



## Assessment of Assistant Principal in the Context of Henry Mintzberg's Views on The Administrator's Features

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### Abstract

Administrators are needed to administrate schools for their purposes, like other organizations. One of those who assume this task in schools is the assistant principals. The purpose of this study is to reveal how the assistant principals made sense of their place and characteristics in the school in the context of H. Mintzberg's views on the administrator's features. Qualitative research methods and phenomenological patterns were used in this study. The participants of the research were 19 assistant principals working in Konya. The data were obtained from the interviews, observations, and documents. Descriptive and content analysis methods were used for data analysis. In this regard, two themes emerged: the meaning of the assistant principal for the school and the characteristics of the assistant principal. According to the research results, both formal and informal meanings are attributed to the assistant principal. In parallel, the assistant principal has different and many features, especially bureaucracy and communication. In this study, Henry Mintzberg's opinions about the administrators were compared with the interview data obtained, and it was observed that the views generally overlapped with the data obtained. In the last part of this study, suggestions for researchers and practitioners were included.

**Keywords:** school administration, assistant principal, qualitative research, Henry Mintzberg

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## Introduction

It is necessary to understand the meaning of administration correctly in terms of the organizations' continuity for their purposes. However, considering the literature on administration, there are various definitions. Koçel (2001) attributes this to the changes in needs and goals. Eren (2001), on the other hand, defined this concept as a process that involves making and implementing decisions regarding the effective, efficient, and harmonious use of available resources to achieve certain goals. According to Mintzberg (2014, p. 3), mutual compliance –based on informal communication - direct control, regulating work processes, bringing services to a certain level, and getting employees' skills to a certain point are required for administration to achieve its goals. Again, administrators need to decide what to do, determine the right works, plan what to do, take up the work they do, value communication, evaluate opportunities, make meetings efficient, and ensure that we-feeling dominates in the organization (Drucker, 2011, p. 35). With a similar point of view, Bursalıoğlu (2003, p. 4) lists the behaviors expected from the administrators as being wise, behaving well to their subordinates, being brave, compliant, and prone to the agreement, being flexible, and making decisions through consulting someone.

One of those who will implement the school administration processes (Bursalıoğlu, 2000, p. 5), expressed as performing administration in school, is the assistant principal. The assistant principal is the person who is involved in the administration process with the school principal as his/her subordinate. To administrate the school effectively and efficiently, a school administrator should know people well, have communication skills, have a good command of the language, be healthy, speak foreign languages, be aware of various disciplines and technology, and dedicate himself/herself to his/her profession (Açıklan, 1998, p. 6); know the connections regarding the school and perform what he/she has learned at school in his/her professional life (Karpinski, 2008). According to Karasoy (2010) & Acar (2019), assistant principals are responsible for conducting many works simultaneously at school. However, there are various factors affecting their professional satisfaction even though they have different works, and they are busy. These factors are defined as families' support for school and communication with them by Rios-Harrist (2011); working with the school principal and teachers in a team atmosphere by Cranston, Tromans & Reugebrink (2004); and the administration style in schools and the atmosphere in the school by Lennon (2009). In addition to this, according to the author, the positive

atmosphere reflected by the teachers also positively affects the students and parents. According to Shore & Walshaw (2018), the absence of the conditions mentioned above at school will cause dissatisfaction, tension, and works to be done randomly.

