



## Being a Music Teacher: The Self in the Mirror of a School Principal

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine in-service music teachers' opinion about their school principals and to find out how much importance the principals give to them. In this study the interview technique was used as the mean of data gathering. The population of this survey consists of 13 in-service music teachers, of which 8 music teachers were interviewed as the study sample. The sample group was determined randomly. The interview form consisted of eight questions. Content and face-to-face validity were used to determine the validity and the reliability by using the opinions of three experts. According to the data obtained through the interviews, music teachers share a common opinion that the school principals do not give the required importance or value to them and their profession.

**Keywords:** Administration, Education system, Music education, Music teacher, Perception, School principal.

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### INTRODUCTION

The administration of the education system and education process in accordance with the science of management and scientific data is called education management (Aydın, 2000; Başaran, 1994; Kaya, 1991). To use human and material resources efficiently in order to help educational organizations reach their goals is the duty of education managers. According to Kayıkçı (2001) as trained human power and material resources are limited, it is very important to train the education managers in our country.

In the past for the lack of students, class and capacities in schools, there was no need for principals (Campell, 1970). At the beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> century, there were no principals at schools. Teachers were used to manage by themselves. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, as a result of the increase in schools, the duties and responsibilities of teachers were increased and so principals became a necessity and they became the leader of the schools (Moore, 1964). In 1920's the expectations of the principals were increased. Their duties became scientific thus making them social leaders and making their determined values became very important.

In the 1930's with the effect of Industrial Reform, the school principals' role became that of a financial manager. In the 1940's their role as democratic leaders became very important. After the 1950's with the advent of education management, laws took part in creating the rules in schools and so they became the legal leader in schools. Thus laws and the legal word became very important for principals. In the 1960's the role of principals became more bureaucratic, and in the 1970'S the role of planning and arbitrations became very important. In the 1980's and 1990's in contrast to the expected management role, educational leadership roles became very important for principals (Beck and Murphy 1993; Blase and Kirby 2000; Haynen 1973; Sergiovanni 2001).

In our country the history of management started with the foundation of the Republic. After the foundation of the Republic a lot of changes were made in education. In March 3, 1924 with the law of 'Tevhid-i Tedrisat', education associations unified. With this law, ministry centre and country organizations got a new configuration and there was a need of principals and controllers for the newly created organizations. To meet this necessity, in 1928, The Department of Pedagogy was opened at Institute of Gazi Education.

In order to operate effectively as in management you must be educated. But in Turkey, educational faculties are not of a quality deemed necessary. As a result, in our country the history of education management is young, so that Turkey isn't as successful as developed countries in educating education managers.

The capability, knowledge and behaviors of principals are important in order to become effective on students, teachers, school staff, and parents. The principals should aim to improve the quality of education in order to raise the teachers' occupational talents and they should raise the motivation of teachers and use the award system effectively (Aydın, 2000; Karakelle, 2009; Mitchel & Peters; Nicklos & Brown, 1989). The principal should pay attention to the teachers' problems sincerely and care about their requirements. In addition, he or she should make the teachers participate in the decisions and should require meetings and additional studies to improve the teachers.

Research shows school principals have to pay close attention to the needs of all teachers, as well as to the lessons they prepare and teach. A suitable place for effective education and activities must be created in order to help to improve teacher's professional skills. However, statistics show that music teachers working in the primary or secondary schools face various problems. For example, Akgün (2006) found out after he had submitted a questionnaire to 135 music teachers in Ankara that there was no music classroom in schools and that having the musical instruments was not enough.

In spite of a lot of research concerning school management, and the capability of school managers (Akçay 2003; Toprakçı 2002; Bredeson 1985; Can & Çelikten 2002; Kayıkçı 2001; Okutan 2003), there was no research in music literature. Also, there was no research found in Burdur where education is based on music teacher's ideas.

## **Research Objectives**

The aim of the study is to analyze in-service music teachers' opinion about their school principals in Burdur. The specific purposes of this study were to determine whether:

- Principals supply technical instruments to the music teacher;
- Principals care about the problems of the music teacher;
- Principals see musical activities and music lesson as a necessity;
- Principals contribute any improvements to the music teacher's professional career.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

There were a total of thirteen in-service music teachers in Burdur. Out of which eight music teachers were interviewed as the study sample. The sample group was determined randomly.

