

## AN EVALUATION OF PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP PRACTICES ON ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP SELF-EFFICACY<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to evaluate the principals' leadership practices on the assistant principals' leadership self-efficacy. The hypotheses of the qualitative research method were used in the study. The data of the study were obtained through two semi-structured interview forms were developed. One was applied to the six principals and the other one was to ten assistant principals in the secondary school in Ankara. The data were analyzed by using content analysis. In order to increase the internal validity of the study, themes and codes and the data analysis process were conducted with the help of experts who had experience in assessment and evaluation of qualitative researches. When the opinions of the participants were examined, it was seen that the strategies used by the principles in the development of the leadership role of assistant principals were various. When these strategies were examined, it was determined that there were behaviors such as giving challenging tasks, giving feedback, giving autonomy to them, encouraging, and praising them about the tasks they had completed. Moreover, it was understood that the assistant principals had an opportunity to co-learn with their colleagues on their daily tasks and these tasks supported their self-efficacy beliefs.

**Keywords:** Self-efficacy, leadership, principal, assistant principal, career development.

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## INTRODUCTION

Recently, education researchers have begun to examine more comprehensively the effects of self-efficacy beliefs on the leadership performance of principals and assistant principals and their indirect potential effects on student achievement (Işık & Gümüş, 2017; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Smith, Guarino, Strom, & Adams, 2006). In this study, self-efficacy beliefs, considered as an important predictor in the development of assistant principals' leadership behaviors, were discussed. Also, evidence showed that principals' leadership practices were a small but a significant effect on leadership self-efficacy of assistant principals and it was another dimension of this study (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006). According to dominant conceptualizations, it was seen that principals did not adequately prepare their assistant principals to serve as a principal (Harvey, 1994; Hausman, Nebeker, McCreary, & Donaldson, 2002; Oleszewski, Shoho, & Barnett, 2012). In this respect, it is expected that the study will contribute to the literature on the strategies used by the principals in the development of assistant principals' leadership self-efficacy in secondary school.

### *Self-efficacy*

The theory of social cognitive learning, which was introduced by Rotter in 1950s to overcome the shortcomings of behavioral theory in explaining the concept of learning, theorized with the important contributions of Bandura and Mischel (Hogben & Byrne, 1998). In this regard, the basic concepts of social learning theory were defined as the reciprocal determinism (individual, environmental and behavioral variables), the symbolic capacity (language and mimics), the indirect learning capacity (modelling, imitation and description), the prediction activity (cognitively perception of results), self-regulation capacities (goal setting and orientation) and self-efficacy (self-confidence) (Bandura & Kupers, 1964; Bandura & Mischel, 1965; Bandura & Whalen, 1966). The concept of self-efficacy was introduced as a component of the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). In this theory, the concepts of imitation and observation were introduced in the description of the learning first, then the theory was updated to include cognitive processes such as estimating and evaluating the results of memory, language, and behaviors (Malone, 2002). In the following years, it became an important variable frequently used in research conducted in different fields such as education, medicine, psychology, business and international relations (Kurbanoglu, 2004).

According to Bandura (1997), the concept of self-efficacy was defined as self-belief in the individual's ability to organize and successfully execute a particular behavior and activities necessary to demonstrate a certain achievement. Senemoğlu (2004) defined self-efficacy as individuals' own judgment and belief about the extent to which an individual can succeed in the difficult situations s/he may encounter in the future. Zimmerman (1995) stated that the concept can be expressed as beliefs about the individual's ability to perform and achieve a duty. Self-efficacy beliefs are generally concerned with individuals' own judgments as to how well they can perform the actions necessary to achievement. According to Bandura (1997), the self-efficacy perception of the individual determines the activities s/he chooses, the challenges s/he can undertake, the level of effort s/he

will make to achieve a goal, how much s/he will endure. In addition, Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) stated that the concept of self-efficacy should be recognized as a belief in one's ability to perform a duty, not the actual capability of an individual.

Bandura (1997) identified some components that enable the individual to develop self-efficacy belief and to be processed at the cognitive level. Studies conducted within the scope of these definitions have identified four main components that have an impact on self-efficacy belief. In this content, self-efficacy was constructed from four basic sources: performance accomplishments, verbal persuasion, vicarious experiences and physiological state. Performance accomplishments (mastery experiences) indicate that negative experiences reduce self-efficacy perceptions while positive experiences that the individual has already achieved increase self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977, 1986). Individuals evaluate the outcomes of their actions and make judgments about their ability to achieve in similar events and decide whether they will act in accordance with that judgment (Bandura, 1986, 1995). Another source affecting self-efficacy belief is vicarious experiences. Vicarious experiences (indirect experiences) refer to the judgments of individuals about their performance by comparing with peers or friends in the same situation. It is accepted that positive self-efficacy perception occurs when the individual is successful compared to peers whose performance is observed by the individual, and negative self-efficacy perception occurs when the individual underperforms (Bandura, 1977, 1982). It is important that the model needs to have common qualities with the individual. Verbal persuasion means that an individual is convinced by his/her social environment about being capable of achieving their goals and being sufficient to demonstrate the behaviors they need to perform in order to achieve a task. Moreover, if these conditions are not provided, an individual may not be successful because the confidence in the persuasion process and the sense of self-efficacy will decrease. The other source of self-efficacy belief is emotional states (psychological states / physiological and emotional states). According to this source of self-efficacy, it is stated that the mental states and the physical conditions have an effect on the self-efficacy beliefs. In other words, it was argued that in order to solve a problem, an individual need to be in a cognitively, emotionally and physically healthy condition to increase the possibility of showing that behavior and develop self-efficacy belief. Thus, the encouraging, promoting, moderately challenging environment where one can feel comfort express himself/herself in a positive way and that affects individuals' self-efficacy beliefs positively. On the other hand, the threatening and degrading, environment in which one cannot express himself comfortably affect the self-efficacy belief negatively (Bandura, 1977). According to Bandura (1977), the more consistent an individual's performance accomplishments (experiential experiences), the greater changes occur in perceived self-efficacy levels. In other words, he argued that performance accomplishments are the most important sources that influence individual self-efficacy beliefs.

