

# The views of physical education teachers on the management approaches of the school principals

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to investigate the views of physical education teachers on the management approaches of the school principals. The research was conducted using the phenomenological design, which is used in the qualitative research methods. The respondents for the study group in the research comprised 17 physical education teachers who were randomly selected and working in state schools in Kayseri province during 2019-2020 academic year. The interview method was used in the research. In this method, the interview form was used as the data collection tool which comprises three sets of questions. The research data were analyzed through the content analysis method. Based on the results of the research, it was discovered that the physical education teachers in the study group considered that the school principals generally have an autocratic management approach. The physical education teachers in the study group reported that they were influenced by this approach of the school principals mostly in a negative way. Moreover, the physical education teachers in the study group suggested that the views of teachers should be sought by the school managements more in order to democratize the management approaches of the school principals.

**Keywords:** School principal, management approach, physical education teacher.

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## INTRODUCTION

The history of the administration dates back to ancient times. It had been noted through the previous studies that the Sumerians developed the writing style to respond to the need for administrative control process. Ancient Romans gave explanations about the effective management system, and the Roman Catholic Church contributed significantly to the old management understanding (Benligiray, 2005). As can be understood from these explanations, it can be said that the concept of management had existed since the existence of the human being. The concept of management expressed here differed depending on the changes experienced over time. The concept of management is primarily a universal activity, and therefore, is one of the most important concepts. Examining the historical process, we can say that everywhere there is a human being has a type of management. Yurdakul (2011) defined

management as the science of acting at the right time, right place and with the right people and tools by using existing resources in a realistic way in order to successfully perform a particular task. Management is a process consisting of various functions related to each other. The most important reason why the management process is universal and realistic is that managers perform management functions (planning, organizing, directing, coordination, control) in the realization of organizational goals (Batmaz, 2012; Benligiray, 2005). Managers are individuals who oversee and direct the activities of other people in the organization (Robbins et al., 2013).

The most important factor that determines the type of management approach and shapes is the way the manager uses authority (Başaran, 2004; Terzi and Kurt, 2005). According to Başaran (1991), the use of

administrative authority and the delegation of authority to the subordinate managers by the highest authority varies from organization to organization and from manager to manager. This change exposes the forms/styles of management. Moiden (2002) stated that no consensus can be reached on the “optimal management style”. From here, it can be said that school principals are expected to use their ideal management style in order to carry out the management process in a healthy way and to achieve the determined goals. As a result of this understanding, autocratic, democratic-participatory and full-freedom management styles emerged (Ergun, 1991).

Managers with autocratic management style gather authority within their own bodies and provide a work environment functioning with orders. However, they have all the responsibility. Managers in autocratic management approach do not take the views of their subordinates when taking decisions, refuse any objections to their decisions, and the employees are obliged to comply with their decisions. In the autocratic management approach, subordinates have to obey the orders given to them without questioning. Managers who adopt this management approach often use the method of reward and punishment (Türkmen, 2013). It is stated that in organizations, where such management style is applied, uneasiness arises with decreasing creativity and productivity (Akat, 1984).

Democratic management approach is a type of management with high importance given to people and work, where the employees participate in decisions with an atmosphere of team spirit and teamwork. It can also be called a “Participatory Management Style” because employees are involved in decisions. In this type of management, managers are the ones who control the work done (Aytürk, 1999). There is no central authority in the democratic management approach. The manager acts by distributing tasks and responsibilities to the subordinates, and it can be said that decisions are taken collectively in meetings. It is stated that in organizations where democratic participatory management style is applied, positive relations arise between managers and subordinates with an increasing level of job satisfaction (Doğan, 2001).

The full-freedom or *laissez-faire* management style is defined as the avoidance of decision-making, initiative and use of authority by managers in organizations (Diebig et al., 2016). The manager, who provides full freedom management style, does not fulfill his/her responsibilities, does not appear in the business when needed, ignores requests for help from employees and avoids giving opinions on matters significant for the organization (Sandhaland et al., 2017). Türkmen (1994) states that the success of the organization in this management style depends more on the success of the members of the organization compared to the manager and that the members of the organization must be expert in their affairs with a high awareness of responsibility in

order to implement this management style (cited in Batmaz, 2012).

It will be inevitable to achieve goals in schools, which have the required physical education facilities, equipment and materials as well as physical education teachers who loves their profession, and where the school administration and even teachers other than the physical education teachers support and help the physical education (Şahin, 2011). It can be said that the effectiveness level of management styles of managers has a significant effect on the realization of these goals and that a number of factors influence the management style option. In the light of this information, this study aimed to examine the views of physical education teachers on the management styles of school principals.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research model

This study, which examines the views of the physical education teachers on the management approaches of the school principals, was designed in the phenomenological model, which is used in the qualitative research models. The phenomenology model provides an in-depth understanding of the meaning and nature of everyday experiences of individuals (Patton, 2014).

