

An Examination of School Administrators' Opinions About the School Through Sociological Theories

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Abstract

Sociological theories put forward to understand society are closely related to education, which is one of the social institutions. According to the common sociological perspective, which sees education as a function of society, every theory has the power to influence schools. The aim of this study is to examine school administrators' views on the definition of school, its purpose, teachers and administrators, and what should and should not be in schools through four sociological theories: Functionalist, conflictualist, interpretivist, and critical. Knowing the theoretical background of school administrators' views on the school, which have direct and indirect effects on school development, and explaining school administrators' perspectives on the school will enable us to understand the foundations of school management and educational leadership behaviors. In addition, being able to reveal the intersection between sociology and school administration can develop action plans for getting support from the school to improve society.

Keywords: school administrators, sociological theories, leadership, society

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Introduction

The society we live in, along with its identity and integrity, as well as the ability to understand and accept other societies, is substantially shaped by our schools. Education at school helps people understand changes and develop sustainability, including lifelong learning (Mulford, 2003). With the sociological view of school, Emile Durkheim defines education as a function of society. Educational processes, practices and decisions are influenced by processes, practices, and decisions of the society (Durkheim, 2016). Schools have undergone radical changes influenced by alterations in society, such as structurally, economically, culturally, politically, and technologically. Paradigm changes occurring in society have also affected the emergence of new types of schools beyond educational routines. For example, when class distinctions were important and worth protecting in society, caste schools became widespread, where each individual attended the school of their own class. Along with the beginning of the industrial process, students from different social classes received basic education jointly, whereas economic schools became prevalent for students to attend after basic education. The demand for education as a legal right, the illegitimacy of the distinction between social classes, and democratization led to the emergence of the democratic school type. Although the class structure left over from the feudal system has disappeared, socio-economic levels constitute the basis of class distinction in today's society. The most convenient example of this is private education institutions. The presence of private institutions in education can create options in favor of those with better socio-economic status. Globally, private schooling increased by 9% from 1997 to 2021 (UNESCO, 2022). In Türkiye, 14,179 out of 70,383 schools are private schools (Ministry of National Education [MEB, English acronym MoNE], 2023), indicating a high demand for private education institutions. The private schooling rate can be evaluated in the sense that there are class differences arising from socio-economic levels in society and that these differences are reinforced through education. There are policies that provide financial support by the government to families who want to send their children to private school in Türkiye.

Social structures, processes, phenomena, and orientations create new educational systems, routines, and types of schools. In other words, education, as a function of society, is inevitably influenced by social changes. Examples from the history of education and school support this idea. Sociologists have tried to explain societies

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and social changes with a number of theories. The theoretical framework includes the main sociological theories that form the background of our work and the studies of these theories in the field of education.

Sociological Theories

Functionalism, rooted in the positivist tradition of Comte and Durkheim, sees society as a set of integrated parts that are in a certain order with each other. The functionalist sociology of education focuses on the function of education within the social structure. Durkheim states that the most basic function of education is to strengthen social morality (2010). According to Durkheim (2010), children should be taught discipline, commitment to society and autonomy of will through moral education. Like Durkheim, Parsons and Merton also emphasize the concept of morality and state that balance in society can be established through common values and common consciousness (Üsküplü Yeniay, 2019). According to Shepard and Greene (2003), the function of schools is to develop academic skills, transmit the culture of the society, create a common identity among the members of the society and support individual development. Dreeben (2013), another functionalist thinker and author of the book "How Schools Work", focused on the functions of the socialization experiences offered to children by the school environment.

This approach has provided a field for the development of administrative theories that focus on the leaders' need to supervise and control their employees (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2021). The reflection of functionalist theory on educational leadership can be seen as an authoritarian leadership approach in which the leader structures the school because, according to this theory, it is emphasized that school administrators must ensure the protection of certain values in order to maintain social order.

Conflict theory, which emerged as an alternative to the theory of functionalism, has its roots mainly in the works of Karl Marx and Max Weber. Conflict theory views society as an arena of inequality, which fosters conflict and change, with a primary focus on disparities. Marx's theory has influenced the sociology of education with the theories of class conflict, alienation and ideology (Üsküplü Yeniay, 2019). However, Weber focuses on the need for education to give the individual the competence needed to place them in their future status (Hurn, 2002). Status and power also cause social stratification, just like the economy. Individuals can sometimes be at the top and sometimes at the bottom of stratification (Ritzer, 2012). This situation may cause conflict. Schools are bureaucratic, rational, and authoritative structures. Tensions and conflicts between teachers, students, administrators, and parents are possible. According to Collins (2012), education functions as a separation mechanism rather than talent development, and the task of education is to teach status culture, moreover, if a school prioritizes academic and professional development, it is because there is a certain element of status culture.

