

## Evaluation of the Standards for Recruiting and Training Elementary School Principals Used in Some European Union Countries by Teachers and School Principals in Turkey

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This study purposes to determine how adoptable and applicable teachers and school administrators in Turkey think the practice of selecting and training elementary school administrators is in England, France and Germany, as well as how adoptable and applicable “Elementary School Principal Selecting and Training Model” is, which is developed considering the conditions in Turkey. The sampling is composed of 356 school administrators and 382 teachers working in 121 public schools in provincial centers in Turkey. The data required for the research has been compiled through the scale “The Standards for Selecting, Appointing and Training Elementary School Principals” developed by the researchers. In the analysis of data, percentage, frequency, arithmetical mean and standard deviation have been used for descriptive statistics, and t-test has been used for unrelated sampling as interpretative statistics technique. It is concluded in the research that the model is found to be adoptable by elementary school administrators and teachers in Turkey, and it is thought to be applicable although its level of adoptability is lower than that of the model used in the Turkish education system. The level of adoptability in all sub-dimensions of the model is higher than the level of applicability.

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### Introduction

Educational administration became a scientific study that transformed and developed especially after the Second World War. However, professional training of principals in education and professionalism in educational administration have not become prevalent

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enough worldwide. The reason for that is a consistent notion of management describing all managerial functions and allowing forecast of all managerial applications, which is accepted by all related parties, has not yet been developed. This hinders agreement on the concepts of educational administration, as a result of which an agreement cannot be reached so as to establish a common understanding about the educational administrator training programs and to identify particular components. The optimum way in training school principals has been advocated as training based on practice as opposed to concepts occasionally proposed; education as opposed to research; being general as opposed to being specific (Calderhead, 1997; McIntyre, 1993; Forsyth & Murphy, 1999; Walker, 1969; Griffiths, 1977).

Selecting and training principals in education has two dimensions. In the first dimension, the analysis, research and concepts discussing the answer to the question “How principals should be selected and trained?” are covered. In the second dimension, the answer to the question “How principals in education are selected and trained?” is considered (Balci, 1988). As seen, the first dimension attempts to find out the ideal whereas the second dimension reflects the reality.

Alternative approaches have been proposed to decide how programs for training principals in education should be developed. Some of them are: (1) *Task oriented training program*: Training programs are structured according to the duties of the principal. (2) *Process oriented program*: This approach anticipates centralization of training programs around significant administrative processes. (3) *Concept based program*: This approach considers school a social institution, and it is based on conceptual formulation such as system concept, organizational concept and individuality concept. (4) *Interdisciplinary and multidiscipline training program*: Training programs are based on certain interdisciplinary approaches and the basic notions of related disciplines. Basically, this approach is performance-based, and proposes the cooperation of field oriented disciplines (Sergiovanni, Burlingame, Coombs & Nos, 1980; Balci, 1988).

“Competencies” and “roles” undertaken have a significant role in selecting and training school principals. Parallelism is observed between the competency as well as fields of competency of education and school principals, and their roles and fields of roles. This ascertainment can be attributed to competency and role relation, and such a parallelism is both natural and rational. As known, in a general sense, role is the whole of the behavior expected from a person at a certain post. Competency, on the other hand, is the existence of certain knowledge, skills and attitudes to display the expected behavior. In other words, the role of the school principal defines his areas of responsibility whereas his competency defines his being equipped with knowledge, skills and attitudes to fulfill his responsibilities. Hence, school principals should have competency both in school management leadership and educational leadership (Balci, 1988).

In general, programs for training principals in education passionately disallows principals to be far away from or insensitive to the social, economic and political context of the society they live in, aims that they earn an advocate at their earning an advocate identity that intervene social and political fields (Sisman & Turan, 2003).

Nowadays in Turkey, an important development that deeply affects the education system in general and schools in particular, in addition to globalization and information society is the phenomenon of Turkey’s entering European Union (Balci, 2000; 2004). Turkey was unanimously approved as the European Union nominee country during the summit of EU state and government head meeting in Helsinki on 10-11 December 1999. Certain steps have

been taken so that Turkish education system complies with EU education system and standards, and an EU office has been formed in the Ministry of Education (MoNE, 2006). Analyzing the education system of the member countries shall be guidance in forming a roadmap during the EU accession period. For this reason, studying the procedure for selecting, training and appointing school principals, especially in the developed EU countries, is considered a subject worth analyzing.

The research question in this study is analyzing the adoptability and applicability of the standards for selecting, training and appointing elementary school principals in developed countries in EU by teachers and principals in Turkey during EU accession period.

Considering the difficulty in studying all countries in the European Union, the practice of selecting, training and appointing elementary school principals in England, Germany and France, which are the three biggest countries forming the core of European Union in political, economic and socio-cultural sense, has been evaluated in this study.

When education and school administration in European Union countries is considered, the picture generally observed is as following: In Europe, systematic research and development attempts for training principals in education initially started in Sweden in 1979 with “school leadership program” that lasted six years (Dalin, 1980), as a result of which selecting and training administrators in education and school principals have gained importance especially in EU countries. Governments face more demands for schools to become more effective. Local authorities hold school principals liable for school quality and performance. To illustrate, in some countries such as Sweden and England, parents and community leaders are more powerfully represented in school rules and organs of government (Thody et al, 2007).

### ***Selecting, Appointing and Training Elementary School Principals in England, France and Germany***

England, Germany and France, which are the three biggest countries forming the core of European Union, have different administrative structures. In these countries, the management of education system in general, and the management of elementary schools in particular show variations depending on the country’s public administration approach. France has a rigid centralist structuring whereas Germany, which has a system based on states, and Britain, where liberalism and autonomy are prevalent, have decentralized systems. Therefore, decision of the central government is the determining factors in selecting and appointing school principals in France while school councils made up of related stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, students and local authorities are closely involved in decisions in Britain and Germany.

Comparing recruiting and training systems of school principal of the countries within the scope of the study; that is the systems of Turkey, England, France and Germany it might be noticed that working as a teacher is the common condition to apply for being recruited as principal at all the countries (Akin, 2012; Sungu, 2012, p. 48).