### Study group

591 physical education teachers work in state schools in Kayseri during 2019-2020 academic year. The respondents for the study group in the research comprised 17 physical education teachers who were randomly selected and working in state schools in Kayseri province during this academic year. During the research, the names of the participants in the study group were kept confidential, and instead, they were coded as P1, P2, P3... as the abbreviation of the *participant*. Distribution of the teachers in the study group according to certain characteristics is given in Table 1.

### Data collection

In this research, the “interview” technique was used which is one of the qualitative research data collection techniques. Interview is defined as a technique for collecting data through oral communication. It was also stated that the interview is used as the quickest way to learn the knowledge, thoughts, attitudes and behaviors of individuals on various topics and their possible causes (Karasar, 2016).

A form was prepared for use during the interview between the researcher and the source participants. At

**Table 1.** Distribution of the teachers in the study group according to certain characteristics.

Code	Age	Gender	Professional experience	School type
P1	47	Male	22	Secondary School
P2	51	Female	24	Secondary School
P3	50	Male	22	Secondary School
P4	37	Male	13	Secondary School
P5	40	Female	15	High School
P6	41	Female	18	High School
P7	32	Male	4	Secondary School
P8	32	Male	3	High School
P9	45	Female	22	High School
P10	35	Male	5	High School
P11	41	Male	14	Secondary School
P12	40	Male	15	High School
P13	40	Female	15	Secondary School
P14	42	Male	14	Secondary School
P15	48	Male	25	Secondary School
P16	42	Female	17	High School
P17	40	Male	15	Secondary School

the beginning of the form, the individuals in the study group were asked questions relating to their personal information. Initially, a question pool consisting of six items was prepared for the questions on the interview form. In order for the participants to understand the questions easily, they were clearly expressed and due diligence was paid to avoid abstractness and causing short answers. This question pool was presented for the evaluation by qualitative research experts and the necessary corrections were made within the scope of "expert review" strategy, which is reported by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2011) among the techniques used to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative research. In addition, the interview form was given to three physical education teachers different from the study group and their responses were received. At the end of the evaluation and the trial, it was seen that the interview form was functional and three questions that served the purpose of the research were selected among the questions:

1. What do you think of the management styles of school principals working in the Turkish Ministry of Education?
2. What do you think of the impact of management styles of the school principals on your teaching profession?
3. What efforts could be done to democratize the management styles of school principals?

The interviews were conducted one-on-one and they were voice recorded, so there was no need for the researcher to take notes, which rendered the function of asking questions and listening to the answers more efficient.

### Data analysis

The research data were evaluated through the "content analysis" method. Content analysis is to bring together similar data within the framework of specific concepts and themes and to organize and interpret them in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011).

As stated by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2011), certain steps were respectively followed during the data analysis such as the coding of the data, finding the themes, arrangement-identification of the data according to the themes-codes, and interpretation of the findings. In addition, within the scope of "plausibility" principle stated by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2011) for the validity and reliability in qualitative research, the code and themes created were examined by other researchers and positive feedback was obtained.

### RESULTS

As is seen in Table 2, the physical education teachers in the study group think that their school principals are generally have the autocratic management approach. The physical education teachers in the study group assumed that their school principals display commanding behaviors, they strictly comply with the rules, they do whatever required by the system, and they attach great importance to documents.

As is seen in Table 3, the physical education teachers in the study group stated that the management approaches of their school principals generally affected them negatively in professional terms. The physical

**Table 2.** Results concerning the general views of physical education teachers in the study group on the management styles of the school principals.

	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Autocratic	Has poor communication with the students	2	56.75
	Strictly abiding by the orders of the superiors	2	
	Academic achievement-oriented	2	
	Does what is required by the system	3	
	Strictly complying with the rules	3	
	Displays commanding behaviors	4	
	Attaches great importance to documents	3	
	Has no vision	2	
Democratic	Cooperates with the teachers	3	27.02
	Attempts to fulfill his/her tasks	2	
	Optimistic towards the teachers	3	
	Helpful towards the teachers	2	
Full freedom	Taking no risks in management	3	16.21
	Does not put pressure on the teachers	3	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.** Results concerning the views of physical education teachers in the study group on the effects of the management styles of the school principals on the teaching profession.

