

Secondary School Principals' Opinions on Leadership Competencies

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Abstract

In today's changing and developing conditions, the role of school principals in education has increased significantly. Managers must also use their own leadership qualities while fulfilling these roles. In the research, managers' qualifications related to leadership and their opinions were tried to be examined. The purpose of the research in this context is to determine the opinions of secondary school principals on leadership competencies. Phenomenology, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. In this direction, data were tried to be obtained with the help of interview questions at the point of determining the leadership competencies of secondary school principals. As a result of the research; leading and guiding, decision-maker and practitioner, having fair and communicative skills, participatory and effective in relation to the environment, strong legislative power, and persuasiveness. In addition, middle school administrators say that managers do not develop themselves enough, managerial duties are not carried out by competent persons, and managerial appointments must be made with a written examination. Secondary school principals also think that to contribute to the development of leadership competencies of managers, the in-service training activities should be organized, and the school principals should participate in the planning stages of these activities.

Keywords: Leadership, secondary school principals, competencies.

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Introduction

Schools are places where educational processes are implemented and contribute to the development of children. Schools, which include many elements, undertake quite several tasks in the context of shaping the future of a society. Raising a successful generation is only possible thanks to schools. School principals are of the highest order in terms of the teaching activities in schools. As an effective administrator, school principals must have certain knowledge, skills, and competencies. The fact that school principals have specific characteristics will ensure that the institution they work as a manager will be successful with all the elements.

For the school to achieve its goals, it must be put in order. To design a corporate culture with all its elements, a fully equipped school principal is needed. In this direction, school administrators are now expected to exhibit a participatory, restructuring change leadership that will make the school more democratic (Murphy & Hallinger, 1992). Only in this manner, an appropriate educational environment can be created to train the targeted individuals. However, thanks to these knowledge and skills, the desired success in schools can be achieved.

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School principals should work to ensure that the school is a whole with all its stakeholders while maintaining education and training activities in schools. The environment of the school should also be included in the teaching processes, and it should ensure that every segment gets a share from the success or failure to be achieved. For this reason, schools will become more effective organizations if school principals establish an effective communication network with the school's stakeholders to develop the school and achieve the goals of education and training (Yavuz, 2009). Furthermore, the school principal who get through this will naturally contribute not only to the increase in success, but also to the development of the school in every sense and making it a center of social attraction.

Today, as the change in the social realm is quite high, it is not possible for people and the social groups they constitute not to be affected by this change. In this context, we can assert that schools, which are indeed entities intertwined with the environment and can be considered as life per se, are also affected by this change and development. While all these organizational and management systems and educational processes are affected by this change, it is expected that the principals who manage the schools take precautions against these developments.

Numerous definitions have been made regarding the concept of leadership. If we look at some of them, leadership is roughly guiding the activities of others, providing coordination and order, and directing people, evaluating the performance of individuals, and motivating them in this regard, assigning tasks and monitoring the responsibilities brought by these tasks, creating successful solutions to problems and appropriate ways to accomplish tasks. Thus, leadership means to be able to provide human and technical resources and to demonstrate the role of organizational guidance towards its followers (Bernardin & Russell, 1998: 153). A leader is the person who imposes sanctions to affect the success and efficiency of the organization (Robbins & DeCenzo, 2003). A leader is also a person who has a strong, dynamic personality, who influences, manages, and directs his/her environment and the society to which he/she is addressing, who can make his/her followers do their own will without coercion, and can also set an example for them (Sorensen & Epps, 1996). Leadership is the way the leader deliberately influences the group in groups where two or more people interact (Owens, 2004). Leadership is the process that emerges within the group and includes efforts to influence the group in line with a purpose (Northouse, 2009). In short, leadership can be defined as the process of gathering a group of people around certain goals and activating and influencing them to achieve these goals (Sharma and Jain, 2013: 310). Based on these definitions, it can be stated that leadership is a multi-directional and all-purpose concept that requires developing a vision for the harmonious work of the organization and activating the employees of the organization in line with this vision, putting forth new approaches by keeping the internal motivation at the highest level, and solving the problems that arise by keeping all processes under control. Again, competencies such as using human and material resources effectively, taking risks and seizing opportunities, not only being limited to managerial position, but also being able to assert themselves in all areas of social life can be counted among the characteristics of an effective leader.

