School Principals' Views on Administration Work, Their "Frequent Turnover" and Its Effects on Their Work

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Abstract

School administrators' "frequent turnover" has been discussed intensively in the Turkish Educational System recently. Currently, principals are selected for 4 years after an interview conducted by a committee of directors of national education. After that period, they either go back to their classes or are chosen for another 4 years for the last time. This frequent turnover can be disruptive for schools. This study was conducted to determine school principals' views on administration work and this frequent turnover. The study employed a qualitative research design. The participants were 20 principals chosen with maximum sampling method. The data were analyzed with content analysis method. Results revealed that most principals consider administration work as a professional and career profession which requires expertise, leadership qualities and education in educational administration. They also evaluate the selection system as problematic and limiting their work period with 4 years prevents them from realizing long-term projects. Finally, they think that the system works with political considerations clearly.

Keywords

School, Administration, Principals, Work, Quality, Qualitative Research, Content Analysis

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School administrators' "frequent turnover" has been discussed intensively in the Turkish Educational System recently. Currently, principals are selected for 4 years after an interview conducted by a committee of directors of national education. After that period, they either go back to their classes or are chosen for another 4 years for the last time. This frequent turnover can be disruptive for schools. This study was conducted to determine school principals' views on administration work and this frequent turnover. The study employed a qualitative research design. The participants were 20 principals chosen with maximum sampling method. The data were analyzed with content analysis method. Results revealed that most principals consider administration work as a professional and career profession which requires expertise, leadership qualities and education in educational administration. They also evaluate the selection system as problematic and limiting their work period with 4 years prevents them from realizing long-term projects. Finally, they think that the system works with political considerations clearly. Keywords: School, Administration, Principals, Work, Quality, Qualitative Research, Content Analysis

As a school administrator, an educational leader promotes a significant influence on the effectiveness of their school and the achievement of their students. Effective principals understand the core purpose of schools and have the capacity to develop and shape a compelling vision that sets the direction for their school and guides their practice. They also support and monitor the learning and growth of effective teachers that fosters powerful teaching and learning for all students (Education & Training, 2016; Fullan, 2003). In addition to being the leader of a school, the principal is also expected to be a visionary and an innovator who predicts the educational challenges of the future and creates innovative ways to meet them (Apple, 2005; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Hall, 2005; Kaljunen, 2011; Rinne, Järvinen, Tikkanen, & Aro, 2015; Thomson, 2001).

The process of their selection and employment has been discussed heavily in many countries as well as in Turkey. Research suggests that some practices are implemented to select the best candidate. Among all the selection approaches, interviews are the most widely one, which consist of obtaining more information about a candidate from their responses to pre-established questions (Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick, 2008; Lin, 2013). For a more effective and accurate interview, the interviewers who are selected for the panel should represent demographic diversity to minimize unwanted bias. Another way is to use interview panels, which develop multiple dimensions for each interview question can help maintain the validity level (Ployhart, Schneider, & Schmitt, 2006). A further selection method is competency-based selection system, which is based on candidates' performance. It is relatively used rarely in education (Steiner & Hassel, 2011). Anderson (1988) claims that an applicant's level and range of competency can help determine an applicant's level and range of competency. Their technical leadership, human leadership ability, educational leadership, symbolic leadership, cultural leadership and community criterion qualities may help their performance while administering a school (Education & Training, 2016).

In addition to traditional requirements, Amy (1988) proposes that personal qualities must also be given consideration while selecting principals. As to this, they should be determined, creative, and enthusiastic-willing and able to confront problems and seek out opportunities to inspire their school communities toward beneficial change. Anderson (1988) also suggests a full-time internship (six months to one year) as an assistant principal before becoming real-life administrative situations. Long-term internships also enable both parties in the selection process to make a more informed decision. In the selection process, a trained, diverse team should consider information gathered from many sources and ask every candidate "the same, predetermined, and well-thought-out questions. In this regard, it would also be beneficial to broaden the search committee to include parents, teachers, students, and community members, and circulating surveys for input on desirable principal traits. This gives a sense of participation in the selection of a new principal. NASSP (2016) recommends that principals should engage in activities designed to simulate typical school situations. These exercises include leaderless groups, fact-finding, stress tests, and personal interviews. Since they practice a very important role at their schools, selecting and employing a new principal can significantly affect the vitality and student achievement rates of a school (Clifford, 2010). Therefore, choosing an effective school principal is one of the most important decisions that the ministry or school board can make (Elmore & Burney, 2000). However, research shows that many principals leave their posts after less than five years, which creates a lot of problems for educational system.

