Relationship Between Instructional Leadership and Organizational Climate in Primary Schools

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Abstract
The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between instructional leadership and organizational climate. The study consisted of 375 teachers working in primary schools in Ankara. The Organizational Climate Description for Elementary Schools (OCDQ-RE) Turkish version was used to determine instructional leadership behaviors of primary school principals. An organizational climate questionnaire was used as a tool to determine the level of organizational climate behaviors of teachers. Pearson moments correlation coefficient and Regression Analysis methods were used to analyze the data. According to the findings of the study, primary school principals do not exhibit instructional leadership behaviors at on optimum level, and the level of organizational climate was found to be low. There is a positive and significant relationship between instructional leadership and organizational climate. According to the results of the regression analysis, instructional leadership is a significant predictor of organizational climate.

Keywords: Instructional leadership, Organizational climate.

1. INTRODUCTION

Educational organizations are known to be very important in terms of institutional qualities. In order for educational institutions to be successful in achieving their objectives, organizational climate plays a major role. Organizational climate creates strong bonds among employees and high levels of satisfaction and performance, and this can be achieved through leaders who enjoy their jobs and can increase the job satisfaction of employees. In educational institutions, a positive climate can be achieved by influential

leaders. For this reason, the current study aimed to study organizational climate and institutional leadership in primary schools.

Leadership is one of the much debated and analyzed topics in organizational studies. The literature stresses that the perception of the leadership is an important factor for organizations. A brief look at the concept of leadership demonstrates that leadership is a process which aims to raise organizational awareness and improve development (Ubben, G. C., Hughes, L. W. & Norris, C. J., 2001). According to Bass (1977), a leader assigns different tasks and duties to employees, to help them gain new experiences and learn different skills, as well as to provide constant feedback and to pay attention. Daft (1991) stated that leadership is an ability to influence employees to achieve objectives, and it includes dynamics and power. Gardiner (2006) explained leadership as the art of decision-making and a process which involves broad participation of diverse groups.

Studies on the changes in and the improvements of society prove that leadership is an important concept. The literature on leadership demonstrates that there are different types of leadership. Instructional leadership is considered to be an essential type of leadership in motivating employees to pursue organizational objectives in an educational setting, increasing the performance and the efficiency of the employee.

1.1. Literature Review

1.1.1. Instructional Leadership
An instructional leader sets the objectives of a school by providing professional development opportunities to teachers, communicating, monitoring, coordinating, the curriculum, observing progress, and supporting the educational culture through attracting attention (Prytula, M., Noonan, B. & Hallsten, L., 2013). Hallinger (2003) defined instructional leadership as a key factor in explaining the changes and improvements in schools, or the effectiveness of school based on the research conducted, and he also stated that it is a type of leadership that focuses on objectives and the academic achievement of students. According to Findley and Findley (1992), instructional leadership, compared to other leadership types, is a type of leadership which requires dealing with students, instructional programs, and teaching and learning processes directly. There are three powers that shape and define a school. These are students, teachers, and society. The effectiveness of school depends on the interaction of these powers in terms of curriculum. The duty of principals who are instructional leaders is to coordinate these powers, in order to increase the quality of the instruction.

Şişman (2004) suggested that there are five key dimensions of behaviors associated with instructional leadership that principals should exhibit.

• Principals are supposed to define the objectives of the school by determining the vision and the mission of the school. The objectives of the school should be emphasized, explained, and shared through meetings with teachers, students, and parents (Şişman, 2004).

• In the educational schedule and instructional processes, principals should lead, plan, and enforce the schedule and the educational and instructional process to achieve the objectives of the school (Argon, T. & Mercan, M., 2009).

• Principals participate in evaluation and improvement of instruction, expressing their expectations and encouraging everybody to take part in the process of evaluation and improvement of the schedule. Besides, they should monitor the school's success and students' and teachers' performance, evaluate them, and take precautions in order to achieve the objectives of the school (Tatlılıoğlu & Okyay, 2012).

• One of the most important duties of principals, who are to develop themselves in order to adapt to the new era and environment, is improving and training teachers to keep up with the pace of changes and to maintain quality (Töremen & Karakuş, 2008).

• Creating a regular teaching and learning environment and atmosphere has multiple effects on motivation, identifying with the organization and mood and performance. The principal should create a positive school atmosphere in which everybody is pleased to work and trusts each other (Şişman, 2007).