The developments experienced in recent years enable all stakeholders in the educational environment, especially teachers, to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills and to develop them. In this direction, the leader directs the employees towards the goals of the organization. At the same time, a leader reveals the energies of the employees and contributes to their development (Winston & Patterson, 2006). Drucker (2003) also states that innovation should be internalized and managed institutionally. Under today's circumstances, education programs have been rearranged and greatly improved. Teachers who graduate from these new programs will also start their duties in schools in a very competent and equipped manner. As a natural consequence of this, it is thought that secondary school principals should improve themselves according to these new competencies. Determining the vision of the school in line with the goals and objectives and planning considering all these are the competencies that secondary school principals should have. Implementing the created plans correctly and identifying and solving problems that may interrupt the education and training processes are among the qualifications that secondary school principals should have. In this context, it would be appropriate to emphasize the importance of foresighted school principals working in secondary schools.

School principals must be effective and influential leaders. The students following him/her, and especially the teachers, should respect the knowledge, skills, and experiences of the school principal,

adopt, and follow these competencies. For this reason, it is very important to manifest the competencies of secondary school principals.

Today, the most important condition for being an effective and influential manager is to have sufficient knowledge, skills, and equipment. In this research, the views of school principals working in secondary schools about leadership competencies will be introduced and set forth. Thanks to this study, the opinions of the principals on whether they have improved themselves adequately will be determined. It is thought that with the results of the research that will emerge, important information will be obtained on the determination of the qualifications of secondary school principals, and it is anticipated that findings will be obtained on how to choose a manager.

Effective and competent administrators are needed while carrying out educational activities in schools. However, it is debated whether the leadership characteristics of most of the corporate managers are sufficient. In this context, it has become crucial to determine the leadership competencies of managers working in secondary schools. In this study, it will be tried to determine the opinions of secondary school principals about leadership competencies.

The main purpose of the study is to reveal the opinions of secondary school principals about leadership competencies and to develop suggestions based on the findings. In this direction, answers were sought to the following questions:

1. What are the school principals' views on leadership?
2. How many leadership qualities should a manager have to be qualified as a school principal?
3. What level of communication skills should school principals have?
4. What should be considered to create a successful school?
5. Does a school principal have a share in the success of teachers at school?
6. Should a school principal act unassistedly in solving emerging problems?
7. To what extent does the communication with the environment affect the success of a school principal?
8. Is there a consensus among school principals on the qualifications that a successful principal should have?

Method

Model of the Research Study

The general purpose of this study is to set forth the opinions of secondary school principals about leadership competencies. In this direction, phenomenology, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the research. Phenomenology aims to describe a person's experiences and knowledge regarding various phenomena. The purpose of this sort of research is to demonstrate participants' perspectives regarding their life and world and the personal meanings they attribute to their life experiences (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). In the research, interview technique was used to collect data and describe experiences. Stewart and Cash (1985) defined the interview as "a mutual and interactive communication process based on asking and answering questions and for a predetermined and serious purpose" (As cited in Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006, p. 119). In the analysis of the data, inductive analysis technique, which is one of the content analysis concepts, was used. In the inductive process, the researcher works back between the database and the themes until a comprehensive set of the subject is acquired (Creswell, 2014). Inductive analysis is done by conducted to determine the concepts underlying the data and the relationships between these concepts (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006).

Study group

In the research phase, it was tried to obtain the qualitative dimensions. In the study group, there are secondary school principals working in Bergama, İzmir. During the application of the interview form, necessary explanations were made to the sample group about the purpose and implementation of the research. Interviews were conducted with school principals who wanted to do the interview voluntarily. General information about the study group is presented in Table 1. The abbreviation "SP" is used for the school principals whose information is presented in the table.

Table 1

General Information about the Study Group

Code of the School Principal	Managerial Experience
<i>SP1</i>	9 Years
<i>SP2</i>	11 Years
<i>SP3</i>	13 Years
<i>SP4</i>	12 Years
<i>SP5</i>	16 Years
<i>SP6</i>	7 Years
<i>SP7</i>	5 Years
<i>SP8</i>	6 Years
<i>SP9</i>	7 Years
<i>SP10</i>	4 Years

As seen in Table 1, the research was conducted with 10 school principals. The management experience of school principals varies between 4 and 16 years. It can be said that the experience periods are evenly distributed.

Data Collection Tools

For the purposes of the research, a semi-structured "Secondary School Principals Interview Form" was used to collect qualitative data. It is thought that the desired results can be achieved with this form. Information about the "Secondary School Principals Interview Form" is given below.

