What are the Expectations of Primary School Teachers from Instructional Leaders during the Distance Education Period?

The aim of this research is to determine primary school teachers' expectations from instructional leaders in the distance education period. In this study, which was formed in the context of qualitative research method, the case study has been used as a design. The participants of this study consist of 11 teachers who worked in primary schools during the 2020-2021 academic term. This data collection tool consisting of 5 questions was prepared as a semi-structured interview form. As a result of the research, the themes of vision, mission, education programs, supervision, school culture and professional development were found, and sub-themes formed depending on these themes were specified.

Key Words: Instructional Leadership, Primary Schools, Teachers, Students

Introduction

It can be said that situations such as natural disasters, economic recessions and environmental problems cause changes in organizational culture (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2011). It cannot be said that teachers are willing to observe these changes and make new arrangements (Owen, 1987). In this context, education administrators should make efforts to solve problems and develop employees due to the nature of leadership (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; McShane & Glinow, 2005). This situation can be exemplified as the difficulties faced by teachers in the distance education process and what education administrators have to do to solve these difficulties.

Especially during the pandemic period, life has lost its normal rhythm and education systems have experienced great difficulties (Daniel, 2020; Zhao, 2020). During this period, teachers faced negative situations such as uncertainty, sadness and anxiety (Kim & Asbury, 2020). In addition, they faced many problems such as internet connection problems, difficulties about evaluating students, difficulties in making teaching materials, and parents' inability to collaboration (Fauzi, & Khusuma, 2020). Teachers are expected to solve these problems with the qualifications of instructional leaders.

Instructional Leadership

It can be said that there are many leadership behaviors to increase the effectiveness and efficiency in schools or to solve problems in schools. For example, ethical leadership to solve problems in schools before they arise, distributed leadership, which is to reconsider the distribution of roles to increase the effectiveness of schools, or cultural leadership, which is to present a new vision in the context of the values, beliefs and assumptions of the school
It can be said that one of the leadership behaviors that increase the effectiveness of the school is instructional leadership (Purkey & Smith, 1983). Studies have revealed that positive management behavior affects students’ success positively (Blankstein, 2004; Şişman, 2002). This leadership behavior, which initially appeared as instructional management in the context of controlling and coordinating educational programs, gradually became instructional leadership (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982).

When we examine the definitions of instructional leadership, the focus of leadership turned to the teacher, as it is related to activities that directly affect student development. That is, instructional leadership is thought to be changing teacher behaviors (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). There are two opinions; the first of these views is the narrow view, which is the teacher behavior that develops the student. The second is the broad view, which is leadership behaviors that affect teacher behaviors with organizational variables such as school culture. (Sheppard, 1996; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). Narrow view includes education and training activities, while broad view includes administrative behaviors (Murphy, 1988). In other words, it can be said that the leader has the responsibility of leading the teaching process and planning and developing school programs, following and evaluating the behaviors in the school (Erdoğan, 2000).

Table 1. Dimensions Regarding Instructional Leadership

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Just as there is no single definition of the concept of leadership (Özkalp & Kırel, 2010), there is no single definition in instructional leadership. Especially when the literature is examined, it is seen that the researchers bring different definitions and different dimensions of instructional leadership (Andrews, Basom, & Basom, 1991; Blase & Blase, 1998; Leithwood, 1994). When the dimensions of the authors were examined in order to reveal the dimensions of instructional leadership, the most common citations made by the researchers are shown in Table 1.

Thanks to its qualities such as creating a positive classroom climate, supporting student development, equal distribution of resources, providing high visibility, promoting professional development, maintaining teaching time,
promoting the school climate, editing the educational program, creating a school culture based on learning, trust and cooperation and determining the vision and mission of the school, instructional leadership is expected to meet many needs of teachers (Hallinger, 2003; Spillane, Halverson ve Diamond, 2001). For this reason, it is thought that this research is important to determine the needs of primary school teachers who do not know what to do as a result of distance education caused by the pandemic or who want to eliminate their own deficiencies. In addition, it is thought that instructional leadership behaviors are important in determining in which areas they meet the needs of primary school teachers. In addition, this research is thought to contribute to the field in terms of showing the contribution of instructional leadership to primary school teachers.

The aim of this research is to determine primary school teachers' expectations from instructional leaders in the distance education period. For this purpose, the following questions were sought.

