**Generation Z Support to Autonomy in Education in Turkey:
Evaluation of Teacher Candidates' Views**

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to demonstrate the opinions of teacher candidates, who were born after 2000 and called Generation Z, about the concept of school autonomy. This quantitative research was conducted according to the descriptive survey model. The data obtained is based on the responses given by teacher candidates to the "School Autonomy" questionnaire that was prepared for school administrators as part of the 2012 PISA exam. Generation Z teacher candidates in general hold the opinion that the authority to make decisions should lie with the school when it comes to determining the annual school budget, making disciplinary decisions about students, evaluating students' success, accepting students to school, choosing textbooks and determining the courses to be taught. Teacher candidates also believe that the ministry, provincial education directorates and schools should cooperate in the selection of schools and determination of their annual salaries.

Keywords: Generation Z, teacher candidates, school autonomy, PISA

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Keeping up with change requires a flexible structure for organizations and personal development for individuals. Individuals' generation plays a very strong role in their beliefs, attitudes, thoughts and general views (Kayıhan & Erduran, 2017). A generation is defined as a community that has lived in the same historical period, has been affected by the same social events and has the same social identity. Each generation has different ways of perceiving life and styles of communication, its own characteristics, principles, strengths and weaknesses (Toeffler, 2018).

Generations of individuals are defined according to the years they were born in the 20th century and 21st century; "Generation X" includes individuals born between 1965-1979, "Generation Y" is comprised of individuals born between 1980-1999, and those born after 2000 are called as "Generation Z" (Yüksekbilgili, 2013). Generation X is described as a generation of emotional, idealistic, contentious, neat people who are open to change, educated and focused on their careers. They prefer watching movies to reading books (Senbir, 2004). Generation Y can be described as libertarian, intellectual and technologically capable individuals. Generation Y members are individuals who are independent, free, against authority, not restricted by the rules, not constrained by working hours, self-confident and want to climb career ladders as soon as possible. They dislike taking orders, reject impositions, have stubborn and rebellious characters. They love to be in social media and social environments and can engage in conflicts in line with their own ideas and wishes. (Bayraktar, 2017). Generation X is called an ideological generation, while generation Y is referred to as a pragmatist generation (Çetin and Karalar, 2016).

Individuals born from 2000 and onward are called members of Generation Z. Generation Z is also labelled as the "Digital Generation" (Somyürek, 2014). This generation, as the previous generation, is highly engaged in technology, and can even be said to be addicted to technology. Especially, today's ever-developing advanced smart devices and

internet infrastructure can cause the members of this generation to become addicted to technology (Kavalcı & Ünal, 2016). Generation Z is in the focus of the internet. This generation, which uses technology well, is younger than other generations. They can easily perform many tasks simultaneously (Golovinski, 2011). This brings Generation Z one step ahead of other generations. In a general sense, Generation Z has a pragmatic and realistic character. Compared to previous generations, they are more wary about taking risks. This entrepreneurial and more social generation consists of individuals who learn how to learn and are open to new technologies because they are raised surrounded by technology. It takes a very short time for the members of this generation to focus on any topic. Long texts and time-consuming and repetitive applications are boring for them (Penfold, 2017). The perspective of Generation Z regarding business life differs from previous generations. Among the expectations of the Generation Z from the working environment are flexibility in the workplace and working time, maintaining the work-life balance, the opportunity of both vertical and horizontal career advancement, the tasks in which technology is integrated, recognition for success, opportunities that offer moral rather than material satisfaction, and technological tools (Computer, internet etc.) made available to them (Arar, 2016). Due to its features, Generation Z can be considered as the generation of individuals who like to act individually in flexible organizations and can create an environment in which they can express themselves. Besides making money, job satisfaction, organizational justice and motivation are very important for this generation. They have the feature of adapting to the speed of knowledge and time, and these individuals pursue fun and continuous learning while working. These characteristics are directly related to flexible organizations, self-management and school autonomy (Seymen, 2017). This is because autonomous management approach and flexible organizational structure are dependent on individual talents and a participatory

management approach (Elma & Demir, 2017). Generation Z individuals born after 2000 and studying at universities will be assuming their roles in business life very soon.