Secondary School Principals Interview Form

In line with the research, a semi-structured interview form was prepared and the opinions of secondary school principals about leadership competencies were tried to be demonstrated. In addition, these collected data are included in the findings section. In the first stage, a form was prepared in line with the data to be collected. The questions in the form were arranged under the guidance of the literature review related to the subject. The relevant form consists of 10 questions. The questions were developed to measure the sub-problems of the research. The developed questions were discussed with the field expert who has experience and studies on the subject and took their final form after some necessary corrections such as adding items, changing expressions, and suitability for qualitative study. The first question of the interview form is about what leadership means to school principals. The second question is about determining the characteristics that a successful school principal should have. The third question is aimed at determining how administrators and teachers should communicate. While the fourth question is about the working environment that a school principal should prepare for the teachers working in his school, the fifth question is about how the school principal should behave in his/her relations with the environment. In the sixth question, the points to be considered for an effective school management were sought, while in the seventh question, it was desired to reach the information about which ways a school principal followed in solving the problems that arise in the institution. The eighth question is about whether the principals improve themselves sufficiently or not. In the ninth question, it is aimed to answer the question of whether the school principals are run by truly competent people, while in the tenth and last question, it is aimed to reveal the suggestions of the school principals regarding the appointment of administrators.

Data Collection and Analysis

The interview form was recorded in writing after obtaining the permission of the school principals and applying it after face-to-face interviews with them. Besides, the interview form was examined with the relevant field expert and necessary corrections were made in line with the feedback received. However, to increase the validity of the research, the research process was tried to be expressed in detail. The obtained findings are given without adding any comments as the reliability of the research is aimed. The data obtained with the interview form used within the scope of the research were shaped after the review of the relevant literature and the interviews.

In the study, the interview method, one of the qualitative research methods, was preferred. In the interviews, the opinions of ten different school principals were consulted. Before the interviews, the school principals were reached, and an appointment was made after the necessary permissions were obtained verbally. Interview data were obtained in written form. Based on the determined common codes, the data were interpreted. Explanatory tables were presented in the findings section and the data in the tables were supported by the answers given by the school principals.

Inductive analysis was evaluated in the analyzes related to the qualitative dimension used in the research. The opinions of the school principals were determined, and the explanations were expressed in the form of tables. Codes were assigned to each school principal interviewed, and examples of opinions were included in the findings section of the study. The data obtained in this way has been explained and some inferences have been made.

Credibility, Consistency and Objectivity

In qualitative research, validity is related to the researcher's transfer of the researched phenomenon as unbiasedly as possible. Reliability, on the other hand, is the measurement of scientific findings in the same way and the same way of measuring a phenomenon or event at the same time (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). The research was conducted with interview forms. It is very important in terms of credibility that the face-to-face interviews with the school principals are handled clearly and the research is given in all details. Reaching general conclusions based on the answers given by the school principals to the individual questions and the similarity of the expressions strengthened the consistency of the study. The results were objectively shown with the help of statements, both in the form of tables and in verbal manner, and the relevant findings were obtained by synthesizing the views.

Findings

In this part of the research, the findings obtained because of the examination and evaluation of the data collected from the school principals participated in the research are included. The findings are shown in tables and the results of the research have been reached in this direction.

Secondary School Principals' Views on Leadership

The findings obtained from the answers of secondary school teachers given to the interview question "What does leadership mean to you? Can you explain briefly?" are given in Table 2.

Table 2

Secondary School Principals' Opinion on the Definition of Leadership

Themes	School Principal's Code
Taking and implementing decisions	SP2, SP5, SP9, SP10
Guider	SP4, SP5, SP6, SP10

Achieving goals	SP1, SP8
Respected	SP2, SP7
Pacemaker	SP2, SP7
To master the legal dimensions	SP2, SP8
Improver	SP3
Visionary	SP3
Changer	SP4
Shedding light on the future	SP5

As seen in Table 2, school principals see the leader as a person who makes and implements decisions, guides, achieves goals, is respected, is a pacemaker, master of legal dimensions, develops, visionary, changes, and sheds light on the future.

According to SP2, leader is characterized as a person “who is respected, taken as an example, able to take decisions at the right time and implements decisions, and knows the legal aspects well.”

According to SP5, leader is characterized as a person “who is skillful in the art of managing people, shedding light on the future and directing people.”

As it can be understood from these explanations, secondary school principals mostly stated the expressions of guiding and implementing these decisions by adopting a course of action.

Opinions on the Qualities That a Successful Secondary School Principal Should Have

The following findings in Table 3 were reached in line with the answers given to the interview question asked to the secondary school principals: “There are some characteristics that a successful school principal should have in the fields of education and management. What do you think a successful manager should have?”.

