



## The Opinions of Teachers about School Principals who graduated from Physical Education and Sports Departments

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### Article Info

### ABSTRACT

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The aim of this research is to determine the opinions of teachers about school principals who graduated from physical education and sports departments. This research was designed as a qualitative research. The study group of this research consists of 10 teachers whose school principals graduated from physical education and sports in Erzurum in the 2022-2023 academic year. In this study, maximum variation sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used. As a result of this, teachers revealed two main themes and ten sub-themes. The first theme is individual behaviors of school principals. The sub-themes of individual behaviors of school principals are communication, inability to manage instructional program, motivation, sport activity and authority respectively. The second theme is the behaviors of the school principals about the school culture. The sub-themes of the behaviors of the school principals about the school culture are ceremonies, organizational communication, values, role models and rewards in the school culture respectively.

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## INTRODUCTION

People are facing many problems. People need leaders who will solve these problems and manage change. However, there is no leadership behavior or characteristic that always gives the same result in different cultures, different sectors and different organizations (Barutçugil, 2014). Efforts to identify the best leadership trait set and leadership behaviors have some limitations. It is a common view that effective leadership behavior is situational today (Lunenburg, & Ornstein, 2021). We believe that the personality traits of the leader and their educational background are important, as there are no universal common behaviors related to leadership. That's why, it's important to know the definition of leadership and distinguishes it from other similar things.

There are many definitions of leadership and definitions related to leadership have common points. The first is a specific purpose, the second is a specific group of people, and the third is a leader to direct them (Zel, 2011). Robbins & Judge (2009) defines it as influencing a group to achieve vision and goals. Yulk (1981) defines it as influencing group members. Conlow (1999) defines it as an influence function. In the light of these, leadership has three important dimensions. The first of these requires leadership influence. Second, leadership requires reaching the goal. Third, leadership requires followers (Lunenburg, & Ornstein, 2021). Leaders influence their followers and organizations to achieve the goal.

One of the important antecedents of leadership behavior is the personal characteristics and qualities of leaders (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). Leaders have a positive effect on school culture and employees with the characteristics they have (Kalkan, Aksal & Dağlı, 2020; Stolp, 1994). In case of discovering the beliefs and assumptions that are elements of culture, manager can achieve performance (Şişman, 2007). Effective and trust-based school cultures have a positive effect on student achievement. On the other hand, school cultures based on humane control support the social aspects of students (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). In summary, school administrators have a significant impact on students' achievements, teachers, and the culture of their school. In Turkey, teachers can become school administrators. In order to understand the contributions that physical education and sports teachers make to their institutions after becoming a school administrator, we first want to understand the qualities of a physical education and sports.

In the literature, opinions about the qualifications, which physical education and sports teachers should have, can be diversified according to the opinions of students, teachers and academicians. Some of them are professional knowledge and skills, self-control, appearance, understanding, perfect relations, open to criticism, patience, sense of humor, self-confidence, interest in the lesson and students, objectivity, discipline, open to student opinions and criticism, improvisation, using rewards, student participation, teaching according to student level (Demirhan, Coşkun & Altay, 2002; Saçlı, Bulca, Demirhan, & Kangalgil, 2009).

There are many reasons why physical education and sports teachers become school administrators. When we consider their personality traits, physical education and sports teachers think that they have good leadership and management skills. They want to choose management because of the higher positions and better working conditions. In addition, physical education teachers have revealed that they have a chance to gain a social environment, too. Appreciation is also an important factor for physical education and sports teachers to be managers. Finally, it is a very important factor for physical education and sports managers to think that they will contribute to their profession (Esentürk, & Güngör, 2019).

In the literature, there are limited researches on the contributions of physical education and sports teachers to schools as administrators. In this context, this research will make an important contribution to the literature. This provides the awareness of education administrators about the positive behaviors of physical education and sports graduate school administrators. The aim of this research is to determine

the opinions of teachers about school principals who graduated from physical education and sports departments. In order to achieve this general purpose, the participants were asked 1) the views of the teachers about the individual behaviors of the school principals who graduated from physical education and sports 2) the opinions of the teachers about the school culture of the school principals who were graduated from physical education and sports.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This research is to determine the opinions of teachers about school principals who graduated from physical education and sports departments. This study will not generalize from the opinions of teachers. Instead, this research will examine the teachers' views on school principals who are graduates of physical education and sports departments. Therefore, this research was designed as a qualitative research. There are in-depth descriptions and interpretations in this research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In addition, this research was designed with a case study. Case study is the in-depth study of a particular situation in a period of time (Creswell, 2013).