According to Bourdieu and Passeron (2015), who conduct research on class distinction within the education system, the relationship between cultural capital in this distinction and the position of schools in ensuring the continuity of occupational strata, school culture constitutes the process that will ensure the continuity of inequalities. Bowles and Gintis (2012), known for their work on conflict theory, have suggested that the education system legitimizes the production of inequalities and stratification in the labor force. According to the "Affinity Principle" put forward by Bowles and Gintis (2012), social relations in the educational environment are similar to those in the working environment. For example, just as the student's control over the curriculum at school is less than that of administrators and teachers, in the workplace, workers have less control over their managers. The ability to manage social change emphasized by conflict theory can be considered in conjunction with the adaptive leadership approach, which has an understanding of a leader who effectively manages multi-layered personal, organizational and social change in society (Heifetz, et al., 2009; Northouse, 2021). It points to a leadership approach in which school leaders encourage school stakeholders to confront and cope with problems, challenges and changes.

In the background of *the interpretive theory*, which is another theory that tries to understand society, lies symbolic interactionism, which argues that meaning emerges in the process of interaction between people (Blumer, 1969, as cited in Üsküplü Yeniay, 2019), phenomenology, which argues that knowledge is socially constructed by individuals (Bruce & Yearley, 2006), and ethnomethodology, which focuses on the method by which the order of daily life is established (Tezcan, 2005). Interpretive theory holds the view that functionalism and conflictism neglect the free will of the individual. The essence of the theory is the concepts of daily activity, freedom, meaning, interaction, compromise and subjectivity (Blackledge & Hunt, 1985, as cited in Üsküplü Yeniay, 2019). According to the interpretative sociology of education, in order to understand the education system, it is necessary to examine the daily activities of students, teachers and administrators. The roles and behavior patterns of individuals are formed in the school. Individuals attach meaning to their own actions and to the actions

of others. These meanings are interpreted subjectively by individuals and are not immutable. Meanings are shared between individuals, and this leads to consensus. Bernstein (2003), an interpretive theorist who studies symbolic interaction within the framework of class conflict, argues that the forms of classroom relations in education cannot be understood without considering the principles that regulate symbolic and linguistic relations between teachers and students.

The transformational leadership approach, which takes the understanding of leadership to a completely different ground, emphasizes the importance of emotions, values, ethical codes; satisfying human needs; in other words, the leader should approach his followers with the fact that they are fully human. This approach is recognized as a critical paradigm shift in leadership literature, just as interpretivism opposed functionalism (Northouse, 2021). It will be easier for a leader who is so aware of the world of meaning and signification of his followers through their eyes to accompany them on their journey to realize their potential at the highest limit (Northouse, 2021). In this context, it can be said that the school administrator who can create common value for teachers and students at school and ensure that this value is adopted by others can gain the notion of transformativeness.

Distinctively, *critical theory* criticizes society, the ruling class, power elites, and institutions. Critical theory has been reflected in the field of education as critical pedagogy. It has been shaped as a part of the radical democracy plan that aims to support the development of a culture of democracy and active citizenship (Esgin, 2019). Freire (2014) argued that education should raise free and conscious citizens, that individuals who can transform the world they live in can only be raised in this way, and that students should focus not only on getting information, but also on relating this information to the world and using it in practice. The idea that inequality of opportunity can be addressed through social justice aims for an emancipatory education that puts the student experience in educational environments ahead of the student's race, language, gender, and socio-economic status (Esgin, 2019).

In consideration of the studies of critical pedagogical theorists, Paulo Freire, the author of the book "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", criticizes the understanding of education that the teacher tells, the student listens, the teacher is the subject, the student is the object, the student does not make decisions, the teacher is the authority, the student obeys the authority. According to him, this type of education system sees people as passive beings and aims to make students compatible with the world (Freire, 2014). According to Giroux (2008), the purpose of education should be to prepare individuals for work and to create consciousness that can interfere with life, to provide social design skills for a different future, rather than solely providing critical thinking skills. Apple (2012) emphasizes the link between creating individuals who adopt the values appropriate to the needs of the social division of labor of the school, comprehending the economic and cultural roles of schools, and teaching what needs to be known in the society where inequality is prevalent. This theory proposes a major change in the leadership process, namely servant leadership. According to Greenleaf (2003), the leader is actually the servant of the group and leads the group by serving them. In schools, this means less authority, less formal power and the removal of all classical, authoritarian and hierarchical walls. The school administrator serves the school to ensure the development of teachers and students by valuing them.

