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Secondary School Directors' Communication Competence on the Basis of Teacher Opinions

AYCAN CICEK SAGLAM and MURAT AYDOGMUS

Abstract

The purpose of the current study is to determine the communication competence of school directors working in various secondary schools in the city of Usak, Turkey, in relation to variables on the basis of teachers' opinions. The population of the study, which employs the descriptive survey model, is comprised of 820 teachers working in 18 secondary schools located in the city of Usak during the 2014-2015 school year. All the schools included in the study were visited and the questionnaire given to teachers who were willing to participate in the study. Of the distributed questionnaires, only 301 were subjected to analysis. The research data were collected by using "Communication Competence Scale for Elementary School Directors" developed by Topluer (2008). The statistical analyses of the collected data were conducted using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 17.0 program by means of descriptive statistics, t-test, one-way variance analysis (ANOVA) and Tukey significance test. Findings revealed that in general the teachers think that the school directors' communication competence is high. The school directors' communication competence for the dimensions of understanding, empathy, social comfort, and support was found to be "mostly" positive. Moreover, it was also concluded that the gender variable has no significant effect on teachers' opinions about any of the sub-dimensions of directors' communication competence. However, the teachers' opinions about the sub-dimension of support were found to vary on the age variable. Older teachers are of the opinion that school directors demonstrate more supportive communication patterns. The number of teachers in a school was also found to significantly affect teachers' opinions. In terms of the sub-dimensions of understanding empathy and social comfort, with increasing numbers of teachers, the school director's communication competence in general is evaluated more positively.

Keywords: communication, communication competence, teacher, school director.



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Introduction

Communication is an important factor in enhancing teachers' motivation and ensuring their efficiency in schools where informal relationships play an important role. Schools with an effective communication network will have more interaction between the director and the teachers. In this way, good cooperation will be established between the management, one of the most effective units of the school, and workers. The motivation of workers in schools where the communication network is strong is more than those in schools where the communication network is weak. Through effective communication, both the management and workers can better understand what the other side wants and thus the motivation of workers, particularly that of teachers increases. According to a definition, communication; "is the act of influencing or activating a behavior, the motivation purpose, the exchange of information with two or more persons, and the understanding of this information"(Bridge, 2003, p. 8).An increasingly motivated teacher is more willing to work towards the goals of the school, feels highly committed to the school and does not hesitate to do his/her best for the success of the school. If teachers communicate effectively with directors and other teachers in the school, it becomes easier to reach the goals of the organization (Gunes, 2007). According to Vieira and Auriemma (2015), the first step for education and training is to find a common language. In many schools, this language is used to provide coordination between) teachers and to increase motivation. In addition, in order to maximize the effectiveness of this communication, the common language must be populated at all levels of the school, from classroom instruction to vocational learning. The greatest task in this regard falls to the school administrator. Moreover, the quality of director-teacher communication in the school is a factor that directly affects the degree to which the school achieves its goals and teacher-student relations. Communication and the quality of communication are of great importance in terms of establishing a democratic organization and accomplishing organizational goals (Simsek, 2003).

Communication is lifeblood of a braid. If we think of school as a person, the communication becomes blood circulating throughout the whole body to feed educators, students, parents and society. If communication is interrupted or ineffectual, there is a blockage in the circulation (Danielson, 2015). Communication, one of the management processes, activates the other processes of management and plays a key role in maintaining these processes. If this key role is properly played, management will be well informed about the good and bad sides of the system by the workers. Thus, workers' motivation levels are also affected from the existing communication process (Torbacioglu, 2007). The communication process is not just about sending one or more simple messages. Communication is about complex networks that connect people together. For example, in an organizational context, an administrator (source) who wants a volunteer (message) to work on the weekend may send this message to all employees (receivers) via an e-mail (channel). This model, conceptualized as a very simple "SMCR" model, can be summarized as a source transmitting a message to a receiver via a channel (Miller, 2012, p. 32). It is the school director who will lead the school towards its objectives and will create a quality atmosphere in the school. As a social system, the school should be able to establish a balance between the individual and the organization and in this regard, the main responsibility should be taken by the school director. For school directors to serve the goals of the school effectively, they need to be well-informed about the concepts and theories of management and human relationships (Toremén & Kolay, 2003).In addition, not directly involved in managerial