### **Study Group**

The study group of this research consists of 10 teachers whose school principals graduated from physical education and sports in Erzurum in the 2022-2023 academic years. The number of participants included in the research stopped when the themes and sub-bases repeated each other (Creswell, 2013). In this study, maximum variation sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used. Maximum variation sampling is not to generalize but rather to reveal what is the same and different among diverse situations (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). 6 of the participants are female and 4 are male. These teachers participated in the research from 5 different schools. Teachers were coded according to the first letter of their school's type. The teachers participating in the research were coded as A1, A2, C1, C2, S1, S2, V1, V2, V3 and E1. In other words, there are two teachers from school A, two teachers from school C, two teachers from school S, three teachers from school V, three teachers from school E, and one teacher from school E. The average age of the participants is 36,9.

### **Research Instruments and Processes**

This research is to determine the opinions of teachers about school principals who graduated from physical education and sports departments. There are two questions in this research. Semi-structured interview form was used because these questions were related to how teachers perceived their principals. Individual responses are collected from each participant. Although there are no pre-determined statements and questions, there are questions to be clarified in the semi-structured interview form (Merriam, 2013). The questions in the semi-structured interview form were obtained as a result of literature review. One language and two experts evaluated the questions. As a result, the contents of the questions were changed twice. Afterwards, a teacher was interviewed in the context of the pilot application.

### **Data Analysis**

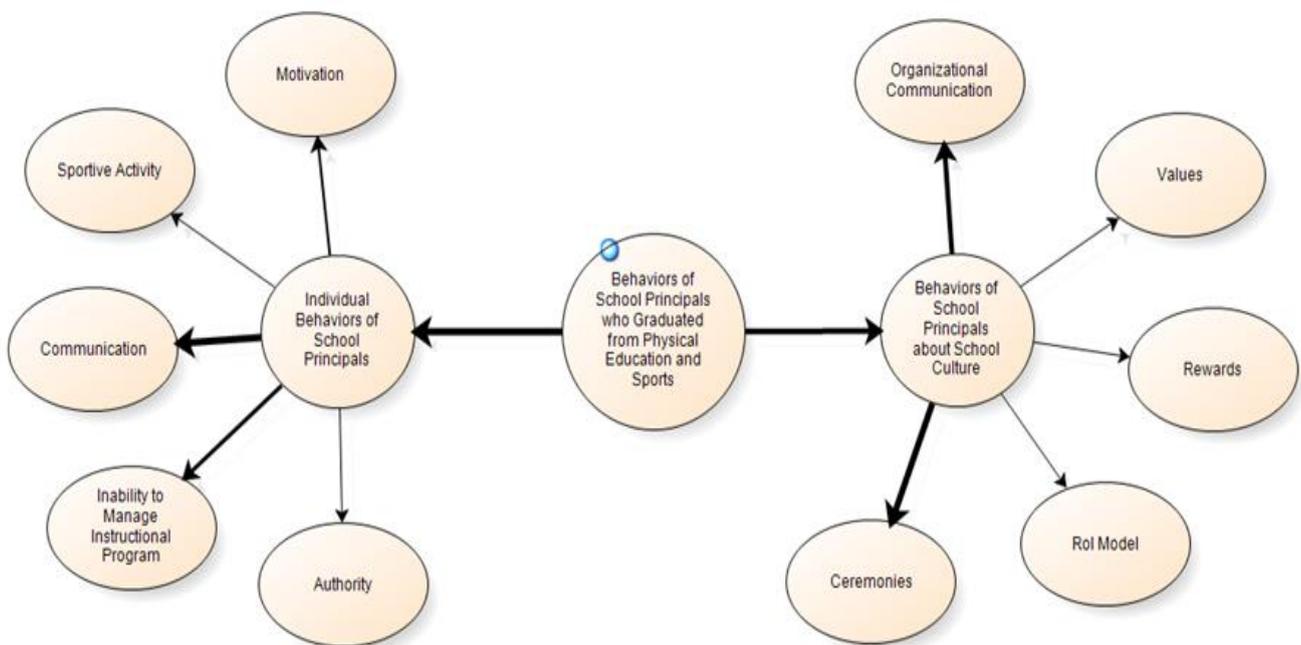
The teachers were interviewed between on October 6 and October 28, 2022. The interview time with a teacher was approximately 35 minutes. Before the interview, the teachers were selected when they were available, and questions were asked face-to-face or by phone. During the interview, the opinions of the participants were noted. After the meeting was over, the participants confirmed the notes taken. During this