In recent years, there have been studies on the leadership behaviors of school administrators (Hallinger, 2016, Heck & Hallinger; 2005;), the function of school administrators in school development (Jackson, 2000; Leithwood, et al., 2010), as well as studies that combine sociological paradigms and leadership literature (Çelik, 2023). However, there are no studies examining school administrators' perspectives on school in the context of sociological paradigms. Research on school administrators focuses on outputs such as administrators' behaviors and practices. It is seen that the theoretical background of administrators' leadership behaviors is not sufficiently covered in the literature. The main reason for this situation may be that the influence of sociological theories in explaining practices is ignored. Sociological paradigms and their effects on ontological and epistemological views are as close to us as the atmosphere surrounding us. In addition to filling a gap in the field, this study is also valuable in terms of recognizing the importance of sociological paradigms.

Method

Research Design

This research has been designed as qualitative research. Qualitative research is a method that approaches the problem interrogatively and interpretatively, in an effort to understand the form of the problem it is studying in its natural environment (Lincoln & Denzin, 1994).

Participants

Ten school administrators were interviewed in this study. The participants of the study were determined by maximum variation sampling. Maximum variation sampling is employed to identify main patterns within outlier cases (Miles & Huberman, 2021). In this study, school administrators working in schools in different districts, different socio-economic environment conditions, and different levels of schools in Ankara were sampled in terms of gender, management levels, and education levels. In the study, generalization was not aimed with maximum diversity. With diversity, similarities and patterns in the views of different administrators were focused on. The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that all responses would remain confidential. Each participant was given a code and number by the researcher to ensure participant confidentiality.

Data Collection

In this study, the opinions of school administrators were gathered through a face-to-face interview format. The main purpose of choosing the interview method as the data collection tool in this study was to enable school administrators to express their perspectives in their own words. According to Patton (2014), the purpose of interviewing is to understand how the participant sees the world, to learn the terminology and judgments used, and to capture the complexity of personal perspectives and experiences. The basic principle of qualitative interviews is to provide a framework in which participants can explain their understanding in their own words.

Ethical permission was obtained from the Başkent University Ethics Committee for this research. Appointments were made for each administrator on different days to conduct the interviews at their convenience. The purpose of the research and why they were selected as participants were explained to them during the interviews. They were informed that the research was conducted confidentially and that ethical permissions were obtained. Additionally, it was emphasized that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the research process at any time if they wished. A semi-structured interview form was used in the research.

Objectivity, Reliability, Credibility, and Transferability

Validity and reliability criteria in qualitative research differ from those in quantitative research. According to Miles and Huberman (2021), validity and reliability in qualitative research can be assessed using the standards of "objectivity, reliability, credibility, and transferability." Objectivity seeks to answer the question "are the results based on the subjects and conditions of the research, not the researcher?" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, as cited in Miles & Huberman, 2021). In this study, to reduce bias and ensure objectivity, the data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes were clearly presented in a sequential order, and the study data was preserved for potential reanalysis. Reliability is defined as "the consistency of the study process and its relative stability across time, researcher and space" (Miles & Huberman, 2021). In order to ensure reliability in this study, interview questions were included by the researcher and it is possible to control the compatibility between the questions and the design. Additionally, the coding of the research was constructed independently by researcher, it was attended to clarify the roles of the researcher in the research process. Credibility is also referred to as the "accuracy value of the research" (Miles & Huberman, 2021). To enhance credibility, the researcher made sure that participation in the research was voluntary, checked the consistency between the questions and the answers, presented the findings and results in a clear and understandable way, and included quotations from the participants' views. Transferability addresses the question of "can the results of a study reach broader contexts?" (Miles & Huberman, 2021). Maximum diversity sampling was chosen to ensure transferability in this study.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis and content analysis were used to analyze the data. According to Patton (2014), content analysis is any qualitative data reduction and interpretation effort to identify basic consistencies and meanings by

taking qualitative material. The codes that emerged in the content analysis were categorized in the context of four sociological theories.

Findings

The codes derived from content analysis of school administrators' responses were matched with themes based on sociological theories and presented in the findings. The findings are exhibited under the headings of school definition, teacher, school administrator, school purpose, what should not be in school and what should be in school.