## Instruments and procedures

In this study the interview technique was used as the means of data gathering. The interview form consisted of eight questions which were based on getting the ideas teachers about their school principal. The questions were made by the process of literature review. Content and face-to-face validations were used to determine the reliability of the opinions of three experts. After meeting the three experts, the numbers of questions was decreased to eight and the form of some questions was changed. The validations established that the form of the questions was suitable for the survey.

## Data analysis

The questions passed three steps while data was analyzed. In the first step, the questions were coded so that the data was summarized. In the survey, qualities acquired from the interview form were analyzed by induction and comparison methods and interpreted by method of descriptive statistics.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings acquired from the survey have been given according to the order of sub-problems. In the interview form the numbers which are in parenthesis represent the names of the teachers. In the interview form there are 2 questions for each sub-problem. The answers of the music teachers to the questions:

### RQ 1: Does your principal supply a suitable atmosphere (classroom, instruments or tools, board...etc.) for an efficient education?

87 % of the teachers said “No.” 50 % of these teachers said it is because of the lack of the materials. 37 % of them said it is because more importance is given to other lessons. 13 % of them said the principal supplies classroom and instruments. (See Figure 1)

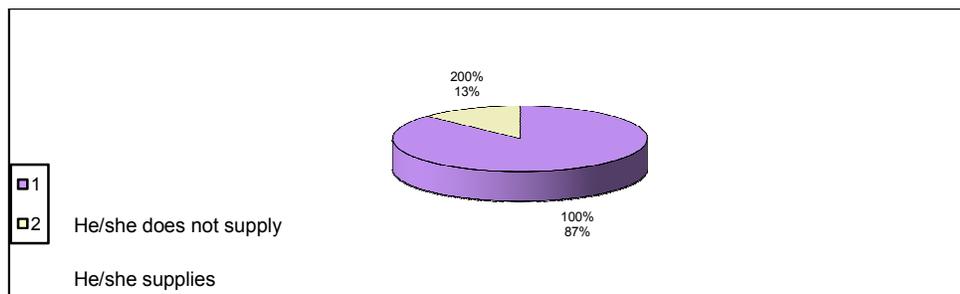


Figure 1: The capability of principals to supply music teachers their musical instruments

The quotations from the answers of the teachers and their comments:

“We have never had a music class up to now. We have no instruments like board, org, etc. In our school, if we had a class we could bring some. In any case, we often bring them, but we have to carry them to breaks with us. The principal doesn’t give importance to my need of special class.”(1)

“There are no classes or instruments in our school. I’ve talked to my principal about it, but a suitable place hasn’t been acquired. This causes a loss of time in the lessons. For example: I draw by myself because we don’t have a music board. It is difficult to be successful in forty minutes.”

“In spite of having a music class in the school, the principal doesn’t supply the materials and instruments. The priority is always for Computer, Physics, and Chemistry lessons.”

Four music teachers said they have neither special classes nor instruments; this is because their schools have limited facilities. (2, 5, 6, 7)

Only one teacher said they have sufficient facilities, so they are able to conduct the lessons more effectively. (8)

*“Does your principal supply technical tools you need for your activities? Why? Why not?”*

25 % of the music teachers said the principal supplies every type of tool needed. 33 % said the principal only provided tools sometimes; 25 % said “No” and the principal doesn’t give importance to their activities; 13 % said the principal does because he has to, but there is a lack of knowledge in this subject. (See Figure 2)

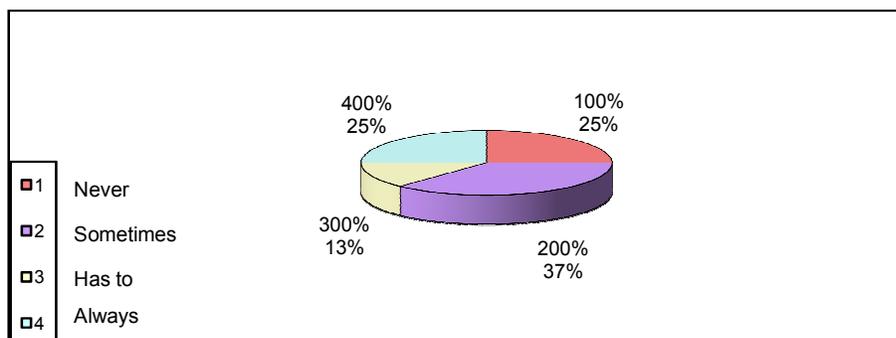


Figure 2: The capability of principals to supply technical tools

The quotations from the answers of the teachers and their comments:

“We have too many difficulties in this subject. We do our activities in the school garden because we don’t have a stage. Our sound system isn’t supplied. There is a lack of practicability.”(2)

“The stage and the microphones aren’t enough for the school. I wanted them to be supplied but they haven’t supplied yet.”(4)

“In the activities, they supply the tools and sound system but the principal doesn’t have enough knowledge about this. For this reason, we sometimes have problems.”(1)

Three of the music teachers said the tools are supplied only in big and extensive activities and they mostly supply them by themselves. (3, 5, 6)

Two of them said their principals supply their tools in every activity. (7, 8)

## RQ 2: “Does the principal pay attention to music teachers’ problems, ideas and advices?”

*“Can you share your occupational problems with your principal honestly and look for solutions together?”*

62 % of them said they can share, but they were not able to find solutions; 38 % said they can share and look for solutions together. (See Figure 3)

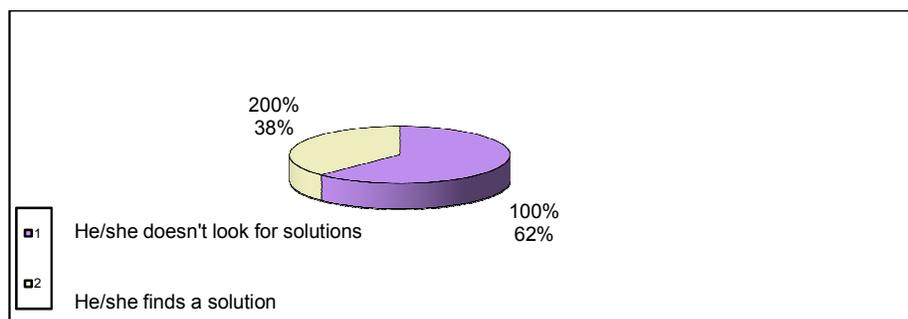


Figure 3: The capability of principals solving the occupational problems of music teachers

The quotations from the answers of the teachers and their comments:

“I can not share my problems honestly. When I talked about my problems we always have problems with the principal. He sometimes says he can help, but always does as he wants.

Three of the music teachers said they share their problems, but the principals are not capable of solving them. (3, 4, 5, 7)

Three of them said they share honestly and look for solutions together and they try to find solutions as much as the practicability happens. (2, 6, 8)

*“Does your principal consider your opinion, suggestion and demands related with your music activities and make you join the decisions? Why or why not?”*

37 % of them said principals consider their opinions and suggestions; 38 % said they do sometimes, but don't involve them in decisions and 25 % said “No”. (See Figure 4)

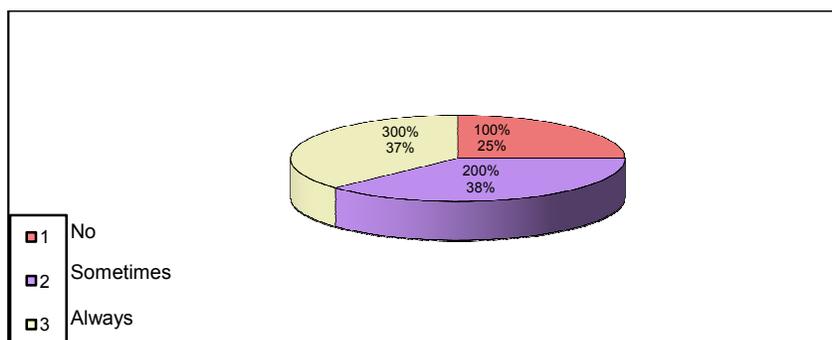


Figure 4: Principal's consideration of music teachers' opinions, suggestions, and demands

The answers and the comments of the music teachers are below:

“The principal decides what and how to do the activities and we have to obey. He doesn't pay attention to my advice.” (2)

“He doesn't pay attention to my advice. He always wants to do everything by himself.” (1)

“Sometimes he listens to my advices, but when our opinions are opposed; he does as he wants. (3)

“Sometimes he listens to my opinions, but he isn't effective in involving me in making decisions. He always makes decisions as he wants.”(4)

“Our principal considers my opinions, suggestions and demands, but I want him to be more sensitive in making decisions by giving attention to my advices and needs.”(5)

