Women Administrators in Education: Leadership Behavior Assessment According to Teachers' Perceptions

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to reveal leadership behaviors of women administrators in education. The research was designed using the survey model and it was conducted with 936 randomly selected teachers who work on the schools administered by women administrators, in Istanbul. The Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (Hemphill & Coones, 1957) has been used for data collection. T-test and ANOVA techniques have been used for data analysis. As the result of the research, it has been found that women administrators usually show "initiation of structure" type leadership behaviors.

Key words: woman, administration, leadership, education

Introduction

In our rapidly evolving world, the changes that occurred in the demographic characteristics of the workforce and consumers changed the traditional status of the women, which resulted with the gradual increase of women's roles in the social and economic life. In this context, the women's proportion on the labor force and career development has been significantly increased (Aytaç, 2000). Women have been introduced to the work life due to several reasons other than their recognized main characteristics and in time they adapted these qualities to the work life. Their passion for success pushed them to advance in the working life but it was not easy for them to reach executive positions having started from the position of worker (Negiz & Yemen, 2011).

According to Berner (Katkat, 2000), in all fields and even in the professions where the majority of the workforce is female (*i.e.* education, health, etc.), women are administered by men. Berner concluded that, even in the country such as

Sweden where 70% of the women are working, forming 44.4% of the Total workforce, although the rate of working women is higher than the other countries, this high rate is not reflected at the executive positions. This fact is not limited with Sweden. Gender is an important factor in the first and second education levels where the majority of teachers is women (Acker, 1994). All along, children's education and teaching is seen as a profession suitable for women, today 87% of primary school teachers and 67% of all teachers are women in America (Apple, 1996). On the other hand, the ratio of women who work as teacher or executive at high school or college levels is lower (Streitmatter, 1999). This is due to the fact that management is seen as a *men's job* (Streitmatter, 1999). Davis (1998) stated that the proportion of women administrators was lower than the men, according to him the proportion of women administrators in educational institutes is almost the same as a century ago.

The culture of the society and the way of seeing women has a considerable impact on this situation. The results of experimental studies showed that activity levels of women and men are different due to the organization and their positions in the organization (Northouse, 2007). Thus, a direct comparison of female and male administrators according to their qualities should be avoided. In this context, the purpose of this study is the assessment of women administrators' leadership behaviors according to the perceptions of the teachers who work with them.

Methodology

Research Model

This research, aiming to determine perceived leadership skills of women administrators, was designed based on *survey model.*

Participant

Participant of the research consists of 936 teachers, who work with female administrators on public and private elementary and secondary schools affiliated to the Ministry of Education, which are located in the Anatolian site of Istanbul.

Table 1

Demographic Distribution of the Participant

Variables		1	2	3	4	5	Total
		Male	Female				-
Gender	*n*	524	412				936
	%	55.9	44.1				100
		Private	Public				-
School type	*n*	104	832				936
	%	11.1	88.9				100
		1-5 year	6-10 year	11-15 year	16-20 year	+21	-
Seniority	*n*	306	207	84	57	198	936
	%	32.7	22.1	8.9	6.1	21.2	100

Data Collecting Tool

Ergene (1990) adapted *Leadership Behavior Scale* to Turkish, from The Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire: LBDQ developed by Hemphill and Coones (1957), and performed validity and reliability tests. The scale is formed by two dimensions, namely *Initiation of Structure* and *Consideration*, and 30 attributes. It can be said that an individual with high *initiation of structure* score is mostly job-oriented whereas an individual with high *consideration* score is mostly people-oriented. Each attribute is evaluated using a 5-points Likert scale, (5) Always, (4) Most of the time, (3) Sometimes, (2) Rare and (1) Never. Alpha Cronbach coefficients of the scale are calculated as .82 for *initiation of structure* dimension and .87 for *consideration* dimension.

Data Analysis

Prior to statistical analysis, demographic variables have been categorized; independent t-test has been performed to check if there was a differentiation according to *gender* and *type of school,* and one-way ANOVA has been applied to check the differentiation according to *seniority*.

Findings

Table 2 displays mean (*X*) and standard deviation (*SD*) values of the perceived leadership behaviors of women administrators in education. The

maximum possible score is 75 for both sub-dimensions. The average scores of the education staff participated to the research are 57.42 for *initiation of structure* dimension and 54.43 for *consideration* dimension.

Table 2

n, X and SD Values for the Dimensions of Leader Behavior

Sub-dimensions	n	X	SD
Initiation of Structure	936	57.42	8.68
Consideration	936	54.53	12.04
Total	936	111.97	19.19

Table 3 displays independent t-test results, which was performed to check if there was a differentiation among the perceived leadership behaviors of the women administrators according to the *gender*.

There was not statistically significant difference among the perceived leadership behaviors of the women administrators according to gender in *İnitiation of Structure* sub-dimension and in *Total Leadership* behavior scores [p>.05]. On the other hand, a significant difference has been observed in *Consideration* sub-dimension between the opinions of male and female teachers, in favor of the female teachers [p>.05].

