

## Educational Administrators' Perceptions about Critical Pedagogy

Gurkan Bayoglu<sup>\*1</sup> and Ali Ilker Gumuseli<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Okan University, Institute of Social Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey*

<sup>2</sup>*Okan University, Faculty of Education, Istanbul, Turkey*

<sup>\*</sup>*Telephone: +90 0505 443 15 70*

*E-mail: <sup>1</sup><gurkanbayoglu@mail.com>, <sup>2</sup><aligumuseli@gmail.com>*

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**ABSTRACT** It has now become clear to all that the divergence of educational methods and goals are becoming widespread. Therefore, having sustained attention as an institution of culture by some anthropologists, the educational institution should become involved in emancipation practices. The aim of this paper is to analyze educational administrators' perceptions about critical pedagogy, which advocates emancipation in education practices, along with considering of some demographic variables. The present study applies a screening model. The study group includes 204 educational administrators work at public schools in Beylikduzu (Istanbul) during the 2014-2015 academic year. The study aimed at determining educational administrators' perceptions in three subdimensions, that is, "Education System", "Functions of School" and "Emancipator School". Educational administrators agree with the following item the most, that is, "*Teachers must question themselves when students criticize*" and with the following item the least, that is, "*The mission of the school is to prepare children for the community*".

### INTRODUCTION

Considering the history of thought and anthropologically speaking, it is not possible to find a common source to all ideas and beliefs spread all over the world. It should be kept in mind that cultures are relative in today's complicated societies, and they are not the same quality seeds growing plants and the same straight path moving plants (Levi-Strauss 1975). Hence, no anthropologist will accept any notion of culture being completely stable, and no educator will accept the notion of education being completely stable (Brameld 1955). With respect to Johnson (1943), education is not only the transmission of culture from one generation to another, and it is also the transformation of people. From the basis of "culture" discourse developed by relativist anthropologists, educators need more free lands to make real transformation of people. It is obvious that critical pedagogy is the only thing that can help educators reach this goal.

As the main topic of foundation and transfer of knowledge, education and educational management has been the subject of the scientific

researches since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and generally affected by the management approaches. With the Industrial Revolution, which is described as 'the pass from the tool to the machine', Taylorist management understanding ignoring the worker in the production process, began to lose its efficiency and the modern paradigm, which rose on the basis of enlightenment idea was named the rationalist age after renaissance in 1650s. Modernist aspect, which develops with the effect of positivism, defines the human wisdom as the first tool to reach the information by eliminating the God from the center of information (Thornhill 2000; White 2006). According to the proponents of this idea, which depends on objectivity, wisdom, universality, the absolute and accuracy, the only way to reach the information is through experiments and observation.

The word "modern" meaning, 'what occurs after a radical change' is a new understanding, which consists of scientific, political, cultural and industrial revolutions and generally has a meaning of what does not comply with the previous and also does not belong to the past (Jeaniere 1994). English empiricist John Locke who set the basis of the perception of education of this modern view claims in his book, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, that human mind is a blank slate-tabula rasa, and that people do not have any information innate in the mind. Locke does not admit the existence of the

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*Address for correspondence:*

Gurkan Bayoglu

Okan University, Istanbul, 34959 Turkey

*Telephone: +90 0505 443 15 70*

*E-mail: gurkanbayoglu@gmail.com*

knowledge, which is acquired before the experiment (a-priori), instead, he mentions that while filling this blank slate up with the positive data from the outer world based on experiment and observation, families, teachers and the government have crucial tasks. So he placed a new God at the center of the education practices (Locke 1992).

In Modernist education practices, the teacher develops roles to facilitate the occurrence of the knowledge in the learning process and provides the transfer of the knowledge. In this teacher-centered education model, learning-oriented student is passive as the person who stores the information, s/he accepts the authority of the teacher who is the expert and surrenders in the process of the exploration of the knowledge to attain the right answers (Kilgore 2004). The teacher who defines the objectives and the methods of education is admitted as the source that gives the answers, leads the students and evaluates the learning processes in the class (Kilgore 2004; Tyler 1950). The success of the process is one-way, which depends on whether the teacher and the students fulfill their roles in the class or not (Kilgore 2004).

