

Kindergarten Management Problems and Solutions in Turkey: The Experiences of Principals

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Abstract

In this study, it is aimed to reveal the problems faced by kindergarten principals with the order of importance and to propose solutions to these problems according to their own opinions. The research was designed with mixed (exploratory order) method. In the qualitative dimension, 10 school principals were interviewed. 62 school principals were reached to obtain scaling data based on ranking judgments. As a result, the problems faced by kindergarten principals are related to finance, staff, parents, legislation, communication and students in order of priorities. The most important problems encountered under these problem headings are these: Insufficient income sources under the title of financing, not being able to employ enough auxiliary personnel under the heading of staff, parents' perspective to school under the heading of the parents, excessive workload under the title of legislation, foreign students and parents in the subtitle of communication and adaptation process problems in the student.

Keywords: Kindergarten Principals, Management Problems, Kindergarten Finance, Turkey

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INTRODUCTION

There are many sub-systems that contribute to the sustainment and development of societies. It can be stated education holds special significance among these systems since it serves as a guide to the future of societies. Within the education system, schools make up an important sub-system with regard to the masses that it has access to as well as the duties and roles that they have taken on. Schools comprise an important sub-system within the education system with regard to the masses that it has access to and its appointed tasks. Hence, schools play an important role in the sustainment and development of the society. Schools are organizations that shape the formal education process by trying to instill desired behavioral changes through the presentation of educational activities in accordance with the needs of the society and the individual (Fidan & Erden, 1998).

Administration is one of the principal elements of schools for carrying out their functions. Therefore, it can be indicated that school administration is a unit that will provide functionality to the education system while contributing to shaping the future of societies. In this regard, it is expected from school principals to be well-equipped individuals with sufficient competence. Whereas well-equipped school principals are defined as individuals who establish coordination between the members of the organization, give orders, carry out inspections to prevent deviating from the goals, direct the works carried out and ensure that the human and financial resources at the schools are used in the most effective manner as possible so that the schools are able to reach their goals (Gürsel, 2003).

School principals may encounter different problems in the administrative processes. A problem in school administration can be defined as anything that prevents the school from reaching its goals, slows it down and diverts it from the target which should be resolved (Başaran, 1994). School principals enter a problem solving phase when they act in order to actualize the reasons of existence of schools. These problems can be resolved through awareness, defining and identifying. It is required in order for the problems to be resolved that school principals have a good command over the concepts and processes related with school management, are able to motivate all shareholders of the school in the direction of school objectives, are well-versed in behavioral sciences as well as education management (Türkmenoğlu, 2015) and are able to resolve the problems encountered not by way of trial-error but through the utilization of scientific methods (Çalık, Sezgin & Çalık, 2013).

Administration of kindergarden institutions differ and gain importance due to the fact that the ages of the educated children small, that the parents are in continuous communication with the administration, that majority of the employees are female and that they are different with regard to physical attributes, course hours as well as the recesses and the materials used etc. It can be observed when a literature survey is conducted that many studies have been conducted on the administration at primary education (primary-secondary schools) and secondary education levels as well as the problems encountered (Bakır, 2007; Bıkan, 2008; Bıyık, 2014; Gülder, 2007; Güler, 2006; Kahramanoğlu, 1990; Sarıce, 2006; Sevgi, 2004; Şekerci & Apay, 2009; Turan, 2007). However, the number of studies on kindergartens is quite limited (Büte and Balcı, 2010; Demir Yıldız, 2018; Demircan Aydın, 2017; Doğan, 2014; Tok, 2002). It seems quite important to use scientific methods to put forth the problems that school principal faces at the kindergardens encountered less in research studies compared with other education levels.

The importance of kindergarden institutions is understood strongly every day due to the fact that they make up the first stage among the educational institutions and that personal, moral and cognitive developments are completed rapidly as emphasized by development and education institutions at the target age group. Poyraz & Dere (2006) defined kindergarden institutions as social establishments having education as their primary function which shape children aged between 0-6 in healthy and well-organized environments in the light of the cultural characteristics of the society thus laying the foundations for a strong personality, social sensibility and creative intelligence. Therefore, each adversity faced during the pre-school period may leave behind deep traces while every positive incident may ensure that the education life of the individual continues successfully.

Students can go to kindergartens, nursery classes or day care centers during the pre-school period. Kindergartens are separated because they have an independent administration. Therefore, the aim of the present study was determined as identifying the problems encountered at kindergartens and their priority levels in addition to suggesting solutions to overcome it.

METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

Design and Participant

Mixed method was used in the present study in order to benefit from the advantages of both qualitative and quantitative methods while reducing the limitations of both in resolving the research problem. Mixed method studies can be defined as the use of both the qualitative and quantitative research methods by a researcher in one study or in several consecutive studies (Creswell, 2003). Different patterns are used in mixed method studies due to the difference of the research process. Exploratory pattern that starts with qualitative methods and continues with quantitative methods was used in order to make the study more understandable. Exploratory pattern is a research pattern during which qualitative data are collected first which are then used to develop the quantitative follow-up stage (Mert, 2019). During the research process, opinions of the participants on the problem areas they encounter at their respective schools were collected first. They were then asked to use the scaling method for listing the problems.

