Responsibilities of Elementary School Principals in Turkey: Perceptions and Expectations

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ABSTRACT The main objective of this research is to determine the expectations and perceptions of teachers and principals at public elementary schools of the responsibilities of school principals. The research was conducted in a qualitative design, and data was collected by the interview method. The participants in the study comprised 9 principals and 10 teachers from public elementary schools in 11 sub-provinces of Istanbul. A semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher was used as a data collection tool. Data was analyzed using the content analysis technique. According to the research findings, the participants perceive the concept of responsibility in school administration in the context of conscientious responsibility, parental responsibility, representation responsibility, and especially legal responsibility. School principals are, to a large extent, unable to fulfill the responsibilities expected of them, and give higher priority to finding funding sources for the school, conducting daily operations, and ensuring non-violation of legislation and school security, rather than accomplishing educational goals.

INTRODUCTION

The present paper, the main subject of which is the responsibility of school administration, will first address various aspects of the concept of responsibility, then investigate the subject of responsibility in terms of administration, and lastly focus on the responsibilities of school principals.

Responsibility establishes a connection between an individual and society (Bierhoff and Auhagen 2000: 1). According to Shaver and Schutte (2000: 36), the concept of responsibility is a structure within the social system that is related to the social context and established by people. Within this structure there are expectations of culture, social norms about the appropriateness of behavior, legal requirements, and concepts regarding interpersonal relationships (Shaver and Schutte 2000: 36).

Assuming responsibility and being held responsible/being responsible are different. According to Basaran (2000: 89), assuming *responsibility* is performing a responsibility to the best extent even if you are not being held accountable. Being *held* responsible is being held accountable to the person who imposes the responsibility (accountability). In this context, being held responsible is defined as being held accountable to others for actions (Basaran 2000:

89), a personal quality where an individual is obligated to answer when questioned about an action (Hancerlioglu 1996), or preparation of an employee to prove fulfillment of their tasks to their superiors (Balci 2010: 85). According to those who define the concept as "assuming responsibility, free will is the fundamental element of responsibility (Bierhoff and Auhagen 2000: 2). According to Timucin (2000: 440), who defines the concept as an "obligation to fulfill a goal or correct a mistake", the underlying concepts of responsibility are autonomy and moral freedom. However, only an individual who can make choices with moral freedom, independent of all external connections, is responsible. The influence of external forces removes the responsibility, or at least makes it void. According to Bok (1998: 11), if an individual makes choices of their own free will then they have freedom of choice and therefore hold moral responsibility for their choices. An individual who has no free will or freedom of choice is not responsible for their actions.

Responsibility in Administration

The concept of responsibility, which is defined as an "obligation to carry out duties" in the organizational context, provides employees

with a focus on their jobs. It also enhances their career with intangible benefits such as self-confidence, job satisfaction, and feelings of respect and appreciation toward co-workers (Thompson 2002: 76). Responsibility begins with the appointment of an employee to a position in the organization, through which the employee assumes responsibility with the authority of the position (Basaran 2000: 89). From this perspective, there is no responsibility without authority. Assuming responsibility of a subject in an organization means assuming its authority (Drucker 1996: 417). According to Bursalioglu (2013: 182), responsibility is a manager's obligation to engage in certain actions and exercise authority. Drucker (1996) states "Responsibility is absolute and cannot be externalized. No management can be held exempt from responsibility," thus pointing out to the indispensability of responsibility in management.

Administrative responsibilities may change depending on the objective and structure of the organization. However, there are some common administrative responsibilities in all organizations. Tortop (1982) lists common administrative responsibilities in all organizations as the responsibility of distributing and grouping work among top levels, the responsibility of preparing the work, setting the goals and determining the procedures for performance of the work, the responsibility of improving skills and training personnel, the responsibility of fairly rewarding and punishing, and the responsibility of making decisions.