Assistant principals must have various characteristics to show the desired performance. It is seen that there are different characteristics and skills reflected in the research results considering these characteristics. According to McCrary-Cramp (2006), supervision and evaluation (% 77.2), programming (% 64.8), special training (% 68.5), cooperation with families (% 59.9), cooperation with teachers (% 65.4), school administration (% 55.6), financial affairs (% 58.6), personal decision making (% 56.2), discipline (% 56.2), understanding the work as a whole (% 56.8); according to Oliver (2005), coordinating educational activities, programming, communication, supervision of the teachers, enforcement of legislation, decision making, evaluation, environmental relations, time management; according to Rintoul & Kennelly (2017), communication skills and decision making skills as well as routine works; according to Sun & Shoho (2017), the ability to contribute to educational activities for student success if they find sufficient resources and time; according to Grissom & Loeb (2011), the ability of conducting the administration works together with the works related to education and training are among the expectations from the assistant principals. Considering the characteristics that the assistant principals should have, it is noteworthy that bureaucracy-based administration works have an important share, among other characteristics. According to Şimşek & Yıldırım (2000), bureaucracy and centralist understanding prevail in schools. School administrators are the representatives of the education bureaucracy. According to the researchers, school administrators do not sufficiently show the school's behaviors and themselves because of the bureaucratic understanding. Similarly, Yaman (2018) revealed in his study with teachers that school administrators mostly focus on correspondence-based administration.

Considering the Turkish education system, there are two regulations regarding the statements about the assistant principals. These are the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) Regulation on Pre-school Education and Primary Education Institutions (Articles 40 and 41) and the Ministry of National Education Regulation on Secondary Education Institutions (Articles 79-83). According to the legal texts mentioned above, two main characteristics of the assistant principal draw attention. The first one is the person accountable to the school principal for the regular implementation of education and training

works. The second is being the person who represents the school principal when he is absent (MoNE, 2013; 2014).

Three subjects were influential when deciding to carry out a study on the assistant principals. First, it is considered that there is not enough research in terms of both subject and method after examining the research in the National Theses Center of Council of Higher Education (CoHE) and scanning various national and international sources. Among the research in the National Theses Center of CoHE, 36 theses were examined considering assistant principals' subject. 35 of them were master's theses, and one was a doctorate thesis. There were studies based on school principal-based administration approach, assignment, success, mentoring, and leadership in these theses. There were no research on making sense of assistant principal and its characteristics. Second, the author thinks that the assistant principal can contribute to developing the administration's understanding of the school since the assistant principals perform various works on behalf of the school principal and know the school. Third, the researcher observed the system as a participant and naturally as he also served as an assistant principal in the past. It is considered that this will contribute to a better analysis of the research data. The reasons, as mentioned earlier, led the researcher to investigate the administration approach in the school based on the assistant principal. It is considered that this will contribute to an in-depth understanding of the results considering the position and characteristics of the assistant principals in the school. In terms of practitioners, it is assumed that this study will contribute to making decisions when creating educational policies. Based on the three points specified above, this study aims to reveal how the assistant principals made sense of their place and characteristics in the school by considering Henry Mintzberg's (2014, p. 3) views on the administrator's features. In this regard, the research questions of this study were as follows:

1. How do assistant principals interpret the principal assistant role?
2. What are the characteristics of an assistant principal according to the assistant principals?
3. To what extent do the assistant principal's data correspond to Henry Mintzberg's views on administrators?

## **Method**

This section includes a detailed explanation of the method by using references from the literature.

### **Research Method and Pattern**

A qualitative research method was used in this study. Creswell (2016, p. 44) explains the purpose of qualitative research as revealing the participant's experiences from his perspective through the researcher. A phenomenology pattern was adopted in this study. Christensen, Johnson & Turner (2015, p. 408) explain phenomenology as revealing how the researchers experience and interpret a situation.

### **Participants**

The study group consisted of 19 (15 male and 4 Female) assistant principals working in Konya province, Turkey, in the 2017-2018 academic years. As there were no difficulties in reaching out to the participants, a convenience sampling technique was used. Yıldırım & Şimşek (2011, p. 113) state that convenience sampling provides two benefits for studies: it is economical and contributes to the progress of the research process more quickly. In this study, the snowball (chain) sampling technique was used since other assistant principals could be reached by considering the recommendations of the participants. According to Miles & Huberman (2015, p. 28), the purpose of the snowball (chain) sample is to reach well-versed people through people who know them and provide opportunities for them to contribute to the study at hand. Considering the sample size, literature, and available data were determinant. It is understood from the literature that there is no specific number for the study group, and the researcher can determine the number of participants (Merriam, 2015a, p. 79).

