs regarding change agency*

Theme	Category	Code
15. Demonstrating Change Agency Skills	Necessary	Gaining a Perspective Towards Change Adapting to the Continuity of Change Seeing Examples of Change Occurring Internationally Understanding the Impact of Change on Students Encouraging Teachers to Embrace Change
	Not Necessary	-
	Effect	Being a Pioneer in Change Understanding Students Better Motivating Students for Scientific Research Encouraging Students in the Context of Change Making Change a Cultural Norm Solving Problems Arising from Change

According to the table, the school principals emphasize the need for continuous change, agreeing that they must develop their skills in adapting to and managing change. Notable excerpts from their views on this matter are presented below:

“We initiate change, but we cannot make it a continuous process. I feel the need to ensure the sustainability of change.” (P13).

“Since Teknofest was launched at our school, we have been finalists every year. What this has provided us is that it has become a culture. They no longer fear it; when this happens, the children also gain skills in expressing themselves. The best software often emerges from the simplest ideas, and that child should not be afraid to present that idea. We need to convey that change is not a bad thing.” (P2).

Table 17.*Professional development needs regarding communication channels*

Theme	Category	Code
16. Using and Developing Communication Channels	Necessary	Ability to Reach Out to Closed-off Individuals Ensuring Continuity in Communication Developing Persuasion Skills
	Not Necessary	Feeling Adequate
	Effect	Gaining Effective Communication Skills Practicing Empathy Knowing How to Approach People

According to the table, the school principals indicate a need to develop their skills in effective communication and maintaining it in order to influence the people around them. However, some school principals express that they are successful in communication and do not feel the need for the course. Notable excerpts from their views are provided below:

“Let me put it this way: the reason I am pursuing a minor in guidance and psychological counseling is to understand people and know their darker sides. Sometimes, I don’t even know how to approach someone. There should be a basic literacy course in elementary school for this kind of topic.” (P14).

“At this point, I don’t feel the need for it. I also receive feedback on this; people say, ‘You remain so calm even when you’re angry.’” (P12).

Table 18.*Professional development needs regarding professional ethics and values development*

Theme	Category	Code
17. Developing Professional	Necessary	Forgetting Professional Ethics Need for Discussion on the Ethical Value of Actions Taken Developing Practices that Serve as Examples of Ethics for Teachers
	Not Necessary	Sufficiency of Ministry of Education Seminars Feeling Adequate

Ethics and Values	Adopting Ethics as a Life Philosophy	
	Effect	Evaluating the Ethical Value of Actions Taken Embracing the Concept of Professional Ethics Being an Example in Professional Ethics

According to the table, it is understood that school principals feel the need for professional development in order to adopt professional ethics and values as established norms in their lives and to set an example for teachers in this regard. However, some school principals state that they do not feel the need to develop themselves further. Some of the notable views on this topic are as follows:

“I think it's very important. I'm not unaware of what professional ethics are, but sometimes it needs to be reminded—this applies to me as well. We are human; we forget.” (P6).

“I don't feel the need in this regard because I am someone who reflects ethical issues in my life; these are topics I am sensitive about.” (P14).

Table 19.

Professional development needs regarding the development of personal leadership resources

Theme	Category	Code
18. Developing Personal Leadership Resources	Necessary	Needing Psychological Support
		Developing Themselves Pedagogically
		Improving Problem-Solving Skills
		Inability to Set Communication Boundaries
		Improving Communication Skills
		Effectively Managing Time
	Not Necessary	Being Indecisive
		-
	Effect	Being a Strong Leader
		Producing Lasting Solutions to Problems
		Conducting Self-Assessment
		Using Time Efficiently
		Managing Stress Effectively
		Gaining Effective School Management Skills

All school principals have expressed the need to develop personal leadership resources, stating that this would support them cognitively, socially, and psychologically. Notable quotes regarding their views on this matter are as follows:

“I want to use my time efficiently. At the same time, I need to manage stress; it could be through a psychologist or psychiatrist. They should share their experiences with me. We also need to receive regular psychological support. When I manage my nerves, I end up harming myself.” (P5).

“I feel a lack in setting boundaries for myself and for the other person. For instance, we do not know our limits in communication; we cannot define our boundaries in understanding this.” (P17).

Discussion and Conclusions

The primary aim of this study is to identify the professional development needs of school principals working in the Turkish Education System in order to enhance their leadership practices. To achieve this goal, professional development studies and leadership frameworks related to leadership practices in different countries were examined, and the similar topics focused on in the reviewed documents were listed under 18 headings. According to the research results, among the school principals indicating that they have a professional development need for all of the identified 18 topics, there were also school principals who stated that they do not have such a need. The findings that emerged in the study were discussed in light of the literature, considering the centralized structure of the Turkish Education System.