Similarities and differences between the standards for selecting, training and appointing (Cinkir 1999; DfES, 2004; Erdogan, 2000; European Commission, 2000; Eurydice, 1996; 2005a; 2005b; Hausman & Boyd, 1994; Hopes & Döbrich, 2001; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Osborn & Mc Ness, 2001; Solakoğlu, 2006; 2004; Sungu, 2012; Thody et al, 2007; TTA, 1998) school principals in England, France and Germany can be identified as following:

- In England and Germany, employing and selecting school principals is realized by a council consisting of related parties (principals, teachers, parents' representatives, students' representatives, local government representatives) whereas in France, central authority is in charge.
- In England, teaching diploma, master's degree, Ph.D. degree or an equivalent certificate approved by the government is required to become a school principal. However, the general tendency is Germany and France is having the qualification to become a teacher at the school where one is to be appointed as the principal.
- Experience, seniority and competence are significant criteria in applying for and being appointed as school principal in all three countries.
- In France, an examination is given for selecting school principals while an interview is conducted in England and Germany in addition to considering the certificates obtained.
- In-service training programs have a considerable role in training school principals in all three countries. Such programs are conducted by professional organizations in England (former name: Teacher Training Association- TTA, new name: Teacher Development Association- TDA). However, they are conducted by central government in France and by states and local institutions in Germany.
- In Germany and France, a minimum 5 year teaching experience is a must to be appointed as a school principal. Different from the two other countries, age limit (30-56) and A class state official qualification are expected to be met in France. In England, experience is a prerequisite.
- The procedure to be appointed as a school principal works as following in England and Germany: Vacant posts for school principals are announced and applications of candidates are evaluated by school councils formed by stakeholders, after which applications are submitted to the local authorities for appointment. In France, announcement is not made for vacant posts. Instead, selection and appointment of candidates are made by the central authorities. In Germany, each school gives a job advertisement listing the required qualifications. In other words, job advertisement for the principal may vary depending on the characteristics and requirements of the school.
- Interview is conducted related to the background, experience and professionalism in school principal selection exams in England, Germany and France. While written exam is given in addition to the interview in France, it is not the case in the other two countries. In England, after candidates are selected, whether they are supposed to obtain school principal certificate in training programs depends on the level of success in the exam.
- Candidates are observed teaching, chairing a meeting and working on a case study in the principal selection exam in some states of Germany and in France. In England, in addition to these, several other activities (shadowing an experienced principal, brainstorming session, taking part in school development projects) are also carried out during training period.
- In France, a two-phase exam to become a school principal is given once a year, the first phase being the written knowledge exam, and the second phase being the interview. In the knowledge exam, laws related to education, general management institutions, school administration and pedagogical knowledge are tested. In the interview, general knowledge is tested. The successful candidates attend a one-year in-school principal training at Ecole Normal Superior (ENS) in Paris, during when they continue to get paid (Ada, 1997).

- In England, the level of candidates who have been successful in the selection exam is evaluated and they are trained accordingly. The training may range from entering an exit test to attending a two-year intensive training program. In France, the successful candidates attend in-service training programs during their two-year trainee principal period. In Germany, the successful candidates attend a training program before being assigned to the post and they have to take part in in-service training programs to get equipped during the first few years of their post as a principal.
- In England, successful candidates are allocated funds for training.
- In England, training programs for successful candidates cover contemporary management knowledge and skills, such as quality education, higher standards, collaboration with the environment, human resource management, efficient school, school financing, leadership, decision-making, communication, school vision and mission, strategic targets. However, in France, training a principal who would meet the requirements of bureaucracy (representing the state, tracing exams, providing security, dealing with education) is mainly focused on. In Germany, training programs including relatively contemporary management practices (managing school, organizing and developing, relationships with the environment, school quality, image and development, leadership) are applied though not as contemporary as in England.
- In England, training programs for school principals are prepared further to the views of teachers, experienced and successful school principals, professional associations, local education authorities and universities whereas limited number of stakeholders such as trainers, experts and in-service training unit contribute to designing training programs. However, no such finding has been noted in the related literature about France.
- Several stakeholders (trainers, academicians, experienced principals, inspectors and managers in different fields) may take part in school principal training practices in England while such participation is rather limited in Germany and France.

To sum up, school principal selection and training practice in England is quite intensive at high standards and based on participation of all related stakeholders, placing emphasis on contemporary management and leadership applications, which involve a variety of methods and techniques. However, in Germany and especially in France, such positive practices are rather limited.

### ***Selecting, Appointing and Training Elementary School Principals in Turkey***

The Ministry of Education Regulation published in 1896 is an important milestone in the history of Turkish education, and selection and appointment of school principals. In this regulation, which made detailed planning of Ottoman education system forming the base for the current Turkish education system (Bursalıođlu 1987; Kaya 1996; Akyuz, 2001), basic characteristics of school principals are identified, as well as identifying the characteristics of students at male and female teacher training schools.

The practices related to selecting and appointing principals could not be implemented within a set system or according to an official policy during the first few years of the Republic. Since French public administration model used to be applied in management, in education its effects were reflected, as a result of which still today a centralist application is seen in educational management. In this approach, everything being planned by the central authority, education and school principals used to work as an “executor” rather than a “principal”. For this reason, the need was not noted for principals to be equipped with managerial formation (Balcı, 2003).

In Turkey, the dominant concept in the field of training elementary school principals has been “*apprenticeship model*” since foundation of the Republic (Simsek, 2003). This model shows some similarities with the principal training model in some European countries. Principal training models in France, Italy, Sweden and Denmark are examples for such a similarity (Simsek, 2003). Apprenticeship model places Turkish education system on centralist bases. In fact, the emphasis in educational law stating “*what actually matters in this profession is teaching*” indicates this concept (Law related to the Ministry of Education).

In order to evaluate procedure related to selecting, appointing and training elementary school principals in Turkey, it is crucial to consider the legal arrangements in the recent past. Selecting, appointing, evaluating and training principals are the subject matter of these legal arrangements (Balci, 1999).

According to the legal arrangement made in 1993, work experience as an assistant principal is a prerequisite to be appointed as a school principal and graduate study in educational management is a factor for appointment (MoNE, 1993). According to the legal arrangement made in 1998, every teacher with a bachelor degree, whose trainee teacher status is over, can become a school principal. This clause reflects the understanding that school administration work can be accomplished by any teacher, and that becoming a school principal can be learnt by gaining experience while teaching. With this legal arrangement, selection exam was put into application for in-service training programs before appointment. Those who had completed certain programs (EYTEP, TODAİE Public Administration Specialization Program) were exempted from the selection exam (MoNE, 1998).