1) What are your expectations from your education manager during the distance education period?

   a) What were your expectations from your school administrator to provide information about your vision and missions during this period?
   b) What expectations did you have from your school administrator in the process of forming a school culture?
   c) What were your expectations from your education manager in regulation the educational program?
   d) What expectations did you have from your education manager regarding the developing of your professional development?
   e) What kind of expectations did you have from your training manager regarding supervision?

**Method**

In this section, the pattern, participants, and analysis of the research are presented.

**Research Pattern**

In this study, which was formed in the context of qualitative research method, the case study has been used as a design. The case study cannot be generalized independently and for different situations (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In addition to this, It is an intense analysis and description of one or more conditions (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2015; Glesne, 2012).
Studying Group

The participants of this study consist of 11 teachers who worked in primary schools in Erzurum during the 2020-2021 academic term. When the data obtained from the study group repeat itself, data collection was stopped (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2013). The teachers included in the study were selected from the purposive sampling method. In this way, the situation that is easy to reach and close is selected and analyzed. The six of the participants in the study group are women and five of them are men. the average working year of the participants is 7,18. The average age of the participants is 30, 78.

Data Collection Tool

The data collection tool used in this study was developed by the researchers. While preparing the questions, the questions were prepared using the factors obtained as a result of the literature review. This data collection tool consisting of 5 questions was prepared as a semi-structured interview form. In semi-structured interviews, questions should be formed from different structured techniques or flexible questions (Merriam, 2013). In order to evaluate the clarity of the questions in the interview form and their suitability for the purpose, 3 field knowledge experts were obtained through the draft text and rearranged in the light of feedback. By following this method, the internal validity of the measuring tool was tried to be ensured with expert opinion (Şener, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, Demirel, 2012; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

Data Analysis

The interview were held between 1 -25 December 2020. General information about the research was given to the study group. The average duration of interview was 35 minutes. First, the data obtained through the semi-structured interview form was stored as a Word document and then transferred to NVivo-8 program. It can be said that the NVivo program provides more practical tools to overcome the difficulties in the arrangement and analysis of this data set (Baş & Akturan, 2008), and the NVivo program also helps to make detailed analysis (Balcı, 2011). Later, the data transferred to the NVivo program was analyzed by content analysis. First of all, the categories are determined by considering the sample differences. Then, the categories revealed by the coding are revealed with quantitative indicators. Subsequently, the quantitative indicator obtained from the qualitative data is used for interpretations and analysis of the research (Bilgin, 2006). A separate model was obtained for each hypothesis as a result of the content analysis. In this model, the redundancy of codings and reference numbers obtained in content analysis are shown by the excess of arrows (loading or citation) in the target model.

The excess of arrows in the target model was obtained by dividing the coding obtained from the loading created for each sub-theme by 5. With this
rating, while the least cited sub-theme or theme is 1k, the most cited sub-theme or theme is shown with 5k. In other words, it is observed that as the number of citations increases, the uploading to the target sub-theme or theme increases. The data obtained as a result of the analysis made were coded according to the variables related to the participants. The opinions of the participants are randomly ordered from 1 to 11. The participants are coded with T.

It is important for the accuracy of the observations to ensure the reliability of qualitative research, and for the validity of the categories and interpretations determined by the researcher to coincide with the facts (Şener et al., 2012). In order to ensure the reliability of the research, member control was made first. The data obtained from the study group were given to the same people after the application and their writings were asked to be confirmed. However, in the reporting of the study, the quotations of the participants were included in the study without any additions, and all the data obtained were recorded completely. While examining the data obtained to ensure the validity of the research, the researchers carried out the analysis process independently from each other. Then, the findings obtained were compared and their consistency with each other was confirmed. In addition, in the process of analyzing the data, in order for the researcher to behave impartially and the notes obtained about the literature were used in the analysis of the process.

**Findings**

The diagram obtained from the opinions of the participants regarding the expectations from the education administrators during the distance education period is shown in the figure below. In addition, the themes consisting of the opinions about the expectations of the teachers and the reference views that led to the emergence of these themes are given below.

When the figure below is examined, according to the answers of the participants, three themes received the most citations equally. These themes are vision and missions, regulation of the training program and supervision. After these three themes, the most cited theme is school culture. The least cited theme is professional development. Providing information about these themes will begin with the mission theme, which is one of the themes that have three references at most. In addition to this, the themes and sub-themes related to them are detailed at below.
Figure 1. A schematic display of the expectations of teacher

Providing information about these themes will begin with vision and mission theme, which is one of the themes that received the most citations equally. Sub-themes related to the vision and mission theme and some examples of views on these sub-themes are given.