It has been revealed that if school principals take a course on *Understanding the Nature of Leadership* as part of their professional development studies, they can gain awareness related to the subject, enhance their leadership capacities to distinguish between leadership and management, and adapt to changing conditions, which would make them feel secure and positively reflect on their actions. Supporting these findings, the study by Devos and Bouckennooghe (2009) indicates that the perceptions of school principals regarding their leadership roles are reflected in their actions, and that schools

with principals who possess a leadership identity exhibit a strong climate. Additionally, when the literature is examined, it is emphasized that leadership capacity develops through professional learning experiences (AITSL, 2018), that school principals acting with leadership awareness can keep up with current trends and that effective leadership practices promote equity and participation in schools (OPC, 2023). However, it is known that school principals operating within the centralized structure of the Turkish Education System experience role conflict between their administrative duties and leadership responsibilities and struggle to take initiatives (Özdemir et al., 2024). Therefore, it can be said that the course they take to understand the nature of leadership can increase their awareness and develop their perspectives.

The school principals participating in the research stated that a professional development program covering the course content of *Understanding and Analyzing Contextual Factors* would contribute to their ability to analyze all conditions varying from the micro area of the school to the macro area. Indeed, the literature suggests that a successful school leader must understand the social, cultural, political, economic, legal, and intellectual contexts of the country and school district in order to promote student learning and school development, and to organize educational processes that align with the context (AITSL, 2014; British Council, 2017; LAUSD, 2023; NPBEA, 2015). Additionally, a study conducted by Şahin and Türkoğlu-Özdemir (2024) indicates that school leaders who analyze the strengths and weaknesses of teachers and students will make their planning more functional. At the same time, school principals will be able to determine the school's goals more healthily by aligning the educational goals determined by the Ministry of National Education with the needs of the school and its stakeholders. From this perspective, it can be said that understanding contextual factors will help school administrators make decisions with more analytical thinking.

The research findings indicate that if school principals participate in training related to *Creating a Shared Vision*, they believe they will be able to approach vision creation more technically, set more realistic and long-term goals, better advocate for the goals they establish, and thus more easily foster the belief of school stakeholders in the vision. Consistent with the findings, the literature highlights that school leaders need to ensure collaboration by creating a vision that aligns with student learning and educational policies during the process of forming a shared vision (Alberta Education, 2023; British Council, 2017; NPBEA, 2015). Furthermore, Toikka and Tarnanen (2024) emphasize that school leaders who create a shared vision can transform the school into a learning community, while Dufour, Dufour and Eaker (2016) point out that creating a shared vision paves the way for long-term educational practices. Şahin & Türkoğlu-Özdemir (2024) emphasized in their research that the multicultural structure is dominant in schools within the framework of the Turkish Education System and that school principals should be competent enough to consider the needs of multicultural education while creating a partnership in vision. Therefore, it can be said that the collaboration of school principals with school stakeholders contributes to the academic success of the school, thus highlighting the need for school principals to develop themselves in this area through the training they receive.

School principals expressed that if they take a course on *Creating Strategic Management Processes*, they will be able to effectively manage time and goal-setting processes, strategically act in different contexts, and evaluate goal-setting processes. The literature supports these findings, emphasizing that it is necessary to establish strategic goals and plans to create and sustain an efficient school environment (LAUSD, 2023; OLF, 2014), and that these plans should align with national and local goals based on student needs (AIR, 2020; OECD, 2009). According to Amoli and Aghashahi (2016), strategic thinking is a prerequisite for strategic planning. NASSP (2023) claims that school principals who engage in strategic planning can maximize school performance. In the Turkish Education System, schools legally have the responsibility of making strategic planning. The Ministry has published a guide for the strategic plans of schools (MoNE, 2024), and school principals must take into account the contextual factors of schools along with the guide when preparing a strategic plan. Therefore, it can be said that school principals need to have a comprehensive knowledge base in order to create strategic management processes specific to their schools and contribute to the academic development of the school.