The qualitative study group was comprised of 10 kindergarten principal in differ with regard to socioeconomic states in order to ensure maximum diversity by identifying situations that are similar to and differ from the problems examined in the study population. A sample group was not identified for the quantitative dimension of the study and it was aimed to contact with the principals of 67 kindergartens (MoNE, 2019) after which 62 school principals were contacted thus shaping the quantitative dimension based on their opinions.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data for the qualitative dimension of the study were acquired by way of semi-structured interview from among the interview methods in the guidance of the interview form. A semi-structured interview is a meeting in which the researcher does not strictly follow a formalized list of questions but directs the questions to the participants in a more flexible manner based on a form (Özer Özkan, 2019). The interviews were recorded in order to ensure an accurate transcription. The 10 participants were coded as KP1 (Kindergarden Principal 1), KP2.....,KP10.

While scaling method was used in the quantitative dimension of the study in order to sort the problems identified by way of the interview method in order of decreasing importance. Findings were obtained using the online scaling form for identifying the level of importance for the data acquired as a result of the qualitative processes. This form was sent to the participants either via mail or through messaging applications.

Data Analysis

According to Creswell & Plano Clark (2010), qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques are used when analyzing the data in mixed method studies. Descriptive analysis technique was used in the qualitative dimension of the study. In descriptive analysis, the acquired data are summarized and interpreted based on pre-determined themes and direct quotations are frequently used to reflect the opinions of individuals (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005).

Scaling based on ordering judgments was applied during the analysis of quantitative data. Scaling is used to express the procedure which includes the development of a measurement tool followed by fitting the acquired data to the equal interval scale level which enables the consideration of the classification as a unit when interpreting (Acar Güvendir & Özer Özkan, 2013). Microsoft Excel

software was used during the analysis for preparing order frequency matrices indicating which problems have been placed how many times at which order by the kindergarten administrators. A matrix of proportions Ratio matrices were prepared based on the responses to the questions after which the “z” values corresponding to the matrix elements were obtained passing on to the preparation stage for the unit normal deviations matrix. The sum of each column was written down at the lowest line of the unit normal deviations matrix followed by calculating the mean values for the “z” value on this line thereby obtaining the scale values.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Administrative issues at kindergartens were classified under the main headings of; *financing, personnel, parents, students, regulations and communication.*

Opinions of Kindergarten Principals on Financing Issues

The opinions of kindergarten principals on financing issues can be handled under three sub-headings. These sub-headings are; *variations in income items, variations in expense items and expenditure process.*

Variations in income items: The first aspect that attracts attention with regard to financing was the problem of variations in income items. Kindergarten principals emphasized the insufficiency and diversity for the resources related with income items and specified these items as; fees and allowances after which they indicated various problems they encountered under both headings.

Kindergarten principals stated that the fees generally cause problems. The participants emphasized that the collected fees are insufficient. Participant opinions on the insufficiency of the collected fees;

It is difficult to manage a weathered building on fees alone. It is very difficult to collect money from the parents. If it is necessary we call [or] message them regarding fees. The energy I spend for calling people all the time is another issue. These calls may sometimes become annoyingly frequent. (KP9)

Of the participants, KP2 and KP7 stated that some parents who give fees use this as an element of pressuring thus trying to make an impact on the decisions of school administration. They also stated that as a result of this they either experience conflicts or are forced to give priority to the demands of the parents indicating that fees incite competition with other schools and that they have to increase the classroom sizes to take more fees. The participants stated that they experience allowance related problems as well. This was expressed as;

We do not demand allowance but this is related with luck, if we have it we have a better year, if not... (KP1)

Under the allowance heading, kindergarten principals mentioned the chance factor, that they cannot move beyond certain expense items, that their budgets are not sufficient to accomplish their goals because they are left by themselves in the school and that all these factors have an adverse impact on quality.

Variations in expense items: Expense items at the kindergartens consist of expenses made for staff members, cleaning, acclimatization activities, expenses for the physical spaces, repairs, maintenance activities, educational tools and equipment along with unexpected expenses that may occur. Participant opinions were as follows;

Of the collected fees, 90-95 % is spent on the staff members and we are left with a very little amount after this. We struggle in finding material because we have to fit in the budget. The Ministry sends only books; I did not see anything else. (KP1)

This is an old building, the school needs to be repainted because it is a living structure, it should be renovated continuously which is costly and we have to deal with workers all the time. (KP5)

Kindergarten principals mentioned the importance of the exterior appearance of the building and the equipment inside stating that the parents pay attention to them during registration rather than the quality of education. They said that the schools have to be painted every year and that the materials used should be renewed but complained that they experience difficulties in finding the financial power to do these.

Expenditure process: Kindergarten principals mentioned the extreme workload for the expenditure process, that the teachers do not take on responsibility for this and that they try to solve the issue faster because they do not have sufficient staff for market research. The opinions of a principal on this issue are given below:

We establish a commission, there are tenders. This is a serious workload and plus we have to be meticulous. We write the names of the teachers for the commissions but they do not want to take on responsibility and we are forced to do it as well.” (KP6)

Opinions of Kindergarten principals on personnel problems: The kindergarten principals said that they experience various problems due to the demand by more parents for certain teachers.