**Online Course Content:** The most cited sub-theme is ‘online course content’ for the vision and mission theme. In other words, primary school teachers have expectations from education administrators about what to do in online lessons during the distance education period. Some examples of this sub-theme are given below:

"... I expect them to give examples of what I should do in online lessons... (T2)"

"... First of all, I had expectations on what tools would be used for distance education activities, how to use these tools, and how we can interact with students in distance education activities like the classroom environment ... (T5)"
"... In this process, we needed to get information on subjects such as assessment and evaluation, planning live lessons, and increasing student participation... (T9)"

**School-Family Cooperation:** Another sub-theme is ‘school-family cooperation’ for the vision and mission theme. Primary school teachers say that the work of school-family cooperation is one of the important tasks of schools in distance education. Some examples of this sub-theme are given below:

"... Providing parent-teacher-student coordination, reducing the level of anxiety about the situation, leading different entertaining and instructive contents, etc.... (T6)"

"... It could be planned what could be done for school-family cooperation in order for the process to proceed in a healthy way and even what could be done to achieve this.... (T10)"

**Information Flow:** Another sub-theme is ‘school-family cooperation’ for the vision and mission theme. Teachers think that the continuous flow of information to them in the online education process is important. The view regarding this sub-theme can be given as an example: "...first of all, general information about the online process should be given, considering the teachers of all age groups...T11".

**Feedback:** Another sub-theme is ‘feedback’. Primary school teachers stated that feedback is one of the important duties of the school administration during the distance education period. The view regarding this sub-theme can be given as an example: “I will be pleased with the feedback of our administrators by thoroughly reviewing the in-class activities or the forms of our interviews...T8”.

**Determination of Student Needs:** Another sub-theme is ‘determination of student needs’ for the vision and mission theme. The view regarding this sub-theme can be given as an example: “...in the distance education process, determining targets according to the opportunities and conditions of the students and providing opportunities in line with these targets were among my expectations...T4”.

Another main theme that receives the most citations is the regulation of the education program. Sub-themes related to the training program and some examples of views on these sub-themes are given.

**Resource Provider:** The most cited sub-theme is 'resource provider’ for the regulation of the education program. In other words, primary school teachers state that education administrators should provide resources for lessons in term of online education. Some examples of this sub-theme are given below:

"... Our school administrator should shed light on us with his knowledge and skills about the school and the program. ... (T2)"

"... I just expected them to give a draft as a framework curriculum... (T3)"

"... It is important that they present changes in new educational content and curriculum... (T11)"
Appropriate Program Schedule: Another sub-theme is 'appropriate program schedule' for the regulation of the education program. That is, primary school teachers want their daily and weekly lessons to be held within the appropriate schedule. Some examples of this sub-theme are given below:

"... during this period, my expectations were from our manager to be fair in organizing the program and arrange lessons at appropriate hours for teachers. In addition to this, they should make arrangements... (T5)"

"... Unfortunately, we cannot arrange our class hours for parents and us... (T10)"

Feedback: Another sub-theme is 'feedback' for the regulation of the education program. That is, Primary school teachers want that their administrators should learn their feedback about the education program during the distance education period. One example of this sub-theme is given as "... we cannot get the information of our students 'What did they learn, What did not they learn?' Arrangements could be made to get feedback... (T8)"

Mini Meetings: The last sub-theme is 'mini meetings' for the regulation of the education program. That is, Primary school teachers want to participate in informative mini-meetings about the education program. One example of this sub-theme is given as "... Consultation on what changes can be made to the program under distance education conditions... (T1)"

Another main theme that receives the most citations is the supervision. Sub-themes related to supervision and some examples of views on these sub-themes are given.

Developmental Supervision: The most cited sub-theme is 'developmental supervision' for the supervision theme. Primary school teachers want developmental supervision rather than the classical supervision in the period of distance education. Some examples of this sub-theme are given below:

"... in fact, we had expectations such as the announcement that they would try to help in the points that needed guidance, not a punitive attitude... (T5)"

"... performance-enhancing teacher-manager interviews could be made, such as how they could support them as administrators... (T8)"

"... in order not to leave teachers alone on these issues, situation assessment meetings could be held every week... (T10)"

Multi-stakeholder Supervision: Another sub-theme is 'multi-stakeholder supervision' for the supervision theme. Primary school teachers stated that not only teachers should be included in supervision but also families and school administration should be in supervision. Some examples of this sub-theme are given below:

"... I hope the process will become even more qualified with the school-parent-teacher cooperation... (T10)"

"... Certainly, supervision in distance education should not be left to 1 person. Children's self-control is very weak and we are not around them. School
management should take a coordinating role and involve parents, teachers and management... (T11)"

**Student Supervision:** Another sub-theme is 'student supervision' for the supervision theme. Primary school teachers stated that students should be supervised closely by school managers. One examples of this sub-theme is given as "... in addition to supervising the teachers, it was among my expectations that students should be supervised in terms of class participation and homework... (T4)"

Another main theme that receives citations is the school culture. Sub-themes related to the school culture and some examples of views on these sub-themes are given.

