

An Analysis on Mission Statements of Turkish Primary Schools: Similarities and Differences

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Abstract

Mission statements are increasingly becoming an inevitable component of educational institutions. The main reason behind this can be attributed to the fact that they are determinants for the accreditation of schools in today's competitive educational arena. Thus, gaining an insight into the emphasized concepts in mission statements of primary schools is essential since primary schools are the places where the education starts for every single individual. In this regard, the aim of this study is to provide a document analysis of mission statements of Turkish public primary schools which are governed by the Ministry of National Education. To achieve this, mission statements of 500 primary schools across Turkey were compiled; particularly schools from the Western and the Eastern parts of the country were randomly selected and included in the analysis. As well as the comparison between mission statements of schools located in two opposite sides of the country, a special attention was paid to whether any reference to language teaching and learning was available in the mission statements. The whole data were analysed via content analysis. The results give in-depth information about common and differing points among mission statements. The most common mission was found to be educating individuals who valued Atatürk's principles and reforms underpinning the Turkish education system. Besides, a number of distinct missions

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were detected with regard to some targeted personality traits between the most cited points in missions of the Eastern and the Western schools. In terms of foreign language education, only a few references were revealed in mission statements of primary schools in Turkey.

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Introduction

“Wherever society exists, leadership exists” (Hackman & Johnson, 2004: 5), which means we are either the leaders or the followers in the society where we exist. For this reason, leadership is of great importance; and, as an essential issue in various fields, it can be defined as a purposeful act of leaders who are aiming to construct the social world of their followers (Greenfield, 1986). That is to say, leaders should be able to unify their followers around the shared values and make followers to commit themselves to what is good and correct. Different from this, a more recent definition shows us that leadership requires guiding the members of an organization to initiate and institutionalize innovation in an organization (Waters, 2014). As is clear from this definition, it is crucial for leaders to unify members around key missions and visions. Contrary to this, management is mostly related to the implementation of some agreed policies by aiming at using resources more effectively (Bush, 2008; Nahavandi, 2008). What is implied in the definition of management is that it is sufficient for a manager to accomplish pre-determined intentions with an ultimate aim to use resources wisely. However, it can also be concluded that the responsibilities of a leader can be



categorized under two primary headings which are creating an innovative organization and executing managerial tasks. In other words, leading and managing are different concepts but both are essential to create successful organizations which achieve their ultimate objectives.

In terms of educational management, the core activity is to determine the aims of the organization as a first step. In most schools, school principals are the ones who decide the aims, most probably in cooperation with the school governing body. It is obvious that school aims are under the influence of both external environment and government policies (Bush, 2007). The question is to what extent school principals have a right to modify government policies based on school-level missions or visions. To accomplish such a school-level modification, one should consider different leadership models and decide on the most appropriate model for the requirements of the particular school contexts. Based on the typology of leadership models proposed by Bush (2003), there are eight models including managerial, transformational, participative, transactional, post-modern, moral, instructional and contingent leadership models.

Managerial model is associated with leaders carrying out the functions, tasks and behaviours competently, which means it does not include the concept of vision. That is, the focus is on managing existing activities rather than planning or implementing a vision which can provide a better future for schools. Transformational model assumes each member of the organization to make commitments such as building vision or goals, modelling organizational values and fostering participation in decision making process (Leithwood, 1994). Similarly, participative leadership encourages one to be involved in the decision-making process on the

way to improve the school effectiveness (Leithwood, 1999: 12). In addition, Bush (2003) makes a connection between political and transactional leadership and claims that disagreements are resolved in favour of the most powerful protagonists. This only creates short-lived solutions and there is no long-term commitment to values or visions of the school. Bush (2003) also mentions post-modern leadership which is about diverse and individual perspectives of stakeholders are focused. That is, hierarchy is minimized so as to provide a quality democracy and a more consultative stance toward leadership. As for moral leadership, the key factor in effective leadership is the values, beliefs and ethics of leaders themselves. Different from those, instructional leadership supports the importance of developing teaching and learning since the core tenet is that professional learning of teachers and student growth go hand in hand. Last but not least, contingent leadership challenges the idea of one-size-fits-all; and claims that a good leader can diagnose the problems effectively and produce the most suitable solution considering the contextual variations. All these models may have naturally impact on the determination of school missions by all stakeholders under the guidance of school leaders.