Responsibility in School Administration

In the most general sense, the responsibility of the school administration is to ensure the school attains its goals in line with the expectations of respective laws, educational policies, and modern education (Taymaz 2011: 61). According to Sergiovanni et al. (2004: 60), in order to ensure the effectiveness of the school, all school administrators are responsible for (a) being sensitive to the culture of the school and society, (b) achieving the organizational goals, (c) adapting to the environment, and (d) ensuring organizational integrity. Maintaining the school culture includes protecting and maintaining the traditions and cultural norms of the school and school community. Attaining the goals includes determining and defining the goals and utilizing available resources in a manner to ensure achievement of the goals. Adapting to the environment

is related to the school changing along with changes in society. Transformation in technology and political processes require changes in personnel policies, organizational structures, and education programs at schools. Ensuring integrity means the co-existence of all elements at school (branches, departments, etc.) as a harmonious whole, creating an organizational identity to ensure the dedication of students and teachers to the school (Sergiovanni et al. 2004: 60-63).

Western research suggests that there have been some changes in the area of the responsibility of school principals in recent years. While the fundamental responsibility of a school principal was previously sustaining operation of the school and the continuing performance of activities as planned, the new approaches have adopted the perspective that a school principal leads their community and acts as a balance between the demands and interests of the school stakeholders (Catano and Stronge 2006). With the "No Child Left Behind" reform realized in the United States in 2002, the concept of accountability was preferred more than responsibility, thus holding the school principals accountable for failures. This regulation imposed the responsibility of the entire student success on school principals (Dolde 2008: 72).

From a different point of view, Cranston (2013) asserts that there is a need to shift the debate about school leadership from one dominated by accountability to one grounded in notions of professional responsibility. That is, emphasizing professionalism will cause a "shift [in] the agenda of action in schools from an externally determined one, to one that is internal and contextualized and that requires the professionals (that is, the school leaders) to be directly and acutely engaged."

School administration in the Turkish education system is not considered a professional occupation and is defined as an area of duty among the teaching profession. This is defined in article 42 of the Fundamental Act of National Education as the "Teaching profession is a specific field of specialization assuming education duties and related administrative duties of the State". The area of responsibility of a school principal is defined in article 60 of the Elementary Education Institutions Regulation as follows:

An elementary education institution is administered by the principal together with other employees in a democratic training-education

environment. In addition to teaching, a school principal is authorized to carry out their duties in accordance with laws, statutes, regulations, directives, and programs, and maintain and monitor school order. A principal is responsible for managing, evaluating, and improving the school according to its objectives.

According to such a description, the teaching profession is taken as a basis, and administration is considered an additional duty. A principal's responsibility in teaching classes is an indication of this. Conversely, the first sentence stresses the sharing or distribution of responsibility among the staff of the school. Sanzo et al. (2011) claim that sharing responsibility in school administration with a community of professionals is an important part of maintaining successful schools. Besides, sharing responsibility is considered as a requirement of the distributed leadership approach in school administration. In Keeffe's (2014) study, creating a new sense of shared responsibility and empowerment among teachers is considered by principals as the first priority in introducing distributed leadership. In the same study, building leadership about learning is defined as the combined responsibility of the staff.

Apart from the above-mentioned regulations, a list of principles and a detailed job description defining the areas of responsibility of principals are not available in the Turkish education system. The findings of the present research are hoped to contribute to the clarification of the areas of responsibility of school principals. Also, there are a limited number of studies in the literature focusing on the responsibilities of school principals in Turkey. In this regard, this paper is expected to contribute to this gap in the literature and provide researchers with ideas for new research.

Objectives

In the light of the presented information, the objective of this research is to determine the expectations and perceptions of teachers and principals at public elementary schools of the responsibilities of a school principal. Under the scope of this objective, answers to the following questions are sought:
- How do principals and teachers perceive the concept of "responsibility in school administration"?
- What responsibilities do principals and teachers expect school principals to have toward students, teachers, and parents?

- What responsibilities do principals and teachers perceive that a school principal has in reality toward students, teachers, and parents?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research Design

This research was designed qualitative. For an in-depth description of the perceptions and expectations regarding the concept of responsibility, which is the subject of the present paper, the qualitative research design and interview method were adopted.