1.1.2. Organizational Climate

The concept of organizational atmosphere was introduced in the late 1950s, when instructors were trying to conceptualize the differences in work places. Organizational atmosphere is a relatively stable property which influences behaviors and is dependent on, organizational perception (Hoy, 1990). Organizational climate is a term that forms an organizations identity, differentiates it from other organizations, describes and empowers the organization, influences the behaviors of the employees, and is intangible and long lasting (Karcıoğlu, 2001).

According to Schneider (1975), shared perceptions of organizational climate characterize the process and the practices of the system. Employees perceive the climate because organizational perceptions function as a major structure that mediates between behaviors, practices, and the processes of the system. For Stringer (2001), organizational climate is a set of measurable properties at the workplace. It is dependent on common perceptions within the organization, and it also influences motivation and the behaviors of employees (Attkinson, T. & Frechette, H., 2009). Jones & James (1977) defined organizational climate as a construct that measures the variables related to structure and determines the variables that demonstrate the relationship between situational and personal properties.

1.1.3. Connecting Instructional Leadership to Organizational Climate

Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp (1991) identified six dimensions of organizational climate behaviors, including supportive principal behavior, directive principal behavior, restrictive principal behavior, collegial teacher behavior, intimate teacher behavior, and disengaged teacher behavior.

Supportive principal behavior is the reflection of basic concerns for teachers. The principal listens to the teachers and is open to suggestions. Criticism is constructive and prizes are given genuinely. The competence of the teachers is respected, and the principal displays a personal and professional interest in teachers.

Directive principal behavior is rigid and close supervision. The principal monitors and controls all teacher activities constantly.

Restrictive principal behavior hinders teachers work rather than facilitating it. Teachers are loaded with paperwork, committee requirements, routine tasks, and other demands which interfere with teaching responsibilities.

Collegial teacher behavior supports an open and professional interaction among teachers. Teachers are proud of their schools, take pleasure in working with their colleagues, and are enthusiastic, eager, and respectful to others.

Intimate teacher behavior is unifying and cohesive, and it helps maintain strong social relations among teachers. Teachers know each other, are close friends, socialize on a regular basis, and support each other.

Disengaged teacher behavior emphasizes a lack of meaning and focus on professional activities. They display non-productive efforts, and they do not have any common goals. In fact, their behaviors are generally negative, and they are critical of other teachers and their school.

When the notion that a principal benefits from the properties of instructional leadership qualities is taken into consideration, employees will criticize, question, and state their opinions in different situations, which will promote their commitment to the organization and have them exhibit their performance for the sake of the organization.

Consequently, a desirable climate for the school can be achieved through instructional leadership abilities of the principal. The impact of principals on the organizational climate has been and will be questioned. In Turkey the success of educational institutions is discussed and criticised every year, and this influences both teachers and students negatively. İn particular, the Ministry of Education takes major steps to raise quality. Despite the studies, it is obvious that employees in the institution are not informed about this process, and they experience anxiety related to it. One of the reasons for the problems is that principals either are not informed or do not exhibit instructional leadership behaviors sufficiently. In our country, it is the principal's instructional leadership behaviors that determine to what extent employees adapt to these new steps. The problems related to adapting to changes and increasing the success of the school influence the school atmosphere significantly, which leads us to discuss the diverse qualities of educational institutions. Exhibiting instructional leadership behaviors plays a major role in institutional success and organizational climate, and principals are expected to improve themselves in line with these purposes. In Turkey, studies related to this subject have generally focused on one of the consents, or on their relationship with other variables, but not on the relationship between these two concepts. Therefore, the current study aimed to analyze the relationship between instructional leadership behaviors and organizational climate. Identifying this relationship may offer us new ways to achieve the objectives of schools.

1.2. The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between the primary school principal's instructional leadership behaviors and the organizational climate as perceived by teachers.

The study particularly aimed to provide answers to following questions:
1. What are teachers' perception levels related to their principal's instructional leadership behaviors?
2. What is the level of teachers' perception levels related to organizational climate?
3. What is the relationship between the principal's instructional leadership behaviors and organizational climate?
4. What is the relationship between the sub-dimensions of instructional leadership and organizational climate?
5. Is instructional leadership the predictor of organizational climate?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Model

In the current study, which aimed to analyze the relationship between the principal's instructional leadership behaviors and organizational climate according to teachers' views, a screening model was used. The study was designed to use a causative and relational research model.

