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Examining How Management Skills of School Administrators Contribute to Organizational Climate according to the Perceptions of Teachers Working in Public High Schools: Konya Province Case

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to explore how management skills of school administrators contribute to organizational climate according to the opinions of teachers working in public high schools. The data were collected by using “Contribution of Managers’ Management Skills to Organizational Climate Scale” developed by Akar (2006). The teachers who work in public high schools in Konya province in Turkey were the target population of this study and 448 teachers were determined as the sampling. In addition, T-test and ANOVA test were used to calculate the significance levels for the scale dimensions according to demographic information. The findings revealed quite high values for “Thrust” and “Aloofness” dimensions as well as a significant difference in “Aloofness” dimension for “School Type” variable. Halpin (1966), in his study, determined six organization types and suggested that open climate is the most positive one. The high values obtained for “Thrust” and “Aloofness” dimensions in this study indicate lack of open climate; therefore, management skills of school administrators are not sufficient in creating an open climate at schools and fail to have a holistic effect on teachers.

Keywords: Management Skills, Organizational Climate, School Administrators

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduce the Problem

Each school environment involves active students, teachers and administrators who continuously communicate with each other. Communication is the main instrument that builds up a common ground among these groups and

serves as the building blocks of an organization (Mumby & Stohl, 1996). It is acknowledged that we can talk about an organization when two or more individuals come together and communicate with each other (Barnard, 1994, p. 35). Schein (1970, p. 40) defines organization as mental harmony of activities carried out collaboratively by people who come together to achieve predetermined common goals within a hierarchy of authorities and responsibilities. It is obvious that there is a continuous communication in any organizations (Schein 1970, p. 40). Each organization has a unique climate which provides information about relationships among its members since it gives clear hints about the psychological state of this particular organization (Dönertaş, 2008, pp. 8-9). Accordingly, organizational climate can be defined as an interaction-based environment created by members of an organization. Organizational climate affects members of the organization and is often affected by them (Eren & Çekmecelioğlu, 2002). Due to ongoing interaction among individuals in a school environment, we can also talk about a sort of climate stemming from such relationships in a school.

Just like in every organization, there is an administrator in a school organization as well. Thus, the nature of communication between administrator and organization members positively or negatively affects how effective these organization members will be. Quality communication can be achieved through a collaboration-based management strategy (Putti & Aryee, 1990, p. 44). Since positive climate and organizational success can be achieved when members are aware of organizational objectives and effectively adopt them, quality communication between administrator and group members is more likely to result in higher levels of sustainable achievement. In other words, it is essential for administrators in an organization to have multidimensional communication and activity skills (Açıklan, 1994, p. 139; Stonar & Wankel, 1986, p. 397). The current study aims to explore the contribution of management skills of school administrators to organizational climate according to the perceptions of teachers working in public high schools in Konya province in Turkey. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the related literature by providing data about the role and responsibilities of administrators in creating an organizational climate in a school environment. In addition to the question “What are the contributions of management skills of school administrators to organizational climate according to the opinions of teachers working in public high schools?” the following question will also be answered within the scope of the study: “Do scale dimensions which involve the perceptions of teachers working in public high schools about how management skills of school administrators contribute to organizational climate differ according to independent variables “school type” and “gender”?”

1.2. Explore Importance of the Problem

Teaching profession has the power to affect societies directly and guide the future of children who are considered the main building blocks of a society. Indeed, it is essential to try to solve problems teachers face while trying to do their jobs. Therefore, this current study aims to explore to what extent management skills of school administrators affect school climate. It is believed that the findings of the study will provide invaluable guidance to policy makers and administrators in creating environments to encourage more effective teaching. In addition, the study is expected to contribute to both national and international literature with its findings. Finally, it is believed that when the suggestions presented in this study are implemented in the future, more quality school climates and more productive teaching-learning environments will be achieved.

1.3. Describe Relevant Scholarship

Celep (2002) points out that teachers working in public high schools affiliated to Ministry of National Education often fail in their classroom management practices since they are not qualified enough in this issue at the beginning of their careers. In addition, disobedient behaviors and attitudes of students negatively affect teachers (Özdemir, 2006, p. 73). Such certain behaviors give harm to school organizational climate as well. For example, administrators might fail to adopt effective management skills, which is believed to be a factor preventing teachers from teaching effectively (Ardıç & Polatçı, 2008, p. 73).

