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## Innovational Leadership in School Management

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### Abstract

This study aimed at examining school administrators' innovational leadership behaviors and the level of practicing these behaviors. The study was designed using the descriptive model since it aimed to identify school administrators' innovative behaviors and approaches in school management. School Management Innovational Leadership Scale (SMILES) developed (2016) by the researcher was used in the study as the data collection instrument. Data was collected from 111 school administrators and 346 teachers during the 2015-2016 academic teaching year. According to the research results, school administrators' innovational leadership behaviors are collected under three factors; "Encouraging Innovation", "Pursuing Innovation", and "Implementing Innovation". It was found that school administrators mostly show the innovational leadership behaviors expressed in the three factors and in the total scale. It was expressed in the study that compared to females; males believe that school administrators show more innovational leadership behaviors. Also, compared to participants with graduate degrees, participants with undergraduate degrees believe that school administrators show more innovational leadership behaviors. At the same time, compared to teachers, school administrators believe that they show more innovational leadership behaviors.

**Keywords:** innovational leadership, school management, SMILE Scale.



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## Introduction

There are many variables that define the quality of educational services provided by schools which are educational organizations. School administrators' innovation and leadership skills are believed to be among the variables that are effective in the production of educational services provided by schools. From past to present, schools have faced many problems, school community's expectations of quality from schools have increased and schools are required to compete with other schools. Increasing need for problem-solving skills in schools, responding to the expectations of the school community and increasing competitive abilities of schools are related to school administrators' innovation and leadership skills. It can also be argued that sustainable innovation and leadership cultures can be obtained with the support of administrators equipped with innovation and leadership skills.

Leadership types required at different situations vary in organizations; organizations need different types of leaders in different situations. Leaders are not expected to achieve success in each situation. Therefore, presenting a new leadership approach for sustainable innovation in educational organizations will be a leadership approach specific to the organization.

The term innovation does not have an exact translation in Turkish (native language of the author), but has been defined with terms such as "novelty", "discovery" and "invention" (Bozkurt & Taşcıoğlu, 2007). The term "innovation" was first used mostly in the industry sector, being introduced later on to the service sector. Innovation is defined as the discovery of new and different methods in the production of goods and services and the presentation of new ideas and opinions which thereby increase competitive power (Bell, 2013; Drucker, 1985; Kırım, 2006; Porter, 1990; Tuominen, Pippo, Ichimura, & Matsumoto, 1999).

For school management, innovation means finding new methods to solve the problems faced in education, training and management services, and introducing changes to increase the quality of these services to compete with other schools. At the same time, it is also believed that schools can increase their productivity through.

Innovation is indeterminate, i.e. it has both successful and unsuccessful results. It is imperative that senior management accept risks and provide support and commitment to ensure the application of successful innovation (Bayhan, 2004). When these are ensured, innovational leadership provides positive results (Gümüşlüoğlu, 2009). Hence, it can be claimed that leadership skills are required in school administrators to manage innovation, to remove ambiguities in innovation and to apply innovational approaches to school management.

Five basic activities exist in innovation: (a) analyze environment and identify opportunities; (b) generate innovations and investigate; (c) plan project and select sponsor; (d) prioritize project and assign teams; and finally (e) implement product innovation plan. Each activity is described in terms of its development (Cormican & O'Sullivan, 2004, p. 4). To a great extent, the execution and implementation of these factors identified for innovation is dependent on leadership (Sundström & Viktorsson, 2009). For successful and sustainable innovation, school administrations are expected to provide leadership in innovation practices to human resources at the school and the members of the school community.

Innovation has three main categories: technological product innovations, technological process innovations, and organizational innovations (Durgut, Arıkan, Aksoy, & Göker, 2003, p. 27). It is imperative for companies to have an organizational culture that promotes innovation so that they can be successful in innovation activities (Satı & Işık, 2011). It is believed that organizational innovation cultures are only possible with a strong leadership in innovation. Therefore, it is necessary for schools which are educational organizations to open innovational leadership approach to discussion and to bring practices of this new leadership approach in schools into question.

Innovation is vital for the success and sustainability of organizations (Bülbül, 2010). Positive, significant and medium level correlations have been identified between the parameters that point to a tendency for innovation and innovation performance achievement levels (Şendoğdu & Öztürk, 2013). Innovations in companies positively affect their business performances (Öztürk, Mesci, & Kılınc, 2013). Therefore, it can be argued that innovation is also crucial for the success of educational organizations.