Administrators' Turnover

For more than three decades, in the field of educational administration there has been intensifying interest in the problem of educational change (Fullan, 2003). Hargreaves and Goodson (2006) indicate that most mainstream educational change theory and practice in the field of educational administration neglects the political, historical, and longitudinal aspects of change to their detriment. The effects of recent neoliberal policy changes on the teaching profession have been much researched and discussed, also in regard to the future of teaching as well as the global re-regulation of teachers work (Hargreaves, 2013; Rinne & Ozga, 2013; Seddon, Ozga, & Levin, 2013). The neo-liberal model search policy in educational sector affects school administrators working conditions. The governments frequently change the system, which affects their work quality directly.

Awokoya (1983) feels educational policy is directed towards increasing the quality of life of people. Okoroma (2002) states that the frequent changes have actually created more problems than solutions to school administrators, particularly the frequent transfer of teachers and principals. Like teachers, principals become more effective with experience especially in their first three years (Clark, Martorell, & Rockoff, 2009). Furthermore, no matter how effective a principal was at his or her previous school, when he or she transfers to a new school it takes approximately five years to fully stabilize and improve the teaching staff as well as fully implement policies and practices to positively impact the school's performance (Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). As principals become more experienced, those who stay at a school longer tend to run schools easier. Nettles and Herrington (2007) state that principals who consistently communicate expectations for high performance, demonstrate that this constant expression of their philosophy is linked step for step to positive results in school and student achievement. Although more challenging schools have greater principal turnover, the most effective principals have longer tenures than ineffective principals (Beteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012; Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2012; Miller, 2009; Seashore-Louis et al., 2010).

Leaders' effect on students contributes to 25 percent of the total school influences on student academic performance (Cleef, 2015; Jensen, 2014; Leithwood, Louis-Seashore, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). As a result of principal turnover, students achieve less and schools that experience principal turnover year-after-year realize serious cumulative negative effects on students (Beteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012; Miller, 2009). Despite the expensive investment in principal preparation, selection, and transition, a study conducted by Fuller and Young (2009) found that just over 50 percent of newly hired principals stay for three years and less than 30 percent stay beyond year. In some countries, like America, there is a very high rate of leadership turnover, ranging from 15 to 30 percent each year (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2012). Principal turnover affects student achievement and research suggests that high rates of principal "turnover" would be disruptive to a school community-especially when they are strong instructional leaders. While highly effective principals create significant changes each year, it takes an average of five years to put a mobilizing vision in place, improve the teaching staff, and fully implement policies and practices that positively impact the school's performance (Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010). For this reason, the main purpose of the current research is to analyze school principals' views on administration work and their "frequent turnover" as a result of the current principal selection and appointment law. As this is considered one of the basic problems of the Turkish Educational Management system, the possible results of this study may shed a light on the solution to the problem.

Method

The primary goal of the study was to explore school principals' views on the work of administration and their frequent turnover and its effects on their work. To achieve this goal, we employed a qualitative research design. These kinds of researches provide in-depth knowledge about a topic (Creswell, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). By using the procedures of qualitative research, we also intended to describe, analyze, and interpret the group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time." As such, by using this research design and utilizing in-depth interviews, the study discovered "culture-sharing" behaviors, beliefs, and language among school principals in Turkey.

Working Group

The participants of this study were 20 school principals from different schools in the 2015/2016 academic year in Turkey. We determined the participants with maximum variation sampling method. When using a maximum variation sampling method, the researcher selects a small number of units or cases that maximize the diversity relevant to the research question. The idea behind this method is to look at a subject from all available angles, thereby achieving a greater understanding. We also know this sampling method as "Heterogeneous Sampling." It involves selecting candidates across a broad spectrum relating to the topic of study. This type of sampling is useful when you cannot take a random sample, for instance, if the sample pool is too small (Bailey, 1994). We present the participants' demographics in the table below:

Table 1.1 The principals' demographics

Age	n	Gender	n	Total Administrative Experience	n	Administrative Experience At This School	n	Education	n
25-35	2	**Male**	11	**1-5 years**	9	**1-5 years**	18	**Graduate**	17
36-46	9	**Female**	9	**6-10 years**	4	**6-10 years**	1	**Masters**	3
47-57	7			**11-15 years**	5	**11-15 years**		**PhD**	
58+	2			**16-20 years**		**16-20 years**	1		
				21 +	2	**21 +**			
Total	20		20		20		20		20

As we can see above, most principals are young. As far as we consider their experience, most principals (n=9) have between 1-5 years' administrative experience in total, and similarly most of them have little experience at their current schools (n=18). When we consider the participants' education, while most principals (n=17) have graduate degrees, only few of them (n=3) have master's degree in educational administration.

Data Collection and Analysis

We collected the data by using the "repertory grid" technique. This technique is a constructed interview method. In this method, we can characterize a semi-structured interview. During this interview, the respondent confronted with a triad of elements and then asked to specify some important ways in which two of the elements are alike and, thereby, different from the third (Bailey, 1994; Kerkhof, 2006). We gathered school principals' opinions through interviews with semi-structured questions. We preferred this method as the subjects could express their opinions and thoughts freely around particular topics. In this study, we collected the data by using the following procedure. First, we informed the principals with an e-mail about the purpose of the study, and we asked them if they could participate in this research voluntarily. We consented the participants who accepted to take part in the research about the confidentiality of the data we obtained from them. We promised the participants that we would keep their identities and their names in secret and we would not mention them in any part of the study or share with anyone else. Second, we planned an interview on an agreed-upon day with those who accepted the invitation, and we visited them on that date. We both recorded and noted the interview with their permission and each interview took approximately 25-35 minutes. In order to fulfill the purpose of this research, we raised the following semi-structured questions:

1. *What can you tell us about the work of school management? Is managing a school a work or a duty that can be conducted by anyone?*
2. *How do you evaluate the current principal selection and appointment process? How would you like it to be?*

3. *What is your opinion on limiting school administrators' appointment time of period for 4 years?*
4. *How does the possibility of leaving the office after 4 years affect your work?*
5. *How are the administrators appointed to their posts? With political concerns or qualification?*
6. *Does the current situation create stress on your work quality? How?*

We analyzed the data with the "content analysis" technique which usually aims to analyze similar data on a topic and comment on it (Mayring, 2000). In the first step in the data analysis process was the data organization procedures as Bogdan and Biklen (1998) recommended. In organizing the data, the researcher revisited each interviewer and listened to each audiotape while reviewing the transcripts to ensure the accuracy of the data. We analyzed each principal's interview transcript later according to the data analysis procedures as Bogdan and Biklen (1998) described. They call it as for the development of coding categories, mechanical sorting of the data, and analysis of the data within each coding category. In this respect, we coded each participant's interview separately according to the principal's views on the administration work and their "frequent turnover" as a result of the changing school administrators' selection and appointment rules and regulation. The government released it in 2014 in Turkey. We grouped emerging themes and, later on repeated themes among the interviews into coding categories. We did it in three steps: category definition, exemplification, and codification regulation. First, we separated the answers to each question into meaningful categories, named, and coded. These are *school principals' views on the definition of the work of school administration, the current way of school principal selection and appointment, limiting their work period with four years and selecting principals with political considerations or competence-based criteria.* In the second step, we brought the conceptualized statements together. In the third step, we intended to avoid repetition. In the last phase, we explained the identified results and related to each other. We also intended to build a cause-and-effect relationship among the separate parts. In this sense, we coded the principals' views as P1, P2, P3, and P4…

We used the constant comparative approaching the process of organizing and analyzing the data. The use of the constant comparative method results in the saturation of categories and the emergence of theory. Theory emerges through continual analysis and doubling back for more data collection and coding (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Glaser, 1992). In this method, we collected each set of data (*interview transcripts*) collected and reviewed them in search of key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data that became categories of focus. We reviewed the data for each participant multiple times for confirmatory and contradictory statements until we organized the data into satisfactory categories and sub-codes to address the research question.

