



Perceptions of School Administrators on Their Contributions to Teacher Professional Development

Okul Yöneticilerinin Öğretmen Mesleki Gelişimine Katkılarına İlişkin Algıları

Mehmet Fatih KARACABEY* 

Received: 17 March 2019

Research Article

Accepted: 16 July 2019

ABSTRACT: The aim of the study is to determine the contribution of school administrators working in Şanlıurfa to the professional development of teachers. The research was conducted according to the survey model. Data from 493 school administrators working in a primary school, secondary school and high schools during the 2017-2018 education period were collected with a form prepared on the internet. Descriptive statistics, t-test and variance analysis were used to analyze data. As a result of the research, it was determined that school administrators frequently contribute to the professional development of teachers. In Şanlıurfa, 63.50% of school administrators support teachers' professional development at frequent and always levels. It was determined that the most frequent activity of the school administrators was to review the relevant sources and to inform the teachers about educational innovations. The least frequent activity was to develop an example course to develop teachers. No difference was determined in perceptions of school administrators according to gender, duty, seniority, type of school, education and branch.

Keywords: school administrator, professional development, in-service training.

ÖZ: Araştırma amacı, Şanlıurfa'da görev yapan okul yöneticilerinin öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimlerine katkı düzeyini belirlemektir. Araştırma, tarama modeline göre yürütülmüştür. Veriler, ilkokul, ortaokul ve liselerde 2017-2018 eğitim-öğretim döneminde görev yapan 493 okul yöneticisinden internet üzerinde hazırlanan bir form ile toplanmıştır. Verilerin analizinde betimleyici analizler, t-testi ve varyans analizi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonucunda okul yöneticilerinin, öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimlerine sık sık katkıda buldukları belirlenmiştir. Şanlıurfa ilinde okul yöneticilerinin %63.50'si yeterli olabilecek sık sık ve daima düzeylerinde öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimlerini desteklemektedirler. Okul yöneticilerinin en sık yaptığı etkinliğin, ilgili kaynakları takip ederek öğretmenleri eğitim-öğretimle ilgili yeniliklerden haberdar etmek olduğu belirlenmiştir. En az yapılan etkinlik ise, öğretmenleri geliştirmek için örnek ders işlemektir. Okul yöneticilerinin algılarında cinsiyet, görev, kıdem, okul türü, öğrenim ve branş değişkenlerine göre farklılık bulunmadığı belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: okul müdürü, mesleki gelişim, hizmet içi eğitim.

*Corresponding Author: Dr., Harran University, Şanlıurfa, Turkey, mfkaracabey@harran.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1874-8733>

Citation Information

Karacabey, M. F. (2020). Perceptions of school administrators on their contributions to teacher professional development. *Kuramsal Eğitim Bilim Dergisi [Journal of Theoretical Educational Science]*, 13(1), 78-90.

Introduction

School administrators are responsible for the continuity of all systems in the school in a smooth and proper manner. School principals have an effective leadership structure, support teachers' professional development and help them create space to apply what they have learned, meaning that students and teachers have the opportunity to experience new experiences with the exchange of information and ideas.

In order to understand how professional development is shaped, it is necessary to examine what lifelong learning is and how it develops. In fact, the understanding of lifelong learning throughout the world is parallel. While the models for professional development activities and the incentives for teachers to promote this issue vary across countries, each system is essentially based on the concept of lifelong learning. At this point, the concept of lifelong learning should be examined. This concept actually means that the individual develops himself/herself in every sense outside the school (Craft, 2000). Individuals who continue their lifelong learning process that is useful only to themselves in their professional life are the individuals who carry out their professional development. But those who naturally make professional development are those who have succeeded in placing lifelong learning in all areas of their lives (Kızılkaya, 2012).

The concept of lifelong learning has gained importance especially in 1970 and beyond. This is due to the increase in the competition between information and technology among countries (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). The concept of lifelong learning, which focused on social and cultural elements in Europe, was started to be dealt with in a multifaceted way. Today, although lifelong learning is a personal desire in the past, it is generally maintained with economic concerns. In countries, individuals are in a constant race about what they can learn to be more successful than others. People have realized that the rapid development of industry in 1970 and beyond and the danger of exhaustion of resources become clearer and that the knowledge acquired in schools will not be enough to lead them to success. States have also realized that the intellectual resources of people will create new sciences and have begun to create programs that promote lifelong learning and hence professional development. Moreover, taking part in these programs and keeping the information updated in the professional field has been turned into a legal obligation in many countries (Elçiçek, 2016).