Table 3

According to Secondary School Principals, the Characteristics of a Successful Manager

Themes	School Principal’s Code
Being fair and just	SP1, SP3, SP4, SP5, SP8, SP9
Mastering the law	SP1, SP4, SP6
Being a leader	SP1, SP7, SP10
Have high level communication skills	SP2, SP4, SP9
Ability to make decisions under stress	SP1
Being consistent	SP1
Follow up on assigned tasks	SP1
Mastering the teaching field	SP2
Mastering the technology	SP2
Being equal	SP3
Hardworking	SP5
Being objective	SP5

Some of the opinions of secondary school principals are as follows:

SP2: “The manager should have a full command of the field of management and technology, and his/her communication skills should be at a high level.”

SP9: “The manager should be fair and equal, be able to plan the goals of the institution, be a visionary.”

SP4: “A successful school principal should have a good command of the rules, be successful in human relations and be fair.”

According to these answers, secondary school principals emphasized the qualities that a successful manager should have such as being fair, having a good command of the legislation and having high-level communication skills.

Opinions on the Communication of Secondary School Principals with Teachers

In line with the answers given to the question "How should an administrator with a good leadership quality communicate with teachers?", which was asked to secondary school principals to determine their level of communication with teachers, the following findings were reached.

Table 4

Characteristics of Communication with Teachers According to Secondary School Principals

Themes	School Principal's Code
School goals should be shared with teachers	SP1, SP7, SP8, SP10
Empathize with teachers	SP3, SP9
Rules should be clearly stated	SP5, SP6
Goals should be implemented with teachers	SP1
There should be no superior-subordinate relationship	SP2
The teacher's work environment should be better than that of the administrator	SP3
Face to face meeting should be ensured	SP4
The manager should be courteous and polite	SP5
Instructional leadership must be set to work	SP7

In line with the characteristics of the communication to be established with the teachers, the following comments were received from the principals:

SP1: "The goals of the group and the school should be explained to the teachers clearly, the ideas of the group should be taken, and the goals should be finalized, and consistency should be observed in reaching these goals."

SP7: "Instructional leadership must be set to work."

As it can be understood from the findings, secondary school principals emphasized the importance of including teachers in the studies and being polite with them.

Working Environment for Teachers

The questions addressed to the secondary school principals were: "What kind of a working environment should a good school principal plan for the teachers working in the school? In line with the answers given to the question "Can you explain by giving an example?", the findings given in Table 5 below were obtained.

Table 5

Characteristics of the Working Environment to be Prepared for Teachers According to Principals

Themes	School Principal's Code
An environment suitable for the structure of teachers should be created	SP1, SP5, SP6, SP7, SP9
Teachers should be able to enjoy school	SP2, SP7, SP8, SP9, SP10
Teachers should be able to believe and trust the principal	SP3
Teachers must look after the interests of the institution	SP3
Teachers should have a good syllabus	SP4

Teachers should not need materials	SP4
Teachers should not be affected by physical conditions	SP4
The working environment should be planned together with the teachers.	SP7

According to the table, some of the opinions expressed by the secondary school principals are as follows:

SP2: "Teachers should be able to enjoy school and work in an environment where they are comfortable in the classroom."

SP4: "The teacher should not be bothered with the physical conditions of the school, he/she should not have a deficiency in terms of materials, and the teacher's curriculum should be adjusted in a way that does not bore him/her."

SP6: "The needs of teachers should be taken into account while preparing the physical environments of the school."

After the answers received, results such as creating an environment suitable for the structure of the teacher, preparing the lesson programs well and ensuring that the teachers can enjoy the school, teachers' trust in the school principal, not needing materials and not confronting other physical conditions were reached.

Relationship of Secondary School Principals with the Environment

The answers given to the interview question asked to the secondary school principals as "How should a school principal behave in his relations with the environment?" revealed the following findings given in Table 6.

Table 6

Opinions of Secondary School Principals on How to Behave in Relations with the Environment

Themes	School Principal's Code
Include the environment in all activities	SP3, SP5, SP6, SP7, SP8
Close relations with the environment should be established	SP2, SP7, SP9, SP10
School and environment should be directed towards a common goal	SP1, SP8
The environment should be well analyzed	SP1
The school principal must be loved and respected in the community	SP2
The principal should not forget that he represents the school	SP2
Site visits should be made	SP3
Participation in activities in the surrounding area should be made	SP3
It should be felt that the school is at the service of the environment	SP3
The school principal should know the city bureaucracy and parents well	SP4

Some of the examples presented in Table 6 are as follows:

SP3: "The middle school principal should involve the environment in all activities, make field visits, participate in special days and events, and make everyone feel that the school is always at the service of the environment."

SP4: "The school principal should know all the city bureaucracy (District Governorate, Garrison, Police, Public Health, Religious Affairs, etc.) and the shopkeepers in the immediate vicinity, and be able to meet with the parents one-on-one and meet face to face."