In the context of *Creating a Positive School Culture*, school principals have expressed that they can develop themselves in building trust among the school's stakeholders, particularly in preventing groupings that occur among teachers, creating supportive practices regarding the reflections of problems that female teachers face in their private lives on their work life, and knowing how to approach parents. Supporting the needs of school principals, studies by Çevik and Köse (2017) and Sezgin (2010) indicate a positive relationship between school culture, teacher motivation, and commitment to the school; thus, the relationships developed with teachers (Hollingworth, Asikin-Garmeger & Winn, 2018) contribute to school culture. However, the literature emphasizes that school principals must ensure students have positive experiences (LAUSD, 2023; UKGDE, 2020), listen to parents (OLF, 2014), and handle conflicts within the school respectfully. Despite this emphasis in the literature, it appears that the school principals participating in the research have overlooked students and parents in creating a positive school culture.

The school principals participating in the research stated that within the framework of *Creating an Effective Learning-Teaching Environment*, they could update themselves on evolving and differentiating teaching methods, involve parents

and teachers who are indifferent to the learning-teaching process, and thereby support the academic and emotional aspects of teachers and students. A review of the literature shows that being knowledgeable about effective teaching methods and strategies is among the expected leadership practices of school principals (British Council, 2017; OPC, 2023; Şahin & Türkoğlu-Özdemir, 2024). Additionally, school principals are held responsible for the motivation of students and teachers (ATSL, 2018). Alongside these, the literature emphasizes that to develop effective learning-teaching processes, school leaders must implement various assessment systems for teachers and students and provide feedback on the learning-teaching processes (UKGDE, 2020). The lack of reference to such competencies in the opinions of school principals may stem from their insufficient proficiency in supervision, facing limitations in authority regarding supervision, and the negative attitudes of teachers towards supervision (Türkoğlu & Şahin, 2021).

School principals expressed that teachers resist professional development, stating that the course content on *Supporting Teachers' Professional Development* would contribute to their ability to guide teachers correctly in their professional growth. Supporting the problem faced by school principals, the studies by Türkoğlu and Şahin (2021) indicate that teachers lack faith in professional development. Research by Gore and Rickards (2021) suggests that an engaging and peer-presented learning experience increases teachers' willingness for professional development. Additionally, the literature attributes the task of encouraging teachers towards professional development to school leaders (AIR, 2020). In the context of the Turkish Education System, school principals do not have the initiative to ensure that teachers receive the necessary training (Şahin & Türkoğlu-Özdemir, 2024). However, it can be said that a lesson plan structured under the title of supporting teachers' professional development could assist school principals in breaking the resistance of teachers who resist professional growth and in establishing how professional development can be made continuous.

Regarding *Creating a Collaborative Culture with School Stakeholders*, school principals indicated that they struggle to communicate with institutions around the school and to involve parents in school activities, expressing that they could gain competence in using appropriate communication channels with institutions and could be supported with different ideas in involving parents in school events. The literature emphasizes that school principals need to make institutions and parents active partners in school development and student learning (Alberta Education, 2023). Thus, it can be said that it would be beneficial for school principals to be supported in how they can create collaboration with stakeholders, particularly at the institutional and parental levels.

The school principals participating in the research reported that the school's funds come from the ministry in specific categories, making it difficult for them to establish a balance in spending, and thus they expressed that the course content on *Efficient Use of Resources* could be beneficial. A review of the literature supports these findings, indicating that the allocation of funds from the central administration should be increased and the authority to use these funds should be relaxed (Özdemir et al., 2024), as well as that school administrators' previous training related to budgeting is insufficient (Dikbaş & Gül, 2024). Furthermore, it is noted that they need to develop themselves in terms of ensuring accountability (Şahin & Türkoğlu-Özdemir, 2024). The literature also emphasizes the effective use of not only financial resources but also physical, technological, and human resources (AIR, 2020). Considering the views of school principals, it can be suggested that the lack of mention of these resources stems from their lack of authority to utilize and obtain these resources, leading them to feel no need for self-development in this area.

School principals stated that they cannot take the initiative to distribute leadership, do not know the limits of delegation, and believe that with training on *Distributed Leadership Practices*, they could manage the distribution of leadership better. The literature indicates that the inability of school principals to take initiative may be influenced by the concentration of authority in the Turkish education system and the inadequate execution of oversight and control mechanisms in schools (Özdayı, 2001). Additionally, distributed leadership may be shared more restrictively in larger schools (Arık & Çağlar, 2023). Research has shown that distributing leadership increases teachers' perceptions of organizational support (Dağ & Bozkurt, 2023), alleviates the workload of school principals, and enhances students' self-confidence (Sadoula & Korumaz, 2020). Given these findings, it can be concluded that distributed leadership is necessary even in centrally managed schools, and the school principals participating in the research could gain the courage to take initiatives and develop competencies through the course content.