### **Analysis of the Data Process**

The data sources of this study were interviews, observations, and documents used. Literature was reviewed for preparing an interview form. The draft form created based on the relevant literature was submitted to two academics and assistant principals. Then, a pilot interview was held with two assistant principals. The redactions of the interview were evaluated with the relevant academics, and the interview form was finalized. In this process, the researcher requested help from a Turkish teacher in terms of language and expression. In the interview

form, the meaning of the school and the assistant principal, its individual and professional characteristics, and its relationship with the existing structure were questioned based on the participants' experiences.

The second data source for this study was observations. Points that may attract attention and contribute to the research were noted before, during, and after the interviews. Observations were revealed based on both the notes taken during the research process and the researcher's experience as an assistant principal. In order to make the observations systematic, the points to be observed, according to Merriam (2015b, p. 114), were considered. The points to be observed were converted into a form by the researcher and used during the research. The data obtained were presented in the findings and interpretations section. The form included the attitudes, the environment, the striking issues, and thoughts about the participant. Another source used in this study was the documents. According to Patton (2014, p. 4), various written sources can be evaluated as a document and included in the study. In this regard, the legislation bank of the Ministry of National Education on assistant principals was scanned. Since two regulations were considered to serve the purpose of this study, these two regulations were included. These were the Ministry of National Education Regulation on Pre-school Education and Primary Education Institutions (MoNE, 2014) and Regulation on Secondary Education Institutions (MoNE, 2013). Finally, the data obtained from all the mentioned data sources were compared.

To avoid any loss in the data, the data were recorded using a voice recorder. A descriptive analysis technique was used in the analysis of the data. In the descriptive analysis, according to Yıldırım & Şimşek (2011, p. 224), participants' thoughts should be reflected in the study in a meaningful way. The aim here is to establish a logical relationship between thoughts. The descriptive analysis was reflected in the study by directly quoting the participants' views that could contribute to the study and make inferences from these transfers. This study also included a content analysis. According to Gökçe (2019, p. 33), the content analysis aims to systematically reach new meanings from the data. In this study, the content analysis was carried out by explaining the themes, categories, and sub-categories reached. In this regard, this study was classified under two themes, two categories and eight sub-categories (Table 1).

### **Validity-Reliability Strategies Used in the Study**

Five strategies specified by Merriam (2015c, p. 221) were used to ensure the research's validity and reliability. These strategies were reflected in the study as follows:

1. Diversification: Interpretations were made based on the data obtained from the interviews, observations, and documents, and the results were obtained.
2. Participant confirmation: After the interviews were redacted, the participants were provided with feedback, and their views about the meeting were obtained.
3. Adequate and appropriate participation in the study: After deciding that similar data were obtained in this study, the interviews were ended. In this regard, 19 participants were considered to be sufficient for this study.
4. Expert review: The process was followed by two academics who carried out studies in this field and used the qualitative research method. The study was revised in line with the views of these academics.
5. Detailed description: Considering the participants' views, related ones were reflected in this study in the form of direct quotations as much as possible.

### **Role of Researcher and Ethics**

It is thought that the fact that the researcher served as an assistant principal in the past and he used qualitative research methods in his previous studies will contribute to better identification of categories and themes (Table 1) and to better understand what was attempted to explain from the data obtained in the study. Considering ethics, individual permission from participants, and institutional permission from institutions were obtained. The participants' views were quoted by using code names such as AP1, AP2, and so on instead of using their real names.

### **Findings**

This section includes the data obtained from interviews, observations, and documents and their interpretations. Also, at the end of this section, the interview data were compared with Mintzberg's views (2014, p. 3).

### **Data Obtained from Interviews and Interpretations**

This section includes the findings and interpretations obtained from the interview data. Themes and categories were presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Themes and Categories in Research*

Theme 1: The meaning of the assistant principal for the school	Meaning attributed to assistant principal	Man of duty Coordinator Bridge Everything
Theme 2: Characteristics of the Assistant Principal	The characteristics of the assistant principal reflected in the school	Communication skill Human values Being well-versed Self-development, renewal

***Theme 1: the meaning of assistant principal for the school***

It is seen that there are one category and four sub-categories in this theme based on the data.