The existence of various features is important for providing professional development in teaching. For example, focusing on how students can learn better and researching teaching models for this will increase the success of both teachers and students. However, among the priorities of the teachers, the content of the courses and the transfer of this content to the students should be the most efficient. Teachers should focus on teaching within the classroom and learning by themselves in the details of the profession. Teachers' and managers' interest in deep, active learning activities and leadership skills are among the factors that influence professional development (İlğan, 2013; Schleicher, 2012).

The focus of all models on the professional development of teachers is to make the education more qualified. Kızılkaya (2012) argues that these models aiming at development in the teaching profession should be focused on exhibiting skills and discovering ideas for success. Through these models, teachers get acquainted with technology, recognize new methods of training, learn about analyzing the psychology of

students, parents and other employees in the school, follow developments in curricula and the world, and get strategic information about how they can benefit from technology in the classroom. It is possible to summarize the approaches regarding the professional development of teachers briefly as follows:

Observation / Assessment Model: Teachers are unable to obtain information on what students think about their performance in the class. If experts visit and monitor teachers in classrooms, it is possible to prepare a report on the state of the interaction between the teacher and the student and to develop the teacher's deficiencies (Sparks & Horsley, 1989).

Open Classroom Model: Plans are organized with the participation of parents, education managers or teachers working in other schools. In this way, it is possible to benefit from the accumulation of knowledge of all parties. In a sense, the classroom becomes an open space for everyone. Teachers can differentiate their teaching methods (Ekinci, 2015).

Course Activity Model: In this model, the main activity is to help teachers cooperate with each other. Teachers who study each other in various fields of education aim at developing ideas and exchanges with criticism (Hooker, 2017).

Study Groups Model: In the study groups model, the teacher community cooperates with a specific problem to solve it or to make a plan for a common goal. In this process, they solve problems with their own experiences (Ekinci, 2015).

Interrogative / Action Research Model: Action research means that a teacher trying to understand or solve a problem. Teachers collect data and review their own attitudes, thus giving a proper explanation to their colleagues (Ekinci, 2015).

Case Study Model: In this model, participants write information about their practices and attitudes and then share them with other participants so that other participants can get an idea of themselves. This model is made with the help of video recording systems and is in harmony with the developing technology (Ekinci, 2015; Kızılkaya, 2012).

In order to be successful, Gürbüz, Erdem, and Yıldırım (2013) argue that every individual who constitutes the institution they are in must be successful. The fact that an education manager is a driving force in developing teachers, teachers taking steps to explore their talents and creating opportunities for using these skills means a more dynamic education and training of students who are more successful in social, psychological and other fields. According to the study the importance given to professional development is included in the basis of other variables.

Özdemir (2016) believes that the real success of a school and its administrators can be provided by keeping the information current. It is among the most important factors that give importance to their professional development and motivate the teachers in the school, create opportunities for them and open to innovations and the systems they establish in schools. The author is of the opinion that a teacher should continue to develop on the field, pedagogy, psychology and social issues that he/she is interested in, even after the profession, before and after the profession, regardless of the level of duty and level.

Korkmaz (2015) interviewed 94 classroom teachers in the study which investigated the effects of school administrators and supervisors on the continuity of

teachers' professional development. Accordingly, it was observed that the teachers who were informed by their managers and auditors about the activities related to professional development were more willing and conscious about professional development than those who were not informed. In addition, there are findings that school administrators have more positive opinions on the issues of job satisfaction and organizational commitment than the others. In the study, it was observed that school administrators generally expect teachers to complete their professional responsibilities. Many managers do not take concrete steps towards the development of the teachers in their professional development. Teachers' activities and activities in their classrooms in the event that they feel negative themselves in the study is also among the information obtained in the study that the effort is not noticed in time will prevent people from making an effort and make it difficult to develop professionally.

Turkey is a country that has been to modernize and wanted to provide modern education system and try to make arrangements for professional development of teachers by law. Especially after the proclamation of the Republic, old and hard learning alphabets were left, modern education methods were adopted, and student-teacher interaction was given importance. The Directorate General for Training and Development of the Ministry of Education as a Center within the Ministry of Education now operates in the aim of keeping the teaching profession up-to-date and involving teachers in an effective professional development process. This institution has the aims of teachers to understand their predispositions in their professional development process and to contribute to their development in accordance with their abilities, to develop teachers' careers and to prepare them for top positions, to prepare publications related to in-service training, to train teachers in national or international programs. By taking advantage of the data provided by this institution, young teacher candidates are educated in the universities. Thus, a standard teacher preparation system is established throughout the country and it is made possible for each teacher to catch up with the chance of development (Elçiçek & Yaşar, 2016).

