



Social intelligence and leadership styles of the school administrators in Turkey

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to examine the relationship between social intelligence levels and leadership styles. The study was conducted with 202 administrators employed in the primary schools of Turkey. The data collection instruments were administered to the school administrators who came from different parts of Turkey and attended the educational administrators' meeting held in Gaziantep, Turkey. For this study, "Leadership Styles" questionnaire developed by Günbayı (2005) and "Social Intelligence Scale" developed by Silvera et al. (2001) were administered. The data were analyzed using MANOVA and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis techniques. In the study, significant relationships were found between some dimensions of social intelligences and leadership styles of the administrators.

Keywords: goal emphasis; interaction facilitation; social awareness; social skills; support

Introduction

Leadership is an important part of our life and has both social and emotional dimensions. At the workplace, for instance, employers and leaders have to be in a social interaction that necessitates adaptation to the social environment (Kobe *et al.*, 2001). Goleman (2006) suggests that positive interactions improve leadership styles of the managers. He gives the example of Ms Smith, a middle school principal, who managed to orient the new teachers in her school by spending social time with them, outside the school. Goleman benefits from the field of neuroscience to explain how the performance of the managers and teachers, and also the climate of schools are affected when they are motivated or stressed (Goleman, 2006). Goleman *et al.* (2004) list six leadership styles that can be effective for creating a positive school environment, where people feel motivated to show their best performances. These styles are visionary, affiliative, coaching, democratic, pacesetter and commanding (Goleman, 2006). Bush (2011) also argues that if we are looking for successful schools which provide good learning opportunities for students, effective leadership and management is necessary.

Some researchers provided a connection among the concepts of social and emotional intelligence (Seal *et al.*, 2006). People's intelligence in general is examined within the subareas of social behavior and emotions (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). Because the organized response of emotions "lead to a transformation of personal and social interaction into enriching experience" (Salovey and Mayer, 1990, p.186), emotional intelligence is seen in its relationship to social intelligence. Emotional intelligence refers to intrapersonal skills such as self-awareness and self-management, while social intelligence implies interpersonal skills such as social awareness and relationship management (Seal *et al.*, 2006). The combination of both intelligences fosters one's ability to understand others' needs, emotions, perceptions, and thoughts and manage his/her relationships with others in social interactions.

Seal *et al.* (2006) discussed the effect of emotional and social intelligence (ESI) on the performance in organizations. The emotional and social competencies are necessary to adapt to the organizational environment as well. Leadership performance effectiveness is closely related to one's emotional and social competencies, both intrapersonal and interpersonal abilities (Boyatzis, Stubbs and Taylor, 2002, cited in Seal *et al.*, 2006).

There are studies that examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership. In their study, Kotze and Venter (2010) for example, aimed to find to what extent emotional intelligence predicted leadership effectiveness. The findings showed the dimensions of emotional intelligence such as problem solving, stress tolerance, problem

solving, reality testing, self-awareness, stress tolerance, and empathy significantly predicted leadership effectiveness. Deniz (2012) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence of managers in health sector with their leadership practices. He found that female managers had better skills in evaluating their own and others' emotions than those of male managers. The study also showed that managers with more than 11 years of experience benefited from emotions better than managers with less experience.

The researcher came across with few studies that deal with ESI and leadership effectiveness. Birknerova (2011) studied social and emotional intelligences in school environment and analyzed if school administrators were socially and emotionally competent. The overall findings revealed significant differences between gender and factors of emotional intelligence. Yet statistical significance was not found between factors of social intelligence and gender. Furtner et al. (2010) examined associations between self-leadership and socioemotional intelligence. The study revealed significant associations between social sensitivity and emotional expressivity. But no associations were detected for emotional control.

Goleman and Boyatzis (2008) discuss how emotional intelligence with its aspects of empathy and self-knowledge played an important role for effective leadership. Leaders with emotional intelligence are able to define, use, understand and direct emotions, which are significant skills necessary especially in team work (cited in Caruso & Salovey, 2004). Yet, today the field of social neuroscience is involved in the discussions of "what makes a good leader" (p.74). Namely, it is important what we feel and think in our brain when we are interacting with people.

The main concern of the present research is how social intelligence influences leadership styles of the administrators. Goleman and Boyatzis (2008) list the following characteristics of effective leaders with social intelligence: empathy, conforming to others, fostering positive feelings in others, inspiring others to be effective, and so forth. Kotze and Venter's (2010) study that examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, defines leadership effectiveness with the following dimensions: "environmental orientation, vision formulation and sharing, preparing the organization for implementing the vision and implementing the vision" (p.31).

