

RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA YAZISI

Examining the Effects of School Managers on Organizational Climate in Northern Cyprus Secondary Education in Different Dimensions

KKTC Ortaöğretiminde Okul Yöneticilerinin Örgüt İklimi Üzerindeki Etkilerinin Farklı Boyutlar Açısından İncelenmesi

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of school administrators on organizational climate in secondary schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) across different dimensions. This evaluation aims to understand the perspectives of school administrators and teachers toward the organizational climate. The study holds particular significance for school reforms and accountability in education ministries and institutions. The research covers 10 school administrators and 40 teachers working in the districts of Nicosia, Famagusta, Kyrenia, Güzelyurt, and İskale, under the TRNC Ministry of National Education. A qualitative research approach was adopted with a case study design. The researcher used a semi-structured interview method, developing two interview forms comprising eleven semi-structured questions, refined with feedback from five experts in the field. This interview form served as the data collection tool. Descriptive and content analysis techniques were applied for qualitative data analysis. Findings indicate that teachers highlighted transformational leadership's role in fostering a positive school atmosphere through school administrators maintaining a disciplined and supportive environment. The importance of nondiscriminatory techniques and equitable task distribution emphasized by teachers is evident. School administrators need to apply techniques such as task rotation and personnel feedback collection as tactical tools within sensitive management dimensions of education to achieve fair task allocation. Administrators should also foster effective communication and motivation within the organization to positively influence school climate. While presenting perspectives on school climate from both administrators and teachers, future studies might conduct experimental research with quantitative data to explore the long-term effects of changing leadership styles on school atmosphere.

Keywords: Northern Cyprus, Organizational Climate, School Administrator and Teacher.

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Öz:

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'na bağlı ortaöğretim okullarında okul yöneticilerine örgütsel iklimi etkilerinin farklı boyutlarda incelemesini sağlamaktadır. Bu değerlendirme okul yöneticilerinin ve öğretmenlerin örgütsel iklimi karşı bakış açılarını anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu araştırma, okul reformları, hesap verebilirliğinden sorumlu eğitim bakanlıklarını ve kurumları için farklı bir önemine sahiptir. Araştırma, KKTC Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'na bağlı orta öğretim kademesinde Lefkoşa, Gazimağusa, Girne, Güzelyurt ve İskele ilçelerinde görev alan 10 okul yöneticisi ve 40 öğretmenini kapsamaktadır. Araştırmada, nitel araştırma yaklaşımı kullanılmış ve bu yaklaşım içerisinde durum çalışması desenine başvurulmuştur. Araştırmacı, yarı yapılandırılmış sorulardan oluşan görüşme yöntemini kullanmış ve bu amaçla on bir adet yarı yapılandırılmış sorudan oluşan iki görüşme formu alanda çalışan beş uzmanında görüşü alınarak geliştirilmiştir. Veri toplama aracı olarak bu görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Nitel veri analizi yöntemlerinden betimsel analiz ve içerik analizi teknikleri kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen bulgular öğretmenler; dönüşümsel liderliğin, okul yöneticilerinin disiplinli ve destekleyici bir ortamı sürdürmedeki rolünü vurgulayarak olumlu bir okul atmosferini teşvik ettiği yönünde görüş belirtmiştir. Öğretmenlerin, sıklıkla ayrımcılık yapmayan tekniklerin ve eşit görev dağılımının önemini vurguladıkları ortaya çıkmaktadır. Okul yöneticilerinin, eşit görev dağılımı elde etmek için görev rotasyonu ve personel geri bildirimi toplama gibi tekniklerin ve taktiklerin eğitimini bir hassa yönetim boyutunda kullanılması gerekliliği ortaya çıkmaktadır. Okul yöneticileri bir örgüt olarak okulun ikliminin etkili iletişimle ve örgüt içerisinde motivasyonun artmasına yönelik çalışmalar gerçekleştirilmesi gerekliliği sonuçlarına ulaşmıştır. Bu araştırma okul iklimine yönelik görüşleri okul yöneticisi ve öğretmen perspektifleriyle sunarken, gelecekteki çalışmalar değişen liderlik stillerinin okul atmosferi üzerindeki uzun vadeli etkilerini yönelik nicel yaklaşımları içeren sayısal verilere dayanan deneysel araştırma gerçekleştirilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kuzey Kıbrıs, Örgütsel İklim, Okul Yöneticisi ve Öğretmen.

