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## Leadership Expectations of Secondary School Students in the Context of School Principals

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**Abstract:** In the research, it was aimed to learn the leadership expectations of secondary school students in the context of school principals. In this context, focus group interviews were conducted with sixteen students studying at different grade levels in the research conducted with a phenomenological design, and the data obtained were subjected to content analysis. When the findings were examined, it was seen that the leadership expectations of the students from the school principals were shaped in four sub-themes (behavior, values, skills and abilities, and characteristics). According to the results obtained, students from school principals about leadership; In the behavior sub-theme, they expect the most discipline and valuing ideas, they expect the most fairness, tolerance and understanding in the values sub-theme, they expect the most professional expertise in the skills and abilities sub-theme, and they expect the most compassion and sincerity in the characteristics sub-theme. The results show that the expectations of the students, which are the basic elements of the education process, should be taken into account by the school leaders.

**Keywords:** *Leadership, leader behaviors, school leadership, school principals, student expectations.*

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### Introduction

Leadership is a process in which an individual influences the other members of the group to achieve common goals (Northouse, 2007). It also includes establishing effective communication with subordinates and influencing them from the leader's vision to achieve organizational goals (Alvani, 1993). In this direction, there are two important theoretical perspectives regarding the emergence of leadership in the individual structure. The first of these is the trait theory, which includes the innate qualities of the individual such as courage, intelligence, assertiveness, power, and responsibility, and the second one is the behavioral theory, which is based on the development of learnable individual qualities such as planning, organizing, controlling, and directing (Verawati & Hartono, 2020).

At this point, an effective leader generally has a vision, inspires his/her followers, acts with integrity, and shows original qualities, at the same time, he/she develops the human capital in the organization, shares the future (strategist), realizes the talents in the organization, manages the talents and makes things happen. The characteristics of an effective leader also include the structure of an individual who has the role of an executive taking responsibility and having personal competence (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2021). According to Kouzes and Posner (2002), effective leaders act in line with a competency that guides and models the process, inspires within the framework of a shared vision, challenges processes, enables others to take action, and encourages individuals.

According to Wellin (2013), an effective leader acts in line with three principles. The first of these is following a vision (direction) determined to achieve a goal, the second is establishing effective relationships and influencing other people to achieve the goal, and the third is extensive use of the mind (brain) based on problem solving through intuition and logic. At this point, Shockley-Zalaback (2006) distinguishes between the manager and the leader. According to Shockley-Zalaback, while the main function of managers is to fulfill the roles required of them and evaluate their subordinates by directing, leaders guide their employees and followers to achieve their goals and act in a supportive way in achieving these goals. Kostera et al. (2002) also support this situation and argue that while leaders show a long-

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term goal and direct their followers and subordinates to this goal, the goals of managers are only to manage the relevant business processes.

In this context, there are various power areas that are shaped in the leader's structure while managing organizational processes. These are; (1) the position that stems from the institution and title and includes the power of authority, (2) being charismatic that includes leadership style and personality, (3) relationships that cover the formal or informal interaction networks within or outside the organization, (4) the knowledge covering the dominant control over the environmental elements to form an argument, (5) the expertise covering the effect resulting from the transmission and development of expert knowledge, and (6) the rewarding that binds individuals to established standards and expectations (Bal et al., 2008).

In this framework, it is important for school principals, who are the official managers and leaders of the school organization, to go beyond the managerial processes and act as a leader and manage the processes. Thus, school leaders who draw a successful profile generally support all stakeholders in the school, provide opportunities for success and strive to increase the quality of education (Drysdale et al., 2003). As determined in the study of Oluremi (2008), effective leadership behaviors of school principals affect school learning. On the other hand, as stated in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2009) report, the educational leadership styles of school leaders are important in today's effective school leadership. Indeed, according to this report, innovative teaching practices are taken into account more, professional development of teachers is ensured, and cooperation increases in schools where school principals exhibit educational leadership. This situation has positive effects on the student, who is the target of the active learning process, and student success. Thus, according to Grissom et al. (2021), school leaders should engage in behaviors such as teaching-oriented interactions with teachers, creating an efficient school climate, supporting and facilitating productive collaboration and professional learning communities, and strategically managing staff and resources to increase school and student success and improve outcomes. School leaders should also have managerial skills such as personal development and relationship management, supporting classroom teaching and using data, strategic thinking, and resource development. This leadership orientation includes practices that reflect positively on the school and student outcomes.