This study was conducted to determine the contribution of school administrators working in Şanlıurfa to the professional development of teachers. The research asked the following questions:

1. How often do school administrators contribute to the professional development of teachers?
2. What activities do school administrators do to contribute to the professional development of teachers?
3. Is there any difference in the perceptions of school administrators according to gender, duty, seniority, type of school, education and branch?

Methodology

This research employs the survey model. This model is based on collecting data from a large number of participants and generalizing the results achieved. The study population consists of 1763 elementary, middle and high school administrators working in Şanlıurfa at the 2017-2018 academic years. All the administrators in the population have been reached without sampling. The Ministry of National Education sent an official invitation letter to school administrators. Finally, 493 administrators volunteered to participate. Descriptive statistics belonging to the participants are given in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of the Participants

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	428	86.80
	Female	65	13.20
Duty	Principal	270	54.80
	Assistant principal	223	45.20
Seniority	0-3	83	16.80
	4-6	106	21.50
	7-10	81	16.40
	11 and above	223	45.20
School Type	Primary school	194	39.40
	Middle school	184	37.30
	High school	115	23.30
Education	Bachelor's	428	86.80
	Graduate	65	13.20
Branch	Classroom	158	32.00
	Branch	335	68.00

428 (86.80%) of the school administrators participated in the study were male and 65 (13.20%) were female. Of the managers, 270 are principals and 223 are assistant principals. In terms of seniority, 83 managers are between 0 and 3 years, 106 managers are between 4 and 6 years, 81 managers are between 7 and 10 years and 223 managers have more than 11 years. 194 of the executives are in primary school, 184 are in middle school and 115 are in high school. There are 428 managers who hold a bachelor's degree and 65 managers hold a graduate degree. There are 158 principals who graduated from classroom teachers and 335 managers who are graduates of branch teachers.

Data from participants were collected with a form prepared on the internet. In this form, demographic questions related to gender, duty, seniority, type of school, education, and branch, and teacher professional development scale developed by and with the permission of Bozkuş (2016) were included. On the one-dimensional scale, there are ten items which are rated between 1: never and 5: always in Likert type according to their frequency. As a result of the validity and reliability analysis of the scale, the total explained variance was 67.3% and the Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated as 0.80 (Bozkuş, 2016). The Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated again with the data obtained in this study as 0.90. Unidimensionality was confirmed again by confirmatory factor analysis based on maximum likelihood estimation according to values stated by Hu and Bentler (1999) ($\chi^2/df = 5.28$, $p < 0.001$ GFI = 0.93, CFI = 0.94 NFI = 0.92, IFI = 0.94 RMSEA = 0.09, SRMR = 0.04). Therefore, no modification was done. Factor loads of items ranged from 0.52 to 0.80.

Results

The averages of school administrators' responses concerning the scale are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Mean and Standard Deviation Values of Items

Items	\bar{X}	Sd
I keep track of relevant resources and inform teachers about innovations in education	4.23	0.84
I discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers with each other.	3.95	0.98
I create environments where we can share what we learn.	3.93	0.96
I encourage teachers to participate in events such as congresses, courses, competitions organized nationwide.	3.87	1.11
I organize training activities at the school for the professional development of teachers.	3.41	1.12
I get help from the experts in the area for professional development of teachers.	3.38	1.17
I give teachers individual reading and research tasks.	3.35	1.07
I identify individual and group development programs.	3.33	1.11
I organize a professional development monitoring form for each teacher.	3.05	1.24
I do a sample lesson to develop teachers.	3.05	1.21
General	3.55	0.78

According to the average of all items ($\bar{X}=3.55$, $Sd=0.78$), principals' level of support the professional development of teachers correspond to frequently level at Likert ranges (never: 1.00-1.79, rarely: 1.80-2.59, sometimes: 2.60-3.39, often: 3.40-4.19, always: 4.20-5.00). Therefore, school managers think they often contribute to teachers' professional development. In addition, it was determined that the most frequent activity of the school administrators was to inform the teachers about the innovations in education by following the related sources ($\bar{X}=4.23$, $Sd=0.84$). The least frequent activity was teaching a sample class to develop teachers ($\bar{X}=3.05$, $Sd=1.21$).