The related studies found that information sharing between administrators and employees has positive effects on employees’ “job satisfaction” and “perception of justice” levels. Successful communication opportunities provided

by administrators do not just indicate a quality communication cycle. Such an opportunity will also lead to higher levels of “perception of justice” among employees who will, in turn, enthusiastically work on and complete all tasks (Putti and Aryee, 1990, p. 44). Stonar and Wankel (1986, p. 397) and Açıkalın (1994, p. 139) suggest that a positive, creative and productive organizational climate is clearly dependent on members’ awareness about and adoption of organizational goals. Therefore, managers are primarily responsible for positive development and progress of an organizational climate while trying to achieve organizational goals.

When administrators lack necessary management skills required to create a positive organizational climate or fail to put these skills into practice, it is almost impossible to achieve organizational goals (Açıkalın, 1994, p. 139; Stonar & Wankel, 1986, p. 397). Indeed, it is believed that school administrators generally fail to display these necessary management skills. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the contributions of management skills of school administrators to organizational climate according to the opinions of teachers working in public high schools.

1.4. State Hypotheses and Their Correspondence to Research Design

The findings of the study are believed to provide invaluable guidance to policy makers and administrators in creating environments to guarantee more effective teaching. In addition, the study is expected to contribute to both national and international literature with its findings. Finally, it is thought that when the suggestions presented in this study are implemented in the future, more quality school climates and more productive teaching-learning environments will be achieved.

2. Method

This section presents information about the research model, the research limitations, the population and the sampling, and the data collection technique and instrument.

2.1. Identify Subsections

This study uses comparative model, which is a type of survey model. Survey model describes cases or phenomena in the past or the present as they are without making any changes while comparative model has at least two variables and independent variable is tested against dependent variable to determine the presence of any variations (Karasar, 1999, p. 108).

2.2. Participant (Subject) Characteristics

This study is limited to the opinions of school administrators and teachers working in public science high schools, anatolian high schools, religious (vocational) high schools and vocational high schools located in Karatay, Meram and Selçuklu districts of Konya province in Turkey during 2017-2018 academic year. The sampling is limited to the teaching staff working in the schools affiliated to Ministry of National Education.

2.3. Sampling Procedures

This section presents information about the population and sampling of the study, the procedures followed for the administration of the scale, the sampling method used and the analyses.

2.3.1. Sample Size, Power, and Precision

The population of the study was 4226 subject-matter teachers working in public high schools in Konya province during 2017-2018 academic year. According to the sampling method used, 500 scales and questionnaire forms

were administered to the participants. A total of 448 scales and questionnaire forms were used in the analysis when those with wrong and missing information were excluded from the analysis.

2.3.2. Measures and Covariates

In order to collect data, the study used *Contributions of Perceived Management Skills of Managers to Organizational Climate Scale*. Developed by Akar (2006), this scale is similar in terms of items and dimensions to the scale which was developed by Halpin (1966) in order to determine organizational climate types (Akar, 2006, p. 21). Since Halpin (1966, p. 132) suggests that his scale can be used for all organizations, it can be said that the scale developed by Akar (2006) can be used in high schools as well.

The scale was administered face-to-face after the researcher informed the participants about the scale and the study.

As for the reliability of the scale, Cronbach Alpha value was calculated as .95. An extra factor analysis was not preferred since the validity analysis results of the scale in the literature were already consistent with each other (Yıldırım, 2009, pp. 57-61).

This 5-point Likert type scale consists of thirty items and four dimensions: Production Emphasis, Consideration, Aloofness and Thrust (Akar, 2006, p. 21). The score ranges of means for each degree of Likert points are as follows:

- 1,00-1,80 : I do not agree at all
- 1,81-2,60 : I hardly agree
- 2,61-3,40 : I agree to some extent
- 3,41-4,20 : I agree to a large extent
- 4,21-5,00 : I totally agree

2.3.3. Research Design

Since it is difficult to access all the population of the study, stratified sampling method was used to determine the sampling of the study. In this method, certain variables and characteristics are taken into consideration to determine equal number of participants with similar characteristics from an overall population (Altunışık et al., 2005, p. 55). Accordingly, the total number of participants in each high school type was determined by calculating their percentages in proportion to overall number of participants. According to stratified sampling method, equal number of participants was determined for three different districts of Konya by equally dividing the number of participants determined for each school type into three.