***The meaning attributed to the assistant principal***

Participants considered it appropriate to explain themselves from four subjects in the school. These were a man of duty, coordinator, bridge, and everything. It was understood from the views that the participants had multi-dimensional and comprehensive experiences. The participants (AP 1, 2, 9, and 15) emphasized that the assistant principals fulfilled many duties, especially the duties communicated to them by the school principal in addition to the previously assigned duties. It was striking that the determining factor in the assignments was bureaucracy. However, it was determined that the bureaucracy made it difficult for the participants to do the duties given and undertaken over time. Some of the views were as follows: AP 1: *“There is already a work plan given to the assistant principal. He/she carries out the works in line with this work plan. Paperwork to be done and bureaucratic works complement them. He/she has responsibilities against the school principal. He/she fulfills these responsibilities”*. AP 2: *“The assistant principal is someone who undertakes a part of the operation related to the school, especially in the assignment made by the school principal. In other words, if we accept the school as a whole, he/she is someone who can handle some of its parts”*. AP 9: *“The administrators, especially the assistant principals, are indispensable in terms of ensuring full control of the division of labor in schools where the workload and the number of the students are high.”* AP 15: *“The school principal usually identifies the duties and requests the assistant principals to distribute the duties. The*



*assistant principals have to deal with a lot of work outside their field; they are way too busy”.*

Some participants (AP 6, 11, 14, 16, 18, and 19) also considered assistant principal as a coordinator. Participants made plans to organize the works in the school in the administration dimension. They met the expectations to take the necessary measures for making the activity suitable for its purpose. Therefore, it is understood that planning and coordination, one of the administration processes in the literature, are implemented. Some of the participants expressed their views as follows: *AP 16: “Assistant principal is like a coordinator. He/she serves as a coordinator in terms of providing the necessary equipment and order to achieve the purpose of the social activity in all the works done, all activities, and social activities to be held”.* *AP 18: “The assistant principal is an organ that ensures the carrying out of work within the school. I think he/she is the spinning wheel of the school. He/she is a gear that ensures the spinning of this wheel in coordination when carrying out the school works and ensures that the school serves its purpose”.*

Participants (AP 3, 7, 8, 11, 17, 18, and 19) preferred to explain the organization's assistant principal with metaphors such as bridge, heart, and backbone. With these metaphors, the participants pointed to the importance of the assistant principal in the school. By defining assistant principals in this way, it is considered that the participants drew attention to the aspects of the assistant principal that provide balance in the organization, solve problems, and provide an organizational environment away from conflicts. Participants' success at this point may lead the organization (school) to teamwork as a whole. Some of the views were as follows: *AP 3: “The assistant principal can be seen as a bridge between the school principal and the teachers. Teachers may not be able to meet with the school principal constantly. Due to school principals' works and meetings, teachers can only share their requests with the assistant principals”.* *AP 11: “The assistant principal is like a heart in the human body. The assistant principal is a structure running to fulfill its responsibilities for both teachers, students, and parents”.* *AP 18: “I can describe the assistant principal as the person who establishes a bond between school principal, teachers, parents, and students.”* *AP 19: “He/she is the closest assistant of the school principal. I see him as a person who helps to establish relationships among teachers and students and helps to do works more actively”.*

Finally, participants (AP 4, 5, 10, 12, and 15) expressed the assistant principals as everything for the school without making any distinction and by including all three

previously mentioned definitions about the assistant principal. It is noteworthy that there is an expectation that the assistant principal is ready for all kinds of situations and conditions at the school. It is expected from the participants to behave according to the situation, in other words, to be a versatile employee who understands all kinds of jobs and who does everything. Some of the views were as follows: AP 4: “We can say that the assistant principal is everything for a school to run smoothly” AP 5: “*An assistant principal means everything for a school... The assistant principal is the person who does all the work. When he/she is not there, all the work goes wrong, so we can say that he/she is the backbone of a school*”. AP 10: “*... being his/her first addressee means everything in this regard. Because you are the stakeholder of all the staff*”.