processes but involved in leadership and cooperative processes, motivation emerges as a result of individual needs. For these processes to be carried out effectively, motivation is a pre-requisite (Torbacioglu, 2007). Communication is at the heart of education. Communication at school; on the other hand, is an indispensable part of success in education. Healthy mutual communication can exert an important influence on all elements of education. For the formation of a communication process, it is of great importance to establish interpersonal communication. Communication is such links that people are connected to each other through it and thus can work efficiently and in harmony as a group. This link sometimes brings people closer to one another and sometimes away from one another. If an effective working environment and success are targeted at school, then great care should be taken for the formation of effective communication between individuals. Schools are living social organizations. As in any organization, for schools to survive and to keep pace with the age, they must function effectively. Directors and teachers working in schools not having an effective communication network seem to be indifferent to the objectives of their schools and school environment. On the other hand, motivation of directors and teachers working in schools having an effective communication network is high and they work industriously to accomplish the objectives of the school. Thus, it seems to be clear that by having a good communication network, it is more likely to educate thinking, questioning and successful generations. Therefore, the current study is important to elicit secondary school teachers' opinions about their school directors' communication competence, to evaluate the current situation and to formulate suggestions for teachers to have better communication with school directors. In terms of management of communication, it can be summarized as "If you cannot communicate, you cannot be an administrator". In this context, in a study conducted by members of the American Management Association in 2003, the results of the research question, "What features make you an effective leader", emphasizes the importance of communication. While the members gave the communication answer as the first characteristic to this question; as the second and third characteristic, they responded with motivation and team-building, based on communication in essence (Barker, 2011, p. 8).

The general purpose of the current study is to investigate secondary school directors' communication competence in relation to some variables on the basis of teacher opinions and to develop suggestions in light of the findings. To this end, answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. What are the teachers' opinions about the "Understanding and Empathy", "Social Comfort", and "Support" sub-dimensions of the secondary school directors' communication competence?
2. Do the teachers' opinions about the "Understanding and Empathy", "Social Comfort", and "Support" sub-dimensions of the secondary school directors' communication competence vary significantly based on;
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Number of teachers at school
 - Number of students at school

Methodology

In the current study, “Descriptive Survey Model” was employed to reveal the secondary school directors’ communication competence as it is on the basis of teacher opinions. The population of the study consists of 820 teachers working in state secondary schools in the city of Usak, Turkey, during the 2014-2015 school year. All the secondary schools were visited by the researcher and questionnaires were given to teachers who were at the school during the visit. The completed questionnaires were then collected from the teachers and they constituted the sample of the study. Of the 820 teachers in the population, 520 (63%) were given the questionnaire and 301 (35%) questionnaires were collected and subjected to analysis. Balci (1995, p. 110) cited Anderson (1990) that this return ratio shows that the sampling is big enough to represent the population according to 95% certainty level for populations of different sizes and the table given for theoretical sampling sizes.

When the data concerning the demographic features of the participants are examined, it is seen that 52.5% of the participants are females and 47.5% are males. Of the participating teachers, 32 are in the age group of 20-30; 138 are in the age group of 31-40 and 131 are in the age group of 41 or older. When the data related to the number of teachers working at school are examined, it is seen that of the participating teachers, 29 (9.6%) are working together with 15-30 teachers; 55 (18.3%) with 31-45 teachers; 56 (18.6%) with 46-60 teachers and 161 (53.5%) with 61 or more teachers. When the data related to the number of the students at school were examined, it was found that the number of teachers working in schools having less than 300 students is 17; the number of teachers working in schools having 301-400 students is 20; the number of teachers working in schools having 401-500 students is 35 and the number of teachers working in schools having more than 500 students is 229.