Participants

The participants in the study comprise 9 principals and 10 teachers from public elementary schools in 11 sub-provinces of Istanbul. Participants were selected according to the qualitative research approach, ensuring they had different characteristics according to criteria, such as sub-province, gender, age, seniority, education level, and school size. Participants were selected from 11 sub-provinces of Istanbul (Avcilar, Bahcesehir, Buyukcekmece, Esenler, Esenyurt, Fatih, Gungoren, Maltepe, Umraniye, Uskudar, and Zeytinburnu). While one of the principals was female, eight were male; seven of the teachers were female and three were male. The age range of the principals was 32-56, and that of the teachers was 28-38. The seniority of the teachers varied between 2 and 13 years; that of the principals, including teaching, varied between 9 and 35 years, and the seniority of principals in the principal position varied between 4 and 18 years. Years of service of the principals at their current school varied between 3 to 5 years. Three of the principals and four of the teachers held a graduate degree. The number of students and the number of teachers at the schools where the teachers work varied between 150 and 3200, and 30 and 75, respectively. The number of students and the number of teachers at the schools where the principals work varied between 430 and 3900, and 20 and 103, respectively.

Data Collection and Analysis

The research data was collected by the face-to-face interview method using a semi-structured interview form during the interviews. The interview method used under the scope of the quali-

tative research design is considered a functional method that allows attainment of full and accurate data on the subject studied (Judd et al. 1991: 253). In the semi-structured interview form the participants were asked how they perceived the concept of responsibility; what responsibilities school principals should have toward students, teachers, parents, environment, and community; and what responsibilities school principals adopted or had in reality. Audio-recording was done during the interviews with the consent of the participants, and the records were subsequently analyzed.

The data collected was analyzed using the content analysis technique. In content analysis, different approaches can be employed, such as data reduction, use of descriptive and pattern codes, and presentation in tables (Balci 2015: 300). In this context, the participant responses were converted into short statements and coded, and the statements that were close in meaning were combined under appropriate themes. The frequency (f) of the views under each theme, the coded short statements of the participants, and the participants who made each statement (principal P1, P2,.... teachers T1, T2, ...) were presented in tables. The responses of the participants unrelated to the subject were not taken into consideration during the analysis.

In order to strengthen the research validity, expert opinion was obtained from academia in the education administration field while preparing the semi-structured interview form. The confirmation of three participants was obtained for the accuracy of the analyzed audio-recordings. In order to improve the reliability of the research, the research process and method are described

in detail, and detailed demographics of the participants are provided. According to Yildirim and Simsek (2013), appropriate strategies include inter alia, a clear definition of the research participants, and a detailed description of data collection and analysis processes.

RESULTS

In the research findings, the principal and teacher perceptions of the concept of responsibility, expectations of the participants regarding the responsibilities of a principal toward students, teachers and parents, and their perception of the actual situation are analyzed.

Perception of Concept of Responsibility

The research findings relating to the perceptions of the participants of the subject concept are combined under specific themes and short statements under the themes are presented in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, the perceptions of the participants of responsibility are combined under the themes of *"legal responsibility", "conscientious responsibility", "parental responsibility",* and *"official responsibility".*

Legal Responsibility

The participants seem to define the concept of responsibility in the frame of legal responsibility (f=10). Some principals perceive the concept as fulfilling the duties prescribed by laws and adhering to legislation. The principals reported that the legislation failed to adequately

Table 1: Principal and teacher perceptions of the concept of responsibility

Theme	Perceptions of principals	Perceptions of teachers
Legal Responsibility (f=10)	- Improving the school success (P3) - Fulfilling legal obligations (P4) - Adhering to legislation (P6) - Satisfying all parties (P3)	- Being legally bound (T1) - Job obligations (T2, T4, T10) - Performing duties, being accountable (T2, T3)- Protecting and functionally using the equipment (T8)
Conscientious Responsibility (f=7)	- Being conscientious (P1, P4, P5) - Being enthusiastic to fulfill the duty (P7) - Doing more than the mandatory duties (P9)	- Feeling conscientiously (morally) obliged to do (T1) - Being conscientious (T10)- Assuming extra-legal duties (T10)
Parental Responsibility (f = 3)	- Feeling as if their own child (P8) - Protecting what is entrusted (P3)	- Protecting teachers and students (T7)
Official Responsibility (f=2)	- Representing the office (P7)	- Official obligations (T2)

define the responsibilities of principals, and that their responsibility turned only into adhering to laws because only compliance with legislation was inspected. In parallel with the principals, the teachers also appear to perceive the responsibility within the context of legislation as the principal's fulfillment of and being accountable for the duties imposed by legislation.