### ***Theme 2: characteristics of the assistant principal***

Based on the data in this theme, it was determined that there was one category and four sub-categories.

#### ***The characteristics of the assistant principal reflected in the school***

In parallel with their perceptions of the assistant principal, the participants argued that the assistant principals had different characteristics based on their experience and observations. It was determined that the characteristics that can be considered positive were predominant. The intensity of the duties and responsibilities within the organization prevented the characteristics from being exactly as desired. It was seen that four points stood out as the characteristics of the assistant principal. These were communication skills, human values, being well-versed, and self-improvement. Two points drew attention to the characteristics mentioned above. First, the more these characteristics were reflected in the organization, the more positive the atmosphere in the organization was. Second, these were characteristics that could be evaluated both individually and professionally. Also, the characteristics of doing administrative works (bureaucratic works) stood out among the other features. However, it was considered that the above-mentioned characteristics were interrelated and were more suitable to be evaluated as a whole. For example, an assistant principal knowing how to use a computer could use this skill when following the school works.

Communication skills (AP 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 14, and 18) were the most expressed among the views, which showed the importance of communication in terms of school administration. AP3 explained this characteristic using the “bridge” metaphor. The assistant

principal having communication skills is expected to bring more positive contributions to the school's atmosphere. This situation also requires that the assistant principal interact formally and informally with those who work at different levels of the hierarchy. In other words, the assistant principal can behave according to the situation. Communication skills also bring about gains such as the assistant principal's familiarity with different schools, their practices, and these schools' personnel. Thus, the gains obtained may have positive reflections, both individually and professionally, on the assistant principal. Some of the views of the participants were as follows: *AP 1: "... The school principal and the assistant principals always come up with an idea. We always come up with new ideas. I always work with this kind of person. They were good examples for me. People around me and the people I know are hardworking people who duly perform their duties as an assistant principal". AP 3: "As I said, professionally, an assistant principal serves as a bridge. If he/she wants to solve a problem, he/she will definitely solve it. Even if he/she cannot solve the problem, he/she gets help from his/her senior to solve it. Every professional interview and every discussion adds something to the teacher professionally. However, since the assistant principals are inevitably involved in all kinds of discussions, each discussion contributes to them". AP 4: "... A school administrator is a person who keeps the human relationship well". AP 7: "I pay a lot of attention to communication. If a person creates a positive perception in communication, I think he is always one step ahead. If the other person can communicate with you, I think it is the biggest positive behavior".*

Another characteristic expressed by the participants was that the assistant principal internalized human values (AP 2, 7, 10, 12, 15, 17, 18, and 19). According to the participants, the assistant principal should have characteristics that can be evaluated professionally and humanely. It can be understood from the participants' views that the humanitarian characteristics will have positive reflections on the assistant principal with administrative and guiding features. Some of the views were as follows: *AP 2: "We are equal with teachers. There is no point in acting as if we were superior". AP 5: "I have seen both a slightly aggressive and the mild-tempered ones among assistant school principals. However, I think the assistant principal must be between these two temperaments." AP 10: "First, he/she has to be a role model. What does it mean? I want him/her to be one level above the teachers with his/her life, behavior, or specialization in a particular field".*

Participants also attached importance to the assistant principal's being well-versed in certain discipline areas (AP 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, and 19). They emphasized that being

