

## The Perception of Teachers About Management Skills of School Principals\*

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this research is to reveal the perceptions of teachers who have been working in primary and secondary schools for school principals' methods and skills. Survey model was used. The population of research includes 795 primary school teachers and 740 branch teachers who have been working in primary and secondary schools in Adapazari, Sakarya in 2012-2013 education year. The sample consists of 107 primary and 147 branch teachers who were chosen randomly by random sample method. 319 questionnaires (% 79,75 ) were turned back from 400 distributed questionnaire. 58 (% 18,18 ) questionnaires were empty and 7 (% 2,19 ) questionnaire were filled incorrect from turned questionnaires. Empty and wrong questionnaires were removed and 254 (%63) questionnaires were used. To collect data, management skills scale was used which was developed by Quast and Hazucha (1992), and adapted Turkish by Sekerci. This scale has two parts. In the first part of this scale, there are questions related to teachers that applied for their view; gender, in-service training, year of service, branch, education status variables. In the second part of scale, there is an scale which consist of 34 items. The scale is 5-point Likert scale from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree." The reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) of the questionnaire was found .94. Mean, frequency, percentage, standard deviation, correlation, t-test, ANOVA and Kruskal Wallis test were used for analysing the data. Mean score of principals' management skills is  $\bar{x} = 3.96$ . The meaning of this result is at the level of "Agree ". Primary and secondary school teachers defined that school principals' skills related to quality and responsibility taking dimensions are better. When we look the items that takes part in quality dimension, it is thought that principals target to inform teachers and students about school and students' success, struggle for life quality and provide learning climate based on trust. No meaningful difference could found according to all variables except from branch variable.*

**Keywords:** Management, management skills, school principal, teacher

### Introduction

Throughout the history, human beings both managed and being managed. (Bursalioğlu, 2010:1). Management, is complicated even in small organisations. The causation of the complication of management is based on people. (Başaran, 2000:14). There have been numerous different definition of the concept of management. Some of that defined concepts are indicated below. While Başaran (2000:13) explains management as the process of motivating people by organising and coordinating them so that they can come together and perform the duties that will help the organisation to achieve its goals, Eren (2008:4) describes management as the process of reaching previously defined goals of an organisation by using the sources actively and efficiently with the help of planning, organising, leading and control functions. According to Dimock "the answers to the questions of what is going to be done? and how it is going to be done? constitute the synthesis called management. " (Gürsel, 2003:45).

For the thinkers who see the management as a process, management is the process that involve whole efforts to direct a group of people to the aims that identified before and provide coordination with the help of collaboration across the group (Şimşek, 2002:7).

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The effectiveness of the management and the organisations can be seen as aim, duty, authority and liability shared by at least 2 people. Dolayısıyla hem yönetim hem de örgütler nitelik açısından birbirinden farklı hale gelirken, farklı türlerde etkileşim biçimleri geliştirmekte ve karşılıklı bağımlı hale gelmektedirler (Şekerci ve Aypay, 2009:136).

Management is determined as operations and functions as a process: an application as art: the group of systematic and scientific information as a science. (Mucuk, 2005, s.128).The common definition of management is “Management is doing tasks with the help of other people” (Koçel, 1998:11).

In another words, management is a tool or it is about the tools that is responsible for successful completion of the aims of the organisation. In that case, in each kind of business: from a factory to a small workplace, or in each kind of organisation: from a hospital to a primary school, in short, in all of the private and public institutions, the tools, that are needed to accomplish the goals, are going to be similar or the same even though the aims of those institutions are different (Kaya, 1999: 42).

The common points of the definitions about management from different approaches can be identified as below. (Taymaz, 2003: 19):

- To help the organisation to reach previously detected aims and to make it live for the purpose of it.
- Providing human and material resources and using them efficiently.
- Applying the decisions and strategies that identified in the organisation and ensuring that the tasks are being done
- Monitoring, inspecting and improving the tasks done by the organisation.