The overall averages of responses to the unidimensional scale were ordered according to their frequencies. These frequencies and the corresponding Likert ranges are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

The Frequency of School Administrators' Contribution to the Professional Development of Teachers

The frequency of Contribution to the Professional Development	<i>f</i>	%	Cumulative %
Never	7	1.40	1.40
Rarely	44	8.90	10.30
Sometimes	129	26.20	36.50
Often	201	40.80	77.30
Always	112	22.70	100.00
General	493	100.00	

According to findings, 7 (1.40%) of the school administrators gave no support to teachers' professional development, 44 (8.90%) administrators rarely, 129 (26.20%) administrators sometimes, 201 (40.80%) administrators frequently, and 112 (22.70%) administrators always supported the teachers' professional development. Therefore, in the province of Şanlıurfa, 63.50% of the school administrators support the professional development of teachers at frequencies that can be considered sufficient (often and always).

Table 4

Differences according to Demographic Variables

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	\bar{X}	<i>Sd</i>	<i>T/F</i>	<i>p</i>
Gender	Male	428	3.57	0.79	0.86	0.39
	Female	65	3.48	0.72		
Duty	Principal	270	3.60	0.73	1.55	0.12
	Assistant principal	223	3.49	0.84		
Seniority	0-3	83	3.53	0.74	1.91	0.13
	4-6	106	3.59	0.66		
	7-10	81	3.72	0.80		
	11 and above	223	3.48	0.83		
School Type	Primary school	194	3.57	0.78	1.00	0.36
	Middle school	184	3.59	0.76		
	High school	115	3.46	0.82		
Education	Bachelor's	428	3.56	0.79	0.50	0.62
	Graduate	65	3.51	0.72		
Branch	Classroom	158	3.61	0.78	1.15	0.25
	Branch	335	3.53	0.78		

It was determined whether school administrators' contribution to teacher professional development differs according to gender, seniority, type of school, and education and branch. Independent-groups *t*-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) findings are presented in Table 4. According to the findings, perceptions do not differ significantly in terms of gender ($T=0.86$, $p<0.05$), duty ($T=1.55$, $p<0.05$), seniority ($F=1.91$, $p<0.05$), type of school ($F=1.00$, $p<0.05$), education ($T=0.50$, $p<0.05$) and branch ($T=1.15$, $p<0.05$).

Discussion

In order to determine the contribution of the school administrators working in Şanlıurfa to the professional development of teachers, the results obtained in this study are as follows:

1. It has been determined that school administrators frequently contribute to the professional development of teachers. In Şanlıurfa, 63.50% of school administrators support teachers' professional development at often and always levels which may be sufficient.
2. The most frequent activity done by the school administrators is to inform the teachers about the innovations in education by following the related sources.
3. The least activity is to teach a sample class to develop teachers.
4. There is no difference in perceptions of school administrators according to gender, duty, seniority, type of school, education and branch.

The data obtained from the research is based on the perceptions of the school administrators. For this reason, there may be differences between administrators' and teachers' perceptions. In a survey that applied the same measurement instrument to teachers in Şanlıurfa province, 25.5% of school administrators support teachers' professional development at often and always levels which may be sufficient (Bozkuş & Karacabey, 2018). Therefore, it can be thought that school administrators evaluate themselves more positively. Further research should be done to compare perceptions of school administrators and teachers. Researchers should consider that school administrators may judge themselves more positively than teachers. Therefore, future research should control self-rater bias.

Because, in previous studies (Çalık & Şehitoğlu, 2006; Ekinci, 2010), it was determined that school administrators did not contribute enough to teacher professional development. The teachers' participation rate of professional development in Turkey is 24%, so the possibility that the administrators contribute to the teacher professional development at a rate of 63.50% is low (Ministry of National Education, 2016). Therefore, it can be claimed that school administrators do not contribute sufficiently to the professional development of teachers, and it may be advisable to educate and encourage administrators to increase their contribution.

In previous studies (Bozkus 2016; Bozkus & Karacabey, 2018) it is confirmed that the most frequent activity done by the school administrators is to inform the teachers about the innovations in education by following the related sources. Indeed, school administrators should follow the innovations and inform the teachers about them (Gündüz & Balyer, 2013). However, school administrators have limited access to academic databases. Therefore, it can be thought that managers follow general media.

Since teachers have the same opportunities, it is important that the administrators have more academic resources. For this reason, school administrators should be provided access to academic resources and they should be encouraged to use these resources.

