



An Investigation into Management Styles and Creative Leadership Characteristics of School Administrators

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research is to examine the management styles and creative leadership characteristics of school administrators. The study used a descriptive and quantitative survey model. It was conducted on 50 academics and associates based on voluntary participation. The research used two different questionnaires. The scale “Creative Leadership Qualities of School Administrators” was used to measure the perceptions of teachers regarding innovative leadership qualities. It was formulated as a five-point Likert scale by Uçar and Sađlam (2019). The other scale used in the study was the “Scale of Management Styles Exhibited by School Principals” developed by Asar (2019) as a five-point Likert scale to collect the data. The study found no significant difference in the management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators based on variables such as sex, age, professional seniority and educational level of teachers.

Keywords: Creative leadership, management styles, administrator, teacher

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, humans have needed various things to survive and live in better conditions. Many of these needs are beyond the capacity of a single individual to meet. Hence, people have come together, seeking mutual assistance and spending more time together along with their increased needs. Humans have established organizations to work together for a common purpose. As the goal became permanent, there was a constant need for organizations. Robbins, Decenzo, and Coulter (2013) note that people come together to achieve permanent goals and create structures called organizations. Robbins and Judge (2013) state that an organization is a constantly operating social structure that exists due to people’s need for each other. Therefore, people meet their needs by forming regular and continuous associations under the roof of an organization. Dewey (2004) suggests that humans are social beings and points to the need for mutual empathy. Thus, the common aim of humans as social beings is to come together under the structure of an organization created for various purposes.

People who come together to achieve a common goal need leadership to achieve their goals (Robbins et al., 2013). Because the existence of management is based on two or more people coming together for a common purpose, management gains continuity through the organization. Human-made and goal-oriented organizations incorporate people to achieve common objectives. The reason for the existence of an organization is its goals and the existence and ongoing management of an organization depend on these goals. It is the administrator’s responsibility to accomplish the organization’s goals. As stated by Aydın (2015), it is the responsibility of an administrator to align employees’ joint efforts with the organization’s goals. Hence, leaders are expected to guide people towards their goals to sustain their presence within the organization. Therefore, administrators seek ways to reach these goals through people. Chief administrators use the styles derived from personality, knowledge and experience to motivate people towards their goals (Başaran, 2004). As Bursaliođlu (1999) noted, administrators are influenced by others in creating their own style. As a result, it is expected that the management’s leadership style becomes closely related to some personal characteristics with which it establishes a management relationship, in addition to their own. The situation is predictable. In this context, the question of what assumptions exist regarding the relationship between an administrator’s subordinates’ innate characteristics and their characteristics related to leadership in the administrator’s leadership is one of the topics discussed in the literature. Researchers in management have noticed the impact of human nature on leadership styles and have attempted to explain how people can be rejuvenated by their inherent human nature. Douglas McGregor has determined that this assumption is incorrect as administrators act based on the belief that people

are inherently lazy. He defined the pessimistic approach to human nature by Theory X and the optimistic approach by Theory Y (M. Aydın, 2014; Ozkol, 2014). Abraham Maslow also studied human nature and argued that people act to fulfill their needs that have a hierarchical structure (Güngör, 2014; Robbins & Judge, 2013). William Ouchi, who conducted business research in the United States and Japan, used the Z theory to explain that a person can have both good and bad qualities, taking into account the assumptions of the X and Y theories (Başaran, 2004). According to Ouchi (1989), neither pure individuals nor organizations should be at the forefront of management. He argued that appropriate management depends on the compromise between desires of the organization and people.

Today's administrators are expected to adopt a leadership style that embodies the characteristics of modern management, but classical management approaches still persist (Tortop, İsbir, Aykaç, Yayman & Özer, 2012). They are expected to have a modern management approach, but they may also exhibit management styles that include traditional management approaches. According to Aydın (2014), the leadership styles of administrators are primarily based on their assumptions about humanity, in addition to other factors. This clearly demonstrates the importance of knowing the human assumptions of management to demonstrate the management mentality and give ideas for leadership styles.