Three of the music teachers said their principal always pays attention and considers their opinions, suggestions, and demands. (6, 7, 8)

### **RQ 3: “Does your principal consider the music lesson and music activities important?”**

*“Does your principal make the students and parents think that music lesson is important and necessary? Why? Why not?”*

62 % of them said “No” for this reason it makes students and parents see the music lesson as unnecessary. They said this is because the principal thinks that the other cultural lessons are more important and the music lesson is only for fun. 38 % said “Yes” and added that the principal gives speeches about the importance of the music lessons. (See Figure 5)

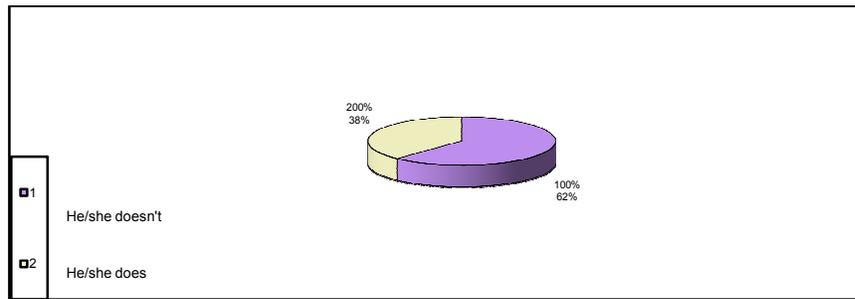


Figure 5: The position of the principals for making the students and parents think that music lesson is necessary and important

The quotations from the answers of the teachers and their comments:

“Music lessons are perceived as fun lessons. The other lessons are more important, not only for principals and parents, but also for students. I have never heard a speech from my principal that music lessons are important.” (1)

Two of the music teachers said that their principals don't make the students and parents think that music lessons are important, they see other lessons as more important and this effects the parents in a negative way (2, 3, and 4)

Three of the music teachers said that their principals make parents and students think that music lessons are important and they make a speech to the students and parents. (5, 6, 7, 8)

*“Does your principal act eagerly about your taking part in celebrations and commemorations?”*

87 % of them said “Yes” they take part in every activity; but 37 % of them said this is only because the principals feel obligated; 50 % of them said that their principals act eagerly and want music programs in every activity; 13 % of them said the principal did not bother. (See Figure 6)

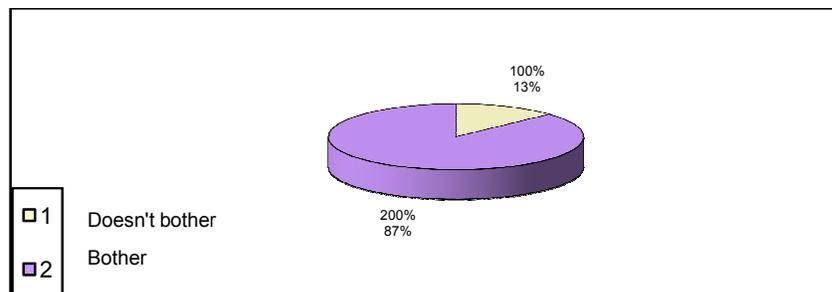


Figure 6. The position of the principals in music teachers taking part in school activities

The quotations from the answers of the teachers and their comments:

“Our principal wants me to take part in activities by force because it is traditional for poems, dances, folk dances, and music programs to be performed in activities.” (1)

“No, they don't act eagerly. There are very different kinds of activities in celebrations or end of the year; oratorio, dance, folk dance...etc.”(4)

“Five of the teachers said their principals act eagerly about their taking part in celebrations and commemorations and end of year activities. (2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8)

**RQ 4: “Does your principal award your studies? Why? Why not?”**

50 % of the music teachers said they are not awarded despite being assigned. This is because activities seem as usual studies; 37 % said they are always awarded orally, while 13% said their studies are awarded orally too, but they are not supported much during the study. (See Figure 7)