Understanding the nature of the knowledge, and the effort to disseminate it has been one of the fundamental problems of human beings during the history of thought. As an area of social sciences, education has made some effort in this regard, especially in the area of the dissemination of knowledge. Conventional education understanding, which is generally defined as the process of desiring behavioral changes of the individual is criticized, because of problems like the process of forming the student institutionally, degrading the relations to the hierarchical level and disabling by preventing students' imagination, creativity and freedom (Apple 2004; Illich 2006). As Shaull mentioned in Freire's book (2000) titled, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, "There is nothing named as impartial education process. Education is used either as a tool to make the integration of the young with the logic of the current system easy, or to become the 'practice of freedom', which means providing men and women that are willing to associate with the reality of critically and creatively exploring the styles of participation in the transformation of their world." Of course, at this point the question is, "who will define the features of desired behavioral style of the student and how will it

be done?" It should not be forgotten that the lifestyle of an individual is the result of his preferences. Thus, should the education process be a natural one, which is formed by the student's own preferences, and should s/he take part in it actively or should it be a process, which is formed by others?

The student in the learning process has been stereotyped according to the dominating values in the society, he has been made passive to the extent of becoming a part of the mechanical rote learning process, his ability to create has been weakened and he has been made into a container, which should be made full by the teacher in the name of the continuation of the social and political order during the history (Freire 2000; Althusser 2006). This model, which is named the banking education model by Freire, portrays the teacher as the teller and the student as the patient listener and as the object who is in charge of packing the material that is loaded. So, the relationship between the teacher and the student in the class is unilateral and in the form of narrations without reality. The students repeat and memorize the propositions, which are given to them by the teachers without realizing that they are very far away from meaningful reality and integrity (Freire 2000). Also, Giroux (1998) drew attention to the importance of discussing this role of the teacher in the class, while leaving the idea that knowledge is developed by only the teachers.

This education model, which assumes that others are absolute illiterate, presents the teacher as the mandatory opponent of the students, and condemns the student to being the object of learning process with the following characteristics. The teacher teaches and students learn, the teacher knows everything, students know nothing, the teacher considers, students are considered, the teacher talks, students listen in a well-behaved manner, the teacher provides the discipline, students are disciplined, the teacher does, students has the illusion of doing by the teacher's action, teachers confuse the authority of knowledge with their own professional authority and suggest this authority as the opposite to the students' freedom, and the teacher is the subject of the learning process, students are only the object (Freire 2000).

This content of the education moves away from its meaning of revealing students' latent

creativity, interest and ability and makes them observant of the outer world and others' values. On the other hand, the individual complies with the society by being formed according to the values determined by the dominant political and economic dynamics and by importance, he has been transformed into a creature that has some else's conscience in the schools, which are a part of social and political structure of the dominant society (McLaren 2011). Therefore, the individual gets away from himself and also his nature and becomes the person whom others want him to be.

Kuhn (2012) defines 'the paradigm' as, 'the whole of beliefs and values of a definite science community' in his book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in which he shows opposition to the classical science perception. Kuhn refutes the believe that science and knowledge proceed linearly by the way of articulation, instead of this, he emphasizes that it is a process of revolution in which the old theory is refused and the new theory is placed instead (Kuhn 1970). This change in the science image led to the change of the perception of the nature of knowledge and occurrence of new paradigms in educational area.

The concept of 'postmodernism' was used in "A Study of History" by Arnold Toynbee for the first time and it started to take the place of the modern paradigm in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, therefore it caused many changes in education as well as in philosophy, art, painting, literature, economy, culture, architecture and other areas (Huyssen 1984). Lyotard (1984) defined postmodernism as losing validity of the meta narrations and postmodern society as the society, which changes rapidly because of the progress in the computer, information, science and technology. With respect to Giddens (2013) postmodernism is generally used to describe the transition to a new and different social order in all aspects. Postmodern society, which rises on the freedom of individuals, gives the right to live to each culture and brings cultural pluralism to the fore. Feyerabend (1993) supports the idea that the keystone in science is freedom of individuals and at this point the truth has no common criteria and never will. Therefore, the individual's preference to know and their claims should not be limited. His definition of "anything goes" is one of the best concepts, which explain the structure of the postmodern society including indispensable notions of "difference"

and "pluralism". For Feyerabend, there is not just one description of knowledge and one method of giving information.