Leadership practice involves actions taken by leaders while performing their leadership duties and responsibilities (Rathert & Kırkgöz, 2017). Needless to say those duties and responsibilities are vital in terms of the effectiveness of the organization. In parallel with this notion, Chemers (2003) identified three essential components of an effective leadership. The first component is the image that management refers to establishing credibility and legitimacy. The second component is the relationship development which means building motivation on the way to achieving group tasks by fair



coaching and guidance. The third one is the resource deployment associated with making efficient use of sources and materials for the sake of goal attainment. Besides those components, the relationship between leadership and organizational culture should be emphasized because these concepts are quite intertwined. Regarding this, there can be resistance to change in schools contexts when leaders feel a need to make alterations in an organizational culture. When this is the case, administrators generally prefer to overcome this problem through persuasion (Hoşgörür, 2016). Namely, if there should be a change in school culture, effectiveness of leadership practices gains greater importance.

According to Hackman and Johnson (2004), each organization has a unique way of seeing the world and this depends on the organization's particular assumptions, symbols and values. In relation to this, Turan and Bektaş (2013) point out that an organizational culture includes so many variables such as socialization, rituals, language, authority, economy, technology, and influence. They also assert that forming an organizational culture is a complex process, most probably because of so many variables interacting together even though some variables might be more dominant than the others. More important than that, Şişman (2002) posits that a culture comes into existence when a group of people come into interaction. Concerning educational organizations, humans play a central role in the formation of school culture (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). Organizational culture is a complex phenomenon (Schein, 1990) and understanding inter-organizational relationships is the key to organizational excellence (Schein, 1984), most probably because of the fact that human factor is influential in such organizations.

This so-called school culture can be seen as a sub-culture of the society because the focal assumptions, ideas or values reflected in the school culture also reflect the culture of the whole society. Considering the fact that each organization has its own special culture which differentiates it from other organizations (Morey & Luthans, 1985; Dimmock & Walker, 2005), school cultures are also built by different stakeholders including school principals. In Şişman's (2002) views, school principals have some basic responsibilities such as setting and implementing goals, guiding the school members, sustaining mutual trust among members; and creating and maintaining school culture. In this regard, Bolman and Deal's (1991) four frames can be mentioned to understand what is included in the concept of leadership. Those frames are structural, human resource, political and symbolic frames. The structural frame is associated with the belief that any organization should be designed for maximum efficiency. That is, organizational structures are created to align with the requirements of the environment and to reach the desired outcomes. The human resource frame emphasizes the importance of relationships within the organization; namely it views the organization from the eyes of its members. In this frame, human needs, energy, talent, career, salaries, opportunities and so on are focused. The political frame is more related to the process of decision-making in an environment including divergent interests-ideas and limited resources. Put it differently, stakeholders in any organization have differences in interests, values, beliefs and perceptions of reality. Moreover, the most important decision is to allocate scarce resources, which results from negotiation among stakeholders. The symbolic frame involves the use of meanings, beliefs and faith based on our previous experiences in order to explore how sense is constructed. More specifically; visions, missions or values of organizations convey



a sense of identity and people feel themselves special about what they accomplish.