Companies which require innovative skills and aim to make these skills sustainable should, first of all, be open to innovative ideas and adopt them. Identifying strategies and following the process for innovation is the main requirement for companies that exist in the rapidly changing conditions of today's market (Satı & Işık, 2011). International literature emphasizes the importance of leadership in innovation as well as in organizational cultures and structures, teamwork, psychology and the motivation of staff who will be involved in innovation (Gümüşoğlu, 2009).

It is evident that school organizations need innovational leaders as much as other organizations. Following the founding of administrative sciences, the development processes addressed and examined leader and leadership concepts by applying different approaches. While classical organization and management theories tried to explain leadership via leadership traits theory, which proposed that leaders have specific extraordinary traits, neoclassical organization and management theories tried to define leadership via behavioral theories based on interest and commitment to work and to employees. Modern organization and management theories approach leadership on the premise that it is generated by present structures and conditions and address and examine the concept of leadership on the basis of situational leadership (Sağır, 2013).

Leadership is the skill to bring a group of people together for specific goals and to influence and guide them to realize these aims (Çelik, 2003; Eren, 1996; Hodgetts, 1999; Hoy & Miskel, 2010; Paksoy, 2002; Robbins, 1994; Torlak, 2008; Zel, 2006). When common characteristics of leadership definitions are examined, it is seen that leadership, in the simplest sense, is regarded as the power to influence others. Lloyd (2006) defines eight key factors in leadership: inspiration, strategic thinking, farsightedness/foresight, honesty, impartiality, courage, supportiveness, and wisdom. The concept of leadership includes the leader as well. While leadership points to a concept, leader points to the person. Hence, there are many definitions for the leader that are meshed with the definitions of leadership and that exhibit the job definition of the leader.

The leader is the individual who has the utmost influence on the person or the group they are believed to lead (Freadman, Sears, & Carlsmith, 2003, p. 53). The leader determines the vision, objectives, priorities and the standards of the organization, takes the necessary measures to keep them intact and ensure mutual agreement among these (Drucker, 1996,

p. 130).Bursaliođlu (1994) regards the leader as the individual who assesses and regulates group experiences and who benefits from the power of the group as a result of these experiences; while Özden (2006), approaches the leader based on their impact on transformation, defines the leader as the person who is able to take new opportunities generated by major changes and who can bring new expansions to the organization by using these opportunities in spite of the indefinite aspects and dangers.

The starting point of these approaches are defined by using contingency theories based on the understanding that leadership qualities and behaviors that are relevant for all situations do not exist (Şişman, 2004, p. 6). Contingency theories argue that it is impossible to predict in advance the leadership behaviors that will be effective in different situations (Çelik, 2004, p. 192). Hence, a leader in a specific situation cannot lead in another case and the leader should definitely have the qualities required by the situation (Scott, 1964, p. 384).In this context, it is believed that a different leadership approach is necessary for innovation in school management.

While school management problems are on the rise, school communities' expectations for quality education are also increasing. Innovational leadership is regarded as imperative in school management for both solving the problems faced by schools and for responding to demands of the school community regarding quality education. Hence, this current study aimed to present a new leadership approach for school administrators titled innovational leadership and to define the relationship between this leadership approach with other leadership approaches used in school management. Research results are expected to present an expansion to academic communities on innovation at schools.

## **Methodology**

The sample of the current research is comprised of 286 senior students from a public university in Turkey's Mugla province during the 2015-2016 academic year who participated in the study on a volunteer basis.

The study was designed via the descriptive model since it aimed to identify school administrators' innovative behaviors and approaches in school management. The School Management Innovational Leadership Scale (SMILES) developed by the researcher was used in the study as a data collection instrument. During the scale's development phase, the six-phase process proposed by Lester and Bishop (2000) was followed. The first phase included a literature review and formation of the item pool by identifying innovational leadership behaviors of school management.

Six school administrators and four academicians were asked to assess the suitability of innovational leadership behaviors included in the item pool. The first item pool included 62 items, which were then reduced to 53 as a result of reviewing the items and removing those that were similar to each other. The items in the final item pool were administered to 72 teachers to check the intelligibility of the items. The teachers provided feedback for item intelligibility and the period of administration; any adjustments deemed necessary were applied based on the feedback. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was identified to be 0.93 the during pilot testing.

