



The Role of the Directors in Language Schools

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Dil Okullarında Yöneticinin Rolü

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The Role of the Directors in Language Schools

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Abstract

This study aims at examining the role of directors working at the schools of foreign languages in Turkey. The perceptions of the directors and other administrative staff as well as the teachers, on what directors do and where they focus their attention in a less than effective way were identified. 39 directors and 270 teachers participated in the study. Respondents were asked to identify how much time they or their directors spent on the different areas of management. Their responses were analyzed considering their job titles, experience and educational background both through descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis. The results revealed that management is accepted as a challenging job by both groups. Directors stated their desire to focus more on academic issues including professional development of their teachers, curriculum planning, testing and student motivation. Bureaucratic paperwork and having to meet the unrealistic expectations have been identified as their main complaints. It was also revealed that dealing with low motivation levels of students and teachers, lack of support from top administrators and financial restrictions were the main challenges faced. The results of this study imply that directors need support from their higher administration especially regarding human relations and conflict management.

Article Info

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Öz

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki yabancı dil okullarında çalışan yöneticilerin rolünü incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada yöneticilerin ne yaptıkları ve zamanlarını neye odaklanarak geçirdikleri, yöneticilerin ve öğretmenlerin bakış açıları ile belirlenmiştir. Araştırmaya 39 yönetici ve 270 öğretmen katılmıştır. Katılımcılardan kendilerinin veya yöneticilerinin farklı yönetim alanlarına ne kadar zaman harcadıklarını belirlemeleri istenmiştir. Elde edilen sonuçlar, katılımcıların unvanları, deneyimleri ve eğitim bilgileri dikkate alınarak hem tanımlayıcı istatistik yöntemleri, hem de nitel içerik analizi yoluyla analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, yönetimin her iki grup tarafından da zor bir iş olarak kabul edildiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Yöneticiler, öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişimi, öğretim programı hazırlama, ölçme değerlendirme ve öğrenci motivasyonu gibi akademik konulara daha fazla odaklanmak istediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Bürokratik evrak işleri ve gerçekçi olmayan beklentileri karşılamak zorunda olmaları ise temel şikayet noktaları olarak belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin ve öğretmenlerin motivasyon düzeylerinin düşük olmasının, üst düzey yöneticilerin desteğinin olmamasının ve finansal kısıtlamaların yöneticilerin karşılaştıkları başlıca zorluklar olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, yöneticilerin özellikle insan ilişkileri ve çatışma yönetimi konusunda üst yönetimlerinden destek almaları gerektiğini göstermektedir.

Makale Bilgisi

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yönetim alanları, Dil öğretmenleri, Dil öğretimi, Algı, Yöneticilerin rolü

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Introduction

Within English medium universities all over the world – whether in offshore markets such as the USA or the UK, or in onshore markets such as Turkey or the UAE – there is an important role played by the programs designed to support non-native speaker students in entering the degree programs. The role played by these programs -commonly referred to as the “Schools of Foreign Languages” or mostly the “Prep Schools”, sometimes also called “Intensive English Programs” or “English language foundation” -involves helping intake students to get their English levels up to the level needed for university study, offering support with General English and English for Academic Purposes (EAP), in particular, and in some cases generally supporting students with cultural acclimatization (Aydın, 2017a).

In the specific context of Turkey, it should also be noted that many of these universities – and hence the prep schools – also serve international students, mostly from the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa, and some from European countries. It is very often the case that the prep school is part of a slightly larger department, that of the school of foreign languages, sometimes offering degree programs or elective courses in languages other than Turkish and English. While intensive one-year education in other foreign languages such as German, French and Russian are also provided, English is the main language taught in these schools.

Turkey has the second highest number of students in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), as of 2017 statistics (Mandal, 2017). In 2017, more than 7,750,000 students enrolled in 184 universities, 112 of which are state universities and 67 private foundations. Most of these universities have programs providing complete (100%) or partial (%30) English-medium instruction (EMI). Some of these programs also accept students from departments offering complete Turkish-medium instruction. Table 1 summarizes the number of the EMI programs in Turkish state and foundation universities (Mandal, 2017);

Table 1. Number of EMI programs in Turkish universities

Programs	100% EMI	30% EMI
State	909	458
Foundation	199	24
TOTAL	1108	482

Consequently, the Turkish prep school context is one which serves one of the largest numbers of students with similar profiles within the context of English Language Teaching (ELT) globally.

No matter what kind of an organizational structure these prep schools have, each one has a “director” responsible for the administrative duties. In some cases, where intensive language education is provided not by separate schools but by departments belonging to a faculty of the university, “coordinators” or “heads” have this responsibility of dealing with the administrative obligations. The directors are appointed by the rectors of the universities. In many cases, they are chosen for having an academic title, such as a professor or an associate professor. According to a recent survey conducted by Aydın (2017b), 25% of the directors of the schools of foreign languages are professors and 57 % of them have a degree from educational sciences fields, while 43% are from other academic fields. Nevertheless, only a few of these professors have a language teaching background.

