

ANALYZING THE PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATORS CONCERNING THE EXECUTION OF MANAGERIAL PROCESSES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND DETERMINING THE TRAINING NEEDS

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study is to analyze the perceptions of educators concerning the execution of managerial processes in elementary schools and to study whether there is significant difference about the opinions of educators according to their gender. The study was carried out in elementary schools located around Güzelyurt City in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). A questionnaire was used to collect data from the educators working in elementary schools concerning the execution of managerial processes. The findings showed that out of 28 questions asked to the educators, only for five of them, there were significant differences and for the rest 23 items, there were no significant differences about the perceptions of educators according to their gender. As a result of the study, the training need of educators are determined.

Keywords: Managerial processes, perception, elementary education, educator, training needs

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the importance of education in a rapidly changing global environment is increasing for the cultural, economic and social development of a country. The elementary education is one of the basic factors for the success and wellbeing of societies.

The mission of elementary schools in general is to ensure that all students acquire information and skills and the ability to apply their knowledge to become lifelong learners and productive citizens in a diverse/global world. This mission is best accomplished through a structure of student-centered learning communities characterized by: equity and access to a quality education that includes strong instructional leadership; high expectations for the achievement of all students; a rigorous curriculum; frequent monitoring of student performance; extending learning opportunities for students failing to meet academic standards; well trained, certified teachers in all classrooms; enhanced resources; families who are empowered to assist in providing a quality education for every child; a school climate conducive to building positive relationships; a safe and orderly school environment fostering enhanced school pride (Thompson, 2006).

Although there are many factors affecting the accomplishment of this mission, the capabilities, abilities and skills of educators have very important effect on the quality of elementary education. All of the schools including elementary schools are managed by administrators (school principals and/or assistant principals) (Bursalıoğlu, 2002).

Managerial processes used in the elementary schools should be applied in effective ways in order to ensure good quality education. Therefore, knowing the perceptions of the educators concerning the application of managerial processes in education system is essential in determining the training needs.

The Purpose of the Study

This study aims to determine the opinions of the educators working in elementary schools in TRNC concerning the execution of the managerial processes. In this work, decision making, planning, organizing, influence, communication, coordination, and evaluation processes were considered separately and analyzed. Based on the main aim mentioned above, we tried to find whether there is a significant difference between the perceptions of educators based on gender or not. In literature, there are limited numbers of studies aiming to analyze the managerial processes in elementary schools in Turkey and TRNC (Dulkar, 1990; Güneş, 1991; Güçlü, 1997; Yazıcı, 1998; Aytekin, 2002; Tamcoşar, 2004.; Tomgüshehan, 2004; Ağdelen, 2005). Because there are very few works on managerial processes in elementary school, in this study an evaluation of the execution of the managerial processes was done and as a result the training needs of the educators, especially for school principals, related with the managerial processes were determined.

METHOD

Participants

The population of the research consisted of all teachers and school administrators (called educators in the study) working in elementary schools located around Güzelyurt City in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In order to collect data from the educators, face to face interview method was preferred. Each elementary school was visited one by one and the educators were informed about the aim of the study. From the questionnaires answered by respondents, due to missing information of some questionnaires, out of 27 managers only 22 of them and out of 159 teachers only 115 of them were used in statistical analysis. In brief, a total of 137 questionnaires which were properly answered by the educators were used for statistical analysis.

Materials and Procedure

The questionnaire method was used to collect and assess data. The questionnaire used in this study was adopted from Yazıcı (1998) and consists of two main parts. First part aims to measure demographic attributes of educators and the second part consists of 28 items concerning the execution of managerial processes (decision making, planning, organizing, influence, communication, coordination, evaluation) which aims to measure the perceptions of educators concerning the execution of managerial processes in elementary schools. 4 questions are asked in order to measure the perceptions of educators concerning each managerial process. Each question has 3 options and educators were asked to select only one of the option that best describes their opinion.

The data collected by means of questionnaires were analyzed by using statistical techniques. First of all, descriptive statistics about the demographic features and opinions of the respondents about the execution of the managerial processes were calculated and presented in tables. Furthermore, in order to test whether there is a statistically significant difference about the perceptions of educators based on gender, the Chi-Square (X^2) test of independence method was used at the 5% level of significance. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) Version12 was used for all statistical tests.

RESULTS

Findings about demographic features:

After collection of data, a detailed statistical analysis was carried out. The demographic statistics about the position, gender, tenure and last graduated school of educators are summarized in the following tables.