Data was then collected from 111 school administrators and 346 teachers during the 2015-2016 academic year. Scores were calculated from the scale between the level of 'incompetence' and 'competence' in innovational leadership. The five-point, Likert-type

(Never, Very Little, Partially, Mostly, and Always) data collection tool with 53 items was then finalized.

Arithmetic means were calculated by using "Interval Width=Series Width (Range)/Number of Group" formula and score intervals were identified to be  $4/5 = 0.80$  (Tekin, 1996). The score intervals identified are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Score Intervals for Likert-type Scale

Level	Score Interval
(5) Always	4.21-5.00
(4) Mostly	3.41-4.20
(3) Sometimes	2.61-3.40
(2) Rarely	1.81-2.60
(1) Never	1.00-1.80

Varimax rotation, one of the exploratory factor analysis methods, was used to present SMILES' construct validity. First of all, correlation matrix (*R matrix*) was examined in order to ensure data fit for factor analysis and significant relationships were identified ( $p < 0.01$ ) that pointed to the fact that data were fit for factor analysis.

Later Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett Sphericity analyses were undertaken where KMO sampling adequacy coefficient was found to be 0.980 and Bartlett Sphericity test  $\chi^2$  value was identified to be 22608.810 ( $p=0.000$ ). KMO value is supposed to be higher than 0.60 and Bartlett test should be significant for data to be fit for factor analysis (Büyüköztürk, 2004). KMO value higher than 0.90 means perfect fit for factor analysis (Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999).

Factor analysis results showed that factor load values were between 0.417 and 0.790. Results of factor analysis provided a five-factor structure with eigenvalues of 29.868, 1.798, 1.530, 1.229 and 1.121. However, since there were items under the fourth and fifth factors with no high load values ( $< .40$ ), only two items (23 and 24) provided load values and Item 22 did not have load values under any factors, it was decided to remove items 22, 23, 24, 28, 29, 32, 33 and 41 as a result of the exploratory factor analysis. Results of the new factor analysis undertaken on the data are provided in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Rotated Component Matrix

Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3	
Encouraging Innovation		Pursuing Innovation		Implementing Innovation	
Item	Load Value	Item	Load Value	Item	Load Value
i7	.797	i35	.505	i50	.717
i3	.776	i37	.460	i53	.681
i6	.762	i20	.772	i46	.672
i4	.751	i21	.702	i48	.662
i2	.742	i40	.630	i43	.658
i8	.740	i31	.628	i51	.611
i5	.697	i36	.609	i42	.590
i1	.684	i34	.587	i49	.588

Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3	
Encouraging Innovation		Pursuing Innovation		Implementing Innovation	
Item	Load Value	Item	Load Value	Item	Load Value
i9	.638	i27	.574	i39	.580
i11	.622	i30	.560	i44	.569
i26	.605	i25	.533	i47	.557
i18	.583	i52	.528	i38	.541
i13	.574	i14	.520	i45	.453
i15	.573				
i16	.573				
i12	.567				
i17	.552				
i19	.533				
i10	.528				

The three factors obtained as a result of the factor analysis explained 64.954% of the total variance. Therefore, the three-factor structure obtained at the end of the analysis explained a major part of the total variance in the items and in the scale. These factors are defined as Factor 1: Encouraging Innovation, Factor 2: Pursuing Innovation, and Factor 3: Implementing Innovation. There are 19 items in the first factor, 13 in the second and 13 in the third factor. The factor structure was defined as a three-factor structure based on eigenvalues, which can be seen in the scree plot graphic in Figure 1 which was drawn according to eigenvalues.