Improving student learning in terms of management of education requires a holistic leadership perspective. In this sense, educational leaders should focus on student learning, development, and welfare in all fields of study (National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2015). In this context, in the effect of educational leadership on student success, school leadership considering standards such as mission, vision and core values, ethical and professional norms, equality and cultural sensitivity, curriculum, teaching and assessment, care and support for students, development of the professional capacity of staff, participation of family and society, and school development and reflecting these standards in management practices are important in terms of meeting student expectations and ensuring student success (NPBEA, 2015).

In this context, it is important to look at the leadership behaviors of the principals, which are mostly based on research in the literature on the opinions and perceptions of teachers, from the perspective of students which is a different perspective and reveal the leadership expectations of the students in the context of school principals (Bulach et al., 2006; Cansoy, 2019; Cerit, 2009; Dereli, 2003; Ekinci, 2015; Heidmets & Liik, 2014; Naido, 2019, etc.). Thus, in this process, the basic elements that students expect from school principals in terms of leadership will provide important benefits in terms of ensuring the efficiency of educational processes and student happiness and success. Within this direction, the study aims to learn the leadership expectations of secondary school students in the context of school principals, and the answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the perceptions and views of students studying at the secondary school level about leadership?
2. What behaviors do secondary school students expect from their school principals?
3. What kind of values do secondary school students expect from their school principals?
4. What kind of competencies do students studying at secondary school expect their school principals to have?
5. What personal characteristics do students studying at secondary school expect school principals to have?

## **Methodology**

### *Research Design*

In the research, the phenomenological design was used to learn the leadership expectations of secondary school students in the context of school principals. The phenomenology design is mostly used to make sense out of the data collected within the framework of the research and to analyze it, however, the meanings, judgments, perceptions, and experiences that exist in the subjective consciousness of the participants can be revealed in the studies conducted within the framework of this design (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2014; Padgett, 2017).

In the research, "focus group interview", which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used to reveal the leadership expectations of secondary school students in the context of school principals. In focus group interviews, the number of participants in each group should be between 6 and 8 people, the interview should be carefully planned, a comfortable environment suitable for the interview should be chosen, and the researcher should be experienced in

group interviews (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Focus group interviews were conducted by forming two groups (5th and 6th grades constituting the first group and 7th and 8th grades the second group) of eight participant students each.

### *Working Group*

The criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods mostly used in qualitative research, was used to determine the student groups that will participate in the research. In particular, this method is frequently used in determining the situations and people who will provide rich information about the research, and an intensive data collection process takes place by selecting the participants by the predetermined criteria within the framework of the research (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2002). In this context, in a state secondary school located in Sancaktepe district of Istanbul province, "students studying in the 5-6-7th and 8th grades, who can express themselves easily and are known to be talented in negotiation and debate" were used as a criterion to determine the study group. While selecting these students, the opinions of the advisory teachers were taken into account. In this context, focus group interviews were conducted with 16 students who met the relevant criteria of the study, and the demographic information of the study group is shown in Table 1.

*Table 1. Demographic Information of Participating Students*

<b>Participant Code</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Age</b>
P1	M	5	10
P2	M	5	10
P3	F	5	10
P4	F	5	10
P5	M	6	11
P6	M	6	11
P7	F	6	11
P8	F	6	11
P9	F	7	12
P10	F	7	12
P11	M	7	12
P12	M	7	12
P13	M	8	13
P14	M	8	13
P15	F	8	13
P16	F	8	13

Note: Encodings P1, P2... were used to ensure the safety of participant students.

As seen in Table 1, eight of the students forming the study group are female students, and eight are male students. At the same time, four of the students are in the 5th grade, four are in the 6th grade, four are in the 7th grade, and four are in the 8th grade. On the other hand, the age of the students varies between 10 and 13 years.

