SOCIAL WORKER AS A MEMBER OF A MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM IN A SCHOOL SETTING

OKUL ORTAMINDA MULTİDİSİPLİNER EKİBİN BİR ÜYESİ OLARAK OKUL SOSYAL HİZMET UZMANI

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ABSTRACT

Schools are the systems that are open to society. It is impossible to solve the problems of students in school setting with reference to only students. It is clear that most of these problems are based on external factors such as family system and peer groups. School social service appeared in the US in 1906. One can see plenty of problems necessitating social service at schools, which are migration, child workers, the handicaps for the access to education and etc. School social service, which appeared as a result of a social need, adapts ecological theoretical view and empowerment approach as theoretical framework. School social service involves the interventions carried out in school setting. The organization and processes of each school are different. In this regard, the problems causing educational inequality in relation to the type of school, climate and culture will be different and school social service interventions will not be homogeneous. A school social service worker works as a part of a multidisciplinary team consisting of the principal, deputy principal, teachers, nurses, clerks and etc. Also, school social workers work under the principal at schools and they are supposed to apply 20-60-20 theory of school change so as to increase students' academic success. With the efforts of school social service workers, the climate and academic culture of a school will improve in a positive way. Revealing school social service workers' affairs with the other workers and laying out their duties and responsibilities together with their ethical rules are the main purposes of the current paper. In order to realize the aforementioned purposes, both international and local literature related to social work were reviewed. Today, school social service workers have not been assigned to work at schools in Turkey yet. There is a need for school social workers to minimize the internal, external and social behavioral problems of students. Education as a social equalizer undertakes important tasks. To this end, the tasks of school social service workers are crucial in order students to have equal opportunities at schools.

Keywords: School Social Service Worker, Multidisciplinary Team, Equality in Opportunities, Social Work

ÖZ

Okullar topluma açık sistemlerdir. Okul ortamında öğrencilerin yaşadıkları problemleri sadece öğrencilerden hareket ederek çözemeyiz. Birçok problemin aile sistemi, arkadaş sistemi gibi öğrenci dışı kaynaklı olduğunu görmekteyiz. Okul sosyal hizmeti 1906 yılında Amerika'da ortaya çıkmıştır. Okul sosyal hizmetinin ortaya çıkmasını gerektiren göç, çocuk işçiler, eğitime erişim engelleri vb. birçok problemin var olduğunu görmekteyiz. Toplumsal bir gerekliliğin sonucu olarak ortaya çıkan okul sosyal hizmeti, ekolojik teorik bakış açısı ve güçlendirme yaklaşımını, kuramsal çerçeve olarak benimsemektedir. Okul sosyal hizmeti okul ortamında gerçekleştirilen sosyal hizmet müdahaleleridir. Her okulun organizasyonları ve süreçleri birbirinden farklıdır. Bu açıdan okulun türü, iklimi ve kültürüne bağlı olarak eğitimsel fırsat eşitsizliğine neden olan problemler farklılaşacak ve okul sosyal hizmeti müdahaleleri de türdeş olmayacaktır. Okul sosyal hizmet uzmanı okul ortamında okul müdürü, müdür yardımcısı, öğretmen, hemşire, memur vb. multidisipliner bir ekibin üyesi olarak çalışmaktadır. Aynı zamanda, okul sosyal hizmet uzmanı okul ortamında müdürün emri altında çalışır. Okul sosyal hizmet uzmanı, öğrencilerin akademik başarılarının artması için 20-60-20 Okul Değişim Kuramını başarılı bir şekilde uygulayabilmelidir. Okul sosyal hizmet uzmanının yapacağı çalışmalarla okulun kültürü ve iklimi olumlu yönde gelişecektir. Okul sosyal hizmet uzmanının diğer çalışanlarla olan ilişkilerini, görev ve