Schyns (2004) stated that leaders influence self-efficacy beliefs of their subordinates by providing an opportunity to experience, modeling, and verbal persuasion. According to him, leaders are able to offer opportunities for their subordinates to experience high task demands and thus they have mastery experiences by distributing tasks or giving new tasks. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) described the concept of self-

efficacy of principals as having an impact on the school environment, occupational performance and student achievement. In the study, a principal's self-efficacy belief is formed from three components as school management as managerial efficacy, instructional leadership efficacy, and ethical leadership efficacy.

As a result, employees can have the opportunity to challenge difficult tasks because of their managers and increase their self-efficacy beliefs. There are many experimental studies determining that there is a relationship between leadership behaviors and self-efficacy beliefs (Akin, 2014; Bülbül & Çuhadar, 2012; Eden, 1990; Murphy & Ensher, 1999; Prussia, Anderson, & Manz, 1998; Schyns, 2001, 2004; Von Collani, 2002; Shea & Howell, 1999). These studies indicated that there was a positive relationship between self-efficacy and charismatic leadership, instructional leadership, leader-member exchange, referral feedback, professional exchange, and performance. The related literature showed that most studies on leadership and principals' efficacy are influenced by the theory of self-efficacy lies at the main point of Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory. Even though the number of experimental studies on the leadership self-efficacy beliefs of principals was limited, the findings of them were very effective (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). There are also studies on self-efficacy in which the qualitative method was used (Palmer, 2006; Usher, 2009). In these studies, it can be seen that interviews' views on the sources of self-efficacy beliefs.

### **Leadership**

From an organizational aspect, leadership is considered as a process that impacts the behaviors of individuals or groups for the sake of achieving the goals (Yukl, 2006). Some questions such as which practices are more effective, how goals are defined, how individuals, groups, teams or organizational units are oriented towards this aim were the main points of theoretical and experimental research (Bass & Bass, 2008; Yukl, 2006). To Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004), nowadays' primary criteria is the reforms of principals and their accountability and they are the principles that influence the school's academic achievement and fulfil the school's basic academic functions. The concept of efficacy was asserted as an undiscovered way to explain the motivation and behavior of the principal in order to be able to make these changes. Self-efficacy, seen as an essential characteristic of an effective principal, is the perception or judgment of one's capability to influence change. Bandura (1997) stated that, in the context of self-efficacy, employees with high self-efficacy in the period of organizational change endure longer and make more effort when they meet with obstacles in their new positions.

Contextual factors related to the school can influence leadership. Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee (1982) exemplify these factors such as the educational policies at the macro level, the socio-economic environment of the school and the personal characteristics of the school leader. From this point of view, it is observed that, after an organizational change, individuals who have high self-efficacy beliefs adapt and work more quickly to new tasks (McDonald & Siegall, 1992). Likewise, McCollum, Kajs, and Minter (2006) argued that self-efficacy beliefs affect achievement and fulfilment of their duties. Besides this, Black (2003) stated that there was a limited research on principals' self-efficacy beliefs. Principals can contribute to the self-efficacy beliefs of

assistant principals through performance accomplishments, modeling, and verbal persuasion (Bandura, 1997). For this reason, the leadership of principals is considered as an important factor in the development of assistant principals' self-efficacy beliefs. In addition, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) argued that the role of self-efficacy in motivating and influencing principals' behavior was underestimated, but it should be examined for further studies.

## METHOD

### *Research Design*

This study, which aims to analyse the contribution of secondary school principals who served in Turkey on leadership self-efficacy of the assistant principals, is designed as a descriptive research. In the study, the assumptions of qualitative research were used. In recent years, qualitative approaches have been used frequently in studies conducted especially in the field of social sciences. Thus, an in-depth analysis was conducted to identify the level of coordination and communication among principals and assistant principals who were interviewed.

### *Research Sample*

In this qualitative study, some criteria were used to get data. The level of development (lower, middle and upper) of the region where the school was located was taken into consideration. In this context, TSI (Turkey Statistics Institute) data was requested through official correspondence. These data were determined based on the apartment rental prices in terms of transportation and infrastructure services. Also, the distribution was conducted according to the average score (300 and below, 301-350, 351-400, 401-450 and 451 and above) of the school's central examination result in the 2016-2017 academic year. Data were gathered from principals and assistant principals working in schools with different conditions. The study group consisted of a total of sixteen people, including six principals and ten assistant principals, who work in six schools in the province of Ankara. A demographic information of participants was presented in Table 1.

When Table 1 was examined, it was seen that the majority of the principals who were interviewed were male. In addition, the age range of the participants ranged from 28 to 60, with two of them graduating from a master's degree. However, teaching experience changes between 4 and 20 years, with leadership experiences varying between 2 and 30 years.