In the collection of the data, the “Communicative Competence Scale” was used; which was developed by Wiemann (1997) and adapted to Turkish by Topluer (2008). This scale consists of two parts. The first part was prepared by the researcher to elicit data about the participants’ gender, age and the number of teachers and students in their schools. In the second part, there are items related to school directors’ communication competence. The Communicative Competence Scale is made up of 31 items and three dimensions. These dimensions are “Understanding and Empathy”, “Social Comfort” and “Support”. In Topluer’s (2008) study, factor and reliability analyses were conducted for the scale. At the beginning, the basic components were analyzed and five dimensions appeared on the 36-item scale. Then factor analysis was repeated again using varimax perpendicular rotation technique for 31 items and three dimensions were revealed. After this process, it was seen that the first factor had a 16.164 Eigen value and 52.141% of the total variance; 2.146 for the second factor and 6.921% of the total variance, and 1.086 for the third factor and 3.504% of the total variance. For the reliability analyses of the sub-dimensions of the Communicative Competence Scale, the Cronbach Alpha value for *Understanding and Empathy* sub-dimension was found as 0.96, 0.87 for the *Social Comfort* sub-dimension, and 0.86 for the *Support* sub-dimension.

In the current study, KMO (Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin) and Bartlett Sphericity Test were repeated to determine the suitability of the scale for the factor analysis. KMO value was found to be .945. As a result of Bartlett Test, it was found that $p=.000$ ($p<.01$); thus, it was concluded that the data exhibits a normal distribution. The reliability analyses for the sub-

dimensions of the scale were repeated, and alpha value was found to be 0.945 for the sub-dimension of *Understanding and Empathy*, 0.843 for the sub-dimension of *Social Comfort* and 0.787 for the sub-dimension of *Support*.

Findings

Findings related to the First Sub-problem

The first sub-problem is “What are the teachers’ opinions about the ‘Understanding and Empathy’, ‘Social Comfort’, and ‘Support’ sub-dimensions of the secondary school directors’ communication competence?” The analysis of the teachers’ opinions about the secondary school directors’ communication competence is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Teachers’ opinions about the school directors’ communication competence

| Dimensions | N | \bar{X} | Ss |
|---------------------------|-----|-----------|------|
| Understanding and Empathy | 301 | 3.93 | 0.61 |
| Social Comfort | 301 | 3.88 | 0.63 |
| Support | 301 | 3.43 | 0.75 |

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that the teachers are of the opinion that the directors’ communication competence at the sub-dimensions of understanding and empathy ($\bar{X}=3.93$, $S=0.06$), social comfort ($\bar{X}= 3.88$, $S=0.63$), and support ($\bar{X}=3.43$, $S=0.75$) is “mostly” positive. Yet, when some items in the sub-dimension of support were examined, it was found that the teachers evaluate the directors’ communication competence as relatively weaker. In this regard, there seems to be some negative perception of the items “While talking to us, our director frequently interrupts us” ($\bar{X}=2.04$), “His/her manner of addressing us is harsh” ($\bar{X}=2.19$), “Our director is indifferent to our feelings” ($\bar{X}=2.10$), “Our director is not interested in what we are telling while talking to us” ($\bar{X}=1.76$).

Findings Related to the Second Sub-problem

The second sub-problem of the study aims to determine whether the teachers’ opinions about the directors’ communication competence vary significantly based on gender, age, the number of teachers at school and the number of the students at school. Findings related to these variables are presented separately for each sub-dimension.

Findings Related to the Sub-dimension of Understanding and Empathy

The effects of gender, age, the number of teachers at school and the number of students at school on the teachers’ opinions about the directors’ communication competence for the sub-dimension of understanding and empathy are presented in Tables 2-5.

Table 2. T-test results of effect of gender on teachers' opinions about school directors' communication competence: Sub-dimension –understanding & empathy

| Gender | N | \bar{X} | S | Sd | t | P |
|--------|-----|-----------|------|-----|------|------|
| Male | 143 | 3.91 | 0.63 | 299 | 0.64 | 0.52 |
| Female | 158 | 3.96 | 0.58 | | | |

As can be seen in Table 2, the teachers' opinions about the directors' communication competence for the sub-dimension of understanding and empathy do not vary significantly based on gender ($t = 0.64$; $p > 0.52$).