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sorumluluklarını, etik kurallarını ortaya çıkartmak bu çalışmanın amacıdır. Çalışmanın bu amacını gerçekleştirmek için yerli ve yabancı okul sosyal hizmeti literatürü taranmıştır. Günümüzde, Türkiye'de okul sosyal hizmet uzmanları hala okullarda görevlendirilmemiştir. Öğrencilerin içsel, dışsal ve sosyal davranış problemlerinin en aza indirilmesi için okul sosyal hizmet uzmanlarına gereksinim vardır. Toplumsal eşitleyici olarak eğitim önemli görevler üstlenmektedir. Öğrencilerin okulda eşit imkânlara sahip olabilmesi için okul sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının üstleneceği görevler önemlidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul Sosyal Hizmet Uzmanı, Multidisipliner Ekip, Fırsat Eşitliği, Sosyal Hizmet

INTRODUCTION

While educational institutions are usually open to every individual, due to some reasons such as the geographical structure of some regions are unfavorable, demographic structure and differences between regions, everyone cannot benefit equally from the state institutions (Gül, 2018: 3). As nation states have their own educational and school systems, there appear different philosophical foundations on which these systems are based. States have their own education systems that are unique, also the insights and applications related to education differ from one state to the other one (Şişman, 2012: 84). Nowadays education institutions in all countries, especially in secondary school level, are categorized into different groups based on the education type they provide. The present differentiation ends up with the result that students compete with each other in different tracks. Studying at higher education institutions for the graduates of Science High Schools and Vocational-Technical Anatolian High Schools changes depending on the factors that are about a student's physical and intellectual surrounding.

As a part of occupational responsibility, since the day it was founded, social work has participated in setting up social policies that have influence on well-being and prosperity of the people in need (Danış, 2007: 52). Hence, social work is an area where interaction tension is high and stress level is very intense (Işıkhan, 2018: 28). School social service, as a branch of social work, appeared as a solution to internal and external social problems arising at educational context.

School social service is an applied branch of social work which focuses on behavioral problems of students originating from various factors and academic success. (Dağ, 2018: 23). School social service workers fulfil their duties in very vulnerable regions related to students; therefore, their duties might be quite complex (Costable, 2008). Social workers serving in the school environment undertake important roles and responsibilities in helping students' mental health and behavioral problems, together with contributing to the mental health of children positively. Social workers embracing ecological theoretical approach carry out research at district, school, home and society levels by examining students in terms of their natural systems (Kılıç and Özkan, 2015: 166). School social service workers are significant members of training team in a school setting. They organize activities so as to improve external, internal, social and special-education specific development of students in cooperation with teachers, administrators, school counselors, psychologists and families (Özbesler and Duyan, 2009: 21). The literature review indicates that school social service workers have various roles and duties at schools (Wettenstein, 2013: 21). School social workers conduct teamwork that makes consultation possible with other staff at schools, and undertake different roles in direct services, exchange of views and program development processes (Constable and Alvarez, pp. 124; Poppy, 2012: 18). If principals, deputy principals, school counselors, assistant staff and school social service workers work in harmony in a school setting, more efficient services can be given for the benefit of students.

The purpose of this study is to reveal the connection between the culture and climate of a school and the interaction among the school principal, deputy principals, school counselors, teachers and school social service workers, as members of a multidisciplinary team, in the renewal activities. In every single school, decision-making process in favor of students is influenced by school culture and climate. In this regard, the position of a school social service worker, as a member of a multidisciplinary team in the decisions in favor of students, is discussed and it is be argued how a school social service worker can get the support of the principal, deputy principals and teachers in order to change the culture and climate of a school.

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1. ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE OF SCHOOL

Today, in the management approach, both strong organizational culture and open organizational climate are of great importance. Efficient and trust-based school climate and culture are directly related to the outputs of school activities. There is not a magic stick to change the climate and culture of a school quickly and easily; on the contrary, this change requires a continuous process in a long-term (Uysal, 2015: 81). The climate and culture of a school is a structure which is affected from many factors such as the environment of school, the expectations of students and their families, the academic success of school, absence and dropout rates of students.