Among those frames, effectiveness of a leader can be more associated with political and symbolic frames (Bolman & Deal, 1992). Further, Bolman and Deal (2008) assert that the leadership frame provides one to be able to position herself/himself as leaders who can interpret and make appropriate decisions for various situations. More clearly, Bolman and Deal (1991) in their multi-frame view note that leaders own at least one preferred or dominant frame to interpret what occurs in their organization; yet, the more frames a leader use in her/his leadership practices, the more effective she/he will be as a leader. That is to say, contextualizing particular situations using multiple frames helps a leader base her/his decisions on a sound ground with many cues and experiences. Apart from those, Boggs (2003) claims that a leader should be capable of building effective relationships, understanding accountability, being adaptable to differing conditions and possessing communication and transformation skills. In parallel with this, interactions amongst school members are evidently vital to create a collaborative vision and to be involved in leadership functions. The key factor at this point is the distributed leadership framed around specialization and expertise which is solely possible in a mutual trust and open door communication climate (Sivri & Beycioğlu, 2017).

One of the main contributions to the formation of a school culture can be to create a positive atmosphere provided by the school leaders. In fact, while doing this, not only school leaders but also teachers, students and parents should cooperate. If this is the case, then cohesion and convergence might emerge among those stakeholders (Özdemir, 2006). To accomplish this, focusing on

common goals and learning outcomes is important (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) so as to create uniformity because shared vision in culture makes the vision more achievable (Durukan, 2006). Similarly, leadership is a reciprocal learning process that enables stakeholders to negotiate meaning linked to shared purpose of schooling (Harris & Lambert, 2003). Likewise, Kılıç (2013) mentions that effective communication among colleagues learning from each other can be regarded as a primary factor that affect leadership practices in schools. In that sense, school leaders can revise the values and standards of the school with their specific discourse and can make others to be aware of such values and standards (Çelikten, 2003). To put it differently, leadership is not a function only performed by the school leaders. Rather, reaching a shared goal with the contribution of all stakeholders is vital in the process of the renewal of school culture. Here, school leaders' role is to renovate the school culture in a positive way regarding the connection between the school culture and leadership (Deal & Peterson, 2009). The essential point is that leadership is somehow connected to learning. To elaborate on this, Lambert (2003) posits that leadership is reciprocal, purposeful learning in community. Another crucial point for Lambert (2003) is that the ultimate goal is to develop all adults in the school community as reflective and skilful leaders. On this issue, Barth (1990) proposes that everyone within a school is capable of leading and becoming an active member in a community of leaders, and collegiality poses importance in promoting learning and improving schools. By doing so, the outcome will be steady and lasting improvement in student performance, which leads to the construction of sustainable schools.

In the light of these, the focal point of the study is to explore the mission statements and their implications for educational leadership.



As a concept, leadership can be in different forms such as authoritarian, charismatic, transformational, traditional, ethical, cultural, situational, and visionary (O'Brien, Draper & Murphy, 2008). Among these different forms, the adopted leadership model inevitably influences the missions of educational institutions. Furthermore, the vision of school leaders along with the culture of the society can also be the determinants of the content of the mission statements.

Aims of the Study

Mission statements refer to what the organization wants to be and whom it serves; hence, they express the *raison d'être* of an organization with an aim to unify various components of the organization around a common purpose (Özdem, 2011). In other words, it can be asserted that mission statements make the reasons linked to the presence of an organization obvious. A well-designed mission statement entails the clarification of the fundamental purposes of the organization, and therefore makes the organization unique and different from other organizations (Ülgen & Mirze, 2004). From another perspective, Dinçer (2004) defines a mission as a long-term goal, a shared value and belief; one that is concerned with quality not quantity. For all these reasons, a mission statement should be clear, concise and intense (Özdem, 2011); it should involve the legal requirements expected from the organization (Erçetin, 2000). It can also be claimed that the relevant literature is mainly based on the analysis of mission and vision statements of business. (e.g. Doğan, 2002; Yurtseven, 2003; Coşkun & Geyik, 2004; Peyrefitte & David, 2006; Karabulut, 2007; Köseoğlu & Temel, 2008; Doğan & Hatipoğlu, 2009). Herewith, the shift should be directed to the educational arena,

namely the content of mission statements of educational institutions at different levels. Schools at different levels such as primary, secondary and high schools or even universities should be scrutinized separately in terms of their self-determined missions. This will lead us to the strengths and weaknesses in a great deal of mission statements from a comparative perspective. This comparison can also be made between private and state educational institutions so as to see whether missions show a change or not. Such attempts to explore similarities and differences with an aim to unravel shortcomings in various mission statements will provide us to better reshape missions of schools, which will help school leaders revise and implement their schools' missions more critically and effectively.