The Notion of management includes: organizing and controlling activities, to achieve a particular purpose; orienting people to a particular purpose by bringing together a variety of factors of production and human labor, the activities to achieve the goals by bringing together employees and making them work. From another approach, the common kavrams in management are: bringing together, organizing, and yonelting to an aim (Akdoğan, 2009:27).

### ***Educational Management, School Management and School Principal***

Educational management means effectively operating, developing and revamping of schools which meet the educational need of the community. (Bursalıoğlu, 2005).Educational management, in a way, is the implementation of management in a limited area. The boundaries of that area is generally drawn by aims and structure of the education system. As the educational management occurs with the implementation of management to education, in a similar way, school management occurs with the implementation of educational management to school. (Bursalıoğlu, 2005:5). Education management is influenced by the theoretical developments that observed in various areas and the reflection of these theories. (Beycioğlu ve Dönmez, 2006: 317).

It is an undoubted fact that the schools are the first place to start improve the education system.Competent school administrators play an important role in the development and improvement of the whole system. (Açıklalın, 1998:8).On the basis of the problems in the education system is considered as related with management problems.It is manager’s duty to develop a positive organizational environment in schools, and the groups in the organisation is responsible for the sustainable reforming.The manager’s main tasks include, directing the school resources to organisation’s aim in an efficient way and coordinating the educational program to achieve the objectives. Moreover, achieving this is based on the effective communication of managers and teachers. (Şekerci ve Aypay, 2009: 137).

In recent years, different approaches about the concept of the manager have emerged which are both definitions and terms. In parallel to the changes in the structure of management, other terms, that considered to reflect better the changes and developments, have been used instead of the term “manager”. The candidate concepts that are going to take place of the term manager mainly include: Leader (Chief), Coach, Facilitator, Mentor, Enabler, Supportive (Koçel, 1998:17). In this study, the concept of principal will be used.

Management is both science and art. Educational management, is a science that examines the use and placement of human and related tools and equipment in such an effective way that will help the educational institutions and schools to achieve their objectives. On the other hand school management is included in educational management

and examines the principals and techniques that help school to suit their purposes and to operate in an efficient way. (Binbaşıoğlu, 1988:1-3). Aydın defines the concept of manager who uses existing organizational structure and procedures to be able to achieve the objectives of an organisation (Aydın, 2005:320).

Manager is a person who work through others (Koçel, 1998:11). According to Simsek (2002:13), manager is a person who tries to achieve goals through others. Manager, working in a business organization, hospital, a government agency, the trade unions, universities or in the army, is the primary person that expected to do the right thing. (Drucker, 1994:9). Managers have to use human resources, material resources and time as a production factor and have to harmonize it with human labor. (Eren, 2008:8-9). The importance of school management arises from management's mission. Management's mission is to support the organization in accordance with the objectives of it. Furthermore, the authority and responsibility of school principals determines the importance of school management (Bursalıoğlu, 2005).

A well-structured observation method was used to define what directors, managers and leaders are doing in their daily work. These studies offer a detailed picture of what principals do in work, where and with whom they spend their times. In 1989, Kyung A. Chung and Cecil Miskel (2010: 377), examined the main findings of the research and summarized as follows:

- Managing the school is a tense and weary task.
- Principals prefer verbal communication.
- Managerial activities are incredibly diverse.
- Managerial work is divided to sections.

Principals is the main actor that supports the school to achieve its goals. Principal is the most important factor to make students beneficial for society and environment (Can, 2013).

### ***The Skills that Principal Need to have***

Management skill is an ability which makes the attaining process real to reach organisational purposes, working with individuals or above individual and organisational researchs. Having knowledge about management skills, and focusing on developing management skills is very important because displaying this kind of skill is generally accepted as first requirement of management skill. Due to management skills are so important for achievement of the organisation, institutions focus on the steps to develop principals' skills (Certo and Certo, 2009:36).

