The criteria and training for the position of school leadership in the United States of America and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to compare and contrast the procedure of choosing and appointment of school leaders in the United States of America and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and make suggestions regarding the procedures to be followed in TRNC. In the data collection process, the qualitative research method document analysis was used. Dissertations, scientific articles, laws, regulations and websites were searched to collect the data. The training, selection and appointment of school leaders in the United States of America, which has a deep-rooted past regarding the training of school leaders' and the procedures followed by the TRNC regarding the appointment of school leaders were studied. The procedures followed by the two countries were compared and the dissimilarities were detected. Suggestions were made to the Ministry of Education and Culture of the TRNC for the changes to be made in the appointment of school leaders.

Keywords: School, school leader, the United States of America, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, document analysis.

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1. Introduction

Administration is the process of managing and controlling the life of an organisation. It is the administration's responsibility to ensure organisational development in accordance with scientific and social values. A high quality administration can only be possible where qualified administrators are available (Acar, 2002). Providing a healthy education service, having continuity in organisational development and attaining education-related objectives in a national context are only possible by delegating the suitable personnel for the position of school leadership (Sungu, 2012).

A school leader has many responsibilities such as creating the necessary process for a school's main goal of effective education, assuring professional development of the personnel, forming a personnel policy, evaluating performance and having sound communication with the school's environment (M. Aydin, 2014).

A school leader needs good administrative knowledge, leadership and communicative skills to be able to get the organisation attain its goals and present the school personnel with the convenient and peaceful environment for them to work efficiently. It is vital for education organisations that people who possess these qualifications should be chosen, trained and appointed (Cemaloglu, 2005). As Celik (2002) stated, although the number of schools around the world is higher than the number of factories, commercial businesses attach more importance to administrator training than the importance attached to training education administrators.

After the 1980s, education reforms in many countries focused on discussion about school leaders' training issue. In accordance with getting insight into school leaders' influence on student success, school leader training programmes gained importance and the issue was started to be worked on. Jackson and Kelley (2002), Kaufman (2009), Murphy and Forsyth (1999) who pointed out that the studies on the subject matter emphasised the deficiencies of the preparatory leader training programmes and offered suggestions on how to increase the quality of these programmes (as cited in Gumus & Bellibas, 2015). As Taipale (2012) stated, due to the quality of the USA's pre-service school leader training programmes and its well-established past about the subject, the USA set an example for numerous countries' improvement in their leader training systems.

2. Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to analyse the procedure of school leader training, election and appointment in the USA, which has a well-established past about the subject, and to compare it with the process in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC); in order to make suggestions to improve the procedure of school leader training, election and appointment in the TRNC.

3. Method

The research was carried out via document analysis method which is a qualitative research method. The data was collected by examining documents which are significant resources for qualitative research (Yildirim & Simsek, 2013). These documents include scientific articles, dissertations, web pages, laws and regulations.

4. Findings

4.1. The procedure of selection and appointment of school leaders in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

The appointment criteria for the position of headmaster are the same throughout the country in the TRNC. The prerequisite qualifications to apply for the position are:

i. To have at least an average professional success grade and not to have had any disciplinary punishments (if he had any punishments, a certain period of time has to pass depending on the harshness of the penalty),

ii. To have served as an assistant headmaster, a department chief or a workshop supervisor for at least two years, or

iii. To have served as a teacher at the secondary and vocational schools for at least 15 years, including temporary service (Teachers Law of the TRNC, 1985).

According to the Regulation of Qualifying Examination for Teachers of the TRNC (2005), only eligible candidates have the right to take the 'written examination for promotion'. The exam is marked out of 350 points (Table 1).

Table 1. The subjects included in the qualifying examination to appoint headmasters for the secondary and vocational schools

Administration sciences	110
Legislation	140
General knowledge	60
English (intermediate level)	20
Computer (usage proficiency)	20
TOTAL	350

Source: Adapted from the Regulation of Qualifying Examination for Teachers of the TRNC 2005.

Table 1 indicates that the topics on administration constitute 31% of the exam. The rest of the topics are on legislation (Fundamental Law of the TRNC, Teachers Law of the TRNC, regulations and standing orders under the Ministry of National Education and Culture), general knowledge about recent events, intermediate level English and computer usage. These topics have a proportion of 69%. Although the purpose of the exam is to elect administrators, administration sciences are emphasised less than the other subject areas.

The candidate has an opportunity to get a mark up to 650 for additional qualifications. The additional qualifications stated in the Regulation of Qualifying Examination for Teachers of the TRNC (2005) are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. The additional qualifications to be appraised and their values

(A) Years of service	200
(B) Registry record	100
(C) Educational status	50
(D) Professional development (in-service courses attended)	150
(E) Scientific researches and published work	70
(F) Social and cultural activities	80
TOPLAM	650

Source: Adapted from Regulation of Qualifying Examination for Teachers of the TRNC (2005).

As presented in Table 2, the highest point for promotional purposes is credited for years of service. A Master's degree in educational administration is worth 20 points, and a Doctorate degree in the same field equals 50 points. In-service training attendance is not compulsory, but attendance to these training courses provides extra points. To sum up, the points granted to years of service, social and

cultural activities are much higher than the points assigned to the postgraduate degrees in educational administration.

