Teachers' Opinions on the Competencies of School Administrators During COVID-19 Outbreak

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this qualitative-case study was to determine the competencies that school administrators have during the COVID-19 process and the competencies they should have in the post-COVID-19 process according to the opinions of teachers. Using maximum diversity sampling method, the researcher selected 10 teachers working in Izmir in the 2021-2022 academic year. The obtained data by using a semi-structured interview form were analyzed through the content analysis method. Research findings show that administrators mainly carry out technical work and operations related to the smooth execution of the distance education during the COVID-19 process. It also reveals that the majority of administrators are successful in technical competencies that include knowledge and skills related to their field of expertise. Based on the research findings, it can be said that both in the COVID-19 process and in the post-COVID-19 process, administrators should improve themselves not only in technical competencies, but also in humane and conceptual competencies and they should have information, technology and emotional literacy skills. Further conclusions and implications were also discussed.

Key words: COVID-19, Competency, School Administrators

INTRODUCTION

With the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, which affected the whole world in December 2019, a serious transformation was experienced in all aspects of life. This transformation has also significantly affected the education and teaching process; millions of students, teachers, school administrators, parents, lecturers, etc. from pre-school to higher education have been exposed to a process they have never experienced before. The COVID-19 process has changed all known parameters of the education process, making unpredictability and uncertainty the new slogan of the education system (Harris and Jones, 2020). This state of uncertainty and unpredictability has also manifested itself in the distance education process, the reopening of schools and the administration process and has led to serious problems (TEDMEM, 2020). One of the school members most affected by this process has been "school leaders who have the pinch point in the system and are walking a tightrope without a safety net" (Harris and Jones, 2020, p. 244). School administrators had to struggle with various problems that came to the fore with the distance education process such as internet access problems of students, teachers and families (Arık, 2020; Ülger, 2021), communication problems with teachers, students and parents (Külekçi Akyavuz and Çakın, 2020; Özdoğru, 2021), the incompetence of both teachers and students in using distance education platforms (Gençoğlu and Çiftçi, 2020), the

inability of students to actively participate in the lessons and the inability to provide an effective assessment and evaluation system in this context (Kavuk and Demirtaş, 2021; Saygı, 2021). Accordingly, such a situation imposed important duties and responsibilities on school administrators who have the role of practitioner of the education-teaching process (Kara and Bozkurt, 2021). In fact, in such times when uncertainty, anxiety and unpredictability are experienced intensely, it is not possible to expect school administrators to fulfill the administrative competencies and practices they have witnessed or experienced in a period of stability, continuity and relatively calm (Harris and Jones, 2020). Within this context, it has become a requirement for school administrators to develop various competencies, acquire roles and update themselves (Kocabaş et al., 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In a world where change is experienced intensely, it is usual for people and institutions to change in this direction because the problems change in parallel with these changes. Coping with these problems requires having new knowledge and skills, that is, it requires administrators to have the competence to solve those problems (Gökçe, 2004). Competence is the knowledge, skills and attitude that a person must have in order to perform her/his job effectively and solve

the problems (Bartman et al., 2007; Töremen and Kolay, 2003). In other words, it is the sum of knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors and values that an administrator is expected to have in order to achieve organizational goals (Gökçe, 2008). The adoption of change in the organization largely depends on the effectiveness and competence of the administrator. This effectiveness derives from the administrator's knowledge, skills and personal characteristics. Changes in needs along with individual and social changes necessitate administrators to change themselves. In this sense, the fact that administrators are equipped to manage the new knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors brought by change can be evaluated in the context of administrative competence. For instance, school administrators' skills and knowledge of management theories, empathizing, motivating, mastering learning-teaching methods, techniques and strategies, managing conflict, and developing positive relations with the environment are just a few of them (Gökçe, 2004).

Administrative competencies, defined as what is expected from administrators to provide organizational effectiveness (Gökçe, 2008), is an extremely comprehensive issue that includes technology and leadership (Ağaoğlu et al., 2012). Various explanations and classifications are made regarding administrative competencies, which can be addressed in a broad framework. The most common of these is the technical, humanistic and conceptual classification by Katz (1955). Once the competencies put forward by Katz (1955) -that an administrator is expected to have- are detailed, it is seen that technical competence mainly includes knowledge and skills related to the field of expertise. Technical competence, which is the most well-known among the three competence areas due to its concreteness, is the field that covers the methods, techniques and processes required by the job. In a sense, it is knowledge of expertise. Skills such as managing the budget, purchasing, accounting, building maintenance and transportation are considered within the scope of technical competencies. Similarly, in the context of technical skills, administrators are expected to be competent in the areas of instructional leadership, technological leadership, management skills, legislative knowledge, effective usage of resources and research and development (Atış and Dilbaz, 2022). In summary, technical competence is the ability of a person who needs to be equipped and to perform his/her duty professionally as it should be (Nwogu and Ebunu, 2019).