Primary, secondary, high school and university students born after 2000 and named as the 'technology generation' are all members of Generation Z. Although there are different ideas in the literature regarding the personal characteristics of the new generation, teacher candidates who belong to Generation Z and who will be responsible for the education of the next generations (Kırık & Köyüstü, 2018), the studies conducted on the expectations of this generation regarding the teaching profession and school expectations are limited. Therefore, further research is needed to determine the opinions of Generation Z teacher candidates about the optimal structure of schools. New findings can shed light on educational policies, educational reforms, and teacher training processes. Identifying the opinions of Generation Z teacher candidates about school autonomy can serve as a guide to the restructuring of the school. In this study, the "School Autonomy" questionnaire prepared within the scope of the 2012 PISA exam for school administrators was administered to teacher candidates, and following questions were posed:

➢ Who should have the authority to make decisions in the appointment of teachers to a school?

➢ Who should have the authority to make decisions in determining annual teacher salary increase rates?

➢ Who should have the authority to make decisions in determining the annual school budget?

➢ Who should have the authority to make decisions in making disciplinary decisions?

➢ Who should have the authority to make decisions in assessing students' achievement?

➢ Who should have the authority to decisions on the students' admission to school?

➢ Who should have the authority to make decisions in determining the textbooks?

➢ Who should have the authority to make decisions in determining the courses to be taught in the school?

The answers given to the questions reflect the expectations of Generation Z about school autonomy or school-based management.

Methodology

This quantitative research was conducted according to the descriptive survey model. Survey model studies are aimed to make predictions and generalizations about the research through the method of sampling (Balcı, 2018). The target population of study consisted of teacher candidates who studied with the Faculty of Education of Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University in the fall semester of the 2019-2020 academic years. In this study, no sample selection was made, and questionnaires were distributed to 351 teacher candidates. 107 of the questionnaires were returned.

Data Collection Tool

The data were collected through the "School Autonomy" questionnaire prepared for school administrators as part of the 2012 PISA exam. The school autonomy questionnaire form is composed of a 'school autonomy related to resource allocation category' and a 'school autonomy related to academic and program category'. In the category of school autonomy related to resource allocation, the items regarding determination of annual teacher salary and creation of annual school budget are included. The 'academic and program related school autonomy category' included prompts about choosing a teacher for the school, making disciplinary decisions about the students, evaluating the success of the students, accepting the students to the school, determining the textbooks and determining the courses to be taught (OECD, 2013).

Data Analysis

Regarding the eight items included in the school autonomy questionnaire, the teacher candidates replied to the question, "Who do you think should have authority?" by choosing one of the following: Ministry of Education, Provincial Directorate of National Education, or

The School Administration. Based on frequency and percentage analyses, the responses are shown in a percentage graphic.

Findings

After analyzing the responses given by teacher candidates, the findings related to gender, year of birth, and who should have the authority in choosing teachers for school, determining teacher salary increase rates, making the annual school budget, making disciplinary decisions about the students, evaluating student success, accepting students to school, determining the textbooks and determining the courses to be taught are shown in figures in this section.
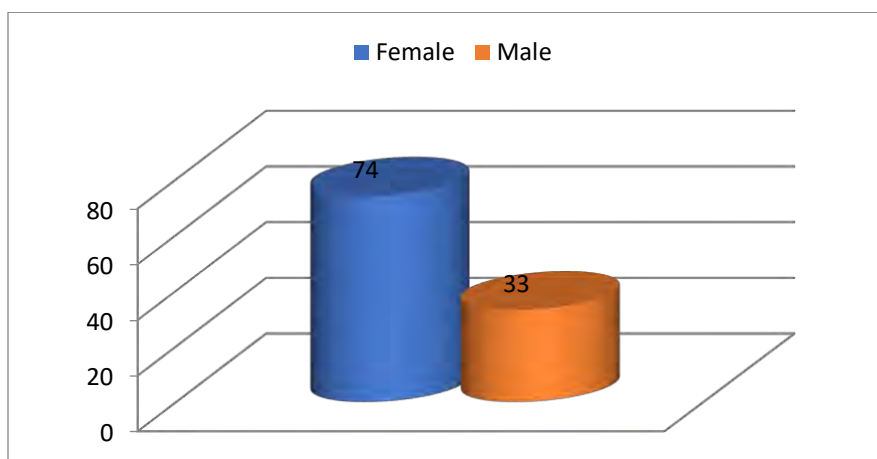
Figure 1. The Ratio of Teacher Candidates By Gender