Günbayı (2005) who adapted the Leadership Styles" Questionnaire into Turkish examined the responses of female and male teachers to leadership styles. The leadership styles were listed as follows: 1) support, 2) interaction facilitation, 3) goal emphasis and 4) work facilitation (p.691). Support implied behavior that helped someone feel worth and important. Interaction facilitation meant behavior that encouraged someone to develop close interactions and relationships with others. Goal emphasis implied behavior that encouraged someone to achieve his/her goals by involving activities such as scheduling, coordinating, and planning (Kast & Tosenzweigh, 1981, cited in Günbayı, 2005). We now live in a global world which provides various opportunities for organizations. Organizations are becoming complex and dynamic environments in which leadership is crucial for effective management, controlling diverse teams, and implementing strategies (Ekelund and Adl, 2012).

Effective leaders should have the skills of empathy and self-knowledge, which are closely associated with emotional intelligence. If leaders have interpersonal competencies and social skills, that means they have social intelligence. In organizations, leaders having social intelligence can reinforce social links between themselves and their employees. They can "foster a positive mood in their teams" (Goleman and Boyatzis, 2008:4).

With the impact of globalization, Turkish education system is involved in a serious restructuring process. Between the years 1985-2010, Ministry of National Education

completed 21 projects within the framework of the adaptation process to European Union (Kucuker and Gurbuz, 2012). The Europeanization reforms in Turkey should also impact schools. In Turkey both public and private schools are structured in such a way that leadership and management duties are held by the school principal (Babaođlan and Litchka, 2010). However, democratic leaders recognize the potential of their followers and emphasize teamwork. Such leaders are also aware of the significance of teamwork, interaction and collaboration that make the teamwork more effective (Yun, Cox and Sims, 2007). Working with either individuals or a large group in a team, understanding and responding to them require social intelligence (Hughes, Thompson and Terrel, 2009).

There are various studies related to school leadership in Turkey (Uđurlu and Hovardaođlu, 2011; Ađaoglu, Altinkurt, Yılmaz and Karaköse, 2012; Babaođlan and Litchka, 2010; Aydın, Sarier, ve Uysal, 2013; Gündüz, 2012). Yet, the researcher did not come across with any study that examined the direct relationship between social intelligence and leadership styles. The researcher therefore believes that this study may have a significant contribution to the area.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the relationships between social intelligence and leadership styles of school administrators. Answers were sought to the following questions:

- 1 a) What are the leadership styles (support, interaction facilitation, goal emphasis, work facilitation) of the administrators?
 - b) What are the social intelligence levels (social information processing, social awareness, social skills) of the administrators?
2. Are there significant differences between school principals and assistant principals in terms of;
 - a) Leadership styles (support, interaction facilitation, goal emphasis and work facilitation)
 - b) Levels of social intelligence (social information process, social awareness and social skills)
3. Does the social intelligence of the school administrators predict their leadership styles?

Method

Sample

In this study correlation and descriptive analysis methods were used. The study was conducted with 202 school administrators employed in the different cities of Turkey. Table 1 presents information related to the demographic characteristics of the sample. The data collection instruments were administered to the school administrators, who came from different parts of Turkey and attended the educational administrators' meeting held in Gaziantep, Turkey.

Table shows that 10.0% of the participants are female, and 89.1% of them are male. The majority of the participants are between the ages of 30 and 39 (41.1%). 59.4% of the participants are principals, and 40.6% of them are assistant principals.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for Sample Distribution*

		F	%
Gender	Female	22	10,9
	Male	180	89,1
Age	18-29	10	5,0
	30-39	83	41,1
	40-49	72	35,6
	50-65	34	16,8
	65-above	3	1,5
Status	Principal	120	59,4
	Assistant Principal	82	40,6
	Total	202	100,0

Data collection tools

For this study two instruments were utilized as follows:

Leadership Styles Questionnaire

Leadership Styles Questionnaire was developed by Bowers and Seashore (1966) and adapted to Turkish by Günbayı (2005). This questionnaire was originally developed for teachers and aims to determine what leadership styles teachers would adopt if they became administrators. A sample statement in the questionnaire is as follows:

“If I become an administrator, I will support interpersonal relationships between myself and the other school staff.”

Item wordings in the questionnaire were changed and made it suitable for administrators. A redesigned sample item is as follows:

“I as an administrator, support interpersonal relationships between myself and the other school staff.”

The Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficients of the redesigned “Leadership Styles” Questionnaire are .77 for “support” sub-dimension, .76 for “interaction facilitation,” .66 for “goal emphasis,” and .64 for “work facilitation.”

The questionnaire has 20 Likert-type items. The leadership styles are: Support, interaction facilitation, goal emphasis, work facilitation. The points received for each dimension in the questionnaire range between 1-5.

Social Skills-Tromso Social Intelligence Scale

The Tromso Social Intelligence Scale (TSIS) was developed by Silvera, Martinussen and Dahl (2001) in order to determine the social intelligence levels. It is a self-report type of instrument that has 21 items. This questionnaire was translated into Turkish by Doğan and Çetin (2009), who also analyzed the validity, reliability and factorial structure of the Turkish version of the scale. TSIS measures social intelligence in three sub-dimensions

Sub-dimensions

The items 2, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 20 and 21 were reverse coded.

Social Information Processing	1-3-6-9-14-15-17-19	8
Social Skills	4-7-10-12-18-20	6
Social Awareness	2-5-8-11-13-16-21	7

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data obtained from the research. For the sub-dimensions of social intelligence levels and leadership styles, the means, ranges and standard deviations were calculated.

In order to make the calculated mean more comprehensible, the mean was divided by the maximum score that could be obtained from that particular sub-dimension. With this way, percentages were found.¹ MANOVA was used to assess whether or not there is a significant difference between the leadership styles and social intelligence levels of the principals and assistant principals. Pearson Product –Moment correlation was performed to test the relationships between the social intelligence and the leadership styles.

Results

Findings of this study are presented as shown below, starting with the scores of leadership styles and social intelligence levels of the administrators. The data of the study were analyzed by MANOVA and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis techniques. Findings related to the first research question: What are the leadership styles (support, interaction facilitation, goal emphasis, work facilitation) and social intelligence levels of the administrators?

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for Leadership Styles and Social Intelligences of the Administrators*

	Sub-dimensions		Mean	S.D.	*Min.-Max.	**%
Leadership Styles	Support		19,78	3,043	5-25	73
	Interaction Facilitation		20,04	2,951	5-25	75
	Goal Emphasis		19,47	2,830	5-25	72
	Work Facilitation		19,43	2,713	5-25	72
			19,68	2,56		
	Total	73	78,73	10,25	20-100	73
Social Intelligence	Social Information Processing	30	29,22	5,319	8-40	66
	Social Skills	17	22,72	3,684	6-30	69
	Social Awareness	28	25,29	4,445	7-35	65
			25,74	3,51		
	TOTAL	73	77,24	10,53	21-105	66

Table 2 shows that the sub-dimension “interaction facilitation” had the maximum mean score. This means that school administrators used the leadership style of “interaction facilitation” more than the other styles. Concerning the social intelligence levels of the administrators, the maximum mean score belongs to the sub-dimension “social skills.” This shows that administrators used “social skills” level of social intelligence more than the other levels.

Findings related to the second research question: Are there significant differences between school principals and assistant principals in terms of;

- 1) Leadership styles (support, interaction facilitation, goal emphasis and work facilitation)
- 2) Levels of social intelligence (social information process, social awareness and social skills)

Table 3. *MANOVA Results for the Comparisons Between Principals and Assistant Principals Concerning Their Social Intelligences*

Social intelligence sub-dimensions	Status	N	Mean	S.D.	F	Sig
Social information processing	Principal	120	29,80	5,224	3,567	,60
	Assistant Principal	82	28,37	5,374		
Social skills	Principal	120	22,63	3,675	,173	,67
	Assistant Principal	82	22,85	3,715		
Social awareness	Principal	120	25,11	4,481	,485	,487
	Assistant Principal	82	25,56	4,405		
Social Total	Principal	120	77,55	10,561	,256	,613
	Assistant Principal	82	76,79	10,555		

Wilks' Lambda= ,966; $F_{(3,198)}=2,3272$; $p= ,076$

The findings of MANOVA analysis are summarized in Table 3. Concerning the sub-dimensions of the social intelligence, no significant difference was found between principals and assistant principals [WilksLambda(Λ ,985; $F(3,19)=2.32$, $p>0,01$)]. This finding shows that social intelligence levels of the principals and assistant principals are similar.