well-versed was especially valuable for the assistant principals in technology, practices, and developments (especially in terms of legislation). The fact that the specified practices meet the needs of the age and the organization affects the assistant principals as other educators and brings about the necessary measures. Applications such as e-school, MEBBİS (Ministry of National Education Data Processing Systems), KBS (Public Expenditure and Accounting Information System), TEFBİS (Educational Financing and Education Expenditures in Turkey Information Administration System), and DMS (Document Administration System) which has become widespread in the Turkish education system since 2006 are considered to be the reflections of this requirement. In addition, to make use of the practices within the scope of the FATİH (Movement to Increase Opportunities and Technology) project in the school environment, to know the regulations made with the legislation, and to organize the works and procedures according to these documents, the assistant principals must be informed about the relevant practices. In addition to this, considering their views, the participants were especially willing to benefit from technology-based learning and improve themselves. Another point drawing attention among the views was that the knowledge of the assistant principals should be multidimensional. The assistant principal should be aware of both the legal texts related to the school and the practices required by age. Assistant principals are expected to comply with the regulations made (technology-bureaucracy balance is expected). Some of the views were as follows: AP 11: *“Assistant principals need to know computer-related technologies very well. All kinds of works and correspondence are done through computers”*. AP 13: *“We see assistant principals during meetings, they are enthusiastic, and they have a grasp of the technology.”* AP 17: *“... For example, smart boards will be set up in our school within the Fatih Project scope, and I applied to MEBBİS to receive training (distance training) on this subject. I will improve myself in this regard”*. AP 19: *“The assistant principal should know the new regulations and instructions. When the teacher asks a question, he should say the related article of the regulation instead of looking at the regulation. But, he/she should check the related regulation before teachers ask to provide information”*.

Finally, the participants also emphasized self-improvement and renewal as characteristics (AP 7, 9, 12, 15, and 16). They expressed that the assistant principal's self-improvement and renewal would positively impact both himself/herself and the organization. Therefore, communication-related to hierarchy inside and outside the organization was also considered to be important. It was reflected in the views that the

assistant principals were eager to improve themselves and contribute to their colleagues' improvement. They attempt to provide a suitable environment as much as possible. However, it was seen that there were three problems considering this contribution. These were being reluctant, the idea of not getting enough support, and the intensity of works. In terms of developing and renewing themselves, the assistant principals emphasized that it depended on the person. In other words, the assistant principal or teacher could engage in various activities for self-improvement. The function of the school administrator here was to support and facilitate it. Assistant principals mostly focused on postgraduate education as a means of improvement and development. They believed it would bring dynamism and vitality to the assistant principal and then to the school. Some of the views were as follows: AP 12: *“If the school principals and assistant principals want to improve themselves, there are opportunities. I am preparing a program for myself. I talk with my administrator friends about this when I am not at school. I interview them and ask questions. I share everything I experienced with them. Apart from that, I read books on behavioral sciences, human relations, and personal development”*. AP 15: *“... He/she can study for a master's degree with or without a thesis. There are very important resources for effective communication. Seminars are organized on self-development in administration, and he/she should attend these seminars. If he/she does not do anything apart from being an administrator, he/she loses. He/she does not contribute to his/her position. There are opportunities, and he/she definitely can make use of them”*. AP 16: *“... As there are many people under the assistant principal's responsibility, he/she should be able to improve himself/herself professionally. For this reason, I think the assistant manager must have a master's degree in administration”*.

## **2. Data Obtained from Observations and Interpretations**

The observations were obtained through the observation form prepared by considering Merriam's observation points (2015b, p.114) and included in this study. The form contained six stages. First, the physical environment was observed. According to the researcher, the participants worked in clean, comfortable, well-maintained, or under maintenance environments. Second, the participants' approaches to the study were observed. The participants showed a positive approach to the study. The reasons for this can be listed as follows. Institutional and then individual permissions were obtained for the interviews, the interviews were made by appointment, the researcher had previously been in various formal and informal environments with the participants, expressions were showing that the thoughts

were expressed clearly and naturally, these expressions were directly quoted in the study, and the participants wanted to be informed about the results of this study. Third, the participants' approaches to the researcher were observed. The fact that the participants acknowledged the researcher was considered comforting for both parties in reaching the study's purpose. Fourth, experiences during the research process were observed. Considering the research process, there was no permission problem both in an institutional and individual context.