Trustworthiness and Rigor

Here, the interviewer played the role of facilitator and listener by simply asking questions and recording the answers without leading them. Six field experts reviewed the questions to ensure content validity and then we developed the latest forms of the questions with these experts' suggestions. In addition, the participants were content enough with the confidentiality of the research to get in-depth answers without any hesitation. We chose the locations to avoid by power relations. Therefore, we conducted the interviews somewhere out of the schools. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the study some precutions were taken. First, while preparing the interview form, the related literature was examined to create a contextual frame in order to increase the internal validity of the research. Second, the

participants were able to express their opinions freely and sincerely since we guarenteed to kep their identities secret. Moreover, we explained the research process clearly in order to increase external validity. We also described the design of the research, study group, data collection process, analysis and interpretation of the data in detail. We wrote and recorded all of the data without any interpretation to ensure internal reliability. In addition, another faculty who has experience on qualitative research coded the information obtained from interviews. We compared this code with and calculated the consistency. The consistency rate was 94% (Miles & Huberman, 1994). We explained the research process clearly in order to increase external reliability. We also preserved thhe raw data and coded data to welcome other resarchers to examine them.

There are several limitations of this research in terms of transferability to the population. First, the sample was one of volunteers. These individuals are not necessarily representative of other academics within other school types. Therefore, the results are limited to this group of academics and caution should be exercised when attempting to infer about any of the results with regard to other populations. Secondly, the researcher was the main instrument of data analysis. The analyses and results are a product of the researcher's interpretation of the data. The study is the product of the researcher's perspective, and it is recognized that a different researcher may identify different features of importance within the same data sets (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2002). Finally, although the researcher tried to look for equal gender representation, it was impossible because of the high willingness of male academics.

Results

This study purposes to determine school principals' views on administration work and frequent turnover as a result of the current law. According to that law, school principals are selected and appointed to their posts for a limited time (4 years). If they would like to go on their career, they are interviewed and may be appointed to their posts or they are sent to their classrooms as teachers. In both cases, they cannot stay in their offices more than 8 years. After that time they go back to their classes. Although they have deep experience in school administration, they are obliged to end their career as a school principal and new principals take over the control. The experience in school administration is ignored and it causes a great turnover among school administrators in Turkey, which is the basic concern of this research. The current situation shows that the work of school administration does not require any experience, educational background and anyone who is a teacher can carry out that work. Through this study, we purposed to determine how they feel and evaluate the new school administration selection and appointment system. In this part, we introduce some findings which were obtained from school principals. In this part of the research, these findings are given below each main theme:

1.   **School Principals' Views on the definition of the work of school administration**

Table 2. *Views on the definition of the work of school administration*

Main Theme	Sub Theme	F	%
Definition of the Work of School Administration	A Career Profession	2	10
	Requires Leadership Qualities and Education	6	30
	Requires Experience	8	40
	A Duty	2	10
	A work everybody can do	2	10
Total		**20**	**100**

A 36-year-old young and inexperienced principal states,

> The work of administration is the most important thing at a school. If a school is administered successfully, it reaches its aims easier. Therefore, the administration work is a profession that everybody cannot perform successfully. It requires patience and an administrator should have good decision making techniques. The current situation disturbs us and affects our work quality badly. (P1)

Another 49-year-old experienced principal also claims, "The work of administration is a professional occupation, not an ordinary work that anybody can do. For this reason, they should be chosen among the qualified ones (P2)."

An inexperienced school principal claims,

> I do not think it is a profession and also a work that everybody can perform as well. A person who is selfish and has poor communicative and language skills cannot carry out this work. A person who also cannot control his anger and behave fairly to everybody at school cannot do administrative post. This profession can be difficult for these kinds of people. (P5)

A 61-year-old experienced principal states, "It is a duty, but everybody cannot do it. It requires leadership qualities. While choosing administrators, their leadership qualities should be tested" (P7).

A young inexperienced principal says, "It is a professional work and it requires self-sacrifice. We spend too much time at school and sometimes we neglect our private lives. Everybody cannot be an administrator. They should be chosen with care (P9)."

Another experienced woman principal underlines, "It is not a profession. Anyone who desires cannot perform it, and in fact they should not do it as well (P10)." A fifty-year-old inexperienced principal says, "It is a profession and those who want to be an administrator should have education in educational administration (P11)." A sixty-year-old experienced school principal says, "An administrator should have leadership qualities. It also requires expertise in educational administration. They should be connective and fair among all staff (P13)."