Postmodern education practices, which refuse the objectivity of knowledge and stable perception of the world, depend on structural approach (McLaren 1999; Slattery 2013). Knowledge is subjective to the world where chaos exists and where each individual structures knowledge by himself through his foreknowledge. In a postmodern class, as transfer of knowledge is a nostalgic dream, the authority and knowledge of the teacher, which is the center of the modernist education paradigm lost its power and died (Kilgore 2004). The idea that the individuals' own voices are important in defining their lives has been emphasized since the student is in the foreground (Kurt 2009), schools have been transformed into the educational environments where the students who are sensitive about equality and social justice are brought up in free classes and individualistic transformation, which is the driving force of the development is allowed to take place (McLaren 2011). Therefore, the teacher in the learning process has taken the role of a guide to reflect their interests, talents and abilities, which take place in the law of national education on the basis of the relationship depending on the trust they have (Neo and Neo 2006). Learning is a private phenomenon, which occurs as a result of liberal relationships between student and the teacher. Freire (2000) names this model of education as problem-posing education. In the light of all these, he suggests the following, that is, people develop the ability to understand the world they live and the style of existence in a critical way, they begin to grasp the world as not a stable reality but the reality in transformation and in progress, they assume that dialogue is a must to understand the reality, and they become inventive by participating in the critical and creative transformation.

There are doubts about the traditionalism, which was built on modernism, the perception of the world as a universal whole and the view that looks for the exact answers to the questions in today's world where the borders almost disappear and as a result of globalization the world becomes a village. In the postmodern discourse in which the cultures become free as much as they can, there is a pluralist soul, there is not just one truth, the subjectivity and localness of knowledge become first, it has to be

necessary to recount the story of education, which is one of the most important processes of human life.

There are no borders between the teacher and students, and the idea that the teacher is the only ruler in class and the only person who has the knowledge is unsettling. According to Freire (2000), both sides should be both, the teacher and students at the same time. The students who have been the object of the education so far have become the subject and they got rid of the passive-receptive position and took part in active learning process. Postmodern education understanding liberates the students, teachers and the principals in comparison with the modern education style's coerciveness. Furthermore, teachers and the administration just leaves a mark on the learning process, they enlighten the students and prepare liberal classes where they can discuss and get the ability of critical thinking to be able to understand the universe. For this reason, education should not be the process through which the student is shaped by the dominant idea but the tool that serves for the freedom of all the stakeholders. Also, the syllabus should be developed in the way that it supports this freedom. Critical pedagogy, which defends liberal education applications, frees stakeholders by eliminating the barriers between the teacher and students, and can be named as one of the movements, which will provide postmodern education understanding to reach the aim of turning the classes into liberal areas.

### **Problem Statement**

The following problem statement was addressed in the study, "*What is the level of educational administrators' perceptions about critical pedagogy?*"

### **Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this study is to define the educational administrators' perceptions on the principles of critical pedagogy, along with considering some demographic variables (gender, graduated school, branches and experience as an administrator). In the study, a variety of suggestions regarding critical pedagogy have also been introduced under the light of educational administrators' perceptions. The answers to the following questions are searched out in order to achieve this goal:

1. To what extent do educational administrators' perceptions about critical pedagogy differ in relation with gender variable?
2. Is there a difference between the educational administrators' perceptions about critical pedagogy in relation with their level of education?
3. Do the educational administrators' perceptions about critical pedagogy change in relation to their branches (social sciences, physical sciences, language or applied courses)?
4. To what extent do the educational administrators' perceptions about critical pedagogy differ in relation with their experience as an administrator?

### **Significance of the Research**

This study is thought to provide a snapshot of school administrators working in a neighborhood located in a cosmopolitan city. Also, further studies based on qualitative approaches could open new perspectives as to how demographics like gender and degree of education could contribute to the development of critical pedagogy in administrators. The findings of this study are expected to provide useful information that could be adopted and implemented by school administrators at schools.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Model**

This study examines the perceptions on critical pedagogy of the principals who work in the public schools in Beylikduzu in Istanbul and screening model is used in this study. Screening model is the research approach, which aims at describing a situation in the past or right now as it is. In this model the subject of the research is portrayed in its own conditions and as it exists. Relational screening model is the research model, which targets to define the covariance existence of or the level of covariance existence between two or more variables (Karasar 2014).