Table 3

T-test results for the Dimensions of Leader Behavior Scores according to Gender

Sub-dimension	Gender	n	x	SD	t	df	p
Initiation of Structure	Female	412	57.42	9.11	-.002	933	.998
	Male	523	57.42	8.26			
Consideration	Female	411	55.43	12.12	2.170	931	.030
	Male	522	53.64	12.68			
Total	Female	411	112.86	19.74	1.402	930	.161
	Male	521	111.09	18.65			

Table 4 displays ANOVA results, which was performed to evaluate the perceived leadership behaviors of the women administrators according to the

seniority. First, Levene Test has been applied to the data in order to determine homogeneity value of the variances. There were not significant differences in all dimensions, so it has been concluded that variances were homogeneously distributed.   There was not statistically significant difference among the perceived leadership behaviors of the women administrators according to seniority in *Initiation of Structure, Consideration* sub-dimensions and in *Total Leadership* behavior scores [p>.05].

Table 4

ANOVA results for the Dimensions of Leader Behavior Scores according to Seniority

Sub-dimension	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p
Initiation of Structure	Between groups	128.992	4	32.248	.430	.787
	Within Groups	69691.885	930	74.938		
	Total	69820.877	934			
Consideration	Between groups	335.451	4	83.863	.537	.709
	Within Groups	144961.612	928	156.209		
	Total	145297.063	932			
Total	Between groups	550.266	4	137.567	.374	.827
	Within Groups	340879.033	927	367.723		
	Total	341429.299	931			

Table 5 displays independent t-test results, evaluating the perceived leadership behaviors of the women administrators according to the *type of school.* Significant differences have been observed in *İnitiation of Structure, Consideration* sub-dimensions and in *Total Leadership* behavior scores among the teachers who work on public and private schools in favor of the teachers who work on private school [p>.01]. This result shows that teachers who work on private schools state that female administrators show more leadership behaviors. Accordingly, teachers who work on private schools perceive women administrators much more job oriented than their colleagues who work on public. The situation is the same for consideration dimension. It has been found

that administrators of the private schools show more consideration type leadership behaviors. In line with these two sub-scales, a similar result has been obtained for Total leadership scores. All these results show that female administrators who work on private schools are perceived as possessing more leadership behaviors compared to women administrators who work in public schools.

Table 5

T-test results for the Dimensions of Leader Behavior Scores according to School Type

Sub-dimension	School type	n	X	SD	t	df	p
Initiation of Structure	Private	104	62.42	6.22	6.381	933	.000
	Public	831	56.80	8.70			
Consideration	Private	104	59.66	10.44	4.580	931	.000
	Public	829	53.77	12.57			
Total	Private	104	122.08	14.87	5.870	930	.000
	Public	828	110.59	19.25			

Discussion

Within the content of this study, which was conducted to see the perception of the teachers managed by female school principals, it has been found that women administrators in education show more "Initiation of Structure" type leadership behaviors compared to "Consideration" type leadership behaviors. The review of the researches performed by Erkuş (1997), Zel (1999), İnci (2001) and Çağlar & Yakut & Karadağ'ın (2005) show that, administrators in education area mostly show "Initiation of Structure" type leadership behaviors in Turkey. Bass (1990) says that women reach executive positions with greater struggles and challenges compared to their male colleagues. Gender stereotypes have formed the basis of the prejudices, which have prevented women to reach management positions, in addition generally accepted judgments about good managers being men led to the representation of women in top management at lower rates (Coleman, 1997; Çalışkan-Maya, 2012; Ergin & Çınkır, 2005; Selçuk, Yalçınkaya & Uslu, 2013). But Özan and Akpınar

(2002) found that there was no significant difference between the successes of female and male administrators. Babaoğlan and Litchika (2010) did not found a difference between female and male administrators in Turkey, whereas a differentiation according to gender has been found on the leadership perception of the school principals in America.

A significant difference has been observed in the *Consideration* sub-dimension of the women administrators' perceived leadership behavior according to gender, in favor of the female teachers. Female teachers say that women administrators show more consideration type leadership behavior. Parallel to this finding, Turan and Ebiçlioğlu (2002) revealed that female administrators are distinguished with their communication sense whereas male administrators stand out on vision dimension. On the other hand Can (2008) expressed that gender variable is not important on the perception of the teachers, as far as the executive shows managerial behavior.

The categorization of the women administrators' perceived leadership behavior according to the school type show that there are significant differences between the perception of the teachers who work in public and private schools in *İnitiation of Structure, Consideration* sub-dimensions and in *Total Leadership* behavior perception, in favor of the private school teachers. These results are in line with the studies conducted by Zel (1999) and Çemberci (2003). The changes occurred in the management approaches and women becoming more successful in the issues such as understanding and communication, team work, focusing on process, effective listening and empathy, negotiation skills, stress management, change management, diversity management were effective on the increase of female administrators, especially in private organizations (Barutçugil, 2002). In addition, an overview of the executive selection criteria used in private and public schools revealed that private schools have more extensive criteria compared to public schools. Accordingly, people who are executive in private schools are expected to possess leadership qualities in addition to managerial qualities (Çağlar, Yakut & Karadağ, 2005). The comparison of this fact with the results of the study shows that the research results are not unexpected.

Considering the results of the study and the literature, female administrators should be encouraged to participate to leadership based on-job trainings in order to show both initiations of structure and consideration leadership behaviors in their school, which will allow them to be clearly and accurately evaluated by all shareholders. Some encouraging and supporting legal regulations, regarding the involvement of the female administrators in the profession, may take place in order to create the awareness that management is much more than the gender.

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