Scree Plot

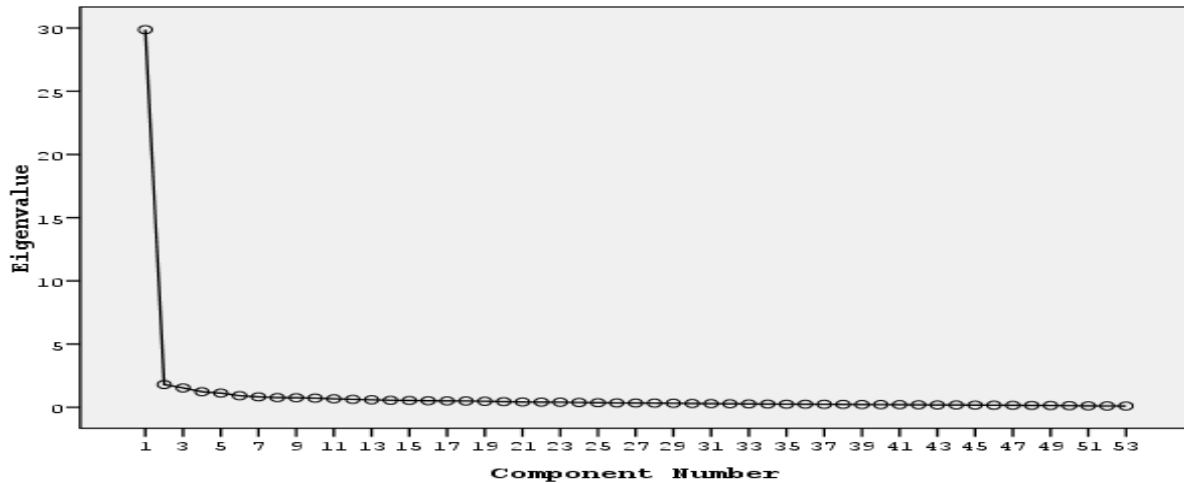


Figure 1. Scree Plot Graphic Drawn According to Eigenvalues

Since the explanation of the total variance was found to be high, the high factor load values in the three factors means that SMILES could measure the desired structure and therefore was accepted as valid. Internal consistency and test-retest methods were implemented for reliability analyses and Cronbach Alpha value was found to be 0.984 for the whole scale.

**Findings**

Findings related to personal variables of the teachers and administrators who took part in the study are presented in Tables 3, 4 and 5.

**Table 3.** Participant Views on Innovational Leadership

Factor	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Encouraging Innovation	457	1.21	5.00	3.6085	.84797
Pursuing Innovation	457	1.46	5.00	3.9135	.78112
Implementing Innovation	457	1.15	5.00	3.6565	.81110
Total	457	1.29	5.00	3.7105	.78589

Table 3 shows that school administrators mostly realize innovational leadership behaviors included in School Management Innovational Leadership Scale (SMILES) in Encouraging Innovation dimension with  $X = 3.60$ , in Pursuing Innovation dimension with  $X = 3.91$  and in Implementing Innovation dimension with  $X = 3.65$ . Regarding the whole scale, school administrators were found to generally realize innovational leadership behaviors with a mean of  $X = 3.71$ .

**Table 4.** T-test for Participant Views Based on Gender

Factor	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Encouraging Innovation	Female	163	3.5202	.91588	455	1.662	.097
	Male	294	3.6575	.80532			
Pursuing Innovation	Female	163	3.8042	.82867	455	2.238	.026
	Male	294	3.9741	.74804			
Implementing Innovation	Female	163	3.5267	.88780	455	2.563	.011
	Male	294	3.7284	.75731			
Total	Female	163	3.6041	.84962	455	2.164	.031
	Male	294	3.7695	.74318			

Table 4 presents no significant differences ( $p > .05$ ) in participant views based on gender in terms of Encouraging Innovation dimension included in School Management Innovational Leadership Scale (SMILES), whereas significant differences exist in Pursuing Innovation and Implementing Innovation dimensions and in the total scale ( $p < .05$ ). Based on the findings, compared to female participants, male participants believe that innovational leadership are followed more at schools.

**Table 5.** Participant Views Based on Level of Education

Factor	Education Level	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Encouraging Innovation	Undergraduate	383	3.6725	.82357	455	3.721	.000
	Graduate	74	3.2774	.89985			
Pursuing Innovation	Undergraduate	383	3.9466	.75292	455	2.068	.039
	Graduate	74	3.7422	.89963			
Implementing Innovation	Undergraduate	383	3.7078	.79647	455	3.106	.002
	Graduate	74	3.3909	.83945			
Total	Undergraduate	383	3.7619	.76434	455	3.213	.001
	Graduate	74	3.4444	.84576			



Table 5 presents significant differences between participant views in all the three dimensions included in the School Management Innovational Leadership Scale (SMILES) and in the total scale ( $p < .05$ ) based on level of education. According to the findings, compared to participants with graduate education, participants with undergraduate education believe that school administrators present more innovational leadership behaviors.