### **Study Group**

The study group of the research includes all of the educational administrators (principals and

vice-principals) who work at the state schools in Beylikduzu in the 2014-2015 academic year. The instrument was conducted on 204 educational administrators. The researcher contacted them and collected their data individually. Therefore, the response rate appeared to be high. The demographic information of the participants used in the research is in Table 1.

**Table 1: Percentages and ranges of the educational administrators in the study related to demographic variables**

<i>Educational administrators</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	51	25
Male	153	75
<i>Branch</i>		
Social sciences	21	10.29
Physical sciences	46	22.55
Applied courses	8	3.92
Language	34	16.67
Religion	12	5.88
Primary school teaching	83	40.69
<i>Degree of Education</i>		
Graduate	144	70.59
Master's degree	60	29.41
<i>Period of Management</i>		
1 -9 years	120	58.82
10-19 years	64	31.37
20 years and more	20	9.81

### Data Collection Tool

The data of the research was collected with the Principles of Critical Pedagogy Scale by (Yilmaz 2009). Scale consists of three subdimensions as "Education System", "Functions of the School" and "Liberating School". There are 15 items in "Education System", 11 items in "Functions of the School", and 5 items in "Liberating School". There are 31 items as Likert type questions in the survey and are answered as follows, that is, 1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Agree and 5: Strongly agree. Some items in the survey are coded adversely. The answers given by the participants can be both assessed according to subdimensions or total point can be obtained. The increase in the point that the participants get in the survey shows that the level of participation to the principles of critical pedagogy increases. When the point decreases, also the level decreases. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the total survey is .75. It is .88 for the subdimension of education system, .78 for the subdimension of functions of the education system. According to this, Cronbach Alpha form of reliability coefficient for the

whole survey is .71, .72 for the sub-dimension of education system, .71 for the sub-dimension of the functions of the school, and .61 for the sub-dimension of the liberating school.

### Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences 16). As a further analysis, percentage, frequency, arithmetic mean, t-test and ANOVA were used to interpret the data.

### FINDINGS

In this section, the participants' perceptions on critical pedagogy were evaluated first and then these perceptions were examined with regards to the demographic variables (gender, branch, degree of education, period of management branches).

Table 2 reveals finding concerning the problem statement, "What are the educational administrators' perceptions about critical pedagogy?" that was examined through arithmetic mean scores.

As can be seen in Table 2, participants' perceptions about the principles of critical pedagogy on the all subdimensions of "education system", "functions of the school" and "liberating school" are moderate. Educational administrators mentioned that they showed the behavior "sometimes" ( $\bar{X}=3.01$ ) within the subdimensions of "education system" and "functions of the school". This is followed by "liberating school" sub-division ( $\bar{X}=2.61$ ) that is shown at a lower level.

Participants agreed most on these two items related with the "Education System" subdimension, that is, "Schools are a means of social control" ( $\bar{X}=3.78$ ) and "The power relations in the society is effective on education" ( $\bar{X}=3.56$ ). Participants agreed least on these two items related with this sub-dimension, that is, "Schools are the places where the inequality is reproduced" ( $\bar{X}=2.21$ ) and "Schools reproduce poverty (social status)" ( $\bar{X}=2.24$ ).

Two items that the participants agreed most within the sub-dimension "Function of the schools" are, "The teacher should question himself when the students criticize him" ( $\bar{X}=4.32$ ) and "Schools should work for providing social justice" ( $\bar{X}=4.08$ ). Two items that the partici-