Eren (2008:10-12) divides specialities that principals need to have into two groups. The first one is "Three Speciality Approach" the other is "Management Skill Approach". The specialities that principals need with these Three Specialities Approach are these:

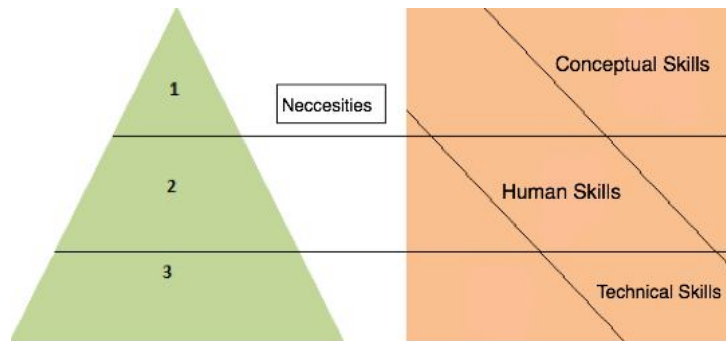
**Intellectual Specialities of Principals:** Liberal education, Logicality, spirit of analysing, power of intuition, imagination, judgement, focusing on problems, ability for expressing the idea clearly. These specialities and qualities will provide manager to affect the people around them, guide them, an ability to make people accept their ideas.

**Specialities Related to Character of Principals:** Balance between intelligence and sense, adaptation to different people, places and conditions, prudence, initiative, memory power, dynamisms, perseverance, tidiness, methodical promptness, seriousness.

**Social Specialities of Principals:** Outlooking, acceptance with cloathing; having quality for cater to groups; understanding the group structure, common purpose, value and sense; tries to place good habits that needs to be obeyed while working, challenging with bad habits, behave balanced according to specialities of people or situation, be aware of the time to move forward or move back, knowledge, experience, justice, give trust, to be known with having power of persuasion, authority, careful with special life.

Eren (2008:12-13) arrange to management skills approach and specialities of principals into three groups as Robert L. Katz do. Robert L. Katz have done the most accepted study about management skill. According to this Katz claims that good performance of the principals result from management skills. A principal who is equipped with necessary management skill will probably perform well and will be more successful than others. On the other hand the principal who is lack of necessary skills will probably perform bad and will be unsuccessful. Katz indicates that there are three types of important skills for successful management (Certo and Certo, 2009:37):

- 1- Technical Skills:** Technical skills need to use specialized knowledge and to be proficient on procedure and technique related to job. Engineering, computer programming and accountancy can be given as an example for this kind of skills. Technical skills are mostly related with process and working with physical objects.
- 2- Human Skills:** Human skills constitute cooperation into group which is being managed. In short, these skills include working with people. Types of approach and communication include individual and group benefit.
- 3- Conceptual Skills:** It is a skill that the organisation is seen as whole. The principals who are equipped with conceptual skills knows how the organisation is in relation with environment, how do the different functions of organisation complete each other, and how does the change of any parts of organisation affect other parts.



While ascending from lower grade towards higher grade, conceptual skills are becoming more important and technical skills are becoming less important. It can be explained like that; while principals are being specialized (in organization) they start to take part in actual producing activities and technical part less and they part in process of guidance in organization more. Human skills have an importance for principals at the level of high, medium and low. In spite of this, common indicator of all levels of management is human. According to modern approach, principals should have the skills below (Certo and Certo, 2009:38):

**Determining Roles:** Imposing duties to workers, explain the working responsibilities, aim of working and expectations for their performance

**Organizing Functions:** Controlling the process and quality of work and evaluating individual and unit performance

**Short-term Planning:** Determining using of staff and resource to complete the work effectively; determining programming and coordinating unit activities effectively.

**Consultation:** Before decision stage evaluating with workers who will be affected by the decision, encourage workers to be in decision process, using the offers and ideas of others.

**Supporting:** Behaving thoughtful, support someones when they are sad or anxious, courage them when there is a difficult situation.