School principals noted that the counseling system developed by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has not been adopted. They believe that a mentoring system developed within the school for newly appointed teachers could foster a mentoring culture and activate the teachers' room, indicating their need for knowledge in the course titled *Creating a Mentoring System*. In the literature, establishing a mentoring and coaching system for teachers is viewed as a prerequisite for school development and improving teaching (OECD, 2009). Eröz (2019) stated that the mentoring functions of school principals positively impact teachers' job satisfaction, and Eisenschmidt and Order (2018) indicated that mentoring practices increase collaborative culture among teachers. Therefore, it can be said that the course content on creating a mentoring system would be beneficial for school principals based on a needs analysis conducted for them and teachers.

Regarding *Ensuring School Safety*, school principals expressed the need for training to implement more effective measures against risk factors arising from students, parents, and the school environment. This training would enable them to identify criminal acts more easily, respond more effectively in crisis situations, and support students' psychosocial well-being more consciously. A review of the literature indicates that school leaders must identify risks they may encounter within and around the school and develop collaborative practices to eliminate these risks (NASSP, 2023; NPBEA, 2015; OLF, 2014). In the Turkish education system, the responsibilities of school principals regarding school safety are regulated by circulars from the MoNE (MoNE, 2018). However, research has found that school principals face elements threatening school safety that stem from teachers, students, and parents, with solutions often exceeding their authority (Yıldırım, Akan & Çiftçi, 2018). Furthermore, it is emphasized that they need training to strategically address the problems they encounter (Özdemir et al., 2024). Thus, it can be suggested that training tailored to meet school principals' current needs regarding school safety should be developed.

School principals indicated that receiving training on *Promoting Social Justice* would be beneficial in creating a democratic school environment. Providing inclusive and multicultural learning opportunities for increasingly diverse student groups, thereby creating an equal and democratic environment where all students feel a sense of belonging, is viewed as a responsibility of school leaders (Alberta Education, 2023; NPBEA, 2017). The literature reveals that the qualifications of school principals in Türkiye regarding social justice need to be improved (Kasapoğlu-Tankutay, 2022), particularly in schools with a high number of refugee students (Türkoğlu Özdemir & Özkan, 2024). Because the Turkish Education System has required students from different ethnic groups and different native languages to receive education with a common language and central curriculum. Therefore, it can be suggested that training should be organized for school leaders regarding social justice, considering their needs and the demographic context they are in.

Participants in the research expressed a need to access accurate data and the ability to read data. They stated that after a course on *Data Literacy*, they could take data-driven steps, thereby developing their ability to act more strategically and scientifically. A review of the literature indicates that understanding the role of large-scale evaluations (e.g., PISA) in improving schools and making data-driven decision-making a culture are among the responsibilities of school leaders (Alberta Education, 2023; OECD, 2009; OPC, 2023; UKGDE, 2020). However, it has been found that school principals in the Turkish education system primarily operate within the framework of regulations and experience (Tabak, Şahin & Tabak, 2020), focusing mainly on data related to students' academic success in school practices. Therefore, there is a need for more support regarding the culture of data use and data literacy (Yükünç & Saylık, 2022). Thus, it can be concluded that receiving a course on accessing, reading, and interpreting data would be beneficial for school principals.

With the course on *Demonstrating Change Agent Skills*, school principals noted that they could gain a perspective on change, follow changes occurring in different countries, and lead both students and teachers through change, motivating them in the process. The literature emphasizes the necessity for school leaders to demonstrate change agent skills (British Council, 2017; NASSP, 2023). Additionally, it is noted that school principals need to facilitate change while requiring professional development to keep up with the pace of change (Acton, 2021). In their studies, Lee, Douglass, Zeng, Wiehe-Loes and Reyes (2022) found that the program implemented to enhance skills related to change agency led to improvements in school leaders' perceptions of change and their abilities to initiate change. When considering change in the context of the Turkish Education System, it can be said that the changes in the education system have continued since the Ottoman period, that the changes have mostly occurred due to the imposition of the central system from the perspective of teachers, and that teachers are reactive to this situation (Şahin & Demirel, 2019). Therefore, it can be said that school principals can act as change agents by gaining competence in ensuring that the changes in the system adapt to the school through the relevant course content.

Regarding *Communication Skills*, school principals expressed that by improving communication channels with school stakeholders, they could enhance empathy and develop their approaches to these stakeholders. As emphasized in the research, school leaders are expected to provide feedback as hospitable and good listeners to school stakeholders and create an educational environment based on respect and trust through their effective communication skills (AITSL, 2014, 2018; AIR, 2020). However, studies conducted in the Turkish context indicate that school principals struggle with empathy and tend to behave egoistically, with communication problems between administrators and teachers partly stemming from the administrators' hierarchical status (Bayar & Zengin, 2021). Additionally, findings suggest that the communication management skills of school leaders can be enhanced through modules and training (Şener & Özkan, 2018). Thus, it can be suggested that school principals need a course content that can help them break the vertical communication chain in the centralized education system, allowing them to create a warmer and trust-based educational environment.