After these answers, 10 themes emerge. Secondary school principals should include the environment in all kinds of activities in relations with the environment, analyze the environment well, direct the school and the environment to a common goal, establish close relations with the environment, the school principal should be loved and respected in the environment, the school principal does not forget that he represents the school, field visits are made, participate in the activities in the environment, making the school feel that it is at the service of the environment, and the school principal's familiarity with the city bureaucracy have come to the fore.

Considerations for an Effective School Management

The findings shown in Table 7 below were obtained from the answers given to the question: "What should a successful school principal pay attention to for an effective school management? Can you explain briefly?"

Table 7

Opinions of Secondary School Principals for an Effective School Management

Themes	School Principal's Code
The principal must be fair	SP1, SP3, SP8, SP9, SP10
The school principal must have knowledge of the legislation	SP1, SP2, SP9
Must have effective communication	SP3, SP6
Value the opinions of stakeholders	SP3, SP7
Teachers and students should know their behavior well	SP1
The legislation should not be viewed as punishment	SP2
Do not shy away from responsibility and initiative	SP2
Must be a good leader, not a manager	SP2
Should be open to developments and outside	SP3
Working as an example for teachers	SP4

In line with these answers, it is seen that secondary school principals mostly emphasize the importance of having a good command of the legislation and being fair. The opinions of some secondary school principals are as follows:

SP1: "The school principal should make the teachers feel that he is fair, that he has a good command of the legislation, that he is a good leader, and should be able to express well to teachers and students that he will not compromise on negative behaviors."

SP4: "The school principal should not act like the boss, she should set an example by working with the teachers, make them feel that they are a part of this mechanism, and ultimately make them understand that the administrator is also a teacher."

In addition, the administrators also expressed themes such as knowing teacher and student behavior well, not seeing the legislation as punishment, not avoiding responsibility, and taking initiative, being a good leader, having effective communication, being open to developments and outside, valuing the opinions of stakeholders, and setting an example for teachers.

Ways to be followed in the Solution of the Problems That Arise in the Institution

The findings obtained from the answers given by the secondary school principals to the interview question "Which ways do you follow to solve the problems that arise in the institution where you work as a school principal?" are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Opinions of Secondary School Principals on the Ways to be followed in solving the Problems That Arise

Themes	School Principal's Code
Conversation (persuasion method)	SP1, SP2, SP4, SP5, SP8
Identifying the source of the problem	SP1, SP9, SP10
Collaboration with individuals and institutions	SP3, SP6
Preventing problems before they occur	SP4, SP7
Exhibiting a rigid attitude	SP2
Improvement of physical conditions	SP4
Using calming language	SP4

After the answers, 7 themes emerged. Here are some views on solving the problems that arise:

SP5: "It is necessary to identify the problem on the spot, listen to every aspect of the problem and evaluate every factor."

SP8: "If the problem is related to human relations, I am in favor of solving the problem by listening to both sides and using a calming language."

In the solution of problems, secondary school principals mentioned methods such as conversation and persuasion, identifying the source of the problem, displaying a strict attitude, cooperation with people and institutions, improving physical conditions, preventing problems before they occur, and using a calming language.

Opinions on Secondary School Principals' Self-Improvement

When secondary school principals were asked "What are your views on whether secondary school principals develop themselves sufficiently or not? Can you explain?", the findings shown in Table 9 below were obtained from the answers given to the question.

Table 9

Secondary School Principals' Opinions on Whether They Improved Themselves

Themes	School Principal's Code
School principals cannot improve themselves enough	SP1, SP2, SP5, SP7, SP10
The workload hinders the academic development of the manager	SP4, SP5, SP9
The administrator cannot develop himself due to the system	SP1, SP8
In-service training should be provided so that they can improve themselves	SP3, SP6
School principals should be selected from the fields of management	SP2
The ideas of school principals should be sought in in-service training	SP3
If the school principal is on the field, he can improve himself	SP4

In line with the answers above, it is concluded that school principals cannot improve themselves due to workload and systemic problems. Some statements of secondary school principals on the subject are as follows:

SP3: "In-service training activities for school principals to improve themselves should be carried out at regular intervals and should be open to change and development. At the same time, cooperation should be made with the managers at the point of these trainings.

SP9: "Due to the workload, time cannot be spared for personal development."

In addition, it has been found that school principals should be selected from the fields of management, in-service training should be given to school principals and the opinions of school principals should be sought for these trainings, and that the school principal can find the opportunity to improve himself if he is in the field of problems.