Based on these notions, the present study attempts to detect the common points in the mission statements of state primary schools in Turkey. Additionally, whether there are any differences between mission statements of schools located in the Western and the Eastern parts of the country is also within the scope of the study. The reason why opposite locations are under scrutiny is because people living in these two locations have socially, economically and culturally differing lifestyles. Thus, this disparity may be assumed to influence school cultures and educational aims. Lastly, references to foreign language teaching and learning in mission statements of Turkish state primary schools are also investigated. This study is assumed to provide researchers and policy makers who are interested in educational leadership to realize how important it is to enhance missions that educational institutions undertake. Further, considering the fact that missions are changeable based on the transforming requirements of the school contexts and roles of school leaders, examining mission statements to make them more appropriate for the



current educational necessities is crucial. Such a research will inevitably contribute to national literature of educational administration as well as the related international literature sharing an identical educational context with Turkish schools.

In parallel with the aims, three research questions were formulated:

- What common points are frequently emphasized in mission statements of Turkish state primary schools across the Western and Eastern parts of the country?
- Are there any differences between the mission statements of Turkish state primary schools located in the Western and Eastern parts of the country? If yes, what are the differences?
- Are there any references to foreign language teaching and learning in the mission statements of Turkish state primary schools? If yes, what references are there?

Methodology

Research Design

The design of the present study is based on document analysis which is related to the analysis of written materials about the target phenomena; and the purpose is to give voice and meaning around the topic (Bowen, 2009). In the present study, the target phenomena are mission statements of Turkish primary schools. It is mainly based on the content analysis of mission statements of randomly selected Turkish primary schools. With content analysis, the aim is to describe the existing situation associated with what sort of missions Turkish primary schools undertake. To do so, cities from the Eastern and Western parts of Turkey were listed and classified randomly. Following this, a certain number of primary schools in the selected

cities were chosen randomly again. Websites of the selected primary schools were scanned so that we could have an access to an up-to-date mission statement. If we encountered an appropriate mission statement, we added the mission statement in either the Eastern or the Western document analysis file. Afterwards, an eight-step process of O'Leary (2014) in relation to document analysis was followed: (1) Gather relevant texts. (2) Develop an organization and management scheme. (3) Make copies of the originals for annotation. (4) Assess authenticity of documents. (5) Explore documents' agenda, biases. (6) Explore background information (e.g., tone, style, purpose). (7) Ask questions about document (e.g., who produced it? Why? When? Type of data?). (8) Explore content.

Based on the analysis process above, the first step was to gather relevant updated mission statements in computer files, which was followed by the organization of the whole data. Namely, the data were divided into two files so as to examine the mission statements of schools in the Western and Eastern parts of Turkey separately. Various copies of the data in different files were prepared to make it possible for the researchers to analyse the data by taking notes. Afterwards, authenticity of data along with possible biases were checked and controlled. This step led us to the next two steps including the exploration of purposes of mission statements and questioning how and why they have been produced. As the last step, the content of mission statements was examined.

Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 500 primary state schools in Turkey. Mission statements were accessed through the official internet websites of those schools. The schools included in the study were randomly chosen from the city centres, not from the counties of



the defined cities. First, the cities were determined randomly; however; the only criterion was that cities would be located either in the Western or in the Eastern part of the country. In parallel with this, 26 different cities were included in the study; 13 from the Western part and 13 from the Eastern part of the country. In total, mission statements available on the website of 500 primary schools across the country were compiled in two different files. Mission statements of 250 schools from the Western part compromised the first file; and similarly, another file was constituted with the mission statements of 250 schools from the Eastern part of the country. Overall, these two files were 72 pages long and contained 20,567 words.