The scale was administered face to face after the participants were determined by using convenient sampling method. In this method, participants are selected by researchers themselves to facilitate data collection procedure (Ural & Kılıç, 2006, p. 40; Altunışık et al., 2005, p. 56). Thus, the schools with the highest number of teachers in these particular districts were preferred so that the necessary number of participants could be accessed in a relatively shorter time.

3. Results

SPSS 22.0 software was used for the analysis of the data collected from the scale and the questionnaire form prepared by the researcher. Since the data set was found to have normal distribution and be homogenous, parametric tests were used for the data analysis.

Descriptive statistics, T-test and One-Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) were used as the analyses at 0,05 degree of significance.

3.1. Statistics and Data Analysis

This section presents information about the descriptive statistics and the variance analyses as well as the normality values.

3.1.1. Descriptive Statistics about the Participants

In this section, frequencies and percentages of demographic information were calculated and tabulated as follows.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics about the Demographic Information about the Participants

School Type	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Religious (Vocational) High Schools	167	37,3
Vocational High School		
Anatolian High School	167	37,3
Science High School	91	20,3
	23	5,1
Gender		
Female	206	46
Male	242	54

Table 1 shows that % 37,3 (167) of the participants attend religious (vocational) high schools, % 37,3 (167) vocational high schools, %20,3 (91) anatolian high schools and %5,1 (23) science high schools. As for gender variable, %46 (206) of the participants are female and %54 (242) male.

3.1.2. Statistics about Normal Distribution

Whether the data had normal distribution or not was tested by using descriptive method (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012; Abbott, 2011, p. 50). In this method, normality of the data is determined by examining mean, median, skewness and kurtosis values (Abbott, 2011; Kirk, 2008). The results of normality test are presented as follows:

Table 2: Normality Test Results of the Scale

Scale Items	KURTOSIS	SKEWNE SS	MEAN \bar{X}	MEDIAN
1. Administrator closely tracks each phase of activities carried out by teachers.	-,236	-,464	3,44	3
2. Administrator is successful in persuading others in meetings.	,046	-,645	3,58	4
3. Administrator gives importance to completion of all tasks without making any mistakes.	,323	-,829	3,92	4
4. Administrator devotes himself to his work and institution.	,068	-,819	3,75	4
5. Administrator supports social and cultural development of teachers, students and other staff.	-,483	-,620	3,56	4
6. Administrator shares information with teachers while trying to solve a problem.	-,709	-,524	3,54	4
7. Administrator has a friendly approach towards teachers.	-,718	-,506	3,50	4
8. Administrator trusts teachers in that they make correct judgments.	-,578	-,472	3,53	4