**Awareness:** Appreciate and be aware of effective performance, important achievements, special contributions.

**Development:** Leading and giving advise, giving opportunity for developing skills, help people to learn how to develop their skills.

**Strengthening:** Giving opportunities for important responsibilities in working activities, give some privileges, and trusting people while solving problems and before getting approval.

**Being on The Side of Alteration:** Explaining the alteration ambitiously that has to be done.

**Taking Risk for Alteration:** Taking individual risks and make sacrifices to courage the wanted alteration in organisation.

**Courage to Think:** Couraging individuals to examining assumptions about the job and to find better ways.

**External Awareness:** Analysing event, process and external environment to explain the opportunities of organisational unit and the threat to it.

Quast and Hazucha (1992:203) define management skills in five dimension and 20 sub-sections showed below (Sekerci and Alpay, 2009:140):

**Taking Initiative Skills:** Listening, human relation, confliction management, motivating workers.

**Taking Responsibility Skills:** Planning, being organised, individual organising, time management, giving information, style of leadership and affecting people, selecting representative and controlling.

**Technical skills:** Written communication, skill related with quality and finance, knowledge about job and technical knowledge.

**Other Skills:** Verbal communication, analysing problems and making decision.

**Quality Skills:** Personal motivation, qualified working, student success, information.

The purpose of this study is to determine the school principals' management skills intended to teachers' perceptions who have been working in primary and secondary schools. For this purpose, it was tried to find answers for the following sub-problems:

- 1- In which level are the primary and secondary school principals on management skills about taking initiative, taking responsibilities, technical skills, other skills and quality skills?
- 2- In the management skills of primary and secondary school principals are there any meaningful differences according to gender of teachers, in-service training, seniority, branch, education status variables?

### Method

The research is scanning model. In the scanning model the mentioned event, person or object is tried to be defined in his/its conditions and it exists. In order to determine particular features of a group it is aimed that gathering all data.

### Participants

The population of research includes 795 primary school teachers and 740 branch teachers who have been working in primary and secondary schools in Adapazarı, Sakarya in 2012-2013 education year. The sample consists of 107 primary and 147 branch teachers who were chosen randomly by random sample method.

### Data Collecting Tool

To collect data, management skills scale was used which was developed by Quast and Hazucha (1992), and adapted Turkish by Sekerci. After the scale was translated into Turkish, it was given to four instructors and taken their advice. Quast and Hazucha classified the management skills in five dimensions and 34 items. These sub-dimensions consist of; taking initiative, taking responsibilities, technical skills, quality skills and the other skills. This scale has two parts. In the first part of this scale, there are questions related to teachers that applied for their view; gender, in-service training, year of service, branch, education status variables. In the second part of the scale, there is a scale which consists of 34 items. The scale is a 5-point Likert scale from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree." The distribution of questions according to the dimensions and "Cronbach Alpha" are shown in the table 1.

**Table 1. Percentage of Question Numbers According to Dimensions and Cronbach Alpha Coefficient**

Dimension	Question Nu.	Persantage	Cronbach Alpha
Taking initiative	1-8	23,5	.92
Taking responsibility	9-21	38.23	.77
Technical skills	22-26	14.7	.62
Other skills	27-30	11.7	.87
Quality skills	31-34	11.7	.91
Total	1-34	100	.94

319 questionnaires ( % 79,75 ) were turned back from 400 distributed questionnaires. 58 ( % 18,18 ) questionnaires were empty and 7 ( 2,19 ) questionnaires were filled incorrectly from turned questionnaires. Empty and wrong questionnaires were removed and 254 ( % 63 ) questionnaires were used. The scale's reliability ( **Cronbach Alpha** ) level is .94. In other words the reliability of the scale is high. On the other hand the dimensions reliability level is respectively: taking initiative .92, taking responsibility .77, technical skills .62, other skills .87 and quality skills .91. Percentage of distributed questionnaires to schools and returned questionnaires are given in table 2.