Data Analysis

The whole data were exposed to content analysis with the aim of discovering the differing and common points in the mission statements. The ultimate goal was to see whether there was any difference between mission statements of Turkish primary schools in the Eastern and the Western part of the country. In other words, it was aimed to find out whether the location was an influential factor in defining missions of the schools. To achieve this, the two files were combined and analysed so as to reach commonalities in the first phase of the analysis. Afterwards, files were separated and the analysis was based on the comparison between the mission statements of primary schools in different locations in the second phase. Another goal in employing content analysis was to explore references to foreign language teaching and learning in mission statements if there was any. To do so, all data were examined with a very specific aim to unravel concepts in relation to foreign language education. After this third phase of the analysis, frequencies were calculated, and mission statements cited more than 40 times were

regarded as the significant ones. However, all references to foreign language education were included in the findings. To ensure trustworthiness, Guba's (1981) four criteria which are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were considered. To be credible, the intra- and inter-rater reliability was ensured by analysing the obtained data at different times and by both authors of the paper. To accomplish transferability, our specific sample was described in terms of educational leadership. For the sake of dependability, a detailed methodological description was presented. Lastly for confirmability, we guarantee that all of the findings were induced from the data.

Results

Common points in the mission statements of Turkish state primary schools

Regarding the first research question dealing with the common points in the mission statements of Turkish state primary school located either in the Eastern or the Western parts of Turkey, Table 1 summarizes the common points emerged as a result of content analysis:



Table 1.

Common points in mission statements irrespective of the location of schools

<i>Common statements</i>	<i>f</i>
Educating individuals who value Atatürk's principles and reforms	137
Educating individuals who can keep up with the contemporary developments in the world	114
Educating individuals depending on the Basic Law of National Education	97
Educating good and well-behaved individuals	90
Educating individuals sensitive to national and moral values	82

Table 1 illustrates the common and highly-referred points in mission statements. As understood, the most important mission statement is associated with Atatürk's principles and reforms (f: 137), which underpins the Turkish education system. Following this, the second most emphasized mission is related to the integration of contemporary developments (f: 114) in education system. In this way, individuals could keep up with the recent technological or scientific improvements across the world. Another frequently-cited point in mission statements is that the education system should adhere to the Basic Law of National Education (f: 97), determined by the Ministry. This might be a way to provide uniformity in the educational principles all over the country. Moreover, educating good and well-behaved individuals (f: 90) and educating individuals sensitive to national and moral values (f: 82) are among the other common points in mission statements of the Turkish primary schools. That is to say, sensitivity to national and moral values may be assumed to be essential for educating good and well-behaved citizens.

Differences between the mission statements of Turkish state primary schools located in the Western and the Eastern part of the country

In accordance with the second research question, differences in the missions statements of schools located in different regions are examined and results are shown in Table 2:

Table 2.

Differences in missions statements of schools located in different regions

<i>Eastern Cities</i>		<i>Western cities</i>	
<i>Statements</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>Statements</i>	<i>f</i>
Educating respectful individuals	47	Educating open-minded individuals	50
Educating knowledgeable and skilful individuals	43	Educating self-confident individuals	42
Educating individuals sensitive to universal values	42	Educating happy citizens	40
Educating individuals sensitive to social and cultural values	41		

Table 2 presents the discrepancies between the mission statements of primary schools located in the two opposite sides of Turkey. Accordingly, in the schools located in the Eastern part, the highlighted missions are respectful (f: 47), knowledgeable and skilful (f: 43) individuals who are sensitive to universal (f: 42), social and cultural values (f: 41). All these seem to point to the fact that Eastern schools attach greater importance to such personality traits as respect, having knowledge and being talented. Furthermore, it is also vital for those schools to educate individuals who are aware of both universal and cultural values. That is, familiarity with the universal values is as important as familiarity with one's own cultural or social values. Contrary to these, the emphasized missions in the Western schools



are quite distinct even though the frequencies seem close. It is seen that some other personality traits are stressed in the missions of the Western schools. To specify, being open-minded (f: 50), self-confident (f: 42) and happy (f: 40) individuals come to the fore. Namely, being open to new and different viewpoints, having confidence in one's own capabilities and feeling happy with what one has are the major targeted missions.