Continuation of Table 3: Normality Test Results of the Scale

Scale Items	KURTOSIS	SKEWNE SS	MEAN \bar{X}	MEDIAN
9. Administrator accepts the fact that everybody can make mistakes and tolerates these mistakes when necessary.	-,340	-,555	3,55	4
10. Administrator gives importance to teachers' opinions and takes them into consideration.	-,451	-,529	3,51	4
11. Administrator tries to encourage collaboration among teachers.	-,567	-,511	3,51	4
12. Administrator cares about personal problems of teachers.	-,832	-,141	3,11	3
13. Administrator generally organizes meetings to announce the activities to be done in the school.	-,439	-,510	3,59	4
14. Administrator asks the staff to obey regulations and refuses any discussions or criticism about rules.	-,971	-,240	3,20	3
15. Administrator only makes routine decisions in our school such as distribution of courses and classrooms.	-,773	,443	2,43	2
16. Administrator provides an environment where teachers can work efficiently.	-,358	-,595	3,61	4
17. Administrator helps teachers to solve their problems.	-,633	-,480	3,51	4
18. Administrator notifies teachers in writing regarding all extra tasks and activities.	-,039	-,721	3,78	4
19. Administrator uses his authority to help teachers when needed.	-,789	-,445	3,49	4
20. Administrator takes constructive criticisms of teachers into consideration.	-,559	-,458	3,45	3,50
21. Administrator is sensitive about arriving at school before teachers.	-,322	-,726	3,79	4
22. Administrator searches for methods to promote teachers' professional development and shares them with teachers.	-,683	-,266	3,31	3
23. Administrator emphasizes and supports teachers' achievement rather than their failures.	-,639	-,409	3,44	4
24. Administrator is careful about his personal care, appearance and health.	,262	-,892	3,97	4
25. Administrator is consistent and realistic in his decisions and behaviors.	-,312	-,566	3,61	4
26. Administrator is strong against difficulties and never dreads them.	-,438	-,498	3,66	4
27. Administrator is aware of and applies methods to cope with stress.	-,306	-,495	3,56	4
28. Administrator is self-confident.	,232	-,847	3,82	4
29. Administrator has the ability to think out of the box and uses this ability when needed.	-,468	-,383	3,54	4
30. Administrator is aware of the developments in information and communication technologies and follows them.	-,262	-,579	3,66	4

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that skewness values range between $-1,141$ and -892 ; and kurtosis values between $,323$ and $-,971$. Skewness and kurtosis values between ± 1 and arithmetic means and median values that are close to each other indicate that data has normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013, p. 48; McKillup, 2012, pp. 77-78; Howitt & Cramer, 2011, p. 68).

3.1.3. Variance Analyses of Dependent Variables and Independent Variables

In this section, T-test and One Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) were done for school type and gender variables.

“Post Hoc” Test was done to determine how dimensions differ according to the groups in ANOVA test. Prior to the PostHoc test, “Levene” test was done to see whether groups are distributed normally or not and it was found that variances were equal ($p > 0,05$). LSD test is used to test variances between groups when these variances are equal (Kayri, 2009; Büyükoztürk, 2004, p. 43). Therefore, LSD test was done as part of PostHoc Test.

The results of T-test and ANOVA Test for scale dimensions and demographic information are presented below:

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics about the Dimensions of the Scale

Dimension	N	\bar{X}	STANDARD DEVIATION (Ss)
Production Emphasis	448	3,62	,88
Consideration	448	3,47	1,02
Thrust	448	3,65	,84
Aloofness	448	3,07	,91

Table 3 shows descriptive statistics about the scale dimensions. According to the analysis, the highest mean was for “Thrust” dimension (3,65) and the lowest for “Aloofness” dimension (3,07).

Table 4: Independent Sample T-test Results between Scale Dimensions and Gender Variable

Dimensions	Gender	N	\bar{X}	Ss	t	p
Production Emphasis	Female	206	3,66	,85	,739	,460
	Male	242	3,59	,90		
Consideration	Female	206	3,44	1,00	-,564	,573
	Male	242	3,50	1,03		

Table 4: (Continuing) Independent Sample T-test Results between Scale Dimensions and Gender Variable

Thrust	Female	206	3,69	,84	,944	,346
	Male	242	3,61	,84		
Aloofness	Female	206	3,03	,93	-,942	,347
	Male	242	3,11	,89		

According to Table 4, T-test done between dimensions in relation to gender variable did not reveal any significant differences among the groups ($p > 0,05$).

Table 5: ANOVA Test Results between Scale Dimensions and School Type Variable

Dimension	School Type	N	\bar{X}	Ss	F	p
Consideration	Religious (Vocational) High Schools	167	3,61	,84	,023	,995
	Vocational High School	167	3,63	,96		
	Anatolian High School	91	3,62	,80		
	Science High School	23	3,61	,85		
Production Emphasis	Religious (Vocational) High Schools	167	3,51	,99	,390	,760
	Vocational High School	167	3,42	1,08		
	Anatolian High School	91	3,46	,96		
	Science High School	23	3,62	,96		

Table 5: (Continuing) ANOVA Test Results between Scale Dimensions and School Type Variable