In the context of the *Professional Ethics and Value Development* course, school principals have suggested that by recalling and evaluating ethical values related to their profession, they can develop themselves in ways that serve as role models for teachers. The literature indicates that school leaders must act according to professional ethics and norms, understand the moral and legal frameworks that define their duties, and operate within this framework (AITSL, 2014;

NPBEA, 2015). The ethical codes and values reflected in the discourse and behaviors of school principals enhance the behavioral and psychological aspects of teachers (Erkoç, Özbatan & Kırıl, 2024). For an ethical climate to become a culture, school leaders must first adopt ethical behavior as a principle (Önder, 2024). In the Turkish Education System, professional ethics have been defined by regulations for educators and a guide bulletin on professional ethics has been published (MoNE, 2025). However, unethical behaviors of school principals such as threatening the position and preventing communication (Bora, 2017) have been encountered. Therefore, it can be argued that it would be beneficial for school principals to be supported through vocational training to adopt professional ethics and values.

Within the *Developing Personal Leadership Resources* course, school leaders indicated they could improve in areas such as pedagogy, problem-solving, time management, and communication skills. They expressed that they could overcome issues related to indecision and boundary-setting, thus enhancing their psychological well-being, including stress management and anger control. In a study by Polat et al. (2018), it was found that school leaders require professional development in themes such as management knowledge (pedagogy, regulatory knowledge, etc.), personal development (psychological well-being, ethics, etc.), technical proficiency (technology use), and school-community relations (collaboration), but in the Turkish Education System, there is no professional development program that is flexible enough to meet the different professional development needs of school principals. Similarly, Şahin and Türkoğlu-Özdemir (2024) noted that school leaders need to develop personal leadership resources in areas such as theoretical thinking, communication, and psychological empowerment. Hence, it can be concluded that a course focusing on the personal development of school principals would be beneficial.

When examining the statements of school principals who indicated they do not have a professional development need regarding the above topics, it emerged that they believe that their Master's education and MoNE seminars are sufficient, that they seek support from school stakeholders, when necessary, that they have managed to develop themselves, and that leadership practices will improve with experience. They sometimes also feel that leadership practices lack practical relevance in Turkish Education System structure, so this to a belief that teachers remain indifferent to the practices. Supporting the views of school principals, research by Kesmen, İşlek, Yılmaz & Aksu (2023) found that school principals believe their Master's degrees in Educational Management have contributed professionally and supported their transformation from management to leadership. However, there are findings indicating that school principals believe professional training is not functional (Bozkurt, 2023) and that they feel inadequate in self-development through Master's education (Gürkan & Toprakçı, 2018). In this context, it can be suggested that school principals have a professional development need at various levels for their leadership development, and thus more frequent and need-based in-service training should be conducted for sustainable professional development.

Additionally, school principals, who hold the belief that leadership develops through experience, often face more challenges in school management during their early years in office (Yetim & Toprakçı, 2020). They can overcome these challenges with increasing experience; however, considering the research on the potential for developing leadership practices (Chu & Cravens, 2012; Day & Sin, 2011), it can be stated that school principals may be resistant to development and require training that can change their perspectives. School principals are dependent on the central organization in terms of budget, personnel maintenance, time and curriculum management. The system does not leave much space for school principals to use initiative (Eğitim Reformu Girişimi [ERG], 2017). While authorities are concentrated in the upper system (central organization), responsibility largely lies with the school (Aslan, 2021). This situation pushes Turkey behind many European countries and the USA in terms of school autonomy. In schools where they cannot act autonomously, school principals hesitate to use their authorities and limit themselves when making decisions (Şahin, Akkaş, Yeşil & Ertan, 2018). This situation drags school principals into a dead end in terms of implementing the leadership practices expected of them (Tabancalı & Su, 2021). For this reason, it can be said that it is necessary for the Ministry of National Education to provide schools with the autonomy to act within their own contexts in order to expand the areas of action of school principals who cannot find space to implement the leadership practices expected of them. Thus, it can be argued that school principals can contribute to school development by applying in practice the gains they have gained through training in leadership practices organized in line with their needs (Bozkuş et al., 2022).