### *Data Collection Tools*

To learn the leadership expectations of secondary school students in the context of school principals, an interview form consisting of semi-structured questions was used as a data collection tool. In semi-structured questions, a mixture of closed and open-ended questions is generally used, and the opinions and experiences of the participants about the case in question are learned (Adams, 2015). In this direction, while the focus group interviews were conducted with the participating students, the consent of the relevant students and their families was obtained, and then the interview was planned and questions were asked to the students. Some of the semi-structured questions asked to the students in the interview form are as follows;

1. What is a leader in your opinion and how should he/she be?
2. In your opinion, about a school principal:
  - a) What kind of behaviors should they exhibit?
  - b) What kind of values should they have and what kind of values should they exhibit?
  - c) What skills and competencies should they have?
  - d) What kind of personal characteristics should they have?
3. When you imagine a school principal you like, what would you compare them to?

### *Data Collection*

To carry out the focus group discussions, first of all, planning was made about the time and place of the meeting with the participants, and a meeting was held in the school library in December 2021. The school's advisory teacher also participated in the focus group discussion and the emotional state of the students was taken into account in the process. During the interview, firstly, students were informed about the interview, a dialogue was established within the framework of trust (Kvale, 1996), and then demographic information was learned and semi-structured questions were asked to the participant students. Also, during the interview process, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was taken into account, and attention was paid to the situations that would adversely affect the students' personal rights and emotional state (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund Turkey Representation Office, 2004). At the same time, the students were provided with the flexibility to express themselves easily, only partial interventions were made by the researcher in case of going out of the subject.

### *Analysis of Data*

The data obtained as a result of the focus group interviews were first written down by using a word processor program, and then the data obtained were coded through various word groups, concepts, categories, and themes, using the content analysis technique (with the Maxqda program) and taking into account the aspects that have common meanings within the framework of the case addressed (Wilson, 2011). Since the codes, categories, and themes obtained in the research were derived directly from the data obtained, traditional content analysis was used (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

### *Validity and Reliability*

In the validity studies, the interview questions and the researcher's judgments about the cases were presented based on the literature (Merriam, 2018; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). Another important issue in validity studies is external validity, which ensures that research results can be generalized to other studies, samples, and settings. In this context, detailed information was given about the research process, stages, analysis and results in order to ensure external validity, and all testable details were shared (Tuncel, 2008).

The data obtained in order to ensure internal reliability in reliability studies were coded by two independent experts, and coder consistency was calculated by applying the formula specified by Miles and Huberman (1994). The similarity (consensus) rate between the two encoders was 83%. In addition, the coding and data set were shown to the participant group and their approval was obtained, and the views of the participants were included in the research as much as possible in order to increase the credibility and confirmability of the research (Merriam, 2018; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005).

Another important issue in reliability studies is external reliability. In order to ensure external reliability, the experiences, judgments and expressions of the participants were conveyed as they were. At the same time, no intervention was made in the data collection process in order to provide an emotional comfort environment for the participants and to prevent participant reactions (Merriam, 2018; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005).

## **Findings / Results**

Considering the findings obtained in the research, students studying in various grades expect various behaviors, values, skills and abilities, and characteristics from school principals, who are the leaders of the school. As seen in Figure 1, students' expectations from school principals; focused on establishing discipline and valuing ideas in the sub-theme of behavior, being fair, being tolerant and understanding in the sub-theme of values, expertise, discovering talents and effective communication in the sub-theme of skills and abilities, compassion-sincerity in the sub-theme of characteristics.