**Table 6.** Participant Views Based on Type of Task

Factor	Task	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Encouraging	Teacher	346	3.5222	.87508	455	-3.902	.000
Innovation	Administrator	111	3.8777	.69466			
Pursuing	Teacher	346	3.8195	.80025	455	-4.644	.000
Innovation	Administrator	111	4.2065	.63745			
Implementing	Teacher	346	3.5765	.83480	455	-3.775	.000
Innovation	Administrator	111	3.9058	.67728			
Total	Teacher	346	3.6238	.81059	455	-4.241	.000
	Administrator	111	3.9808	.63417			

Table 6 shows significant differences between teacher and administrator views in all three dimensions included in the School Management Innovational Leadership Scale (SMILES) and in the total scale ( $p < .05$ ). According to the findings, compared to teachers, administrators believe that school administrators present more innovational leadership behaviors.

## Conclusion and Discussion

This study aimed to present school administrators' innovational leadership behaviors and the level of practicing these behaviors. Research results for school administrators' innovational leadership behaviors are collected under three factors, as "Encouraging Innovation", "Pursuing Innovation", and "Implementing Innovation". It was found that school administrators "mostly" present the innovational leadership behaviors expressed in the three factors and in the total scale. It was expressed in the study that compared to females, males believe that school administrators present more innovational leadership behaviors. Also, compared to participants with graduate degrees, participants with undergraduate degrees believe that school administrators present more innovational leadership behaviors. At the same time, compared to teachers, school administrators believe that they present more innovational leadership behaviors. The study shows that innovation is not given sufficient priority in Turkey, the desired increase is not attained and therefore an insufficient level of competence in competition exists (Akin & Reyhanoğlu, 2014; Incekara, Demez, & Akyol, 2014; Kalça & Atasoy, 2008). Turkey was listed 33<sup>rd</sup> among 34 countries in 2014 in the annual innovation performance measures undertaken to assess EU member and candidate countries' innovation skills (Yalçintaş Gülbaş, 2011). In another research, it was found that Turkey has low innovation indicators among countries such as EU member states, USA, Japan, and Israel (Ersöz, 2009; Işık & Keskin, 2013). It was also presented in many studies that school administrators do not have high problem-solving skills which are crucial skills in innovation (Ercan, 2014; Sağır & Göksoy, 2012; Üstün & Bozkurt, 2003). Problem solving at schools is believed to be related to both innovation skills and leadership skills of school administrators. There is a direct and positive relationship between innovation and production at schools (Haelermans & Blank, 2012).

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23.	School administrator practices routine solutions to problems he/she encounters					
24.	School administrator makes crises-based planning					
25.	School administrator puts school problems in an order of priority					
26.	School administrator develops projects for the school					
27.	School administrator supports school projects					
28.	School administrator follows other schools					
29.	School administrator transfer innovative practices from other schools					
30.	School administrator believes that every problem has a solution					
31.	School administrator is open to cooperate with everyone					
32.	School administrator is willing to compete with other schools					
33.	School administrator regards each crisis as an opportunity					
34.	School administrator supports research and development activities at the school					
35.	School administrator has a strategy to realize school goals					
36.	School administrator strives to reduce costs at school operations					
37.	School administrator follows technological developments					
38.	School administrator engages with brainstorming in solving problems					
39.	School administrator makes efforts to learn something from everyone					
40.	School administrator knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school					
41.	School administrator markets the school for competition					
42.	School administrator looks at all situations related to school from an analytical perspective					
43.	School administrator reevaluates he previously resolved problems related to school					
44.	School administrator uses technology at school operations					
45.	School administrator rearranges the cooperation among staff each year					
46.	School administrator does not regard any idea as eccentric					
47.	School administrator strives to develop himself/herself					
48.	School administrator acts boldly in the face of changes					
49.	School administrator attaches importance to practical solutions					
50.	School administrator does not obsess with details in school operations					
51.	School administrator knows the opportunities and threats for the school					
52.	School administrator is aware of the significance of lifelong learning					
53.	School administrator advocates that each problem has a simple solution					

