Research Article

School Administrators' Opinions on Frequently Changing Regulations Related to Appointments and Relocation: A New Model Proposal[*]

Şenol Sezer[1]
Ordu University

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to reveal school administrators' opinions on frequently changing regulations related to appointments and relocation and to offer a new model. A qualitative research design was employed. The study participants were 20 school principals and 20 vice principals working in the Ordu, Giresun and Trabzon city centres during the 2014–2015 academic year. They were selected through a criterion sampling method. Semi-structured interviews were used as the data collection tool. One main theme with six sub-themes was determined to identify the positive aspects of frequently changing regulations, and 13 sub-themes were used to identify the negative aspects. The main theme of the positive aspects was motivation and clarity. The main themes for the negative aspects were (i) favouritism and (ii) administrative problems. Seventeen criteria were determined with regard to school administrators' appointment and relocation. The main themes for these criteria were (i) administrative skills, (ii) training and experience and (iii) scoring. The findings showed that the school administrators' opinions are generally negative related to frequently changing regulations. The findings revealed that the frequently changing regulations cause favouritism and administrative problems in the appointment process for school administrators. A new model is also offered in this study.

Keywords

School management • Principal • Regulation • Appointment • Relocation • Model proposal

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Recruitment, selection, training and retention of school administrators have great importance for all education systems because effective educational leadership is vital to provide improvement in all educational activities and processes for schools that foster student learning. Appointments based on traditional in-service training fail to meet the learning needs of increasingly diverse student bodies. In recent years, there has been a growing consensus that school administrators should be selected and trained in leadership programmes and theory and practice should be combined in the training process.

Typically, each school has a principal who is responsible for the school's operation (Degenhardt, 2006; Lashway, 2003; Portin, Alejano, Knapp, & Marzolf, 2006; Salazar, 2007). In many countries, the school principal is an elected administrator (Lunenburg, 2010). School principals are generally decided by an official representative, multi-member committee or school board (Bolivar & Moreno, 2006). The most frequently used selection criteria are management and/or leadership experience (in Austria, Denmark, Ireland, Israel, Northern Ireland, Portugal and Spain), additional academic or other qualifications (in Austria, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Portugal and Spain), interpersonal and personal skills (in Austria, Denmark, Ireland and Northern Ireland), vision/values for school leadership (in Austria, Denmark, Ireland and Israel) and quality of work proposals for the school (in Austria, Denmark, Ireland and Israel) (Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008).

In Turkey, it cannot be said that an effective and sustainable project related to school principals' training and appointment is available yet. In addition, many studies related to in-service training and the appointment processes for school administrators have been conducted. While some of these studies suggest a new model, e.g. Altın and Vatanartıran (2014), Balyer and Gündüz (2011), Cemaloğlu (2005), Çelenk (2003), Ereş (2009) and Işık (2003), some of them analyse the current situation and offer solutions to problems, e.g. Akçadağ (2014), Demirtaş and Özer (2014), Helvacı and Aydoğan (2011), Karip and Köksal (1999), Korkmaz (2005), Okçu (2011), Özmen and Kömürlü (2010) and Turan, Yıldırım, and Aydoğdu (2012). According to Işık (2003), although there are some important developments in the selection and employment of school principals and some developments encouraging the establishment of such programmes in the Turkish Educational System, the Ministry of National Education never requires a certificate for school principal appointment.

An appointment and relocation regulation published in the Official Gazette in September 1998 had brought a two-phased examination system for candidates seeking to be school administrators. According to the regulation, candidates who pass the first exam need to complete a 120-hour in-service training programme, and they can obtain a management certificate if they score at least 70 points out of 100 on the post-training evaluation exam. This ended the master-apprentice system that had long been used for

school administrators' training. According to Taş and Önder (2012), the 1998 regulation can be regarded as the beginning of professionalism in educational management.