Humane competence, defined as the ability to work with others, is the competence area in which people working together are prioritized. It is the ability to create an environment in which one can work collaboratively as an active member of a team. It manifests itself in the way an individual perceives his subordinates, superiors and equals, and in his behaviors. People with this competence are aware of their own behaviors, attitudes, beliefs and feelings. They have high communication skills and approach differences with tolerance. They create a democratic working environment. They are also aware of the motivations and needs of the employees. In other words, they have the ability to understand and motivate individuals and groups (Katz, 1955). Humane competence includes the skills of working effectively as a member of the group, being compatible, cooperating and leading the group (Bursalıoğlu, 1991). Establishing a positive bond between the administrator and the employee and empathizing can be given as examples of humane competencies (Özdemir, Tekin-Bozkurt and Aydın, 2015). Similarly, motivating group members, understanding them (Töremen and Kolay, 2003) considering individual differences and caring for human relations are also considered within the scope of human competence. In the context of human skills, the administrator is expected to be fair, tolerant, respectful, disciplined and to have empathy and communication skills (Atış and Dilbaz, 2022). Humane competencies such as communication and listening skills play a key role at the success of organizations as they inspire the employees, enable faster adoption of the changes and enable the organization to develop (Sonsaard and Darbavasu, 2019).

Finally, conceptual competence is the ability to be up to date, evaluate the school within a system, and see it as a part of a whole (Töremen and Kolay, 2003). In addition to seeing the organization as a whole, it is the skill that enables the administrator to see both the business network within the organization and its interaction with its environment (Sermsak, 1996). In fact, it is the ability of the administrator to position his/her organization not only within system integrity but also at the national level (Katz, 1955). It also includes mental skills such as idea generation, application and development in relation to the goals of the organization (Nwogu and Ebunu, 2019).

According to Katz (1955), one of his technical, humane and conceptual competences is not more important than the other. Depending on the job and the level of responsibility, one competence may stand out over the other. As the level of direct communication between the administrator and subordinates increases, the number of personal contacts increases, and accordingly, humane competence can be more pronounced. On the other hand, as the administrative level increases, the rate of direct contact decreases, and accordingly, the humane competence area goes into the background and conceptual competence can come to the fore with policy decisions and larger-scale decisions (Katz, 1955).

It is also stated that the administrative competencies are updated according to the changes and developments and accordingly Katz's classification of technical, humane and conceptual competences, which is widely accepted in the field of education, is not the only classification that is generally accepted. It is uttered that administrators may have different areas of competence (Gökçe, 2008). For example, Drake and Roe (1986) discuss the competencies that school administrators should have under five headings: humanistic skills, conceptual, teaching, technical and cognitive skills. Similarly, Mustamin and Yasin (2012) identified the following three areas related to school administrators' competencies in their research:

1. Administrative competencies related to the school leadership dimension: Policy and direction, cooperation between staff, stakeholders and society, administration of the school program, providing diversity.
2. Administrative competencies in terms of teaching leadership dimensions: Teaching and success, leadership lessons, administration of the learning environment, responsibility for measurement and assessment.

3. Administrative competencies in terms of operational leadership dimensions: Management of change and innovation, construction and management of technology resources, development of human resources and ethical leadership.

Sonsaard and Darbavasu (2019) list the five basic skills that an administrator should have as knowledge, concept, teaching, humanistic and technical skills. In addition, having leadership skills, creating a positive organizational culture, knowing psychology, communicating effectively, selecting and maintaining qualified personnel, and having a right reward system are among the things that the administrator should do.

Besides these, this classification is discussed by expanding in the process that has been experienced with the changes and the view of technological competence is included in this list (Sevinç and Arslan, 2019). It is stated that today's administrators should have technological and digital literacy, communication, listening and innovation skills (Sonsaard and Darbavasu, 2019). Apart from this, it is claimed that it is a necessity for school administrators to have modern management knowledge, leadership skills and competencies such as the management of subordinates and effective decision making (Bursalıoğlu, 2000). Once the studies that deal with administrative competencies from different perspectives are examined in detail, it is seen that the focus is on the characteristics that administrators are expected to have. For example, teachers state that school administrators should have the competencies of being equipped, able to solve problems, tolerant, compassionate, fair, knowledgeable and practical (Boydak-Özan, Nanto and Öztürk, 2020). Töremen and Kolay (2003) list the administrative competencies as adopting a democratic management approach, developing herself/himself, supporting the self-development of others, benefiting from technology actively, providing a collaborative working environment, and being in contact with the environment in their research. Çetin and Adıgüzel (2006), focusing on the environmental phenomenon related to administrative competencies, emphasize that the administrator should not be independent from the environment, should have the skills to interact with the environment, to know the region and to introduce the school to the environment correctly.