Further to the regulation introduced in 1999, to be qualified to be appointed as a principal in education, “having a bachelor degree or being a teacher with a university degree” (having a bachelor degree in any other field apart from education, such as Faculty of Political Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary or others as well) was considered satisfactory, and it was not regarded necessary to have pre-service training or in-service training in the field of educational management. However, the regulation requires a selection test to be taken for the post of assistant principal in elementary schools as well as a 120-hour in-service training program for principals, both of which could be regarded as a significant improvement (MoNE, 1999). This is the first regulation mandate to candidate principals and assistant principal to be trained before appointing as a principal or assistant principal (Kayikci, 2001).

The regulation introduced in 2004 can be seen as a turning point in selecting and appointing elementary school principals, since with this regulation, appointing elementary school (and also other education institutions) principals started to be done through written examinations, and the ones who succeed qualify to take the interview. In this examination system, principals take achievement tests and assistant principals take selection test. In both the written exam and the interview, although the candidates are evaluated with respect to their competency in the field and professional competency, representative ability, course of conduct and attitude, expressive and judgmental abilities, it is noted that the topics and content in the exam mainly focus on laws and regulations to meet the requirements of bureaucracy (MoNE, 2004). According to the regulation, having graduated from education faculty, departments of educational management inspection, planning in education and educational economics does not qualify one to be appointed without taking the exam. With this regulation, the regulation introduced in 1999 that necessitated trainee principals to attend pre-service training program upon selection, which was introduced as a positive change and development was made invalid.

The regulation revealed in 2007 abolished the selection test that was supposed to be taken to be appointed as a principal, and requires school principals to be appointed based on their interview results. According to this regulation, assistant principals are appointed as following: A candidate among the teachers in the related school is proposed by the principal. The candidate is then appointed by the governor following the proposal of County Director of Education in countries or Province Director of Education in provinces. Among the principals in elementary schools, elementary school principals are appointed by the governor upon the proposal of the County or Province Director of Education (MoNE, 2007). However, implementation of the mentioned regulation has been held by the Council of State. Thus, the issue of appointing principals is currently in ambiguity, which is expected to be settled once the Council of State gives the final decision related to the court case. From 2004 till 2010, approximately 30 regulations or public mandates had been made in order to get rid of the problems related to principal selecting and appointing. In all of the regulations within this period, as in the case for previous ones, ‘to be a teacher for some period’ and ‘to have university degree’ are the fundamental restrictions in order to apply the administrator position (Tas, Onder, 2010, p.172).

Nine regulations made by MoNE related to principals selecting and appointing since 1990’s. The regulations conducted after 1990’s has generally set the standards of being a teacher or having passed selection exam as pre requisite in order for principalship. Post graduate degree of educational sciences could be basic standard for teachers in order to be principal in schools (Aslanargun, 2011).

The current regulation (MoNE, 2013) revealed in 2013, mandate for assistant principal candidates to be successful in centralized paper and pencil test and for principal to be successful in paper and pencil test as well interview results. The regulation mandate that paper and pencil test includes these topics along with proportions: Instructional leadership (10 %), school administration and development (10%), human relations in administration (4%), ethic in education (4%), Turkish language grammar (10%), general knowledge (8%), Turkish administration system (5%), code of conduct (2%), and Ataturk principles and history of Turkish revolution (2%). As could be seen from paper and pencil test the components of directly related with contemporary school administration were not enough. Their proportions totally were 28%.

When we analyze the historical course of related articles of the regulations on recruiting school principals in Turkey, we notice that some articles come into prominence in all regulations like; being successful at the selection exam, being experienced in management (as vice principal), having good credentials as a civil servant, not having a disciplinary penalty and seniority in the profession. There is not any compulsory in-service training course or training program for candidate to attend before being appointed as a principal (Sungu, 2012, p. 48).

As Ozmen and (Komurlu, 2012) mentioned in Turkish context that there are a variety of problems in the selection, appointment, and training of principals and assistant principals. Although there are regulations about selecting and appointing principals and assistant principals in Turkey the MoNE did not able to set up decent standards about this issue (Sisman & Turan, 2002; Sungu, 2012).

When currently effective legislation and regulations related to selecting and training principals in education are considered as a whole, it can be concluded that since the regulation put into effect in 1869, there has not been much change in the field of selecting and training

principals in education, and that school administration is still seen as an additional assignment, assuming that the teacher can accomplish administrative work without any need for additional training. However, it is not a rational expectation that a successful teacher can always manage a school successfully. School administrators should be educated in accordance with the universal standards and have certain competencies in addition to having a good understanding of basic concepts in the field of educational management (Sergiovanni, 1991).

It seems inevitable that certain changes take place in the Turkish education system in general and in the application for selecting and training principals in education as well, as in other fields during EU accession period of Turkey. During organizational change period, the key factor to increase the success of change is to inform the parties who are to be affected by the change and who are to apply the change, to provide detailed information related to the change and to get the support of related parties. Thus, since Turkey intends to become a member of European Union, it is significant to analyze how adoptable and applicable candidate and current school principals in Turkey think the practice of selecting and training school principals in schools in European Union is.

The aim of this study is to reveal the procedure for selecting and training elementary school principals in three EU member countries, England, France and Germany, and to determine, among elementary school principals and teachers in Turkey, the level of adoptability and applicability of “*Elementary School Principal Selecting and Training Model*” scale, which is developed based on the procedure in the mentioned countries.

## **Method**

### ***Samples and Data Collection***

The field under survey in this study is principals and teachers employed in public elementary schools in provincial centers in Turkey. “Stratified sampling” technique has been used in the research. Based on this approach, the field under study has been initially divided into corresponding sub-fields under survey according to geographic regions that is seven strata composed of seven survey areas. Then, one province has been selected impartially from each survey area with the attempt of ensuring representation of each sub-field in the survey in the sampling. At the final stage of the sampling, cluster sampling method has been used. Elementary schools in the provincial centers under survey have been listed and the schools where the research is to be carried out have been partially selected. While determining the number of schools under survey, the number of principals who would be under survey has been considered. Assuming that elementary schools in provincial centers have 3 to 5 administrators on average, the number of schools has been determined to allow 3 administrators from each school to be under survey.