In the process starting with the regulation published in the Official Gazette on April 1999, school administrators' selection and appointment were performed in a framework of a series of instructions that changed frequently (Şişman & Turan, 2004). Within the last 25 years, the Ministry of Education has made many changes to regulations related to the appointment and relocation of school managers. From 2004 till 2010, approximately 30 regulations or public mandates were implemented to solve problems related to appointment and relocation. The appointments based on regulations frequently changed by the Ministry have not satisfied school administrators and have led to court cases (Taş & Önder, 2012). Furthermore, school administrators have called for abolishing the regulations and cancelling the appointments. The cases were concluded on behalf of school administrators by the State Council, and consequently, school administrators were not appointed permanently in 2004–2010. Moreover, this caused many schools and institutions to be managed vicariously. Because of the cancellation of the regulations, in 2008–2009, the Ministry made direct appointments using its authority given by the 71th and 76th articles of the Civil Servants Law No. 657 (Resmi Gazete, 1965). However, a number of actions for nullity were sued to the Administrative Courts, and many appointments were annulled by the Administrative Courts (Aslanargun, 2012). According to one of the latest regulations dated June 2014, school principals are to be appointed on the basis of professional seniority, managerial experience, oral exam (interviews) points and evaluation scores. Evaluation scores are given by senior managers (district national education director, branch manager or branch manager in-charge of human resources), teachers (with the most and least seniority), two teachers selected by the teachers board, student council president and Parent–Teacher Association president and vice president (Resmi Gazete, 2014).

The Unions have asked the State Council to annul some of the articles in a regulation dated June 2014. In addition, the underserved or relocated school principals according to new regulations have asked the Administrative Court to supersede appointments, and a number of the cases have resulted in their favour. Frequently changing regulations with slight differences are perceived as a way to depose existing principals and appoint new principals who are affiliated with the ruling party. Moreover, instability reduces school effectiveness and disrupts labour peace. Therefore, in line with the proposals and opinions of all stakeholders, the development and implementation of a new, permanent and sustainable model for choosing, training and appointing school administrators is a priority case now more than ever for the Turkish Education System. This study aims to reveal school administrators' views on frequently changing regulations and to offer a new training and appointment model.

Method

Design

This study was designed to fill in the knowledge gaps concerning the selection, training and appointment of school administrators. For this purpose, the aim was to reveal school administrators' opinions related to frequently changing regulations and to offer a new model. A qualitative research method was adopted. The qualitative research method is used to obtain in-depth information about a topic (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Singh, 2007). This study used a case study pattern, which is one of the qualitative research methods (Creswell, 2015, p. 96).

Participants

The participants were 20 principals and 20 vice principals working in the Ordu, Giresun and Trabzon city centres during the academic year 2014–2015. They were selected through the criterion sampling method. Being relocated was considered as the prerequisite criterion. This criterion has also been taken as a baseline because relocated school administrators are aware of the regulations on the appointment and relocation of school administrators. Professional seniority was considered as another criterion. In addition, school administrators' managerial seniority was considered as another criterion. Regulations are evaluated by school administrators in different ways because both administrators' professional seniority and managerial seniority influence their opinion. The study was conducted with school administrators who serve in different cities to reach more relative results considering applications in different cities. In addition, membership in different unions was selected as a criterion to ensure the representation of school administrators' different views as objectively as possible. The demographic characteristics of the participants are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants ($\eta = 40$)

Duty Place	η	Position	η	Professional Seniority	η	Managerial Seniority	η	Union	η
Ordu	14	Principal	20	1–6 Years	-	1–6 Years	14	Eğit. Bir-Sen[1]	21
Giresun	13	Vice principal	20	7–12 Years	3	7–12 Years	13	Türk Eğit. Sen[2]	7
Trabzon	13			13–18 Years	16	13–18 Years	6	Eğitim-Sen[3]	3
				19–25 Years	8	19–25 Years	3	Eğitim-İş[4]	1
				Over 25 Years	13	Over 25 Years	4	Aktif Eğit. Sen[5]	1
								Non-member	7
Total	40		40		40		40		40

(1) Eğitim Bir-Sen (Union of Educators): This union ranks first in terms of the number of members (Resmî Gazete, 2015).

(2) Türk Eğitim-Sen (Education Workers' Union of Turkey): This union ranks second in terms of the number of members.

(3) Eğitim-Sen (Education and Science Proletarians' Union): This union ranks third in terms of the number of members.

(4) Eğitim İş (Union of Employees in Education and Science): This union ranks fourth in terms of the number of members.

(5) Aktif Eğitim-Sen (Active Educators Union): This union ranks fifth in terms of the number of members.