According to ISSCL (1996, 1997) report Turan and Şişman (2000) list the competencies that an administrator should have are to have a vision, to ensure the creation of a success-oriented organizational culture, to use the school's resources effectively, to have ethical values, to determine policies and procedures for the school. Having skills such as interacting with school-related units such as family, environment and society, understanding the political, social, economic, legal and cultural context are also listed in the report.

Besides the ones listed above, professional competence and merit stand out as the competence areas that school administrators are expected to have. These features can be detailed as knowing management, giving the right job to the right person and being fair (Yılmaz Bolat and Ataşoğlu, 2022). Erdoğan (2006) -evaluating the issue in terms of both humane and technical competencies- claims that

administrators can create a working environment in which they can carry out both valuing the employees brought by the neo-classical management approach and task-oriented work brought by the classical management approach. He states that an administrator who is persistent and resorts to persuasion ways to increase efficiency will take into account the wishes and desires of the employees as well. Similarly, Turan et al. (2012) claim that personality traits such as being open to communication, fair and patient, and knowledge and skills such as leadership, management knowledge, teaching experience, field knowledge, and time management stand out in terms of administrative competencies. A research result supporting these is also reported in a study conducted by Öztürk and Erdem (2020). In the study, it is pointed out that administrators have technical competencies the most.

In addition to the competencies that administrators are expected to have, the areas in which they are deemed inadequate are also expressed in the studies. For example, Karakuş and Töremen (2006) in their study, which deals with the competencies of administrators from the point of view of supervisors, emphasize that school administrators are inadequate in terms of guiding teachers, developing vision and mission, creating team spirit, ensuring that the school benefits from technological developments at the highest level, and bringing a learning organization philosophy to the school. Moreover, Öztürk and Erdem (2020) consider administrator competencies from a teacher's point of view and note that administrators have conceptual competencies at the lowest level. When the features of the administrators that are expected to have and the areas that are thought to be inadequate are evaluated together, it can be said that the administrators should have the conceptual skills that can be expressed as the technical required by the classical management approach, the humane required by the neo-classical approach and the ability to evaluate the organization required by modern management as a whole, not independent from the environment. In addition, it can be inferred that with the changes experienced, it is necessary to have people who dominate the technology and digital world, which are an indispensable part of our lives.

Since administrative competencies increase student success, lead to managing the activities carried out at school successfully and enable the teacher to work more efficiently (Dowis, 2005) it is thought that the competence level of the school administrator who is the most basic components of the school and primarily responsible for the work and functioning of the school will be reflected in the school and school success at the same rate. In short, the competencies of the school principal can be determinative at student's performance and school success (Özdemir et al., 2015).

It is possible to see some studies focusing on the competencies of administrators according to the opinions of supervisors (Karakuş and Töremen, 2006), teachers (Ağaoğlu et al., 2012; Atış and Dilbaz, 2022; Boydak-Özan, Nanto and Öztürk, 2020; Brina and Erkılıç, 2021; Erdoğan, 2006; Özdemir et al., 2015; Öztürk and Erdem, 2020; Memisoglu and Uylas, 2015; Yılmaz Bolat and Ataşoğlu, 2012) and the administrators' own perspectives (Ağaoğlu et al., 2012;

Çetin and Adıgüzel, 2006; Gökçe, 2004; Koskei et al., 2019; Menteşe, 2021; Özdemir et al., 2015; Sevinç and Arslan, 2019; Turan et al., 2012; Yılmaz Bolat and Ataşoğlu, 2012) in the literature. Once these studies are examined, it is stated that supervisors generally evaluate managers as inadequate in terms of exhibiting sufficient leadership behaviors in terms of administrative characteristics. It is also pointed out that teachers emphasize that their administrators are sufficient in terms of duties and responsibilities, but they need to improve themselves in terms of human relations. Finally, it is reported that administrators underline that the administrators to be appointed should be appointed on the basis of merit and that administrators should have certain competencies.