Based on all above, it can be concluded that the professional development needs of school principals in the Turkish education system regarding leadership practices align with those of school principals in different countries. Therefore, conducting training for principals under the identified 18 themes would be beneficial for them. However, there are differences in the needs of school principals regarding leadership practices, and considering that some school principals believe leadership practices in the centralized education system will be ineffective, it is suggested that they should first be supported in enhancing their motivation and beliefs about professional training. Continuous needs analyses should be conducted regarding the topics they require for leadership practices, and their authorities should be expanded so that they can take bolder steps. Furthermore, it is necessary to design leadership actions that school principals can implement

in the centralized system, taking into account the findings obtained, and to provide guidance for their professional development.

The Ethical Committee Approval: Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institution and presented in the article file.

The authors declared that this study complied with all the rules specified in the "Directive on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions" and that none of the actions specified in the second part of the directive under the title "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics" were carried out.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Yeni çağın taleplerine cevap verebilecek nitelikte insan sermayesi yetiştirmenin ilk adımı okullarda atılmaktadır (Boberiene, 2013; Goldin, 2003). Bu nedenle okullar, günlük idari işlerin yoğunluğunda kaybolan yöneticiler yerine, yeni çağı anlayabilen, çağın gerektirdiği davranış ve becerileri sergileyebilen ve tüm bunları eğitim uygulamalarına yansıtarak öğrencilerin akademik ve sosyal çıktılarına katkı sağlayabilen liderlere ihtiyaç duymaktadır. Okul müdürlerinin liderlik uygulamalarını geliştirmeyi hedefleyen ülkeler ise uygulamalara yönelik kabul gören standartları ve çerçeveleri dikkate alarak, liderlik gelişimine yönelik programları kendi yerel bağlamları ve ihtiyaçları doğrultusunda yeniden yapılandırmaktadır (AITSL, 2018; Gurr, 2015). Bu nedenle yapılan araştırmada liderlik gelişimine yönelik farklı ülkelerin uygulamalarından yola çıkılarak Türkiye’de görev yapmakta olan okul liderlerinin liderlik uygulamalarına yönelik ihtiyaçlarını ortaya koymak araştırmanın odak noktasını oluşturmuştur.

Ulusal düzeyde okul liderliği gelişimine yönelik mesleki eğitim planlanmadan önce eğitim yönetimine yön veren ve liderlik uygulamalarına yönelik çalışmalarda öncü olan ülkelerin okul liderliğine yönelik mesleki gelişim çalışmaları sürecinde hangi konulara odaklanıldığının dikkate alınmasının faydalı olacağı söylenebilir. Bu nedenle ABD, Avustralya, Birleşik Krallık ve Kanada olmak üzere eğitim yönetimi alanına yön veren 4 ülkenin, eğitim örgütleri tarafından geliştirilen okul liderliği standartları ve mesleki gelişim çerçevelerinin odaklandıkları ortak noktalar, Türkiye bağlamında okul liderliği uygulamalarına yönelik mesleki gelişim programı içeriğinin nasıl olması gerektiğini ortaya koymayı hedefleyen bu araştırmanın kavramsal çerçevesini oluşturmuştur. Araştırma kapsamında dikkate alınan kavramsal çerçeve; *Liderliğin Doğasını Anlama, Bağlamsal Faktörleri Anlama ve Analiz Etme, Ortak Bir Vizyon Oluşturma, Stratejik Yönetim Süreçleri Oluşturma, Olumlu Bir Okul Kültürü Oluşturma, Etkin Bir Öğrenme Öğretme Ortamı Oluşturma, Öğretmenlerin Mesleki Gelişimini Destekleme, Okulun Paydaşları ile İş Birliği Kültür Oluşturma, Kaynakları Etkin Kullanma, Liderliği Dağıtma, Mentorluk Sistemi Oluşturma, Okul Güvenliğini Sağlama, Sosyal Adalet Liderliği Sergileme, Veri Okur-Yazarlığı Becerisi Gösterme, Değişim Ajanlığı Becerisi Gösterme, İletişim Kanallarını Kullanma ve Geliştirme, Mesleki Etik ve Değer Geliştirme, Kişisel Liderlik Kaynaklarını Geliştirme* (AIR, 2020; AITSL, 2014, 2018; Alberta Education, 2023; British Council, 2017; IEL, 2013; LHRD, 2023; NASSP, 2023; NPBEA, 2015; OECD, 2009; OPC, 2023; SREB, 2008; UCLES, 2019; UKGDE, 2020), olmak üzere 18 başlıktan oluşmaktadır.