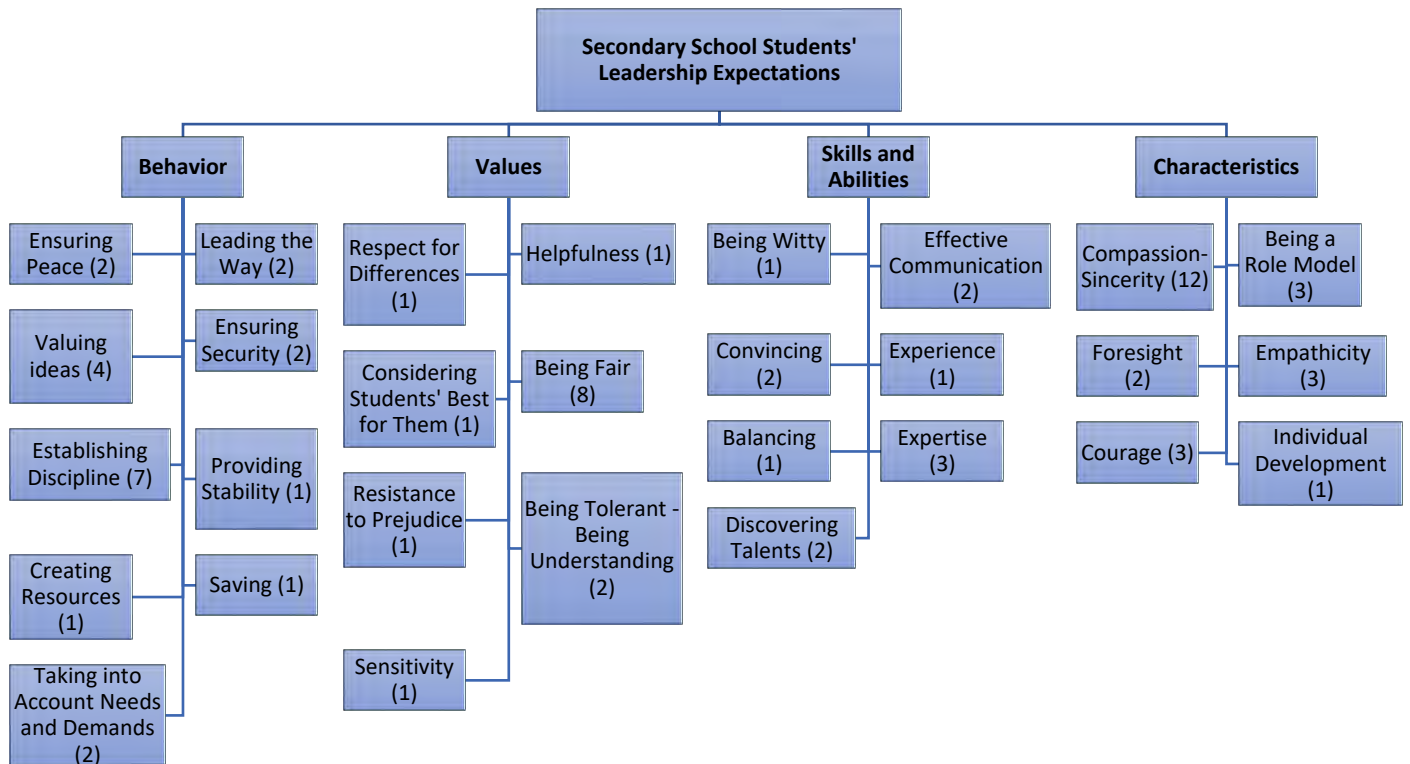


Figure 1. Leadership Expectations of Secondary School Students in the Context of School Principals

### Behavior

Students participating in the research expect various behaviors from their school principals as a leader. According to the students' opinions, school principals should ensure peace in the school with the decisions they make regarding the school, value their opinions by taking into account the opinions of teachers, students, and other stakeholders, and maintain discipline by operating the discipline process well without going to extremes and keeping everything in balance. Moreover, according to students, school principals should provide financial income to the school, take into account the needs and demands of students and take action for them. Some of the students' opinions are as follows;

"I think the leader of the school is the main person who ensures the peace of the school because he is the person who decides by combining the views of teachers and students and implements that decision." (P5/6<sup>th</sup> grade).

"The leader of the school is the person who makes orderly and coherent decisions by collecting the views and feelings of teachers, students, or people working in the school." (P6/6<sup>th</sup> grade)

"Although I agree with my friends, I am also in favor of discipline in their decisions. Too much discipline causes students to withdraw from school, and lack of discipline causes students to lose seriousness." (P1/5<sup>th</sup> grade).

"A good leader must be disciplined" (P3/5<sup>th</sup> grade).