As shown in Figure 1, 74% of the teacher candidates who participated in the research were female and 33% were male.
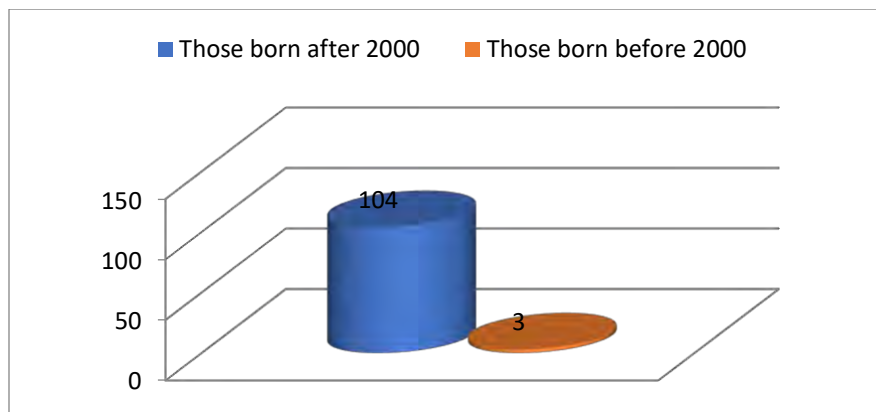
Figure 2. Pre-Service Teachers' Age Category

As shown in (figure 2) 97% of the teacher candidates who participated in the study were born in 2000 and afterwards (Generation Z), and 3% were born before 2000.
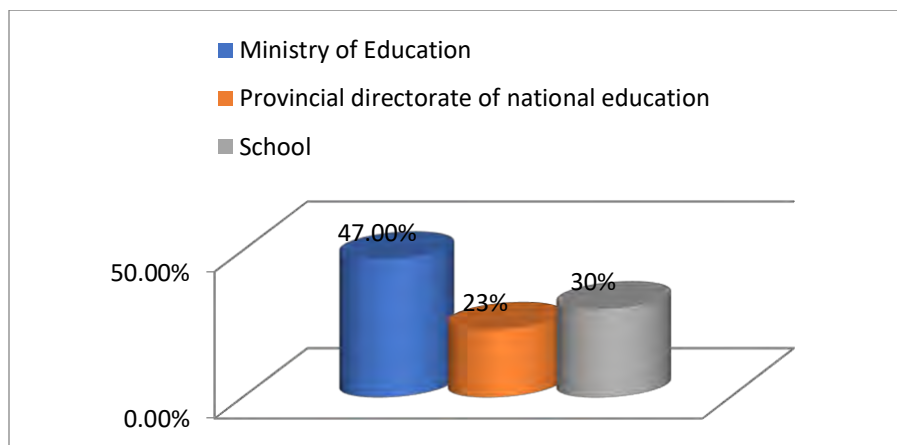

Figure 3. Authority of the School in Teacher Selection

As shown in Figure 3, 47% of the teacher candidates included in Generation Z were of the opinion that the decision-makers in the appointment of the teacher should be the ministry, while 30% thought that the schools should also have the authority to decide on the selection of teachers, and 23% stated that the authority regarding this issue should lie with the Provincial Offices of National Education. Overall, 53% of the teacher candidates in total emphasized that the school and local education elements should be involved in the decision-making process regarding the selection of teachers.
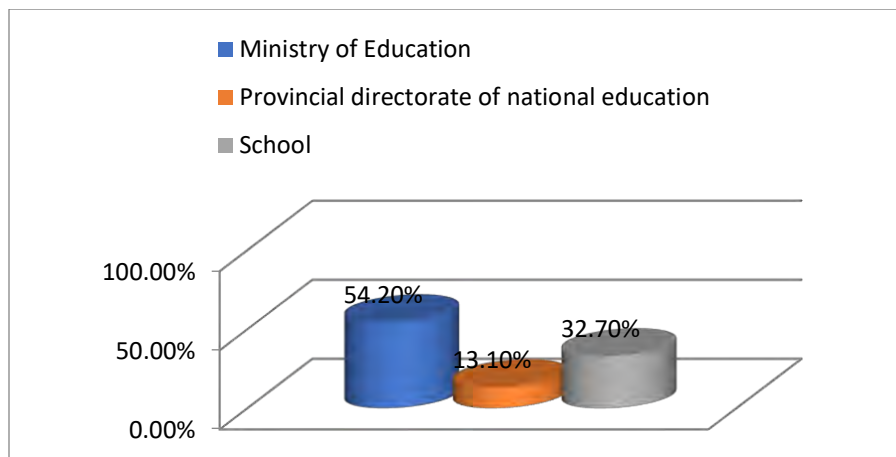
Figure 4. Authority in Determining Teacher Salary İncrease Rates