**Table 1.** Demographic Information of Participants

School Code	Role	Gender	Age	Educational Level	Teaching Experience (Year)	Managerial Experience (Year)
LS1P	Principal	Male	58	Bachelor's Degree	14	16
LS1AP1	Assistant Principal	Male	48	Bachelor's Degree	10	11
LS1AP2	Assistant Principal	Female	46	Bachelor's Degree	20	8
LS2P	Principal	Male	45	Bachelor's Degree	15	6
LS2AP1	Assistant Principal	Male	60	Three-year	10	30
LS3P	Principal	Male	53	Bachelor's Degree	16	9
LS3AP1	Assistant Principal	Male	45	Bachelor's Degree	18	4
LS3AP2	Assistant Principal	Male	35	Bachelor's Degree	4	2
MS1P	Principal	Male	41	Master Degree	8	5
MS1AP1	Assistant Principal	Male	38	Master Degree	9	4
MS2P	Principal	Male	37	Bachelor's Degree	10	4
MS2AP1	Assistant Principal	Male	28	Bachelor's Degree	5	2
MS2AP2	Assistant Principal	Male	38	Bachelor's Degree	14	2
US1P	Principal	Female	50	Bachelor's Degree	10	15
US1AP1	Assistant Principal	Male	33	Bachelor's Degree	6	4
US1AP2	Assistant Principal	Male	45	Bachelor's Degree	20	2

### **Research Instrument and Procedure**

The data of the study were collected with the semi-structured interview forms developed by the researchers. During the formulation of the questions in the semi-structured interview forms, the related literature was reviewed and the views and suggestions of the principals and assistant principals taken. The draft forms were presented to the five experts and thus the content validity of the forms was provided. The forms that were prepared on the basis of the feedbacks obtained from the experts were applied to two principals and two assistant principals in terms of pre-application and it was seen that there was no problem in understanding, interpreting and responding to the questions. After this step, the final forms were composed (Appendix-1). After interviews were made, the answers of the participants sent to two experts independently in order to get themes and codes. When their themes and codes were compared, it was seen that 90% of their themes and codes were the same. After that, the themes and codes were determined by utilizing the theoretical framework of leadership self-efficacy. Some codes were also added to the process of application (Saldaña, 2009; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Themes and codes used in the analysis of the data were presented in Table 2.

As examined in Table 2, it was aimed to analyse research data under three themes: the role of the principles in developing leadership self-efficacy, the quality of daily tasks, and the criteria for the distribution of tasks. During the application of the semi-structured interview forms, permission for voice recording was received, but two participants did not permit voice recording. Therefore, researchers took notes during the two interviews. In order to increase the validity of the study, the researcher tried to establish trust between the researcher and the participants and the length of the interview was tried to be kept long in order to ensure this trust (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011).

**Table 2.** Themes and Codes for Analysing Data

Themes	Codes
The role of the principals in the development of leadership self-efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving specific tasks</li> <li>• Giving challenging tasks</li> <li>• Providing feedback about the task</li> <li>• Encouraging</li> <li>• Praising</li> <li>• Giving suggestions</li> <li>• Providing autonomy</li> <li>• Having a positive interaction</li> <li>• Working together on many tasks</li> </ul>
The quality of daily tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides professional development</li> <li>• Contributes to the solution of the problems</li> <li>• Helps school staff and students</li> <li>• Contributes to school success</li> <li>• Supports solving problems</li> <li>• Provides resources for teaching activities</li> <li>• Gives opportunity to learn from colleagues</li> <li>• Is not suitable for the goals</li> <li>• Builds the capacity to become principal</li> </ul>
Criteria for the distribution of tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on previously defined tasks</li> <li>• Random distribution</li> <li>• Deciding on the meeting</li> <li>• Contribution to the school</li> <li>• Pay attention to the capability of staff</li> </ul>

In addition, coding was executed to keep the identity of the interviewees confidential. In the coding of schools, the schools have an average score of 400 or higher in the 2016-2017 academic year according to the central exam result, US1, US2 ...; schools 300 to 399 are MS1, MS2 ...; 299 and under are coded as LS1, LS2. Moreover, for the principals interviewed in these schools were coded as P, assistant principals according to the interview order were coded as AP1, AP2. Accordingly, symbol US1AP1 represents the first assistant principal who was interviewed in the first school with a scoring average of 400 and above.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative data obtained during the interview process were evaluated using content analysis, one of the qualitative data analysis techniques. The voice recordings of the participants were transformed into text and a content analysis was conducted based on the words, expressions, language used, the structure and characteristics of the dialogues, the symbolic expressions used and analogies. It is also aimed to contribute to the external validity of the study, direct expressions of some participants were given. Furthermore, in order to increase the internal validity of the study, the views of experts in the field of research and qualitative research method were obtained regarding the determination of the themes and codes and the analysis of the data. Also, the texts of participants sent to themselves to check whether the ideas reflected in the texts were correct or not. The final analyses were conducted by making necessary corrections in line with the opinions. In order to contribute to the reliability of the study, a different researcher was asked for support and the analysis and

coding of the data of a school was asked. Then the findings reached by the researchers were compared and it was seen they were mostly the same.

## RESULTS

In this part of the study, the opinions and interpretations of the principals and assistant principals related to the themes and codes were presented.