"I think discipline that does not go to extremes is a must for a manager or leader" (P1/5<sup>th</sup> grade).

"....must provide financial resources to the school." (P5/6<sup>th</sup> grade)

"He should do activities that meet the needs of the students. He should produce resources that can provide psychological support if necessary. He should organize courses and focus on talent courses apart from the regular courses." (P6/6<sup>th</sup> grade).

According to the students, at the same time, school principals should pave the way for students and teachers by leading them and providing the necessary support. Again, according to students, school principals should first consider the safety of the school and students, and should not allow factors that negatively affect student safety at school. Also, according to students, school principals should ensure stability with their decisions and management style and should have the awareness of saving resources to reduce school expenses. Some of the students' opinions are as follows;

"The leader of the school should be a person who leads students and teachers, paves the way for them, informs them and offers them all kinds of support in terms of material and moral factors and work environment." (P13/8<sup>th</sup> grade).

"He should consider the safety of the school and students first because there is a serious grouping in schools, there are people whom we call gangs in schools, who intimidate and threaten people. The principal must first decongest them and ensure the safety of the school and students." (P13/8<sup>th</sup> grade).

"That person should have the characteristics of making quick decisions, managing the group and providing stability in the school environment." (P13/8<sup>th</sup> grade).

"He should be skillful at reducing school expenses. For example, fuel savings can be achieved by preventing the windows from being opened in winter, except for breaks." (P1/5<sup>th</sup> grade).

### *Values*

Students participating in the research expect various values from their school principals as a leader. According to students' views, school principals should respect different views and take measures for differences to be expressed. However, according to students, school principals should be helpful and consider the well-being of students. Again, according to students, school principals should show justice by treating everyone equally and without discrimination.

"He is a person who respects different opinions. For example, there may be events such as 'you are different, don't play with us' at school. The leader should not have these and take measures to prevent such things from happening" (P16/8<sup>th</sup> grade).

"He should be hardworking and helpful to other people" (P14/8<sup>th</sup> grade).

"I think the principal should think about the good of the students. For example, he should have them do experiments to measure their level and guide them accordingly. This is necessary for non-discrimination" (P5/6<sup>th</sup> grade).

"He should be in a structure that does not discriminate, equal to every student, and respects the rights of teachers and students" (P8/6<sup>th</sup> grade).

"I think the principal should treat everyone equally, regardless of religion, language, race or gender" (P8/6<sup>th</sup> grade).

"Students should value their opinions. He should be fair and reflect this to the students" (P10/7<sup>th</sup> grade).

"Everyone should be treated equally. He should be egalitarian" (P13/8<sup>th</sup> grade).

According to the students, at the same time, school principals should not have prejudices, they should destroy existing prejudices by resisting and be sensitive about this issue. Again, according to students, school principals should be tolerant by understanding their stakeholders and should be sensitive to students and teachers by showing interest and paying attention to their opinions.

"She should not be prejudiced and if anyone else has prejudice, she should destroy it. She should be sensitive to prejudices" (P14/8<sup>th</sup> grade).

"Must have a tolerant, understanding and empathetic approach." (P12/7<sup>th</sup> grade).

"He should care about himself and people, he should be understanding" (P4/5<sup>th</sup> grade).

"I think the leader of the school should take care of the teachers and students closely, listen to their views and work for the good of the school" (P7/6<sup>th</sup> grade).

### *Skills and Abilities*

Students participating in the research expect various skills and abilities from their school principals as a leader. According to the students' views, school principals should be quick-witted and able to manage crises well in situations that require quick decision-making and expressing opinions. At the same time, according to students' opinions, school principals should display an impressive and strong profile in communication and should be skilled and good at speaking and persuading their stakeholders. Moreover, according to student opinions, school principals should have experience in school management.

"He should be witty. When a student or teacher asks something, he should be able to respond quickly. He should be able to make immediate decisions and manage crises well" (P5/6<sup>th</sup> grade).

"Must be strong and expressive in communication. They should make decisions based on their own observations, not what they hear from the outside" (P15/8<sup>th</sup> grade).

“He should have good oratory, high persuasiveness” (P10/7<sup>th</sup> grade).