Türk Eğitim Sisteminin merkeziyetçi yapısında okul müdürlerinin lider kimliklerinden ziyade verilen görevleri eksiksiz bir şekilde yerine getiren yönetici rollerinin ön plana çıktığı bilinmektedir (Yirci ve Berk, 2021). Bu nedenle okul müdürlerinin liderlik uygulamalarını geliştirebilmelerine imkan tanıyan mesleki gelişim programları ile ilgili adımların oldukça yavaş atıldığı söylenebilmektedir. Cumhuriyetin kuruluşundan bu yana düzenlenen şuralar incelendiğinde, okul müdürlerinin ilk defa 1980’li yıllarda lider olarak değerlendirildiği (MEB, 1982, 1993) ve 2010’lu yıllarda okul yöneticilerinin liderlik davranışlarının geliştirilmesinin gerektiğine yönelik tavsiyelerde bulunduğu görülmektedir (MEB, 2014, 2021). 2010 itibarı ile bakanlık tarafından geliştirilen İlköğretim Kurum Standartları (2009), Okul Temelli Mesleki Gelişim Modeli (MEB, 2010) ve Kapsayıcı Eğitim Bağlamında Okul Yöneticilerinin Mesleki Gelişim Projesi (MEB, 2022) gibi çalışmalar okul müdürlerinin liderlik davranışlarını geliştirmelerine imkan tanıyan çalışmalar arasında yer almaktadır. Mesleki gelişim çalışmalarını ele alan araştırmalar incelendiğinde ise çalışmaların yeterince işlevsel olmadığına yönelik bulgular dikkat çekmektedir (Akan vd., 2013; Balcı, 2021; Polat vd., 2018; Şahin ve Çeper, 2013).

Tüm bu verilerden yola çıkılarak Türkiye’de görev yapan okul müdürlerinin liderlik uygulamalarını geliştirebilecekleri bir mesleki gelişim programına ihtiyaç duydukları, bu programın içeriğinin ise liderlik uygulamalarına yönelik uluslararası çalışmalar ile uyumlu ve okul müdürlerinin ihtiyaçları bağlamında yapılandırılması gerektiği ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu nedenle yapılan araştırmada Türkiye’de görev yapan okul müdürlerinin liderlik uygulamalarını geliştirmeyi hedefleyen bir mesleki gelişim programının hangi içeriğe sahip olması gerektiğini, uluslararası alanda yapılan çalışmaların odaklandığı ortak yönleri ve okul müdürlerinin liderlik uygulamalarına yönelik ihtiyaçlarını dikkate alarak ortaya koymak amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda aşağıdaki sorulara yanıt aranmıştır:

1. Okul müdürlerinin liderlik uygulamalarını geliştirmeye yönelik tasarlanan bir mesleki gelişim programı için hangi konular gereklidir?

-Okul müdürleri bu konuların liderlik uygulamalarını nasıl etkileyeceğini düşünmektedir?

Yöntem

Bu araştırma nitel araştırma yöntemi ve fenomenoloji deseni ile yürütülmüştür. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 2023-2024 eğitim öğretim yılında Gaziantep ilinde görev yapan 18 okul müdürü oluşturmuştur. Çalışma grubu amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi ile belirlenmiş ve grupların belirlenmesinde gönüllülük esas alınmıştır. Araştırma verileri araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu ile elde edilmiştir. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu BD, Avustralya, Birleşik Krallık ve Kanada olmak üzere dört ülkenin okul liderliği gelişim çerçeveleri ve programları dikkate alınarak hazırlanmıştır. Araştırmaya katılan 18 kişi ile 3 gruptan oluşan odak gruplar oluşturulmuş ve yarıyapılandırılmış görüşme formu odak gruplara uygulanmıştır. Odak grupların oluşturulması ve görüşmelerin yürütülmesi sürecinde alanyazında yer alan bir takım kriterler dikkate alınmıştır (Maynard-Trucker, 2000; Ritche & Lewis, 2003). Araştırma verileri olduğu gibi yazıya aktarılarak önceden belirlenen temalar altında düzenlenmiştir. Veri analizi sürecinde betimsel ve içerik analizi teknikleri uygulanmıştır.

Bulgular ve Tartışma

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, Türk Eğitim Sisteminde çalışan okul müdürlerinin liderlik uygulamalarını geliştirmek için mesleki gelişim ihtiyaçlarını belirlemektir. Bu hedefe ulaşmak için farklı ülkelerde liderlik uygulamalarıyla ilgili mesleki gelişim çalışmaları ve liderlik çerçeveleri incelenmiş ve incelenen dokümanlarda odaklanılan benzer konular 18 başlık altında listelenmiştir. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre, belirlenen 18 konunun tamamı için mesleki gelişim ihtiyacı olduğunu belirten okul müdürleri arasında, böyle bir ihtiyaçları olmadığını belirten okul müdürleri de bulunmaktadır.