**Table 2. Percentage of Distrubuted Questionnaires to Schools and Returned Questionaire**

School	Teacher Nu.	Given	Questionaire	Valid	Percentage
Ahmet Akkoç Primary- Secondary	68	33	25	22	75.7
Arif Nihat Asya Primary- Secondary	40	35	32	26	91.4
Aykut Yiğit Primary- Secondary	48	35	29	25	82.8
Evrenköy Primary- Secondary	20	25	18	10	72
Osman Bey Primary- Secondary	46	35	30	21	85.7
Sait Faik Abasıyanık Primary- Secondary	43	45	36	32	80
Selçuk Bey Primery- Primary- Secondary	27	30	24	19	80
17 Ağustos Primery- Secondary	25	30	20	17	66.6
Sabiha Hanım Primary- Secondary	57	55	40	34	72.7
İmam Hatip Secondary	32	40	35	27	87.5
Türk-İş Primary- Secondary	30	35	30	21	85.7
Total	436	400	319	254	79.75

### Analysis of Data

The research data were analyzed with SPSS for Windows 21.0. Mean, frequency, percentage, satandard deviation, correlation, t-test, ANOVA test were used for analysing the data. On the other hand as a result of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, due to the education status variable is not normal ( $p < .05$ ) Kruskal-Wallis test were used.

### Findings

In this section test findings are given. teachers' perceptions who have been working in primary and secondary schools about the management skills of school principals are given in Table 3.

**Table 3. The Perception of Teachers about Management Skills of School Principals**

Dimension	$\bar{x}$	S
Taking initiative	3.82	.79
Taking responsibility	4.02	.71
Technical skills	3.96	.95
Other skills	3.94	.85
Quality skills	4.09	.81
Total	3.96	.71

When the perception of the teacher about school principals' management skills are researched, it is seen that teachers give feedback at the level of "Agree" in total (3.96) and in all dimensions. The highest dimension is quality skills dimension (4.09) the lowest dimension is taking initiative (3.82). According to this result, it can be said that principals internalize quality skills more than taking initiative.

When examined the average points of 34 items taken in scale; It is seen that the items, which have the highest and the least average, take part in the dimension of "taking responsibility". It is seen that; the items 13 (Conducts the official correspondence effectively.) and 21 (Controls the studies of teachers.) have the highest average, the item 18 (Entrust the teachers.) has the least average. Result of the t-test intended for school principals' management skills related with gender were indicated in table 4.

**Table 4. Result of the t-Test Intended For Management Skills Related with Gender**

Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	S.S	t	df	F	P
Female	120	3.99	.66	.605	252	1.120	.291
Male	134	3.94	.76	.610	251.592		

The perceptions of the teachers for the management skills of principals do not indicate meaningful differences according to gender ( $p > .05$ ). Result of the t-test intended for school principals' management skills related with in-service training were indicated in table 5.

**Table 5. Result of the t-Test Intended For Management Skills Related with In-Service Training**

In-service training	N	$\bar{x}$	S.S	t	df	F	P
Attended teacher	115	3.88	.75	-1.791	252	.012	.911
Non-attended teacher	139	4.04	.67	-1.772	230.754		

The perceptions of the teachers for the management skills of principals do not indicate meaningful differences according to in-service training ( $p > .05$ ). Result of the t-test intended for school principals' management skills related with branch were indicated in table 6.

**Table 6. Result of the t-test Intended for Management skills Related with Branch**

Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	t	df	F	P
Primary teack	107	3.88	.86	-1.696	252	13.420	.000
Secondary	147	4.03	.59	-1.601	175.4		

The perceptions of the teachers for the management skills of principals indicate meaningful differences according to branch variable. According to mean scores, secondary school teachers percept management skills of principals higher than primary school teachers do. Result of the ANOVA intended for school principals' management skills related with seniority were indicated in table 7.