Education, teaching and learning process is a complex task with many inputs and outputs. There are many different factors that affect these processes (Doğan, 2004: 84). In today's school systems, students are categorized in a range of different tracks and skills. The most promising high schools put their students in college preparatory courses, the others continue their training with basic or occupational classes (Zastrow, 2014: 470). The organization and processes of schools aiming to train students towards different skill groups are different from each other. The knowledge of organization and processes of a school, in terms of school social service, will lead to more accurate and faster activities in favor of students (Dağ, 2017: 74). With reference to the philosophy of social justice and social equality, the effective functioning of a school's organization and processes will contribute positively to school culture and climate.

Nowadays, the most important problem that principals and school social service workers encounter is to change the culture and climate of a school when they slow down the progress of a school. There are some basic factors which are effective while identifying the culture and climate of schools (Dupper, 2013: 22). A school social worker should be informed about the different climates of schools. It is very difficult to make effective interventions without the knowledge of the school's cult ure and climate. A social worker should be well-acknowledged about formal and informal power sources at school and its neighborhood. School is not a process which is made up by the interaction between students and teachers (Dağ, 2018: 34-39). Conversely, school is an open system to the environment. Both it is affected by the environment and it affects the environment. The culture and climate of schools are affected by lots of factors such as academic success of students, their absence rate and their behavioral disorders.

1.1 School Culture

Schools have a very important and indispensable place in teaching the cultural heritage of societies to future generations and accomplishing the students' to realize their social and economic roles successfully. While it is not possible to imagine schools separately from the social environments in which they are located, schools are also expected to renew the culture (Karadağ and Özdemir, 2015: 261). In this respect, it is necessary to adopt a school culture where knowledge is seen and produced as the main value and everyone shares their experiences and learns mutually. It can be advocated that such kind of a school culture might exist in a management philosophy called "learning organization" (Terzi, 2011: 79). The adoption of a positive school culture will enable the education to reach its goals more easily. Besides, it will increase the satisfaction of workers, students and parents.

The 60th article of the regulation on primary education institutions and the 5th article of the regulation on high schools by Turkish Ministry of Education clearly point out that "a principal runs a school" For this reason, a principal must also run school culture with different administration activities (Özdemir, 2006: 418). Additionally, both teachers and administrators are supposed to act in harmony with organization values in a positive school culture (Şahin-Fırat, 2010: 75). A possible disorder between school officials and organizational values will lead to management problems.

While improving school culture, the first duty of a school administrator is to make contribution to the emergence of an efficient school culture. As a consequence of this situation, formal and non-formal dimensions of a given educational institution will be integrated with each other. Administrators, teachers and students are naturally proud of their schools. Likewise, the parents of these students sometimes feel a kind of similar proud. Shared emotions facilitate adaptation and intimacy among administrators, teachers, students and their parents (Özdemir, 2006: 418). Undoubtedly, Schools cannot be separated from their surroundings and positive school climate will facilitate the integration with the environment. The essential elements of a strong school culture whose formal and non-formal structures such as staff, students and parents are integrated are listed below.

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Table 1. The Essential Elements of a Strong School Culture

a. *Shared values of school*	*Shared common values in a school setting are open to stakeholders and spread into all activities of school. Shared common values are often uncodified and these values usually appear in the planned activities of school. Shared values drive administrators, teachers and students in lots of different activities such as lesson plans, teaching / learning methods, time planning and rewarding.*
b. *Humor and Joy*	*The degree of joy in a school is directly connected to a strong school culture. Humor and happiness are an expression of the experience of individuals at school in the face of difficulties.*
c. *Shared Stories*	*There are some old stories in every institution, including educational institutions. The stories which have been told for a long time are related to school culture. These stories, which are described as legend, reflect the historical face of the school. These stories not only entertain, but also motivate workers, students and parents. Moreover, stories and urban legends play a binding and unifying role among the stakeholders.*
d. *Social Communication Networks*	*Schools have a communication network aiming to let people know "What is going on at the school?"*
e. *Commemorate and Celebration Ceremonies*	*The rituals of a school are school activities. Celebration ceremonies aim to commemorate heroes and legends, together with important events in the school's past.*
f. *The Relations between the Stakeholders*	*Teachers, who have positive communication with their colleagues, will help each other and share their professional experience. Constructive social relations in an educational institution will lead to success.*