2.2. Population and Sample

The research population involved teachers working in the province of Ankara during the 2012-2013 academic year. The sample included 375 teachers who were randomly chosen from 20 primary schools. 31.7 % of the sample were male and 68.3 % were female; 46.7 % ranged between the ages 21 and 30; 38.1 %

were ranged between the age 31 and 40; 13.3 % were ranged between the ages 41 and 50; and 1.9 % were over the age 51. 30.9 % had 1-5, 32.3 % had 6-10, 20.3 % had 11-15, and 16.5 had over 16 years of teaching experience, and 82.9 % of the participants worked in the same school for 1-5 years, 10.9 % worked in the same school for 6-10 years, 4.0 % worked in the same school for 11-15 years, and 2.1 % worked in the same school for more than 16 years.

2.3. Instruments

In order to determine the perception level of teachers related to primary school principals' instructional leadership roles and the success of those roles, an instructional leadership behaviors of principals questionnaire developed by Şişman (1997) was administered. To determine teachers' perceptions of the organizational climate of their schools, "The organizational climate description for elementary schools," developed by Hoy et al. (1991), was administered.

2.3.1. Instructional Leadership Questionnaire

The Instructional Leadership Questionnaire developed by Şişman is a 5-point Likert type scale consisting of 50 items. The questionnaire involves 5 dimensions.

- Determining and sharing the school's objectives,
- Educational programs, and administering instructional process,
- İnstructional process, evaluating students,
- Supporting and improving teachers,
- Regular teaching and learning environment, and creating dimensions of climate.

Each dimension consisted of 10 questions. The questionnaire is based on Likert-type items ranging from (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) usually and (5) always.

The questionnaire was administered to a group of 150 teachers apart from the sample, to check its reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was .956. The reliability analysis of Şişman (1997), who developed this scale, was .92. As for the validity analysis, the KMO value was found to be .876 and $p<005$. The results of Cronbach's alpha are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1.
Cronbach's alpha values of instructional leadership and its subdimensions.

Subdimensions	Cronbah Alpha
Determining and sharing school objectives	.844
Education program and administering instructional process	.800
Instructional process, evaluating students	.883
Supporting and improving teachers	.897
Regular teaching and learning environment and creating dimensions of climate	.931
Instructional leadership (general)	.956

2.3.2. Organizational Climate Questionnaire

The Organizational Climate Scale was developed by Hoy et al. (1991). The original scale consisted of 42 items. The translated version consists of 35 items, because 5 items were found to be similar to other items in terms of meaning. In order not to repeat the same items, they were excluded. The items of the scale range from (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) usually and (5) always.

The questionnaire was administered to a group of 150 teachers apart from the sample, to check its reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was .883. As for the validity analysis, the KMO value was found to be .830 and $p<005$. The results of Cronbach's alpha are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2.
Cronbach's alpha values of organizational climate and its subdimensions.

Subdimensions	Cronbah Alpha
Supportive principal behavior	.889
Directive principal behavior	.815
Restrictive principal behavior	.690
Collegial teacher behavior	.762
İntimate teacher behavior	.727
Disengaged teacher behavior	.794
Organizational climate (general)	883

2.4. Data Analysis

The data obtained from 375 questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS 16.0 packet software. In the analysis of the data, the mean, standard deviation, percentage, frequency, Pearson product moment two tailed correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis provided by descriptive statistical analysis were used. The items on the 5-point Likert scale on instructional leadership and organizational climate scales were evaluated as *1.00-1.79 never*, *1.80-2.59 rarely, 2.60-3.39 sometimes, 3.40-4.19 usually*, and *4.20-5.00 always*.

3. RESULT

Question 1. What are teachers' perception levels related to their principal's instructional leadership behaviors?

The responses of teachers to the instructional leadership scale corresponded to sometimes ($M=3.03$, SD=1.01) in terms of their principal exhibiting instructional leadership behaviors. Data regarding the subdimensions of instructional leadership suggest that principals are best at identifying and sharing school objectives ($M= 3.28$, SD = 1.05), and worse at supporting and improving teachers ($M= 2.62$, SD = 1.09). According to the findings related to the teachers' perceptions, principals do not exhibit sufficient leadership behaviors (Table 3).

Table 3.
Means and standard deviations of teachers' responses to instructional leadership and its subdimensions.

	Subdimensions	N	M	SD
Instructional leadership	Determining and sharing school objectives	375	3.28	1.05
	Education program and administering instructional process	375	3.19	.99
	Instructional process, evaluating students	375	3.01	1.09
	Supporting and improving teachers	375	2.62	1.09
	Regular teaching and learning environment and creating dimensions of climate	375	3.03	1.18
	Total	375	3.03	1.01

Question 2. What is the level of teachers' perception levels related to organizational climate?