The participants answered the questions of the researcher without hesitation. During the interviews, all participants focused on the interview. They postponed other occupations. Fifth, participants' good command of the subject and their ability to correctly understand and answer the questions were observed. The participants answered each question without hesitation and restriction. This suggested that the data were sufficient for the research and, therefore, the data redaction and analysis stage could be started. Finally, thoughts about the participants were included in the observation notes. Participants positively approached the research process as a whole. They adopted a friendly manner in their interviews with the researcher. It was considered that the participants answered each question in a way that could satisfy the researcher. Based on the six stages mentioned above, it was considered that observations supported the thoughts expressed by the participants, and there was a consistency between the views and observations.

### **3. Data Obtained from Documents and Interpretations**

The MoNE Regulation on Pre-school Education and Primary Education Institutions and the MoNE Regulation on Secondary Education Institutions (MONE, 2018) were included in this study. These documents were included in this study, as they included items containing assistant school principals' reasons for being in school. Article 40 and Article 41 of the MoNE Regulation on Pre-school Education and Primary Education Institutions (two out of 97 articles in total) regulate principal assistant duties. The regulation was published in 2014. The regulation changed six times until 2020, excluding 2017. Articles 79, 80, 81, 82, and 83 of the MoNE Regulation on Secondary Education Institutions (five out of 227 articles in total) regulate assistant school principals' duties. The regulation was published in 2013. A total of 11 amendments were made in the regulation until 2020. It was noteworthy that the items regulating the assistant school principal were arranged in detail, comprehensively, and also in a way to include various duties. In addition to this, in both regulations, the expression

“*Fulfills other duties and responsibilities required by the duty provided by the school principal*” at the end of the articles for the assistant principals supported the finding that the assistant principals were ready to do everything in the school. This statement also supported the views of the participants that they had bureaucracy-based duties.

The data obtained from the interviews, observations, and documents supported the participants' definitions that they could do any work when needed. For example, the idea of “everything” expressed in the definitions for assistant principals complemented the statement that the assistant principal in the specified regulations should perform the school principal's duties. Besides, observing the schools' technological infrastructure through files, writing samples, etc. related to the works of the participants was complementary to the participants' statement that the assistant principal “should be well-versed”. All these examples suggested that the data sources used in this study were consistent with each other.

### **Comparison of Research Findings with Henry Mintzberg’s Views on Administrator’s Features**

The data obtained from the interviews were compared with H. Mintzberg’s (2014, p. 3) views regarding administration (Table 2).

The research data in Table 2 were created considering theme 1. According to Table 3, the research data generally overlapped with Mintzberg's views (2014, p. 3). It was considered that the partially overlapping or non-overlapping views stemmed from two reasons. The first was that the issues that do not fall within the assistant principals' duties - such as supervision and evaluation - in the Turkish education system fall within the field of assistant principals in different education systems. Second, it was considered that there were trends during H. Mintzberg’s research period. As in every field, research fields and trends in educational administration may change, and different findings may be included in the literature.

Table2. *Comparison of Research Data with Mintzberg’s Views on Administrator’s Features*

<b>Mintzberg (2014)</b>	<b>Research Data (Table 1)</b>	<b>Results</b>
Mutual communication-based harmony	Communication skill Bridge Human values	Views and data are consistent

Direct control	No data	Views and data are not consistent
Organizing work processes	Coordinator	Views and data are consistent.
Bringing services into a certain level	Man of duty Everything	Views and data are consistent.
Bringing employees skills into a certain level	Being well-versed Renewing himself	Views and data are consistent.

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## Discussion

Considering the literature on school administration, it was seen that there were many characteristics expected from school administrators. While Açıkalın (1998, p. 6) emphasized these characteristics as people-oriented communication, being aware of the environment, and commitment to the job while Bursalıoğlu (2003, p. 4) emphasized personal and professional behavior. According to the author, the administrator should attach importance to personal characteristics such as being smart and brave and professional characteristics such as conformity, flexibility, and counseling. In a similar study, Mintzberg (1973, p. 99) stated that the administrators were expected to serve the organization, its environment, and those maintaining their organization's existence. However, while doing this, the structure in school should facilitate the administration works and facilitate education affairs and, therefore, the works of teachers and school administrators (Kotnis, 2004). In this regard, school administrators should pay attention to both personal and administrative characteristics (Akbaşlı & Diş, 2019). The characteristics expected from the school administrators will have a positive effect on both the atmosphere of the school and the motivation of the employees at the school. Therefore, school administrators should primarily attach importance to communication (Akyol, 2019; Erözyürek, 2019; Kesimal, 2019). The literature shows that many behaviors are expected from administrators, especially from the school principals and assistant principals. This situation is considered to explain the four basic behaviors (man of duty, coordinator, bridge, and everything) attributed to the assistant principals in this study. It is also mentioned in the literature that bureaucracy is a