**Table 2: Mean points of the Items of educational administrators' perceptions about critical pedagogy**

<i>Educational Administrators' Perceptions about Critical Pedagogy</i>		$\bar{X}$	<i>S</i>	<i>Order</i>
<i>Education System</i>	Education is the source of an important inequality.	2.75	1.31	11
	Schools are the places where the current situation continues.	3.08	1.00	7
	Schools spoil the individual and the society.	2.36	1.12	12
	Schools reproduce poverty (social status).	2.24	1.10	13
	Schools are a means of social control.	3.78	1.01	1
	Schools are the places where the official ideology is transferred.	2.80	1.30	10
	Schools are the places where the type of person government desires is brought up.	3.00	1.18	9
	Schools are the places where the inequality is reproduced.	2.21	1.09	14
	Public schools can make a reform by themselves, improve but they cannot make basic structural changes.	3.43	1.11	4
	Public schools are supported by the dominant social structure and they work to support the structure in return.	3.16	0.93	6
	Conservative view is dominant in educational policies.	3.25	1.25	5
	Education system is becoming more liberal day by day.	3.08	1.02	7
	The power relations in the society are effective on education.	3.56	1.05	2
	Big companies try to be effective on education.	3.07	1.08	8
	The results of the central exams in the education system are not the indicators of the success of the students.	3.45	1.12	3
	Total	3.01	1.11	
	<i>Functions of the School</i>	Schools should work for providing social justice.	4.08	1.12
The teacher should question himself when the students criticize him.		4.32	0.90	1
Discipline is the indispensable part of the schools.		1.76	1.06	10
The only authority in class is the teacher.		3.04	1.29	5
A good student is the student who obeys the rules.		2.77	1.07	7
The information given in schools can be used in daily life.		2.29	1.04	8
Current education programs (syllabus) are sufficient.		3.78	0.93	3
It is acceptable to get tuition fee from the students.		3.04	1.40	5
The teacher and knowledge should be in the core in schools.		2.81	1.19	6
Schools are indispensable institutions.		1.95	1.11	9
The main purpose of the schools is the transfer of knowledge.		3.27	1.15	4
Total		3.01	1.11	
<i>Liberating School</i>		People should work very much to have a good position in society.	1.90	0.99
	Education is a must to have a good position in society.	1.78	1.00	4
	Schools should be the place where the students are liberated.	3.67	1.14	2
	The duty of the schools is preparing the students for the society.	1.73	0.86	5
	Teachers should share the authority and responsibilities in class with the students.	4.00	1.01	1
	Total	2.61	1.00	

pants agreed least within this subdimension are, "Schools are indispensable institutions" ( $\bar{X} = 1.95$ ) and "Discipline is the indispensable part of the schools" ( $\bar{X} = 1.76$ ).

Two items that the participants agreed most within the sub-dimension "Liberating School"

are "Teachers should share the authority and responsibilities in class with the students" ( $\bar{X} = 4.00$ ) and "Schools should be the place where the students are liberated" ( $\bar{X} = 3.67$ ). Two items that the participants agreed least within this subdimension are "Education is a must to

have a good position in society" ( $\bar{X}$  = 1.78) and "The duty of the schools is preparing the students for the society" ( $\bar{X}$  = 1.73).

In relation with the first research question, "To what extent do the educational administrators' perceptions about critical pedagogy differ in relation with gender variable?", it was examined through t-test scores. The results are given Table 3.

Considering the data in Table 3, it was determined that there is no significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ) between the gender groups according to perceptions of educational administrators on the principles of critical pedagogy within the subdimensions of "Education System" and "Liberating Schools". However, there is significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the gender groups according to perceptions of educational administrators on the principles of critical pedagogy within the subdimensions of "Functions of the Schools" and the total principles of critical pedagogy. For the female principals, "education system" ( $\bar{X}$  = 2.88), "functions of the schools" ( $\bar{X}$  = 2.91), "liberating schools" ( $\bar{X}$  = 2.57) subdimensions and total points of critical pedagogy ( $\bar{X}$  = 2.84) are significantly low in comparison with the male principals.

In relation with the second research question, "Is there a difference between the educational administrators' perceptions about critical pedagogy in relation with their level of educa-

tion?", it was examined through t-test scores. The results are given in Table 4. From the answer of the educational administrators who participated in the research to the Critical Pedagogy Scale in Table 4, it was determined that there is no significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ) between the degrees of education groups according to educational administrators' perceptions on the principles of critical pedagogy within the subdimension of "Liberating Schools". In other words, getting a bachelor's, master's or PhD degree of education does not change the educational administrators' perceptions on this subdimension of critical pedagogy. But there is significant difference in the "education system" subdimension ( $p < 0.05$ ), "functions of the school" subdimension ( $p < 0.05$ ) and total points of perceptions on critical pedagogy ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the educational administrators who had the degrees of bachelor's or masters. The educational administrators who had masters' degrees have more positive opinions on all the subdimensions and the total point of critical pedagogy.