Table 4.
Means and standard deviations of teachers' responses to organizational climate and its subdimensions

	Subdimension	N	M	SD
	Supportive principal behavior	375	2.18	.87
	Directive principal behavior	375	2.10	.70
Organizational Climate	Restrictive principal behavior	375	2.57	.78
	Collegial teacher behavior	375	2.54	.56
	İntimate teacher behavior	375	2.24	.61
	Disengaged teacher behavior	375	1.73	.63
	Total	375	2.24	.46

The analysis of the data obtained from the organizational climate scale shows that teachers' overall perceptions of organizational climate is very rare (*M*=2.24, SD=.46). As for teachers' perceptions of organizational climate, they display restrictive principal behavior most (*M*=2.57, SD=78) and disengaged teacher behaviors least (*M*=1.73, SD=.63). Therefore, teachers' perceptions of organizational climate is generally quite low (Table 4).

Question 3. What is the relationship between principals' instructional leadership behaviors and organizational climate?

The analysis of the data presented in table 5 displays that there is a positive and significant relationship between instructional leadership and organizational climate (r=0.75, *p*<.01). Thus, when teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership increases, their perception of organizational climate also increases (Table 5).

Table 5.
Pearson correlation and the results between instructional leadership and organizational climate

	1	2
1. Instructional leadership	1.00	.749**
2. Organizational climate	.749**	1.00

Question 4. What is the relationship between the sub-dimensions of instructional leadership and organizational climate?

The analysis of the correlations between the sub-dimensions of instructional leadership and organizational leadership revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational climate and regular teaching and learning environment(r = .752, *p*<.01), and creating climate as well as supporting and improving teachers (r = .738, *p*<.01).

Table 6.
Correlation analysis results of instructional leadership and its subdimensions and organizational climate.

	Organizational Climate
Determining and sharing school objectives	.671**
Education program and administering instructional process	.676**
Instructional process, evaluating students	.671**
Supporting and improving teachers	.738**
Regular teaching and learning environment and creating dimensions of climate	.752**

Besides, there is a positive, medium-level, and significant relationship between education programs and administering instructional processes (r=.676, *p*<.01), determining and sharing school objectives (r = .671, *p*<.01), and instructional processes and evaluating students (r = .656, *p*<.01). The relationship between organizational climate and the regular teaching and learning environment, and creating climate and supporting and improving teachers, is at a higher level compared to others. Accordingly, the more principals exhibit instructional leadership behaviors, the higher the perception level of organizational climate is (Table 6).

Question 5. Is instructional leadership the predictor of organizational climate?

The multiple regression analysis related to whether instructional leadership is a predictor of organizational climate showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between instructional leadership and organizational climate (R=.749, R^2 = .562, Adjusted R^2= .560, *p*<.01). Instructional leadership explains approximately 56 % of the total variance in organizational climate. Accordingly, there is a high probability of increase in the perception of organizational climate in institutions where instructional leadership behaviors are exhibited at the highest level (Table 7).

Table 7.

Multiple regression analysis results related to instructional leadership as the predictor of organizational climate

Variants	B	Standard Error $_B$	β	t	p
Intercept	1.206	.050		24.134	.000
Organizational Climate	.342	.016	.749	21.862	.000

R= .749   *R^2= .562*   *Adjusted R^2= .560*   *$F_{(1-373)}$ = 477,938*   *p= .000*

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis regarding teachers' perception of principals' instructional leadership behaviors corresponds to a "sometimes" (*M*=3.03, SD=1.01) level. Principals exhibit the "determining and sharing school objectives" sub-dimension at higher frequencies. Principals as instructional leaders should create a vision that expresses the basis of existence and educational and instructional policies clearly, and conveys the vision to the personnel (Özdemir, S., Sezgin, F., Şirin, H., Karip, E. & Erkan, S., 2002). For Hallinger & Murphy (1986), principals play a major role in determining and improving school objectives and leading the personnel. Şişman (2004) stated that instructional leaders are supposed to define the school's vision and mission, and share them with the members of the organization, as well as develop strategies to achieve established school goals. Principals should encourage the school community to adopt the objectives, to work to achieve the objectives, to improve the academic performance of the students, and to raise the expectations about students' success. After "determining and sharing school objectives," "educational program and administering instructional process," "regular teaching and learning environment and creating climate," "evaluating instructional process and students" sub dimensions were displayed. "Supporting and improving teachers" were the least frequent behaviors exhibited by principals. The reason underlying this result may be the lack of appreciation of the teachers' performance, efforts, and success by the principals, and lack of encouraging teachers to improve professionally and participate in in-service training. Hallinger & Murphy (1986) suggested that principals should distribute informative reports to improve their personnel and encourage them to benefit from senior teachers. Aksoy & Işık (2008), Argon & Mercan (2009), Sağır & Memişoğlu (2012), Serin & Buluç (2012), and Tatlıoğlu & Okyay (2012) also found similar results