The result that the least activity is to teach a sample class to develop teachers has been identified in previous research too (Bozkuş 2016; Bozkuş & Karacabey, 2018). In the success of students, it is seen that the teacher's effective lesson can be considered as a priority (Creemers, Kyriakides, & Antoniou, 2013; Muijs & Reynolds, 2000). But it can be asserted that the teachers in Turkey are not effective in this regard (OECD, 2014; World Bank, 2011). Therefore, it is important that school administrators should improve teacher efficacy. Administrators can provide effective education and training methods for teachers (Payne & Wolfson, 2000). Through sample courses, it is possible to prevent the teachers to be hurt by direct education. In the east part of Turkey, the sample lesson method has been shown to be effective in teacher professional development (Erbilgin & Boz, 2013; Mete, 2013). Administrators should be encouraged to give sample lessons.

The reason why the school administrators' self-perceptions about their contribution to teacher professional development did not differ according to the demographic variables might be a result of similar working conditions in schools.

Conclusion

The teaching profession has a great role in the development of the country. The most important factor in student achievement is the teacher factor (Buchanan, 2012). Support for teachers is important for student learning. Even though teachers have received a very high-quality education prior to service, the teacher needs a support mechanism to master his / her profession and achieve competence. The training that the teacher received prior to service has become insufficient within a few years due to the incredible increase in knowledge in today's world. At this point, professional development is an inevitable necessity for teachers.

Professional development is an educational process that aims to provide the individual with the knowledge, skills, and habits related to a specific profession and to improve his / her abilities in many ways (Smith & Gillespie, 2007). The common point in the professional development process is that the individual knows about himself/herself, knows its strengths and weaknesses, and thus seek proper professional development. The process for the teaching starts with the candidate teacher stepping into the profession. In the first years, the candidate teacher is trying to deal with the problems brought by the profession and on the other hand, he must maintain his professional development in accordance with the requirements and needs of the era.

The professional development phenomenon, which is important for all professions, comes to the agenda when it comes to teaching. Teachers' information is changing day by day. The development of new teaching methods further increases the importance of the professional development of teachers. In order to achieve high success in student outcomes, it is necessary to professionally develop a teacher who provides education and training to the student (Duffield, Wageman, & Hodge, 2013).

Professional development is a dynamic process that takes place throughout the life of teachers. Due to this dynamic feature, professional development is a constantly evolving and changing phenomenon. The change and development of teachers'

professions are experienced at a dizzying pace. With professional development, teachers will constantly seek excellence as they will be aware of their deficiencies and will enable their students to achieve excellence. Therefore, teachers' professional development efforts should be supported by school principals (Leithwood, 1992). Teachers whose professional development is supported by the school principals can participate in activities for their professional development more easily.

The approach of the school administration has an important role in ensuring the participation of teachers in the professional development programs. The school administrator is the person who determines the development goals of the school depending on the vision and mission of the school. School administrators form the culture and team spirit as an orchestra conductor within the school. Accordingly, school administrators are responsible for helping teachers to plan their careers by engaging teachers in various professional development programs for school development. It is possible to determine the professional development needs of teachers and to realize the professional development activities within the school by establishing university-school cooperation towards these needs through the initiative of school administration.

Teachers must constantly renew and develop their professional knowledge. If the school principal wants to increase the success of his / her students, he/she should contribute to the professional development of the teachers (Zepeda, 2013). Successful students are the work of the teachers who make their professional development permanent. While teachers are engaged in professional development activities, they may be supported by school principals inside the classroom or outside the classroom. The contribution of school principals to teachers for their professional development can be very different. When a teacher conducts professional development activities in the classroom, school, and private life, it is possible that he/she may face difficulties in some cases. School principals may need to provide a variety of help for teachers to overcome their difficulties in their professional development activities. Every work done by the school principals for the professional development of teachers is a positive contribution.

Professional development should be appropriate to the needs of institutions and teachers. The person who knows the best needs of the institution is the school principal. The school principal needs to know the needs of the teacher, together with the school needs. The school principal should provide teachers with professional development activities in line with the needs of the teacher and the school. These professional development activities must meet the needs of the school as well as the needs of teachers. These professional development activities to be realized by the teachers can be successful with the direct support of the school principal. The school principal can plan various professional development activities for each teacher. Principals should employ instructional leadership to provide teacher professional leadership (Blase & Blase, 1999). Principals should act as an instructional leader and learner, create a learning environment, involve in the design, delivery and content of professional development, and assess the professional development outcomes (Bredeson & Johansson, 2000). In professional development "principals must be cognizant of shared norms and values among their faculties before initiating new practices in curriculum, instruction, or school organization" (Youngs & King, 2002, p. 643).

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