Procedure

The study was conducted in four stages: (i) definition of the problem, (ii) preparation of the data collection instrument, (iii) data collection and (iv) data analysis and interpretation (Karadağ, 2011).

Definition of the problem. During interviews with school administrators, it is understood that frequently changing regulations related to school administrators' appointment and relocation causes various problems. Moreover, the regulations reduce the principals' morale and motivation. Therefore, it is necessary to determine the defective aspects of the existing procedures and to identify an ideal model for school administrators' employment.

Preparation of the data collection instrument. A semi-structured interview form was used for data collection. The form was prepared in two stages. First, questions about the participants' demographic characteristics were developed. Then, open-ended questions were written on the basis of an expert's opinions. The semi-structured interview form consisted of two parts. The first part contained five questions about the participants' demographic characteristics and the second part contained the following three open-ended questions: (i) What are the positive aspects of frequently changing regulations? (ii) What are the negative aspects of frequently changing regulations? (iii) Which criteria should be considered in the appointment and relocation process used for school administrators?

Data collection. The research called each principal and vice principal to schedule an appointment and then gave out the semi-structured interview form. The interviews lasted for about 20 minutes, and the school administrators expressed their views in writing in response to the open-ended questions.

Data analysis. The data were transferred to a computer via Microsoft Excel and analysed using descriptive analysis. This method consists of four stages: creating a thematic framework for analysis, processing data, identifying findings and analysis

and interpretation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 256). School administrators' similar responses to the same question were evaluated in the category. The written data were coded, and six sub-themes were determined to identify the positive aspects of frequently changing regulations. A single main theme was determined to identify these sub-themes: motivation and clarity. Thirteen sub-themes were determined to identify the negative aspects of regulations. Two main themes were determined to identify these sub-themes. The main themes were (i) favouritism and (ii) administrative problems. Seventeen criteria were determined to be related to school administrators' appointment, and three main themes were determined to identify these criteria. The main themes were (i) administrative skills, (ii) training and experience and (iii) scoring. The views on the sub-themes were sorted according to their frequency.

Validity and Reliability

Related literature was reviewed in-depth, and a conceptual framework was created on the subject to improve the internal validity of the study. The data were coded by the researcher and another scholar who is experienced in qualitative research. In the first stage, the themes were kept large enough to cover the concepts but narrow enough to exclude unrelated concepts. The formula "Reliability = Consensus/Consensus + Dissidence × 100" was applied to determine the reliability of the coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The agreement between the two coders was calculated as $32/(32 + 4) × 100 = .89$. In the second phase, structural integrity was achieved by controlling the relationship between the main themes and sub-themes as well as the relationship between each sub-theme and the others. The research process was explained in detail, and all evidence was shown without comment to improve the external validity.

Findings

Positive Aspects of the Frequently Changing Regulations

In this section, the positive aspects of the frequently changing regulations are evaluated under the single theme "motivation and clarity." The terms school principal and vice principal are abbreviated as "SP" and "VP," respectively. It is impossible to state all the participants' opinions because of the limitations of space. As such, the more remarkable views have been included. These views are as follows:

[SP1] *It is positive because the task period of a school principal at the same school is limited to four years.*

[SP8] *It can encourage success by determining the conditions of being assigned duty for more than four years at the same school. So it does not give opportunity to school principals to be in languor.*

[VP14] *I find it positive because the last regulations ensure replacing or putting out to pasture the administrators who have lost their ambition to work. Every new regulation brings new criteria, and this allows willing ones to be employed as school administrators.*

[VP18] *I find it positive because new regulations enable young and more ambitious administrators to be appointed instead of the administrators who are aged and have no particular purpose in the profession.*

The frequency and percentages of sub-themes related to the main theme of motivation and clarity are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Sub-themes of Motivation and Clarity (η = 40)

Sub-theme	Principals	Vice principals		
	f	*f*	*Total*	*%*
Ineligible principal's deposal	5	8	13	31.0
Willing principal's appointment	-	9	9	21.4
Encouraging success in school administration	5	4	9	21.4
Clarity of the task period at the same school	6	-	6	14.3
Definition of certain rules for appointment	4	-	4	9.5
Job enthusiasm	-	1	1	2.4
Total	20	22	42	100

According to Table 2, the positive aspects of the frequently changing regulations are the ineligible principal's deposal (f = 13, 31%), the willing principal's appointment (f = 9, 21.4%), encouraging success in school administration (f = 9, 21.4%), clarity of the task period at the same school (f = 6, 14.3%), definition of certain rules for appointment (f = 4, 9.5%) and job enthusiasm (f = 1, 2.4%).