Conscientious Responsibility

Five of the principals perceive the concept of responsibility as having a good conscience about the job done and actions performed. Accordingly, responsibility is a feeling of conscientiousness an individual must have. Some teachers (T1, T10) report they perceive responsibility in the context of conscientious responsibility that has conscientious, moral, and legal aspects.

Parental Responsibility

Some of the principals perceive responsibility in the form of parental responsibility and state that principals must have the same feeling of responsibility to students as parents feel to their

children. According to this perception, principals must approach students with a sense of parental responsibility, feel like a parent, and consider everyone at the school as someone entrusted to them. With a similar approach, a teacher stated that they perceive the principal's responsibility as protecting and watching over students and teachers with a fatherly approach.

Official Responsibility

Some participants perceived the concept of responsibility as representing the office in the best way. According to this perception, responsibility means that a principal represents their office in the best way (P7) and fulfills what is expected of them in accordance with the requirements of the office (T2).

Responsibilities of Principals to Students

Expectations of the participants about the responsibilities of principals to students are combined under six themes. Themes and short statements reflecting expectations are presented in Table 2. These themes include: *communication*, *academic development*, *guidance*, *social-emo-*

Table 2: Expectations of principals and teachers about responsibilities of principals to students

Theme	Expectations of principals	Expectations of teachers
Communication (f=8)	- Communicating well with students (P1, P9) - Loving students (P1, P3) - Paying close attention (P6, P7, P9) - Trusting and listening well (P1)	- Showing mercy (T5) - Attending to personal problems (T6) - Being honest and reliable (T7) - Being respectful (T5)
Academic Development (f=7)	- Promoting the need to learn (P1) - Creating a good learning environment (P6, P7) - Promoting regular study (P3)	- Guiding teachers for academic success (T3) - Ensuring academic success (T6, T9) - Ensuring admission to a good high school (T6)
Guidance (f=7)	- Guiding, being a role model (P1) - Developing moral values (P3, P9) - Warning against errors (P3) - Guiding toward what is good and right (P8)	- Enabling effective school guidance services (T1) - Guiding toward good behavior (T2) - Guiding, counseling (T3)
Social-Emotional Development (f=5)	- Promoting participation in social activities (P6)	- Organizing activities in accordance with ocial, emotional needs (T1, T2, T3, T9)- Creating a healthy school climate (T9)
Parenting (f=5)	- Considering students as his own children and acting accordingly (P5, P8)	- Considering every child as his own and treating them like a parent (T5, T8, T10)
Safety and Discipline(f=5)	- Ensuring school discipline (P1) - Creating a safe school environment (P4)	- Preparing a safe learning environment (T4) - Ensuring school discipline (T7) - Protecting against violence/discrimination/ exclusion (T8)

tional development, *parenting,* and *safety and discipline*.

Communication

The primary expectation of the responsibilities of principals to students is effective communication (f=8). In this context, the principals and teachers emphasized that good communication required loving students; paying close attention to them; not excluding them; protecting them against violation and discrimination; being respectful, honest, and reliable; to them, listening to them, and attending to their problems when necessary.

Academic Development

According to a significant number of participants (f=7), for the academic success of students principals must be responsible for preparing a good learning environment for students, promoting the need to learn among students, guiding them to study regularly, and ensuring their admission to good high schools.

Guidance

Seven of the participants expected a principal to assume responsibilities such as guiding students in their behavior and activities, counseling them, supporting them in moral development, and distinguishing what is good and right.

Social-emotional Development

One of the responsibilities that the participants expect from principals is creating a school climate and environment congruent with the so-cial-emotional development of students, organizing appropriate activities for them, and ensuring student participation in such activities.

Parenting

One of the responsibilities some participants impose on principals is that principals must feel like a parent and consider and treat students as their own children.

Safety and Discipline

The participants described one of the fundamental responsibilities of principals as safety and discipline (f=5), where the principals should ensure school discipline, create a physically and psychologically safe environment, and protect children from violence, discrimination, and exclusion.

The perceptions of the participants of the responsibilities of principals to students in reality are combined under five themes and presented in Table 3. These perceptions include: *safety and order*, *academic success*, *management, and communication*.

Safety and Order

A significant number of the participants (f=9) state that principals mostly do not have the expected responsibilities regarding students, and care more about getting through the day with no problems and carrying out day-to-day operations rather than about education and learning.