research, validity and reliability were ensured by obtaining participant confirmation, expert opinion, recording the notes taken during the interview, and establishing long-term interaction with the participants (Creswell, 2013; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

The main purpose of content analysis is to explain the concepts, organize the concepts and reveal the themes. With content analysis, the facts in the data are revealed. The main purpose is to bring same concepts and organize them for the reader. First, the data is encoded. Second, themes are revealed. Thirdly, the arrangement of codes and themes are revealed. Fourth, the findings are identified and interpreted (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Data has been transferred to Nvivo program to make content analysis easier. With this software, themes and sub-themes can be interpreted using quantitative data (Bilgin, 2006; Creswell, 2013). The number of citations received by the codes and themes made with the Nvivo program is shown by the thickness of the relevant arrows. The thickness of the number of arrows leading to a theme or sub-theme is at most 5k. On the other hand, the arrow thickness leading to the least cited theme or sub-theme is 1k.

## FINDINGS

The figure showing the main and sub-themes that emerged as a result of the research is presented below. In addition to this, there are sentences that are examples for this theme and sub-themes.



**Figure 1.** A Schematic Display of The Motivation For Behaviors of The School Principals Who Graduated from Physical Education and Sports

### The Individual Behaviors of the School Principals

In this research, 'individual behaviors of school principals' is the first theme. Teachers expressed their views on the individual behaviors of school principals who graduated from physical education and sports. The sub-themes consisting of the opinions of teachers who are physical education and sports graduate school principals about 'individual behaviors of school principals' are listed below from the most cited sub-theme to the least cited sub-theme.

#### Communication

According to the findings obtained as a result of the research, the most cited view within the theme of 'individual behaviors of school principals' is 'communication'. In other words, school

principals who are graduates of physical education and sports can communicate effectively. The sentences that are examples of this sub-theme are below.

"...our principal is a person who does not break people's hearts. He always establishes warm relations with us... (V1)"

"... I think school administrators who are physical education and sports graduates are more extroverted. They spend time with teachers. They can respond to problems and needs more quickly ... (S2)"

... compared to the previous school principal, this principal is a very good person when she compares them both as a communicator and as a human being... (C1)

### **Inability to Manage Instructional Program**

According to the findings obtained as a result of the research, the second view within the theme of 'individual behaviors of school principals' is 'inability to manage instructional program'. According to the opinions of teachers, school principals who graduated from physical education do not have the necessary knowledge to be successful in the content of the courses such as mathematics, physics or English. That is, it cannot be said that they are academically successful. The sentences that are examples of this sub-theme are below.

"... I think that this manager is not knowledgeable about academic success because he is interested in the abilities of students in physical education and sports lessons. I can say that he sees academic success as a 'race' ... (C2)"

"... they are different in vision. Physical education cannot solve academic problems as a teacher ... (V2)

### **Motivation**

According to the findings obtained as a result of the research, the third view within the theme of 'individual behaviors of school principals' is 'motivation'. School principals who are graduates of physical education and sports can motivate teachers. The sentence that is examples of this sub-theme is below.

"...this manager contributed positively to the increase perception of ethics and respect for the profession...(A1)

### **Sportive Activity**

According to the findings obtained as a result of the research, the fourth view within the theme of 'individual behaviors of school principals' is 'sports activity'. School principals who are graduates of physical education and sports can organize more sports and social events for students and teachers. The sentence that is examples of this sub-theme is below.

"...in general, there is not much difference, but this manager gives more importance to sports and extracurricular activities. This manager encourages students to do sports and participate in competitions more ... (E1)

### **Authority**

According to the findings obtained as a result of the research, the fifth view within the theme of 'individual behaviors of school principals' is 'authority'. School principals who are graduates of physical education and sports can provide control and discipline. The sentence that is examples of this sub-theme is below.