School Definition

In the answers given by school principals about how they define school, the concepts of socialization, value and culture transmission under the theme of ensuring continuity of society emerged. Some examples from the answers given by the administrators are given below.

"The school combines socialization, culture transfer, and values, making it more than just a teaching-oriented institution."

"School is an environment where socialization takes place at a high level."

"School is not merely a place for academic learning, but also a valuable setting where children discover their identity in the company of their friends and teachers."

Socialization, value and culture transfer are the concepts defended by the functionalist theory. According to this theory, schools have the function of socializing students and transferring values and culture to ensure the continuity of society. In the context of educational leadership, autocratic leadership behaviors of administrators emerge. Administrators can show a dominant management style to ensure socialization in order to ensure the transfer of values and culture and the continuity of society.

Teacher

In the answers given by school principals about teachers, the concepts of appealing to emotions, touching lives, love under the theme of meaning; communication, role modelling, guidance under the theme of interaction emerged. Some examples of the answers given by the principals are given below.

"We touch the lives of children. If you don't appeal to the emotions of this generation, transferring information alone doesn't mean anything. You need to love them; you cannot be successful if you are not on the same wavelength."

"The teacher must touch the heart of the child. A teacher who does not know the student cannot be useful, the student should be reached through communication. Every child is different; teachers cannot step in that world with a stereotype. A teacher should be a role model rather than just a knowledge transmitter."

"Students don't really need knowledge, if they are determined, they do it themselves. If the teacher can access to the inner world of the student and touch it, this is the best. Every person's world is different, their expectations are different, the main thing is to step in their world."

"The first priority is academic; the teacher will embrace them with love while doing them. What you told the child will be forgotten, but if I touched his heart and caressed his head, he will not forget it."

"Teacher is not just a teacher, but an exemplary character, an element that touches lives, and guide who shapes students' future."

"The function of the teacher is to prepare for life, to guide the student, to shape the dough, to guide them to reach information, to contribute to their self-knowledge, besides education."

"The teacher should be a guide to the student rather than conveying information, more like a fellowship of knowledge, like a mentor."

School administrators referred to the interpretive and critical paradigm while defining teachers with their answers. In the context of educational leadership, it can also be interpreted that administrators expect transformational and servant leadership behaviors from teachers. According to these models, teachers should basically understand and support students. This finding is surprising in the following way. School administrators, who refer to value transfer and socialization when defining the school, focus on emotions, understanding and support when defining the teacher. They may expect teachers to show transformational and servant leadership behaviors in their classrooms by establishing a deep connection with students.

School Administrator

In the answers given by school principals about school administrators, leadership, planning, organizing under the theme of political function, providing good working environment and motivation under the theme of interaction, source point and relieving under the theme of reconciliation emerged. Some examples of the answers given by the administrators are given below.

"The function of the school administrator is to ensure the healthy functioning of the school, set a mission and vision, and enable it to move forward with stakeholders."

"The school administrator should create a productive working environment, motivate teachers and students, ensure they are happy at school, and facilitate education and training in a healthy way by preparing the necessary equipment."

"The job of the school administrator is to alleviate the burden on teachers and eliminate factors that can disrupt their motivation."

"The school administrator should be a leader who can organize well and serve as a source point between students, teachers, and parents."

"The administrator should plan education. The school administrator's job should be the student."

"The administrator should be a watcher and an example."

"The administrator should relieve people's burdens."

"It is the duty of the administrator to organize the distribution of responsibilities along with the planning of education and training"

There are traces of functionalist and interpretivist theories in school administrators' views on administrators. What is surprising in this finding is that the administrators who explain the school with the functionalist paradigm refer to the interpretivist paradigm when explaining school administrators. In the context of educational leadership, it can be interpreted that the participants emphasized both autocratic leadership behaviors and transformational leadership behaviors of school administrators.

Purpose of the School

In the answers given by school principals about the purpose of the school, the concepts of education in accordance with the dynamics of society, national values, culture; raising cognizant citizen under the society continuity; person of age, self-actualization and creativity under the theme of social design skills; self-confidence and the dreaming individual under the theme of emancipatory education emerged. Some examples of the answers given by the administrators are given below.

"If education is aligned with the dynamics of society, the school can achieve its purpose. Education must evolve into the future."

"The school's purpose is to develop individuals who can keep up with the times, create an environment where students can self-actualize, get to know themselves, and test themselves."

"The purpose of school is to prepare the individual for the future."

"The aim of the school is to prepare the individual for life."