Academic Success

Some of the participants (f = 6) state that principals feel more responsible for student success and focus on school success and school suc-

Table 3: Perceptions of principals and teachers of responsibilities of principals to students

Theme	Perceptions of principals	Perceptions of teachers
Safety and Order (f=9)	- Saving the day, carrying out day to day operation (P1, P8) - Ensuring school safety (P1, P8)	- Saving the day, carrying out day to day operation (T3, T4, T6, T8, T10) - Ensuring school safety and discipline (T2, T3, T4, T6, T7)
Academic Success (f = 6)	- Ensuring student success (P2) - Ensuring success in general exams (P6)	- Ensuring student success (T1, T2, T7) - Ensuring success in general exams (T1, T6)
Management (f=5)	- Equipment, cleaning, maintenance, repair (P1, P7)- Managing finance (P5)	- Equipment, cleaning, maintenance, repair (T4, T7)
Communication (f=3)	- Treating with tolerance and patience (P3) - - Establishing good relations (P4)	Establishing formal relationship, maintaining distance stop (T5)

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cess in nationwide examinations. However, the participants criticize this situation for only focusing on academic success and ignoring social and emotional development and the teaching of values. A principal (P6) states that the system compels principals to generally focus on course success; another principal states that principals focus on student success not for responsibility, but rather for their own career and image.

Management

Some participants (f=5) have the perception that the responsibility felt by principals to students is mostly "keeping up the school, ensuring survival of the school". According to this perception, principals are unable to allocate time to education, learning, and student development, and spend almost all of their time and energy in duties such as fund raising for the school, maintenance and repair of school equipment, and cleaning the school.

Communication

While one of the participants (P3) states they are responsible for establishing good communication with students and treating them with tolerance and patience, a teacher states that principals fail to establish effective communication with students.

Responsibilities of Principals to Teachers

Expectations of the research participants about the responsibilities principals must have toward teachers are combined under five themes. The themes and short statements reflecting expectations thereunder are presented in Table 4. These five themes include *communication, motivation and support, preparation of environment, education and training,* and *ethics*.

Communication

The expectation most emphasized by the participants (f=13) with regard to the responsibilities of principals to teachers is effective communication with teachers. Accordingly, principals must treat teachers with understanding and empathy, pay close attention to them, pay attention to love, respect, and courtesy, and trust in their relationships with them.

Motivation and Support

Nine of the participants expect principals to be responsible for providing professional motivation to teachers and help them solve their problems. In this context, the participants expect principals to raise a consciousness of duty among teachers and improve their professional motivation by offering contributions to helping them focus on the job and solve their problems.

Preparing Environment

An important responsibility the participants (f = 8) emphasize is that school principals must prepare a work environment for education and learning. In this context, what is expected of a

Table 4: Expectations of principals and teachers about responsibilities of principals to teachers

Theme	Expectations of principals	Expectations of teachers
Communication (f =13)	- Empathy and understanding (P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7) - Communicating effectively (P4, P5, P7, P9)- Paying close attention (P3, P6, P7, P9)	- Empathy and understanding (T3 T5, T10) - Relationship of love, respect, kindness and trust (T1, T7) - Paying close attention (T10)
Motivation and Support(f=9)	- Providing professional motivation (P3, P4, P8) - Supporting problem solving (P9)	- Providing professional motivation (T5. T6, T9) - Providing support with student/parent (T3, T7)
Preparing Environment(f=8)	- Creating a positive school climate (P5) - Improving physical conditions (P2, P7)	- Creating a good learning environment (T2, T7, T8,) - Creating a positive school climate (T4, T6) - Improving physical conditions (T7)
Education and Training(f=7)	- Providing education and development opportunities (P3, P5) - Sharing knowledge and experience (P4)	- Supporting personal and professional development (T1, T3, T4, T9) - Treating equal and fair (T1, T3)
Ethics (f=4)	- Being democratic (P5)	- Being honest (T7)

principal is to both provide the education tools and equipment needed by students and to prepare the psychological environment for education by creating a positive school climate where teachers feel peaceful.

Education and Training

The participants think that a school principal must support the personal and professional development of teachers. In this context, the responsibilities expected of principals are to create professional education and development opportunities for teachers, help them benefit from these opportunities, and share their knowledge and experience with teachers when necessary.