As shown in Figure 4, 54.20% of Generation Z teacher candidates stated that the ministry should have the authority to determine teacher salary increase rates, while 32.70% expressed that the schools should also have the power to make decisions in determining the salary increase rates, and 13.10% replied that Provincial Offices of National Education should be the authority determining the rates of salary increase. It can be said that teacher candidates thought that not only the ministry but also the local stakeholders who make up the education system should be asked of their opinions and decisions should be made together.
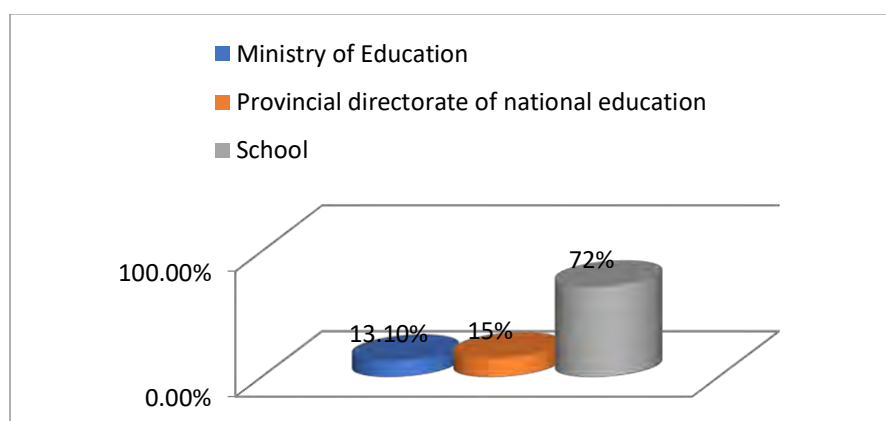

Figure 5. Authority to Determine The Annual School Budget

As shown in Figure 5, 72% of the teacher candidates stated that the decision-making authority regarding the determination of the annual school budget should be completely the school, 15% said the power to make decisions on this issue should be given to the Provincial

Offices of National Education, while only 13.10% believed that the ministry should be the authority. It was observed that the teacher candidates of Generation Z mostly advocated that the schools should be autonomous in determining the education budget.
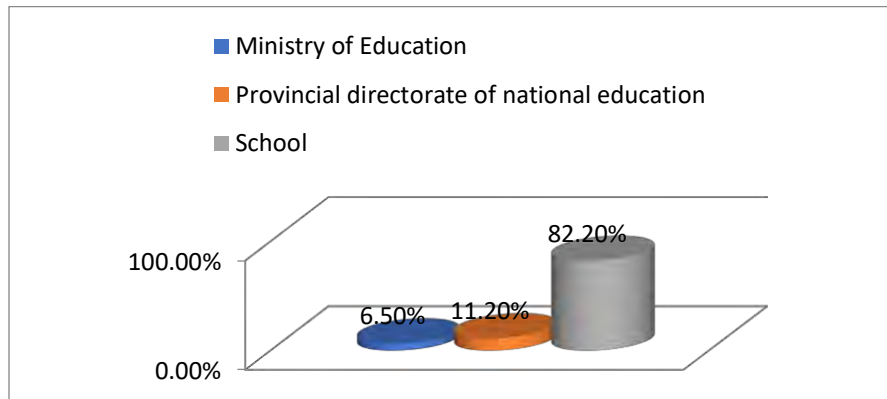