Target field under survey in this research is composed of 2.524 administrators and 28.842 teachers in total. Out of this, 356 administrators and 382 teachers in 121 schools have been given the questionnaire. Anderson’s (1998) formulation for sampling size has been used to determine the sampling size. Provincial centers where the survey has been conducted and the number of principals and teachers are as following:

Bursa, 80 administrators and 78 teachers; Denizli, 33 administrators and 33 teachers; Konya, 68 administrators and 66 teachers; Adana, 82 administrators and 101 teachers; Trabzon, 23 administrators and 37 teachers; Van, 29 administrators and 29 teachers; Şanlıurfa, 41 administrators and 38 teachers.



Out of these provincial centers, while Adana constitutes the biggest one in the sampling with 82 administrators and 101 teachers, Trabzon forms the smallest one with 23 administrators and 37 teachers. Considering the administrators in the survey, 18% are females and 82% are males. With respect to teachers in the survey, 53% are females and 47% are males. This ratio indicates that the rate of female school administrators in Turkey is rather low. 89% of the administrators have a bachelor degree, and 11% have graduate degree. 88% of the teachers have a bachelor degree and 12% have a graduate degree. 56% of the administrators are class teachers and 44% are specific course teachers. 48% of the teachers are class teachers and 52% are specific course teachers. 47% of the administrators have been in the profession for over 20 years of, and only 2% have been in the profession for less than 5 years. This ratio indicates that experience is a significant criterion for school administration position.

### ***Instrument***

*“Elementary School Principal Selecting and Training Model”* which is designed based on the elementary school principal selecting and training applications used in England, Germany and France and which is developed considering the conditions in Turkey has been turned into draft data collection tool with the purpose of collecting data needed for the research. Data collection tool is made up of two parts. Personal information is collected in the first part. The second part has two sub-dimensions with items related to the standards for selecting and appointing principals and applications for training principals.

The level of adoptability and applicability for each item or expression in the Likert scale data collection scale is defined in 5 graded scales. Draft data collection tool which is developed based on the related literature has been evaluated for content and face validity by the experts in the field and the ones in the field of measurement-evaluation. Based on the feedback, revisions have been made, after which the tool has become available for pilot study. Pilot study of the scale has been carried out with 100 principals and teachers employed in public schools.

Factor analysis (principal component analysis) has been used for constructive validity of each sub-dimension of the data collection tool, which consists of 11 sub-dimensions or scales. Alpha coefficient and item-total correlation have been used for testing reliability. Further to the factor analysis studies, the items with factor loading .40 and over are grouped, and the items with lower factor loading are deleted. However, three items (Items with factor loading below .40, but included in the scale after being revised as considered significant are: Item 21; “including field practice in administrator formation” (0.39), though with low factor loading, have not been deleted as they are considered significant. Instead, they have been revised and included in the scale.

Out of total 11 sub-dimensions or scales, the one with the lowest explicable total variance (35,40%) is “Institutions to conduct in-service training and courses”, and the one with the highest explicable total variance (89, 71%) is “selection of candidate principal”.

### ***Data Analysis***

Descriptive statistics techniques (percentage, frequency, arithmetic mean, standard deviation) have been used in the analysis of data collected by scales, and t-test has been used for unrelated sampling. Criterion intervals stated below have been considered while discussing the data: 1,00 - 1,79 = Never; 1,80 – 2,59 = Rarely; 2,60 – 3,39 = Moderately; 3,40 – 4,19 = Frequently ; 4,20 – 5,00 = Completely.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Standards for Selecting Elementary School Principals**

#### *I-Findings and discussion related to the features expected from elementary school candidate principals*

It is noted that the statements and items in the model under the dimension called ‘features expected from elementary school candidate principals’ are found completely adoptable by principals ( $\bar{x}=4,36$ ) and teachers ( $\bar{x}=4,24$ ). In this dimension, the statement (feature) that is found to be the most adoptable by principals and teachers is ‘having assistant principal experience’ ( $\bar{x}=4,53$ ); the one that is found to be the least adoptable is ‘the candidate not having been penalized’ ( $\bar{x}=3,91$ ).

It is also observed that the statements and items in the model under the dimension called ‘features expected from elementary school candidate principals’ are found ‘completely’ applicable by principals ( $\bar{x}=3,82$ ) and teachers ( $\bar{x}=3,64$ ). In this dimension, the statement (feature) that is found to be the most applicable one by principals and teachers is ‘having assistant principal experience’ ( $\bar{x}=3,96$ ); the one that is found to be the least applicable is ‘the candidate having had education (bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, seminar, course, etc) in the field of school management’ ( $\bar{x}=3,54$ ). T-test results comparing the views of administrators and teachers with respect to levels of adoptability and applicability of the ‘features expected from elementary school candidate principals’ dimension are given in Table 1.

**Table 1:** t-test results comparing the views of administrators and teachers with respect to levels of adoptability and applicability of the ‘features expected from elementary school candidate principals’ dimension

Categories	Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Adoptability	Administrator	320	17,43	2,83	663,27	2,33	,020
	Teacher	351	16,98	2,75			
Applicability	Administrator	320	15,28	3,58	669	2,44	,015
	Teacher	351	14,58	3,84			

It is noted in Table 1 that there is a meaningful difference in favor of administrators between views about both adoptability [ $t_{(663)}=2,33$ ,  $p < .05$ ] and applicability [ $t_{(669)}=2,44$ ,  $p < .05$ ] of administrators and teachers. This finding indicates that compared to teachers, public elementary school administrators believe ‘features expected from elementary school candidate principals’ dimension of the model is more adoptable and they find it to be more applicable in the Turkish education system.

#### *II. Findings and discussion related to the process of selecting, evaluating and appointing elementary school candidate principals*

*a) Sub-dimension for testing:* It is noted that the adoptability of the statements and items in the model under the dimension for ‘selecting, evaluating and appointing elementary school candidate principals’ is thought to be at moderate level ( $\bar{x}=3,33$ ) by administrators, and at considerable level ( $\bar{x}=3,73$ ) by teachers. In this dimension, the statement whose adoptability level is the highest by both administrators and teachers is ‘giving written examination’ ( $\bar{x}=4,53$ ); the statement whose adoptability level is the lowest is ‘giving oral exams (designed to test knowledge and compatibility).