Table 1: Distribution of the Educators According to Position

Position	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Principal	14	10.22
Assistant Principal	8	5.84
Teacher	115	83.94
Total	137	100

Table 2: Gender of the Educators

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Female	96	70.07
Male	41	29.93

Table 3: Tenure of the Educators

Tenure	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
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Tenure	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
5 years or less	28	20.43
6-10 years	32	23.36
11-15 yıl	38	27.74
16-20 yıl	22	16.06
21-25 yıl	16	11.68
26 years or greater	1	0.73
Total	137	100

Table 4: Distribution of the Educators According to the Last Graduated School

Last School	Graduated	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Two Years High School		2	1.46
Three Years High School		25	18.25
Four Years High School or Faculty		106	77.37
Other		4	2.92
Total		137	100

Findings obtained from statistical test:

In order to test whether there is a significant difference about the perceptions of educators concerning the execution of several managerial processes or not, Chi-square test of independence (X^2) was used based on gender of educators. Level of significance is considered as 5% for all tests.

Analysis of the perceptions of educators concerning the decision making process: Table 5 represents the Chi-square test results about the perceptions of educators concerning the decision making process based on Gender. According to the results, statistically there is no significant difference between the perceptions of educators based on gender for all items ($P > 0.05$ for all questions).

Table 5: The Results of Chi-square test about the perceptions of educators concerning the decision making process

Expression Concerning the Decision Making Process	X^2	P
1. Decision making of the school administrators concerning the school management	1.646	0.439
2. Determination of the information that will be used as a basis for decision making previously	1.940	0.379
3. Considering the people who will be affected from the decision while the decisions are made	0.090	0.580
4. Benefiting from the technical and professional information in schools while making decision	2.122	0.346

Analysis of the perceptions of educators concerning the planning process: Table 6 shows the Chi-square test results about the perceptions of educators concerning the planning process based on Gender. The results indicate that statistically there is no significant difference between the perceptions of educators based on gender for all questions ($P > 0.05$ for all questions).

Table 6: The Results of Chi-square test about the perceptions of educators concerning the planning process

Expression Concerning the Planning Process	X ²	P
1. Preparation of the annual working programs in school	1.587	0.452
2. Evaluation of the planned works	5.936	0.051
3. Planned works in school	0.992	0.609
4. Realization of the works in school	1.707	0.426

Analysis of the perceptions of educators concerning the organizing process: Table 7 indicates the Chi-square test results about the perceptions of educators concerning the organizing process based on Gender. According to the results, for the expression ‘informing the teachers about what the expectations are from them concerning their duties’ there is significant difference between the perceptions of educators based on gender ($X^2 = 8.201$; $p < 0.05$). For rest of the items, statistically there is no significant difference between the perceptions ($P > 0.05$ for three questions).

Table 7: The Results of Chi-square test about the perceptions of educators concerning the organizing process

Expression Concerning the Organizing Process	X ²	P
1. Informing the teachers about what the expectations are from them concerning their duties	8.201	0.017*
2. Fulfillment of the works in school	0.155	0.925
3. Distribution of the duties to the teachers	3.445	0.179
4. The teacher and the administrator working in the school know what to perform	0.097	0.953

* $P < 0.05$

Analysis of the perceptions of educators concerning the influence process: Table 8 represents the Chi-square test results about the perceptions of educators concerning the influence process based on Gender. The results show that for the item ‘Encouraging the Teachers in order to work willingly and better’, statistically there is significant difference between the perceptions of educators based on gender ($X^2 = 6.351$; $p < 0.05$) For the other three questions, there is no significant difference between the perceptions ($P > 0.05$ for three questions).

Table 8: The Results of Chi-square test about the perceptions of educators concerning the influence process

Expression Concerning the Influence Process	X ²	P
1. The degree of interaction between teachers and administrators	3.290	0.193
2. Encouraging the teachers in order to work willingly and better	6.351	0.042*
3. The usage of authority when the teachers create problem	0.583	0.747
4. Recognition of the teachers’ problems by the administrators	3.183	0.204

* $P < 0.05$

Analysis of the perceptions of educators concerning the communication process: Table 9 summarizes the Chi-square test results about the perceptions of educators concerning the communication process based on Gender. The results indicate that statistically there is no significant difference between the perceptions of educators based on gender for all items ($P > 0.05$ for all questions).

Table 9: The Results of Chi-square test about the perceptions of educators concerning the communication process

Expression Concerning the	X ²	P
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Communication Process		
1. Direction of the information flow within school	0.390	0.823
2. The acceptance level of the instructions by teachers	3.644	0.162
3. Communication among the same levels	2.134	0.344
4- Meetings in school between teachers and administrators due to duties	0.573	0.751

Analysis of the perceptions of educators concerning the coordination process: Table 10 shows the Chi-square test results about the perceptions of educators concerning the coordination process based on Gender. The results indicates that for the item ‘The Cooperation of the Administrators With Teachers in Order to Provide Better Education for Students ‘ statistically there is significant difference between the perceptions of educators based on gender ($X^2 = 7.028$; $p < 0.05$). For the other three questions, there is no significant difference between the perceptions ($P > 0.05$).