A young 1-year-experienced school principal says, "It is neither a profession nor a work that everybody can do. It is a talent brought by birth. It cannot be acquired with education and experience (P3)." A principal with 16 years school experience states, "The work of school administration is a career profession. It can be implemented with love and care. When you have positive feedback about your work, it makes you really happy (P4)." Another experienced school administrator emphasizes, "It is neither a profession, nor a work that anybody can do. It is a talent and requires ability to perform (P12)." As seen above, most participants accept the work of school administration as a professional and career work. They consider administration as a work which requires experience, expertise, leadership qualities and education in educational administration. School principals are not happy with the new situation and they are disturbed because their experience will be ignored and sent to their classes 4 or at most 8 years later.

School Principals' Views on the Current Way of School Principal Selection and Appointment

Table 3. *Views on the Current Way of School Principal Selection and Appointment*

Main Theme	Sub Theme	f	%
Current Way of School Principal Selection and Appointment	Right and Fair	3	15
	Problematic	7	35
	Requires Objective Criteria	7	35
	Experience is favored	2	10
	Competence in Administration is preferred	1	5
Total		**20**	**100**

According to the new law and regulation, school principals are selected with an interview among teachers for 4 years. If they would like to stay in their offices for 4 more years, they go into another interview. It is heavily criticized that the candidates' personal qualities and professional qualifications are not asked through these interviews. Instead, their membership to a trade-union and some political concerns dominate these interviews. As a result of this interview, they either stay in their offices for another four years or they are sent back to their classes as teachers. In both cases, are sure that their experience, expertise, education and leadership qualities will be ignored after 8 years. It is not a desired situation, because they feel restless in their offices. Principals have differentiating views.

In this regard, a young inexperienced school principal states, "I find the current principal selection and appointment system right and fair (P1)." An inexperienced woman principal claims, "Every teacher who has suitable criteria should do this work. By doing this, there should be milder relations between administrators and teachers as they can understand each other better (P5)." A fifty-year-old inexperienced woman principal phrases, "The selection system is right but then appointments should be done after an education in educational administration. Moreover, while appointing principals, talent, hard work and competence should be prioritized instead of scores taken from interviews (P11)."

A fifty-year-old experienced principal underlines, "The current principal selection system has some deficiencies. This could be better with a more objective and competence-based selection system. In this way, the school can be administered more professionally (P2)." A young inexperienced principal emphasizes,

> It is not a fair system to appoint everyone as a school principal. I am inexperienced in school administration. Although I like being a principal at the age of 35 years old, I think more experienced and educated ones should be at these posts (P3).

An experienced 46-year-old principal states,

> There should be interview at first, but for renewing one's contract there should be a performance-based evaluation system. Those who perform well should continue to their posts. Having an interview in every four year is not good. A committee who have never been to your school decides to renew your contract, which is not fair (P4).

A young principal says,

Limiting the time with four years prevents principals from feeling of belonging to a certain institution. Instead of the current way, there should be a system based on a long term evaluation and supervision. It can be better for the schools (P6).

A 61-year-old experienced principal underlines,

I'm not happy with the current system. It is not correct. Selecting and appointing principals with this kind of system makes principals chase after political connections from the political party which is in power to be appointed or renew their contracts one term more. They become principals of a political party instead of state principals. This system must change completely and competence in educational administration must be prioritized (P7).

Another experienced principal states, "I do not like the current system. It should be system based on objective criteria." If you are a member of x trade union, you are directly chosen as a principal (P8). An inexperienced woman principal expresses,

I do not find it right. In order for teachers to be principals, they should have at least 10 years' experience as a teacher. In addition to this, principals should be chosen and appointed among assistant principals. As experience in administration is important, those who do not have experience in school administration should not be chosen as a school principal. Once they are appointed, they should also have a right to choose their own assistant principals (P9).

An experienced woman principal figures,

The current system is not correct. Those who chose this profession as a career are made redundant after four years. They should be chosen according to their qualities in administration post and when they are evaluates as ineffective they should quit the work themselves (P10).