It is also observed that the statements and items in the model under the dimension ‘selecting,

evaluating and appointing elementary school candidate principals’ are found ‘moderately’ applicable by administrators ( $\bar{x}=3,09$ ) and teachers ( $\bar{x}=3,14$ ) In this dimension, the statement that is found to be the most applicable by administrators and teachers is ‘giving written examination’ ( $\bar{x}=3,50$ ) the one that is found to be the least applicable is ‘having interview together with written and oral examination’ ( $\bar{x}=2,89$ ).

T-test results comparing the views of administrators and teachers with respect to levels of adoptability and applicability of the ‘selecting, evaluating and appointing elementary school candidate principals’ dimension are given in Table 2.

**Table 2:** t-test results comparing the views of administrators and teachers with respect to levels of adoptability and applicability of the ‘selecting, evaluating and appointing elementary school candidate principals’ dimension

Categories	Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Adoptability	Administrator	320	13,34	4,27	669	4,74	,000
	Teacher	351	14,91	4,28			
Applicability	Administrator	320	12,36	4,22	669	,638	,524
	Teacher	351	12,57	4,37			

It is seen in Table 2 that teachers find ‘selecting, evaluating and appointing elementary school candidate principals’ dimension of the model more adoptable compared to the administrators [ $t_{(669)}=4,74$ ;  $p < .05$ ]; however, there is no difference between the administrators and teachers with respect to the applicability level of the model in the Turkish education system [ $t_{(669)}=,638$ ;  $p > .05$ ].

*b) Sub-dimension for evaluation criteria for elementary school candidate principals:*

It is noted that both administrators ( $\bar{x}=3,96$ ) and teachers ( $\bar{x}=4,02$ ) regard the criteria in the model for evaluating candidate principals ‘completely’ adoptable. In this dimension, the statement that is most highly regarded as adoptable by administrators and teachers is ‘professional experience of the candidate as teacher or assistant principal’ ( $\bar{x}=4,58$ ), while the least adoptable one is ‘reports of inspectors’ ( $\bar{x}=3,14$ ). Administrators and teachers ascribing the same level of importance to all statements in the evaluation criteria dimension of the model indicates that they share the same opinion about evaluation criteria.

It is observed that administrators regard the criteria for elementary school candidate principals ‘completely’ applicable ( $\bar{x}=3,53$ ) and teachers regard it ‘moderately’ applicable ( $\bar{x}=3,79$ ) in the Turkish education system. In this dimension, the statement found the most applicable by administrators and teachers is ‘professional experience of the candidate as teacher or assistant principal’ ( $\bar{x}=3,50$ ); and the least applicable one is ‘candidate having had master’s degree in the field of educational management’ ( $\bar{x}=3,02$ ). T-test results comparing the views of administrators and teachers with respect to levels of adoptability and applicability of the ‘criteria for evaluating elementary school candidate principals’ dimension are given in Table 3

**Table 3:** t-test results comparing the views of administrators and teachers with respect to levels of adoptability and applicability of the ‘criteria for evaluating elementary school candidate principals’ dimension

Categories	Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Adoptability	Administrator	320	23,80	3,59	669	1,99	,047
	Teacher	351	24,38	4,05			
Applicability	Administrator	320	21,18	5,46	669	3,58	,000
	Teacher	351	19,64	5,66			

According to results shown in Table 3, although teachers have a more positive view than administrators about the adoptability of criteria for evaluating elementary school candidate principals [ $t_{(669)}=1,99$ ;  $p < .05$ ] in the model, administrators have a more positive view about its applicability in the Turkish education system [ $t_{(669)}=3,58$ ;  $p < .05$ ].

c) *Selecting elementary school candidate principals*: Administrators and teachers find ‘School principal to be selected by the school board’ the most adoptable ( $\bar{x}=3,34$ ), and ‘School principal to be selected by the Ministry of Education’ the least adoptable ( $\bar{x}=2,81$ ).

On the other hand, administrators and teachers consider ‘School principal to be selected by the Ministry of Education’ the most applicable ( $\bar{x}=3,35$ ), and ‘School principal to be selected by the school board’ the least applicable ( $\bar{x}=2,55$ ).

d) *Appointing elementary school candidate principals*: Administrators and teachers find ‘School principal to be appointed by the Ministry of Education upon the proposal of the school board’ the most adoptable ( $\bar{x}=3,40$ ), and ‘School principals to be appointed by the local authorities’ the least adoptable ( $\bar{x}=1,85$ ). Both administrators and teachers having the same opinion with respect to the most and the least adoptable items in this dimension are noteworthy.

Administrators and teachers consider ‘School principal to be appointed directly by the Ministry of Education’ the most applicable ( $\bar{x}=3,37$ ), and ‘School principal to be appointed by the local authorities’ the least applicable ( $\bar{x}=2,55$ ).

### ***Standards for Training Elementary School Principals***

#### *I. Training principals*

Principles related to training elementary school candidate principals in the model are found ‘completely’ adoptable by administrators ( $\bar{x}=4,15$ ) and teachers ( $\bar{x}=4,15$ ). The principle/statement found the most adoptable ( $\bar{x}=4,35$ ) by administrators and teachers in this dimension is ‘Candidates, upon their appointment, being obliged to attend periodical in-service training programs within the context of continuing education’, and the least adoptable ( $\bar{x}=3,91$ ) is ‘Principal formation to be composed of minimum 10 courses and one seminar to match the master’s degree studies’. The degree of importance given to the statements in this dimension is quite similar when administrators and teachers are considered separately, which is regarded as noteworthy.

It is observed that principles related to training elementary school candidate principals are found ‘moderately’ applicable by administrators ( $\bar{x}=3,39$ ) and teachers ( $\bar{x}=3,28$ ). In this dimension, administrators and teachers find ‘Candidates, upon their appointment, being obliged to attend periodical in-service training programs within the context of continuing education’ the most applicable, and ‘Principal formation to be composed of minimum 10 courses and one seminar to match the master’s degree studies’ the least applicable ( $\bar{x}=3,18$ ). T-test results comparing the views of administrators and teachers with respect to levels of adoptability and applicability of principals related to training elementary school candidate principals are given in Table 4.