Ethics

Another responsibility expected of principals toward teachers is to exhibit ethical conduct. Accordingly, a principal must be democratic in their decisions and actions, treat teachers equally and fairly, and be honest with them at all times.

The perceptions of the principals and teachers who participated in the study of the real responsibilities of principals toward teachers are combined under two themes. Themes and short statements reflecting the perceptions thereunder are presented in Table 5. These two themes include: *control and order* and *communication*.

Control and Order

A major number of the participants (f=10) report that the responsibility the principals feel toward teachers in reality is, contrary to expectations, more about ensuring control over the school and ensuring that teachers carry out daily operations. The participants complain that principals focus on teacher attendance to classes, maintaining daily operations, an absence of

anything contrary to legislation and the demands of top administration, and not paying attention to the content of education and the needs of teachers.

Communication

With regard to communication some principals (P3, P9) report that principals fail to establish effective communication with teachers and fail in their relationships. In parallel, some teachers (T5, T7) perceive that principals fail to treat teachers with understanding, empathy, and kindness, and treat them differently in their relations. Some principals (P6, P7) have a positive perception in this regard and state that they are friendly with teachers and establish effective communication with them; conversely, a teacher (T2) states that their principal pays close attention to and supports the teachers and listens to and attends to their complaints.

Responsibilities of Principals to Parents

The expectations of the research participants about the responsibilities principals must have to parents are combined under four themes. Themes and short statements reflecting the expectations thereunder are presented in Table 6. These four themes include: *communication, participation and collaboration, ethics,* and *education and training*.

Communication

The area of responsibility the participants (f=13) emphasize the most is effective communication of principals with parents. Accordingly, principals must pay attention to open communication; approach parents with empathy and understanding by putting themselves in the par-

Table 5: Perceptions of principals and teachers of responsibilities of principals to teachers

Theme	Perceptions of principals	Perceptions of teachers
Control and Order (f=10)	- Controlling teachers (P4, P5, P6)	- Conducting routine and daily operation (T1, T6, T10) - Controlling and monitoring (T4, T8) - Meeting the demands of top administration (T3)
Communication (f=8)	- Friendly and effective communication (P6, P7) - Poor communication, negative relationship (P3, P7, P9)	- Paying close attention, supporting (T2) - Differential treatment (T5) - Failure to feel empathy (T5) - Failure to be kind and understanding (T7)

Table 6: Expectations of principals and teachers about responsibilities of principals to parents

Theme	Expectations of principals	Expectations of teachers
Communication (f=13)	- Effective and open communication (P2, P3, P4, P6, P8) - Empathy and understanding (P1, P7) - Being tolerant and constructive (P3, P4)	- Effective and open communication (T3, T4, T6, T8) - Empathizing (T3, T9) - Treating with respect and kindness (T7)
Participation and Collaboration (f=12)	- Including in decision process (P1) - Including in educational process (P5, P7, P9) - Collaborating in problem solving (P2, P6)	- Including in decision process (T1, T2) - Including in educational process (T5, T6, T9) - Collaborating in problem solving (T8)
Ethics (f=5)	- Being transparent and accountable (P1, P5, P7) - Being honest and reliable (P3)	- Building a relationship based on trust (T7) - Being honest to parents (T7)
Education and Training (f = 3)	- Organizing educational activities (P1)	- Organizing educational activities (T1) - Supporting their development (T4)

ents' place; and be tolerant, respectful, and kind in their communication with parents.

Participation and Collaboration

Another responsibility of principals considered important is including parents in the education process and collaborating with them (f=12). Principals are expected to include parents in the education process, work with them in matters related to children and the school, and include them in decisions or at least take their opinions into account in decision making.

Ethics

Within the scope of the responsibility of ethical conduct to parents, principals are expected to make the school administration transparent to parents, be accountable when necessary, be honest, and establish trust in their relationships with parents.

Education and Training

One of the responsibilities the participants expect principals to have toward parents is to organize educational activities at the school that contribute to the education and training of parents and attach importance to parent education. The participants especially point out that parents need to be educated in matters such as communication with children, physical and emotional development, the needs of children, and effective study methods.

The perceptions of the participants of the responsibilities of principals to parents in reality are combined under four themes, which are presented with the findings in Table 7: *participation and collaboration, communication, ethics,* and *safety*.