Negative Aspects of the Frequently Changing Regulations

In this section, the negative aspects of frequently changing regulations are evaluated under two main themes: *favouritism* and *administrative problems*. The views related to *favouritism* are as follows:

[SP3] *Individuals' merits were not in the foreground. Moreover, administrative background was not considered. It can be said that favouritism was primarily applied.*

[SP4] *It left school administrators to the determination by local politicians, senior administrators and those who evaluated them with the score.*

[SP6] *The scoring system during the interviews was not fair. Moreover, the interviews were open to interference.*

[VP1] *The school administrators were appointed largely with political concerns. Those who wanted to be appointed as school administrators were forced to get ratification from local politicians and to join the union, which is affiliated with the ruling party.*

[VP10] *The credibility of the appointments is open to discussion, and the impartiality of the school administrators who were appointed in this way is questioned due to the allegations of favouritism and influence.*

[VP11] *Evaluation Commission Members have exhibited particular attitudes to the candidate administrators during the interviews. It is apparent that the commission members are already informed of who will be successful in the interviews. Consequently, the principle of impartiality has been violated.*

The frequency and percentages of sub-themes related to the main theme of favouritism are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Sub-themes of Favouritism (η = 40)

Sub-theme	Principals f	Vice principals f	Total	%
Violation of impartiality	8	9	17	32.7
Appointment based on political concerns	8	4	12	23.1
Favouritism in interviews	6	1	7	13.5
Ignoring individuals' merits	5	1	6	11.5
Influence on commission members	3	2	5	9.6
Commission members' partial attitude	2	1	3	5.8
Openness of interviews to interference	1	1	2	3.8
Total	33	19	52	100

When Table 3 is considered, it is seen that the violation of impartiality (f = 17, 32.7%) ranks first among school principals' and vice principals' negative opinions. Appointment by considering political concerns (f = 12, 23.1%), favouritism during interviews (f = 7, 13.5%), ignoring individuals' merits (f = 6, 11.5%), influence on commission members (f = 5, 9.6%), exhibition of commission members a partial attitude (f = 3, 5.8%) and openness of interviews to interfere (f = 2, 3.8%) are mentioned by the participants as negative aspects. The views related to *administrative problems* are as follows:

[SP10] *Due to frequently changing regulations, school administrators' motivation reduces and the productivity decreases.*

[SP19] *I think frequently changing regulations doesn't have any positive aspects… It caused confusion in school management.*

[SP7] *Administrative positions require stability and a pretty good task period. The relocation every four years causes the task period to end before the school administrators see the results of the projects they have planned.*

[SP9] *School administrators are forced to be in affiliation with the ruling party to maintain their administrative positions.*

[VP18] *The administrative position is not considered as a tenured or staff position. Due to job insecurity, school administrators feel compelled to act in favour of the ruling party.*

[VP20] *Changing a school administrator's duty place has caused adaptation problems and disruption in the labour peace.*

[VP2] *School administrators' motivation has been completely reduced due to the frequently changing regulations. In the process of adapting to a new school, the newly appointed school administrators are confronted with difficulties. The lack of objective criteria for appointment also brings along new problems.*

[VP9] *I think there are no positive aspects of frequently changing regulations.*

The frequency and percentages of sub-themes related to the administrative problems main-theme are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Sub-themes of Administrative Problems (η = 40)

Sub-theme	Principals	Vice principals		
	f	f	Total	%
Confusion in school management	10	7	17	34.0
Lack of motivation	4	6	10	20.0
Adaptation problems in new duty place	3	6	9	18.0
Decrease in administrative autonomy	5	2	7	14.0
Impossibility of long-term projects	4	-	4	8.0
Decrease in productivity	-	3	3	6.0
Total	26	24	50	100

In Table 4, it is seen that ever-changing regulations cause administrative problems. The major administrative problems are the confusion in school management (f = 17, 34%), lack of motivation (f = 10, 20%), adaptation problems in new duty place (f = 9, 18%), decrease in administrative autonomy (f = 7, 14%), impossibility of long-term projects (f = 4, 8%) and the decrease in productivity (f = 3, 6%).