As seen in Table 4, there is no difference between the views of administrators and teachers about the ‘principles related to training elementary school candidate principals’ regarding both the level of adoptability [ $t_{(669)}=,054$ ;  $p > .05$ ], and the level of applicability in the Turkish education system [ $t_{(669)}=1,39$ ;  $p > .05$ ].

**Table 4:** t-test results comparing the views of administrators and teachers with respect to levels of adoptability and applicability of principals related to training elementary school candidate principals

Categories	Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Adoptability	Administrator	320	29,08	4,58	669	,054	,957
	Teacher	351	29,06	4,89			
Applicability	Administrator	320	23,75	7,18	669	1,399	,162
	Teacher	351	22,97	7,18			

In other words, elementary school administrators and teachers find ‘principles related to training elementary school candidate principals’ adoptable and applicable in the Turkish education system almost at the same level. Although the views of administrators in this respect seem more positive compared to the views of the teachers, the difference is not meaningful statistically.

### II. Conducting principal formation program

Elementary school administrators and teachers in the study consider ‘principal formation program to be conducted by universities’ the most adoptable ( $\bar{x}=3,85$ ), whereas they think it to be conducted by ‘professional associations or unions’ the least adoptable ( $\bar{x}=2,05$ ). Similarly, administrators and teachers think that ‘principal formation program to be conducted by universities’ is the most applicable ( $\bar{x}=3,56$ ), and they think it to be conducted by ‘professional associations or unions’ the least applicable ( $\bar{x}=2,06$ ).

### III. Content of the principal formation program

It is noted that administrators ( $\bar{x}=4,55$ ) and teachers ( $\bar{x}=4,55$ ) completely agree with the content of the elementary school principal formation program. In this dimension, the content that is found the most adoptable by administrators and teachers is ‘Human relations in management and human resources management’ ( $\bar{x}=4,67$ ) and ‘School-community relations’ ( $\bar{x}=4,63$ ). These findings indicate that there may be problems in elementary schools related to human relations and schools being exposed to their environment and community.

The contents found the least adoptable ( $\bar{x}=4,40$ ) in this dimension by administrators and teachers are ‘The bases of education (social, economic, historical, political)’ and ‘Organization and management theories’ ( $\bar{x}=4,41$ ). Though these statements are regarded relatively the least adoptable, they are found ‘completely’ adoptable by administrators and teachers.

Administrators ( $\bar{x}=3,84$ ) and teachers ( $\bar{x}=3,67$ ) find the content for elementary school principal formation program ‘moderately’ applicable in the Turkish education system. In this dimension, the contents that are found to be the most applicable by administrators and teachers are ‘Turkish education system’ ( $\bar{x}=3,85$ ) and ‘Inspection and evaluation’ ( $\bar{x}=3,85$ ). The contents found the least applicable in this dimension are ‘Organization and management theories’ ( $\bar{x}=3,66$ ) and ‘Financing Education and school budget’ ( $\bar{x}=3,66$ ). T-test results comparing the views of administrators and teachers with respect to levels of adoptability and applicability of school principal formation program content are given in Table 5.

As it is seen in Table 5, although the views of administrators and teachers related to their finding the content of elementary school principal formation adoptable [ $t_{(669)}=.036$ ;  $p > .05$ ] are the same, there is a difference between their finding it applicable [ $t_{(669)}=2,21$ ;  $p < .05$ ].

**Table 5:** t-test results comparing the views of administrators and teachers with respect to levels of adoptability and applicability of school principal formation program content

Categories	Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Adoptability	Administrator	320	63,66	7,00	669	,036	,971
	Teacher	351	63,68	7,52			
Applicability	Administrator	320	53,72	13,61	669	2,21	,027
	Teacher	351	51,36	13,97			

In other words, administrators and teachers at public elementary schools have similar views about adoptability of the content of elementary school principal formation program; however, administrators ( $\bar{X}=53,72$ ) have more positive views related to the applicability of the content of the program in the Turkish education system compared to the teachers ( $\bar{X}=51,36$ ).

#### IV. Who should be lecturing in principal formation program

Administrators and teachers find the statement ‘Experienced and successful principals should lecture’ the most adoptable ( $\bar{X}=4,34$ ), and ‘Local education managers should lecture’ the least adoptable ( $\bar{X}=2,89$ ). Similarly, administrators and teachers think ‘Experienced and successful principals should lecture’ is the most applicable ( $\bar{X}=4,34$ ), and ‘Local education managers should lecture’ is the least applicable ( $\bar{X}=2,89$ ).

#### V. Conducting in-service training programs and courses

Administrators and teachers think in-service training programs and courses being conducted by ‘an unaffiliated principal training institution’ is the most adoptable ( $\bar{X}=4,34$ ), and such courses to be conducted by ‘local administration’ is the least adoptable ( $\bar{X}=2,89$ ). On the other hand, administrators and teachers feel that in-service training programs and courses to be conducted by ‘the Ministry of Education’ is the most applicable ( $\bar{X}=4,34$ ), and to be conducted by ‘local administration’ is the least applicable ( $\bar{X}=2,89$ ).

#### VI. Methods of teaching of the subjects in the training program

a) *Techniques to be applied:* Out of the methods to be used for teaching the subjects during the school principal training program in the model, administrators and teachers think ‘case studies’ (f:187; 27,9%), and ‘brain-storming and similar group discussions’ (f:180; 26,8%) are the most adoptable ones. The methods found the least adoptable are ‘reading books and articles’ (f:144; 21,5%), and ‘having guest speakers’ (f:110; 16,4%). Hence, elementary school administrators and teachers think that ‘case studies’ and ‘brain-storming and similar group discussions’ methods, considering the methods of teaching subjects in the training program, are the most acceptable. However, they believe ‘reading books and articles’ and ‘having guest speakers’ are the least acceptable. Therefore, it can be concluded that techniques that are based on active participation are preferred rather than relatively passive techniques that involve reading and listening.

b) *Activities that candidates should be obliged to do during the training program:* Administrators and teachers think that ‘preparing projects’ (f:207; 30,8%) and ‘giving presentations’ (f:126; 18,8%) in the model developed are the most adoptable activities that candidate school principals should be obliged to do during the related training program. The activities that are thought to be the least adoptable are ‘reading assignments’ (f:201; 30%) and ‘self-evaluation and peer-evaluation’ (f:68; 10,1%). Accordingly, out of the activities for which candidates should be responsible in the training program, ‘preparing projects’ and ‘giving presentations’ are thought to be the most acceptable elementary school administrators

and teachers while ‘reading assignments’ and ‘self-evaluation and peer-evaluation’ are believed to be the least acceptable.