We have teachers who stand out which is a problem because right now the maximum students a classroom can have is 20-25. But the demand sometimes rises up to 50, all those after the first 25 go and try to find some acquaintances in high-up places or they feel resentment towards you. (KP4)

KP5 stated that some teachers do not display their best performance in order to be more comfortable and work with fewer students. KP 8 also put forth that some teachers do not improve themselves that they still stick to old habits and fail to keep pace with the current age which in turn leads to some problems. The principals indicated that job security is an obstacle between the teachers and their efforts to display their best performances. Opinions of one administrator on this subject are presented below:

Some of our friends use job security as an excuse and do almost nothing in the classroom. They come to the school as if they are forced to do so. They are not good at self-sacrifice. The only reason for this is the lack of a performance-based salary system. (KP9)

The kindergarten principals compared staffed teachers with contracted or paid teachers indicating that job security may have an adverse impact on the teacher and that they receive higher efficiency from contracted and paid teachers. On the other hand, the principals also mentioned that working with paid teachers may lead to different problems due to the insufficiency of assignments. One of the school principals said:

The concept of paid teachers is one of the most problematic areas in education. They come from outside the field and we experience a lot of problems with them, there are even those who come only with a certificate. They do not know how to behave in front of the children or parents. Every year another paid [teacher] comes. (KP7)

The principals stated that they experience problems at school because of the lack of a vice principal. An exemplary administrator opinion on this subject is given below:

Because our students are small, the number of principals is not enough when the number of students is above 250. Because the parents always expect something from you but when there is no vice principal we cannot spare enough time for the parents because we have to do our duties. (KP1)

It has been indicated that there problems are experienced related with staffed auxiliary employees. KP5 indicated staffed auxiliary employees as the most serious problem. Kindergarten principals also mentioned that they cannot work with staffed personnel, that their education levels lead to problems, that they do not display their best performances that they do not meet their responsibilities and that they abuse their rights because of job security emphasizing that they can experience problems which in turn may harm corporate belonging.

Of the participants, KP6 said that each service presented requires one more staff member and that the number of employees should be increased in order to increase school quality thus pointing out another problem. In support of this, KP3 said that they cannot teach Syrian children Turkish at the schools because of the lack of Turkish instructors.

Opinions of kindergarten principals on parent problems: The principals stated that parents may act reactively against obeying the rules of the school and that they especially experience security problems because the parents do not want to obey the rules. The opinions of the principals on the parent problem are indicated below:

They see us as babysitters; [because they pay a particular fee] they think it is a private institution. They want what they paid for. They think we are private workers because we are being paid. (KP3)

The parents think this is a semi-private institution because they pay money. And so their expectations are very high. (KP5)

Majority of the kindergarten principals stated that they experience problems because the parents pay money to the school, because they think their children is more special than others and because of the high academic expectations they have due to their lack of knowledge on pre-school education process. Whereas KP10 put forth contrary to the other kindergarten principals that the parents have no expectations and that is why he experiences problems which in turn makes an adverse impact on his motivation. Accordingly, it can be understood that the problems related with parents at schools differ among the regions.

Opinions of kindergarten principals on student problems: As a general observation, it has been seen that the principals do not experience problems that are directly related with the students. The principals mostly stated that the students experience difficulties especially during the adaptation process. The participants indicated that they are always on the edge because it is difficult to control the students because of their age group which is transferred as a significant workload over to themselves. KP7 and KP10 indicated that they experience problems because of children who have not yet received potty training. They emphasized the difficulties related with ensuring hygiene at their schools. Similarly, they also said that they experience problems due to students with special needs. Various opinions on this subject:

Students with special needs may act violently against the other children because they cannot fully adapt to the classroom and they may behave differently. (KP2)

Schools do not accept these children. That is why the numbers are quite high at schools which do accept them. (KP8)

The principals implied that students with special needs disrupt the harmony in the classroom, which they may behave aggressively against the other children in which case parents start complaining

while they also indicated that they consider the fact that the other parents do not want such children in the classroom as a difficult problem to overcome.

Opinions of Kindergarten Principals on Regulation Problems

The principals pointed out that continuously changing regulations result in misinformation which in turn causes a significant workload to follow up on all the changes, that they sometimes miss important changes resulting in investigations and that some of their efforts turn out to be in vain because of the rapid changes that take place. The most striking participant opinion on this subject was expressed as follows:

We have to do something but we see that they have changed the regulation suddenly and then we start discussing how we should proceed. It seems as if it is present in the regulations but then we take a look and it is not. (KP1)

On the other hand, the participants state that they do not know how to proceed because the regulations are not explicit and understandable, that they can be interpreted in different ways and contain questionable expressions. They emphasize that various confusions and conflicts may arise as a result. The principals have indicated that they experience problems in teacher inspections because they are not inspected themselves. The opinions of an administrator on this subject are provided below:

I wish we were also inspected, that some people would tell us our shortcomings. We do something but we always interpret, we do not know for sure. (KP8)

The principals mentioned that because they are not inspected they continue their duties by now knowing if what they do is right or wrong, that their accomplishments are not appreciated and that some indecent school principals use state facilities for different purposes because they are not inspected. The principals commented that pre-school teachers cannot take a break during recess time, that they have to deal with their needs, course preparations, opinion exchanges during the working hours which is risky because it is not legal and that they experience conflicts with the teachers when they try to place clear rules on this issue.