Yukarıdaki konularla ilgili mesleki gelişim ihtiyacı olmadığını belirten okul müdürlerinin ifadeleri incelendiğinde, Yüksek Lisans eğitimlerinin ve MEB seminerlerinin yeterli olduğuna, gerektiğinde okul paydaşlarından destek aradıklarına, kendilerini geliştirmeyi başardıklarına ve liderlik uygulamalarının deneyimle iyileşeceğine inandıkları ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca, okul müdürlerinin liderlik uygulamalarının pratikte karşılığının olmadığına inandıkları ve bu inancı öğretmenlerin uygulamalara karşı kayıtsız kaldıklarına yönelik inançlarının desteklediği belirlenmiştir. Okul müdürlerinin görüşlerini destekler nitelikte Kesmen vd. (2023) tarafından yapılan çalışmada, okul müdürlerinin Eğitim Yönetimi alanındaki Yüksek Lisans derecelerinin mesleki açıdan katkı sağladığına ve yöneticilikten liderliğe dönüşümlerini desteklediğine inandıkları ortaya çıkmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra okul müdürlerinin mesleki eğitimin işlevsel olmadığına inandıklarını (Bozkurt, 2023) ve Yüksek Lisans eğitimi yoluyla kendi kendilerini geliştirmede yetersiz hissettiklerini gösteren bulgular vardır (Gürkan ve Toprakçı, 2018). Bu bağlamda okul müdürlerinin liderlik gelişimleri için çeşitli düzeylerde mesleki gelişim ihtiyacı duydukları ve bu nedenle sürdürülebilir mesleki gelişim için daha sık ve ihtiyaç temelli hizmet içi eğitimlerin gerçekleştirilmesi gerektiği öne sürülebilir.

Ayrıca liderliğin deneyimle geliştiğine inanan okul müdürleri, göreve başladıkları ilk yıllarda okul yönetiminde daha fazla zorlukla karşılaşmaktadır (Yetim ve Toprakçı, 2020). Bu zorlukların üstesinden deneyimlerini artırarak gelebilirler; Ancak liderlik uygulamalarını geliştirme potansiyeline ilişkin araştırmalar (Chu & Cravens, 2012; Day & Sin, 2011) göz önüne alındığında, okul müdürlerinin gelişime dirençli olabileceği ve bakış açılarını değiştirebilecek eğitimlere ihtiyaç duyabilecekleri söylenebilir. Türk eğitim sisteminde hem okul müdürlerinin hem de öğretmenlerin hakları ve yetkileri bakanlık tarafından belirlenmektedir. Bu nedenle, okul müdürlerinin liderlik uygulamalarında pratik bir ilişkinin olmadığı inancı, öğretmenlerin iş güvencesiyle ilgili olabilir ve bu da uygulamalara karşı kayıtsızlığa, bakanlığın denetimler sırasında tanıdığı sınırlı yetkilere (Türkoğlu ve Şahin, 2021) ve sonuç olarak müdahale edememelerine neden olabilir.

Tüm bu verilere dayanarak, Türk eğitim sistemindeki okul müdürlerinin liderlik uygulamalarına ilişkin mesleki gelişim ihtiyaçlarının farklı ülkelerdeki okul müdürlerinin ihtiyaçlarıyla örtüştüğü sonucuna varılabilir. Bu nedenle, belirlenen 18 tema kapsamında müdürlere eğitim verilmesi onlar için faydalı olacaktır. Ancak okul müdürlerinin liderlik uygulamalarına ilişkin ihtiyaçlarında farklılıklar bulunmaktadır ve bazı okul müdürlerinin merkezi eğitim sisteminde liderlik uygulamalarının etkisiz olacağına inandıkları göz önüne alındığında öncelikle mesleki eğitime ilişkin motivasyon ve inançlarının artırılması konusunda desteklenmeleri önerilmektedir. Liderlik uygulamaları için ihtiyaç duydukları konularla ilgili sürekli ihtiyaç analizleri yapılmalı ve yetkileri genişletilerek daha cesur adımlar atabilmeleri sağlanmalıdır. Ayrıca elde edilen bulgular dikkate alınarak okul müdürlerinin merkezi sistemde uygulayabilecekleri liderlik eylemlerinin tasarlanması ve mesleki gelişimleri için rehberlik sağlanması gerekmektedir.