Table 4. *MANOVA Results for the Comparisons between Principals and Assistant Principals Concerning their Leadership Styles*

Leadership sub-dimensions	Status	N	Mean	S.D.	f	Sig
Support	Principal	120	19,76	3,177	,013	,908
	Assistant Principal	82	19,81	2,855		
Interaction Facilitation	Principal	120	20,12	3,120	,219	,640
	Assistant Principal	82	19,92	2,697		
Goal Emphasis	Principal	120	19,54	3,006	,187	,666
	Assistant Principal	82	19,36	2,565		
Work Facilitation	Principal	120	19,59	2,714	1,041	,309
	Assistant Principal	82	19,19	2,710		
Total	Principal	120	79,02	10,73	,239	,625
	Assistant Principal	82	78,30	9,559		

Wilks' Lambda= ,985; $F_{(4,197)}=,756$; $p= ,555$

Table 4 summarizes the results of the MANOVA statistics. No significant difference was found between principals and assistant principals concerning their leadership styles and the sub-dimensions of leadership styles (support, interaction facilitation, goal emphasis, work facilitation) [WilksLambda (Λ ,985; $F(4,19)= .756$, $p>0,01$)] This finding shows that the leadership styles of the principals and assistant principals are similar.

Findings related to the third research question: Does the social intelligence of the school administrators predict their leadership styles?

Table 5 shows that the sub-dimensions of social intelligence has a moderate and a significant relationship with the leadership styles of the administrators ($R=0.39$, $R^2 =0.15$, $p<.05$). These sub-dimensions explain 15% of the variance in the total leadership styles. According to the standardized regression coefficients (β), the order of importance of the predictor variables for the leadership styles of the administrators are as follows: social information processing, social skills and social awareness. The t-test results concerning the

significance of the regression coefficients show that social information processing and social skills variables significantly predict the leadership styles of the administrators.

Table 5. *Regression Analysis as Predicting the Relationship between the School Administrators' Social Intelligence and Their Leadership Styles*

Predictor Variables	Criterion Variables									
	Leadership		Support		Interaction facilitation		Goal Emphasis		Work Facilitaiton	
	β	T	B	T	β	T	β	T	B	T
Constant	-	10.07*	-	7.03*	-	8.38*	-	10.64*	-	9.33
Social Information Processing	.21	2.71*	.19	2.52*	.27	3.53*	.13	1.66	.14	1.74
Social Awareness	.08	1.14	.14	1.94	.08	1.16	-.03	-.47	.10	1.42
Social Skills	.18	2.07*	.20	2.39*	.11	1.27	.14	1.51	.18	2.11*
	R= .39		R= .43		R= .39		R= .23		R= .35	
	R ² = .15		R ² = .18		R ² = .15		R ² = .05		R ² = .12	
	F =12.01*		F= 15.32*		F= 12.06*		F= 3.80*		F= 9.34*	
	*p< .05		*p<.05		*p< .05		*p< .05		*p< .05	

Social information processing, social awareness and social skills as the sub-dimensions of social intelligence have a significant relationship with the “support” sub-dimension of the leadership styles ($R=0.43$, $R^2 =0.18$, $p<.05$). The sub-dimensions of social intelligence explain 18% of the total variance of “support.” According to the standardized regression coefficients, the order of importance of the predictor variables for “support” is as follows; social information processing, social skills and social awareness. The t-test results concerning the significance of the regression coefficients show that social information processing and social skills variables significantly predict “support.”

The sub-dimensions of social intelligence which are social information processing, social awareness and social skills have a significant relationship with “interaction facilitator” sub-dimension of leadership styles ($R=0.39$, $R^2 =0.15$, $p<.05$). The sub-dimensions of social intelligence explain 18% of the total variance of “interaction facilitator. According to the standardized regression coefficients (β), the order of importance of the predictor variables for “interaction facilitator” are as follows: social information processing, social skills and social awareness. The t-test results concerning the significance of the regression coefficients, show that only “social information processing” significantly predict “interaction facilitator.”

Social information processing, social awareness and social skills as the sub-dimensions of social intelligence has a low and a significant relationship with “goal emphasis” sub-dimension of leadership styles ($R=0.23$, $R^2 =0.05$, $p<.05$). The sub-dimensions of social intelligence explain 5% of the total variance of goal emphasis. According to the standardized regression coefficient (β), the order of importance of the predictor variables for “goal emphasis” are as follows: social skills, social information processing and social awareness. The t-test results concerning the significance of the regression coefficients show that these variables did not significantly predict “goal emphasis.”