Table 3. ANOVA test results of effect of age on teachers' opinions about directors' communicative competence: Sub-dimension – understanding and empathy

| Source of the variance | Sum of squares | Sd | Mean squares | F | p | Significant difference |
|------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------|------|------|------------------------|
| Between-groups | 3.655 | 2 | 1.82 | 5.03 | 0.00 | 1-2 1-3 |
| Within-group | 108.159 | 298 | 0.36 | | | |
| Total | 111.814 | 300 | | | | |

* $p < .05$

As can be seen in Table 3, the teachers' opinions about the directors' communication competence for the sub-dimension of understanding and empathy vary significantly based on age ($F=5.03$; $p < 0.5$). This variance results from the difference between the 20-30 age group and the 31-40 age group, and the difference between the 20-30 age group and the 41 or older age group. Thus, when compared to the teachers in the age groups of 31-40 and 41 or older, the teachers in the age group of 20-30 evaluate the directors' communication competence at the sub-dimension of understanding and empathy less positively.

Table 4. ANOVA test results of effect of number of teachers on teachers' opinions about directors' communicative competence: Sub-dimension –understanding & empathy

| Source of the variance | Sum of squares | Sd | Mean squares | F | p | Significant difference |
|------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------|------|------|------------------------|
| Between-groups | 8.809 | 3 | 2.93 | 8.46 | 0.00 | 1-2 |
| Within-group | 103.005 | 297 | 0.34 | | | 1-4 |
| Total | 111.814 | 300 | | | | 3-4 |

* $p < .05$

As can be seen in Table 4, the teachers' opinions about the directors' communication competence at the sub-dimension of understanding and empathy vary significantly based on the number of teachers at school ($F= 8.46$; $p < 0.5$). A significant difference was found between the opinions of the teachers working in schools having 15-30 teachers and those of the teachers working in schools having 31-45 and 61 or more teachers. Moreover, there is also a significant difference between the opinions of the teachers working in school having 46-60 teachers and those of the teachers working in schools having 61 or more teachers.

With decreasing numbers of teachers, the teachers' opinions about the directors' communication competence at the sub-dimension of understanding and empathy become more negative. In other words, with increasing numbers of teachers, the directors can better show their communication competence at the sub-dimension of understanding and empathy.

Table 5. ANOVA test results of effect of number of students on teachers' opinions about directors' communicative competence: Sub-dimension – understanding & empathy

| Source of the variance | Sum of squares | Sd | Mean squares | F | p | Significant difference |
|------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------|------|------|------------------------|
| Between-groups | 6.120 | 3 | 2.04 | 5.73 | 0.00 | 2-4 |
| Within-group | 105.694 | 297 | 0.35 | | | |
| Total | 111.814 | 300 | | | | |

*p<.05

As can be seen in Table 5, the teachers' opinions about the directors' communicative competence at the sub-dimension of understanding and empathy vary significantly based on the number of students at school ($F=5.73$; $p<0.5$). In this regard, the teachers working in schools with 500 or more students view the directors' communicative competence at the sub-dimension of understanding and empathy more positively than the teachers working in schools with 301-400 students.

Findings related to the Sub-dimension of Social Comfort

The effects of gender, age, the number of teachers at school and the number of students at school on the teachers' opinions about the directors' communication competence for the sub-dimension of social comfort are presented in Tables 6-9.

Table 6. T-test results of effect of gender on teachers' opinions about school directors' communication competence: Sub-dimension – social comfort

| Gender | N | \bar{X} | Ss | Sd | t | p |
|--------|-----|-----------|------|-----|------|------|
| Male | 143 | 3.86 | 0.66 | | | |
| | | | | 299 | 0.49 | 0.62 |
| Female | 158 | 3.90 | 0.60 | | | |

*p<.05

As can be seen in Table 6, the teachers' opinions about the directors' communication competence for the sub-dimension of social comfort do not vary significantly based on gender ($t=0.49$; $p>0.05$).