Table 10: The Results of Chi-square test about the perceptions of educators concerning the coordination process

Expression Concerning the Coordination Process	X²	P
1. The common work between I. Stage and II. Stage in order to realize the objectives of the school	1.183	0.553
2. The cooperation of the administrators with teachers in order to provide better education for students	7.028	0.030*
3. Coming and working together with official and voluntary institutions for the better recognition of the school to environment and society	5.244	0.073
4. Cooperation and changing views with students’ families or relatives in order to better understand and recognise the students in school	1.037	0.595

* P < 0.05

Analysis of the perceptions of educators concerning the evaluation process: Table 11 represents the Chi-square test results about the perceptions of educators concerning the evaluation process based on Gender. According to the results, for two items, statistically there is significant difference between the perceptions of educators based on gender ($p < 0.05$). For the remaining two questions the opinions of the educators are not significantly different ($P > 0.05$).

Table 11: The Results of Chi-square test about the perceptions of educators concerning the evaluation process

Expression Concerning the Evaluation Process	X²	P
1. Evaluation of the teachers by administrators	0.761	0.684
2. The aim of usage of the information obtained as a result of evaluation	4.083	0.130
3. Informing the teacher about the results obtained from evaluation	19.095	0.000*
4. The management level in which the control is performed	7.679	0.022*

* P < 0.05

CONCLUSION

The findings obtained from the statistical analysis shows that out of 28 questions asked to the educators, only for five of them, there were significant differences about the perceptions of the educators according to their gender. For the rest 23 items, there were no significant differences about the perceptions of educators based on gender. The overall statistical findings can be summarized as follows:

Concerning the decision making process: Most of the educators stated that administrators did not exhibit democratic managerial behaviors.

Concerning the planning process: Majority of the educators stated that administrators were not performing school activities in planned manner and they were not letting teachers to participate planning process.

Concerning the organizing process: The general opinion of the educators is that the administrators did not show the structuring behaviors.

Concerning the influence process: The majority of the educators believe that the administrators were not able to orientate and motivate them in a desired level.

Concerning the communication process: Majority of the educators stated that the administrators created a limited communication environment in their schools.

Concerning the coordination process: More than half of the educators stated that, in general, the administrators did not inform them about the common planned activities.

Concerning the evaluation process: The educators stated that the administrators were not able to provide the required corrections and improvements in schools.

The schools administrators should possess the following Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities for better management of schools:

- Thorough knowledge of the principles and practices of teaching.
- Thorough knowledge of the principles of education administration.
- Thorough knowledge of problems of curriculum, supervision, instruction, and guidance.
- Thorough knowledge of educational texts, materials, supplies, and equipment.
- Thorough knowledge of theories of teaching adults.
- Thorough knowledge of standard mental and achievement tests as to their use and interpretation.
- Thorough knowledge of vocational counseling techniques.
- Thorough knowledge of current trends in vocational and academic education.
- Thorough knowledge of training and supervisory techniques.
- Thorough knowledge of public school systems.
- Thorough knowledge of guidance and counseling techniques.
- Ability to instruct, direct, and evaluate staff and teachers.
- Ability to organize and direct a school program.

- Ability to use computers and information technology in education

Based on the findings obtained from this study the school administrators in elementary schools need to learn more about how to perform the following managerial tasks:

- Lead others so that school plans and objectives are achieved.
- Provide advice and guidance to professional staff on educational issues.
- Develop annual school objectives and plan how to achieve objectives set.
- Initiate and manage changes necessary for the development of the school.
- Assess school effectiveness in meeting its learning objectives.
- Identify problems which affect learning and teaching at the school.
- Monitor and evaluate the achievement of plans and objectives.
- Manage one's time effectively.
- Make effective decisions about school matters under his/her control.
- Class visits: Regularly observe teacher's performance and help to improve that performance.
- Ensure that reports of pupil learning are provided regularly to parents and guardians.
- Counsel and guide parents/guardians to help them support the learning of their children.
- Involve parents in teaching activities at the school and in the community.
- Arrange for substitute teachers or teach the classes of unavailable teachers.

- Establish a good work climate at the school.
- Motivate teachers and staff to work hard for the success of the school.
- Maintain high morale among teachers, learners, and other staff.
- Deal with staff sensitively.
- Appraise teacher and staff work performance.
- Provide feedback to teachers and other staff about their performance.
- Resolve/handle conflicts when disputes occur.
- Arrange parent/teacher conferences.
- Establish procedures for communication so that attendance by a member of staff on in-service training courses and workshops provide benefits to other staff and the school as a whole.
- Involve parents in helping their children to learn.
- Inform parents and guardians about their children's academic and social progress.

As a result, in accordance with the findings obtained from the analysis of the data, the school administration should be considered as an special and important occupational area and based on scientific methods, pre-service training models should be prepared and school administrators should be improved by using inservice training programs.

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