**Table 7. Result of the ANOVA Intended for Management Skills Related with Seniority**

Groups	Sum of squares	Mean square	df	F	P
Between groups	2.191	.730	3	1.423	.237
Within groups	128.354	.513	250		
Total	130.545		253		

The perceptions of the teachers for the management skills of principals do not indicate meaningful differences according to seniority variable ( $p > .05$ ). Result of the Kruskal Wallis Test intended for school principals' management skills related with education status were indicated in table 7.

**Table 8. Result of the Kruskal Wallis Test Intended for Management Skills Related with Education Status**

Education status	N	Mean rank	S.D	$\chi^2$	P
Pre-license	16	110.81	3	1.756	.625
License	215	129.82			
Master's degree	22	115.68			
PhD	1	155.50			

The perceptions of the teachers for the management skills of principals do not indicate meaningful differences according to education skill variable ( $p > .05$ )

### **Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions**

When the perception of the teacher about school principals' management skills are researched, it is seen that teachers give feedback at the level of "Agree" in total ( $\bar{x}=3.96$ ) and in all dimensions. In the study of Sekerci (2006) the mean of teacher perception is in the level of "Agree" ( $\bar{x}=3.85$ ). This result supports the research. When examined the average points of 34 items taken in scale; It is seen that the items, which have the highest and the least average, take part in the dimension of "taking responsibility". It is seen that; the items 13 (conducts the official correspondence effectively) and 21 (controls the studies of teachers) have the highest average ( $\bar{x}=4.23$ ) the item 18 (entrust the teachers) has the least average. But these two items that got the highest mean take part in technical skills group which is at the bottom of Katz's management skills ranging and it indicates that school principals internalized management behaviors more which take part in classical management approach. In study of Cansız (1998) "Proficiency of Anatolian Teachers High School Principals" it is indicated that school principals are more successful practising the written law and regulations, but they aren't successful in informal relations. This result is in the sameway with the item 13 which has the highest mean in the research.

In the study of Sekerci and Aypay (2009) "The relationship between management skills and group effectiveness of primary school principals" it is seen that "quality skill" dimension has the highest mean and "taking initiative" dimension has the lowest mean. It is seen that "taking responsibility" dimension has the highest mean in the result of Maltepe's study (2012) "Teachers' opinions on managerial skills and effecting skills of primary education principals on teachers". It means that the principals fulfill their responsibilities that they have.

Primary and secondary school teachers stated that Principals have better skills about "quality and taking responsibility skills". But when the mean points of dimensions are evaluated it is seen that "quality skills" have the highest mean. According to the items which are taking part in this dimension it is thought that; the managers aim education-based schools by informing the teachers and students about school and students success, trying to do high quality study, creating an atmosphere which depends on confidence.

It's understood that school principals focus on student success more. It's defined that teachers find the principals proficient in the matter technical skills, giving importance to school quality, taking responsibility and verbal communication, but taking initiative, conflict management, human relations, motivating skill are at the low level. This situation brings to mind that school principals are tend to show bureaucratic behaviors (Şekerci ve Aypay, 2009).

According to these findings, it can be said that school principals have quality skills which has the highest mean so they try to internalize modern management approach. But, it mustn't be forgotten that 2 items "which has the highest score in scale (items 13-21)" takes part in taking responsibility skills dimension.

In this study no meaningful difference could be founded according to all variables except from branch variable. The reason for this could be that the principals are in communication with the branch teachers about the students success and exams." In the research named "The perceptions and expectations related to the management skills of the administrators at the school the primary school teachers" done by Yarba (2003): could not find any important distinctness in terms of the variables gender, branch and educational level. Other research done in this field by Ergun (1996), Tan (1999) and Şekerci (2006) established that the traits associated with efficient management have no relation with gender.

In service training subjects such as human relations, listening, conflict management, motivating, individual accord within taking initiative skills can be given to the administrators with the lowest average. Ministry of Education "via the law no 6528 ministry of education's fundamental law, some law and statutory decree is in alteration ensure that it gets done" because of this, many principals who was studying countrywide are discharged.



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