Table 7. ANOVA test results of the effect of age on teachers' opinions about directors' communicative competence: Sub-dimension – social comfort

| Source of the variance | Sum of squares | Sd | Mean squares | F | p | Significant difference |
|------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------|------|------|------------------------|
| Between-groups | 1.350 | 2 | 0.67 | 1.70 | 0.18 | - |
| Within-group | 118.004 | 298 | 0.39 | | | |
| Total | 119.354 | 300 | | | | |

As can be seen in Table 7, the teachers' opinions about the directors' communication competence for the sub-dimension of social comfort do not vary significantly based on age ($p>0.5$).

Table 8. ANOVA test results of effect of number of teachers on teachers' opinions about directors' communicative competence: Sub-dimension – social comfort

| Source of the variance | Sum of squares | Sd | Mean squares | F | p | Significant difference |
|------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------|-------|------|------------------------|
| Between-groups | 13.63 | 3 | 4.54 | 12.76 | 0.00 | 1-2 |
| Within-group | 105.72 | 297 | 0.35 | | | 1-4 3-4 |
| Total | 119.35 | 300 | | | | |

* $p<.05$

As can be seen in Table 8, the teachers' opinions about the directors' communication competence at the sub-dimension of social comfort vary significantly based on the number of teachers at school ($F= 12.76$; $p<0.5$). A significant difference was found between the opinions of the teachers working in schools having 15-30 teachers and those of the teachers working in schools having 31-45 and 61 or more teachers. Moreover, there is also a significant difference between the opinions of the teachers working in schools having 46-60 teachers and those of the teachers working in schools having 61 or more teachers. Thus, it can be maintained that with increasing number of teachers, the directors can better show their communication competence at the sub-dimension of social comfort.

Table 9. ANOVA test results of effect of number of students on teachers' opinions about directors' communicative competence: Sub-dimension – social comfort

| Source of the variance | Sum of squares | Sd | Mean squares | F | p | Significant difference |
|------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------|------|------|------------------------|
| Between-groups | 9.10 | 3 | 3.03 | 8.18 | 0.00 | 1-4 2-4 |
| Within-group | 110.24 | 297 | 0.37 | | | |
| Total | 119.35 | 300 | | | | |

* $p<.05$

As can be seen in Table 9, the teachers' opinions about the directors' communicative competence at the sub-dimension of social comfort vary significantly based on the number of students at school ($F=8.18$; $p<0.5$). In this regard, the teachers working in schools with 500 or more students view the directors' communicative competence at the sub-dimension of social comfort more positively than the teachers working in schools with less than 300 students and with 301-400 students.

Findings Related to the Sub-dimension of Support

The effects of gender, age, the number of teachers at school and the number of students at school on the teachers' opinions about the directors' communication competence for the sub-dimension of support are presented in Tables 10-13.

Table 10. T-test results of effect of gender on teachers' opinions about school directors' communication competence: Sub-dimension – support

| Gender | N | \bar{X} | Ss | Sd | t | p |
|--------|-----|-----------|------|-----|------|------|
| Male | 143 | 3.96 | 0.77 | | | |
| | | | | 299 | 0.05 | 0.96 |
| Female | 158 | 3.97 | 0.72 | | | |

As can be seen in Table 10, the teachers' opinions about the directors' communication competence for the sub-dimension of support do not vary significantly based on gender ($t = -0.05$; $p > 0.5$). This shows that gender of teachers is not influential on their opinions about directors' communication competence for the sub-dimension of support.