**Cooperation:** The most cited sub-theme is 'cooperation' for the school culture. In other words, primary school teachers see cooperation as an important value for the reconstruction of school and classroom culture in the distance education period. Some examples of this sub-theme are given below:

"... In this process, I had expectation to act together with all teachers and parents of our school, not as the only teacher of a class... (T5)"
"... for teachers to share their work with each other... (T9)"
"... A solution proposal could be offered in cooperation with our teachers in order to reach these children within the principle of "Equality of Opportunity and Opportunity in Education"... (T10)"

**Transparency:** The second cited sub-theme is 'transparency' for the school culture. In that, primary school teachers revealed transparency as one of the important parts of school culture. Some examples of this sub-theme are given below:

"... Organizing online meetings regularly to receive transparent information and suggestions from teachers... (T1)"
"... I expected our school administration to provide information about all kinds of activities carried out to create a school culture and to be transparent for teachers... (T5)"

**Confidence:** The last cited sub-theme is 'confidence' for the school culture. In that, trust is considered an important element of school culture. Some examples of this sub-theme are given below:

"... we expected our school administrator to have a process that they trust and support teachers... (T2)"
"... being aware of the difficulties of online education, teachers should be supported in this regard... (T6)"

The last main theme that receives citations is the professional development. Sub-themes related to the professional development and some examples of views on these sub-themes are given.
Use of Technology in Education: The most cited sub-theme is 'use of technology in education' for the professional development. In other words, classroom teachers think that the most important thing that will contribute to their professional development is the use of technology. Some examples of this sub-theme are given below:

"... the courses that teachers who are faced with the distance education process for the first time and who have little or no knowledge of web 2.0 tools in education should be organized... (T5)"
"... I expected to be informed about seminars and presentations in order to benefit more from technology... (T7)"
"... We were expected to master the etwinning project portal and web2 programs in a short time.... (T8)"

Academic Educations: The most cited sub-theme is 'academic education' for the professional development. In that, Primary school teachers have revealed that academic training is important for their professional development. Some examples of this sub-theme are given below:

"... my expectation is that these will continue and be developed further academically... (T3)"
"... We had expectations on issues such as providing the necessary counseling by counselors or experts in order to give necessary informations to teachers, who experience the different classroom environment... (T5)"
"... Due to students’ ages, it is important to receive training by expert pedagogues in order to motivate them in distance education... (T11)"

Versatile Educations: The last cited sub-theme is 'versatile education' for the professional development. One example of this sub-theme is given as "...
Providing information about the trainings we can attend other than our formal trainings.... (T9)"

Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestion

In this study, it was tried to determine what the expectations of primary school teachers from instructional leaders during the distance education period. In this context, the questions formed in the light of the instructional leadership characteristics obtained as a result of the literature review were conveyed to the participants. According to the answers of the participants, themes are vision and missions, regulation of the training program, supervision, school culture and professional development. Research questions are discussed below. According to the first finding in the study, findings regarding the sub-themes of the vision and mission theme are online course content, school-family cooperation, information flow, feedback and determination of student needs. These findings are similar to other research results. As a result of the researches, the vision and missions of schools strengthen teachers and students. There are findings indicating that the clear presentation of the school's vision
and mission is very important in the school climate (Cho, 2017; Tofur, & Balıkcı, 2018). Leana & Pil (2006) stated in their study that trust in schools, sharing information and having a shared vision have significant effects on students' achievements and parents' satisfaction. The top priority of the principal of an educational institution is to determine the goals of the school. A school should have goals to regulate itself in order to see if it is successful in its educational process. School principals should monitor and review each of the goals set. Attention to the schedule, lesson, and unit goals will enable the leader to change the training. When evaluated in this context, the main task of the principal is to ensure that these goals are known and supported throughout the school (Hallinger, 2003; Krug, 1992; Weber, 1989).