“She has to be persuasive. She should have a unique approach to the capacity of each student” (P7/6<sup>th</sup> grade).

“In my opinion, a good leader should be disciplined, experienced and successful in school management” (P12/7<sup>th</sup> grade).

According to the students, school principals should have the potential to provide a balance that can find the middle way in the problems experienced. Also, according to students, school principals should have the capacity to solve student problems at school and the quality to meet expectations, that is, they should have the expertise related to their profession and school management. According to the students, at the same time, school principals should pay enough attention to discover the talents of children, provide the necessary environment and carry out activities within this framework.

“Must have the character to find the middle way” (P2/5<sup>th</sup> grade).

“He should be versatile; he should have the capacity to solve students’ questions and problems. Just as a hairdresser should be good at cutting hair and a carpenter at woodworking, the principal should be good at school management” (P12/7<sup>th</sup> grade).

“He should do his job lovingly and be equipped to meet expectations. He should know his profession” (P9/7<sup>th</sup> grade).

“She should have the attention to discover children’s talents, she should do decisive work on it” (P12/7<sup>th</sup> grade).

“He should have the skills to provide an environment for the discovery and development of students’ talents” (P3/5<sup>th</sup> grade).

### *Characteristics*

Students participating in the research expect various characteristics from their school principals as a leader. According to students’ opinions, school principals should show a friendly attitude towards students, approach students with a positive and sincere orientation, and draw a profile in which students can express their views without hesitation and approach them. Also, according to students, school principals should be role models by exhibiting behaviors and attitudes that can set an example for students and other stakeholders. Again, according to students, school principals should have the foresight to evaluate and predict the consequences of their decisions.

“He should value and reassure students and be caring and patient. An angry principal whom students will be afraid of will cause students to stay away from school” (P4/5<sup>th</sup> grade).

“Must be affectionate, empathetic and mild-mannered” (P9/7<sup>th</sup> grade).

“The school principal has always been portrayed to us as a person who cannot be approached and who should be feared. But the school principal should be in a character to destroy this perception and show that he is with the student” (P11/7<sup>th</sup> grade).

“He should be at a level where the student can approach without hesitation and convey his/her views easily” (P2/5<sup>th</sup> grade).

“He should be someone who will set an example for students in their present and future lives. He should be a role model with his behaviors” (P16/8<sup>th</sup> grade).

“He should pay attention to his appearance and attire. In this regard, he should be an example to the teachers and students under his management” (P11/7<sup>th</sup> grade).

“She has to be predictive. For example, when she makes a decision, she should be able to predict its effects” (P5/6<sup>th</sup> grade).

According to the students, school principals should also have the ability to empathize to understand students and feel the reasons for their attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, according to students, school principals should be brave and reflect this development to students by constantly improving themselves.

“He should act accordingly, considering his own student years, and be understanding” (P10/7<sup>th</sup> grade).

“His empathy and communication skills should be high” (P9/7<sup>th</sup> grade).

“He must be brave and hardworking” (P14/8<sup>th</sup> grade).

“Must be tolerant and courageous” (P15/8<sup>th</sup> grade).

“He should constantly improve himself and reflect this on students” (P12/7<sup>th</sup> grade).

Within the framework of the research, the students were also asked what they imagined and liked the school principal as a metaphor, and the reasons why, and the findings are shown in Table 2 below.

*Table 2. Metaphors of the School Principal Profile Dreamed by Secondary School Students*