Source: Özdemir, 2006: 415-416 (as cited in Pawlas, 1997)

Table 1 displays the essential elements which are necessary to unveil a strong school culture. School culture is an important factor affecting the behavior of students, teachers and parents. From this point of view, the culture of a school should be used in the activities to be carried out in the school. In order for the changes in a given school to be successful, the values preventing the change should be eliminated and the values providing change should be placed (Doğan, 2004: 89). In the schools where culture is strong and cooperation, supporting and success are focal points, school culture is expected to increase academic success of the students; on the other hand, the school cultures having negative features are expected to decrease their academic success (Demirtaş, 2010: 6). School social service workers who are present at school and members of a multidisciplinary team are aware of what needs to be done in order to establish a strong school culture. They are initially supposed to detect some negative factors having a negative impact on school culture such as absence, dropout, behavioral problems and etc., then transfer professional knowledge and competences of social work into school setting.

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1.2 School Climate

Today, educational institutions should have an effective learning perspective in the emergence of the student profile who has a self-confidence, believes in the benefit of cooperation, has the capacity to nominate his / her thoughts and ideas to the future of the society, questions his / her environment and aims at the multi-faceted development in general. For this target, a positive learning and school climate must be created at schools first (Karadağ, İşçi, Öztekin and Anar, 2016: 112). It can be noted that the school climate positively impacts social relationships between teachers, school administrators and stakeholders as well as students (Çalık, Kurt and Çalık, 2011: 80). In other words, the climate of a school appears as an organizational feature which affects and influences every stakeholder, including teachers, students, school administrators and parents (Çalık and Kurt, 2010: 167). As educational institutions, schools bear significant duties in both transferring social values, as a part of educational mission, to students who are the future of a given country and teaching universal accumulation of knowledge, as a part of teaching mission. The school climate influences the success of schools in fulfilling their duties in the society (Şenel and Buluç, 2016: 2). The positive school climate will enable the education to fulfill its targets more easily and functionally.

From the perspective of school social service, school climate is vital since it has impact on general operation of school; that is to say, positive school climate means less problems and higher academic success level. In negative school climate, students are usually expected to have more problems and lower academic success (Dağ, 2017: 80). Today, the school climate of qualified high schools and the ones accepting students according to their locations differ from each other. The most visible indicators of a positive school climate are higher academic success expectation, less behavioral problems and minimum absence rates to classes. Besides, positive school climate will enable staff, students and parents to embrace their institution.

2. 20-60-20 THEORY

Schools offer a formative experience for children. Depending on the child's experience, school can become a paradise or a terrible place (Openshaw, 2008). One way of making systematic change in favor of vulnerable student groups in school setting is to use the 20-60-20 theory of school change (Dupper, 2013: 26). This theoretical approach provides convenience to social workers for the activities to be carried out for the sake of students in school setting. According to this approach, the staff working in school setting are basically categorized into three groups. In the first group, there are blockers, the second group, which is majority, consists of regular folks and third group contains people who are volunteer to the activities in favor of students, namely mediators for change.

Table 2. The Ration and Behavior Patterns among School Workers

Blockers 20%	*"They actively try to sabotage any attempted change in school policy and programs, they also try to discredit people who want to make a change, including social workers."*
Regular Folks 60%	*"They usually adopt a "wait and see" attitude against any proposed changes. They remain neutral until the change is proven to be beneficial"*
Mediators of Change 20%	*"This group will be the main support group for social workers to make systematic changes in a school."*

Source: Dupper, 2013: 26-27.