### *VII. Evaluation of school principal training program*

The dimension in the model related to the evaluation of school principal training programs is found to be ‘completely’ acceptable by administrators ( $\bar{x}=4,3$ ) and teachers ( $\bar{x}=4,26$ ). Considering the principals for evaluating training programs, administrators and teachers feel ‘Candidates displaying to what extent expected knowledge and skills are achieved’ ( $\bar{x}=4,34$ ) is the most acceptable, and the principle that is least accepted is ‘Candidate principal activities anticipated for teaching subjects in the previous section (item VI/b) are assessed with a grade out 100 during the training process, and that they make up 50% of the graduation score’ ( $\bar{x}=4,11$ ).

The dimension in the model regarding the principles for evaluating school principal training programs are thought to be ‘frequently’ applicable in the Turkish education system by administrators ( $\bar{x}=3,63$ ), and ‘moderately’ applicable by teachers ( $\bar{x}=3,02$ ). In this dimension, among the principles to evaluate training programs, administrators and teachers think the most applicable one is ‘Candidates displaying to what extent expected knowledge and skills are achieved’ ( $\bar{x}=4,34$ ); and the least applicable one is ‘Candidate principal activities anticipated for teaching subjects in the previous section (item VI/b) are assessed with a grade out 100 during the training process, and that they make up 50% of the graduation score’ ( $\bar{x}=4,11$ ). T-test results comparing the views of administrators and teachers with respect to levels of adoptability and applicability of principles to evaluate training program designed for elementary school principal candidates are given in Table 6.

**Table 6:** t-test results comparing the views of administrators and teachers with respect to levels of adoptability and applicability of principles to evaluate training program designed for elementary school principal candidates

Categories	Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Adoptability	Administrator	320	12,90	1,87	669	,912	,362
	Teacher	351	12,77	1,93			
Applicability	Administrator	320	10,89	3,01	669	1,608	,108
	Teacher	351	10,52	3,01			

As it is seen in Table 6, there is no difference between the views of administrators and teachers with respect to finding the principles to evaluate elementary school candidate principal training program adoptable [ $t_{(669)} = ,912$ ;  $p > .05$ ] and applicable in the Turkish education system [ $t_{(669)} = 1,608$ ;  $p > .05$ ]. In other words, public elementary school administrators and teachers have similar views about the adoptability and applicability of principles in the model to evaluate candidate school principal training program.

### **Discussion**

Based on the findings, it is concluded in the research that ‘Elementary School Principal Selection and Training Model’ developed based on the procedure used in England, Germany and France to select and train elementary school principals are thought to be adoptable by elementary school administrators and teachers in Turkey and, though at a relatively low level, it is also believed to be applicable in the Turkish education system.

One of the most significant conclusions arrived in the research is that experience is considered to be the most adoptable and applicable criterion related to the features expected from

candidate elementary school principals. Likewise, experience is believed to be the most important criterion in British public administration tradition. In other European Union countries such as Sweden, Greece and Cyprus, experience in teaching and as an assistant-principal in general is required to be appointed as a principal, which indicates that seniority plays a crucial role for appointing school principals (Tody et al, 2007).

Administrators find “*evaluation process*” of elementary school principals ‘moderately’ adoptable, and teachers find it ‘completely’ adoptable, while they think of it to be ‘moderately’ applicable in the Turkish education system. Administrators and teachers believe “*evaluation process*” of elementary school principals in the model developed is more adoptable when compared to its applicability in the Turkish education system. “*Evaluation process*” of the elementary school candidate principals in the model developed is believed to be more adoptable by teachers when compared to administrators; however, there is no difference between the views of administrators and teachers considering its applicability in the Turkish education system.

The fact that the criterion related to having completed education in the field is thought to be relatively of less applicable in the system proves that education and training in the field (Bachelor degree, master’s degree, seminars, courses) is not given much importance in appointing principals in Turkey. Master’s degree in the field is not regarded significant enough considering the policies and applications of the Ministry. It could be concluded that being principal is believed to be a post that may be achieved by anyone who has certain amount of experience in teaching, which results from the understanding “*what is important in the profession is teaching*”. This is the attitude of administrators and teachers who highlight professional experience not only to find it applicable, but also to find it adoptable.

Administrators and teachers ‘completely’ agree with the “*evaluation criteria*” of elementary school candidate principals, whereas administrators find it ‘completely’ applicable in the Turkish education system, and teachers find it ‘moderately’ applicable. Evaluation criteria of elementary school candidate principals in the model are found to be more adoptable by administrators and teachers compared to its applicability in the Turkish education system. Although teachers have a more positive view about adopting the “*evaluation criteria*” of elementary school candidate principals compared to administrators, administrators have a more positive view when its applicability in the Turkish education system is considered.

It is determined in the research that while written exams are found adoptable in selecting and evaluating candidate principals, interviews are not accredited much. It is an expected result that, considering the conditions in Turkey, administrators and teachers find objective written exams based on meritocracy the most adoptable while interviews that may allow favoritism are believed to be least adoptable. The reason for this may be the fact that the required substructure and professionalism related to interviews are yet to be settled. Sensitivity of administrators and teachers related to appointment of principals without an exam is quite understandable due to current undesirable practices, especially observed recently without any reasonable or concrete criteria.

Among the statements regarding “*selecting elementary school candidate principals*”, ‘School principal to be selected by the school board’ is the most favored by the administrators and teachers, while ‘School principal to be selected by the Ministry of Education’ is believed to be the least favorable.

Among the statements regarding “*Who to appoint elementary school candidate principals*”,



‘School principal to be appointed by the Ministry of Education upon the proposal of the school board’ is the most favored by the administrators and teachers, while ‘School principal to be appointed by the local authorities’ is the least favored.