An experienced school principal presents, "I do not find the current principal selection and appointment way right. The principals should not change very often and they should choose their own assistants (P12)." A sixty-year-old school principal reflects,

I do not like the current system. Selecting principals with an interview is not objective. There should be written exam as well. There should be more and certain criteria. They can be evaluated by parents, students and teachers for renewing their next term. Limiting their work period with 4 years is not good. It should be at least 10 years (P13).

As can be seen except for few ones, most principals find the current system problematic. Most principals complain about the selection system as the so-called interviews are biased. The interviews do not question the qualities and qualifications of the candidates. They are formed legalize an unethical way of principal selection. During the interviews, it is claimed that the candidates' political views and religious beliefs were tested. In the current system, those who do not have a single day administrative experience can become a principal a school. They learn the profession there by trial-and-error method. Instead, they advise that the principals should

be chosen with a competence-based system and there should be objective criteria for all the candidates. The current system makes principals feel that they are principals of a political party which is in power. They know that if they have good relations with the political party in power, they can be chosen as a principal and their second term can automatically be renewed for the second term

2.   *School Principals' Views on Limiting Their Work Period With Four Years*

Table 4. *Views on Limiting Their Work Period with Four Years*

Main Theme	Sub Theme	f	%
Limiting The Principals' Work Period With Four Years	Limiting it with one term (4 years) is right	7	35
	Should be two terms (4yrs+4yrs=8yrs)	1	5
	Should be more than 10 years	3	15
	Limiting it prevents from long-term plans	4	20
	Limiting it causes stress	5	25
Total		**20**	**100**

The work of school administration is critical as there are high expectations both from parents and society. They are supposed to meet increasing expectations in consistent with school purposes. Therefore, they need to balance the pressures that come from the society and people in the school society. In order to meet all these challenges, school principals should be prepared well, selected and appointed to their posts with a great care. Their experience may also contribute to their daily managerial routines as well as handling with the changing conditions. In the early stages, it is considered that they learn the nature of administration work and year by year their managerial repertoire expands. Their accumulating experience may contribute to the work quality at schools. For this reason, while they are selected, their contracts are renewed, this experience should not be ignored. However, the current situation ignores their experience, and their office time is limited with 4 years or if they are selected for the second term for another 4 years. In both cases they go back to their classes leaving their offices to inexperienced ones. In this regard, some inexperienced principals express, "we find limiting our work period with four years right. It is enough for a principal to show himself and make correct decisions" (P1 also P3-P6-P17-P19). An experienced principal underlines, "The current system (4+4=8) is right. But the second term should be a performance-based system instead of an interview (P4)." Another inexperienced principal says, "It is enough for a principal do what you want as a principal. When you go back to teaching post, you may not lose your teaching abilities (P5)."

An inexperienced principal presents, "It is not suitable limiting for those who carry out their work successfully. However, it should be limited for ineffective principals (P11)." An experienced principal says, "Limiting the period with 4 years discourages me (P2)." Another experienced 61-year-old principal emphasizes, "It is totally wrong. Limiting their work time with 4 years prevents taking risks and responsibility. Imagine a principal thinks being evaluated by teacher, parents and senior management cannot work freely (P7)." An inexperienced woman principal presents, "Limiting the work with four years prevents their future work. By considering four years later, they cannot concentrate on their work. It is also problematic for school culture" (P9_P10). An inexperienced principal states, "I do not think it is right. It is not possible to see the students' success enrolled during your period. It should not be limited. It should be at least 10 years" (P12-P13). A 54-year-old woman principal presents, "The time is too short to see what we have done so far. For institutional process, it is not correct. There should not be a limit in an administrative work. It is a source of stress" (P14 also P15-P16).

As can be seen above, while some principals (n=7) find limiting their work period with four years right and enough, a great number of principals find it quite problematic for many reasons. First, they claim that the time limit prevents them doing some projects. They start a project and leave the school without seeing what has happened. Second, they evaluate that this current selection and appointment method affects school culture in a negative way. Principals are culture-builders at the same time. They state that as a principal, they try to build a good school culture, work hard to provide peace at work, you are fired and all your efforts end. Another issue is that limiting principals' office time with 4 years creates a stress on their work. Principals cannot take risks to start a new work in order not to make any mistake, which is another stress factor.