### ***Theme 1: Principals' contribution to the leadership self-efficacy of the assistant principals***

It has been seen that the principals used different strategies to support the leadership role of the assistant principals they work with. In this context, the principals stated that they accomplished many tasks with their assistant principals, they gave some advice to them about their duties, they praised them among others, they provided autonomy in their work, they encouraged them, and they taught them how to complete a task first. Similarly, the assistant principals talked about working with principals on many tasks and receiving advice from them. They also pointed out that the principals gave them praise, provided feedback about their work, and provided autonomy in their work. Besides this, it is useful to present here various views of a principal and an assistant principal at the same school:

*"... we are already working together on many tasks. I prefer to work together for the sake of not having trouble because sometimes they cannot accomplish their tasks or in the middle of the task they are off..." (LS1P).*

*"Our school principal is a person who wants to be involved in every task, wants to have a part. He assigns a task to us but wants to be in the process. There is no sense of sitting in the office for him. But I do not want this because I want to take responsibility for challenging tasks. For example, teachers' taking a special and compassionate leave... To monitor their special and compassionate leave is my responsibility and I want to take this responsibility. But, he wants to control teachers' special and compassionate leave. We have a lot of responsibility, but we lack authority" (LS1AP1).*

When the views of assistant principals were evaluated, it was understood that it may cause a chaos in the school to work with the principal. Besides, it was recognized that the principal interfered with tasks previously handed down when he had a perception that the tasks were not performed well. Besides this, it was stated that the principals gave advice and feedback to the assistant principals through meetings or face-to-face interviews. An assistant principal at the school in the lower socio-economic environment emphasized that these recommendations contributed to them. Also, it was understood that additional duties may be given to assistant principals to develop their capabilities. It was also seen that the principal made criticism using a positive communication language:

*"For example, at the beginning of this year, district director of national education demanded a research. I gave this task to an assistant principal. We worked together in the analysis of the questions in the new central examination. I assigned the other assistant principal to evaluate the*

*application of innovation awards. He studied on this task. These two assistant principals informed me regularly on these tasks. I wanted to be informed about what their phases were, what their needs were, etc. I provided feedback to them according to this information. " (LS3P).*

*"Our principal always supports us in our leadership work. He informs us about our inadequacies and gives additional duties to develop our competencies" (LS3AP1).*

*"I make criticism when necessary and give suggestions. Of course, these are positive suggestions. I am trying to do it politely. " (MS2P).*

Besides, it was seen that one of the strategies that the principals often used was to be praised. A principal stated that he or she demonstrated this behaviour among others. "I try to praise them at the meetings we held together with the teachers and in the WhatsApp groups" (US1P). Moreover, it is important to point out the view of the assistant principal, who is 45 years old, about the principal's praise: "He praises us. But we do not need a lot of praise. In fact, we are 50 years old." (US1AP2). In this context, it can be said that the assistant principal's age is related to the level of considering the praise. Also, an assistant principal at another school at the similar socioeconomic level stated that the principal did not praise them and considered it a weakness of the principal: "The principal does not give us encouragement praise, He is weak in that respect." (LS2AP1).

The other strategy that the principal uses is providing autonomy. In this respect, some assistant principal states that they are not interrupted when they fulfil their duties. It was understood that this was needed in order for the assistant principal to operate the decision-making process, especially when the principal was not at school. Besides this, the assistant principal at a school emphasized that the principal gave them the task of arranging special and compassionate leave, but later they took it back without saying anything:

*"The desire of the principal to be part of all the tasks affects us negatively. He gives us responsibility but he does not give full authority. He just thinks he gives us authority. Actually, it's not like that. He said that we needed to inform him about our special and compassionate leave in the teachers' board meeting although he had already said that it was enough for him to be informed by the assistant principal in our previous conversations. It was very unpleasant for us." (LS1AP1).*

When the opinion of the principal was examined, it was understood that according to the principal's perception, the assistant principal cannot fulfil this duty. Yet another assistant principal in another school said that as long as they should be fair, their duties would go on. When the process in these two schools was evaluated, it was understood that principals took back the duties when they concerned the assistant principals were not fair while performing their tasks. Another strategy used by the principal is that they support the assistant principals against others even though they make big mistakes. This situation was summarized via a proverb "Don't let it out of this room":

*"Even if the assistant principal makes mistakes, we talk about them together. I defend them against others. I say to others there might be another reason. I try to support them, but when we are alone I tell him about the mistakes. In my opinion, the proverb is perfect for me: Don't let it out of this room!" (LS1P).*

It is useful to point out the views of a principal who gives support increases the desire for learning of assistant principals:

*"Before I took a special and compensation leave, I had left all the documents related to a teacher's change of duty place. The assistant principal called me on the phone and stated that he could make mistake because he had no idea on financial issues. But I insisted on him to prepare the documents. He really made mistake and as a result of this, public financial loss occurred. When inspectors came and wanted us to give defence about this financial loss, I stated that all responsible was belonging to me and I took all responsibilities for this financial mistake. After this event, the assistant principal was perfect at preparing financial papers and he became an expert in this area, even he started to give detail information to other schools." (MS2P).*

### **Theme 2: Contribution of daily tasks on the leadership self-efficacy of assistant principals**

The principals and assistant principals stated that the tasks were mostly managerial and various. They also reported that these duties were contributing to the solution of the problems, preparing them to become principal, providing opportunities to learn from their colleagues, supplying resources for teaching activities, helping school personnel and students, contributing to academic achievement, providing professional development and preventing problems. Controversially, some participants emphasized that their duties included routine work, there was no need for taking a risk, unnecessary and repetitive, and sometimes unexpected developments occurred.