References to foreign language teaching and learning in the mission statements of Turkish state primary schools

The third research question requires having a look at whether there are any references to foreign language teaching and learning in the mission statements. Accordingly, Table 3 presents what kind of references is made as well as the cities and locations of schools which make those references:

Table 3.

References to foreign language teaching and learning in mission statements

<i>References</i>	<i>Cities</i>	<i>Locations</i>
Being capable of using foreign languages	Malatya	Eastern
Learning foreign languages is a need	Elazığ	Eastern
Speaking at least a foreign language	Hakkari	Eastern
Learning at an advanced level via foreign languages	Antalya	Western
Using a foreign language efficiently	Mersin	Western

Table 3 demonstrates the references to foreign language teaching and learning in mission statements. As understood, there are only five references to foreign language teaching and learning regardless of the locations of schools. The eye-catching point is that the references to foreign language teaching and learning can be said to be

limited with today's world which is becoming more and more global. Moreover, the essential point in each reference is different. For example, in the Eastern part, the schools give importance to being skilful at speaking at least one foreign language or to the realization of the fact that learning foreign languages is a need. The reason for those references in the Eastern part may be related to the fact that there are bilingual people living in the region. Further, in the Western part, using a foreign language efficiently and learning more through foreign languages is crucial. At this point, it should be noted that schools having such missions are located in the Southern region of the country where foreign people usually pay a visit for holiday. This could be a reason for foreign language references in the mission statements.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study has investigated what concepts are emphasized in the mission statements of Turkish state primary schools. Similarities and differences between the mission statements of schools located in the Eastern and the Western parts of the country are another concern of the study. Furthermore, exploring references to foreign language learning and teaching in mission statements, if there is any, is also within the scope of the study. In parallel with these aims, mission statements of 500 Turkish state primary schools have been examined using the content analysis technique.

The most common concepts in the mission statement of schools are all associated with educating individuals in the light of Atatürk's principles and reforms, educating individuals depending on the Basic Law of National Education, educating good and well-behaved individuals, and educating individuals sensitive to national and



moral values. These results appear to be consistent with the results of Altinkurt and Yılmaz (2011) who state that all those concepts represent a positive situation for mission statements. This is because it is possible to say that schools clearly determine their missions in the framework of legal regulations. To exemplify, Altinkurt and Yılmaz (2011) propose that Atatürk's principles and reforms, national and moral values and also adherence to the Basic Law of National Education are all signs for legal regulations. Considering common legal regulations to specify missions of state schools may seem appropriate for the sake of standardization in Turkish context; however, context bound factors resulting from cultural, social, financial or moral variables should not be ignored since each educational organization is unique particularly in terms of its assumptions, symbols and values (Hackman & Johnson, 2004).

Concerning differences between the mission statements of schools located in the Eastern and the Western parts of the country, seven significant differing points were detected. Eastern schools give priority to respect, knowledge, talent as well as sensitivity to universal, social and cultural values. Yet, Western schools draw special attention to educating open-minded, self-confident and happy individuals. It is obvious that "location" creating differences in cultural, social, financial, ethnical, moral issues might be a factor influencing what is prioritized in the mission statements of Turkish primary schools. This fact can also be in a strict relation with school culture considering that each organization has its own special culture which differentiates it from other organizations (Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Morey & Luthans, 1985), and mission statements are one of the indicatives of the so-called school culture. In this sense, Marzano et al. (2005) claim that humans play an important role with regard to the formation of school culture. For our own context, it could pose an

obstacle to determining sensible missions if we do not take human factor and context-related elements into account. Based on the results, it is obvious that there are location-based differences in mission statements of Turkish primary schools; yet, there is a need to compare missions of our schools with other nations' mission statements of counterpart schools with an aim to educating international citizens who are able to accommodate themselves to differing conditions of diverse contexts.