"... This principal is disciplined. But he is not a tough person in personality, but the principals is constantly controlling. The principals controls directly and indirectly...(V1)

### **The Behaviors of the School Principals about The School Culture**

In this research, 'culture' is the second theme. Teachers stated the contributions of school principals who are graduates of physical education and sports to the culture of the school. The sub-themes consisting of the opinions of teachers, physical education and sports graduate school principals about the culture of the school are listed below from the most cited sub-theme to the least cited sub-theme.

#### **Ceremonies**

According to the findings obtained as a result of the research, the most cited view within the theme of 'culture' is 'ceremonies'. In other words, school principals who are graduates of physical education and sports strengthen the school culture through ceremonies. The sentences that are examples of this sub-theme are below.

"... he planned ice skating and breakfast to reduce the exam anxiety of 12th grade students and to keep relationships with people at school strong... (A2)"

"... our school principal participates in all activities such as ceremonies and organizations. School is more social. For example, compared to our old school, this school is more social and active....(V3)

"... this school principal tried to create environmental consciousness through activities.... (S2)"

#### **Organizational Communication**

According to the findings obtained as a result of the research, the second view within the theme of 'culture' is 'organizational communication'. When we compare with other school principals, school principals graduated from physical education and sports could be successful in providing interaction in their schools. The sentences that are examples of this sub-theme are below.

"... we can communicate better with this principal. Students can express themselves more easily.... (E1)"

"... communicates with other teachers and students.....(S1)

#### **Values**

According to the findings obtained as a result of the research, the third view within the theme of 'culture' is 'values'. School principals who are graduates of physical education and sports can create a positive set of values in their schools. The sentence that is examples of this sub-theme is below.

"... this principal tries to teach students about national and target values and feelings. Our school principal is always supportive of our teacher friends.....(S2)

### **Rol Model**

According to the findings obtained as a result of the research, the fourth view within the theme of 'culture' is 'rol model'. School principals who are graduates of physical education and sports can be rol model for teachers and students. The sentence that is examples of this sub-theme is below.

"... our school principal shows teachers as a role model...(A1)

### **Rewards**

According to the findings obtained as a result of the research, the fifth view within the theme of 'culture' is 'rewards'. School principals who are graduates of physical education and sports use rewards as motivator as a part of school culture. The sentence that is examples of this sub-theme is below.

"... our previous manager did not even congratulate us when we became champions. However, our current school principal gave material and moral support....(C1)

## **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS**

The aim of this study is to find out the opinions of teachers about school principals who graduated from physical education and sports departments. Therefore, teachers were asked about the individual attitudes of school principals towards teachers and their contributions to the culture of their schools. As a result, opinions on two main themes and ten sub-themes were obtained. In other words, the teachers revealed that the school principals who graduated from physical education and sports have different qualifications than the school principals who graduated from other departments in their schools. While making this comparison, the teachers were asked to compare the school principals who graduated from physical education and sports with their previous school principals.

The first theme is individual behaviors of school principals. The sub-themes of individual behaviors of school principals are communication, inability to manage instructional program, motivation, sport activity and authority respectively. The first of these sub-themes is communication. In other words, school principals who are graduates of physical education and sports can communicate effectively. Demirtaş & Özer (2014) stated that before starting their duties, school administrators should focus on leadership, motivation, coping with stress, communication, conflict management, meeting management. Elekoğlu & Demirdağ (2020) stated that a positive and significant relationship was found between the skills of school principals and their communication skills. Aslanargun & Bozkurt (2012) revealed that one of the problems faced by school principals in school management is the lack of communication.

The second sub-theme is 'inability to manage instructional program'. School principals who graduated from physical education do not have the necessary knowledge to be successful in the content of the courses. Hallinger (2010) stated that as instructional leaders, school principals should play an important role in the coordination of the curriculum and instructional program in their schools. Stiggins & Duke (2008) stated that school principals should consider results from student assessments. Using these results, the school principal should reevaluate the education curriculum. In this context, the principal of the school should assist the school teachers.

The third sub-theme is motivation. School principals who are graduates of physical education and sports can motivate teachers. Unlike this research, Özdemir, Kartal & Yirci (2014) shows that the performance of school principals, who have an important place in teacher motivation, is below the expected level at this point. In his research, Ada, Akan, Ayık, Yıldırım & Yalçın (2013) revealed that external factors rather than internal factors are effective in the motivation of teachers. In order to motivate teachers, a strong administrator support is needed. Yıldırım (2011) revealed that school

principals are motivated by appreciation.