KP4 and KP5 stated that they want to give out achievement certificates to their own teachers in order to motivate them but that they do not even have authority to do so thereby stating that they consider this as a major issue. In addition to the problems caused by the authority appointed and not appointed to them, the kindergarten principals indicated that they experience work load related problems due to regulations expressing their opinions as such:

Our biggest problem is paperwork, we sometimes proceed with the paperwork in accordance with the regulations, and our workload may sometimes place us in difficult administrative situations. (KP2)

Opinions of Kindergarten Principals on Communication Problems

It was understood that the principals consider the architectural structure of school buildings as one of the sources of communication related problems. The principals mentioned some examples as the one presented below with regard to the school building structure related problems that they experience.

A school design with multiple floors is always more difficult I suppose, we have to employ a lot of people for this. (KP4)

Kindergarten principals have emphasized that multiple storey schools make management more difficult, that they have to employ more people in order to establish control in the school which in turn

leads to various other problems. Kindergarten principals have indicated that they experience communication problems related with foreign students and their parents. Accordingly, they said:

We experience a lot of problems with the Syrians because we do not know their language. They sometimes come and go for days. They come and we do not always have a translator, so it is difficult to take out the best performance. (KP1)

The principals have mentioned that they cannot establish communication due to lack of knowledge of the language and failure in finding a translator which leads them to experience problems that are also experienced by the teacher in the classroom. Kindergarten principals have also stated that they experience problems in communicating with their higher executives. Administrator opinions on this subject are indicated below:

What we tell people remains suspended in mid-air when top management members are not really interested and do not have sufficient experience in the subject at hand. (KP4)

We cannot talk about these problems with the upper management because they do not want to face this-this (KP6)

In support of these opinions, the principals mentioned that the process takes a very long time when establishing communication between institutions, that they cannot establish communication with the municipalities and the mukhtarate (neighborhood management) and that they cannot receive the support required for the school. The principals also stated that they experience difficulties in communicating with the principal or vice-principal they are working with as part of the same management team. They commented that the communication problems experienced here lead to greater problems because they are part of the same management team. The principals stated the following with regard to the problems they experience because the school shareholders escalate the problems to others instead of themselves:

The most important problem here is that when you remind the teachers their primary duties some people may protect the teachers and back them up, the problem here is that they have strong people who back them up. (KP4)

The principals indicated that they experience problems because the school shareholders contact different people to solve their problems indicating that problems may be experienced with the teacher, staff members or parents but that problems increase even more when others step in or that they are forced to do things they do not want.

Suggestions of Kindergarten principals for Solving the Problems

The suggestions of kindergarten principals for solving the financing problems they encounter are as follows: increasing the fees, collecting the fees in full during registration as installments to the credit card or developing channels of enforcement for parents who do not pay the fees, providing a certain allowance to the schools for each student and determining this allowance based on the needs of the respective schools, meeting the expenses of personnel, additional resources and material demand centrally through public funding as items that principals spare the most resources for and providing additional special resources for the school through individuals, institutions and establishments.

The suggestions of kindergarten principals for solving the personnel problems they encounter are as follows: supporting the personnel continuously through trainings; ensuring that especially the permanent personnel go through a tough training period during the employment process, putting into effect a wage system based on performance which can identify who is actually working and who is not, contractual employment for auxiliary personnel and laying them off if necessary, increasing the authority of the school administrator in order to prevent arbitrary leave of absence and health report

demands on the parts of the employees and setting up an inspection mechanism for preventing such arbitrary practices.

The suggestions of kindergarten principals for solving the problems related with teachers are as follows: meticulous planning of the teacher assignment process which should be completed outside of the academic year, completing the paid teacher assignment process prior to the start of the semester taking into consideration the adaptation process for the teacher, enabling school administration to continue working with paid teachers they worked with in previous years, taking the opinions of school administration with regard to the paid teachers that will be called in, protecting the paid teachers and increasing their wages to ensure justice inside the school, signing of a contract for preventing the teachers to quit whenever they want, identifying the age group with which guidance teachers will work with during their university education period and ensuring that they receive the required training, increasing the quality of in-service training activities for teachers, conducting them regularly and ensuring that the candidate teachers receive training at least once a month.

The suggestions of kindergarten principals for solving the parent related problems they encounter are as follows: employing male security personnel at schools against the violent incidents at schools, being as transparent as possible in all finance related issues since this is the area for which majority of the parent complaints are made, making a positive change in the opinions of parents related with pre-school and organizing activities and parent visits to make them grasp the importance of pre-school education and using techniques such as draws or first come first serve technique in order to prevent problems during registration.

The suggestions of kindergarten principals for solving the regulation related problems they encounter are as follows: organizing shift hours, eliminating the uncertainties about this issue or providing financial support to those who work overtime, allowing a time for break to pre-school teachers, carrying out activities for teachers during outside class hours in order to improve the quality of education, increasing inspection frequency for kindergartens, increasing the authority of administrators, decreasing the number of students norm for a second vice principal, taking the opinions of kindergarten principals when appointing a vice principal in order to increase effectiveness at the school.

The suggestions of kindergarten principals for solving the communication problems they encounter are as follows: ensuring that the superiors trust the school administration and reduce the pressure on school administration, reducing the frequency of bureaucratic correspondence and ensuring that only the documents that are related with the school are sent, setting up a unique system to establish the coordination between the institutions, carrying out the meetings in a preplanned manner and constructing the school buildings to ensure that they have command over the school.