A principal, who said that the duties were handled based on leaders' decision, stressed that the high number of leaders in the school made it difficult to decide. A principal assistant who supported this view stated that the principal was in the center and did not want the assistant principal to be in the front line. Similarly, an assistant principal, who often says that he carries out managerial work, stated that leadership behaviour was more prevalent while on duty and when the principal was out of school. A principal in a school in the mid-socio-economic environment stated that even in managerial duties, the person fulfils that duty by using his leadership skills, according to his readiness and goal:

*"I think assistant principals have often management-focused duties, sometimes leadership-oriented. Sometimes you give some managerial duties to assistant principals, but the leadership characteristic is distinguished. They can evaluate the situation from different points of view. It depends on their own readiness and goal. Sometimes even if you support them, it is not possible." (MS1P).*

When the interviews were evaluated, it was understood that the duties carried out by the assistant principals prepared them to be a principal. A principal who emphasized that some problems can be solved on an experiential basis expressed the difficulties of promoting from the teaching position to the principal. Similarly, another principal stated that those who did not serve as assistant principals learned the information about the directorship at work. In this context, it can be said that there was a trial-and-error process and loss of time occurred. In addition, talent and courage are mentioned as two important characteristics in the transition of

the assistant principal to the principal. It is useful to include the views of the assistant principal in a school in the lower socio-economic environment:

*"Managing people is something complex. People come up with problems. I had experience, I learned how to behave against problems and how to approach them. So, I think the duties support our leadership behaviors. I also believe that our duties are both useful and challenging. For this reason, every teacher should do administrative work for at least a year. This process improves the trainer too much. I've never thought that before."* (LS3AP2).

It seems that daily tasks make difficult to solve problems and they contribute to leadership self-efficacy. For example, an assistant principal stated that the most task of the school is the personal affairs and that he is responsible for this task. He also said that this task improves him. Besides, according to the opinion of the principal who worked in the same school, the lack of personnel was carried out by the assistant principal in the school and explored this with the insurance metaphor:

*"Our daily tasks support my leadership self-efficacy. I am responsible for the personal affairs that improve my leadership self-efficacy belief. I think my duty is constructive, challenging and interesting. Otherwise, there is no need to you. Most tasks are related to this. I think that the duties I do contribute to the solution of the problems."* (US1AP1).

*"I absolutely think that assistant principals contribute to the solution of the problems in our school. For example, our guide teacher is inadequate. Although there are four positions, there are two teachers. Sometimes they are at meetings. The assistant principals support them. Many problems are solved without going to the guidance service. Staff problems and physical problems are solved. In this context, I think that their job is to help school staff and students... That is, they are a kind of buffer."* (LS3P).

When the opinions expressed by the assistant principals provide a source of teaching work related to the individual effort in the daily tasks, it was understood that this situation is limited to improving the social conditions and providing the source of funding. It is useful to state the statements of three assistant principals:

*"Funding for teaching requires individual effort. For example, you will buy wall paint. You get paint and need the help of the municipality. It happens with individual relationships."* (MS1AP1).

*"Our activities are not enough to provide resources for teaching. We are doing theatre and we are going to provide resources for teaching with similar activities such as a fair."* (LS3AP2).

*"The things we do normally do not provide enough resources for teaching. We need to make more effort. We do pilot tests and so on."* (LS3AP1).

It was understood that studies on increasing the student achievement within instructional leadership are limited. An assistant principal at a school in the lower socio-economic environment said that this was due to the backgrounds of the students. In this context, it is understood that the characteristics of the students can affect the professional self-efficacy perceptions of the principals. Besides this, it is emphasized that student achievement is taken into account at various meetings held in the school. It is also stated that the courses

carried out at the school are aimed to increase student achievement. It seems that this kind of tasks is simplified with the change in the new central examination system:

*"We give importance to the achievement of the students and make various studies for this purpose. This is on our agenda at every meeting. The monotony of tasks changes from time to time. Sometimes it's very busy, sometimes it's like a marathon. We were busier during the Central Exam Transition to Upper Secondary Schools (CETUSS) period, now a little more relaxed." (LS1AP2).*

*"We do not do much of the work that contributes to the achievement of the school. The student profile is inadequate for it. Our students are not academically successful because they are mostly Romanian and other foreign students." (LS2AP2).*

One of the principal stated that assistant principals are faced with unexpected events as well as daily tasks. Apart from their official duties, it is understood that these unexpected events contribute their leadership self-efficacy. Similarly, the characteristics of students in a school in the lower socio-economic environment are shown as a factor that makes their duties dynamic and complex. So, it was understood that it is important to examine the success of a school in the respect of governing school that explains how the assistant principal approaches the events with the locomotive metaphor:

*"In this school, there is a normal division of duty of the assistant principal, but it is on paper. It may vary. There can be different kinds of things. There are standards, but others are dynamic situations. This school should be the driving force of the assistant principal. I should be a pioneer. You need to promote the development of the school." (LS3P).*

*"We manage a place with two administrative staff. There are people. There's mobility. We have to manage them. You need to be determined. It is difficult to manage." (LS3AP1).*

### **Theme 3: Criteria for distribution of tasks**

When the interviews with the principals and assistant principals were examined, it was understood that the meeting was held before the distribution of the duties. The principal said that "We make a meeting every Monday and determine the duties there." It was also stated that the duties were distributed according to the requests of the assistant principals. However, some principals distribute the duties based on the personal skills and qualifications of assistant principals. A view of a female assistant principal is important in terms of the gender perception:

*"They did not support me as a female at first, but then I left. After that, they offered me to come back and I came back... I was responsible for the income issues of the school. The principal knows our competencies and gives tasks according to these skills." (LS1AP2).*

## **CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION**

In this study, it was aimed to examine contributions of the principals, who work in the secondary school in Turkey, on the leadership self-efficacy beliefs of the assistant principals. As a result of the study, it was found

that the principals used different strategies to support the leadership role of the assistant principals. In this context, the principals stated that they accomplished many tasks with their assistant principals, they gave some advice to them about their duties, they praised them among others, they provided autonomy in their work, they encouraged them, and they taught them how to complete a task first. Bandura (1997) argues that verbal persuasion and modeling have a strong influence on the self-efficacy beliefs of an individual. Similarly, Schyns (2004) notes that leaders provide an opportunity for their subordinates to benefit from their experiences as well as being a model, and using verbally persuading to influence their self-efficacy.

Another strategy the principal uses is autonomy. In this regard, some assistant principals stated that they were not interrupted while doing their duties. In addition, the principals emphasized that they supported the assistant principals even when they made mistakes because their aim was to promote the development of leadership self-efficacy of the assistant principals. In addition to this, it was understood that the assistant principals' perceptions of professional performances could be affected depending on the profile of the students. When the literature was reviewed, it was seen that the contextual factors of the school in which the student characteristics were included influenced the leadership behaviours of principals. In this context, it can be seen similar expressions in the previous studies (Bossert et al., 1982; Hallinger, 2011; Köybaşı & Dönmez, 2017; May & Supovitz, 2011). Thus, it is necessary to examine the leadership behaviours considering variables at school because each variable shows various aspects according to the schools and their environments.

It was seen that the assistant principals were faced with unexpected events which have an important contribution to their leadership self-efficacy. In spite of these unexpected events in school, the ability to adapt and apply the strategies in order to solve the problems builds assistant principals' capacity. While using these strategies, the assistant principal needs to have a high level of leadership self-efficacy belief (Dimmock & Hattie, 1996; Leithwood et al., 2006). In this respect, it was understood that complex organizational problems contributed to the level of leadership self-efficacy of the assistant principals.

Another result of the study showed that the principal distributed tasks to his assistants, but he wanted to show his/her leadership behaviour. In other words, principals shared tasks but they did not share their leadership. Recent discussions revealed that there was an increased interest in how leadership is shared among managers, teachers, and families in the perspective of researchers and policymakers (Gronn, 2003, Spillane, 2006). However, findings on shared leadership emphasized that the key element is the ability of the principals to demonstrate leadership behaviours (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Fullan (2007) also pointed out that principals who focus on the capacity of building and develop other leaders' competencies had an important role in supporting schools for the educational reforms. As a result, it was understood that the leadership of the principal contributed to the leadership of others. However, according to the expressions in the study, the principals in Turkey does not want to share their leadership behaviours.

Another result of this study was that daily tasks of assistant principals prepared them to become principals. It was stated that the task of the principal was to assign tasks to the assistant principals to share their duties for

this purpose. Sharing the authority in this framework should prepare the assistant principal for higher positions (Kwan, 2009). However, as opposed to this study, it was found that the principal cannot adequately support the preparation of assistant principals in leadership roles (Harvey, 1994; Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012). This can be evaluated in the context of the contextual factors of each school. Many factors seem to be important, such as the personal characteristics of the principal, the adaption of educational reforms by assistant principals. The other finding was that the duties of the assistant principals were distributed at meetings. It was also understood that at these meetings, the duties were shared according to the requests of the assistant principals. However, it was observed that some principals distributed the tasks according to the personal skills and qualifications of assistant principals.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the results of the study, the following suggestions were developed. First, training should be organized to increase awareness of principals to develop leadership self-efficacy of assistant principals. As a result of this research, principals may design an in-service training program for developing their assistant principals while performing their duties. Also, sample materials for principals such as printed books, booklets, and brochures should be prepared and submitted to schools. In addition, projects should be planned so that different applications can be shared. The principal should be also rewarded when his assistant principal becomes a successful principal in the future or when he is awarded. Activities should be planned to improve the leadership skills of principals. Finally, additional research should be conducted to examine the effects of principals at different school types and levels of education on the self-efficacy beliefs of assistant principals.

## OKUL MÜDÜRÜNÜN LİDERLİK UYGULAMALARININ MÜDÜR YARDIMCILARININ LİDERLİK ÖZ YETERLİĞİNE KATKISININ DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ

### TÜRKÇE GENİŞ ÖZET

#### GİRİŞ

Son yıllarda eğitim araştırmacıları, öz-yeterlik inançlarının okul müdürleri ve müdür yardımcılarının liderlik performansı ve öğrenci başarısı üzerindeki potansiyel etkilerini daha kapsamlı bir şekilde incelemeye başlamıştır (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Smith, Guarino, Strom, & Adams, 2006). Bu çalışmada, müdür yardımcılarının liderlik davranışlarının gelişiminde önemli bir yordayıcı değişken olarak değerlendirilen öz-yeterlik inanışları ele alınmıştır. Ayrıca, müdürlerin liderlik uygulamalarının, müdür yardımcısının liderlik öz-yeterliği üzerinde küçük ama anlamlı bir etkisi olduğuna ilişkin kanıtlar bu çalışmanın bir diğer boyutunu oluşturmaktadır (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006). Alanyazın incelendiğinde, okul müdürlerinin birlikte çalıştığı müdür yardımcılarını müdürlük görevine yeterli düzeyde hazırlayamadıklarına ilişkin ciddi kanıtlar bulunmaktadır (Harvey, 1994; Hausman, Nebeker, McCreary, & Donaldson, 2002; Oleszewski, Shoho, & Barnett, 2012). Konu bu açıdan değerlendirildiğinde, araştırmanın müdür yardımcılarının liderlik öz-yeterliliğinin gelişiminde okul müdürlerin kullandığı stratejilere ilişkin alanyazına katkı sunması beklenmektedir. Bu çerçevede çalışma, ortaokul kademesinde görev yapan okul müdürlerinin birlikte çalıştığı müdür yardımcılarının liderlik becerilerinin gelişiminde oynadığı rolü ele almaktadır. Çalışmanın amacı, okul müdürünün liderlik uygulamalarının müdür yardımcılarının liderlik öz-yeterlik inançlarına katkısını değerlendirmektir.

#### YÖNTEM

Türkiye’de ortaokul kademesinde görev yapan okul müdürlerinin birlikte çalıştıkları müdür yardımcılarının liderlik öz yeterliği üzerindeki katkısının çözümlenmesini konu alan bu çalışma nitel araştırma modelinde olgu bilim deseninde (fenomolojik) bir çalışma olarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu kapsamda araştırmada, nitel araştırmanın varsayımları kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın nitel verilerine yönelik olarak amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kapsamında ölçüt örnekleme ve maksimum çeşitlilik örnekleme kullanılmıştır. Böylece, farklı koşullara sahip okulların müdür ve müdür yardımcılarında veri toplanarak örnekleme çeşitliliği sağlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu ölçütler doğrultusunda araştırmanın çalışma grubunu Ankara ilinde altı okulda görev yapan altı müdür ve on müdür yardımcısı olmak üzere toplam on altı kişi oluşturmuştur. Araştırmanın verileri, araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen iki ayrı yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme formu aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Bunun yanında veri toplama sürecine başlamadan önce liderlik öz yeterliğine ilişkin kuramsal çerçeveden yararlanılarak tema ve kodlar belirlenmiştir. Yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniğinin uygulanması sürecinde ilk olarak ses kaydı izni alınmış ve

ses kaydına sıcak bakmayan iki katılımcının görüşleri araştırmacılar tarafından raporlaştırılmıştır. Bununla birlikte, araştırmacının iç geçerliğini artırmak amacıyla araştırmacı ile katılımcılar arasında güven oluşturmaya çalışılmış ve görüşme süresi bu güvenin sağlanması açısından uzun tutulmaya çalışılmıştır (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Araştırmanın amacı doğrultusunda görüşme sürecinde elde edilen nitel veriler, nitel veri analizi tekniklerinden biri olan, içerik analizi kullanılarak değerlendirilmiştir. Bu aşamada katılımcılara ait ses kayıtları kâğıda dökülmüş ve kelimelere, ifadelere, kullanılan dile, diyalogların yapısına ve özelliklerine, kullanılan sembolik anlatımlara ve benzetmelere dayanarak tanımlayıcı bir analiz NVivo 8 yazılımı kullanılarak yapılmıştır. Ayrıca, bazı katılımcıların ifadelerine doğrudan yer verilerek araştırmacının dış geçerliğine katkı sunulması hedeflenmiştir. Öte yandan, araştırmacının iç geçerliğini artırmak için tema ve kodların belirlenmesi ve verilerin çözümlenmesi süreçlerine ilişkin alan uzmanı ile araştırma konusuna ve nitel araştırma yönteminde yetkin ölçme-değerlendirme uzmanından görüş alınmıştır. Yine araştırmacının iç geçerliğine dönük olarak katılımcı teyidine başvurulmuştur. Araştırmanın güvenilirliğine katkı sunması açısından farklı bir araştırmacıdan yardım istenmiş ve bir okulun verilerinin çözümlenmesi ve kodlamalarının yapılması istenmiştir. Ardından araştırmacılar elde ettiği bulgular arasında karşılaştırma yapılmış ve aralarında uyum olduğu görülmüştür.