School Principals' Views on Selecting Principals with Political Considerations or Competence-Based Criteria

Table 5. *Views on Selecting Principals with Political Considerations or Competence-Based*

Criteria

Main Theme	Sub Theme	f	%
Selecting Principals With Political Considerations or competence-Based Criteria	Totally with political considerations	12	60
	Competence-based selection	8	40
Total		**20**	**100**

The work of school administration requires some personal qualities and professional qualifications. Personally, they should be self-sacrificing, patient, friendly, patient, reasonable, problem-solver and a listener. They should also have some professional qualifications. As they are the decision-makers on school policies, curricula and faculty, they must have an advanced degree, like Master of Science or Doctor of Education in Educational Administration as well as experience. They may also be required to hold licenses in teaching and education administration. However, it is claimed that with their qualifications are ignored with the current system as well as their experience. It is claimed that having political connections is enough in order to be a principal in Turkey instead of personal qualities, administrative experience and professional qualifications.

In this frame, some inexperienced principals figure, "Selecting principals with the current way works on both political considerations and competence-based issues" (P1-P6-P18). Some other principals also comment, "The system works with competence based on competence criteria" (P12-P16-P17). A principal states, "The system works with competence based criteria, but sometimes political considerations become more important" (P15). A 10-year-experienced principal says, "As there are few competent administrators in Turkey, professional administrators should be imported" (P9).

However, some experienced principals state, "The current system works with political considerations. Those who have political connections are selected as principals and teachers' trade union is active in this regard" (P2-P3-P13). A 20-year-experienced principal emphasizes, "The system works completely with political considerations" (P4). Another experienced principal states, "The current system works with political considerations. Competence is rarely taken into consideration these days. Our experience is not taken seriously and 4 years later you

are nothing" (P7). An inexperienced woman principal says, "The system basically woks on political considerations, but sometimes works on competence-based system" (P5). Two experienced principals present,

> It is completely political. The system works with the political considerations of ruling party. However, education is universal and scientific. It should not work based on any views of any political party. It affects all principals' work quality because an incompetent principal may not contribute to educational facilities at school (P10-P14).

As seen above, while some participants (n=8) consider that the system works fine, most principals think that the system works with political considerations and principals are selected depending on their political views ignoring professional qualifications, personal qualities and experience. They also comment that this situation affects their work quality. They evaluate that inefficient principals cause failure at schools because they are not competent and educated in educational administration.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to determine school principals' views on the work of school administration and the frequent turnover faced in the work. Results reveal that most principals accepted school administration as a professional and career work. They consider administration as a work which requires expertise, leadership qualities and education in the field of educational administration. They also think that the work of administration is the most important element at a school system. If a school is administered successfully, it may reaches its aims easier. They also add that the work requires some personal qualities such as self-sacrifice, patience and reason as they work with people both in the school community and the society in which they operate. The work also requires self-sacrifice as they spend too much time at school which may be resulted in neglecting their private lives. For this reason, anyone who wishes cannot be an administrator. Furthermore, they should also be connective and fair among all staff in order to provide peace and a good school culture at school. Moreover, they should also have professional qualifications such as leadership skills, experience and expertise in the field. Therefore, an administrator should have good leadership qualities and decision making techniques. The administrators who are selfish and have poor communicative and language skills cannot carry out this work effectively. For this reason, they should be chosen among the most qualified and educated ones. As the work requires leadership qualities, while choosing administrators, their leadership qualities should be tested with a number of interviews and case implementations. Once they are selected, they can be appointed as a vice-principal to experience the work for some time and then they can start their work. Another result shows that except for few ones, most principals find the current principal selection and appointment system in Turkey problematic for some reasons. For one thing, the participants consider that the interviews are not fair and well-structured, which causes subjective criteria. They advise that principals should be chosen with a competence-based system, objective and measurable criteria. The Turkish educational structure is capable of developing such a system. The current system makes principals feel that they are principals of a political party which is in power. They have a feeling that if they have good relations with the ruling political party, they can be chosen for an administrative post easily or their second term contracts are renewed accordingly.