Crisis, which is more common during periods of intense change, is a phenomenon that schools also experience from time to time as exhibits the characteristics of an open system. Being able to cope with the chaos experienced in crisis periods and successfully managing the crisis process largely depend on administrative competencies. Administrative skills such as leadership, effective use of authority and communication come to the fore in this process (Demirtaş, 2000). In the period of chaos, administrators are expected to have skills such as managing transformation, establishing a learning organization, ensuring continuity, and managing order and disorder (Töremen, 2000). The COVID-19 process has been a process in which this has been experienced very sharply in Turkey as well as in the whole world. This period, in which the importance of administrative competencies is understood once again, is important in terms of understanding how sufficient/inadequate administrators are in terms of coping with chaos and managing the crisis in Turkey.

In the Turkish Education System, it is seen that general criteria such as exam success and being a teacher are sought rather than the above-mentioned qualifications in the selection and appointment criteria of school administrators (Official Gazette, 2021). It has come to the fore in recent studies that the competence areas of the administrators are not focused on in the current appointment criteria of the administrators. It has also been understood that the competence areas of the administrators are an important issue. It can be said that the scientific search and efforts for the restructuring of educational organizations and the training of educational administrators are continuing, but the concrete indicators of these efforts are still new (Eyuder, 2019; Karataş and Karayaman, 2020; Safran and Özdemir, 2011).

Once the studies on the COVID-19 process are examined, it is revealed that studies are generally related to the subject areas such as views of stakeholders, students, teachers and parents on distance education (Özdoğan and Berkant, 2020; Akkaş Baysal et al., 2020) and the problems experienced on distance education (Kavuk and Demirtaş, 2021; Toprakçı et al., 2021). However, no study has been found that addresses the qualifications and competencies that school administrators have during COVID-19 and the competencies they should develop in the post-COVID process. In this context, in this research, it is aimed to determine the competencies that school administrators have during the COVID-19 process and the competencies they should have in the post-COVID-19 process according to the opinions of teachers. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought.

1. What are the duties and responsibilities of school administrators during the COVID-19 process?
2. What are the competency areas that school administrators have during the COVID-19 process?
3. What are the incompetency areas that school administrators have during the COVID-19 process?
4. What are the competency areas that school administrators should develop in the post-COVID-19 process?

METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out with the case study model, which is one of the qualitative research methods. A case study is a qualitative research design in which one or more cases are investigated in depth with various data sources, and the investigated case is examined in depth by developing themes (Creswell, 2007). While the situation in question in the research can sometimes be a single individual, sometimes a group of people; it can be an organizational environment or a problem, event, phenomenon or process in these organizational environments (Sagadin, 1991, as cited in Starman, 2013). In this context, the competencies of school administrators during the distance education process experienced with the COVID-19 outbreak were determined as the case discussed in this study.

Research Group

Maximum variation sampling method, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used to determine the study group of the research. The maximum variation sampling method makes it possible to reveal the similarities or differences, relationships between different situations and, accordingly, to examine the situation in question from a more detailed and broad perspective (Büyüköztürk et al., 2014). Accordingly, the study group of the research consists of 10 teachers who work in Izmir in the 2021-2022 academic year and participate in the research voluntarily. The variables contributing to diversity are as follows: (1) the educational levels of schools at which teachers work, (2) subject areas of teachers, (3) genders of teachers. Accordingly, 5 of the teachers participating in the research are female and 5 of them are male. Of these teachers, 3 work in primary schools, 3 of them work in secondary schools and 4 of them work in high schools. Of the teachers 3 are classroom teachers, 1 of them is philosophy teacher, 1 of them is music teacher, 1 of them is chemistry teacher, 1 of them is social studies teacher, 1 of them is psychological counselor and 2 of them are English teachers.

Data Collection

The data of the research were gathered with a semi-structured interview form, one of the qualitative data collection methods. Semi-structured interviews and semi-structured

interview forms are frequently used as data collection tools in case studies. In this study, a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers was used. While developing the interview form, the literature on administrative competencies of school administrators was reviewed in a detailed way and a comprehensive conceptual framework was created. In addition, the draft interview form was presented to the opinions of three experts working in the field of educational administration and necessary corrections were made in accordance with the suggestions received. Finally, pilot interviews with three participants were conducted to reveal the clarity of the questions, the situations that can emerge during the interview, and possible time-related problems. The interview form consisted of the first part, which includes information about the personal characteristics of the participants, and the second part, which includes 4 open-ended questions about the research topic. In addition, probe questions were also asked to get more detailed information from the participants. It is possible to argue that factors such as detailed literature review, seeking expert opinion, and conducting pilot interviews during the formation of interview questions contributed significantly to the validity and reliability of the research.

Before the data were collected, ethics committee permission was obtained from İnönü University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee. The data were collected through face-to-face interviews at the schools which the participants work. Before starting the interview, permission was obtained from the school principals and the participants themselves as well and the participants were reminded that they could withdraw from the research at any time they wish. Participants' opinions were recorded with a voice recorder, and in cases where participants did not want their voices to be recorded, they were recorded in writing format.