Introduction

The organizational climate of schools plays a vital role in influencing teaching effectiveness, staff morale, student engagement, and the overall learning environment. Characterized by collective perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors within a school, organizational climate is influenced by several factors, with leadership—particularly that of school administrators—being the most significant (Wang & Degol, 2016; Thapa et al., 2013). In secondary education, as administrative complexity and instructional demands increase, the role of school leaders becomes crucial in shaping the institution's environment. School administrators play a key role at the intersection of policy implementation and pedagogical leadership, making their position essential in shaping the school climate. Current research often views climate as a singular construct, offering limited insight into how various dimensions of administrative leadership affect it (Kutsuruba, Godden & Bosica, 2019).

Lahtero and Risku (2021) suggest that leaders who emphasize instructional leadership can enhance the academic environment, while those who support teacher autonomy and collaboration are more likely to improve the relational and collegial aspects of the climate. Post-pandemic, the role of leaders has become even more prominent. The COVID-19 crisis underscored the necessity of adaptive, empathetic, and technologically skilled leadership to maintain institutional stability and morale (Netolicky, 2020). School administrators have faced challenges such as remote learning, mental health concerns, and digital inequalities, all of which deeply affected educational environments across various dimensions.

Relevant studies show that school leaders, including principals and vice principals, have a significant impact on organizational climate through their leadership styles, communication techniques, conflict-resolution approaches, and support systems for staff and students

(Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020). Administrators demonstrating transformational leadership characterized by vision sharing, collaboration, and empowerment create positive school environments that foster teacher motivation, student achievement, and innovation (Çakır & Şahin, 2020; Lahtero & Risku, 2021). Conversely, authoritarian or unsupportive leadership styles are associated with negative school climates marked by stress, low morale, and high teacher turnover (Turan & Bektaş, 2020).

Moreover, the school environment is not a monolithic concept; it encompasses diverse qualities such as collaborative leadership, professional interactions, resource availability, and academic focus (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991).

This study aims to examine the effects of school administrators on organizational climate within secondary schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) across different dimensions. This evaluation seeks to understand the perspectives of school administrators and teachers toward organizational climate. The general research question guiding the study is, "What are the perspectives of school administrators and teachers working in secondary education schools in the TRNC regarding organizational climate?" This research holds significant theoretical and practical importance in educational leadership, organizational behavior, and school improvement. As secondary schools face increasing demands for academic performance, inclusivity, and adaptation in the post-pandemic era, the quality of organizational climate and the role of school administrators become critical for sustainable educational progress (Campbell, 2021).

Based on the general research question, the specific objectives of this study can be listed as follows:

1. What are your thoughts on the essential leadership characteristics that a school administrator should possess in the current century?
2. What are your views regarding the task distribution, behaviors, and communication of school administrators toward teachers and other colleagues in your current educational institution?
3. How do you perceive the impact of school administrators' behaviors and attitudes on the morale and motivation of teachers and other colleagues?
4. As a school administrator, what are your thoughts on the current school climate within the educational institution where you work?
5. As a school administrator, what process do you follow in identifying and managing problems that negatively affect the school climate in your current institution?
6. What process do you follow to improve the school climate in your current institution as a school administrator?

Methodology

Research Model

This study employed qualitative research methods. The qualitative research approach aims to obtain a broad perspective while investigating a specific topic, focusing on events and behaviors occurring in natural settings to provide in-depth information (Büyüköztürk et al., 2024). The research used a qualitative case study design. Case studies help analyze and understand real-life situations and processes in detail, offering researchers the opportunity to thoroughly examine circumstances beyond their control (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In case studies, researchers collect qualitative data framed by the investigation of these situations. These studies stand out for their focus on rich, vivid descriptions of events, their combination of analysis and explanation, and their highlighting of the most critical points related to the case (Baş & Gök, 2024).

Study Group and Sampling

In qualitative research methods, a prominent characteristic of the study group participants is that they are carefully selected in parallel with the research's purpose and questions. The study group consists of individuals whom the researcher observes and interviews to collect data. Establishing a trust relationship between the researcher and participants is an important and decisive factor in obtaining high-quality, accurate data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). The study group of this research consists of school administrators and teachers working in secondary education institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in the districts of Nicosia, Famagusta, İskelle, Güzelyurt, and Kyrenia during the spring term of the 2024-2025 academic year.