The view that school principals are selected by the school board and appointed by the Ministry upon the proposal of the school board is found adoptable in the research. Concerns like informal relations, influence and favoritism that may have a role in appointments, and practices that may change depending on governments should be the reasons why administrators and teachers find this view adoptable. In addition, it may be concluded that an approach that allows school-centered administration concept in which all other stakeholders are closely involved with decisions is found adoptable by administrators and teachers. It is possible to establish a connection between such an expectation and effectiveness of schools. In fact, research reveals that effective schools have qualities such as decentralized school administration, shared decision-making process, high participation of parents, educational leadership, high academic expectations, and coordinated climate both at school and class levels (Fitch, 1992; as cited in. Alston, 2004, p. 80).

However, in Turkey, where unique special conditions (favoritism, deficiency in sub-structure and experience) are found, it is probable that principals being selected and appointed only by the school board may create certain drawbacks. Actually, a selection system regarding and evaluating the views and proposals of the boards made up of school stakeholders instead of processes that require localization and devolution of power, where school boards are the sole determiner, should be more appropriate for the social structure in Turkey. In fact, that administrators and teachers regard ‘principal to be selected by the school board’ the most adoptable though they believe it to be the least applicable results from the above mentioned reality in Turkey. Furthermore, research results indicate that ‘school principals to be appointed by local authorities’ are not thought to be adoptable. Actually, local authorities have not been interested enough in education or provided any support, assuming that educational services are the responsibility of the central administration. Besides, local authorities have not been given such a duty or responsibility legally, as a result of which they tend to keep away from education.

“*Principles for training elementary school candidate principals*” are found ‘completely’ adoptable, but ‘moderately’ applicable in the Turkish education system by administrators and teachers. Therefore, administrators and teachers feel that the principles for training elementary school candidate school principals in the model developed are more adoptable but less applicable in the Turkish education system.

Out of the statements related to “*which institutions are to conduct principal formation programs*” for elementary schools, administrators and teachers find ‘universities to conduct such programs’ the most adoptable, while they find ‘professional associations and unions to conduct such programs’ the least adoptable. On the other hand, ‘principal formation programs to be conducted by the Ministry of Education’ is found to be the most applicable, while ‘professional associations and unions to conduct such programs’ is believed to be the least applicable.

“*Content of elementary school principal formation program*” is found ‘completely’ adoptable by administrators and teachers. The statements that are believed to be the most adoptable by administrators and teachers are ‘Human relations in management and human resources management’ and ‘school-community relations’. The statements that are considered the least adoptable by administrators and teachers are ‘The bases of education (social, economic,

historical, and political)’ and ‘Organization and management theories’. It is noted that administrators and teachers are of the same opinion related to the adoptability of the content of elementary school principal training formation program developed in the model.

Out of statements regarding “*who to lecture in training elementary school principal formation program*”, administrators and teachers find ‘experienced and successful principals to lecture’ the most adoptable, and ‘local educational administrators to lecture’ the least adoptable. Similarly, ‘experienced and successful principals to lecture’ is thought to be the most applicable, and ‘local educational administrators to lecture’ the least applicable. Administrators and teachers believe that the statements related to ‘Who to lecture in elementary school principal formation program’ are more adoptable compared to their applicability in the Turkish education system.

Candidate principals, upon being appointed, to attend in-service training programs periodically within the framework of continuing education is believed to be adoptable and applicable based on the research. This may result from the in-service training tradition in the Turkish education system in spite of certain deficiencies in the Turkish education system. Such programs to be conducted by universities are found adoptable, but their being conducted by the Ministry of Education is thought to be applicable, whereas their being conducted by professional associations and unions is not thought to be applicable. This indicates that professional organizations and non-governmental organizations fail to provide assurance or support to the profession of teaching in Turkey

The research results indicate that such topics as “human relations in management” and school-community relations” should be focused on in the in-service training once the candidate principals are appointed to the post. Hale and Moorman (2003; cited in Barnett, 2004) state that most programs related to training school principals fail to provide the training necessary for public school leaders. According to the literature, it is more meaningful for candidate school principals to have practical management courses accompanied by successful principals (Barnett, 2004).

Administrators and teachers believe that an institution to be established so as to conduct in-service training programs for training elementary school candidate principals is quite agreeable. This view may indicate that such an institution is expected to be isolated from political pressure and be autonomous in addition to having expert trainers in the field.

It may be assumed that the possibility of local authorities lacking infrastructure, insight and experience to conduct training programs may be the reason why such programs and courses being conducted by local authorities is thought to be the least adoptable. In fact, participants believing such programs to be conducted by local authorities may be considered as a reflection of conditions in Turkey.

Considering the teaching methods of topics in candidate school principal training programs, administrators and teachers believe that techniques based on active participation such as case-study, brain-storming and similar group activities are more adoptable compared to relatively passive activities such as listening and reading. Regarding “*activities that candidates should be responsible for in elementary school candidate principals training programs*”, ‘preparing projects’ and ‘presentations’ are believed to be the most adoptable by administrators and teachers, while ‘reading assignments’ and ‘self-evaluation and peer-evaluation’ are thought to be the least adoptable.

While administrators and teachers find the statements related to “evaluating the developed training programs” ‘completely’ adoptable, administrators find them ‘greatly’ applicable in the Turkish education system, and teachers believe that they are ‘moderately’ applicable. Administrators and teachers find the statements related to evaluating the program developed for elementary school candidate principals more adoptable than applicable in the Turkish education system.

The level of adoptability in all sub-dimensions of the model is higher than the level of applicability, which indicates that standards and practices for selecting and training school principals foreseen in the model are found adoptable by educationalists made up of administrators and teachers; however, the level of applicability of these standards is believed to be relatively low (at least in the short-term) due to current management tradition and bureaucratic structure in Turkey.

The thesis that concepts such as devolution of full-authority, localization could be implemented in Turkey without any problems in the historical context just like in England and Germany could be arguable. Considering the unique social conditions in Turkey, rather than practices, some of which may create drawbacks, practices such as deconcentration and authority sharing, which shall enable local community to take active part in educational service, could be an alternative to consider. In this respect, instead of implementing the practices used in countries such as England, Germany and France in Turkey, it would be a more rational approach to make adaptations in such practices, considering the conditions and inner dynamics in Turkey.

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