Appointment Criteria for School Administrators

In this section, the appointment criteria of school administrators are evaluated under three main themes. The views related to *administrative skills* are as follows:

[SP14] *School principals should be appointed considering leadership features. Besides, fairness and impartiality should be considered in appointment process.*

[SP18] *The candidate who wishes to be appointed as a school principal should have leadership features, communication skills and teamwork skills.*

[SP2] *Ones who are willing to be appointed as a school principal should have high-level human relation skills. The candidates also should be open to personal improvement and innovations.*

[VP12] *A school principal should have leadership features as well as human relation skills. Above all, the principal should be consistent.*

[VP20] *A principal should have human relation skills, leadership features and communication skills. A school principal also should be fair and trusty.*

The frequency and percentages of sub-themes related to administrative skills are presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Sub-themes of Administrative Skills ($\eta = 40$)

	Principals	*Vice principals*		
Sub-theme	*f*	*f*	*Total*	*%*
Leadership features	7	15	22	47.8
Communication skills	6	4	10	21.7
Human relations	1	4	5	10.9
Fairness	2	2	4	8.7
Innovativeness	2	-	2	4.4
Predisposition to teamwork	2	-	2	4.4
Personal improvement	1	-	1	2.1
Total	21	25	46	100

When Table 5 is considered, it is seen that the school administrators believe that administrative skills are of great importance in the appointment of school administrators. Leadership features take an important place among the administrative skills (f = 22, 47.8%). The other administrative abilities are communication skills (f = 10, 21.7%), human relations (f = 5, 10.9%), fairness (f = 4, 8.7%), innovativeness (f = 2, 4.4%), predisposition to teamwork (f = 2, 4.4%) and personal improvement (f = 1, 2.1%).

The views concerning the main theme of training and experience are as follows:

[SP9] *School principals should be appointed considering individuals' merits, administrative seniority and professional seniority at least ten years.*

[SP11] *Academic career on educational administration should be considered as well as administrative and professional seniority.*

[VP19] *Individuals' merits and academic career on educational administration should be considered as the main criteria to appoint a school principal.*

[VP15] *Principals should be appointed among the vice principals who have at least four years administrative seniority. In-service training, professional seniority and work performance should be considered as well.*

The frequency and percentages of sub-themes related to the main theme of training and experience are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Sub-themes of Training and Experience (η = 40)

Sub-theme	Principals	Vice principals		
	f	*f*	*Total*	*%*
Administrative seniority	6	10	16	28.6
Individuals' merits	5	10	15	26.8
Academic career on educational administration	7	5	12	21.4
Professional seniority	4	8	12	21.4
In-service training	1	-	1	1.8
Total	23	33	56	100

In Table 6, it is seen that training and experience is considered another important appointment criterion. The sub-themes are administrative seniority (f = 16, 28.6%), individuals' merits (f = 15, 26.8%), academic career on educational administration (f = 12, 21.4%), professional seniority (f = 12, 21.4%) and in-service training (f = 1, 1.8%).

The views related to the main theme of *scoring* are as follows:

[SP5] *Administrator selection exam score and administrative performance score should be considered as well as individuals' merits, administrative and professional seniority.*

[SP7] *Administrator selection exam score, interview score and administrative performance score should be considered.*

[VP7] *Principals should be appointed considering administrator selection exam score. Administrative performance criteria should be determined, and the appointments also should be carried out considering administrative performance points.*

[VP18] *Neither professional seniority nor academic career should solely be considered.*

Table 7
Sub-themes of Scoring (η = 40)

Sub-theme	Principals	Vice principals		
	f	*f*	*Total*	*%*
Administrator selection exam score	8	9	17	44.7
Interview score	5	4	9	23.7
Administrative performance score	1	7	8	21.1
Assessment score given by school stakeholders	2	1	3	7.9
Project score related to the school administration	-	1	1	2.6
Total	16	22	38	100

Assessment scores given by stakeholders, administrator selection exam point and interview point should be considered as well.