The suggestions of kindergarten principals for solving the student problems they encounter are as follows: ensuring that the adaptation period runs smoothly by dividing the crowded groups into smaller groups and providing toys that will attract the attention of the children, arranging the school environment by considering the surrounding environment and habits, ensuring that students with special needs start school at least two weeks after the opening, ensuring that students with special needs spend less time at the school compared with the other students, providing training to children with special needs by pre-school teachers and identification of the disability groups with special needs in an accurate manner by the related institutions.

Priority of the Problem Areas Based on the Opinions of Kindergarten Principals

The problems based on the scaling study conducted with regard to the general problem areas were financing, personnel, parents, regulations, communication and students with the unit normal deviations matrix presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Unit Normal Deviations Matrix for the General Problems Encountered by Kindergarten Principals (Z)

	Financing	Personnel	Parent	Regulation	Communication	Student
Financing		0,329	0,51	1,295	1,232	1,189
Personnel	-0,329		0,202	1,001	0,921	0,920
Parent	-0,51	-0,202		1,052	0,908	0,951
Regulation	-1,295	-1,001	-1,052		-0,078	0,079
Communication	-1,232	-0,921	-0,908	0,078		0,161
Student	-1,189	-0,92	-0,951	-0,079	-0,161	
Z Tot	-4,55477	-2,715	-2,19881	3,345888	2,821869	3,301192
Z Avg.	-0,759	-0,453	-0,366	0,558	0,47	0,550
Sj	0	0,306	0,393	1,317	1,229	1,309

It can be seen when Table 1 is examined that the smallest (z_j) value is -0,759 for A. S_j values are determined by applying a shifting procedure starting from the origin of the axis. The order of importance given by the school principals to the problems encountered can be observed by ordering the S_j values decrementally. In other words, the ordering that is obtained as a result of this process indicates the order of importance for the general problems indicated in the scaling from based on kindergarten administrator opinions.

Table 2 Scale Values and Ranking of the List of General Problems at Kindergartens

	Scale Values (S_j)	Ranking
Financing	0	1
Personnel	0,306	2
Parents	0,393	3
Students	1,137	6
Regulations	1,229	4
Communication	1,309	5

It can be observed when Table 2 is examined that the ‘financing’ heading with the smallest S_j value is the most important problem followed respectively by personnel, parents, regulations, communication and students. Table 3 presents the unit normal deviations matrix (Z) regarding the rankings of the sub-problems related with the financing problem that kindergarten principals see as the primary issue among the general problems experienced at their schools.

Table 3 Unit Normal Deviations Matrix Regarding the Financing Issues Experienced by Kindergarten Principals at their Schools (Z)

	A	B	C	D	E
A		0,154	0,293	0,720	1,035
B	-0,154		0,119	0,642	0,988
C	-0,293	-0,119		0,693	1,148
D	-0,720	-0,642	-0,693		0,250
E	-1,035	-0,988	-1,148	-0,25	
Z Tot.	-2,20197	-1,596	-1,42895	1,806116	3,420853
Z Avg.	-0,440	-0,319	-0,286	0,361	0,684
Sj	0,000	0,121	0,154	0,801	1,124

It can be observed when Table 3 is examined that the smallest value of \bar{z}_j is -0,440 for A. The S_j values obtained as a result of the shifting by adding the absolute value of -0,440 to each \bar{z}_j value as 0,440 along with their rankings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Scale Values and Rankings for the Financing Problems Encountered at Kindergartens

		Scale Values (S_j)	Rankings
A	Insufficiency of income items	0,000	1
B	Diversity of expense items (personnel, maintenance, repair etc.)	0,121	2
C	Problems related with fees (Requesting, Collecting etc.)	0,154	3
D	Reflections of the socio-economic status of the region	0,801	4
E	The need to spare resources for additional materials (educational sets, toys etc.)	1,124	5

It can be observed in Table 4 that the principals have ranked the financing problems encountered at kindergartens as follows: Insufficiency of income items, Diversity of expense items (personnel, maintenance, repair etc.), Problems related with fees (Requesting, Collecting etc.), Reflections of the socio-economic status of the region, The need to spare resources for additional materials (educational sets, toys etc.). Table 5 presents the unit normal deviations matrix (Z) regarding the rankings of the sub-problems related with the personnel problem that kindergarten principals have ranked as the second issue among the general problems experienced at their schools.

Table 5 Unit Normal Deviations Matrix Regarding the Personnel Issues Experienced by Kindergarten Principals at their Schools (Z)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
A		1,278	1,521	1,499	1,204	1,726	1,578	1,770
B	-1,278		0,585	0,418	0,238	0,792	0,611	0,611
C	-1,521	-0,585		-0,174	-0,297	0,242	0,088	0,512
D	-1,499	-0,418	0,174		-0,121	0,437	0,296	0,654
E	-1,204	-0,238	0,297	0,121		0,557	0,368	0,781
F	-1,726	-0,792	-0,242	-0,437	-0,557		-0,119	0,328
G	-1,578	-0,611	-0,088	-0,296	-0,368	0,119		0,403
H	-1,770	-1,005	-0,512	-0,654	-0,781	-0,328	-0,403	
Z Tot.	-10,5758	-2,372	1,735155	0,476047	-0,68218	3,544969	2,420735	5,058662
Z Avg.	-1,322	-0,297	0,217	0,060	-0,085	0,443	1,625	0,632
Sj	0,000	1,025	1,539	1,382	1,237	1,765	1,625	1,954