<b>The Metaphor They Liken</b>	<b>Their Reasons</b>
Mustafa Kemal Atatürk	"Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Leader and warrior like him" (P1/5 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Murat Boz (Singer)	"I dream of a principal who loves and cares for children like him and is active" (P4/5 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Haluk Levent (Singer-Activist)	"I would like a principal who is fair like him, with a leader spirit and who wants everyone's well-being" (P11/7 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Electric Switch	"Just as we turn off the switch and stay in the dark, the absence of a principal means darkness for the school. The copper wires in the key are the teachers and the key is the principal, and together they provide the enlightenment of the student" (P12/7 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Flower	"Just as a flower gives beauty and a pleasant fragrance when it blooms, a school principal should spread knowledge and joy to their surroundings" (P3/5 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Spider-Man	"Just as this character tries to save people's lives, the school principal tries to save the future of the students" (P9/7 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Machine Oil	"As oil fixes a machine and makes it work properly when it rusts, so the principal makes the school work better" (P2/5 <sup>th</sup> grade).
Door	"I liken it to the door to a good life" (P6/6 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Software Developer	"I can also define students as coders and shapers like a software developer" (P5/6 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Browser	"I liken that person to a web browser; someone who can answer any question every time you call" (P13/8 <sup>th</sup> grade).
Lamp	"She should shine like a lamp" (P16/8 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Ant	"Hardworking as an ant" (P14/8 <sup>th</sup> grade)
The Sun	"Like the sun that illuminates us" (P8/6 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Tree	"Just as a tree takes carbon dioxide and gives oxygen, the principal can take away the bad in the school and replace it with goodness" (P7/6 <sup>th</sup> grade)

An examination of the metaphors of the students about the school principals in Table 2 reveals that the expectations of the students about the school principals are focused on the individual structure that focuses on the following: being a leader and a challenger, loving-caring for children, being dynamic and fair, wishing for the well-being of everyone, activating the institution, caring and sharing knowledge, worrying about the future of the students, activating the school, offering a positive school environment to the students, planning and shaping education processes and students' achievements, witty and can solve problems, hardworking and creates a positive school climate by eliminating the negativities in the school.

### Discussion

The findings obtained in the study exhibit that the expectations of the students studying at the secondary school level from the school principals in the context of leadership were dimensioned in the sub-themes of behaviors, values, skills, and talents, and characteristics. In the behaviors sub-theme, the students expect school principals to provide peace in the school, lead, value the opinions of the stakeholders, ensure student safety, provide measured discipline, create stability in the school operation, create financial resources for the school, save resources in the operational processes, and take into account the needs and demands of students and other stakeholders. As Verawati and Hartono (2020) stated, this includes leader behaviors that depend on individual qualities that can be developed later. In this direction, the main behavior of the leader in school operation is to create a "healthy school environment", as reflected in research findings and student expectations, and also to create a "climate suitable for education", which includes a supportive and sensitive attitude in addition to providing security and order (Wallace Foundation, 2013). Drawing attention to this situation, Habegger (2008) stated that the priority in creating a successful student and school profile is to create a positive school climate and culture, and stated that these orientations of school leaders are more important. Again and Kermit (2021) stated that one of the main responsibilities of school principals towards their stakeholders is to lead the situations that will increase student success. Kermit also stated that another important responsibility of school leaders is school safety, as expressed in student expectations, and that this responsibility comprises the security of school facilities and equipment and several situations that need to be controlled, from ensuring the safety of the school to the development of school discipline policies and thus, Kermit supported the findings of this research.

On the other hand, in the values sub-theme, the students expect the following factors from school principals: to respect differences, be helpful, tolerant, understanding, and fair, act in a way that thinks about student welfare, resist and destroy prejudices, and show sensitivity towards stakeholders. At this point, Ulrich and Smallwood (2021) emphasized



that the leader should act with honesty, and NPBEA (2015) emphasized the values of the leader as seen in the research findings by stating that school leaders should manage the process in a structure that takes care of equality, sensitivity, and students. Thus, as Meador (2019) stated, students follow the inconsistencies they encounter in the school environment well, and by examining how school leaders react in similar situations or disciplinary problems, they can question the trust in the justice of school leaders by expressing that they judge and follow fair and inconsistent school leader attitudes. This shows that the students attach importance to the values that the leader should have.