The frequency and percentages of sub-themes related to the main theme of scoring are presented in Table 7.

Table 7 shows that the principals and vice principals assert scoring as another important criterion. The sub-themes are the administrator selection exam score (f = 17, 44.7%), interview score (f = 9, 23.7%), administrative performance score (f = 8, 21.1%), assessment score given by school stakeholders (f = 3, 7.9%) and project score related to school administration (f = 1, 2.6%).

A New Model Proposal for the Turkish Educational System

In Turkey, the training and appointment of school principals continues to be a major problem in the education system. In 1924, the famous American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer John Dewey was invited to Turkey by the Ministry of Education, and he recommended that school administrators should be educated in educational institutions. According to Dewey (1939), the training course for school administrators and inspectors start in one of the teacher training schools and the successful teachers in educational practices should attend it. The Merkezi Hükümet Teşkilatı Araştırma Projesi (MEHTAP) report by TODAİE in 1963 predicted that candidate teachers should be trained for school management during university education and serve as school principals after graduation (TODAİE, 1966). In Turkey, until the 2000s, school principals were seen as bureaucratic managers appointed on the basis of seniority, career and individual merits from among the pool of effective vice principals or teachers (Aydın, 2010; Bursalıoğlu, 2005; Çelik, 2000; Şişman, 2010; Taymaz, 2003).

Different training and appointment models have been suggested in previous studies, such as the professionalisation of school administration (Akbaşlı & Balıkçı, 2013), a preparation, selection and professional development model (Altın & Vatanartıran, 2014), a new pre-service and in-service training model (Balyer & Gündüz, 2012), mentoring (Ereş, 2009), a training programme (Işık, 2003) and a manager training academy (Okçu, 2011). In these models, suggestions have been partially provided regarding the determination of candidates with an examination, training or in-service training. However, an integrated model has not yet been developed.

Principal Preparation Programme (Certificate Programme)

In Turkey, in-service training programmes for principals have historically been an iteration of courses, including general management principles, school laws, administrative requirements and procedure, whereas little emphasis is given to student

learning, effective teaching, professional development, curriculum and organisational change (Balyer, 2012). School principals trained and employed on the basis of this type of in-service training programme are far from being true administrators for today's schools. In this regard, quality certificate programmes should be organised by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with universities. In many countries, particularly in the USA, principal preparation programmes are conducted by the Ministry of Education, universities and different educational leadership institutes. These programmes have also been criticised for not being based on theory and practice (Chapman, 2005; Davis, Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, & LaPointe, 2005). In this regard, quality certificate programmes should be organised by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with universities. Consequently, the certificate programmes should include *student learning, effective teaching, instructional leadership, coaching, effective communication, human relations, school development, strategic planning, team management, crisis management, conflict management, problem solving, organisational change, curriculum development, professional development, budgeting,* and so on. The candidates should be trained by professors in different universities and experts in educational administration. The courses should be based on *theory and practice*. Considering theory and practice-based training, the training period should not be less 240 hours (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Ereş, 2009; Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013). The envisaged features of the qualified school principal preparation programme are as follows (www.ncsl.org; nbctwawe.org):

(i) *Targeted recruitment and selection:* Identify candidates with leadership potential. Candidates wishing to become school principals primarily need to pass a written exam and interview.

(ii) *Strong partnerships:* Create an authentic partnership among districts and universities to ensure effective recruitment and selection, co-designing relevant coursework, field experiences and internships. Provide continuous on-the-job support for new principals.

(iii) *Challenging, coherent curriculum:* Set a curriculum that links theory and practice and integrates coursework focused on instructional leadership and the ability to change school culture and improve teacher effectiveness. The curriculum should be aligned with state and professional standards for school leaders. Faculty should be knowledgeable and competent.

(iv) *Active instruction:* Active instructional strategies that link theory and practice. Required instruction that emphasises problem-based learning, interactive learning field-based projects, professional reflection, strategic planning, budget exercises and effective data use. Such instruction engages university professors and practitioners who are knowledgeable in their subject fields.

(v) *Quality internships and school-based residency programmes:* Offer well-designed and supervised internships or school-based residencies that provide real opportunities for aspiring principals to experience leadership.

(vi) *Social and professional support:* Provide proponent structures and formalised mentoring and advising by expert principals.