Purposive sampling was used to select the sample. Purposive sampling is a nonprobability sampling technique in which the researcher deliberately selects individuals or situations that possess specific characteristics relevant to the research purpose (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Among the types of purposive sampling, criterion sampling was preferred for this study. Criterion sampling involves selecting individuals,

situations, or units that meet predetermined criteria, aiming to obtain in-depth information by focusing on samples with features relevant to the research objectives. Criterion sampling is mostly used in qualitative research, and the sample comprises individuals who meet the specified criteria (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

Data Collection Tool

In this study, a semi-structured interview form was used as the qualitative data collection instrument, employing an open-ended interview technique. The semi-structured interview technique, characterized by its flexibility, involves the researcher preparing questions aligned with the study's purpose before the interview and following the rules of the method. However, depending on the course of the interview, the researcher can also ask different questions, enabling the interview framework to be shaped in a new dimension (Dilci, 2019). Five experts in the field reviewed the researcher-developed interview form for content validity. A pilot application was conducted with one participant each from the school principals, vice principals, and teachers. It was confirmed that the interview form met usability criteria and was effective.

Data Collection Process

Necessary permissions were obtained from the Primary Education Department of the Ministry of National Education of the TRNC (Appendix 1), and all required documents were submitted to the Ethics Committee of the Graduate School of Social Sciences at the University of Mediterranean Karpasia. The study group consists of school principals, vice principals, and teachers working in primary education institutions in the districts of Nicosia, Famagusta, Güzelyurt, Kyrenia, and İskelle affiliated with the Ministry of National Education of the TRNC. The schools included in the study were visited, and interviews were conducted. During the interviews, the semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher for school administrators and primary school teachers was presented. The study commenced after receiving ethics committee approval from the Graduate School of Social Sciences at the University of Mediterranean Karpasia. Interviews were conducted in April during the Spring term of 2024-2025 with permission from the Ministry of National Education and at locations and times convenient for the participants.

Data Analysis

In this study, data were collected through an interview form, and qualitative data analysis was used to analyze the data. Descriptive and content analysis methods, among qualitative data analysis techniques, were used. Descriptive analysis systematically presents data collected under pre-determined categories, such as participants' demographic information. In this method, data are summarized within specific themes and sub-themes, supported by direct quotations. For example, analysis of participants' roles (teacher, vice principal, supervisor, etc.), graduation levels (bachelor's, master's), or years of service—data that can be statistically analyzed—was conducted within the scope of descriptive analysis (Karahan et al., 2022).

Content analysis is a technique that involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting participants' views on the research. Data collection consists of gathering participants' responses; analysis involves coding the data into themes; and interpretation is the process of making meaning from the collected data. During the initial

thematic classification of data, descriptive analysis was conceptually employed, and content analysis ensured coherence in theme formation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021).

Validity and Reliability

An important aspect that enhances the value of scientific research and clearly expresses its purpose is the researcher's ability to demonstrate the validity and reliability of the research findings. Regardless of the type of scientific study, validity and reliability are crucial for achieving the research objectives.

In qualitative research, validity refers to the suitability of the measurement tool used in the study for objectively and effectively measuring the intended concept. Validity is not only about the appropriateness of the measurement instrument but also about accurately measuring the concept without error. It is an important validity criterion to thoroughly examine all the detailed characteristics that present the research problem as a whole. Ensuring the validity and reliability of the data collection methods, research design, and data analysis employed in a study significantly influences the study's acceptance (Arslan, 2022). Additionally, confirming the data by asking participants questions such as "Is this what you meant?" enhances validity (Aziz, 2021).

Findings

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

THEMES	F(n)	%
Gender		
Female	30	60
Male	20	40
Position		
Principle	10	20
Teacher	40	80
Age Distribution		
Under - 30	16	32
31-35	10	20
36-40	7	14
41-45	8	16
46 –over	9	18
Total work experience in teaching		
0-5 Years	13	26
6-10 Years	7	14
11-15 Years	8	16
16-20 Years	3	6
20-25 Years	6	12
25 and older	3	6
Total work experience in management		
5-10 Years	4	8
10-20 Years	3	6
20-25 Years	3	6
School of affiliation of participants		
Öğuz Veli Secondary School	4	8
Şehit Hüseyin Ruso Secondary School	4	8
Lefke Gazi High School	3	6
19 Mayıs TMC	3	6
Turkish Maarif College	3	6
Hala Sultan College of Theology	3	6
Atleks Sanverler Secondary School	4	8
Esin-Leman High School	3	6
Osman Örek Vocational High School	1	2
Atatürk Technical High School	2	4
Haydarpaşa Commercial Vocational School	2	4
Canbulat Secondary School	1	2
Namık Kemal High School	2	4
Famagusta TMC	1	2

Ethical Aspect and Procedure

The rapid expansion of scientific research alongside technological advancements has led researchers to operate within a framework where ethical principles hold significant value. Ethics plays a crucial role in the research process and the application of its outcomes, serving as a key determinant of the validity, reliability, and societal acceptability of scientific studies (Gürlek & Onbaşılı, 2024).