Opinions on Whether Managerial Duties Are Carried Out by Competent Persons

Table 10 shows the findings obtained because of the answers given by the secondary school principals to the interview question: "What are your views on whether the managerial duties are carried out by really competent people?"

Table 10

Opinions on Whether Managerial Duties Are Carried Out by Competent Persons

Themes	School Principal's Code
Managerial duties are not carried out by competent persons	SP1, SP3, SP5, SP6, SP7, SP9
Merit is not considered in the selection of the manager	SP5, SP7, SP8, SP10
Anyone can be a manager nowadays	SP4, SP8
Management is carried out as a second task	SP1
System in the appointment of administrators, effective people etc.	SP1
The manager is having difficulties because there are many areas of responsibility	SP2
Not being treated fairly in the selection of managers	SP4

As can be seen in Table 10, secondary school principals underlined the view that most of the managerial duties are not carried out by competent people. The statements of some school principals on the subject are given below:

SP1: "Unfortunately, management is mostly not carried out by competent people. The reason for this is that the system, people, and political will, as well as the fact that management is seen as a second duty.

SP4: "School principals can improve themselves very well when they are in the field, in a problem. However, the workload prevents the school principal from developing himself in the academic field. It causes the administrator to move away from the teaching profession."

Opinions have emerged that merit is not considered in the selection of managers, that management is seen as a second duty, and that everyone can be a manager today.

Opinions and Suggestions for Appointment of Managers

The answers given to the question, "What are your suggestions for the appointment of a manager?" asked to the secondary school principals, led to the following findings.

Table 11

Opinions and Suggestions of Secondary School Principals on Appointment of Managers

Themes	School Principal's Code
Appointment of the manager must be done by written exam	SP1, SP3, SP4, SP5, SP9, SP10
Appointments should be made on merit basis	SP3, SP9, SP10
There should be no interview	SP3, SP4, SP5
The sections on management in the laws should be updated	SP1, SP7
School principals should be able to choose their	SP6, SP8

own assistants

There must be a fair oral exam/interview	SP1
Manager selection should be made from management fields	SP2
Teachers should not be administrators	SP2
All elements except the written exam should be disabled	SP4

In line with the answers received, 8 themes emerge. Secondary school principals stated that there should be no interviews at the point of manager appointment and that appointments should be made with a written exam. Some other explanations are as follows:

SP2: "Administrative appointments should not be made among teachers; they should be made from areas related to administration."

SP4: "I am in favor of the absence of interviews in managerial appointments and the fact that candidates should undergo a serious written exam to make a fair election. Apart from this, any criteria, documents, peers, acquaintances, affinity, etc. elements must be disabled. In this way, there will be an equal chance of making an equal choice among the candidates.

School principals also stated that changes should be made in laws and regulations regarding management, and that the school principal should choose the people who will work in the assistant principal staff.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

The research is about the leadership competencies of secondary school principals. The essence of the study is the concept of leadership. The idea of what leadership is and what characteristics a successful leader should have constitute the main starting point of the study.

In this study, the opinions of secondary school principals were sought to determine the leadership competencies of secondary school principals. In this direction, firstly, the concept of school management was explained, and the expected characteristics and behaviors of the school administrator were tried to be determined. Afterwards, leadership and leadership characteristics were started to be examined, and desired leadership characteristics were tried to be revealed.

Leaders must first have a vision and mission. In addition, he should have adopted the principle of guiding the group he is the leader of and really changing something. In today's changing conditions, this is of great importance. According to Dalgın (2008), a visionary leader helps employees internalize the vision of the organization by explaining that reaching their personal goals is parallel to the realization of the organization's vision. In this way, the employee who has accepted the vision does his job more comfortably and merrily. It also takes more effort than before. According to Akkaş Baysal (2013), visionary leaders are leaders who can analyze and synthesize the events that may occur in the future with different perspectives, and who can successfully convey the vision to all departments of the organization. As a result of the findings we obtained, secondary school principals emphasized the importance of managers' valuing the opinions of teachers and emphasized that a working climate should be created in accordance with their structure. In this way, they stated that preparing an environment that will enable all employees to do their jobs happily will bring success.

Boone and Kurtz (2013: 233) emphasize that although they do not have the same qualities of great leaders, which we can define as successful managers, three aspects of empathy, self-awareness and objectivity are frequently mentioned, but they also have other characteristics such as courage, compassion, commitment to goals, innovation, and flexibility. To look at the issue from a different angle; it can be easily stated that being a successful leader cannot be thought of independently of the environment. The environment he is in, the world he was born and raised in can shape the behavior of the leader. In addition, it is an undeniable fact that there are other elements that cannot be ignored such as being ambitious, determined, and hardworking for an effective leadership.