In most of the prep schools, on a fairly general level, the directors’ role is fairly clear. They report directly to the rector of the university. They must ensure that the prep school functions as well as possible to help students to cope with the degree programs they enter into. They are also responsible for the curriculum, the teaching materials and assessment, as well as recruiting teachers and their professional development. Thus, it is possible to argue that directors are expected to have the qualities and responsibilities of both “managers” and “leaders”. According to Mehdinezhad and Sardarzahi (2015), managers and leaders differ in their orientations towards objectives. While leaders in the field of education are expected to improve quality and students’ learning, managers are expected to direct the activities and maintain discipline in achieving the desired goals. Therefore, “leadership is associated with changes, but management is looking for maintenance activities” (Mehdinezhad & Sardarzahi, 2015, p. 49).

In Turkish prep schools, the chain of command is simply the director managing all the teachers. Sometimes one management layer, usually one or more assistant directors between the director and the teaching body, exists in the institutions. In some cases, a second middle management layer of supervisors, department heads or academic coordinators constitute the second layer of middle management between the director and the teachers. In foundation universities there is also typically something of a marketing role. Thus, competition among the private sector foundation universities in particular is often fierce, and arguably the prep school year is part of the process of bringing students into the university.

Having said all this though, while this sector of the market in Turkey has grown hugely, especially over the last twenty years, very little study has been undertaken to really define what it is that the directors are expected to do, and how they go about achieving their objectives. The directors themselves belong to a group, Directors of School of Foreign Languages, that was founded 11 years ago, at which they can share ideas, problems and best practices and hopefully learn from one another, but to our knowledge little or no formal research has been carried out into precisely what the directors do and perhaps how their work could be more balanced and successful. This study, then, sets out to define the role of the directors. This has been done through surveying the directors and other administrative staff as well as the teachers on their perspectives on what it is that the directors do and where they think directors are focusing their attention in a less than effective way. Getting the perceptions of both parties is important in revealing any possible mismatches between the directors' and their teachers' perceptions of the roles and responsibilities and establishing a healthier communication bridge between the two stakeholders. Otherwise, as stated by Nicholson (2003), a frequent mismatch of perceptions leads to motivation problems at the institutions. It is hoped that the findings of this survey can lead not only to an increased understanding of what the directors see as their objectives and goals, and how best to reach those targets, but also perhaps to establish support mechanisms for directors, whether they are new incoming directors or established in the post, but feeling like they would like to have a greater idea of options that may help them to carry out their role more effectively.

In many cases, as also pointed out by Fowle (2000), a successful language teacher is promoted to being the manager of the institution with only a little or no formal management training. However, managing requires various types of skills, some of which cannot directly be transferrable from a classroom situation. The hypothesis of the research is that while directors are expected to include the qualities and responsibilities of both managers and leaders and run the school most efficiently, both focusing on managerial issues and leading the teachers and the students, they will be unable to accomplish this duty satisfactorily, mostly due to the lack of preparation given for the job, and also due to the heavy load of bureaucratic procedures in Turkish organizations. It is also hypothesized that teachers will have negative perceptions towards their directors' management and leadership skills and complain about not having sufficient support from them.

The rest of the manuscript will include information about the participants, giving information about the directors' and the teachers' job titles, experience and their educational background. Then, the material used in gathering the teachers' and directors' opinions will be introduced including nine different areas of a manager's job. The manuscript will continue with the results focusing on each research question and their discussion. Finally, what all these findings imply for the directors, higher managers and policy makers will be discussed in the conclusion part.

Methodology

Subjects

The survey was sent to all the universities having an intensive language education program in Turkey and 39 of the directors and 270 teachers participated. When asked how many teachers each institution employed, results revealed that almost half of them (49%) had fewer than 50 teachers, with the remainder mostly between 50 and 100 (41%). There were more than 100 teachers in 10% of the prep schools. Table 2 gives further information about the participants of the study;

As seen in the table, 20 of the participants reported having the job title of "Director", and 9 "Vice Directors". 6 of the participants stated that they were acting as the "Coordinator", and the remaining participants were titled "Heads". As for the 270 participant teachers, they all had the title "Instructor", as determined by the Turkish Higher Education system. When asked about their experience, the majority of the directors stated being in their current position for less than 5 years (61.5%), and the other 10 % expressed having between 5 to 10 years of experience. Only

5 of the administrators were working in their position for more than 20 years. The teacher participants had more experience in teaching. The ones having more than 10 years of teaching experience constitute more than 50% of the teacher group. The majority of the participants in both groups reported that they graduated from an ELT department.

Table 2. Participants of the Study

	DIRECTORS	No	%	TEACHERS	No	%
Job Title	Director	20	51.3	Instructor	270	100
	Vice Director	9	23.1			
	Coordinator	6	15.4			
	Head	4	10.3			
Experience	<5 years	24	61.5	< 5 years	60	22.2
	5-10 years	10	25.6	5-10 years	73	27
	11-20 years	2	5.1	11-20 years	108	40
	20+ years	3	7.7	20+ years	29	10.7
Educational Background	ELT graduate	29	74.4	ELT graduate	167	62.8
	Non-ELT grad.	10	25.6	Non-ELT grad.	99	37.2

Instrument

The research instrument was a survey developed for the aims of this study. It included two versions, one for the directors and one for the teachers. Both versions had three sections. The first section of the survey included questions revealing background information of the participants. Their job titles, experience and educational background, as explained in the previous section, was gathered from the subjects.