The changes in leadership styles lead to new studies in leadership and these studies show new approaches in the field. These approaches have been identified as modern leadership theory. One of the most important characteristics of these modern managements is a leader who improves employee creativity and tries to unleash their imagination (Demir Uslu, 2011). Creativity is a term that has been defined in various ways, such as making discovery and innovation (Yanık, 2007), taking on semantic forms based on the existing forms (Harris, 2009), a set of responses unveiled for situations encountered (Rouquette, 2007), developing and transferring new ideas expected to be useful (Mentor, 2011), and preparing the new by regulating the old (Bentley, 1999). Creative leadership utilizes creativity for innovation and change, where imagination is active, an effective communication network is established, risks are actively managed, and problem-solving is performed effectively (Agbor, 2008; Alder, 2004; Badejo, 2016; Ball, 2018). Leaders who have the quality of creative leadership have also developed and renewed themselves by acquiring many new leadership qualities. Leaders who respect development and change, can tolerate differences, are innovative, have high imagination and developed communication skills are expected to be able to understand and solve problems faced quickly, and to have the ability to manage risks. New leadership approaches, where problem-solving skills are deemed a key element, have along the necessity of characteristics such as perception, understanding and synthesis, which has led to the understanding that new age leaders need to have a certain expertise. Expert leaders who can effectively use their intelligence to solve problems have come out of the old leadership approach and embraced a trend that prioritizes creativity in their management approach. Thus, intelligence also emerges as an element of leadership skills (Yanık, 2007; Demir Uslu, 2011; Stoll and Temperley, 2009; Rouquette, 2007; Marşap, 2009; Harris, 2009).

The main aim of this research is to examine the management styles and creative leadership characteristics of school administrators. Answers are sought to the following questions in line with the study objective:

- 1) Do management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators show a significant difference according to teachers' sex variable?
- 2) Do management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators show a significant difference according to teachers' age variable?
- 3) Do management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators show a significant difference according to teachers' professional seniority?
- 4) Do management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators show a significant difference according to teachers' educational background?

Schools, as educational institutions, have an important place in education process and their importance has increased over years. Social structures, needs, interests and social processes are developing rapidly and technological changes accompany this development every second. The rapidly changing and evolving factors are affecting schools and schools are trying to adapt to the changes and developments. School leaders who are considered leaders in education have substantial responsibilities in adapting to changes and developments within the school. The changing process over the years has brought along some changes in leadership mentality, leading to the emergence of a new senses of leadership. Understanding technology, development and change, understanding the state of problems caused by these factors and grasping them quickly, finding solutions and actively involving stakeholders in the organization, and creating a creative approach for them to improve their productivity become necessary for leaders (Yangil, 2016; Gündüz & Doğan, 2009).

There are many studies, showing that school leadership affects school success (Argon & Dilekçi, 2014; Başaran, 2017; Castro, 2016; Örs, 2010; Özdemir, 2016; Teyfur, 2011). The results of these studies have shown that managerial behaviors determine the quality of education. Leaders' behaviors reflect their leadership styles when carrying out their duties. Therefore, the management style of school managements is an indicator of how

educational activities are carried out and the actions of school leaders in fulfilling this responsibility are of undeniable importance.

Attention is drawn to the similarities between management styles and creative leadership in literature discussions. In this context, the present study aims to combine these two concepts. Considering the research conducted in Turkey and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), no study was found to measure the relationship between creative leadership and management styles. In this sense, the present study aims to make a scientific contribution to the literature.

2. METHOD

Research Model

The study used a quantitative research design with a descriptive survey model. According to Karasar (2012), survey models aim to describe an existing situation as it is. According to Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, and Demirel (2012), survey models collect data to examine certain characteristics of groups by mapping. Therefore, when scanning a model, it is necessary to explain the current situation as it is without intervention. Accordingly, in this study, assumptions about school administrators' creative leadership and the leadership styles they offer were examined without the intervention of the participants.

Characteristics of the Questionnaire and Population Sample

The research used two different questionnaires. The Creative Leadership Qualities of School Administrators This scale is used to measure teachers' views on creative leadership characteristics. The scale was formulated as a five-point Likert scale by Uçar and Sağlam (2019). Uçar and Sağlam (2019) tested the reliability of the scale using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and calculated its total score as 0.98. The other scale used in the study was the Scale of Management Styles Exhibited by School Principals developed by Asar (2019) as a five-point Likert scale to collect the data. Asar (2019) tested the reliability of the scale using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and calculated it as 0.79 for the total score. Furthermore, it aims to be administered to academics and associates.

The scale consists of three parts. The first section includes four questions related to personal information, the second section includes the Scale of Management Styles Exhibited by School Principals and the third section includes the Creative Leadership Qualities of School Administrators. A five-point Likert scale was used with responses of "1: Strongly disagree", "2: Disagree", "3: Neither agree nor disagree", "4: Agree" and "5: Strongly agree".

3. DISCUSSION, RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study obtained necessary permissions and used the Scale of Management Styles Exhibited by School Principals and the Creative Leadership Qualities of School Administrators. The IBM SPSS Statistics 25 software was used to interpret the data obtained in the study. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages and graphics were used. Because there was no normal distribution and there were numerical differences between the variables, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between binary arguments from non-parametric tests and the Kruskal-Wallis was used to find out if there was a significant difference between more than two variables. A p-value of less than 0.05 was required with a 95% confidence interval for a significant difference.