It is important for middle school principals to be fair, sincere, sharing, developing and supportive in their relations with teachers to provide a peaceful educational environment. The administrator should

not criticize the teacher for the slightest mistake. When he can act like this, he will be able to create a team spirit in the school and contribute to the teachers to enter a more enthusiastic working process. In addition, the school principal should determine the knowledge, skills and competence areas needed by the personnel in the school with the information obtained through formal and informal ways, create opportunities to provide these, and play an active role in the planning, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation stages of the necessary educational activities (Hord, 1992). Özdemir and Sezgin (2004) stated that the school principal should draw a talented and equipped teaching leader who realizes the mistakes of the teachers but evaluates them as development opportunities, emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning by giving priority to professional development activities, and acts as a model. A school principal who behaves in this way not only supports teachers' success levels and developmental status, but also positively affects teacher and student success, in short, contributes to school success. Secondary school principals also expressed their opinions in this context; stated that administrators should assume a supportive role in the personal development of school employees. They emphasized the importance of not helping teachers reach their goals by guiding them.

It is very important for principals working in secondary schools to take initiative when necessary. However, in today's education system, principals do not find this freedom too much since they act more in accordance with the directives in schools. In this context, if more freedom and flexibility can be provided, school principals can include practices that can have positive effects on students and teachers. In this way, the wishes of the teacher and the student can be better understood and studies that increase their success levels can be planned. In this context, Erdoğan (2000) defined leadership as taking one step further than applying the techniques to a new process that the leader would define and emphasized the importance of the manager's need to go beyond the legislation to affect the feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and value judgments of the personnel and to create changes.

It is very important that school principals have good relations with the environment. It is an undeniable fact that environmental factors and public relations have an impact on the success of a school. Simon, Simthburg, and Thompson (1973) defined a leader as "a person who can unite people in pursuit of a goal". In this respect, a school principal should play an active role in teacher-student-parent relations, while at the same time he should assume a successful and participatory role in his relations with the environment, ensure that the environment is aware of the goals of the institution, and should be able to combine all elements in line with the objectives. Environmental relations, which are placed on an effective and regular basis, will also contribute to education and training services, and increase success. Gurbuz et al. (2013), in the century we are in, school administrators have the quality of education and training, continue their professional development, constantly renew themselves and update themselves according to the requirements of the age, in this context, follow the technology closely, make efforts for the development of the school they manage, and work with their employees and the environment. It is stated that they should be a leader who establishes good relations. The fact that the importance of environmental factors is so high in education can be attributed to the fact that the interaction of the school with all other elements has increased today.

According to secondary school principals, in-service training activities are of great importance in the development of leadership competencies of administrators. These activities should be planned effectively, managers should be included in the planning stage and their opinions should be sought. As a result, a successful implementation process should be established and school principals who cannot find much chance to develop themselves due to the high workload should be able to take advantage of this distinguished opportunity. In addition, such training activities will increase the interaction of managers with each other, and will ensure the sharing of knowledge, skills, and experiences.

School principals are united around the view that there should be a written exam at the point of selecting the administrators for the task. In this context, a system enriched with leadership competencies should be planned in the written exam to be held to appoint a manager. Within the scope of this system, studies should be carried out to provide an administrator with all the competencies that will be needed in and around the school. The school principal candidate should prepare himself according to the required leadership competencies before the written exam he will take and should be able to develop himself in this direction. Cemaloğlu (2005) states that the fact that school administrators are subject to proficiency exams related to areas that they cannot use in the

implementation process causes the program to deviate from its purpose. Kurt (2009) in his research stated that opening undergraduate or graduate programs to become a manager and teaching courses such as communication, leadership and economics can contribute to the fact that more competent managers are at work. In short, it is of great importance that the administrators elected to schools today have developed themselves in every sense and are competently equipped with the desired administrator features. The selection of these managers can only be made through objective examinations.

School administrators should not be confronted with unnecessary orders and duties while continuing education and training activities in schools. This not only causes them to waste time, but also prevents them from using the necessary leadership qualities by creating an extra workload. In addition, it is necessary to prevent secondary school principals from spending their energies on correspondence by assigning a civil servant to each secondary school. Of course, this is a situation that is more possible in private education institutions under today's conditions. The financial impossibilities in public secondary schools naturally bring along the lack of employees and excess workload. Çelik (2012) stated in his research that private primary school administrators exhibit their managerial and leadership characteristics more effectively than official primary school administrators due to the school's physical location, economic conditions, and authorities. On the other hand, the ability of official primary school administrators to communicate with their employees has come to the fore. In addition, it was concluded that the education administrators and teachers in primary schools do not care about in-service training. It can be said that the ability of school principals to create a successful management mechanism at school is an achievement that can be achieved by having enough time for them. Managers should not be faced with time-consuming work.