The second section of the survey was built around the aspects of the job of the managers of the language teaching organizations, as identified by White, Hockley, Van der Horst Jansen, and Laughner (2008). Respondents were asked to identify how much of their time they spent on the 9 different areas of a manager's job, and then to comment on whether they thought this was the correct amount of time on this area. The 9 areas identified by White et al, with brief explanations of each are as follows:

- 1. Academic management:** curriculum development, course planning, assessment, teaching, materials selection and development
- 2. Business management:** monitoring volume and profitability, costing and budgeting, assessing risk, meeting targets
- 3. Resources management:** procuring, allocating and maintaining teaching materials, IT, study center, classroom furniture and equipment
- 4. Entrepreneurial and customer relations:** identifying new products, promoting and selling the offer, monitoring customer satisfaction, building relationships with customers
- 5. Managing people:** recruiting, inducting, assigning, training, mentoring, motivating, problem solving, grievance and conflict handling, terminating
- 6. Administration:** Overseeing the running of day to day systems, e.g. registration, timetabling, student placement, teacher assignment, social and excursion program
- 7. Professional leadership:** Demonstrating technical competence and teaching skills, identifying and meeting training needs of staff, maintaining quality standards, advising pupils, parents, staff, acting as spokesperson vis-à-vis educational and professional matters
- 8. Diplomatic and representational:** Liaising with clients, participating in institutional policy development, external professional organization involvement, liaising with accrediting and funding agencies, sponsors, international agencies
- 9. Corporate Leadership:** Articulating strategic focus and direction, allocating and coordinating a range of organizational functions, acting as organizational broker, referee.

In the third section of the survey both the directors and the teachers were asked to indicate their opinions on several issues in an open-ended question format. The first two questions below were addressed to the directors and the other three to the teachers.

1. What are the biggest challenges facing directors in the Turkish prep class sector today?

2. If you had a chance to rewrite your job description what responsibilities would you remove to better meet the needs of your department?
3. Is there anything you would like your director to spend more time on?
4. Is there is anything you would like your director to spend less time on?
5. Would you like to work as the director of your prep school?

The surveys ended with a question requesting both groups of subjects to indicate anything else they would like to add which they felt had not been addressed by the survey.

The results were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The first part of the instrument asking questions about the participants’ demographic information was analyzed through percentages and presented in explaining the subjects of the study. The second part, involving questions to reveal participants’ opinions on several issues was analyzed through descriptive statistics, by finding out the percentages. The last part of the survey including open-ended questions on several issues was analyzed through qualitative content analysis (Creswell, 2012). The answers of the participants were divided into chunks and similar themes were grouped under the same categories and presented according to the number of occurrences. In order to ensure internal reliability, this analysis was conducted individually by both of the researchers.

Results

Both groups of participants were asked to indicate their opinions on the approximate amount of time they felt they or their director spent on each of the various management activities and also to indicate whether they felt this was roughly the “right” amount of time for each area. Nevertheless, rather than breaking the director’s job down to the very specific layers described in the director survey, fewer categories, so that teachers would likely have an idea regarding their director’s job, were elected to offer to the teacher group. The following table presents the responses of the directors.

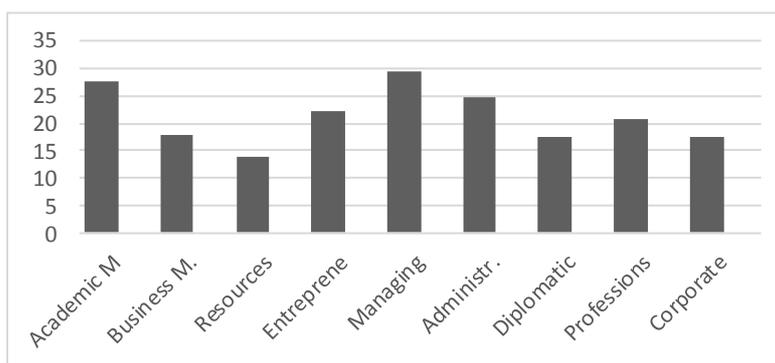


Figure 1. Time spent on each type of management activity: Directors’ opinions

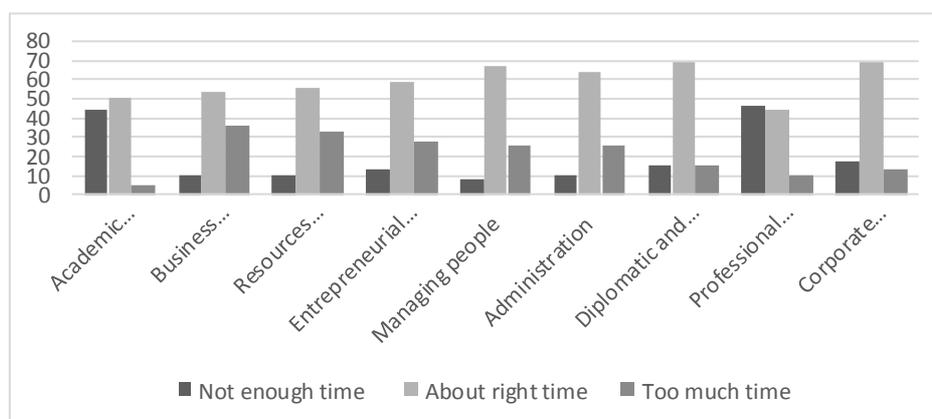


Figure 2. Preferences for time to spend on each type of management activity: Directors’ opinions

As can be seen, directors state that the greater amount of their time is spent on academic management, managing people, administration and entrepreneurship and customer relations.