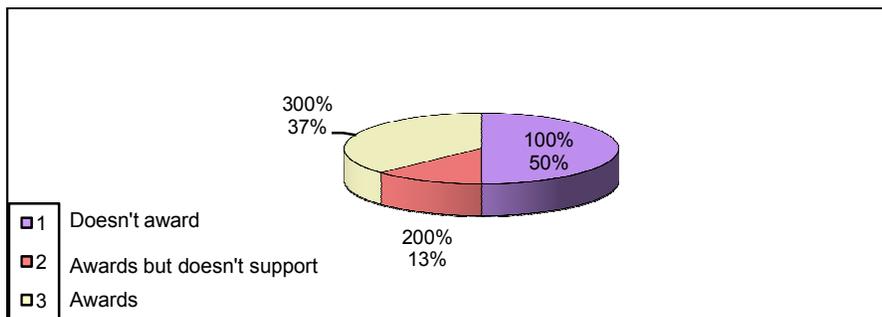


Figure 7: The position of the principals awarding music teachers

The quotations from the answers of the teachers and their comments:

“Our principal does not award. He is eager that we take part in activities, but we can’t see the same eagerness in awarding. (2)

“No, he does not award and I always do everything by myself. They seem as usual activities. (4)

Two of the music teachers said their principals never awarded them. (1, 5)

Three of them said they are awarded orally. (6, 7, 8)

One of them said they are awarded, but aren’t supported during the studies. (3)

*“Does your principal make you to take part in in-service education and contribute any improvements to your career? Why? Why not?”*

75 % of them said “No” and added the teachers take part on their own. 25 % of them said “Yes” and that the principal is sensitive about it. They said he takes great care in announcing these kinds of studies. (See Figure 8)

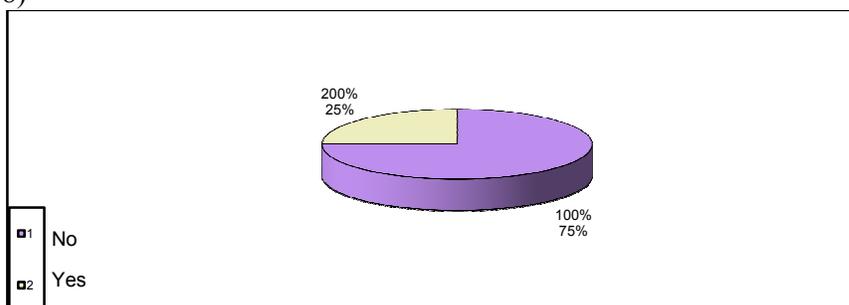


Figure 8: The position of principals making music teachers taking part in in-service education

The quotations from the answers of the teachers and their comments:

“The writings about this topic are put into a signature folder. He does not care about our joining or not. Everybody takes part on their own. (1)

“He does not say anything orally. We learn about them from the writings. In-service education depends on personal intent. (7)

Four of the music teachers said their principals do not eagerly make them take part in in-service education. (2, 3, 4, 6)

Two of the music teachers said their principals eagerly make them take part in in-service education and take great care in announcing these studies. (5, 8)

## CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study is focused on in-service music teachers' opinion about their school principals in Burdur and how much importance the principals give to their music teachers. It has been found out that music teachers think:

- Principals do not provide them with required atmosphere and tools for an effective education.
- Principals are inadequate in supplying the required technical tools.
- Teachers share their occupational problems with the principal honestly, but their demands and opinions are ignored by the principal.
- Principals sometimes consider their opinions, suggestions and demands related to the musical activities.
- Principals do not make the students and parents think that music lessons are necessary and important.
- Principals are eager about music teachers' taking part in celebrations and commemorations or end of the year activities.
- Teachers studies are awarded orally, but they are not supported much during the studies.
- Principals do not act eagerly about teachers taking part in in-service education.

It seems reasonable to conclude that:

- A music classroom should be designed in all elementary or secondary schools and both student and teacher's efficiency should be raised by supplying musical instruments and tools.
- Technical tools required for celebrations and commemorations or end of year activities should be supplied.
- Occupational problems of music teachers should not be ignored. Their opinions, suggestions and demands about activities should be considered and they should be allowed to have a say in the decision making process.
- Importance and necessity of music lessons in psycho-social development of the students should be stressed to the students and parents and the students should be motivated to participate in the activities.
- Principals should use an effective award system and motivate music teachers to perform better activities.
- Principals should inform the teachers about in-service education carefully and by supporting the teachers to participate in this education actively, they should contribute the teacher's career.
- In-service programs about education and contemporary management should be arranged for principals. In these programs, topics on measuring, evaluating and development of art teaching should be featured.
- Music is valuable, for a variety of compelling reasons, personal and social.
- To give a voice to music, and teachers must have an influence in support of it.
- The principal needs to emphasize high productivity and allow music teachers to feel empowered. This will improve employee morale and collaboration between school managers and teachers.

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