## APPENDIX 1

## OKUL YÖNETİMİNDE İNOVASYONEL LİDERLİK ÖLÇEĞİ (OYİÖ)

Lütfen maddelere, katılma derecenize karşılık gelecek kutucuklara "X" işareti koyunuz.		Katılma Dereceniz				
		Hiç	Çok az	Kısmen	Çoğunlukla	Tamamen
1.	Okul yöneticisi mesleğe ilişkin yenilikleri öğretmenlerle paylaşır.					
2.	Okulda yenilik yapma konusunda isteklidir.					
3.	Okul yöneticisi yenilikçi olmanın gerekliliğine öğretmenleri inandırmaya çalışır.					
4.	Okul yöneticisi okulda yenilikçi düşünmeyi teşvik eder.					
5.	Okul yöneticisi okul paydaşlarından gelen yenilikçi fikirleri destekler.					
6.	Okul yöneticisi yenilikçi fikirleri okulda uygular.					
7.	Okul yöneticisi yenilikçi uygulamalar arayışındadır.					
8.	Okul yöneticisi diğer sektörlerdeki yenilikleri izler.					
9.	Okul yöneticisi okulla ilgili karşılaştığı sorunlara özgün çözümler getirir.					
10.	Okul yöneticisi okulda fikir ayrılıklarını zenginlik kabul eder.					
11.	Okul yöneticisi sorunların çözümü için plan yapar.					
12.	Okul yöneticisi okula ilişkin olası sorunları önceden kestirir.					
13.	Okul yöneticisi alanı ile ilgili gelişmeleri takip eder.					
14.	Okul yöneticisi çevrenin okuldan beklentilerini dikkate alır.					
15.	Okul yöneticisi yaratıcı düşünceleri için okul paydaşlarına özgür bir ortam sunar.					
16.	Okul yöneticisi okulda başarılı uygulamaları yaygınlaştırmaya çalışır.					
17.	Okul yöneticisi yenilikçi fikirleri ödüllendirir.					
18.	Okul yöneticisinin okulda bir öneri alma sistemi vardır.					
19.	Okul yöneticisi öğretmenlerin kendilerini yetiştirme imkanlarını destekler.					
20.	Okul yöneticisi kendisine kolayca ulaşılabilecek kişidir.					
21.	Okul yöneticisi iletişime açıktır.					
22.	Okul yöneticisi çeşitli imkânsızlıklardan yakınmaz.					
23.	Okul yöneticisi karşılaştığı sorunlarda rutin çözümleri uygular.					
24.	Okul yöneticisi kriz tabanlı planlama yapar.					
25.	Okul yöneticisi okul sorunlarının çözümünü öncelik sırasına koyar.					

26.	Okul yöneticisi okula ilişkin projeler geliştirir.					
27.	Okul yöneticisi okula ilişkin projeleri destekler.					
28.	Okul yöneticisi diğer okulları takip eder.					
29.	Okul yöneticisi diğer okullardaki yenilikçi uygulamaları okula taşır.					
30.	Okul yöneticisi her sorunun çözümü olduğuna inanır.					
31.	Okul yöneticisi herkes ile işbirliğine açıktır.					
32.	Okul yöneticisi diğer okullarla rekabette isteklidir.					
33.	Okul yöneticisi her krizi fırsat olarak görür.					
34.	Okul yöneticisi okulda araştırma ve geliştirme faaliyetlerini destekler.					
35.	Okul yöneticisi okulun amaçlarını gerçekleştirmede stratejisi vardır.					
36.	Okul yöneticisi okul işlerinde maliyeti düşürmeye çalışır.					
37.	Okul yöneticisi teknolojik gelişmeleri takip eder.					
38.	Okul yöneticisi sorunların çözümünde beyin fırtınası yapar.					
39.	Okul yöneticisi her insandan öğrenilecek bir şeyler öğrenmek çabası içerisinde.					
40.	Okul yöneticisi okulun güçlü ve zayıf yönlerini bilir.					
41.	Okul yöneticisi okulu rekabete açar.					
42.	Okul yöneticisi okulla ilgili her türlü durumu analitik bakar.					
43.	Okul yöneticisi okulda çözülmüş sorunlar hakkında yeniden düşünür.					
44.	Okul yöneticisi okul işlerinde teknolojiyi kullanır.					
45.	Okul yöneticisi okul çalışanları arasında yaptığı işbölümünü her yıl yeniden düzenler.					
46.	Okul yöneticisi hiçbir fikri uçuk bulmaz.					
47.	Okul yöneticisi kendini geliştirmeye çalışır.					
48.	Okul yöneticisi değişimler karşısında cesur davranır.					
49.	Okul yöneticisi pratik çözümlere önem verir.					
50.	Okul yöneticisi okul işlerinde ayrıntılara takılmaz.					
51.	Okul yöneticisi okulun fırsat ve tehditlerini bilir.					
52.	Okul yöneticisi yaşam boyu eğitimin önemini farkındadır.					
53.	Okul yöneticisi her sorunun basit bir çözümü olduğuna savunur.					