(vii) *Candidate and programme assessment:* Use assessments that are linked to standards and programme mission and objectives for programme and candidate improvement.

The Selection of School Principals

Considering the findings of this study and practices in different countries, it is said that school administrators can be appointed using an election model in Turkey. In Anglo-American countries such as Canada, the USA and Australia; Western Europe countries such as the Netherlands and Spain and Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, school administrators are elected by a committee or delegation generally responsible for the management of the school (Şimşek, 2014; Taipale, 2012). On behalf of the enforcement of a democratic management system countrywide, particularly in schools, this model should also be considered essential. To avoid any controversy and to establish credibility, the election process should be conducted on several principles. The main principles should be considered as follows: (i) the school principal should be elected by school community members, (ii) teachers working at the school (including the school principal and vice principals) can be candidates, (iii) candidates have to provide the School Council's recognition for election qualification, (iv) candidates need at least 50% of the votes to serve as a principal, (v) the school principal should be elected for five years, (vi) vice principal(s) should be designated by the school principal, (vii) for a newly established school, a founding administrator should be appointed for five years from among experienced vice principals and (viii) the founding administrator should be appointed by the governor considering the district national education director's opinion.

Considering the criteria in previous studies conducted by Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2010), Bush (2007), Davies, Ellison, and Bowring-Carr (2005), Goldring and Sims (2005), Hallinger and Heck (1998), James, Connolly, Dunning, and Elliot (2006), Lashway (2003), Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) and Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) as well as the findings and appointment criteria from this study, it can be suggested that the candidates should meet the following criteria: (i) have graduated from a university, (ii) hold a school management certificate, (iii) have served as a teacher for at least five years, (iv) have completed projects for school management, (v) have human relations and communication skills, (vi) have leadership characteristics (reason for preference)

and (vii) have an MA or PhD in educational administration (reason for preference). The applications should be evaluated by the School Council. The School Council Members should be (i) the district director of national education (the president of the school council), (ii) the school principal, (iii) the vice principal in-charge of the school's personnel affairs (performs the secretarial tasks of the council), (iv) a teacher selected by the board of teachers by receiving at least one-third of the votes, (v) the president of the student council (only for high schools), (vi) the PTA president, (vii) a representative chosen by parents by receiving at least one-third of the votes and (viii) one of the school district councillors (the headmen in villages). School Council Members should have different duties, which include (i) providing an effective school–community collaboration, (ii) evaluating the applications and introducing candidates' projects to the school community, (iii) recognising the candidate who receives at least 50% of the vote as a school administrator, (iv) approving the school's annual programme in accordance with the teachers' board decision, (v) examining and evaluating projects, (vi) approving project funding and (vii) fulfilling other tasks concerning the functioning of the school.

School principals should be elected by the School Community Members. The School Community Members are (i) the teachers (including principal and vice principals), (ii) the parents, (iii) the students (only for high schools) and (iv) the school officials. School Community Members have different responsibilities and duties, which include (i) voting for candidates and (ii) terminating administrative positions in cases when general discontent emerges from the administrative practices of a school principal. At least 50% of the votes are necessary for this.

Conclusion

When views related to frequently changing regulations are considered, it is seen that school administrators find the regulations both positive and negative. The regulations have been found to be negative by participants, but the results show that they have also been seen as positive. The positive aspects of frequently changing regulations are the ineligible school principal's displacement, willing administrator's appointment, clarity of task period in the same school, encouraging success and definition of certain rules for appointment as a principal. Based on the abovementioned views, it can be said that frequently changing regulations have positive aspects. Furthermore, when qualified administrators are appointed instead of ineligible principals, they will presumably contribute to school improvement and student success rates. Considering the correlation between the students' success rates and school administrators' qualifications, the results are confirmed by previous studies conducted by Bolivar and Moreno (2006), Peterson (2002), Petzko, Clark, Valentine, and Hackmann (2002), Salisbury and McGregor (2005) and Shelton (2012).