In the 2024-2025 Spring Semester, following the acquisition of the necessary report on the research's suitability from the Ethics Committee of the University of Mediterranean Karpasia, the researcher submitted a petition to the Ministry of National Education of the TRNC requesting permission, which was granted upon approval, thereby initiating data collection. Data collection was conducted during the Spring Semester of the 2024-2025 academic year. The Akdeniz Karpaz University ethical committee provided the ethical approval for this research. The date for approval is 14/01/2025, and the approval number is AKUN-ETK-2/25.

Polatpaşa High School	3	6
Lapta Yavuzlar High School	4	8
Dr. Fazıl Küçük Technical High School	1	2
20 Temmuz High School	1	2
Bülent Ecevit High School	1	2
Değirmenlik High School	3	6
Anadolu Güzel Sanatlar High School	1	2

According to Table 1, the majority of teachers contributing to the study were female (60%), while the remaining 40% were male. Among the school

administrators contributing to the research, 20% were school principals, and the remaining 80% were teachers working in secondary education

Table 2. Evaluation of the Core Leadership Characteristics of School Administrators

THEMES	N	%
Transformational Leadership	18	45
Deficiencies in the Leadership Skills of School Administrators	12	30
Collaborative Leadership	10	25
Total	40	100

According to Table 2, the vast majority of participants emphasized the need for school administrators to be transformational leaders. Additionally, they expressed the view that school administrators in state-affiliated educational institutions should take on greater

responsibilities as collaborative leaders. Finally, participants shared their opinion that deficiencies in school administrators' leadership skills negatively affect the school's climate, working environment, teachers, and other staff when viewed as an organization.

Table 3. Evaluation of School Administrators' Task Distribution, Behavior, and Communication Processes from the Perspectives of Equality and Justice

THEMES	N	%
Fair and Equitable Attitude	37	92.5
Existence of Favoritism	3	7.5
Existence of Imbalance in Task Distribution	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

As seen in Table 3, some participants expressed the view that school administrators do not treat teachers equally and questioned whether tasks are distributed fairly. On the other hand, some participants stated that school administrators communicate with fairness and distribute

tasks equally among teachers. Additionally, participants shared the opinion that school administrators exhibit bias and favoritism, indicating that not everyone receives equal treatment.

Table 4. Evaluation of the Effects of School Administrators' Communication and Collaboration with Students, Parents, and the School Parent Association on School Climate

THEMES	N	%
Strong Communication with Families	17	42.5
Existence of Communication Problems	13	32.5
Moderate Level of Participation	10	25
Total	40	100

According to Table 4, participant teachers stated that school administrators communicate effectively with students' families, which positively affects both student success and the organizational climate. However, some participants shared views that school administrators face communication challenges, specifically with a certain

group of students, parents, and the school-parent association, and they need to improve in these areas. Lastly, participants reported that student families' participation in parent meetings and school-parent association events is moderate.

Table 5. Evaluation of School Administrators' Attitudes and Behaviours Towards Improving School Climate

THEMES	N	%
Recognizing and Motivating Teachers	4	40
Assigning Responsibility and Delegating Authority to Teachers	3	30
Promoting Transparency and Communication	3	30
Total	10	100

According to the views expressed in Table 5, school administrators take steps to develop and improve the current school climate by emphasizing the importance of recognizing each teacher as an individual with a unique personality, character, and perspective. They hold individual and group meetings to motivate teachers. Students participating in the research noted that

administrators try to assign responsibilities to teachers and share workload fairly. Additionally, school leaders make efforts to delegate authority to teachers. Finally, the administrators promote transparency and encourage communication with teachers to enhance the school climate.