It is fairly clear from the first column here that directors feel that the areas where they would like to be spending more time are related to their roles; that is, they would like to act more like an “Educator” rather than being a “Manager”. Academic management and professional leadership are the two categories which are broadly speaking those which utilize their skills as professionals in the field of education as opposed to management in general. Nearly half of the respondents identified these areas as ones in which they would like to be doing more. The ones that they would like to be doing less included areas related to the commercial roles like business and resources management as well as entrepreneurial and customer relations. For the other areas, the majority thought the time they spent was about the right time.

When teachers’ responses revealing their opinions related to their director’s job for the various areas of management were analyzed, the following results were gathered;

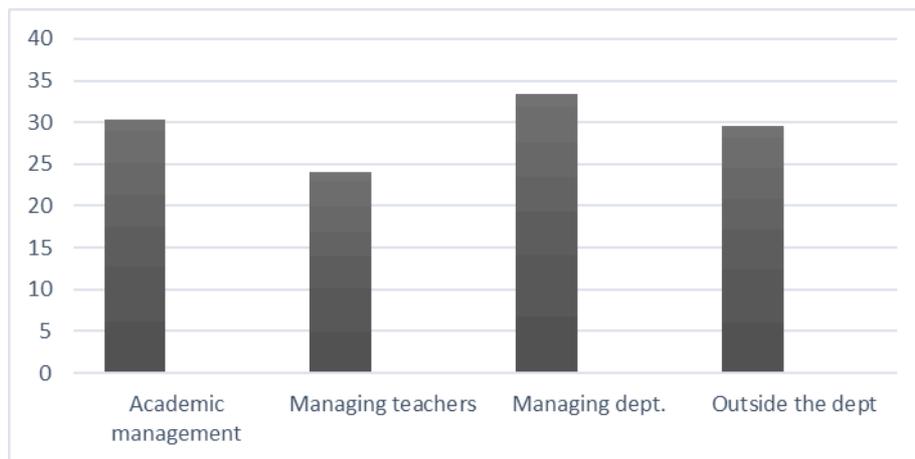


Figure 3. Time spent on each type of management activity: Teachers’ opinion

According to teachers’ perspectives, directors’ time was mostly spent on academic management, managing the department and dealing with the things outside the department. Managing the teachers was the item teachers thought their directors spent less time on compared to the other areas. This contrasts with the directors own perceptions whereby managing teachers was seen as the biggest part of their job.

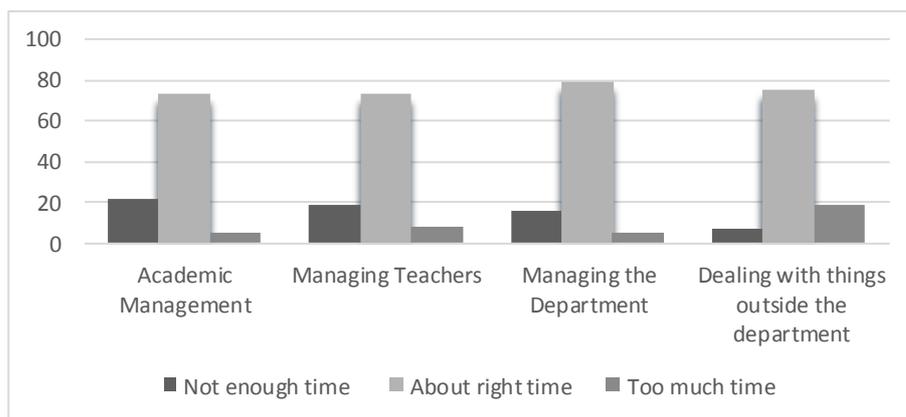


Figure 4. Preferences for time to spend on each type of management activity: Teachers’ opinions

There would seem to be a remarkable level of agreement between what the teachers believe the directors’ jobs should involve and what they perceive it actually does involve, in each case over 63% agreement. The one area where a significant number of teachers felt the directors were spending too much time was - perhaps unsurprisingly - the work outside the department, other university duties, dealing with external needs, interaction with professional and other bodies, such as the Ministry of Education and Turkish Council of Higher Education. As a matter of comparison,

this area, represented by “Diplomatic and Representational” and “Corporate Leadership” in Figure 1 above, was the area where the directors themselves felt most strongly that they were devoting about the right amount of time. The other 3 areas - broadly speaking the internal management of the department, working with teachers and the academic side of things as well as the department as a functioning and sustainable “business” - had significant numbers of teachers feeling that they would like their director to spend slightly more time on this. In general, however, the overall feeling of all these questions appears to be that teachers are relatively happy with the amount of time their directors spend in various areas.

In the third section both the directors and the teachers were asked to indicate their opinions on several issues. The first two questions were addressed to the directors and the other three to the teachers.

