

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT HAS BEEN INCREASING IN STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS, BASED ON INTERNATIONAL EXAMS

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ABSTRACT

The developed countries have focused on the school management and education systems in their education reforms, starting in the late 1990s. Some international organizations, aiming to contribute to these reforms, have given special attention to education and tried to help countries with their deficiencies in teaching, testing and evaluation systems. The PISA exams, one of the international exams, give the opportunity to countries to check regularly to what extent they approach their educational goals in basic education and share the results and evaluation of the factors affecting their education systems. TALIS is also one of these exams that identifies problems and develops suggestions for solving these problems on some sub-areas. The UNESCO IIEP and EU have done similar studies. According to the assessments and reports prepared by the aforementioned organizations, the school administrators in the school system, along with other factors, play an important role in the academic success of student. In this study, it is aimed to develop some recommendations on selection and education process of school administrators for improving the quality of education and academic achievement in the light of exam results and research reports.

Key Words: PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey), School Management, Academic Success.

PREFACE

The schools are open systems. As with any other system, the school system also has inputs, processes, outputs, feedback, and there are sub-systems interact with its environment. If we consider "process", one of the sub-systems, we can encounter its sub-systems which are based on four basis in cycle; these are management, education, cultural, and politics. According to reports prepared as a result of international exams, surveys and assessments, the most important factors that affect academic success in the educational process, the administration and faculty, school principals and teachers that come to the fore. In this study; the "school management" that affects and increases student academic success and the implications for its development is selected as a main problem and tried to be clarified the results obtained, evaluation findings, and proposals on the subject.

METHODOLOGY

This research is descriptive and qualitative techniques are used. The primary school management is the main research area. Because, the international exams try to determine the outputs and efficiency of primary school

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education while evaluating the graduate student's level on basic knowledge and give some inputs to compare countries' education systems.

The international exams' reports, the reports on countries' education systems, and the evaluation papers based on those reports are taken care of while collecting data. In this context, the outputs of OECD PISA reports, the reports and research papers on Finland education system, as the most successful country in this exam, the ERG and other institutions reports, Turkish Minister of Education reports, and the special report (Preparing teachers and developing school leaders for the 21st century) from 2012 International Summit on the Teaching Profession - New York City—March 14-15 are used.

To analyze the data, first the data was grouped in theme-based approach, and then data analysis was performed on the basis of it. In this context; the roles of school management in academic success, in addition to the duties related to general management, to clarify student evaluation system, the courses that will be given, the textbooks, the coverage of courses, and the percentage of school management responsibilities of OECD countries were considered and evaluated.

FINDINGS

The school administration systems, and especially school managers, teachers, educational programs, support systems, the physical structure of the school have been focused during the school educational reforms since at the end of 1990's.

The school manager has been studied by many researchers as one of the most important factors that affects student achievement. The school researches (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Scweithzer ve Wisenbaker, 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Stedman, 1987; Balcı, 1993) results refer that school manager has effects on student success. In addition, especially in the earlier studies on leadership (Leithwood ve Montgomery, 1982) refer that the school atmosphere and student achievement have been affected by instructional and educational leadership (Altun & Çakan, 2008;3).

According the study results conducted in Turkey by Balcı (1993, Akt: Altun&Çakan, 2008), school managers give more importance to administration jobs than educational leadership.

Witziers, Bokser, and Kruger (2003) performed meta-analysis in different countries to examine the effect of educational leadership on academic success and to solve this contradiction among researches from 1986 to 1996. As a result, researchers proved that primary school educational leaders have influence on academic success (Altun & Çakan, 2008).

According to the researches on school management system; distributed powers and decentralized structure, management, programs, mandatory standards are continually being developed in relation to education, constant system monitoring, evaluation tools, provide a high level of individual responsibility are the fore issues in order to establish an effective school management system.

School managers shape the teachers development, determine the educational goals of the school, direct educational applications to achieve educational objectives, make recommendations on the regulatory practices of teachers' methodology, find solutions for the problem between teachers and the classroom, take measures to ensure the motivation of teachers to improve the quality of education. The main duties of the school managers are to develop the learning environment at school and to ensure the development of teaching methods for teachers.

As a result of the inspections carried out by the OECD on PISA 2009 tests, student achievement is higher in schools that provided discipline. 81 % of the successful students stated that systematic school environment has positive contribution to the academic success. The school manager is the most important factor to maintain discipline in the school environment.

Another report prepared after the PISA 2009 tests stated that the reason of higher success rate in private schools compared to public schools is the result of better management systems and administrators of these schools. In this review, it is determined the reasons for being more successful manager of private school and better performance are to have more initiative, better allocation of resources, and school atmosphere.

With the participation of the top 23 countries in the PISA exams, a meeting was held in 14th and 15th of March 2012 in the United States, to discuss the improvement of the quality of education and success. During the meeting, taking into account the results of research on this subject has been compiled in a report that the most important factors affecting the success were determined as school administrators and teachers and what can be done to train school administrators and teachers to have better results around the world to prepare for the 21st century. The U.S. Secretary of Education gave opening speech of the meeting while emphasizing the importance of school administrators and teachers for quality and success in education, and then he gave general information about the projects on this issue.