Figure 6. Authority to Make Disciplinary Decisions About Students

As shown in Figure 6, while 82.20% of the teacher candidates stated that the decision-making authority to punish undesirable student behavior and to reward students should lie only with the school, only 6.50% stated that the authority should lie with the ministry. The teacher candidates endorse the idea that the school should be autonomous about disciplinary decisions.
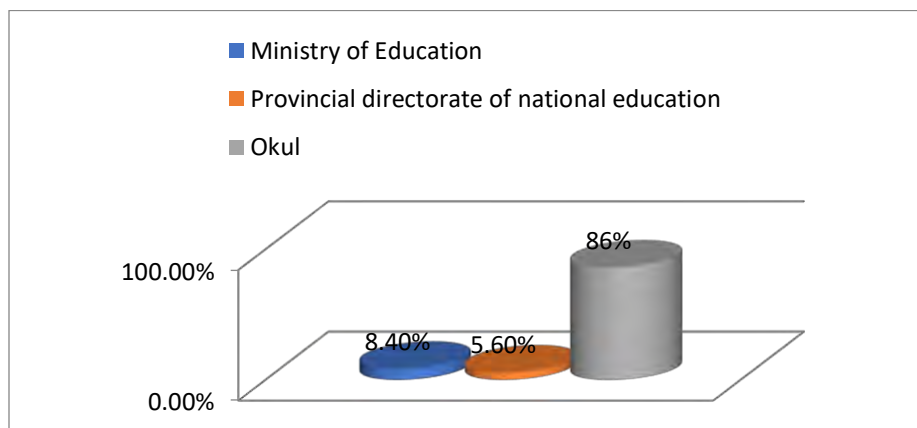

Figure 7. Authority To Make Decisions in Evaluating Student Success

As shown in Figure 7, 86% of the teacher candidates stated that the decision-making authority should completely rest in the school for evaluating students as successful or unsuccessful in passing the courses or classes. Only 8.40% of the teacher candidates

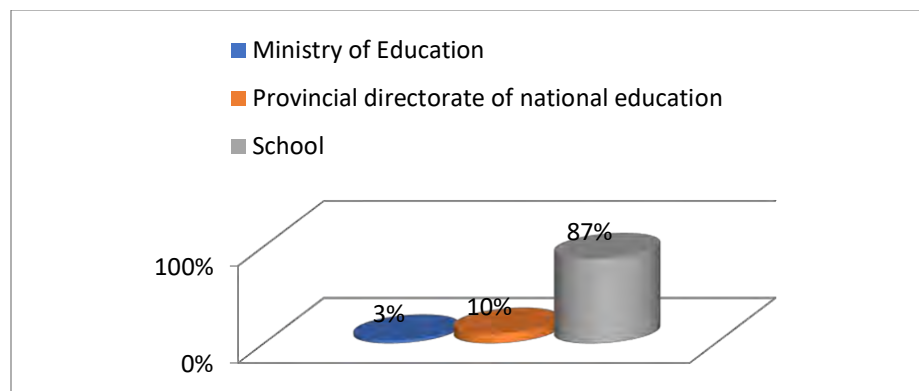expressed that the power to make decisions about the assessment of success should be given to the ministry.

Figure 8. The Student's Authority to Decide on Admission

As shown in Figure 8, while 87% of the teacher candidates stated that the final decision should be made by the school regarding the admission of the student to the school, 10% argued that the decision should be left to the Provincial Offices of National Education, only 3% held the opinion that the decision should be at the disposal of the ministry.
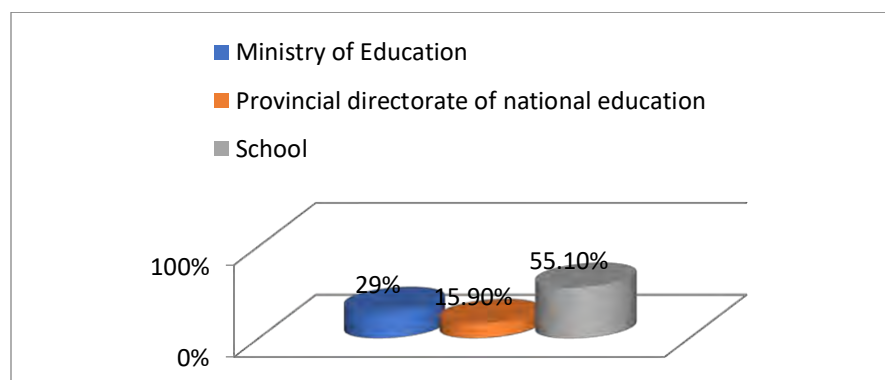