In relation with the third research question, "Do the educational administrators' perceptions about critical pedagogy change in relations to their branches (social sciences, physical sciences, language or applied courses)?" it was examined through ANOVA. The branches that the educational administrators in Beylikduzu fulfill were varied. For this reason, they were classi-

**Table 3: Educational administrators' perceptions of critical pedagogy in relation with gender**

Points	Gender	n	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Education System	1. Female	51	2.88	0.49	204	1.14	0.25
	2. Male	153	2.98	0.51			
Functions of the Schools*	1. Female	51	2.91	0.42	204	2.48	0.01
	2. Male	153	3.09	0.46			
Liberating School	1. Female	51	2.57	0.46	204	0.74	0.45
	2. Male	153	2.63	0.50			
Critical Pedagogy* Total Points	1. Female	51	2.84	0.31	204	2.19	0.03
	2. Male	153	2.96	0.34			

**Table 4: Educational administrators' perceptions of critical pedagogy in relation with degree of education**

Points	Education	n	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Education System*	1. Graduate	144	2.89	0.47	204	2.84	0.00
	2. Masters	60	3.10	0.54			
Functions of the Schools*	1. Graduate	144	2.97	0.43	204	3.51	0.00
	2. Masters	60	3.21	0.47			
Liberating Schools	1. Graduate	144	2.59	0.49	204	1.06	0.28
	2. Masters	60	2.67	0.50			
Critical Pedagogy* Total Points	1. Graduate	144	2.87	0.31	204	4.04	0.00
	2. Masters	60	3.07	0.36			

fied under different groups to compare their perceptions on critical pedagogy. The branches that were categorized as social sciences (geography, philosophy, social sciences, history), physical sciences (physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, physical sciences), languages (foreign languages, Turkish, literature) and primary school teaching (school teaching, preschool teaching, school counseling). All these were examined and Table 5 reveals the ANOVA results, which compare according to the group they are in.

The perceptions of principals on critical pedagogy do not change according to the group of their branches within the education system, liberating schools subdimensions and the total point of critical pedagogy ( $p>0.05$ ). That is, the branch group that they are in does not differentiate their perceptions on these dimensions. However, according to Table 5, principals' viewpoints on critical pedagogy within the functions of the school subdimension ( $p<0.05$ ) change according to the branch group that they are in. The highest participation is shown by the principals who teach courses in the social sciences group, while the lowest participation is shown by the principals who teach in the applied courses group.

In relation with the fifth research question, "Do the educational administrators' perceptions about critical pedagogy change according to their period of management?" was examined. The periods of management of the principals were grouped as 1-9, 10-19 and 20 or more years. There is no significant difference ( $p>0.05$ ) between the periods of management according to perceptions of educational administrators on the principles of critical pedagogy within the subdimensions of "Education System", "Functions of the Schools", "Liberating Schools" and the total point of critical pedagogy ( $p>0.05$ ).

## DISCUSSION

This study was carried out to determine perceptions of the educational administrators work-

ing public schools in Beylikduzu about critical pedagogy. In the study, the native and foreign literature was scanned in a detailed way and the antecedents of the critical pedagogy and their relations with various concepts were explained in the surveys conducted and after that their organizational results were taken into consideration (Yildirim 2006; Inal 2010; Sarioglu 2011; Thomas 2011; Hurst 2013; Ozturk and Karabag 2013; Kesik 2014; Mamur 2014). In native literature perceptions of the primary school teachers, pre-service teachers on the critical pedagogy were examined (Yilmaz 2009; Yilmaz and Altinkurt 2011; Aslan 2014; Terzi et al. 2015). The study conducted by Terzi et al. (2015) to define the perceptions of pre-service teachers on critical pedagogy supports this study partially, the level of perceptions on critical pedagogy of the participants were moderate in "functions of the schools" and "education system" subdimensions, while they were low in "liberating school" subdimension. According to the study conducted on the students who are teacher candidates at the faculty of education, the perceptions of the participants on critical pedagogy were moderate. In this study, which supports this research, the teacher candidates participated most in "Liberating School", "Functions of the Schools" and "Education System" subdimensions, respectively (Yilmaz and Altinkurt 2011). In another study, participation levels of the primary school teachers to the principles of critical pedagogy were low (Yilmaz 2009). What is more, Aslan (2014) analyzed the effect of education philosophy courses on the views of teacher candidates of preschool teaching related with critical pedagogy in his study and determined that philosophy courses increased the teachers perceptions of critical pedagogy. Nevertheless, the fact that there was not a research about the perceptions of the school administrators on the critical pedagogy in the literature makes this study of more importance.