Again, in the sub-theme of skills and talents, the students expect the following factors from school principals: to respond quickly to problems and questions, communicate effectively with stakeholders, have high persuasion skills, have an experienced and expert structure, find the middle way by balancing the problem areas in operation, and discover the talents of the students. The research conducted by Turan et al. (2012) reveals that school principals are aware of this situation. Thus, the research concluded that the basic elements expected from them by their stakeholders were focused on values, skills, and talents such as openness to communication, fairness, and expertise in the field, and at the same time, various behaviors such as ensuring the happiness of the stakeholders, supporting social development, and realizing the student potential were expected from them. Another study supporting the research findings was carried out by Erdoğan (2015). Erdoğan determined that the responsibilities of school principals towards students are communicating effectively with students, showing sensitivity and compassion towards students, dealing with students' personal problems, loving and respecting students, meeting their learning needs, paying close attention to students, creating a good learning environment, being honest and fair, guiding and role modeling, being attentive to the social and emotional needs of students, creating a healthy school climate, providing a safe learning environment and discipline, empathizing with students, and protecting students against violence and discrimination and these findings are in line with the student expectations found in this research.

In the sub-theme of characteristics, students expect the following factors from school principals: providing personal development with compassion and sincerity, being a role model, foresighted, courageous, and empathetic. The main situation that should be emphasized in this framework, as Verawati and Hartono (2020) stated, expresses the leader characteristics that include innate qualities and includes periodic changes related to the formation process of personality. At this point, a determination supporting the leadership characteristics reflected in student expectations in the research was made by Uğurlu and Demir (2016), and in their research, for an effective school, the school leader should be fair and reliable, professionally experienced, and expert, altruistic and exemplary, understanding, honest, humane, displaying balanced behaviors and following developments.

Moreover, the metaphors of the students about the school principals reveal that they expect a structure that creates a positive school climate with leadership qualities, love of children, sense of justice, dynamism and activates the institution, adopt a positive approach to the student, and also a friendly, hardworking and problem-solving profile. Thus, according to Bilge (2013), creating a school environment that supports students increases student success. Also, as Meador (2019) stated, school principals should be good in human relations and reflect this to students, as reflected in the expectations of students. Thus, Meador indicated that school principals encounter stakeholders with many different emotional states in their everyday routine, their leadership qualifications are revealed in such cases, they should make them feel that they care about the situation of individuals, especially students, and make them believe that they can cope with problems. Another person who supports these metaphorical expectations of the students is Kermit (2021). According to Kermit, school principals are of critical importance at schools and school leaders have to have leadership characteristics of high energy, sense of humor, compassion, being discreet, and taking initiative.,

### Conclusion

In this research, which aims to reveal the leadership expectations of secondary school students in the context of school principals, students, from school principals; (1) They expect behaviors to ensure peace in the school, lead, value the opinions of stakeholders, ensure student safety, provide discipline, create stability in school operation, create financial resources for the school, save resources in operational processes, and take into account the needs and demands of students and other stakeholders. (2) They expect values respecting differences, being helpful, tolerant, understanding and fair, acting in a structure that thinks about student welfare, resisting prejudices and demolishing prejudices and showing sensitivity towards stakeholders. (3) They expect skills and abilities responding quickly problems and questions, interacting with stakeholders of communicating effectively, persuading, having an experienced and professional expertise, finding the middle way by balancing the problem areas in operation and discovering the talents of the students. (4) They expect features to compassion and sincerity, being a role model, being foresighted and brave, empathic and providing personal development.

As a result, this research reveals that students, like other stakeholders of the school, have the potential to answer the question of "what kind of leadership?" and student leadership expectations should be taken into account by school administrations. Thus, this research determined that students' expectations from school leaders are mostly focused on providing a positive climate and discipline at school, being fair, compassionate, and sincere, and it is important to value students' opinions and expectations in educational leadership practices and leadership orientations of school administrations.

### Recommendations

When the results of the research are evaluated, it is important for school principals to consider student expectations in terms of leadership orientation that will reflect on student success and happiness. At the same time, within the framework of a participatory understanding, the implementation of practices, activities and plans that will reflect student views and expectations in school leadership processes will also contribute to the creation of a positive school climate.

However, since the research was carried out only at the level of secondary school students, it would be beneficial for researchers to conduct research on leadership expectations based on different school types, grades, and different student ages and profiles. At the same time, it is important to reveal the leadership expectations within the framework of the views of other stakeholders of education (such as student parents).

### Limitations

The research is limited to the views and perceptions of secondary school students in terms of the study group. At the same time, in terms of method, it is limited to focus group interviews and semi-structured research questions asked to the participants in the interviews.

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