Participation and Collaboration

The perceptions of the participants of the principals' inclusion of parents in the education

Table 7: Perceptions of principals and teachers of responsibilities of principals to parents

Theme	Perceptions of principals	Perceptions of teachers
Participation and Collaboration(f=9)	- Seeing parents as a funding source (P1) - Ability to contribute funds (P3, P8) (T1)	- Fund raising (T3, T5, T8, T9) - Listening to complaints and solving problems - Not including in education process (T5, T6)
Communication (f=6)	- Negative attitude toward parents (P1, P6)	- Very limited communication (T2, T6, T8) - Providing information to parents about children (T3)
Ethics(f=4)	- Parents' lack of confidence in principal (P3) - Accountability and transparency (P6)	- Falsely glamorizing everything (T7) - Differential treatment (T9)
Safety (f=2)	- Providing a safe school environment (P6)	- Providing a safe school environment (T4)

process and collaboration are largely contrary to the expectations. Accordingly, principals mostly regard parents as a funding source and do not have the responsibility to include them in the education process. A participant with a positive perception (T1) stated that principals assumed the responsibility of listening to and resolving parent complaints.

Communication

In parallel with participation and collaboration, the participants mainly state that principals do not assume the responsibility of establishing effective communication with parents, or do not want to do so, and that school administrations have a negative attitude toward parents. A teacher (T2) attributes the communication problem to negative behavior, such as frequent complaints from parents about teachers and administrators and their excessive involvement in the affairs of educators. A teacher (T3) stated that principals at least fulfill the responsibility of inviting parents to school meetings to inform them about the status of students.

Ethics

Some of the participants state that principals have the responsibility of accountability and transparency mostly in financial matters to avoid mistrust and suspicion in parents when they ask for their financial contributions. Alternatively, some teachers argue that, in contrast to ethical principles, principals tend to discriminate between parents, treat them according to their occupation and status (T9), are not honest to avoid complaints, and glamorize everything falsely.

Safety

Two participants described preparing a healthy and safe environment for children as one of the responsibilities of principals to parents.

DISCUSSION

Four basic approaches are noted in the description of the concept responsibility by principals and teachers at elementary schools. The first is to approach responsibility in the frame of legislation, acting fully in accordance with and not violating laws. Accordingly, a principal is first responsible for fulfilling what is prescribed by law. The finding of a paper (Aslanargun and Bozkurt 2012) that principals give higher priority to legal responsibilities than to professional and ethical responsibilities suggests the prevalence of this perception among principals.

The second approach is a sense of individual conscientious; a responsibility for one's deeds that requires the individual to be accountable to themselves. In this approach, an individual is not responsible to others, but only to themselves. Based on the perception that "Teaching is a profession of conscience", an established slogan in the Turkish education system, and considering that a principal is also a teacher, this approach is believed to be adopted. In this context, two types of administrative responsibility are argued in the literature, including material (legal-regulative) and spiritual (customary, conscientious) (Simon et al. 1980; Bursalioglu 2013: 185). While the source of material responsibility is hierarchy, that of spiritual responsibility is the system of values. Material responsibility is controlled formally through legal and hierarchical channels. Spiritual responsibility has no legal control; a manager has conscientious responsibility (Bursalioglu 2013: 185).

The third is a paternalist approach, where a principal is regarded like a parent and required to feel the same responsibility to children as their parents. The heart of this approach is the understanding adopted by Turkish and Islamic culture that glorifies the teacher and regards them as parents. The studies focusing on metaphoric perception regarding principals in Turkey suggest that metaphors such as "parent" (Cerit 2008), "father", "head of the family", and "senior member of family" (Yalcin and Erginer 2012) are adopted for principals.

The last approach is to consider the responsibility within the scope of attitudes and conducts that suit the position of principal. This perception takes the status of the position of principal into consideration. A principal is expected to protect the status of the position of principal and act accordingly with this status.