It can be observed when Table 5 is examined that the smallest \bar{z}_j value is -1,322 for A. The S_j values obtained after shifting are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 Scale Values and Rankings for the Personnel Problems Encountered at Kindergartens

		Scale Values (S_j)	Rankings
A	Inability to employ sufficient number of auxiliary personnel	0,000	1
B	Negative attitudes and behaviors of auxiliary personnel due to job security	1,025	2
C	Negative attitudes and behaviors of teachers due to job security	1,539	5
D	Problems related with paid teachers	1,382	4
E	Resistance of teachers towards change	1,237	3
F	Insufficiency of teacher appointments	1,765	7
G	Timing of teacher appointments	1,625	6
H	Problems related with the candidate teacher process	1,954	8

The personnel problems encountered have been ranked as follows according to Table 6: Inability to employ sufficient number of auxiliary personnel, Negative attitudes and behaviors of auxiliary personnel due to job security, Resistance of teachers towards change, Problems related with paid teachers, Negative attitudes and behaviors of teachers due to job security, Timing of teacher appointments, Insufficiency of teacher appointments and Problems related with the candidate teacher process.

Table 7 presents the unit normal deviations matrix (Z) regarding the rankings of the sub-problems related with the “parents” problem that kindergarten principals have ranked as the third issue among the general problems experienced at their schools.

Table 7 Rankings and Unit Normal Deviations Matrix Regarding the Personnel Issues Experienced by Kindergarten Principals at their Schools (Z)

	A	B	C	D	E
A		-0,678	0,323	0,687	0,599
B	0,678		1,082	1,547	1,288
C	-0,323	-1,082		0,358	0,352
D	-0,687	-1,547	-0,358		0,066
E	-0,599	-1,288	-0,352	-0,066	
Z Tot.	-0,93077	-4,595	0,695028	2,526063	2,304704
Z Avg.	-0,186	-0,919	0,139	0,505	0,461
Sj	0,733	0,000	1,058	1,424	1,380

It can be observed when Table 7 is examined that the smallest \bar{z}_j value is -0,919 for B. The S_j values obtained after shifting from the origin of the axis are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 Scale Values and Rankings for the Parent Problems Encountered at Kindergartens

	Scale Values (S_j)	Rankings
A Parent cooperation	0,733	2
B Perspective of the parent towards the school (caregiver, nursery etc.)	0,000	1
C Physical or verbal abuse by the parents	1,058	3
D Adaptation process of the parents to the school	1,424	5
E Impact of the parents on school operations	1,380	4

According to Table 8, the ranking is as follows: Perspective of the parent towards the school (caregiver, nursery etc.), Parent cooperation, Physical or verbal abuse by the parents, Impact of the parents on school operations and Adaptation process of the parents to the school. Table 9 presents the unit normal deviations matrix (Z) regarding the rankings of the sub-problems related with the “regulations” problem that kindergarten principals have ranked as the fourth issue among the general problems experienced at their schools.

Table 9 Rankings and Unit Normal Deviations Matrix Regarding the Regulation Issues Experienced by Kindergarten Principals at their Schools (Z)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
A		0,648	0,884	0,909	0,890	0,95	0,883	0,745
B	-0,648		0,175	0,217	0,231	0,340	0,277	0,277
C	-0,884	-0,175		0,105	0,224	0,406	0,343	0,181
D	-0,909	-0,217	-0,105		0,169	0,359	0,351	0,236
E	-0,89	-0,231	-0,224	-0,169		0,178	0,172	0,125
F	-0,95	-0,340	-0,406	-0,359	-0,178		0,011	0,009
G	-0,883	-0,277	-0,343	-0,351	-0,172	-0,011		0,025
H	-0,745	-0,190	-0,181	-0,236	-0,125	-0,009	-0,025	
Z Tot.	-5,90836	-0,782	-0,19999	0,115513	1,037132	2,213217	2,012895	1,598375
Z Avg.	-0,739	-0,098	-0,025	0,014	0,130	0,277	0,252	0,200
Sj	0,000	0,641	0,714	0,753	0,869	1,016	0,991	0,939

Table 10 presents the S_j values obtained by adding 0,739 as the absolute value of the starting point of the axis of -0,739 to each of the \bar{z}_j values in Table 9.

Table 10 Scale Values and Rankings for the Regulation Problems Encountered at Kindergartens

		Scale Values (S_j)	Rankings
A	High workload (stationary, bureaucracy etc.)	0,000	1
B	Uncertainty of shift hours	0,641	2
C	Inspection related problems	0,714	3
D	Continuous changes in regulations	0,753	4
E	Clarity and intelligibility of the regulations	0,869	5
F	Different interpretations of regulations	1,016	8
G	Inability to preserve the balance between responsibility and authority	0,991	7
H	Problems related with double shift schooling	0,939	6

It is observed that the kindergarten principals rank the regulation related problems encountered at their schools as follows: High workload (stationary, bureaucracy etc.), Uncertainty of shift hours, Inspection related problems, Continuous changes in regulations, Clarity and intelligibility of the regulations, Problems related with double shift schooling, Inability to preserve the balance between responsibility and authority and Different interpretations of regulations. Table 11 presents the unit normal deviations matrix (Z) regarding the rankings of the sub-problems related with the “communication” problem that kindergarten principals have ranked as the fifth issue among the general problems experienced at their schools.