compared to other dimensions in terms of instructional leadership behaviors. Hallinger & Murphy (1986) also found that instructional leadership is an important determiner of effective schools.

In the current study, our analyses suggests that teachers are less satisfied with the organizational climate (*M*=2.24, SD=.46). When particular dimensions of organizational climate are considered, teachers', perceptions reveal that principals exhibit "restrictive principal behaviors "with the highest frequency. Accordingly, teachers are assigned routine tasks, which prevent teachers from doing their job and create a work load. In a school where there are such perceptions, it is possible that there may be some problems concerning achieving objectives and maintaining an organizational climate conducive to effective teaching and learning. Gök (2009) defined organizational climate as the work environment created by the common perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of the employees, the rules applied, and the internal properties of the organization. Therefore, it is expected that principals assign fewer tasks to teachers in order to maintain organizational climate and minimize the influence of "restrictive principal behaviors." After the "restrictive principal behaviors" sub-dimension, "collegial teacher behavior," "intimate teacher behavior," "supportive principal behavior," and "directive principal behavior" were displayed. "Disengaged teacher behaviors" were the least exhibited. In schools where teachers exhibit disengagement, there may be problems among teachers, such as dividing into groups and having views about the insufficiency of the meetings at school. Özdemir et al. (2010) stated that a positive school climate develops and promotes academic improvement, emphasizes learning, maintains positive relationships between teachers and students, and leads every member of the school to respect each other, which paves the way to adopting a fair and consistent policy. All the behaviors exhibited and perceived at school are very important to maintain organizational climate. As for the findings of organizational climate, Sezgin & Kılınç (2011) found no significant difference in their study of organizational climate in terms of demographic properties. Gök (2009) found that organizational climate has a positive relation with motivation. Korkmaz (2011) suggested that supportive principal behaviors and collegial teacher behaviors have a positive association with organizational commitment. Tutar & Altınöz (2007) also stated that organizational climate has a positive influence on the performance of employees. Adenike (2011) found a positive relationship between organizational climate and job satisfaction. Halloway (2012) found positive and significant associations between a number of leadership dimensions and various dimensions of organizational climate.

In the current study, correlation analysis that examined the relationship between instructional leadership behaviors and organizational climate turned out to be positive and significant. In other words, when the teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership increase, organizational climate also increases. Problems about creating organizational climate may stem from the lack of effective instructional leadership behaviors. In this situation, instructional leadership behaviors play a major role in maintaining organizational climate.

The correlation analysis between the sub-dimensions of instructional leadership and organizational climate suggests that there is a positive and significant relationship between regular learning, teaching environment, and creating climate. Accordingly, the efforts of principals to create unity and togetherness, encouraging and supporting teachers to attain educational success, create better physical conditions that successfully influence organizational climate. There is also a positive and significant relationship between organizational climate and supporting and improving teachers. According to our results, the efforts of principals to improve teachers' performances, appreciate the teachers, and encourage teachers to improve professionally increase organizational climate perceptions. There are positive and significant relationships between educational programs and administering instructional processes, determining and sharing school objectives, and evaluating instructional processes and students.

Finally, in the current study, according to the results of the multiple regression analysis aimed at examining whether instructional leadership is the predictor of organizational climate, there is a positive and significant relationship between instructional leadership and organizational climate. Also, instructional leadership explained 56% of the total variance in organizational climate. Exhibiting instructional leadership behaviors at high levels may influence organizational climate.

Considering all the studies, instructional leadership and organizational climate are quite important for organizations. In terms of attaining educational success, a leader who exhibits instructional leadership behaviors is very important. It is believed that in institutions where instructional leadership behaviors are exhibited, it is easier to create an effective organizational climate. Successful instructional leaders influence not only organizational commitment but also organizational justice in a positive way.

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