The research participants expect school principals to assume the responsibilities of effectively communicating with students, paying close attention to them, preparing an effective learning environment for the students' academic development, guiding and counseling them, paying attention to the students' social and emotional development, organizing appropriate ac-

tivities for their development, ensuring physical and psychological safety at school, and treating children as their parents do. However, perceptions regarding the responsibilities assumed by principals in reality are quite far from meeting these expectations. Accordingly, the duties that are most important to principals and what they spend most of their time on are to sustain the day-to-day operations of the school, finish the day without experiencing serious safety problems, and secure funding from a variety of sources for the school's survival.

In fact, these are among the most important challenges experienced not only by principals, but also by the Turkish education system. Studies conducted in recent years in Turkey suggest that these challenges are overwhelming; that although the safety problems experienced by principals threaten schools, regulations and measures fail to be adequate (Erol 2009); that violence and bullying are spreading among students (Yurtal and Cenkseven 2007); and that school principals try to solve their funding problems through their own means because they do not receive sufficient allocations from the central budget (Zoraloglu et al. 2004; Aslanargun and Bozkurt 2012). However, along with legal requirements, ethical duties and best practices for student achievement are the responsibility of all school personnel (Miller 2014).

The teachers and the principals expect school principals to assume the responsibilities of effectively communicating with teachers, providing professional motivation to them, attending to their problems and professional development, preparing an appropriate work environment at school, and behaving ethically. Celik (2013: 101) claims that the ethical responsibility of the principal requires leading the members of the school in terms of ethics, being principled, and internalizing and acting according to ethical rules. These expectations are also in line with the view of a shift in the role of the school principals. Now the principals are responsible for transforming the school into a caring community where teachers can experience a positive organizational climate that will, in turn, contribute to optimal performance on their part (Van der Vyver et al. 2014).

Cooley and Shen (2003: 20) state that the accountability trend added new responsibilities to the traditional responsibilities of principals and forced them to spend more time and effort in their job. However, the perception of the participation of the real situation of principals suggests a situation considerably contrary to this trend and expectations. Accordingly, principals mostly do not feel responsible for education-learning activities in classes and the professional development and needs of teachers; instead, they focus on sustaining day-to-day operations, such as class attendance, the duty roster, and having no problems appear. These findings are also in contradiction with Wahlstrom and Louis' (2008) claim of the "current era of accountability made principals responsible for the quality of teachers' work".

The similar research findings in Turkey also concord with this situation. Teachers find school principals incompetent in guidance and training (Ekinci 2010), and grade principals' attitudes and behavior in responsibility, tolerance, flexibility, collaboration, and participation in decisions as "low-level" (Atay 2001). In contrast, principals attribute this situation largely to funding, safety, and bureaucratic works that take up their entire time and effort.

The teachers and the participants believe that school principals must assume the responsibility of effectively communicating with parents, understanding and empathizing with them, including them in the education process, collaborating with them, fulfilling their education needs, and treating them ethically. The answer to the question of to what extent school principals meet this expectation is, unfortunately, negative. Accordingly, school principals regard parents mostly as a funding source, are reluctant to include them in the education process and decisions, and fail to effectively communicate with them. The negative attitudes of educators have been found to be one of the most important obstacles to participation of parents in the education process (Shannon 1996; Christenson 2004; Erdogan and Demirkasimoglu 2010). A study conducted at elementary schools in Ankara (Erdogan and Demirkasimoglu 2010) has found that causes such as principals' reluctance to include parents in decisions, regarding them only as a funding source, and communicating with parents only for funding issues considerably prevents the participation of parents in the education process. However, principals are observed to assume responsibilities, such as ensuring the safety of students, keeping parents informed about their children, and being transparent in money matters to avoid mistrust among parents, to a certain extent.

CONCLUSION

As a result of discussions, it may be suggested that school principals fail to fulfill the expected responsibilities to a large extent. Perceptions of principals and those of teachers in this regard are very close to each other. School principals try to do their duties in a manner that will not cause any illegal issues, and they pay more attention to legal responsibilities. However, principals allocate a large part of their time and effort to fund-raising for school, maintenance, repair, and cleaning, and daily routine work; ensuring school safety, organizing educational-learning activities, and improving the quality of education, etc. become of secondary importance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to ensure that school principals can focus more on education-learning goals, funding issues at schools must first be solved by allocating more funds to schools. Besides, national strategies must be developed and implemented to ensure school safety. In educational programs or seminars for the school principals, it should be stressed that the responsibility area of principals consists of not only legal requirements, but also improving the quality of education.

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