

The Training Problem of School Principals and Mentoring in Turkey

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Introduction

Today, school principals are seen as instructional leaders and are expected to contribute to the in-service professional developments of teachers. Therefore, school principals are required to direct, supply and support resources for teachers. In this context, school principals play an important role in the in-service professional development of the teachers. However, one of the most important problems in the Turkish education system is the training of school principals. There is no formal training system for school principals in the Turkish education system. Those who are appointed as school principals in the system are expected to train in an informal structure within the framework of a master-apprentice relationship. In this respect, it is predicted that a principal training model that uses the help of mentors, which generally can be described as a more professional implementation of the apprenticeship model, can contribute to the resolution of the training problem for principals in Turkey. In this context, the purpose of this research is to determine the opinions of school principals about on-the-job training and mentoring as a possible principal training system.

Method

Qualitative research methods were used in the study. Participants were identified using the purposeful sampling techniques. The research study group included a total of 10 school principals, including 5 school principals and 5 vice-principals who worked in the city of Kütahya in fall term of the 2013–2014 academic year. In the study, the data was collected using a semi-structured data collection tool that was developed by the researchers. A descriptive analysis technique was used in the analysis of the research data.

Discussion and Conclusion

The participating school principals agree that the lack of a training system for school principals in Turkey is a problem. Participants expressed that they encountered numerous difficulties in their management experiences and they tried to solve these difficulties in consultation with the school principals in their environment. In fact, in Turkey, it can be said that good principals mentor new school principals to a certain degree in an informal way within the framework of a master-apprentice relationship. Research results also confirm this. However, in the present structure, this situation is completely left to chance because school administration is still not viewed as an official profession in Turkey.

Most of the current school principals did not receive any pre-service training related to school administration. School principals' experiences are more directed toward handling bureaucratic matters in the school. Thus, whether school principals have competence in training new school principals or not in itself constitute an important question. Therefore, a principal training system using the help of mentors is an important alternative that should be considered and discussed in Turkey. Remarkably, several possible applications were found which were favorable to all of the school principals who participated in the study.

Key Words: School principals, Training of school principals, Mentoring

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