Social information processing, social awareness and social skills as the sub-dimensions of social intelligence has a significant relationship with the sub-dimension “work

facilitator. ($R=0.35$, $R^2=12$, $p<.05$). The sub-dimensions of social intelligence explain 12% of the total variance of “work facilitator.” According to the standardized regression coefficients (β) the order of importance of the predictor variables for “work facilitator” are as follows: social skills, social information processing and social awareness. The t-test results concerning the significance of the regression coefficients show that only “social skills” variable significantly predict “work facilitator.”

Discussion and Conclusions

The relationship between social intelligence levels of the school administrators with the sub-dimensions of social information processing, social skills and social awareness, and their leadership styles with the sub-dimensions of support, interaction facilitation, goal emphasis and work facilitation were examined in this study.

The findings related to the first research question showed that the “interaction facilitation” sub-dimension of the “leadership styles” had the maximum mean score. Yet, there are not many differences between the mean scores of the sub-dimensions of the leadership styles. This situation shows that although the administrators used the leadership style of “interaction facilitation” more than the other leadership styles, they gave importance to other leadership styles (support, goal emphasis, work facilitation) in a similar level. It is significant that the administrators of the present study gave a considerable importance to “interaction facilitation” since it is an important aspect of leadership behavior. A similar study conducted by Ahmetoğlu, Premuzic and Furnham (2010) in their study examined how interpersonal relationship orientation predicted leadership capability. The researchers measured interpersonal relationship orientation through the training program called Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientations-Behavior (FIRO-B) in order to predict leadership capability and managerial level of attainment. They conducted the study with 547 managers and executives from different countries and industries. The researchers also examined how intelligence and demographic characteristics predicted leadership and managerial level. The results showed that FIRO-B positively predicted leadership capability which is also influenced by intelligence and some demographic variables.

Concerning the social intelligence levels of the administrators, the present study revealed that “social skills” sub- dimension of the social intelligence received the maximum score. Yet, there are not many differences in the other mean scores of the sub-dimensions. This means that the social intelligence levels of the administrators are similar in all three dimensions. Social skills imply “communication skills such as active listening, acting boldly, establishing, maintaining, and breaking up a relationship” (Doğan and Cetin, 2009: 713). These characteristics are needed for effective interpersonal communication in organizations. Riggio and Reichard (2008) defined social skills in three components: social expressiveness, social sensitivity and social control. The researchers discussed how these skills as part of social intelligence are related to effective leadership in social settings.

The second research question was related to the comparisons between principals and assistant principals in terms of their social intelligence levels and leadership styles. The researcher expected to find some differences between principals and assistant principals concerning these variables due to the fact that in Turkish Education system, all authority belongs to the principals and assistant principals simply follow the orders of their superiors in the school hierarchy. However, the findings did not reveal any significant difference. This finding may reveal that in Turkish schools principals and assistant principals may perform similar duties and may not differ much in their roles and status as expected. These similar

characteristics may cause them to display similar leadership behaviors and approaches in social settings.

The findings of the third research question showed that the sub-dimensions of social intelligence significantly predicted the leadership styles of the administrators. This finding is also supported by Ahmetoğlu, Premuzic and Furnham's (2010) study that also revealed positive influence of interpersonal relationships on leadership effectiveness with the help of Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientations-Behavior (FIRO-B) training program. There are other evidences that social skills dimension of social intelligence has a significant influence on leadership behaviors in social settings. Riggio *et al.* (2003) conducted three studies to examine the role of social/communication skills in leaders' effectiveness. These studies in general revealed that social skills led to leader satisfaction. Yet, the performances of only leaders with higher status were influenced by the social skills.

Carson's (2011) study conducted with 124 mid-to-upper level managers showed positive relationship between social skill and transformational leadership style. This type of leadership refers to the following behaviors: idealized influence, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1999, cited in Carson, 2011). These leadership components may be different from the leadership styles discussed in the present study. Yet, Carson's research still gives us an idea about how social skill is positively related to effective leadership behaviors.

Mestry and Singh (2007) emphasize the importance of continuing professional development for principals. The authors examine the perceptions of principals on how the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) course influences their leadership styles. ACE is a new professional development programme initiated by the Faculty of Education in the University of Johannesburg and a non-governmental organization to help principals in South African Schools to develop their leadership skills. A similar program can be suggested in Turkey. Through such a programme principals can be offered some professional development courses by the universities, where they can learn the techniques of how to improve their emotional and social intelligence and leadership skills.

Limited research on the relationship between social intelligence and leadership necessitates further research on this subject. For example, this study can be replicated with other sample groups from different professions. Besides, "emotional intelligence" variable can be added to "social intelligence" and their relationship with leadership styles can be studied.

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