determinant factor. Based on this, it is considered that the findings of this study support the research results in the related literature.

When the literature is analyzed, it can be seen that there are many characteristics attributed to the assistant principals and school administrators. Brooks (2014) draws attention to the importance of assistant principals' place and function at school. Together with the school principal, he defines the assistant principal's function as contributing to student success and the domination of academic studies in the school environment. Landry (2012) & Şevik (2014) suggest that the characteristics expected from assistant principals are as follows: contributing to creating an atmosphere of student success, ensuring that the families contribute more to the school, demonstrating leadership skills, providing an appropriate environment for the students to learn better in a certain discipline, and bringing together the environment outside family and school. It is understood from Karasoy's (2010) study that different characteristics are expected from the assistant principals. According to the researcher, assistant principals are expected to have both a command of administrative works and communicate with students, teachers, and other environments. Döş & Savaş (2015); Paquette (2004) define assistant principals as the assistants in planning, developing, and performing the administrative and educational works. They also emphasize that administrative skills should be included among the characteristics of assistant principals.

Regarding the observations and documents as well as the interviews with the assistant principals, it is considered that the findings are in parallel with the research findings of Açıkalın (1998, p. 6) & Mintzberg (1973, p. 99) in terms of communication skills and in parallel with the research findings of Balıkçı (2016) & Kotnis (2004) in terms of structure - bureaucratic structure- in schools.

## **Conclusion**

In this study, the following conclusions were made: Assistant principals are the administrators who have an important place and function in the school. Various meanings, both formal and informal, are attributed to the assistant principal considering the school administration. However, it is seen that formal meanings - bureaucratic meaning - are predominant. Assistant principals have a tight connection with the school. Although there are articles regarding the assistant principals in the related legislation, they are expected to do other works that are not notified when necessary. Therefore, their behaviors serve all the works related to the school administration. However, these issues do not have negative effects on assistant principals. The assistant principals are perceived as the officers

connected with all school segments and are expected to assist them as much as possible. Both formally and informally, assistant principals are expected to have great communication skills.

According to another result of this study, the assistant principal is a job that contains and should contain many different characteristics. It is noteworthy that these characteristics have both individual and professional aspects. Positive transfer occurs between these characteristics. In other words, an assistant principal using the computer well can do the things that can be done with the computer better and quickly. The characteristics attributed to the assistant principals should change over time, should not be stable, and should be improved based on the school's reality. The results of the studies carried out in the literature (Brooks, 2014; Döş & Savaş, 2015; Karasoy, 2010; Landry, 2012; Paquette, 2004; Şevik, 2014) are in parallel with the finding that assistant principals have many different characteristics. In the related literature, two characteristics of assistant principals come into prominence. These are domination in bureaucratic (administrative) works and communication skills. The fact that this study's findings regarding the assistant principals are bureaucracy-centered and that there are communication-oriented views regarding the characteristics suggests that the results of this specific study support the other results in related literature.

Based on this study, the following can be recommended for practitioners: assistant principal may be expressed more clearly in legal texts. They may be engaged in arrangements and activities that will allow them to focus more on the activities they can pursue self-actualization. For researchers, the following recommendations can be made: more research can be carried out on assistant principals. Researches focusing on the place of the assistant principals at the school can be carried out. This subject can be investigated by using different methods. Research results may be shared with relevant people and institutions in the congresses and workshops to be held.

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