Giroux (2007) mentions that there is not a general definition of critical pedagogy, which is the antithesis of conventional education ap-

**Table 5: Educational administrators' perceptions of critical pedagogy in relation with their branches**

Points	Group of the branch	n	X	S	sd	F	p
<i>Functions of the Schools*</i>	1. Physical sciences	46	3.00	0.43	184	2.29	0.03
	2. Social sciences	21	3.07	0.48			
	1. Languages	34	3.06	0.47			
	2. School teaching	83	3.13	0.43			



proaches, and which is described as development of students' thinking abilities as a result of curiosity and questioning by Paulo Freire depends on critical thinking as the most advanced form of thinking. While Ennis (1985) defines critical thinking as logical and reflective thinking oriented towards what to do and what to believe, Paul (1984) describes it as the process of forming and evaluating individual's thinking. Critical thinking refuses to accept life as it is given and emphasizes that detailed examination of life is necessary, alternative readings can always be found, and different viewpoints and results can be attained by being purified of foreknowledge and obsessions. Critical thinking as an important part of creativity is the subject of two important disciplines, that is, philosophy and psychology (Akinoglu 2001; Gundogdu 2009). It has been thought that the most important reason for the perceptions of the principals in Beylikduzu on critical pedagogy being moderate is the philosophy and psychology courses like Educational Philosophy, Educational Psychology and Introduction to Educational Science during their university education and their vision of world. The topics of Educational Philosophy may affect the teacher candidates' philosophical understanding, world-view and their opinions about the education (Doganay 2011; Aslan 2014). Based on this result, in addition to the basic movements, theories, the processes of learning and development taught in the content of the courses in the faculties of education that the teacher candidates are brought up, it can be suggested that the teacher candidates should learn the norms of thinking, what qualities are necessary for neutral thinking, what thinking is and how it can be developed, the credits of these courses should be increased, and the courses like logic, critical thinking and human rights, which provide the students with alternative viewpoints in the process should be given.

When the participants' perceptions of critical pedagogy are analyzed according to the variables of their gender, educational status (graduate or masters) and their branches, it is seen that the principals' viewpoints differentiate significantly in some dimensions but there is no difference of their perceptions of critical pedagogy according to the period of management.

In this study, there is a significant relationship between the principals' gender groups and "functions of the schools" subdimension and

total points of critical pedagogy in favor of males, and there is no statistical difference between "education system" and "liberating school" subdimensions. Besides the results of studies, which show that there is no significant difference between the individuals' critical theory perceptions and genders (Yilmaz 2009), there are studies that support these results partially according to the gender (Yilmaz and Altinkurt 2011; Terzi et al. 2015). When a general evaluation is made about the results of these studies, it is obvious that there is not a common ground according to the gender. This research is based on a quantitative stance. Further quantitative studies could explore the ways in which gender shapes the perception of critical pedagogy.

Decision-making takes place in the heart of criticism, which is the base for critical theory (Ennis 1985; Biesta and Stamps 2001; Adorno 2006). There are a lot of studies defining gender as important or as not important in the process of decision-making in the literature (Sinangil 1993; Alver 2003; Gücray 2003; Bakan and Büyükbese 2005; Akbaba and Erenler 2011). Illic (1996) associates gender with the basis that other roles can be built on. It is an undeniable reality that gender groups have a restrictive effect on the individuals' actions, roles and preferences, in addition to having specific qualifications, women or men are affected by the factors such as culture, traditions and religion while fulfilling their roles in the society, they move away from their nature and get affected by the norms, labels, roles and prejudices in the social structure (Arslan 2003; Sever 2005). In spite of the effect of the traditional values on women, as a result of the increase in the level of education women have a voice in decision-making process (Ersoy 2009). Moreover, as a consequence of neo-liberal globalization in every field including education, the inequality between male and female works against women, and role of gender is seen as a reason for low productivity (Illich 1996), negative discrimination in terms of wages and sector about the women is blown, and the women are employed in the jobs that give low productivity and low wages (Senses 2004). Simon de Beavoir says, "You are not born as a woman, you become a woman" and mentions that the sort of an individual people will be as a woman is learned, it is not innate but it is cultivated later in life by one's choices. In the study, it was expected that the perceptions of the female princi-

pals would be higher than the male principals related with the critical pedagogy, which is an area of liberation and a stance against the neo-liberal global policies that the critical pedagogues define as the source of inequality.