Thrust	Religious (Vocational) High Schools	167	3,69	,77	2,789	,829
	Vocational High School	167	3,63	,92		
	Anatolian High School	91	3,62	,80		
	Science High School	23	3,55	,85		
Aloofness	Religious (Vocational) High Schools	167	2,96	,95	2,789	,049
	Vocational High School	167	3,23	,83		
	Anatolian High School	91	2,97	,93		
	Science High School	23	3,02	,96		

According to Table 5, ANOVA test results reveal a significant difference among school types only in “Aloofness” dimension ($p < 0,05$). In order to determine between which school types the scale dimensions differ, LSD test was done and it was found that there is a significant difference between vocational high school, anatolian high school and religious (vocational) high school ($p < 0,05$).

4. Discussion

This section presents the findings obtained in national and international studies focusing on perceived organizational climate and its effect on organizations and compares these findings to those of the current study. The participant teachers were asked to reply the items on the scale that are related to management skills. Since these items measure an overall skill level, they consist of some dimensions. Developed by Akar (2006, p. 67), the scale used in this study has four dimensions: Production Emphasis, Consideration, Thrust and Aloofness. The names and characteristics of these dimensions are similar to those in the scale developed by Halpin (1966) by focusing on organizational climate (Akar, 2006, p. 21). Therefore, the values of the dimensions obtained in this current study were compared to those of organizational climate types found by Halpin (1966, pp. 174-181).

Open climate suggested by Halpin (1966, p. 174) in his study conducted with primary school teachers to determine organizational climate types implies a harmonious work relationship between school administrators and teachers. In addition, Halpin (1966, p. 174) found that Production Emphasis (PE) and Consideration (C) dimension values were higher than the mean and Aloofness (A) and Thrust (T) values were lower than the mean. However, the values obtained in the current study are far from the open climate values obtained by Halpin since aloofness dimension is equal to the mean and others are higher than the mean (Table 3). This difference is not also consistent with other climate types (Table 7). The dimension values found in this study are parallel with those of the study conducted by Yıldırım (2009, p. 67) with primary school teachers and the study carried out by Kaya (2010, p. 80) with teachers working in technical vocational schools in order to examine the contribution of school administrators to organizational climate. Moreover, the results of the studies by Akar (2006, p. 67) and Gökçen (2014, p. 141) are quite far from the dimension values of open climate. The dimension values found in the studies focusing on organizational climate were tabulated below.

Table 6: Dimension Values obtained in the Studies Dealing with Organizational Climate

Dimensions	Mean Scores - 1 (Akar, 2006, p. 67)	Mean Scores - 2 (Yıldırım, 2009, p. 67)	Mean Scores -3 (Kaya, 2010, p. 80)	Mean Scores -4 (Gökçen, 2014, p. 141)	Mean Scores in the current study (Table 3)
Consideration (C)	2,45	3,67	3,75	1,99	3,47
Production Emphasis (PE)	2,41	3,83	3,72	2,10	3,62
Thrust (T)	2,70	3,72	3,69	2,02	3,65
Aloofness (A)	2,78	3,32	3,29	2,38	3,07

As we can see from Table 6, the mean scores of dimensions in above mentioned studies do not match mean values of dimensions related to open climate because the scores of consideration and production emphasis are higher than the mean scores and the values of thrust and aloofness lower than the mean scores. This result is clearly seen in the table.

Table 7: Comparison of Organizational Climate Types according to Dimension Mean Score Levels (Halpin 1966, pp. 174-181)

Mean Score of Dimensions	Open Climate	Autonomous Climate	Controlled Climate	Familiar Climate	Paternal Climate	Closed Climate	The Climate in the Current Study
High	PE, C	PE, C, A	T	C	T	T	PE, C, T
Low	A, T	T	C	PE	PE	PE, C	
Equal							A

Table 7 displays the dimension values related to climate types obtained and classified by Halpin (1966, pp. 174-181) in his study dealing with organizational climate. According to Table 6, the results of the studies in Turkey do not correspond to any climate type and open climate is not observed in Turkish contexts, which is in parallel with dimension values obtained in the current study.