Data Analysis

Content analysis method was used in the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews in this study. In that regard, firstly the data recorded in audio and written formats were transferred to the computer. Then the interview texts transferred to the computer were sent to the participants via e-mail and they were asked whether there was anything they wanted to add or remove before the analysis. Lastly, the interview texts, which were finalized in line with the feedback from the participants, were analyzed in a detailed way and the research data were arranged in parallel with the research purpose and questions. In the category creation process, an inductive path was followed and the codes were first evaluated holistically. After creating the primary codes, the main themes were created and the data were collected under these themes and codes. Finally, the themes that emerged as a result of the analysis were listed, and the expressions that can be used as direct quotations were given in the findings section. While direct quotations were given, the names of the participants were kept confidential and each participant was coded as T1, T2, T3.

FINDINGS

In this section, the findings obtained as a result of the semi-structured interviews with the teachers regarding the administrative competencies of school administrators are divided into four themes:

1. The duties and responsibilities of the administrators during the COVID-19 outbreak,
2. The competency areas that the school administrators have during the COVID-19 outbreak,
3. The incompetency areas that the school administrators have during the COVID-19 outbreak, and
4. The competency areas that the school administrators should develop in the post-COVID-19 process.

Once the answers given to the questions about how the teachers evaluate their administrators are examined in order to understand the situation of the administrators during the distance education process, it was found that the majority of teachers (f=6) found their administrators supportive and competent. In this sense, teacher opinions are as follows:

I think it was difficult for everyone when the process first started. I consider her as an administrator who tries to be in communication as much as possible, can communicate whenever we want, is very open to communication and can lead well in this sense. (T6)

I think they managed this process well. During online education, they were in constant communication with both teachers and students, and in the short periods when face-to-face education started, we entered clean classrooms in our school. Organization was well. (T2)

In parallel to these findings, Külekçi-Akyavuz and Çakın (2020) revealed in their studies that school administrators were in constant communication with teachers during the outbreak, even if it was online, listened to their problems, supported them by informing them on the necessary issues and tried to increase their sense of belonging to the school.

However, some participants of the study (f=4) stated that they did not find their managers competent enough. One of the teachers' views expressed in this context are as follows:

Although the administrator, who was as anxious and stressed as possible, tried to draw an image as if he had control over everything, he could not give satisfactory answers to the questions and problems in the process. I think in order to prevent this situation from being understood, he was in an attitude of responding to the questions asked by teachers sometimes with a slight increase in his tone of voice and sometimes with a scolding. With the prolongation of the process, we learned what we could do as teachers. We stopped asking questions to the administrator and tried to solve the problems ourselves. I think this situation relieved the administrator to some extent. (T5)

It is thought that the personality traits of the school administrators are a significant determinant of the participants' developing different perspectives regarding the competencies of school administrators during the COVID-19 process. For example, such personality traits as being open to communication or not, thinking that he/she is competent, trying to conceal his/her knowledge deficiency in the subject he/she

thinks he/she is not competent manifest themselves in the attitudes and behaviors of the individual. Considering that it can be argued that administration is related to personality traits of administrators and participants' developing different perspectives and giving different answers are accepted as usual (Eyuder, 2019).

An interesting finding of the research is that some of the participants (f=3) associated the competencies of administrators during the distance education process with the pre-distance education process and stated that the competence the administrators exhibited during this process depends largely on the pre-existing competencies of administrators. In this context, one participant expressed his views as follows:

> *The pandemic process may be a new situation, but it is quite related to the previous process. You know, if the duties, decisions in a sense, were shared before, the opinions were exchanged, there was an effective communication, in other words if there was a healthy school climate, this would also be reflected in the pandemic process; otherwise, the process would have become much worse. In other words, if things are going well, different instruments can come into play to resolve that crisis when a crisis is encountered. But if not, it continues that way at that school anyway. Our school is a bit close to that. Things weren't going well before anyway; thus, it would be a mistake to expect things to go well in a very different way. Premises have already showed that. If schools cannot be administrated well in normal conditions, they cannot be administrated at all in times of crisis.* (T1)

Participants are of the opinion that the distance education process is not completely disconnected from face-to-face education process; on the contrary, it is a practice that follows each other and complements each other according to existing circumstances. It is revealed that the administrators' existing competencies and administration practices during COVID-19 process also affect the aftermath of the process. In other words, the school administrator's ability to maintain a structure before and after the process depends largely on the existing competencies of the administrator himself/herself.