According to the results, there was a statistically significant correlation between the variable of the managers' level of education and "school functions", the subdimensions of "education system", and critical pedagogy in favor of principals holding a graduate degree. However, there was no statistical difference between the subdimension of "liberating school" and the principals' education level. In the literature, the results of Yilmaz and Altinkurt's (2011) study do not provide support for this research. In this study, which compares students attending Faculties of Education and students attending a certificate program, there was a significant difference between critical pedagogy and all the subdimensions except for the subdimension of "school functions" in total points in favor of graduate level pre-service teachers. The researchers attribute this difference to that fact that the course content of certificate programs has been geared towards gaining teacher candidates who are graduates of Faculty of Science and Letters with formation education. Yilmaz's (2009) study on the primary school teachers' critical pedagogy perceptions, on the other hand, partially supports the results of this study in that it also revealed a statistically significant difference between the subdimension of "school functions" and critical pedagogy in total points in favor of teachers holding a master's degree. Recently, in the frequently changing regulations of principals' appointment, the level of education that the principals attain has been effective in the evaluation and appointment of school principals, and this in turn has positively affected the number of school principals in Beylikduzu district taking graduate level education.

When the researchers analyze whether there is difference in the levels of perceptions on the principles of critical pedagogy according to participants' branches, there is no significant difference in any of the sub-dimensions except the "functions of the schools". The highest participation is seen in school teaching branches while the lowest participation is seen in physical sciences branches in the "functions of the schools" sub-division. The study supports the results of the study by Yilmaz and Altinkurt (2011). How-

ever, there is not a significant difference between the participants' perceptions on critical pedagogy and the field of study in Terzi et al.'s (2015) research. This result may give the idea that teacher candidates' perceptions on critical pedagogy are partially affected by the field they study.

In the study, there is no significant relationship between any of the dimensions of the principles of critical pedagogy scale and the period of management. Yilmaz's study (2009) on the primary school teachers show that there is a difference between opinions of the teachers according to professional seniority in favor of the teachers who had less professional seniority. The reason for why there is not a difference according to period of management is thought to be that a large amount of the principals in the study group have more professional seniority even they have less managerial seniority. Because of the individuals' characteristics, ways of how they perceive the world and their points of view on education could become clearer during the studies, before they started to work or at the first years of working. This perception that the principals had at the first years of working does not change because of the feeling of learned helplessness related with the facts that in-service trainings are insufficient in quality and quantity, there is a lack of desire to develop themselves after a few years of working, most of the books that they studied during university education placed the student at the center of education, and the attempts made to change this situation failed. Because of this, it is difficult for the concepts like critical pedagogy, which is a new approach into the scholarship of education to change the perceptions of the principals who have less managerial seniority but more professional seniority in education.

## CONCLUSION

In this research, perceptions of the educational administrators' (principals and vice principals) about principles of critical pedagogy have been examined. This study is thought to be capable of bringing new insights into the scholarship of education. The data was collected from a developed neighborhood in Istanbul and the results of this study are expected to give unique contributions as an example. In the study, first of all, the principals' perceptions on principles of critical pedagogy were determined,

and then their perceptions were compared in relation with demographic variables (gender, education, branches and period of management). The participation level of the principals on the principles of critical pedagogy was moderate. The dimensions that the principals participated most are respectively "functions of the schools" and "education system", the dimension that they participated least was "liberating school".

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The native and foreign literature shows that researches related the principles of critical pedagogy are very low. Therefore, further studies on the principles of critical pedagogy could be developed on three pillars of education, that is, teachers, students and families. Especially thoughts of families about critical pedagogy should be identified and families should be made aware of critical pedagogy.

Data in this paper showed that perceptions of male principals about critical pedagogy were high. Based on this, it would be beneficial to analyze the reasons for why the female principals' perceptions are lower as they are disadvantaged in the educational area where the neo-liberal global educational policies are dominant.

The study brings out that the courses that the educational administrators take in the graduate programs such as leadership, organization psychology, group dynamics and strategically planning courses in which all the stakeholders of the school should take part in the education process have been given credit for positively affecting and changing the principals' perceptions of critical pedagogy. For this reason, it is absolutely important to open master's and doctorate programs whose content have been meticulously determined and to which school administrators on duty can attend and for the institutions to encourage the school principals to follow these programs.

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