1. What are the biggest challenges facing directors in the Turkish prep class sector today?
2. If you had a chance to rewrite your job description, what responsibilities would you remove to better meet the needs of your department?
3. Is there anything you would like your director to spend more time on?
4. Is there anything you would like your director to spend less time on?
5. Would you like to work as the director of your prep school?

The open-ended question asking the directors’ opinions on the challenges facing directors in the Turkish prep class sector today revealed answers in 11 categories as presented in the figure below;

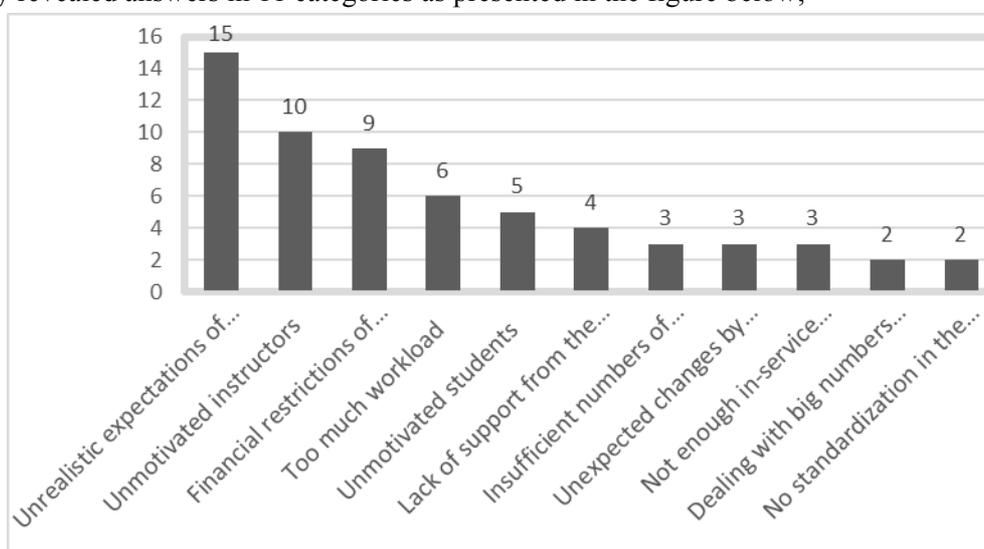


Figure 5. The challenges facing directors in the Turkish prep class sector today

As seen in Figure 5, directors mostly complained about the unrealistic expectations of others. They stated that faculties, institutes and higher managers have too many and unrealistic expectations from the prep schools. Especially the expectation that equipping students with an at least B2 proficiency level in an 8-month academic year period is a real challenge considering that most of them have an A1 level when they begin their language education. For the directors, there is a big gap between reality and expectations, as stated in the following excerpts in their own words;

-We are expected to perform a miracle by making A1 students B2 in one academic year.

-We need to explain what is doable in 1 year to the upper management.

- The students are expected to be able to study in English medium departments by the end of the first year. However, because roughly 75-80% of the learners come from A1 level, it becomes almost an impossible task and the director's success level is mostly evaluated by the academic success rate of the learners. This ambiguity is the biggest challenge for me.

-At the university level academic understanding and prep class needs contradict. As a prep director you have to spend more time to convince academia than to do your own job.

Motivation, especially teachers’ lack of motivation, was the second biggest challenge for the directors. They stated that teachers are not motivated enough and open to change. Financial restrictions schools of foreign languages have, too much managerial workload, insufficient support from the top administrators, lack of instructors compared to the overwhelming number of students, sudden and unexpected regulation changes, relations with and dependency on

the upper administration, not having enough in-service teacher training, having to deal with big numbers of students and instructors and not having standardization in the prep systems overall in the country were the other challenges reported by the directors.

When the directors were asked to rewrite their job description to better meet the needs of their departments, they identified the following priorities for themselves:

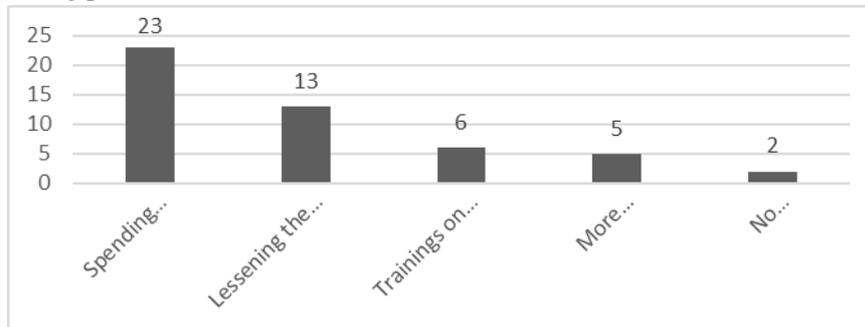


Figure 6. The new job descriptions of the directors

As seen in Figure 6 above, the majority of the directors' answers included spending more time for academic issues. That is, they would like to do more research, and focus on professional development, curriculum planning, testing, and student motivation.

-I actually love and embrace all aspects of my job. I don't want to remove any responsibilities. I think I have the freedom to prioritize my work so that working together with my colleagues we can all meet the needs of the department. The challenge as I see it is that we live in extremely fast changing times and sometimes I would like more human resources so that we could more rapidly take up opportunities that arise to improve teaching and learning both for our students and ourselves.