	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Negative	Causes to weaken the communication with the school management	4	63.2
	Causes a decrease in professional performance	8	
Positive	Causes an increase in course performance	2	36.8
	Causes motivation in professional terms	5	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.** Results concerning the views of physical education teachers in the study group on the efforts to democratize the management approaches of the school principals.

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
School principals should conduct social-cultural activities with the teachers	2	11.7
More fair rules should be determined for the school managements	2	11.7
In-service trainings should be given to the school principals about democracy	4	23.5
Merit holders should be prioritized for assignments of school principals	2	11.7
The views of the teachers should be asked more by the school management	7	41.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>

education teachers in the study group reported that the management styles of their school principals decrease their professional performance and weakens their communication with the school management.

As is seen in Table 4, the physical education teachers in the study group emphasized that the views of the teachers should be asked more by the school managements in order to democratize the management approaches of the school principals. Moreover, the

physical education teachers in the study group expect that in-service trainings should be given to the school principals about democratic approach in management.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the physical education teachers in the study group

believed that school principals generally have an autocratic management style. It is reported that a manager with an authoritarian management style believes in status and power differences between individuals, and he/she advocates that their rights should also be different due to these differences; it was also reported that the authoritarian individuals behave quite obedient when they are subordinates and they expect obedience from their subordinates when they are in superior positions (Hogg and Vaughan, 2007; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1999). An authoritarian school principal makes decisions on his/her own in school administration and is strict in his/her attitudes with teachers. He/she expects teachers to obey him/her and tends to be the dominant character in the school. Moreover, he/she is not tolerant towards employees (Üstüner, 2016). The leadership characteristics that stand out in the Globe research are cooperation, persuasion, status, and autocraticism. These results are consistent with results of the research conducted by Hofstede covering 74 countries (Baltaş, 2011).

According to the results of this research, the physical education teachers in the study group stated that the management styles of the school principals had a negative impact on their professions. Indifferent managers are the type of managers, who do not display the necessary behavior when their intervention is needed, leave subordinates alone during the decision making and the realization of the work. An indifferent school principal is insensitive and carefree in the problems at his/her school. He/she ignores problems, doesn't know who works and who doesn't. They also exhibit behavior that ignores school success, the feelings of the teachers, and problems (Üstüner, 2016). In a study conducted by Demirhan et al. (2014) on physical education teachers, it was reported that the leading problems between the physical education teachers and principals are that the school principals are indifferent towards physical education course, they perceive physical education course as insignificant, they evaluate the significance of the six-hour exercise program depending on the achievements of the school team, they do not like the secondment of the teachers (i.e. school matches), they behave reluctant in giving permission for these secondments, and they do not support in the purchase of material. It was observed that there was no problem with the assistant principals, the group leader teachers and the parent-teacher association because the principal was more dominant. Thus, considering the physical education and sport courses within the current education and training system, the physical education teachers' views about their school principals are as mentioned above, and it can be mentioned that mostly due to these reasons, the management styles of their school principals are affecting them negatively in professional terms.

According to results of the research, physical

education teachers in the study group expects that teachers' views should be consulted in school management in order to democratize the management styles of school principals. In the democratic management style, participation of those, who are influenced by the decision, should be ensured in the decision-making process. School principals with this management style have certain behaviors such as trusting in teachers and allowing them to take decisions on their own, being open to criticism and listening to the criticism about himself/herself, determining the goals of the school together with the teachers, taking decisions with participation as much as possible, displaying constructive behaviors, having open information channels and sharing information (Üstüner, 2016). It can be said that school principals with a democratic management style share their power with teachers, take their views into account and support them to make decisions on their own.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, the views of the physical education teachers on the management styles of their school principals were examined. Based on the results of the research, it was concluded that the physical education teachers in the study group considered that the school principals generally have an autocratic management approach. The physical education teachers in the study group reported that they were negatively influenced from this approach of the school principals. Moreover, the physical education teachers in the study group emphasized that the views of teachers should be encouraged to democratize the management approaches of the school principals.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has certain limitations such as study group and method, as in any research. The findings of this qualitatively designed study cannot be said to be generalizable. At this point, further quantitative studies involving other branch teachers can be designed for contributing to the literature. As a result, in the Turkish education system, school principals become managers by being chosen among from other teachers through certain examinations and by appointment of higher authorities. By supporting their participation in training activities aimed at developing their management styles, they can be encouraged to opt for democratic management styles. School principals can be encouraged to embrace a more democratic management style, to take into consideration the teachers' views more and to consult the relevant branch teacher for any branch activity to be decided in the school.

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