With regard to foreign languages, merely five schools from different cities and locations give priority to foreign language learning and teaching. For instance, being capable of using a foreign language, speaking foreign language/s efficiently or realizing that knowing a foreign language is a need are the targeted missions of some eastern schools. The interesting reference is related to the fact that the mission is to educate people who can learn at an advanced level via foreign languages. Concerning schools in the Southern parts of the country, it is normal to encounter such references because those cities are visited by foreign people especially in summer time; therefore, relations with tourists or foreign people are inevitable in those locations. As to the schools located in the Eastern part, it can be claimed that those places are locations where people can be bilingual or multilingual depending on their social environment. These can be the reasons for giving references to foreign language learning in the mission statements. To exemplify, the highlighted points are being capable of using foreign languages, the need to learn foreign languages and being able to speak at least a foreign language. As is clear, references to foreign languages are quite limited, but Boggs (2003) underlines the fact that a school leader should be capable of building effective relationships and possessing communication skills.



This indicates that Turkish primary schools should put emphasis on communication and interpersonal relationships particularly via foreign languages because establishing interconnections among people from various nationalities is vital to survive in today's world.

In terms of the strengths and weaknesses, main conclusions show that the focal point for Turkish primary schools is the national and moral values unique to Turkish culture. This is understood from the references to Atatürk's reforms and principles and the Basic Law of National Education. Further, the emphasis on educating good and well-behaved individuals indicates that the Turkish education system does not only give importance to develop academic skills but also to modify behavioural tendencies of its citizens. As for the weaknesses in mission statements, a very limited number of references to foreign language education, necessity to highlight the vitality of universal values and the 21st century skills, and taking into account contextual factors that can have an impact upon the whole education system can be listed. Analysis of the mission statements suggests that there is a need to revise the mission statements in the light of those aforementioned points because all these are crucial for students to survive in today's increasingly globalized world. Most particularly, the ultimate goal of leadership in education should be to develop adults in the school community as reflective and skilful leaders as Lambert (2003) proposes. Such a procedure will possibly lead Turkish school leaders and other stakeholders to orient themselves to 21st century skills.

Based on the above conclusions, it can be suggested that mission statements should cover the unique characteristics of organizations because for educational contexts, schools should define their own characteristics and accordingly revise their mission statements. The

reason behind this is related to the fact that schools in different regions are under the influence of different social, cultural, emotional and even financial circumstances. For this reason, each school should determine its own mission by taking contextual factors into consideration. Additionally, while formulating mission statements, school leaders should consider how to improve the effectiveness of their schools by paying attention to the environment where the school is located, the school's sources, goals, target population, services and needs. Moreover, as Özdem (2011) argued, missions should not only be used as decorations for the websites of the educational institutions but they should also be put into action. To achieve this, school leaders should organize meetings or activities in order to make all stakeholders be familiar with missions and how they can put the missions into actions. In other words, all stakeholders including principals, teachers, students or parents should be the actors who formulate missions and put them into practice in a collaborative way. Principals as the leaders of schools play a crucial role to initiate such a procedure of mission development; thus, they should be liable to the local issues that they can face in their region. This is because school principals in different regions may have different problems and need different solutions in our country (Özer Ölmez & Kırkgöz, 2018).

As for limitations, this study is limited to the analysis of mission statements of state primary schools; thus, further studies can be carried out to reveal mission statements of private schools including primary, secondary and high schools, even universities in a comparative manner. Another further study can be focused on whether schools are really implementing what is expressed in their mission statements or not. Our last suggestion is to conduct a



comparative study on the examination of mission statements of schools in other countries so as to reveal weaknesses and strengths of schools' missions in Turkish context.

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