"The perspective on education and training should be standardized to raise children who are in line with national values, and who know their culture and history."

"The aim of school is to give children self-confidence. We should raise children who can dream and strive for that dream."

"The purpose of school is to encourage children to find ways of accessing information, to research, to learn problem solving and to learn how to learn."

"School should be a place that develops children's creativity."

The answers of the administrators to the question of what the purpose of the school should be have reflected the traces of three theories: functionalist, interpretive and critical theories. While the school administrators only referred to the functionalist theory when describing the current school, they were more utopian about what the purpose of the school should be and the themes of social continuity, social design skills and liberatory education emerged. This situation is surprising. School principals expressed what the purpose of the school should be in a different way from the current definition of the school. At this point, it can be said that in addition to autocratic leadership, transformational and servant leadership can be used effectively in achieving the purpose of the school.

What Should Be and Not Be at School?

Under the theme of emancipatory education, the concepts of standard school structure, standard class hours, school bell and standard tools emerged. Some examples of the answers given by the administrators are given below.

"If possible, I would like a classroom without tables and chairs. Let the child listen to me while lying down. The person sitting in the front never forgets that they are sitting in the front, so the desk system affects us a lot. This has permeated even our present life. For example, there was a break in a seminar, and I was sitting in between. Someone came and tried to remove me from my seat, saying, "That's my seat." The habit that this education system has remained with us... The lesson time should be left to the teacher, who should be able to lengthen or shorten class hours. We must trust the teacher, who should be equal to the students in the classroom. There may not be a teacher's desk."

"There can be flexibility in class hours."

"There should not be standardized class hours at school, these restrict students and narrow their imagination. There shouldn't be desks, uniforms, blackboards, bells and tables at school either, these restrict students and narrow their imagination."

"There should not be standardized tools in schools; they should be flexible. Schools should be different according to local differences."

"Schools should be differentiated according to geographical region. There should not be a standard school structure. There may not be standardized class hours either."

"The concept of recess may vary from class to class. Depending on the content of the lesson, 40 minutes may not be enough, while for some, it may be too much. There is no need for a teacher's desk or desks in the classroom; it should be empty."

"There may be no bells at school. If the children feel belonging to the school, they will use all the tools. School should not become torture."

"School time can be changed. The perspective changes, the understanding changes, and if the student becomes able to move comfortably, phenomena such as rows and tables can be removed."

"We restrain self-control with the bell. Somehow, children will learn without it. In life, it may result in not engaging in work without reminders from others."

In the answers given by the school principals about the things that should be available in the school the concepts of uncrowded classroom, functional classroom, social environment and communication under the theme of interaction; the concepts of sport area, art area and self-confidence under the theme of emancipatory education;

the concepts of experiential learning and schoolyard under the theme of relating knowledge to the world; the concepts of democracy and talking student under the theme of democracy culture emerged. Some examples of the answers given by the administrators are given below.

"Classes should not be crowded. With a U or round classroom arrangement, all students can reach the teacher and be equidistant. Social environments outside the classroom should be created. Adolescence is a challenging process, and social communication is very important. There should be an environment where students can sit with their friends and teachers."

"Classes should be organized according to their function, and students should not have to watch their friend's back. The teacher should be able to see all students in the classroom... The school should have a wide area, and children should be able to quickly access the schoolyard. They should be able to see nature... In the garden, they can see animals, grow plants, learn by doing, produce projects, and perceive and solve problems, which will open up their horizons."

"A large area is needed for the school. We are surrounded by the seas, yet there are many who do not know how to swim. If the school area is large, there should be sports areas, swimming areas, art areas. These areas will prevent the students' skills from being polished off."

"School can be a more life-like environment. There can be gardens, animals, plants. Student should be able to plant tomatoes there and eat them two months later. It is a very nice feeling to grow something... I don't like discipline. The child should be comfortable. There should be noise and humming in the classroom. If the teacher doesn't make students talk, it will harm them in their future life."

"Workshop concepts can be expanded for parents to come to the school once a week and participate in the activities there... Preparing children for professional life starting from primary school can be provided with workshops, sports fields and theaters."

"Students should be involved in artistic activities. The aim should be to internalize art and science... A school where students have high self-confidence, can communicate with administrators without fear, and where the doors of the administration are open. A school where there is no problem of absenteeism and yet there are students who are not absent."

"A democratic school is my dream. The doors would always be open. It is easy to rule those who speak, but it is dangerous if they keep silent."