Table 11 Rankings and Unit Normal Deviations Matrix Regarding the Communication Issues Experienced by Kindergarten Principals at their Schools (Z)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
A		-0,098	-0,014	0,293	0,352	0,428	-0,048
B	0,098		0,120	0,470	0,538	0,603	0,069
C	0,014	-0,120		0,444	0,535	0,625	-0,008
D	-0,293	-0,470	-0,444		0,087	0,249	-0,370
E	-0,352	-0,538	-0,535	-0,087		0,198	-0,454
F	-0,428	-0,603	-0,625	-0,249	-0,198		-0,562
G	0,048	-0,069	0,008	0,370	0,454	0,562	
Z Total	-0,91328	-1,896	-1,49193	1,24115	1,768487	2,664896	-1,37342
Z Avg	-0,130	-0,271	-0,213	0,177	0,253	0,381	-0,196
Sj	0,141	0,000	0,058	0,448	0,524	0,652	0,075

It can be observed when Table 11 is examined that the smallest \bar{z}_j value is -0,271 for B. The S_j values obtained after shifting from the origin of the axis are presented in Table 12.

Table 12 Scale Values and Rankings for the Communication Problems Encountered at Kindergartens

		Scale Values (S_j)	Rankings
A	Problems due to the building structure (command, control etc.)	0,141	1
B	Foreign students and parents	0,000	2
C	Inter-school communication of the personnel (comparisons, gossip etc.)	0,058	3
D	Communication with superiors (branch manager, district manager etc.)	0,448	4
E	Communication with different institutions and establishments (municipality, mukhtarate, police force etc.)	0,524	5
F	Communication with the other principals	0,652	8
G	Putting into effect elements of oppression by school shareholders (influential individuals etc.)	0,075	7

It is observed that the kindergarten principals rank the communication related problems encountered at their schools as follows: Foreign students and parents, Inter-school communication of the personnel (comparisons, gossip etc.), Putting into effect elements of oppression by school shareholders (influential individuals etc.), Problems due to the building structure (command, control etc.), Communication with superiors (branch manager, district manager etc.), Communication with different institutions and establishments (municipality, mukhtarate, police force etc.), Communication with the other administrators.

Table 13 presents the unit normal deviations matrix (Z) regarding the rankings of the sub-problems related with the “student” problem that kindergarten principals have ranked as the fifth issue among the general problems experienced at their schools.

Table 13 Rankings and Unit Normal Deviations Matrix Regarding the Student Issues Experienced by Kindergarten Principals at their Schools (Z)

	Adaptation process	Students with special needs
Adaptation process		0,506
Students with special needs	-0,506	
Z Total	-0,50593	0,506
Z Avg	-0,253	0,253
Sj	0,000	0,506

It can be observed based on the Sj values that the kindergarten principals have listed the student problems encountered at their schools as adaptation process and students with special needs.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Even though the administrative problems encountered at kindergartens can be presented under different headings, they are multiple and varied. Classifying or limiting administrative problems with headings of financing, personnel, parents, regulations, communication and students paves the way to viewing the problems from a specific framework. However, while contributing to the intelligibility of the problems, this framework should not mean that different problems may not be present.

The fact that the financing structure of kindergartens is quite different from those of the other stages of education may have led to the principals to consider financing as the primary issue. Even though it is not the main subject of the present study, it has been observed that financing serves as a source for other problem areas through direct or indirect impacts. Thus, it can be emphasized that financing is among the primary issues.

The first problem that kindergarten principals experience with regard to financing emerges as the insufficiency of the sources of income. It is of significant interest that school principals consider private resources rather than public resources with regard to solving the problem of finding resources. There may be different reasons for this: -their lack of belief that they may have the right to speak with regard to the allocation of public resources, -the fact that they think private resources should be used for financing pre-school education, -the number of problems they face regardless of where financing comes from. It may be asserted that the lack of a mutual opinion on the part of the education shareholders (parents-school administrators-teachers) regarding how we should approach the financing issue lies at the heart of the problem that principals experience with regard to finding resources.

Büte & Balcı (2010) and Tok (2002) have reported that fees and school budget is insufficient; Sarıce (2006) stated that the primary school principals are under suspicion due to the money that is collected; whereas Tok (2002), Ada et al. (2014) and Demir Yıldız (2018) illustrated that the principals experience problems in collecting the fees in full and on time. On the other hand, it is also understood that there uncertainties regarding the allocation of the financing acquired from public resources. There does not seem to be any public resource allocation based on the number of students or needs. Sarıce (2006), Özmen & Yalçın (2011) and Kayıkçı & Akan (2014) mentioned the insufficiency of resources and the uncertainties related with the allocation mechanism in their respective studies.