Table 11. ANOVA test results of effect of age on teachers' opinions about directors' communicative competence: Sub-dimension – support

| Source of the variance | Sum of squares | Sd | Mean squares | F | p | Significant difference |
|------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------|------|------|------------------------|
| Between-groups | 7.33 | 2 | 3.67 | 6.75 | 0.01 | |
| Within-group | 161.84 | 298 | 0.54 | | | 1-3 |
| Total | 169.18 | 300 | | | | 1-4 |

* $p < .05$

As can be seen in Table 11, the teachers' opinions about the directors' communication competence for the sub-dimension of support vary significantly based on age ($p < 0.5$). In this regard, the teachers in the age groups of 41 and older and 31-40 find the school directors' communication competence at the sub-dimension of support better than the teachers in the age group of 20-30.

Table 12. ANOVA test results of effect of number of teachers on teachers' opinions about directors' communicative competence: Sub-dimension – support

| Source of the variance | Sum of squares | Sd | Mean squares | F | p | Significant difference |
|------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------|------|------|------------------------|
| Between-groups | 1.84 | 3 | 0.61 | 1.09 | 0.35 | |
| Within-group | 167.34 | 297 | 0.56 | | | - |
| Total | 169.18 | 300 | | | | |

* $p < .05$

As can be seen in Table 12, the teachers' opinions about the directors' communication competence at the sub-dimension of support do not vary significantly based on the number of teachers at school ($p > 0.5$).

Table 13. ANOVA test results on effect of number of students on teachers' opinions about directors' communicative competence: Sub-dimension of support

| Source of the variance | Sum of squares | Sd | Mean squares | F | p | Significant difference |
|------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------|------|------|------------------------|
| Between-groups | 2.146 | 4 | 0.53 | 0.95 | 0.43 | |
| Within-group | 167.037 | 296 | 0.56 | | | - |
| Total | 169.183 | 300 | | | | |

* $p < .05$

As can be seen in Table 13, the teachers' opinions about the directors' communicative competence at the sub-dimension of support do not vary significantly based on the number of students at school ($p>0.5$).

Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of the current study was to investigate secondary school teachers' opinions about the school directors' communication competence in terms of some variables. The findings revealed that in general, the teachers think that the directors' communication competence is high. Kamate (2014) also emphasizes that directors should be able to use proper communication skills in order to get the correct message across clearly about the effect of academic personnel on students' poor performance and social development. A similar finding was obtained in the current study, emphasizing the importance of school directors' communication skills. Parallel to the findings of the current study, Sevinc (2013) found in a study investigating school directors' communication competence that the school directors have a high level of communication competence at the sub-dimensions of understanding and empathy, and social comfort, and a medium level of communication competence at the sub-dimension of support. Similarly, in the current study, the level of communication competence at the sub-dimension of support was found to be slightly lower than the levels of communication competence at the sub-dimensions of understanding and empathy, and also for social comfort. This may be because in some administrative duties, school directors may not find enough time to support personal and the professional development of teachers.

Also, an interesting study was conducted by Sophie (2004). According to her findings, communication skills and leadership abilities of school principals differ significantly according to gender and age. Female school principals consider both leadership and communication skills higher than male school principals. There is a positive relationship between school principals' communication and leadership skills. According to the results of the research, there is a high degree of relationship between managers' interpersonal communication skills and leadership skills. Cubuklu and Dondar (2003) conducted a study to explore teachers' perceptions and expectations of school directors' communicative competence and found that teachers' expectations of school directors' communicative competence are higher than their perceptions. This finding can be interpreted that school directors' communication with teachers and communication competence is not at the desired level. In this connection, it is also remarkable that some items in the support sub-dimension "While talking to us, our director frequently interrupts us", "His/her manner of addressing us is harsh", "Our director is indifferent to our feelings" and "Our director is not interested in what we are telling while talking to us" are negatively evaluated by the teachers of the current study. This shows that though in general the school directors' communication competence is evaluated positively; there are some problems in some specific aspects of communication competence.