The answers given by the school administrators to the questions about what should or should not be in the school overlap with critical theory and interpretive theory. The administrators approached these questions more utopian and criticized the standardized and crowded environment and talked about more free, democratic and diverse areas. This finding coincides with the finding about the purpose of the school. The answers of the school administrators about what should or should not be in the school can be evaluated as they suggest that transformational and servant leadership should find a place in the school.

Discussion

Referring to the findings, concepts of socialization, value, and culture transfer in the administrators' definitions of school were combined under the themes of social development and continuity of society and matched with the functionalist theory. Socialization, value and culture transfer are the concepts defended by the functionalist theory. Durkheim (2016) referred to education as "methodical socialization," and schools are the secondary place of socialization that individuals attend after the family to acquire a socio-cultural personality. Through socialization, individuals become members of society and develop social and emotional skills. While Dreeben (2013), one of the functionalist theorists, has stated that the socialization experiences offered by the school environment cannot be obtained elsewhere, Sadovnik (2013) has explicated that in integrated, well-functioning societies, schools socialize students with appropriate values.

Learning social values through education and gaining a status in society are the goals of functionalist theory (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). On the other hand, the school definition drawn by administrators also has the feature of highlighting autocratic leadership. School administrators may show autocratic leadership behaviors at school to transfer values and maintain social order.

The concepts of appealing to emotions, touching their lives, love, communication, role modeling and guidance have emerged from the administrators' views on the teacher, and these concepts were grouped under the themes of meaning and interaction. These views have matched with interpretive and critical theory. Educators who embrace critical theory can make decisions with all their members. Thus, while presenting change and proportions of the school, they also support the school's progress towards becoming a democratic school (Selvitopu & Kavurgacı, 2019). Bernstein (2003), one of the interpretive theorists, also argues that the principles that regulate the symbolic and linguistic relations between teacher and student should be taken into account in understanding classroom relations. Shi et al. (2016) stated that the teacher uses the "guidance" role primarily to encourage students to think positively, find, explore and create, and that the teacher should fully commit himself to the role of guidance in the classroom. Freire (2014), one of the theorists of critical pedagogy, has represented the idea that the educational system in which the teacher is the subject and the student is the object makes the student passive, while Giroux (2008) has argued that the purpose of education should be to create consciousness that can contend with life, to gain social design skills for a different future, rather than deceiving critical thinking skills. In order to increase interest in science in a teacher's classroom and encourage talented students, the teacher can tell about the achievements, difficulties they face, and dedication of scientists who have received the Nobel science prize in physics or chemistry. This may not create a change for every student, yet it is still valuable if it guides even one student. On the other hand, it can be interpreted that administrators expect transformative and servant leadership behaviors from teachers with the concepts they put forward when defining teachers. According to these models, teachers basically need to understand and support students.

Observably, the concepts of leadership, planning, organizing, providing a good working environment, motivating, being a source point, and being relieving has come forward from the participants' views on the school administrator. These are grouped under the themes of political function, interaction, and reconciliation, which matches functionalist and interpretive theories. Functionalist theorists emphasize the political function of education (Bennett & LeCompte, 1990, as cited in Cookson & Sadovnik, 2002), which involves schools adopting a status, bureaucratic structure, and political structure through education. The leadership, planning and organizing tasks of the school administrator can be interpreted as being related to the function of adopting the roles of the school administrator status. Unlike functionalist theory, interpretivist theory focuses more on the individual and free will. The themes of reconciliation and interaction that emerged from the answers given by the administrators are related to the interpretive theory. Interpretive theory, which seeks to understand the education system through everyday activities, is concerned with the meanings that individuals attach to their own actions and those of their heads. School leaders have interpreted their own functions as providing a good working environment, motivating others, providing resources, and relieving stress. Bernstein (2003), in his studies focusing on communication in education, emphasized the importance of the principles governing linguistic relations. Interaction and reconciliation in school are also influenced by linguistic relations and the sharing of meanings between individuals. As Gronn (1985) revealed in his research, management literature has largely focused on the processes of planning, commanding and executing. While the participants attributed autocratic leadership behavior to school administrators by emphasizing these elements, on the other hand, they also deemed transformational leadership behavior necessary by emphasizing the individualism and freedom themes of the interpretive paradigm.