Table 6. Evaluation of the Role of School Administrators in Student and Teacher Feedback on Improving School Climate in Educational Institutions

THEMES	N	%
Receiving Feedback from Teachers and Students	4	40
Projects Aimed at Improving the School and School Climate	4	40
Monitoring and Evaluation of School Climate	2	20
Total	10	100

According to Table 6, educational administrators reported being open to receiving feedback and new ideas from teachers and students on the development and improvement of the school climate in the schools where they serve. They also shared that they develop short-, medium-, and long-term plans and programs to improve their educational institutions and the organizational climate within them, and that they work to implement new projects. Finally, they indicated that they continually monitor the school climate to conduct current situation analyses and make necessary evaluations to improve it.

Discussion

The study highlights that transformational leadership qualities such as vision, empathy, and justice are vital for fostering a healthy school climate. The theoretical foundations of the study, rooted in transformational leadership theories (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Bass & Avolio, 1994) and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, provide an important framework for analyzing the social and relational dimensions evident in participants' responses.

Many findings in this study confirm those of prior research. The recognition of empathy, support, and participatory decision-making as core leadership attributes aligns with Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins' (2020) emphasis on the emotional and intellectual dimensions of effective school leadership. The significance of morale and motivation, directly linked to administrators' relational behaviors, corresponds with Çakır and Şahin's (2020) research, which underscores leadership behavior as a key factor influencing staff engagement and satisfaction.

Similarly, consensus on the need for leadership training aligns with the OECD's (2020) assertion that continuous

professional development is essential for contemporary school leaders to address complex challenges. Moreover, the study confirms that equitable task distribution and fair treatment are fundamental elements of a positive organizational atmosphere, corroborating the findings of Wang and Degol (2016) and Kutsyuruba et al. (2021), who highlight the influence of justice perceptions on trust and collaboration within educational communities.

While most findings align with existing literature, some notable discrepancies emerged. For instance, although principals generally perceived their communication with staff and stakeholders as open and effective, a significant proportion of teachers expressed dissatisfaction with these practices.

Conclusion

Here is a comprehensive academic English translation of your detailed research findings on the transformational leadership qualities of school administrators and their effects: The teachers participating in the study concluded that, in the current century, school administrators must embody transformational leadership. However, when leadership skills are lacking within the school, it negatively impacts the school climate, work environment, teachers, and other staff members. According to the teachers' perspectives, school administrators do not treat teachers equally, there is an unfair distribution of duties, and favoritism is present within the institution. The teachers also expressed that in-service training programs organized by the Ministry of National Education (MEB) for school administrators should be updated to meet contemporary needs, and that the number of such training sessions should be increased. Regarding communication, teachers noted that while school administrators maintain strong communication with students' families, there are

persistent issues at sensitive levels involving students, parents, and school parent associations.

From the administrators' viewpoints, the school climate in their current schools is positive. They hold both individual and group meetings with students, teachers, and staff to improve the school environment and maintain a positive atmosphere. Administrators reported efforts to recognize teachers individually, delegate responsibilities to encourage ownership of the school, and implement actions to enhance motivation. They emphasized accessibility and openness in communication with teachers and students as factors that increase trust within the organization.

Administrators actively listen to teachers' concerns, conduct individual or group meetings, and implement conflict resolution strategies to eliminate hostile environments. They receive feedback from teachers and students regarding the improvement and transformation of the school climate. Furthermore, administrators develop short-, medium-, and long-term plans and programs to enhance the school climate and initiate new projects accordingly.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies can expand on this research by employing qualitative or mixed method approaches with broader participant samples. The results and findings from such studies can be compared with those identified in the present research to provide a comprehensive understanding.

Recommendations for Researchers

In-service training programs organized by the Ministry of National Education (MEB) for school administrators can be developed to align with contemporary leadership approaches and practices relevant to the current century.

The MEB could also monitor and regulate the distribution of tasks and workloads among teachers to ensure equitable and fair treatment by school administrators. Efforts can be made to address communication challenges faced by school administrators in interactions with students' families and school parent associations. Educational administrators can be better equipped with knowledge, efficiency, and practical examples regarding organizational and organizational climate management through targeted in-service training programs developed by MEB.

Declarations

Ethics Approval and Participation Permission

The Akdeniz Karpaz University ethical committee provided the ethical approval for this research. The date for approval is 14/01/2025, and the approval number is AKUN-ETK-2/25.

Publication Permission

Not applicable.

Availability of Data and Materials

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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Author Contributions

BB and SD proposed the main idea of the research. BB and SD were involved in reviewing and discussing the literature. BB and SD contributed to drafting the article and revising its content. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the article.

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