The OECD PISA reports and the above-mentioned meeting minutes stated that “the initiative” is the first key issue in the school system for success. As the key factors were determined in the use of the initiative are the strong school administrators, senior teachers, head teachers and strong school support systems. However, in these reports, the well-trained school administrators were referred as fundamental element of education reforms.

In OECD PISA reports, assessing the effectiveness of school administrators in the system are determined in four areas and the manager's effect is measured on these. These are;

- a. To determine evaluation system for students,
- b. To determine textbooks which are used,
- c. To determine the scope of the courses,
- d. To determine the lessons to be given.

In this context, the manager’s effect in school system in Turkey, in United Kingdom, and in Finland were defined as seen in the table below.

Table 1: The influence of the school manager in the school system (%)

Topic	Turkey	United Kingdom	Finland
To determine evaluation system for students	42	88	50
To determine textbooks which are used	14	98	98
To determine the scope of the courses	9	77	32
To determine the lessons to be given	14	86	55

(Source OECD, *PISA 2009 Database*, Table IV.3.6.)

In this context, the central government effect in school system on those areas in Turkey, in United Kingdom, and in Finland were defined as seen in the table below.

Table 2: The influence of the central government in the school system (%)

Topic	Turkey	United Kingdom	Finland
To determine evaluation system for students	30	0	7
To determine textbooks which are used	68	0	0
To determine the scope of the courses	76	2	16
To determine the lessons to be given	65	0	6

(Source: OECD, *PISA 2009 Database*, Table IV.3.6.)

Comparing the situation in Turkey with the most successful countries in PISA exams, the results can be reached that the school administrators' initiative is an important criterion in contributing to the success and the over-centralized structure reduces the chance of success of education system, and prevent the development of school managers.

Some of the key qualifications for effective school managers can be identified which are strategic leadership, leadership for training and education, managing human resources, providing organizational development, managing the change, getting the life-long learning as basis, making the overall management, developing themselves and others, being directive, establishing and developing relationships with people, improving organization, managing the school, and being effective while using financial resources. Some countries have improved more qualifications for school managers; such as to be a teacher with experience in a certain time period, to have postgraduate education, to be participated in school-level certification programs, to have worked as a deputy of the undertaken position, and to participate in special programs at universities have been opened in the school management. The school is open system, so, it is highly interactive with its environment. For this reason, one of the features of school administrator is to establish strong relationships with the environment. The school managers spend 1/3rd of their time for the social studies and relationships with environment in Finland. One of the most important features of school manager is to share authority with deputies and other officials in proper ways. The collaborative and participatory leadership approach for the development and success of the school should be the basic behavior features of the school manager.

The programs that are prepared to train school principals candidates cover theoretical background, case studies, personal behaviors, working with advisors, personnel management and development, communication skills, preparing special project for school, management, preparing and implementing strategy, managing the change, and problem solving. Some countries carry out leadership training for candidates within the program in order as project leadership, team leadership, school leadership, and strategic leadership. The managers who took leadership programs can be appointed as local and national level educational leaders.

While the education is re-defined as concept, system, structure, and process, the education system components also have entered into a structural transformation. While the school is defined at the center as a fundamental change agent in information societies; students are defined as strategic human resources, the school managers are defined as strategic transformation leaders, the parents are strategic partners, and the teachers are defined as strategic education leaders (MEB, 2011).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The schools, as open systems, have been operated under different names constitute the basis of the formal education system since the beginning of social life. One of the outputs of the school system is to increase student achievement with high-quality education and good management of the process.

According to the reports prepared based on international examinations and other studies on education stated that, the school managers and teachers are the most important factors for the success in comparison with the other factors which contributed.

Education managers and planners must consider to have well-trained school managers and teachers while preparing strategic plans, targets, and projects on education to obtain better success, higher productivity, and to increase the quality of education.

Education system is not only a social system, but the only way to educate manpower for other social systems, such as legal system, economy, policy, security, and others, and the basis system to transmit common culture to the next generations to provide eternity of nation as well. The success of this system is the success of the community. The managers who are the cornerstones of this success, should be chosen by systematic approach, well trained, developed, continuity should be provided. They should keep track of our era and follow the changes and developments to train next generations to realize the improvement and better quality.

School managers should take some special education and courses, such as theoretical basis, system management, education planning, decision making process, organization, communication, motivation, supervising and evaluation, usage of resources, personal behaviors, human resource management and development, preparing special project for schools, preparation and implementation of strategy, management of change, problem-solving, and information management with case studies. School managers' career development program should cover project leadership, team leadership, school leadership, and strategic leadership.

Educational leaders must be trained in accordance with the requirements of the information age; such as thinking methods (creativity, critical thinking situations, problem solving, decision making, learning), operating procedures (communication and collaboration), working tools (information technology, communication technology, information literacy) and skills to live in the world (citizenship, life and career, personal and social responsibility), in fields of education, to contribute to the success and quality of education.

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