The themes that generated from the participant's views about the purpose of the school are the continuity of society, social design skills and emancipatory education. The views are matched with functionalist, interpretive and critical theories. The aim of societies with education is not only to educate human capital, i.e., manpower, but also to raise the good citizens who will ensure the continuity of society. Societies use education to transfer their cultures, values, and habits to the new generation, and in this way, they raise the citizens that society desires. Durkheim, one of the functionalist theorists, explicates that the most important function of education is to strengthen social morality. According to Durkheim (2010), children should be taught discipline, commitment to society and autonomy of will through moral education. Soder (2003) also suggests that the principles of good citizenship can be taught to everyone similarly only through education and in schools. Considering the ideas of Westheimer and Kahne (2004), it is argued that developing students' capacities and commitment is important for effective and democratic citizenship. We strive to develop student capacities and commitments in educational settings. Schools have the task of gaining or changing behavior. Individuals learn to acquire behavioral principles and social norms at school and to develop behavior accordingly. This is how society's values are transmitted and maintained. Critical theorists also emphasize active citizenship. Freire (2014) defines the purpose of education as raising cognizant citizens, Giroux (2008) as creating awareness to intervene in life, and Apple (2012) as creating individuals who adopt values appropriate to the needs of the division of labor in societies. Good citizen development and behavior acquisition are social and aim at the continuity of society. However, preparing the student for the future and developing their creativity is individual and change-oriented. Future-oriented skills were

also proposed long ago by John Dewey, who suggested an "experience-based" education in which students interact with an "ever-changing world". Young (1998), one of the interpretivist theorists, suggests that the curriculum of the future should be prepared according to 21st-century skills, taking into account the needs of young people. Moreover, in the society of the future, education should drive the economy rather than the economy driving education. Despite the growing knowledge of how the brain works and the continuing emphasis on developing innovative thinking and problem-solving skills, many students function at Bloom's levels of knowledge and understanding. It is crucial that teachers encourage students to apply knowledge, analyze that knowledge (in multiple ways), synthesize or create new knowledge, and continually evaluate it (Larson & Miller, 2011). Craft et al. (2008) define creativity in education as a "significant capacity for imaginative achievement", Runco and Jaeger (2012) define it as a necessity to develop critical thinking skills in students. Research on creativity in schools has, in many cases, strengthened creativity as a national and educational priority. England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and European countries (Creative Scotland 2013; Creative Partnerships UK, 2012; European Parliament and Council, 2006) value the importance and diversity of creativity in the curriculum and pedagogy at compulsory education levels across Europe. Focusing on social change, the value of individual action, which is one of the dimensions revealed by Schlecty (2011) in the transformation of the school, is also discussed extensively in his research on young generations. In Deloitte's (2021) study on generation Y and Z, the participants expressed the necessity of being creative in order to be successful.

While the school administrators only referred to the functionalist theory when describing the current school, they were more utopian about what the purpose of the school should be and the themes of social continuity, social design skills and liberatory education emerged. This situation is surprising. School principals expressed what the purpose of the school should be in a different way from the current definition of the school. At this point, it can be said that in addition to autocratic leadership, transformational and servant leadership can be used effectively in achieving the purpose of the school.

The participants expressed that there should be no standardized school structure and tools, standardized classes and bells. Emancipatory education emerged as a theme, which is aligned with critical theory and interpretive theory. Additionally, participants stated that schools should be differentiated according to the dynamics of the region. Standardization in education can also be evaluated as an effort to reach a predetermined "result/outcome" level by assuming the differences in educational opportunities and possibilities among schools (Kurul, 2011). However, standardization efforts should not prevent schools from revealing their unique differences. Schlecty (2011) argues that society's emphasis on standardization has shifted to quality, choice, and individualization. The concept of standardization, which first involved in businesses and then schools through industrialization, has begun to create contradictions with creativity, originality, individualization, and quality.

In the current information age, the main demands from schools are individuals who have high imagination, creativity, free enterprise, self-confidence, self-control, self-motivation, self-discipline values, who are not like everyone else, who think, act, and produce differently (Şahin, 2004). In order to raise creative individuals with high self-confidence at school, environments, where contemporary management principles and flexible programs are applied by isolating them from the strict rules of the school, are essential (Taş, 2010).

The participants' answers about what should be in schools were grouped under the themes of interaction, emancipatory education, relating knowledge to the world and democracy culture. These views align with interpretive and critical theories. While everyone needs to improve themselves and have their own experiences through interaction with others, there should also be opportunities to develop personal skills such as cognitive, psychomotor, emotional, and social skills. This is linked to the development of students' attitudes, values, beliefs, and self-perceptions (Pollin & Retzlaff-Fürst, 2021). Interpretive theorists also focus on daily activity, interaction and meaning (Blackledge & Hunt, 1985, as cited in Üsküplü Yeniay, 2019).