Notwithstanding, an important number of school administrators find the continually changing regulations to be negative. According to the findings, senior managers were said to have not acted impartially during the appointment process. The main indicators for this situation are violating impartiality, appointing individuals by considering political concerns and favouritism during interviews. Moreover, ignoring individuals' merits is seen to be another indicator of favouritism by school administrators. Furthermore, only one vice principal stated that there were no negative aspects of the frequently changing regulations. The previous studies conducted by Kaya (1997), Saydam (1994) and Tonbul and Sağıroğlu (2012) corroborate these findings. According to the findings, the frequently changing regulations cause major administrative problems such as the lack of motivation, adaptation problems in one's new place of employment, decrease in administrative autonomy, impossibility of long-term projects and decrease in productivity. Previous studies conducted by Altın and Vatanartıran (2014), Akçadağ (2014) and Aslanargun (2012) confirm these findings.

According to the school administrators' opinions, leadership skills are the most important criteria in school principal appointments. In previous studies conducted by Balcı and Çınkır (2003), Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1999), Leithwood and Jantzi (2000), Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) and Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, and Hopkins (2006), leadership characteristics are the most important criteria in school principal appointments. However, in the latest regulations dated October 2015, leadership skills are not predicted as the main criterion (Resmi Gazete, 2015). The findings show that for school administrator appointments, the other criteria are communication skills, human relations, fairness, innovativeness, predisposition to teamwork and personal improvement. School administrators also state that administrative seniority, individuals' merits, academic career on educational administration, professional seniority and in-service training should be considered. The latest regulations employ these criteria (Resmi Gazete, 2015). Considering these appointment criteria, it is realised that the results are consistent with the findings in previous studies conducted by Pont et al. (2008) and Taipale (2012). The other appointment criteria are the school administrator exam score, interview score, administrative performance score, assessment score given by school stakeholders and project score related to school management. The first two of these criteria are considered in the appointment of school principals according to the latest regulations dated October 2015. However, candidates are not yet required to have a leadership certificate. According to the school administrators' opinions, different criteria should be taken into consideration in school principal appointments. Similar results have been revealed in previous studies, such as "objective criteria on academic careers in educational administration" (Akbaşlı & Balıkçı 2013), "interview score, leadership features, communication skills and individuals' merits" (Özmen & Kömürlü, 2010), "administrator selection exam score and administrative performance score"

(Cemaloğlu 2005), "leadership features and predisposition to teamwork" (Çelik 2003), "in-service training" (Ereş 2009), "human relations and fairness" (Gümüşeli 2001), "administrative performance score and innovativeness" (Huber 2005), "leadership features, job seniority and administrative seniority" (Korkmaz 2005) and "academic career in educational administration" (Okçu 2011).

Frequent changes in regulations cause administrative problems such as confusion in school management, lack of motivation, adaptation problems in new duty places, decrease in productivity and the impossibility of long-term projects. In addition, favouritism in the interviews is detrimental to equality of opportunity. Furthermore, appointments based on political concerns are evaluated as impairing labour peace. They also cause a decrease in administrative autonomy and ignore individuals' merits. In Turkey, to put an end to these debates, school leadership certificate programmes should be disseminated and school principals should be elected by the school community, as done in democratically advanced countries. If the frequently changing regulations ensure the dismissal of ineligible principals, it can be seen as useful. In addition, if willing, qualified administrators are appointed instead of aged principals who have no particular purpose in the profession, this should be seen as affirmative in favour of the Turkish Education System. Leadership characteristics, communication skills and human relation skills were considered by the school administrators as the main criteria for school principal appointments. Based on the findings, it can be said that school leadership training programmes are urgently required. The selection exam is seen as a major criterion for school administrator appointments. It should be taken into account to ensure credibility by decision-making bodies in the Turkish Education System. It is seen that in-service training is not taken into account in any way by the school administrators, but academic career in educational administration is considered as a significant criterion. Consequently, it can be suggested that certification and training programmes will play an important role in meeting this need.

This study suggests that an effective and sustainable policy should be established to employ qualified school administrators. For this purpose, certificate programmes should be arranged by various competent universities in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. School principals should be selected by the school community considering proficiencies as well as certificate qualification. To create an effective and sustainable election system, equality and fairness should be considered the main principles during the election process. School administrators should not be elected on the basis of political concerns. Further research can be conducted on the objective criteria related to the selection model. Different studies can be conducted on different groups, such as parents, senior managers and students. Quantitative studies can also be conducted on the school principal selection model.

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