Another problem is that in the current system, candidates who do not have a single day administrative experience can become a principal of a school. It is claimed that the inexperienced administrators learn the profession at schools by trial-and-error method, which

is another problem. Schools are professional learning communities and their leaders should have administrative experience, professional qualifications, expertise and personal qualities that fit the job. They are not the places for inexperienced ones to learn the work of administration. However, some principals think that any teacher who is at the system can do an administrative post without considering their leadership qualities and experience Therefore, they find the current system right. They assess that, there can be milder relations between administrators and teachers as they can understand each other better. They also think that while appointing principals, talent, hard work and competence should be prioritized instead of scores taken from interviews, which is a contradiction. Similar results were obtained by Memişoğlu (2016), Yolcu and Bayram (2015), Demir and Dilber (2015). They found that the current selection process was problematic as it did not have objective criteria. However, in another research Güçlü, Şahin, Yavuz Tabak and Sönmez (2016) found the system objective and democratic as some stakeholders took part in administrative selection and appointment process. In their research, Gülşen and Dayıoğlu (2015) found that school administrators hope to face objective criteria while selecting them. Onğun (2016) also found that school administrators were not trained before they were assigned. Their views about school administrators show that administrators should be selected among teachers with a central exam. The school administrators' performance should be tested in terms of their personality characteristics, communication skills, technical competence, and leadership qualities. A further result shows that while some principals (n=7) find limiting their work period with four years right and enough, a great number of principals find it quite problematic for many reasons. First, they claim that limiting their office time with 4 years prevents them from implementing some projects. They may not take any risks as their office time is limited. Moreover, they also consider that the current principal selection system affects school culture in a negative way, they claim that principals are culture-builders and they try to build a good school culture, work hard to provide peace at work. They do not try to do this because they know that they will be fired and their efforts will be useless. Furthermore, the current system also creates a stress on their work. They evaluate that even if they perform well, their efforts may not be seen objectively. Therefore, instead of performing well, they try to find some connections to help them in the interview. During the interview processes, some political considerations may be prioritized instead of scientific criteria. It is claimed that the second term should be a performance-based system instead of an interview. It should be longer, at least 10 years. For an institutional process, it is not correct. There should not be a limit in an administrative work. It is a source of stress. However, it should be limited for ineffective principals. In short, they think that 4-year office time is not enough to evaluate a principal. Therefore, limiting their office time for 4 years is not good for the school system. Memişoğlu (2016), Demir and Dilber (2015) also discovered that the period was too short and it should be longer. They also found that master's education in educational administration was ignored while selecting the principals. Seashore-Louis et al. (2010) state that it takes approximately five years to put a teaching staff in place as well as fully implementing policies and practices that will positively impact the school's performance. Therefore, limiting their office time with 4 years is not feasible. Research is quite clear that new principals become more effective as they gain experience (Beteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2011; Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2012; Clark, Martorell, & Rockoff, 2009; Coelli & Green, 2011; Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). According to the final result, some participants (n=8) consider that the current principal selection system works fine and they are selected by considering their competence in school administration. However, most principals think that the system works with political considerations and it affects the principals' work quality in a negative way. They also add that the current system must be changed. They state that in the principal selection process, competence in educational administration must be in the center. In addition to that, the participants also evaluate that when

inefficient principals are employed at schools, they will cause failure at schools, because they are not competent and educated in the field educational administration. The principals claim that education is universal and scientific. It should not work based on any views of any political party. It affects all principals' wok quality because an incompetent principal may not contribute to educational facilities at school. In conclusion, as stated before by Çelik (2002) and Şişman and Turan (2002) selecting, training and appointment process of educational administrators has not settled in a scientific and standardized form in Turkish educational management system yet. As also discovered by Memişoğlu (2016) limiting school principals office term with 4 years in not a desired thing for establishing school culture and maintaining it. In this regard, they usually spend one year to recognize the environment, and the last year with worries about staying in his office one more term. This shows that school administration work has not been considered as a career profession in Turkey yet. Rather, they are employed for some time as principals and then they are sent back to their classrooms leaving their offices usually more inexperienced ones which is not ideal for any system. The recommendations reached through this study are below:

- School administration is still accepted as a work that everybody can do, which is not always right. It should be accepted as a professional work which requires education, competence and experience.
- Principals are selected after an interview which is found subjective. They should be chosen with clear objective and performance-based criteria considering their experience and education as well.
- Once principals are appointed, they work for four years. It is understood that limiting their office term with 4 years is a source of stress for them and also not enough to build a school culture. Therefore, they should stay longer as long as they are successful in their posts.

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