Hypotheses of the Study

H0: There is no significant difference among teachers in terms of administrators' management styles and creative leadership characteristics.

H1: Management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators show a significant difference in terms of teachers' sex variable.

H2: Management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators show a significant difference in terms of teachers' age variable.

H3: Management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators show a significant difference in terms of teachers' professional seniority.

H4: Management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators show a significant difference in terms of teachers' educational background.

The five-point Likert scales are rated between 1 and 5 points. The Likert-type items were rated as follows: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither agree nor disagree, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly agree. In the evaluation, reverse items were taken as negative, so were summed up with other items and the total score was obtained. In total, there were 16 reverse items and 19 were regular. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18, 24, 30 and 35 are reverse coded. In this consideration, the results were obtained using the Scale of Management Styles Exhibited by School Principals.

Findings, Interpretation and Discussion

Findings 1: Do management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators show a significant difference according to teachers' sex variable?

Table 1: Mean rank values

	Sex	N	Mean rank	Total rank
Total	Female	34	23.01	782.50
	Male	16	30.78	492.50
	Total	50		

Table 1 shows that the mean rank of women is lower than that of men. Table 2 shows that this difference is not statistically significant ($p=0.079 > 0.05$).

Table 2: Mann Whitney-U test result (female-male)

	Total
Mann-Whitney U	187.500
Wilcoxon W	782.500
Z	-1.759
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.079

In this case, there is no significant difference in the views of teachers on the management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators in terms of sex variable and H1 is rejected.

Findings 2: Do management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators show a significant difference according to teachers' age variable?

Table 3: Mean rank values (age)

	Age	N	Mean rank
Total	21-30	6	19.75
	31-40	27	26.63
	41-50	13	21.96
	51 and above	4	38.00
	Total	50	

Table 3 shows that the mean rank of those aged 51 years and above is lower than others.

Table 4: Kruskal Wallis test (age)

Seniority in teaching	N	Mean rank	
Total	1-5 years	13	29.23
	6-10 years	19	23.42
	11-15 years	8	23.94
	16 years and above	10	25.85
	Total	50	

Table 4 shows the results of Kruskal-Wallis. Table 4 shows that this difference is not statistically significant ($p=0.186 > 0.05$).

In this case, there is no significant difference in the views of teachers on the management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators in terms of age variable and H2 is rejected.

Findings 3: Do management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators show a significant difference according to teachers' professional seniority?

Table 5: Mean rank values (seniority)

Seniority in teaching		N	Mean rank
Total	1-5 years	13	29.23
	6-10 years	19	23.42
	11-15 years	8	23.94
	16 years and above	10	25.85
	Total	50	

Table 5 shows the mean ranks by seniority in teaching. Table 6 shows the results of Kruskal-Wallis. Table 4 shows that this difference is not statistically significant ($p=0.720>0.05$).

Table 6: Kruskal-Wallis (seniority)

	Total
Kruskal-Wallis H	1.337
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	0.720

In this case, there is no significant difference in the views of teachers on the management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators in terms of the variable of seniority in the teaching profession and H3 is rejected.

Findings 4: Do management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators show a significant difference according to teachers' educational background?

Table 7: Mean rank values (educational background)

Educational background		N	Mean rank
Total	Master's degree	14	27.29
	Doctorate	17	25.38
	16 years and above	19	24.29
	Total	50	

Table 7 shows the mean ranks by educational background in teaching. Table 8 shows the results of Kruskal-Wallis. Table 8 shows that this difference is not statistically significant ($p=0.843>0.05$).

Table 8: Kruskal-Wallis (educational background)

	Total
Kruskal-Wallis H	0.343
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	0.843

In this case, there is no significant difference in the views of teachers on the management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators in terms of the educational background variable in the teaching profession and H4 is rejected.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Consequently, there is no significant difference in the management styles and creative leadership characteristics of administrators based on variables such as sex, age, professional seniority and educational level of teachers. The same study should be conducted in different institutions to investigate whether the results change as the sample size increases. Further research to be conducted across institutions can also enrich the literature.

- This study is limited to 50 administrators. More precise results can be obtained with a larger sample size.
- Further research can be conducted with larger institutions and administrators and the results can be compared with those of the present study.
- The relationship between administrators' management styles and various variables can be examined.
- This study used quantitative research method. Further similar research can use both quantitative and qualitative research methods and compare the data obtained.

- There are limited studies in the literature addressing administrators' management styles. More research can be conducted to contribute to the literature on this subject.

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