## BULGULAR

Araştırmanın çalışma grubunda yer alan okul müdürlerinin görüşleri incelendiğinde, birlikte çalıştıkları müdür yardımcılarıyla çoğu görevleri beraber yaptıklarını, çalışmalar hakkında geri dönütler sunduğunu, tavsiyelerde bulunduğunu, onları başkalarının yanında övdüğünü, çalışmalarında özerklik sunduğunu, cesaretlendirdiğini ve ilk önce işlerin nasıl yapılacağını onlara öğrettiğini belirtmişlerdir. Benzer biçimde müdür yardımcılarını, okul müdürleri ile birçok görevde birlikte çalıştıklarından ve onlardan tavsiyeler aldıklarından söz etmişlerdir. Ayrıca, okul müdürünün kendilerine övgülerde bulunduğunu, çalışmalarını hakkında geribildirim sunduğunu, çalışmalarında özerklik sağladığını belirtmişlerdir. Mevcut araştırma bulguları detaylı olarak incelendiğinde, okul müdürlerinin kendi deneyimlerinden yola çıkarak müdür yardımcılarını toplantılar aracılığıyla ya da yanına çağırarak tavsiyelerde bulunduğu ve geri bildirimler sunduğu belirtilmiştir. Diğer taraftan, okul müdürünün sıklıkla kullandığı stratejilerden birisi de övgüde bulunma olduğu görülmüştür. Bir okul müdürü bu davranışı başkalarının bulunduğu ortamlarda yaptığını belirtmiştir. Okul müdürünün kullandığı bir diğer strateji ise özerklik sağlamasıdır. Bu konuda bazı müdür yardımcılarını görevlerini yerine getirirken kendilerine müdahale edilmesini istemediğini belirtmektedir. Özellikle okul müdürünün okulda bulunmadığı zamanlarda müdür yardımcısının karar verme sürecini işletebilmesi için buna ihtiyaç duyulduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Okul müdürü ve müdür yardımcılarını, günlük yürütülen işlerin çoğunlukla yönetsel ağırlıklı ve farklı türden olduğunu belirtmiştir. Bununla birlikte bu işlerin sorunların çözümüne katkı sunan, müdür olmaya hazırlayan, meslektaştan öğrenme fırsatı sunan, öğretim çalışmalarına kaynak sağlayan, okul personeline ve öğrencilere yardım eden, okul başarısına katkı sunan, mesleki gelişimi sağlayan ve sorunların çıkmasını engelleyen özellikte olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Bazı katılımcılar ise görevlerinin, rutin işleri içerdiğini, risk almayı gerektirmediğini, gereksiz ve tekrara dayalı olduğunu ve nadiren ise beklenmedik, anlık gelişmelerin olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Diğer taraftan, okul müdürleri ve müdür yardımcılarını elde edilen görüşmeler incelendiğinde görevlerin dağıtımından önce

toplantı yapıldığı anlaşılmıştır. Ayrıca, söz konusu toplantılarda görevlerin çoğu zaman müdür yardımcılarının istekleri göz önüne alınarak paylaşıldığı dile getirilmiştir. Bunun yanında bazı okul müdürleri, müdür yardımcılarının kişisel becerilerini ve niteliklerini göz önüne alarak bir paylaşımında bulunduğu anlaşılmıştır.

### TARTIŞMA VE SONUÇ

Araştırma sonucuna göre okul müdürünün birlikte görev yaptığı müdür yardımcılarının liderlik rolünün desteklenmesi üzere farklı stratejiler kullandığı görülmüştür. Bu çerçevede, iş birliğine dayalı bir yaklaşımı benimsendiği, çalışmalar hakkında geri dönütler sunulduğu, tavsiyelerde bulunduğu, başkalarının yanında övgü sözleri kullanıldığı, çalışmalarında özerlik sunulduğu, cesaretlendirme yaklaşımları kullanıldığı ve ilk önce işlerin nasıl yapılacağına öğretildiği ifade edilmiştir. Diğer taraftan araştırma kapsamında müdür yardımcılarının öğrencilerin özgeçmişlerine bağlı olarak iş yürütme kapasitelerindeki algılarını etkileyebildiği anlaşılmıştır. İlgili alanyazın incelendiğinde, öğrenci özelliklerinin de içinde yer aldığı okulun bağlamsal faktörlerinin okul yöneticilerinin liderlik davranışlarını etkilediği görülmektedir. Bu kapsamda araştırma bulgularının geçmiş çalışmalarla tutarlık gösterdiği söylenebilir. Bu doğrultuda, liderlik faaliyetlerini içerisinde bulunduğu bağlamsal değişkenleri dikkate alarak incelemek gerektiği söylenebilir. Bu çalışmada ulaşılan bir başka sonuç müdür yardımcılarının yaptığı günlük işlerin onları müdür olmaya hazırladığı yönündedir. Müdür yardımcılara bu amaç doğrultusunda görevleri paylaşması okul müdürünün bir görevi olarak belirtilmektedir. Bu çerçevede yetkinin paylaşılması müdür yardımcılarını için bir üst göreve hazırlayıcı niteliktedir. Araştırmadan elde edilen sonuçlara dayalı olarak okul müdürlerinin müdür yardımcılarının liderlik öz-yeterlik duygularını geliştirmesinin önemine yönelik farkındalıklarını arttırabilmek üzere eğitimler düzenlenmelidir. Bunun yanında, okul müdür yardımcısı başarılı bir müdür olduğunda ya da ödül aldığı anda onun yetişmesinde etkili olan eski okul müdürü de ödüllendirilmelidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Öz yeterlik, liderlik, okul müdürü, müdür yardımcısı, kariyer gelişimi.

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## APPENDIX-1

*Interview Questions for A Secondary School Principal*

1. In what ways do you support the leadership self-efficacy beliefs of assistant principals in the school?  
Could you share an experience that you feel you influenced assistant principals' leadership self-efficacy beliefs in a positive/negative way?
2. How do the daily tasks that assistant principals perform contribute to the leadership self-efficacy of them?
3. What criteria do you follow when distributing tasks to assistant principals?

*Interview Questions for A Secondary School Assistant Principal*

1. In what ways does the principal support your leadership self-efficacy belief? Which situations and factors created by the principal affect your leadership self-efficacy belief in a positive/negative way?  
Can you share a memory that affects you?
2. How do your daily tasks support your leadership self-efficacy?
3. What criteria does the principal follow when distributing tasks to you? What does your principal do for the development of your leadership skills?