Theme 1. Duties and responsibilities of school administrators during the COVID-19 outbreak

Teachers' views on the duties and responsibilities of their administrators during the distance education process are given in a detailed way in Table 1.

The opinions of some participants regarding the duties and responsibilities of school administrators during the COVID-19 outbreak are given below:

> *Actually, we did not do anything on behalf of ourselves, we did not go out, we were always in online classes. Compared to theirs (*school administrators*), we actually did nothing. Because we were at home, we just gave lectures. They opened the school early in the morning and closed it late in the evening. They both checked the course process and made instant plans regarding those who attended the course and who did not. If the schools were*

Table 1. Duties and responsibilities of school administrators during the COVID-19 outbreak

Duties and responsibilities of school administrators	f
Notification of official documents through WhatsApp groups, follow-up of correspondence	6
Preparation of course descriptions and schedules	6
Works and procedures related to the improvement of the physical conditions of the school (cleaning, renovation,..)	5
Descriptions and distributions of duties and tasks	5
Communication with the parents	5
Preparing online exams	5
Guiding in the use of technology	4
Introducing support classes and enabling students who cannot attend classes to attend classes	4
Notification of distance education-based courses and in-service trainings to teachers	3
Follow-up of students' attendance to the courses	3
Provision of tools such as headphones and cameras for computers	2
Ensuring that specific days and weeks are celebrated	2
Participation in courses to observe lessons	1
Determining the arrival and departure times of each teacher group for meetings	1

Table 2. Competency areas that school administrators have during the COVID-19 process

Competency areas of school administrators	f
Distribution of duties and tasks (especially among the administrators themselves and computer teachers)	5
Ensuring flexibility (especially on course hours and schedule)	5
Technological competency	5
Effective communication with teachers, students and parents	5
Shared decisions (abiding by the group decisions)	4
Being supportive and encouraging	4
Granting autonomy (especially on course schedule and hours)	4
Managing the sudden situations (Especially on preparing the school physically for the reopening process of schools)	3
Giving feedback	2
Sharing authority (among administrators themselves)	2

> *to be reopened, they prepared the course schedule. They constantly followed the announcements from the province, district and ministry. If there was any teacher-based, student-based or parent-based information requested, they immediately sent it back to us. They took the information from us and sent to the relevant institution. They followed all of these work and procedures. It's really surprising to see just two people are doing this much work.* (T9).

Theme 2. Competency areas that school administrators have during the COVID-19 outbreak

In parallel to these views, once teachers' views on the areas in which administrators are competent in coping with the

Table 3. The incompetency areas that the school administrators have during the COVID-19 process

The incompetency areas that school administrators have during the COVID-19 process	f
Sharing authority with teachers	6
Ability to make decisions and plans in prompt situations	5
Communication with teachers, students, parents	4
Technological leadership	4
Enabling participation in decision making process	3
Taking and giving initiative	3
Being supportive, motivating and guiding	3
Being democratic	3
Exhibiting leadership characteristics	3
Enabling cooperation	2

Table 4. The competency areas that school administrators should develop in the post-COVID-19 process

The competency areas that school administrators should develop in the post-COVID-19 process	f
Technological literacy and competency	6
The competency of taking and giving initiative	4
Communication competency	3
The competency of sharing decisions	3
Being supportive, motivating and guiding	3
Being open to professional development and innovation	3
The competency of making decisions and plans in prompt situations	2
The competency of problem solving	2
Exhibiting leadership characteristics	2
Sharing authority	1
Instructional literacy and competency	1

problems encountered in the distance education process are examined, it is revealed that the majority of teachers find the administrators successful in areas such as " providing organization within the school, meeting the physical needs of the school (supply of cleaning materials, etc.), ensuring the participation of the students who cannot attend the classes, communication with the parents, information exchange, preparation of online exams, and following the academic developments of the students.

The opinions of the teachers regarding the competences of their administrators in these areas are given in Table 2.

Some of the participants' views on this issue are as follows:

> In general, he was able to intervene in the crisis. Collaborative decisions could be made. As I just said, although sometimes authoritarian decisions were made, it corresponded to 10% of the overall decisions taken individually. He had a leadership style based on collaborating and communicating with teachers. (T7)
> You need the real motivation during this period. How was this movivation provided? It was provided through

our course schedules. The distribution of the courses during the day, their attitudes towards us, their discourses like "how can we reach you in case of an extra situation, what can we do?", the encouragement that you can do it better... (T9)

Administrators' adoption of a collaborative and human-oriented administration approach led to a positive reflection on teachers. However, some of the participants stated that while managers exhibited competency in certain areas; they were unable to maintain these competencies in some other areas during the COVID-19 process.