Democratic education is an education in which the principles and rules of democracy, human rights and freedoms are transformed into explicit or implicit goals in educational programs and provided to young people of society through learning experiences. The goal of democratic education is to educate citizens who are independent, questioning and analytical in their view of the world and yet know the rules of democracy and its applications in depth (Karakütük, 2001). Dewey argued that democracy and education are inextricably linked, and only through democratic education can a democratic society be achieved. In this context, the school should be a miniature society. Children acquire the basic principles of a democratic lifestyle in such a school (Guttek, 2001). Critical pedagogy theorists have emphasized the importance of educating individuals who possess a free, democratic mindset and the ability to engage in critical thinking (Freire, 2014; Giroux, 2008).

Conclusion

In this research, the opinions of school administrators regarding schools were examined through the lens of sociological theories. Social development and ensuring the continuity of society in the definitions of the school; meaning and interaction in the function of the teacher; political function, interaction, and reconciliation in the function of the school administrator; society continuity in the purpose of the school, social design skills and emancipatory education themes have emerged. Also in the opinions of school administrators, what should and should not be in school were grouped under the themes of emancipatory education, interaction, associating knowledge with the world, and democracy culture. Another important result of the study is that the views of school administrators do not show traces of conflict theory. Conflict theory basically emerged as a reaction to inequalities and stratification in society. School administrators did not make any comments on inequalities and social class distinctions in their opinions. This may be because the power of the school to provide equality of opportunity or inequality or to create class distinctions is taken for granted.

Limitations

This research has several limitations that need to be considered. Firstly, the study did not include the opinions of other school stakeholders such as teachers, students, and parents. Future studies can include these stakeholders' opinions to get a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. In addition, the sample size in this study is relatively small, a larger scale study may increase its potential contribution. Although it is common to use the interview method in qualitative research to refer to experiences, the context in which school administrators interacted in this study could have been better understood through observation. In an interview, the participant needs to be aware of the information in order to provide information, and people often take their habits for granted and fall into these habits without realizing it. Good observation can reveal situations and experiences that the participant is not aware of.

Recommendations

In this study, it is seen that while school administrators define the school as functionalist in the current situation, their desires are in line with interpretivist and critical theories. Studies in the field of educational administration prove the effects of school administrators on school development and change. In this context, the first suggestion of this study is to increase the awareness of school administrators that they can transform the school into the place they desire by changing their leadership approaches. The recommendation of the current study for policy makers and decision makers is that changing social paradigms should find their places in education policies. The school practices constructed by policies that are far away from the society may be insufficient to reveal the future of humanity that will develop the society.

Future Research

- Further research can be conducted on the most prominent sociological paradigms in Turkish society and the role of the school in the establishment of these paradigms.
- Studies can be carried out on the school's function of influencing and transforming society.

Conflict of Interest and Other Declarations

The author did not receive any financial support before and during the article writing process. If the article is published, the author will not receive any support. In addition, there is no non-financial conflict or role conflict.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to restrictions their containing information that could compromise the privacy of research participants.

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Okul Yöneticilerinin Okula İlişkin Görüşlerinin Sosyolojik Kuramlar Çerçevesinde İncelenmesi

Öz

Toplumun anlamak için ortaya atılan sosyolojik teoriler, toplumsal kurumlardan biri olan eğitimle yakından ilgilidir. Eğitimi toplumun bir fonksiyonu olarak gören yaygın sosyolojik bakış açısına göre, bu teoriler okulları etkileme gücüne sahiptir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, okul yöneticilerinin okulun tanımı, amacı, öğretmenler ve yöneticiler ve okullarda olması ve olmaması gerekenler hakkındaki görüşlerini dört sosyolojik kuram (işlevselci, çatışmacı, yorumsamacı ve eleştirel) çerçevesinde incelemektir. Okul gelişimine doğrudan ve dolaylı etkileri olan okul yöneticilerinin okula ilişkin görüşlerinin kuramsal arka planını bilmek ve okul yöneticilerinin okula bakış açılarını açıklamak, okul yönetimi ve eğitim liderliği davranışlarının temellerini anlamamızı sağlayacaktır. Ayrıca sosyoloji ve okul yönetimi arasındaki kesişimi ortaya koyabilmek, toplumu iyileştirmek için okuldan destek almaya yönelik eylem planları geliştirebilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: okul yöneticileri, sosyolojik kuramlar, liderlik, toplum