The presence of teachers who resist to change, who consider shifts only as working hours and who do not want to take on responsibility is another major issue. Tok (2002) asserts that the efficiency of education decreases because teachers go round in circles. The teacher candidates who took part in the study by Yılmaz & Altinkurt (2011) have also indicated that teachers do not display the effort required for self-improvement. Sarıce (2006) stated that teachers without job security cannot focus on

their duties because of job related concerns. The kindergarten principals who contributed to the study have also mentioned the negative aspects of job security. They stated that the personnel hides behind the concept of job security and abuse their rights to paid leave. Bıyık (2014) conducted a study in which it has been reported that classrooms are left without a teacher when female teachers go on birth leave and that school principals are faced with problems. It has also been observed that the problems related with auxiliary personnel at kindergartens have transformed into the primary personnel issue. Demir Yıldız (2018), Sarıce (2006), Çinkır (2010) and Bıyık (2014) indicate that personnel shortcomings lead to administrative problems. The school principals who contributed to studies by Çevik (2019) and Ada et al. (2014) mentioned that the quality of education is adversely affected when auxiliary personnel does not have sufficient knowledge.

The fact that parents consider kindergartens as caregiver or nursery is among the primary problems that kindergarten principal's face. According to Öztürk et al. (2016), preschool teachers experience problems related with the perspective of parents towards the school which leads to further issues with other discipline-classroom teachers.

The unwillingness of parents for cooperation or their efforts to direct the school operations when they do cooperate are among the encountered problems. Economic, cultural and school administration attitude factors play a role in the unwillingness of parents for cooperation (Sarıce, 2006). İnan (2010) conducted a study as a result of which it was determined that the parents do not want to join the family participation activities because they find themselves insufficient which is indicated by families as a problem. Tok (2002) indicated that principals also face similar problems stating that the permanence of education is possible through continuity, that the school activities should be supported at home which is hindered due to the attitudes of parents who are not inclined towards cooperation. Dolman (2015) mentioned that parent participation to activities organized by the school is insufficient; while Aktaş (2018) reported the problem of parents who do not take part in the school activities.

Problems related with regulations encountered by kindergarten administrators: indefinite and long shift hours, the teachers preparing for the classes during course hours because they cannot give a break, conflicts with the teachers when they leave the classroom for various reasons such as exchanging ideas etc., the fact that kindergarten principals cannot know whether what they are doing is right or wrong due to lack of sufficient inspections, unwillingness on the part of the teachers when the principals want to inspect them or problems encountered at the end of the inspection process because the principals do not have any powers of sanction. In his study, Tok (2002) set forth the problems related with the insufficiency of inspection and guidance activities at preschool education institutions. Kindergarten principals also experience problems due to the workload related with official correspondence that does not concern their schools. School principals included in the study by Turan (2007) stated that they encounter problems because the correspondence work takes too much of their time.

Problems encountered by kindergarten principals regarding the inability to preserve the balance between responsibility and authority are as follows: negative attitudes and behaviors of personnel who is aware that the principals do not have any power of sanction, encountering complaints and threats when they use their authority and awarding the personnel for motivation.

One of the primary problems encountered by kindergarten principals is related with the fact that foreign parents and teachers do not know Turkish or the lack of translators. Ada et al. (2014) conducted a study on teachers as a result of which it was stated that they encounter problems related with the education of children who do not know Turkish and that they spend most of their time for teaching Turkish to these children which leads to further problems. Demir Yıldız (2018) stated that principals also encounter problems related with the parents who do not know Turkish. Other problems encountered are; shortcomings related with the interschool communication of the personnel, groupings, gossips, comparisons and teachers leaving the classroom during course hours to communicate with other teachers, school shareholders resorting to influential acquaintances to solve

their problems, not being listened to by their superiors or lack of feedback related with the solutions of problems, failure to establish communication with different institutions and establishments, significant damages caused in the operation of the institution due to miscommunication with the administrator colleagues and the inability to establish communication with some shuttle bus drivers because of their harsh, vulgar etc. personalities.

The student related problems encountered by kindergarten principals are as such: Related with the adaptation process; overcrowded classrooms, the first primary school experience of the students and the inability on the part of the students to use toilet seats. Tok (2002) and Sarice (2006) conducted a study in which the participating principals stated that they experience problems due to overcrowded classrooms. Ekinçi (2019) mentioned in his study that students experience problems related with the adaptation process which are caused by parents. Çevik (2019) also indicates that student related problems are fewer at kindergartens which are attributed to the small age group.

Problems encountered due to the students with special needs are; the fact that these students affect the classroom order, violence inflicted by these students on other students, the unwillingness of some teachers to include these students in their classrooms, the fact that some schools are overcrowded with such students because others do not accept students with special needs and the failure to identify the disability groups of students with special needs by related institutions and establishments. Aktaş (2018) indicated in his study that students with special needs are overlooked in the education system in addition to reporting findings on the inefficiency of inclusion education.

Fees should be increased for overcoming the financing issue however parents who cannot pay the fees should be identified and supported in order to provide equality of opportunity and social justice or this service should be supported completely by the general public, the burden on the schools related with personnel expenses should be reduced, allocations should be determined based on the needs of the schools, expenses should be strictly controlled, the required personnel should be employed, job security should be ensured, teacher appointments should be conducted in a systematic manner, in-service training activities should be improved to support the personnel, regulations should be changed based on the requirements and ambiguous expressions should not be used, the balance should be attained between the responsibility and authority of school administrators, uncertainties related with the shift hours of the principals should be eliminated, translators should be present who are responsible from various schools in order to solve the communication problems encountered with foreign students and parents and the it should be ensured that shuttle bus drivers and school administration do not face each other.

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