When Table 2 is examined, it is explicitly seen that the staff working in a school setting is basically categorized into three groups. The staff included in the group of "blockers" try to hinder any possible enterprises. It is really difficult to convince this kind of people. These people usually resist to the decisions to be given for the advantage of students since they believe that it is unnecessary to take steps for enterprise. Hence, school social service workers must try to convince regular folks, the teachers who are neutral in this context, in order to realize the change (Dağ, 2017: 85). Due to the fact that school social service workers cannot alter blockers, they must organize activities for the advantage of students by pulling regular folks and mediators for change towards their side.

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Table 3. The Application of 20-60-20 Theory

"Mr. Soner, who works in a secondary school as a school social service worker, put on the table that some students bullied their peers at the school and questioned possible solutions to prevent this problem in the meeting of branch teachers in the 2nd academic term. He pointed out the significance of the issue when he talked about the problem with the principal before the meeting, managed to put the problem as an agenda topic in the meeting and received the support of the principal. In the meeting, the "blockers" stated "this problem takes place everywhere that humans live and it cannot be prevented". The school social service worker, Mr. Soner, convinced "mediators of change" on the issue that bullying needed to be taught to the students conceptually and some seminars needed to be given about what must be done while facing any bullying actions. Besides, he tried to inform what the principal and "mediators of change" could do in order to enable "regular folks", who stand for 60% in the given category, to participate in the activities to be organized against bullying actions. Mediators of change and regular folks prepared "Anti-bullying School" posters under the leadership of Mr. Soner and caught the attention of the students towards the issue. Also these people organized a contest of drawing about bullying and shared the best picture describing bullying with all of the students. Moreover, Mr. Soner conducted seminars to the parents about "Anti Bullying School" slogan and enlightened the parents about bullying."

Source: Dağ, 2017: 86.

Table 3 reveals how a school social service worker uses 20-60-20 theory of school change effectively in a school setting. 20-60-20 theory of school change guides and enables school social service workers in the activities they want to realize.

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CONCLUSION

Regarding that schools are the systems which are open to society, the behavioral problems arising at schools are originated from family systems of students or their peer systems. School social work is the social work interventions carried out in school environment by acting in an ecological theoretical perspective. Educational institutions are important social equalizers in the society enabling horizontal and vertical mobility.   All states plan a formal education system which is suitable for all students. A standardized education system may be disadvantageous owing to the reasons arising from the individual situation of some students. To this end, school social service appeared in the US in 1906.

School social service takes place in the institutions whose aim is education. In a school,   the principal, deputy principal, psychologist, school counselor, classroom teachers and school social service workers work as team members. A school social service worker works under the direction of the principal in a school setting as a member of a multidisciplinary team.

Academic success of a school changes in accordance with the climate and culture of the school based on the rates of absence, disciplinary punishments, the value given to the school by the parents and performances of teachers. In this regard, in a positive school culture and school climate, academic achievement will increase, teachers and students will have more sense of belonging, and behavioral problems will decrease.

School social service workers must be able to effectively apply 20-60-20 theory of school change in school board meetings and short meetings so as to make decisions in favor of students and put these decisions into practice. Since school social workers cannot change "blockers", they plan activities in favor of students by pulling "mediators of change" and "regular folks" towards their side.

School social service workers are the members of a multidisciplinary team; in other words, they are the professionals who make positive contributions to the culture and climate of a school by applying 20-60-20 theory of school change via convincing the principal. It is an undeniable fact that school social service workers are significant parts of the team working for the aim of increasing academic success of students (the principal, deputy principal, psychologist, class teachers, school counselor and school social service worker).   In Turkey, school social service needs to be in practice for the adaptation of the students to the environment in terms of ecological system approach and empowering school counseling services. The establishment of school social services and the employment of school social service workers will help to reduce the social problems experienced by students in the school setting.

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