- The new priority would be academic development. I would remove administration because that's a job for clerks, not academicians.

The second category, lessening the bureaucratic paperwork, is thoroughly related to the first one. Directors also stated that they would like to have some training on coping with crowded groups. Having more autonomy for the management of the school and not having a teaching or supervision load in addition to their administrative position are the other ideas they would like to remove from their job description. It seems clear that the main areas raised are a desire to spend more time on academic issues, along with a dissatisfaction with the support and management style from above.

The other ideas are presented in the figure below:

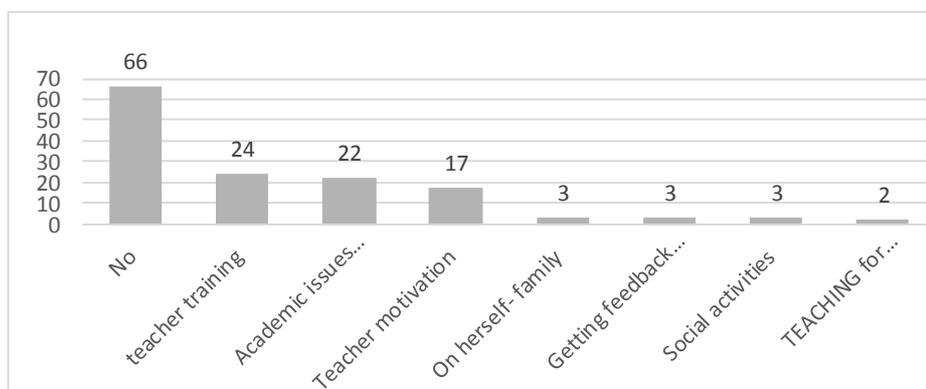


Figure 7. Teachers' preferences for their directors to spend more time on

When the teachers were asked if there was anything they would like their directors to spend more or less time on, the majority expressed their appreciation of what their directors were doing, as exemplified in the quotation below:

-No. It is a demanding task that requires one to do multiple tasks at one time and dedicate most of time to. It is also difficult to work with a large group of people and be fair all the time.

- She is already dealing with many things individually.

-She is already doing a lot for us and our department.

Teacher training, focusing on academic issues and teacher motivation were the top three categories teachers wanted their directors to spend more time on. Some even focused on personal life and mentioned their desires like spending more time on themselves and on their families as well as doing social activities. Getting feedback from students and teaching for some hours to experience the challenges first hand were the other wishes of the teachers for their directors.

Figure 8 below shows teachers’ preferences for their directors to spend less time on. As stated above, the majority of the opinions stated that they did not think their directors were wasting their time with a specific activity.

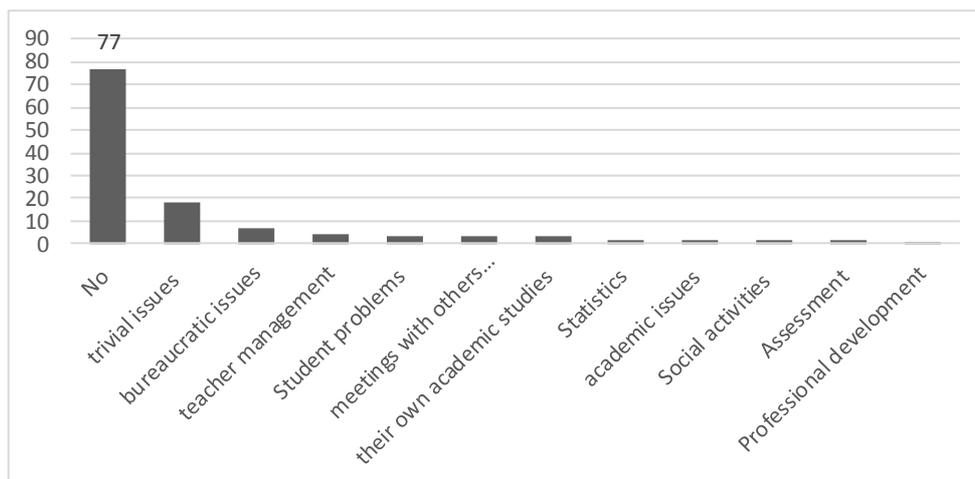


Figure 8. Teachers’ preferences for their directors to spend more less on

While the figure shows general satisfaction, teachers also complained about their directors’ spending their time on what they called “trivial issues” like sending them mails about being punctual for their classes, checking teachers’ clothes, their working and office hours or personal issues. Some even complained about their directors focusing on parking issues.

Spending less time on bureaucratic issues, teacher management and student problems were among the other ideas teachers thought their directors should spend less time on. Allocating time for meetings with others outside school, their own academic studies and statistics were stated as the items that could be spent less time on. Some teachers thought focusing on the academic issues, assessment and professional development of the teachers are the responsibilities of the coordinators, not the directors. Finally, organizing social activities was an item that the directors could spend less time on for the teachers.