Theme 3. The incompetency areas that school administrators have during the COVID-19 process

The incompetency areas that the school administrators have during the COVID-19 process are given in Table 3.

Within this context, the opinions of some participants are given below:

> There was already a crisis. They could intervene in this crisis as best as they could; however as I said before, their authorities are very limited. There is a constant change imposed by higher authorities and agents. In other words, a decision taken today could evolve into a different direction tomorrow. All of these could cause them to be on the horns of a dilemma. They were trying to intervene in this crisis by taking additional responsibilities as much as they could but was the intervention in this crisis very successful? No, it was not. Because the problems caused by the higher authorities were too much. Consequently, they could not intervene in the situation so much. (T7)
> They could not make decisions immediately in sudden situations, they could not rebound from the crisis. I mean what can they do in Turkey? They (the authorities) *announced that the schools would be opened at midnight...The administration had no extra precaution for such a situation. The next day we went to school, some teachers could not even get to school on time. Even 5 or 6 teachers were absent that day. A lot of students were absent. The school was not clean and tidy. There were such kind of problems as everything happened suddenly...*(T2)
> We have volunteered to do several things without expecting anything in return: preparing exams, caring students,communicating with them and their parents, striving to be solution oriented. These were all situations that emerged as a result of the goodwill shown to us by our school administrators. Therefore, the relationship between the stakeholders is about how the administrators behave. As long as they try to guide, encourage and motivate you, you can behave in the same way towards the others and you do not regard them as burdensome, you do not feel bad. Instead of statements like "I don't have to, I'm doing this for money", I use the statement of "of course I will do it". That's why, the administrators should not look down on the subordinates, they should treat them in a more dignified way. (T9).

The adaption of bureaucracy to life is important. Decisions can be made in bureaucracy. Various formal letters can be published. There is also the adaption of this to life. They need to improve themselves a little more in this regard... For example, there is an official letter sent by the ministry but it needs to adapt to practice. This is where the human dimension, the leadership dimension and the administrator dimension come into play. If that does not happen, a chaotic situation emerges... (T8).

Theme 4. The competency areas that the school administrators should develop in the post-COVID-19 process

In parallel to the opinions of participants regarding the incompetency areas that the school administrators have during COVID-19 outbreak, teachers' opinions about the competency areas that school administrators should develop in the post-COVID-19 process are given in Table 4.

It can be deduced from the participants' statements regarding the areas that the school administrators are incompetent and they are expected to have in the post-COVID-19 process that school administrators should improve themselves multi-dimensionally, both humanly and conceptually. In addition, it can be argued that the school administrators sometimes exhibit incompetent behaviors due to factors originating from the system and higher authorities apart from the administrator himself/herself.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As a result of this research, which aims to reveal the competencies of school administrators during the COVID-19 process and the competencies they should have in the post-COVID-19 process, while it was revealed that more than half of the teachers evaluated their administrators as competent; it was revealed that almost half of them did not find their managers competent. Considering the areas in which the administrators are successful and competent, it was determined that the most of these areas are related to technical competencies and administrative roles, which include knowledge and skills related to the field of expertise. In parallel to this finding, various studies on the competencies of school administrators in the pre-COVID-19 period revealed that while the school administrators were successful in technical issues such as taking responsibility and increasing the quality of the school; they were incompetent in conflict management, risk taking, human relations and motivation (Memisoglu and Uylas, 2015) and school administrators need to be equipped in terms of resource management and such competencies as emotional-social, personal-moral, technical, educational-instructional and organizational (Erçetin and Eriçok, 2016). In fact, it is quite possible to expect these results from both this study and other studies in the literature as school administration is already considered as a task of bureaucratic procedures not a task requiring expertise in school administration in Turkey which school administration and principalship do not fit into a certain professional framework (Erdoğan, 2008).