Figure 9. Authority in The Selection of Textbooks

As shown in Figure 9, while 55.10% of the teacher candidates stated that the school should be the authority in the selection of the textbooks to be taught, 29% said that the authority should be the ministry in the book selection, and 15.90% proposed that the Provincial Offices of National Education should be authorized regarding the matter. Teacher

candidates expressed the opinion that schools should also have the option of choosing books in addition to the common books determined by the ministry.
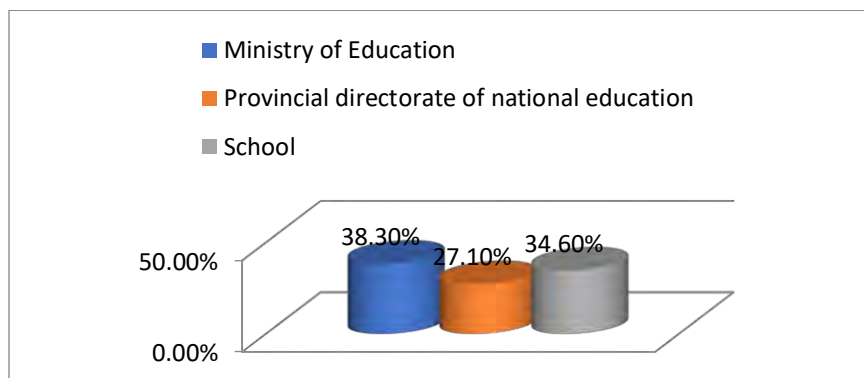

Figure 10. Authority to Decide Courses

As shown in Figure 10, 38.30% of the teacher candidates stated that the ministry should determine the courses to be taught in the school, 34.60% said the schools should decide, and 27.10% were of the opinion that the Provincial Offices of National Education should have the final say in this issue. Teacher candidates held the opinion that the ministry should be the determining factor in compulsory and elective courses in schools, but that the schools should also have the freedom of choice.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

The following conclusions can be drawn about the opinions of the teacher candidates in Generation Z: The teachers who will work in the school should not be appointed only by the ministry, but the school should also have the authority to make assessments regarding this issue. While approximately 54% of the teacher candidates think that the ministry should determine the annual salary increase rates, about 47% believe that the Provincial Offices of National Education and schools should be involved in the decisions to be taken. According to the teacher candidates in general, the school should be authorized to decide on the annual budget of the school. The school should have the authority regarding disciplinary decisions about students. The school should have the authority to decide on students' success and failure. The decision-making authority regarding the admission of the students should lie

within the school. The students' admission to the school should not be limited to the decision of the ministry. The teacher candidates hold the view that the ministry and Provincial Offices of National Education should have the power to make decisions, but the final decision should be left to the school. The teacher candidates have the view that both the ministry and the school should decide together in determining the courses to be taught.

The results of the research related to research on Generation Z from the literature. In his study, Penfold (2017) determined that 70% of Generation Z members wanted to be the manager of their own business and that 60% wanted to have a say in their profession. In his research, Golovinski (2011) determined that individuals from Generation Z want their job to be completed quickly and have the ability to do many things simultaneously. In their research, Taş, Demirdöğmez and Küçükoğlu (2017) found that Generation Z is a generation whose members express themselves more and want to participate in managerial decisions. Yelkikalan, Akatay and Altın (2010) determined that Generation Z is visionary, open to change and favors innovation. Kızıldağ (2019) identified that Generation Z university students have a participatory management approach. It is stated in the OECD (2013) report that schools should be more autonomous in decision making in education, according to the general view of school administrators. The personal characteristics of Generation Z identified in various studies are consistent with the teacher candidates' opinions about school autonomy and participation in the decision in this study.

From the perspective of Generation Z, the school should be empowered to make decisions for effective operation of the school, and hierarchical barriers to the school's participation in political decisions should be removed. For Generation Z teacher candidates, flexible school and school autonomy are a preferred business environment because Generation Z considers work motivation and enjoying work as very important. According to the expectations of Generation Z teacher candidates, schools should have autonomous

management, and the school should be at the very center of decision-making on issues related to education. The school should have more authority. The school should have an autonomous management outside the bureaucratic structure. The autonomous school approach seems to be compatible with the opinions of Generation Z.

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