When the teachers were asked if they would like to work as the director of their prep school, a big majority of them answered with “No” to the question. Only 10 of the participant teachers would think of becoming a director, and 59 of them were not sure. Figure 9 below shows the answers of the teachers;

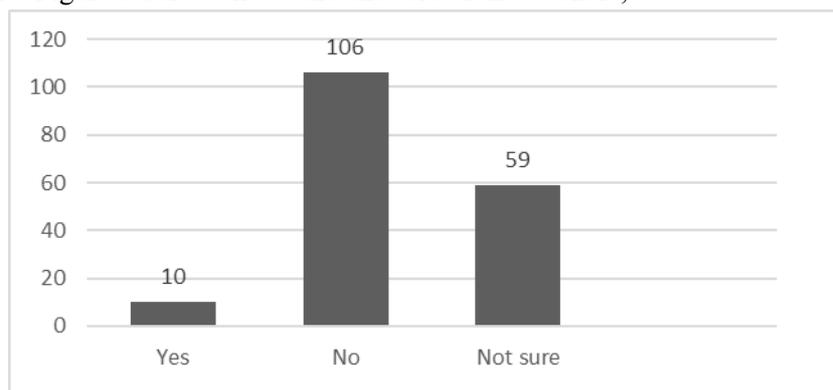


Figure 9. Teachers’ preferences for being a director

The ones who did not prefer to become a director believed that dealing with such big numbers of teachers and students was too stressful and required a lot of effort and dedication. Many of them even thought that being a director was “only a burden”, as seen in the example below;

- *NO, It is not something I was trained for, and it is only a burden.*

- *NO. That's very challenging and tough. It is already difficult to manage people, and much more difficult to manage so many young people.*

- *No, difficult to manage people and senior management, time-taking, difficult to satisfy the staff and meet their needs despite all your efforts.*

Other teachers preferred to stay as a teacher rather than becoming a director for personal reasons, enjoying teaching more, not having qualifications or education to be a director. Therefore, not feeling ready was among the common reasons. Some stated “I can't” because of their personality of being too emotional or too impatient to be a director. The following quotation can be given as an example of these reasons;

- *No. I just like being in the classroom, interacting with the young and seeing their aspirations and improvement by offering personal assistance not only as a teacher but also as a friend who can learn from them indeed. It would be so demotivational and gloomy for me to deal with so much paperwork and formality while having too much on my plate.*

- *No, teaching and creating pleases me more than managing for now.*

Dealing with other people and not satisfying the staff and meeting their needs despite all the efforts were the other reasons of their preferences for not choosing to be a director. They stated that some teachers complain about trivial things, and many are resistant to change.

- *No. Too much responsibility. Difficult to please everyone.*

- *No, because working with teachers with different characters and students who want to pass exams without any efforts are too challenging.*

- *No, never with this teacher profile and school culture.*

The ones who stated that they can work as the director of their school stated that they felt ready for holding the responsibility as well as a higher status as an experienced teacher. They like the idea of being a part of the decision-making process for their school as in the following excerpts;

- *I would definitely want (in my future years). It is for sure that such a position wears you off, makes you get into non-academic tedious meetings representing and advocating your team and department. You have to keep the balance between your supervisors and your instructors, which is obviously stressful. However, being a part of the decision-making process and being responsible for such a dynamic group- I mean both instructors and students-, I believe, encourages you to work and create more. The example I have seen in my institution (thanks to my director and assistant director) is pretty encouraging. The organizational scheme not only enables the department to run smoothly but also provides opportunity to add value to your department as there are many different responsibilities available you can undergo if you are willing to. In such an organizational scheme, taking responsibility never intimidates you despite the difficulties you see your director undergoes. On the contrary, it encourages you to be a part of the system and in the long term to be ready to take over the position when there occurs a need.*

- *Yes, because being an over experienced teacher, an ex-teacher trainer and researcher and now a researcher, I feel qualified enough to fulfill such a duty.*

For the last category of this question, many of the teachers were not sure about their preferences. The multi-dimensional responsibilities of the job and dealing with a huge number of teachers and the students left them undecided. No matter what type of an answer teachers gave to this question, however, almost all of them appreciated what their directors were doing at their schools. The following quotations can be given as examples of these respectful comments;

- *I see my director as a very experienced academician who holds the school's responsibilities professionally. She acts in a warm and humble way as well.*

- *She is doing an amazing job and she is always friendly, supportive and understanding so one or two questions about her attitude towards many things could be included as it is a big part of her job.*

- *We have a great director and feel lucky to work together.*

Discussion

This study focused on identifying the perceptions of directors and teachers on educational management; how they perceive the job, how much time is spent on various activities, as well as the challenges of the job. The results revealed that in most of the cases, the perceptions of directors and the teachers matched. That is, they both thought that managing an educational organization is not an easy job, and, as hypothesized, it is not preferred by many of the teachers because of the challenges it includes, dealing with a high number of people being the biggest one.

Academic management, managing people, administration and entrepreneurship and customer relations were the areas directors stated spending most of their time. They, however, stated that they would prefer having the role of an “Educator” rather than a “Manager”, as distinguished by Mehdinezhad and Sardarzahi (2015), and focus on the professional development of their teachers and the learning process of their students more, being the leader of their education institution. Teachers had stronger opinions related to their directors not spending enough time for the training of the teachers, as well as helping them to solve their problems and motivating them. Providing better support for teachers’ professional development for policy makers as well as for school managers was stated as an urgent and important need in 2009 OECD report as well.