In the current study, it was also examined whether the teachers' opinions about the school directors' communication competence vary significantly based on the gender at the sub-dimensions of "understanding and empathy", "social comfort" and "support", and no gender-based significant difference was found. That is, gender is not influential on the teachers' opinions. This finding concurs with the findings reported by Topluer (2008), Coskuner (2008), and Ciftli (2013). However, contrary to this finding, Sevinc (2013) reported

that the teachers' opinions about the school directors' communication competence varied significantly depending on the gender variable at the sub-dimensions of "understanding and empathy", "social comfort", and "support" in favor of the male teachers. Parallel to this Gokkaya (2009) argues that male teachers are more positive than female teachers about school directors' communication skills. On the other hand, Torbacioglu (2007) stated that teachers' opinions about school directors' communication skills do not vary significantly based on gender. Varma and Stroh (2001) also stated that school directors' communication skills are positively evaluated by teachers of the same gender as the director. That is, if the director is male, then male teachers find his communication skills adequate, and if the director is female, then female teachers evaluate her communication skills more positively. Furthermore, Simsek and Altinkurt (2009) found that female teachers evaluate school directors' communication skills more positively than male teachers.

When the teachers' opinions were evaluated on the basis of the age variable, it was found that opinions about the sub-dimension of "understanding and empathy" varied significantly depending on the age variable. In this regard, the teachers in the age group of 20-30 evaluate the school directors' communication competence at the sub-dimension of "understanding and empathy" more negatively when compared to the teachers in the age groups of 31-40 and 41 and older. While the teachers' opinions about the school directors' communication competence at the sub-dimension of "social comfort" do not vary significantly based on the age variable, they do vary in relation to the sub-dimension of "support". In this respect, the teachers in the age groups of 41 and older and 31-40 evaluate the school directors' communication competence at the sub-dimension of "support" more positively than the teachers in the age group of 20-30. In light of these findings, it can be argued that while teachers with more experience in the profession take some situations for granted and tolerate them, novice teachers may have higher expectations; therefore, their opinions are more negative.

When the findings were evaluated in relation to the number of teachers at school, it was found that while the teachers' opinions about the school directors' communication competence varied significantly at the sub-dimensions of "understanding and empathy" and "social comfort", they did not at the sub-dimension of "support". With increasing numbers of teachers at school, the teachers' opinions about the directors' communication competence at the sub-dimensions of "understanding and empathy" and "social comfort" become more positive. However, this finding conflicts with the findings of Sevinc (2013). Sevinc found that the number of teachers at school does not significantly affect the teachers' opinions about the school directors' communication competence for three sub-dimensions. Torbacioglu (2007) on the other hand, reported that at schools with a higher number of teachers, the teachers' perception of the school directors' communication competence is weaker than those of teachers working at schools with a smaller number of teachers. Furthermore, Onsal (2012) stated that when compared to teachers working at schools with a higher number of teachers, teachers working at schools with a smaller number of teachers find the school directors' communication skills more restricted.

When the findings concerning the number of students at school were analyzed, it was found that while the teachers' opinions about the school directors' communication competence varied significantly at the sub-dimensions of "understanding and empathy" and "social comfort" depending on the number of students at school, they did not vary at the sub-dimension of "support". In this regard, teachers working at schools with 500 or more

students evaluate the school directors' communication competence at the sub-dimension of "understanding and empathy" more positively than teachers working at schools having 301-400 students. Moreover, the teachers working at schools with 500 or more students evaluate the school directors' communication competence at the sub-dimension of "social comfort" more positively than the teachers working at schools with less than 300 students or 301-400 students. As a result, with increasing numbers of students, the teachers' opinions about school directors' communication competence become more positive. This might be because of the close relationships and more time spent sharing in small schools, teachers might have more opportunities to observe and evaluate school directors.

As a conclusion, the school directors' communication competence seems to be high in general according to the teachers, similar to the studies by Jones (2006) and Tabor (2001). Yet, some items in the support sub-dimension "While talking to us, our director frequently interrupts us", "His/her manner of addressing us is harsh", "Our director is indifferent to our feelings" and "Our director is not interested in what we are telling while talking to us" are negatively evaluated by the teachers. Thus, to improve school directors in these respects, in-service training programs can be organized to enhance such weak communication skills of school directors, particularly their addressing and empathic thinking skills.

Notes

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