Davis (1982, p. 123) suggests that examining organizational climate provides invaluable information about to what extent an organization actively operates and the content of regulation revisions to be made in organizations. Similarly, Halpin (1966, p. 133) tried to determine organizational climate types because he claimed that some scales used in the previous studies focusing on organizations failed to provide sufficient and accurate information about organizational climates. Halpin (1966, pp. 174-181) determined the climate types in his study by using the dimension values obtained while developing the scale. Since these dimensions cover some management skills, they inform us about how certain behaviors are practiced in an organization and how necessary regulations should be applied accordingly.

The answer to the question “Are the students in open climate schools academically successful?” greatly varies in different studies (Paknadel, 1988, p. 29). Hoy and Miskel (1982, p. 193) suggest that the belief that any organization with an open climate will be successful can lead to wrong assumptions. Therefore, it can be misleading to associate academic achievement of students only with teacher-administrator interaction. However, it is also true that policies with a potential to result in academic achievement and more quality learning are more likely to be achieved in organizations displaying the characteristics of an open climate (Paknadel, 1988, p. 29). Halpin (1966, p. 131) emphasizes that positive or negative relationships between teachers and school administrators somehow affect students, which can easily be observed by visiting different schools. Hartley and Hoy (1972), in their comparative study carried out with primary school teachers, showed that students and the staff experience less alienation in the schools with an open climate (cited by Hoy & Miskel 1982, p. 193 from Hartley and Hoy, 1972). In addition, the studies revealed that teachers are more confident and efficient (Andrews, 1965, p. 317) and administrators are more determined, more self- confident, more cheerful, more sociable, more practical, stronger and search for new developments and new trends more (Anderson, 1964, p. 71) in schools with an open climate.

Climate types range from open to closed and open climate refers to a positive climate type that an organization should have (Halpin, 1966, p. 137). When the dimension values obtained in the current study are compared to the dimension values of climate types displayed in Table 7, it is seen that those in the current study do not match any climate type. Therefore, there are not specific climate types we can classify in the current study; however, it can be concluded that these dimension values clearly indicate the absence of an open climate (Table 6). Although production emphasis and consideration dimensions reflect the dimension values of an open climate, thrust and aloofness values are extremely high. Similarly, “thrust” dimension value is higher than the mean and aloofness value is equal to the mean. In fact, it is necessary to obtain thrust and aloofness values lower than mean so that an open climate can be achieved in educational environments.

It is not as easy as it seems to change climate types in schools (Paknadel, 1988, p. 34) because Halpin (1966, p. 137) claims that closed or almost closed climate types are similar to the sensitive relationship between a psychiatrist and his patient. Thus, he emphasizes that a positive approach to organization members should be based on psychodynamic factors and be initiated through certain approaches such as understanding, analyzing and assisting (Halpin, 1966, p. 137). In other words, it is not easy to change climate type; however, changing the pattern of working in an organization will make climate change easier (Paknadel, 1988, p. 34). When the dimension values in the current study are considered, we can clearly understand how difficult it is to change climate type. Although the dimension values in this study do not match any climate types, thrust and aloofness values clearly indicate a deviation from an organizational climate, even far from the expectations. Indeed, if a teacher evaluates his school administrator as a hardworking, helpful, role model and sociable person who tries to do his best for organizational productivity and empathizes with others in terms of production emphasis and consideration dimensions and again if the same teacher perceives the same administrator as an exceedingly formal and reserved person who strictly follows current regulations, continuously controls teachers and does not take teachers’ opinions into consideration (Halpin, 1966, pp. 132-135), this situation implies that such an administrator has unpredictable behaviors.

Similarly, if an administrator is sympathetic and understanding at one time but strict, remote and authoritarian at another time, teachers will experience a dilemma in their relationships with this administrator. Since school administrator is the first person that teacher will consult when they make a decision related to school, relationship between teacher and school administrator is crucial. Therefore, it might be useful to provide in-service training programs for administrators and, more importantly, to track the quality of management skills of administrators by carrying out regular audits. In addition, administrators who fail to apply necessary management skills can be replaced with new administrators. Finally, it is essential that communication among administrators at similar levels of hierarchy should be effective and consistent.

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