Quirke and Allison (2007) argue that educational management suffers from administrative and paperwork load and cannot allocate sufficient time to students and learning which is at the heart of educational management. The results of the directors in our study supported this idea as well, they found business and resources management, entrepreneurial and customer relations, the duties especially expected from the directors working at the private sector, as the least favorable ones among all.

For Mattacott (1995), the most difficult job in an ELT organization is being the director of the organization, because “there is the feeling of being the general “dogsbody” with no cohesive job description and at the same time, feeling that the job is an impossible task” (p. 11). In our study both directors and teachers agreed with what the directors’ jobs should involve and what it actually does involve. That is, the job requirements and the realities are perceived in the same vein. The biggest discrepancies were especially related to the “Diplomatic and Representational” area in which teachers thought directors were spending too much time while their directors did not have such a strong opinion about this issue. Teachers preferred their directors to be focusing on their professional development and student learning more, instead of doing diplomatic jobs.

The biggest complaint directors had was meeting the unrealistic expectations of others regarding the language learning process. Teachers’ lack of motivation and their resistance to change were the other challenges they encountered. When the financial restrictions were added to insufficient support from the top administrators, their jobs became overwhelming. Directors also required support for dealing with some managerial issues, such as coping with crowded groups as well as having more autonomy in their jobs.

Teachers’ complaints that their directors are spending time on trivial issues might imply that there might be a miscommunication between the directors and the teachers. That is, what they call “trivial” might be important for the directors and this needs to be transferred to the teachers. Similarly, why teachers believe these issues are “trivial” might be explained to the directors and they might come to an agreement sharing both sides’ opinions. Likewise, what some teachers perceived as important was unimportant to spend time on, according to others in the study. For example, while many teachers thought directors should be focusing on the academic issues and assessment more, some disagreed with them, believing that these are the responsibilities of the coordinators, not the directors. Thus, open communication between all parties seems indispensable for a healthier communication.

Conclusion

Management is a challenging job. As Mintzberg (2009) states, finding out what managers do is not a problem, interpreting it is. The opinions of the directors of the schools of foreign languages and the teachers working with them in this study reveal that this challenge is accepted by both groups. Both groups know that managing people is not an easy job. The results also revealed that directors want to focus on academic issues more than they actually do. Organizing professional development of their teachers, curriculum planning, focusing on testing and student motivation are the main topics they would like to spend more time on. Bureaucratic paperwork, and having to meet the unrealistic expectations of others, are the main topics they complain about spending a lot of their time. Bureaucracy has strict rules in Turkey, making directors’ roles more difficult and preventing them from addressing more important

issues they want to focus on. Directors stated having difficulty in dealing with the low motivation levels of students, but especially of their teachers. Lack of support from top administrators and financial restrictions were stated as the main challenges they faced. While teachers' opinions matched with their directors in many aspects, their views that directors should focus on their professional development and student learning more than doing diplomatic and representational work were even stronger. This conclusion might imply that open communication, including the job descriptions and expectations not only from directors to the teachers but also from the teachers to the directors, is necessary for a healthier communication in an organization, so that everybody can be aware of the expectations in each other's minds.

Directors suffered from dealing with the unrealistic expectations of others that they should create something magic in a short time. Proficiency in language learning is a quite challenging and a long process, which cannot be expected to happen in 8 months. As McGrath and Bates (2013) stated in the managers' motto, "failure is the price managers pay for future success. The only failure you can be criticized for is not trying" (p. xiii). Thus, it is not fair to hold these expectations for foreign language schools. These expectations can only be met with a well-designed program requiring policy makers from all stages of education to come together and have common policies for teaching the foreign language in the country.

Dealing with a huge number of people and with high expectations of others are quite demanding, especially for someone who is not trained to do so. Therefore, being a director of a school of foreign languages is not a desirable job for most of the teachers. This implies that a good teacher needs to be supported with additional skills, especially including leadership and conflict management skills, in addition to being promoted to become a director. For promoting people to higher positions and expecting them to guide others' growth, their own development for the new job requirements need to be taken care of. In order to help educators to become effective managers, management skills need to be taught to them (Fowle, 2000, Jarošová, Lorencová, Půbalová, & Šedivý, 2017). As also suggested by Hockley (2004), just like teachers, managers need continual professional development through a combination of training, experience and reflection. Such training should create opportunities for increasing self-awareness of managers in addition to providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills. This study, thus, can be argued to be giving the managers an opportunity for self-reflection by helping them to realize how they perceive their job and spend their time for management. It also provides an opportunity for teachers to give feedback to their managers by evaluating their job from their perspectives.

Educational management, especially in language teaching, is an area generally neglected in the literature. Researchers might be encouraged to focus on this issue and reveal implications with increasing awareness of the directors and the teachers and the requirements of the job. Future studies can focus on finding out ways of helping directors to be more equipped for the job requirements. For example, how directors can be supported to use their time more efficiently, which is an essential surviving skill for management, can be studied. Training directors on time management and getting their opinions on this might reveal important implications for organizations. Similarly, how a better communication system among the directors, teachers, higher administrators and even the students can be created would be a worthwhile idea to focus on for future researchers.

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