In this context, it can be argued that the opinions of the participants in this study regarding the competencies exhibited by the school administrators during the COVID-19 process mostly focus on the bureaucratic and technical tasks that they should already do. As a matter of fact, Harris and Jones (2020) also argued that in this process, the positions of principals became too bureaucratic as they had to deal with health protocols, ministry of national education circulars and regulations. This bureaucratization has also been experienced in the Turkish education system which has a highly centralized structure and school principals have had significant challenges in this sense. It is already known that the overcentralized structure of the Turkish education system causes many problems such as limitation of autonomy, neglect of institutional needs, etc. (Bümen, 2020). Once a process that requires prompt decisions, such as epidemic conditions, is included in this centralized structure, it is expected that school administrators will become unable to do anything except to fulfill the instructions from the Ministry of National Education. In addition, unclear, sudden and sometimes delayed decisions have exposed the school administrators to a very chaotic process and caused them to experience serious problems. School administrators could not respond to the current crisis in a healthy way and could not effectively perform the decision-making, as the heart of administration (Simon, 1968), and planning processes needed for crisis management (Aytaç, 2020; Kara and Bozkurt, 2021). As a result, it was not possible for school administrators, whose duties and responsibilities were reduced to the implementation of the decisions taken above in an overcentralized structure, to improve their crisis management competencies and to exhibit leadership characteristics (Sarı and Sarı, 2020). However, both in this study and in other studies in the literature, it was revealed that the majority of the participants emphasized the humane competencies of administrators such as communication, motivation, human relations, and cooperation; and the conceptual competencies including the areas such as crisis management skills, instructional competence and democratic leadership during and after the COVID-19 process. As a matter of fact, it is already known that in crisis situations which decision makers cannot rely solely on their own experiences, while at the same time they do not have sufficient time to analyze and interpret every detail of the situation (Steinrücke at al., 2020: 2), the administrators need to have some other skills and competences. The competences required in such a situation are called as information literacy. Information literacy can be described as "a set of skills which allow people to recognize when they need information and also to find, interpret and exploit the information effectively" (American Library Association, 1989). Information literate individuals can critically assess the importance of relevant political, social, and economic factors that may impact the use of new knowledge and recognize and understand the ethical and legal implications of that use (Turner, 2015: 43). In that regard, the administrators who have information literacy are expected to integrate the information which they have had during COVID-19 crisis into their own knowledge base in order to handle it more efficiently in future and this

necessitates a special type of management, administration model. In this context, the management model adopted in the COVID-19 process should be replaced with the manager-supporter-leader model, which takes initiative, is flexible and innovative, and formulates the internal education policy (Charalampous and Papademetriou, 2020). In fact, in order for an administrator to be considered as a leader, he/she must have characteristics such as "creating a common vision and transmitting it across the organization, promoting distributed tasks/works, creating a collective culture, developing and understanding staff, creating productive relationships with parents and the community, and using appropriate communication tactics" (Day and Sammons, 2016).

In this context, both crisis periods such as the COVID-19 outbreak and possible crisis periods in the future require leaders who have conceptual competences who can develop not only technical fields, but also technological and information literacy, human relationships, communication, etc. In a similar vein, Atış and Dilbaz (2022) argued in their study that school administrators should be competent especially in crisis management, visionary leadership, organizational communication, adapting to change, creating a democratic environment, positive organizational climate, being able to cooperate and managing human resources. In addition, Constantia et al. (2021) argued that school administrators' emotional intelligence competencies, emotionally related behaviors and leadership characteristics have significant effects on school management and leadership, especially in times of crisis. As a matter of fact, the psychological competencies that a strong leader should have such as self-awareness, self-control, social awareness and management of interpersonal relationships (Aldiabat, 2019) derive their source from an adequate emotional intelligence and emotional literacy skills. This reveals how vital the development of the emotional intelligence competencies of administrators is for the school culture and society, both during and in post-COVID-19 process. In this context, school administrators should not only develop their technical competencies, but also develop their humane, technological and conceptual competencies. Accordingly, the school administrators should be selected among people who have knowledge of administration, education and instruction, who can evaluate the school from a theoretical and conceptual point of view (Kayıkçı, 2001). Actually, the opinions of a participant may be presented as a suggestion regarding the selection and appointment of school administrators who have the competencies emphasized above:

> How school administrators are selected and appointed is very important in this regard. This also constitutes the starting point of this process. How the appointment is determined is very related to how the school is administrated. If you appoint a poor administrator for a very successful school, you will already play with the fate of that school. Therefore, the criteria for appointment of administrators should be planned very accurately by interacting with academic circles. Thus, the departments in the universities and the provincial district and school administrators who are in the field should be in constant

> contact and actively exchange their views and follow the scientific studies. On the one hand, there are units that carry out scientific studies on administration; on the other hand, unfortunately, there is an administration level that is far from the scientific approach and merit. They create their own circle that is full of their own fellows. "Once these two are very disconnected from each other and administrators are mostly appointed for political reasons, the schools are left to the incompetence of the people who do not have such administrative potential. Therefore, we, as an institution, have already created the problem ourselves. We need to eliminate this (T1)

The negative effects of COVID-19 on education and administration processes have not been fully revealed yet. However, it is noteworthy to argue that each challenge brings some opportunities with it as well. In this context, the COVID-19 crisis may be an opportunity for us to rethink education and administration processes. Accordingly, the data obtained from this study can contribute to both the literature and practice in terms of determining competence areas and the means of developing them for an effective school administration process.

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