The findings obtained from this research, which was conducted to investigate the perceptions of the school principals working in secondary schools, about their leadership competencies were interpreted and the result was reached. These results, which emerged in line with the findings obtained since the first stages of the research, can be summarized as follows:

- Secondary school principals are those who guide the leader and change things, know the legal dimensions, make the vision and mission of the institution open to development and develop, are respected and taken as an example, can take decisions and implement these decisions correctly, and can reach a group's goals by shedding light on the future.
- Secondary school principals are required to be fair, equal, democratic, objective and hardworking, to be consistent in their decisions, to be able to follow their work and duties, to be good in human relations and to empathize, to have rules, technology and They draw attention to features such as being able to plan the goals of the institution by fully dominating the field of teaching, keeping their communication skills at a high level and having the ability to make decisions under stress. Of these, the principal's being fair and impartial was the most emphasized feature.
- According to secondary school principals, a good administrator should be able to use leadership characteristics rather than a supervisor-officer relationship in their relations with teachers and should not give too much space to the language of legislation in their communication with teachers. By establishing empathy, teachers should improve their working environment and conditions better than their own working environment. He should be able to behave consistently by explaining the group and school goals to the teachers well, and he should also meet with the teachers face to face without any means of communication. He should be level and polite, express the rules clearly. School principals frequently mentioned the importance of empathizing in communication with teachers.
- Secondary school principals put forward the idea of creating an environment suitable for teachers' structure in terms of the working environment that should be prepared for teachers. In addition, they pointed out inferences such as the teacher's good curriculum, the fact that the teacher is not affected by the physical conditions at school and does not need materials, can trust the administrators, and enjoy the school.
- According to the results obtained from the relations of secondary school principals with the environment, a school principal should assume a participatory role in the school environment, and the surrounding environment should be taken into consideration for school activities. The

administrator should be able to participate in all activities held in the environment and represent the school.

- Another result obtained from the research is the fact that a secondary school principal should be fair and competent in the legislation for an effective school administration. In addition, according to secondary school principals, the administrator should be able to control the behavior of teachers and students and should not avoid taking initiative when necessary.
- According to the secondary school principals participating in the research, the school principal should use the method of persuading by speaking in solving the problems. Also, instead of solving a problem after it happens, it is necessary to prevent it before it happens.
- Secondary school principals state that managerial duties are not carried out by truly competent people. They argue that the selection of managers is not fair, and they argue that management is seen as a second duty and that today a situation where everyone can be a manager has emerged.
- According to another result of the research, secondary school principals express the idea that a written exam should be made in the appointment of administrators. They are of the opinion that there is no interview and that appointments should be made based on merit. In addition, according to secondary school principals, administrators should not be chosen from among teachers, but from areas related to administration.

The findings that emerged because of the research on "Secondary School Principals' Views on Leadership Competencies" and the results obtained in the light of these findings led to the development of the following suggestions:

- The criteria applicable to the selection, evaluation and appointment of secondary school principals can be re-planned to improve the leadership characteristics of the manager candidates. In this context, manager training and development programs -different from all of them- can be organized to train school principals in the desired dimensions.
- Seminars and courses can be organized to develop secondary school principals, considering the characteristics they should have. In this way, the ties, and interactions of the principals with each other are also strengthened and increased.
- An officer can be assigned to each secondary school to do the necessary correspondence. It is a known fact that school principals also deal with correspondence when appropriate, although this task is performed by assistant principals in schools. As a result of the appointment of civil servants to schools, school principals can devote more of their energy to improving the school.
- It can be ensured that practice studies are frequently applied in the school principals training programs planned and realized for school administrators and that studies are carried out at the point of learning by doing. In this direction, it can be ensured that principals practice by creating appropriate experiences for the situations they may encounter in schools.
- School principals can show fair, open, equal, supportive, sharing, and sincere behaviors in their relations with teachers. In this way, school principals can make teachers feel that they are a team with them and can create a positive working atmosphere by allowing teachers to see the school as a family.
- For middle school principals to devote sufficient time to effective leadership –desired and expected managerial qualities-, too many unnecessary tasks should not be assigned to them.
- For teachers, a study can be conducted to determine what qualifications they want to work with a school principal in their school.
- Research can be planned on how school principals working in secondary schools can benefit from teachers, students, and parents in solving the problems that arise while using their leadership qualities in the field.
- From a critical point of view, secondary school principals can be asked to express their opinions within the framework of the characteristics they should have.

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