The other two sub-themes of the culture theme are sport activity and authority. School principals who are graduates of physical education and sports can organize more sports and social events for students and teachers. School principals who are graduates of physical education and sports can provide control and discipline. In her research, Diş & Akbaşlı (2019) revealed that leader school administrators should be the ones who organize supportive social-artistic and sports activities related to social activity activities. In his qualitative research, Yirci & Berk (2021) revealed the qualities that school principals should have. One of the findings of the study is that school principals are authoritarian in accordance with the situation.

The second theme is the behaviors of the school principals regarding the school culture. The sub-themes of the behaviors of the school principals regarding the school culture are ceremonies, organizational communication, values, role models and rewards in the school culture respectively. The first of these sub-themes is ceremonies. In other words, school principals who are graduates of physical education and sports strengthen the school culture through ceremonies. This is the most referenced view by teachers. This finding has been supported by other researches. Aslan, Özer & Bakır (2009) Aslan, Özer & Bakır (2009) emphasized in their research that administrators and teachers should hold school-related ceremonies. However, it was stated that this and similar ceremonies could not be held due to reasons such as the large number of participants, economic inadequacy and lack of places. Şahin (2013) emphasized that school administrators should convey their values. One of the best way to transfer these values is ceremonies. In summary, ceremonies are one of the important elements for effective schools. Examples of ceremonies held at school are social events such as theatre, sportive tournaments, national celebrations, specific days and weeks, flag ceremonies, achievement awards, year-end events and year-end graduation ceremonies. Peterson & Deal (2011) stated that ceremonies shape cultural values. It also creates close relationships among people. Ceremonies are events that provide support to people. Thanks to the ceremonies, the contributions of the all people can be appreciated.

The second sub-theme is organizational communication. In fact, school principals graduated from physical education and sports could be successful in providing interaction in their schools. This finding has been supported by other research. Gürbüz, Erdem, & Yıldırım. (2013) emphasized school principals' success is to use humor, ensure that their employees have job satisfaction, communicate effectively, use their authority appropriately. Ayık & Fidan (2014) emphasized communication skills of school administrators should be improved. The presence of a high level of covert communication also triggers a strong school culture. Therefore, school administrators should have knowledge about organizational communication. Unlike this research, Çınar (2010) revealed that although administrators are effective in communication, school administrators' communication skills were not at a high level. In other words, it was revealed that the integration of school administrators with the environment was at a moderate level.

The third sub-theme is value. In other word, school principals who are graduates of physical education and sports can create a positive set of values in their schools. Çelikten (2003) revealed that school principals perceive school culture more positively than teachers. Demirtaş & Ekmekyapar (2012) revealed that the values of the administrators and the values-based management practices are important in increasing the work efficiency between them and the teachers, in motivating the teachers and in the perception that the teachers are respected. It is important for school administrators to develop individual and organizational value. Taş & Yeşiltaş (2016) the main values that give priority to the life of school principals are honesty, love, respect, justice, tolerance, and helpfulness. Most of the school principals stated that the school has a great effect on the value acquisition and that the school is the most effective factor after the family.

The other two sub-themes of the culture theme are role model and reward. School principals who

are graduates of physical education and sports can be rol model for teachers and students. School principals who are graduates of physical education and sports also use rewards as motivator as a part of school culture. Özsoy (2011) stated that there is not pozitve relationship between the perceptions of the administrators and teachers' role model behaviors and the problematic behavior attitudes of the students. She students who perceived the role model behaviors of the administrators and teachers positively are not student who has problematic behavior attitudes. Kaygı (2020) revealed that although the reward power is a motivating factor, it is not used much. Rewards should not be given privately to individuals. On the contrary, awards should be given according to high performance and success criteria.

According to these results of the research, it was revealed that the ability to communicate in the managerial qualities of physical education and sports graduate school principals is dominant for both personal and school culture. Therefore, school administrators should establish positive communication with teachers. It has been revealed that school principals graduated from physical education and sports cannot coordinate the instructional curriculum of the school. Therefore, it is recommended that these school principals can carry out more research on the school curriculum and courses and improve themselves.

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