According to the second finding in the study, findings regarding the subthemes of the education program theme are resource provider, appropriate program schedule, feedback and mini meetings. These findings are similar to other research results. Wiles (2008) states that the education program leader in schools has four basic duties. These are cooperating among all stakeholders, putting forward a work plan that everyone can follow, coordinating the activities to achieve the desired program and defining what the program is. Krug (1992) states that effective leaders provide teachers with the information they need, plan their classes effectively, and actively support curriculum development. Although they do not attend the class and teach like a teacher in the course activity, principals should know and be aware of the specific needs of each lesson. Without a broad knowledge base, principals cannot provide the resources necessary for teachers and staff to carry out the school's mission effectively. Smith and Andrews (1989) stated that they showed the ability to evaluate and reinforce appropriate and effective teaching strategies. That is, leaders know and share the latest research findings on teaching. In addition, they supervise staff using appropriate strategies to focus on improving teaching. For example, they present teachers' performance or organize conferences that include goals. Finally, while evaluating the curriculum, the instructor uses student outcome information directly related to teaching.

According to the third finding in the study, findings regarding the subthemes of the supervision theme are developmental supervision, multi-stakeholder supervision, students’ supervision. These findings are similar to other research results. Glicman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2014) state that supervisors should have knowledge about interpersonal skills and technical skills to facilitate instructional development. School administrators should come together with teachers to ensure improvement. Together with teachers, they can take advantage of opportunities and provide professional development. They can contribute to community building. Thanks to these, they have realized that advanced student learning can be achieved. Duke (1982) stated that the main mechanisms for ensuring supervision are evaluation, inspection, rewards and sanctions. School principals should closely monitor student development. They should monitor what is happening behind the classroom door, using standardized test data, grades, teacher and counselor comments, and information about alumni activities. Krug (1992) stated that
good teaching leaders should be aware of various ways in which student progress can and should be evaluated. School principals stated that it is necessary to improve the evaluation results that will help the development of teachers and students.

According to another finding in the study, findings regarding the sub-themes of the school culture theme are cooperation, transparency and confidence. These findings are similar to other research results. Balkar (2015) has stated that confidence, risk-taking, encouraging autonomy, freedom, team work and sharing management are important elements for empowering school culture. Şişman (2002) stated that it is important to create a learning environment based on sharing and trust in the management of school climate and culture and to have team spirit in the school. Anderman (1991) revealed in his research that teachers' perceptions of school culture positively affect their school commitment and job satisfaction. In addition to these searches, it can be said that teachers cannot be expected to teach effectively if a teacher does not receive the necessary administrative support. Establishment of regular classrooms is highly dependent on the establishment of a regular school environment. However, principals can help teachers improve their classroom management skills by involving parents in problem solving (Duke, 1982; Hallinger, 2003).

According to the last finding in the study, findings regarding the sub-themes of the professional development are use of technology in education, academic educations and versatile educations. These findings are similar to other research results. Desimone et al., (2002) revealed in their study that active learning opportunities positively affect the professional development of teachers. Guskey (2002) presented a model for teacher change. In this model, professional development positively changes teachers' classroom activities. As a result, students' learning outcomes are positively affected. As a result, teachers' beliefs and behaviors change. Blase & Blase (2000) revealed what needs to be done for principals to improve teachers. In this context, education administrators should focus on educational activities. They should help collaboration among teachers. They should apply all certain principles of teacher development. Smith ve Andrew (1989) presented that the educational manager knows his/her teachers closely. Education managers provide resources with them and provide opportunities for their development.

According to the first conclusion of the study, the sub-themes of the vision and mission theme are online course content, school-family cooperation, information flow, feedback and determination of student needs. In this context, school principals should clearly and directly convey to primary school teachers the new targets related to distance education. A shared vision and set of goals is considered to be very important for teachers. According to the second conclusion in the study, the sub-themes of the education program theme are resource provider, appropriate program schedule, feedback and mini meetings. It is suggested that education administrators should restructure teachers' educational programs in the context of distance education or provide them with appropriate programs as resource providers.
According to the third conclusion, the sub-themes of the supervision theme are developmental supervision, multi-stakeholder supervision, students’ supervision. It is suggested that education administrators should apply developmental supervision principles to primary school teachers rather than classical supervision. According to another conclusion in the study, the sub-themes of the school culture theme are cooperation, transparency and confidence. It is suggested that education administrators should give importance to value-based behaviors in order to form a strong school culture. According to the last conclusion, the sub-themes of the professional development are use of technology in education, academic educations and versatile educations. It is recommended to provide more training in the context of technology during distance education.

References