Candidates' grades are evaluated out of 1,000 points. Candidates who get 50% of the marks in the written exam, and who get at least a total of 600 are entitled to have a rank in the placement list. Pursuant to the number of vacancies, the candidates who have the highest ranks in the placement list are promoted by the Commission of Public Service (Regulation of Qualifying Examination for Teachers of the TRNC, 2005).

Now and then, The Ministry of Education and Culture organises in-service training courses to maintain the professional development of school leaders. In-service training topics include educational leadership in schools, conflict resolution techniques, efficient use of technology in teaching, effective school management, administrative duties and personnel management, taking inventory, body language in managerial environment (The Ministry of Education and Culture, 2015) and so forth. However, attendance is not compulsory. School managers do not have to submit any certificates to continue to stay in the position and they are not evaluated for performance. As long as a school manager does not commit any of the specified disciplinary crimes under the Teachers Law of the TRNC, he can maintain his position until he retires.

4.2. The procedure of selection and appointment of school leaders in the United States of America

The administration of counties in the USA is of varying nature. The variety can also be seen in the education system. There are different procedures for selecting and appointing school leaders in different counties. According to the data provided by the United States Department of Labor, despite the differences there are some common preconditions to be appointed as a school leader (Gumus & Bellibas, 2015). As stated in Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011), the basic criteria which are valid throughout the country are as follows (Gumus & Bellibas, 2015):

i. Having a postgraduate degree in educational administration, or having taken 18-hour courses from the educational administration Master's programme in addition to a Master's degree in a Department of Education,
ii. Having 1 to 3 years of service in a public school,
iii. Possessing a certificate of administration.

Research results show that many counties in the USA use standards set by the Inter-State Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) in shaping programmes for training school leaders and deciding the competencies required for obtaining a license (Glenewinkel, 2011). These standards are listed below:

i. Setting a vision for learning that is shared by all parties;
ii. Forming a school culture and instructional programme that support student learning and professional development of the teachers;
iii. Making sure that the administration and operation of the school is efficient and making efficient use of resources in order to create a secure, effective and productive learning environment;
iv. Cooperating with staff and public, meeting various interests and needs of the community and utilising community resources;
v. Ethical, fair and accurate attitude; and
vi. Comprehending, reacting to and affecting the political, social, legal and cultural circumstances (as stated in CCSSO, 2008; Ozdemir, Kose & Kavgaci, 2014).

The license programme has to be accredited by the county in which the candidate is applying to work in (Aykut, 2006). In accrediting license programmes, the standards mentioned above are taken into consideration. As stated by McCarthy (2002), many counties apply a performance test called School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) to evaluate and register candidates of school leadership

position (Ozdemir et al., 2014). Counties that require a certain grade in SLLA include Arkansas, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine and Pennsylvania (ETS, 2016). A candidate with a license can apply for the vacancies in the counties (Aykut, 2006). The obligation for obtaining a postgraduate degree or the certificate of educational administration and supervision is the evidence for the scientific approach to the leadership position in the USA (I. P. Aydin, 2002).

Table 3. The subjects included in the SLLA

Scope	Approximate number of questions	Percentage
Part 1 (selected response)		
Vision and objectives	18	12
Teaching and learning	25	18
Administering organisational systems and security	15	10
Cooperating with major parties	21	15
Ethics and integrity	21	15
Part 2 (constructed response)		
The education system	2	10
Vision and objectives	2	8
Teaching and learning	3	12

Source: Adapted from ETS (2016), SLLA.

4.2.1. Part 1

Vision and objectives: This area assesses the candidates' efficiency in analysing multiple information, producing vision and objectives, implementation of a vision and objectives that have a high standard and can be evaluated for all students and teachers, maintaining conformity of the vision and objectives to the county and federal principles, uniting the public and the staff around aims and objectives by using impressive strategies.

Teaching and learning: Tests the candidates' competence in creating an expectation of high performance from all students, providing feedback which improves practice and learning via data and evaluation techniques, being eager for innovation and cooperation.

Administering organisational systems and security: It question the candidates' ability to make long-term and short-term strategic plans, originate a process that conforms to the local, county and federal security regulations, providing opportunity for the informative systems and communication to assure timely data flow, supply for the maintenance and ensure the proper use of these technologies.

Cooperating with major parties: Candidates are evaluated for their skills in reaching and utilising parents and society to remove learning barriers, in encouraging parents' participation in decision-making about their children's education and in exercising efficient communication strategies with the media.

Ethics and integrity: These questions are about setting an example attitude of work ethics, integrity and fairness, and expecting the same from the others, protecting the rights of students and staff in terms of discretion and other using his authority to enhance education and for public interests and providing a transparent decision-making process.

4.2.2. Part 2

The education system: Competencies regarding decision-making about the local issues in relation to wider education policy and establishing connections with stakeholders and legislators to name the cases that affect education and potential changes are tested.

The exam's focus is on candidates' administrative proficiency. The first part consists of 100 questions. The second part contains seven questions on scenarios and documents a school leader m ay come across. Each of the seven questions focuses on the standard content described in ISLLC 2008. The content is presented in the Table 4 (ETS, 2016).

Table 4. The scope of the seven constructed response questions

Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 6
Vision and objectives	Teaching and learning	Education system
Implementation	Professional knowledge	Internal advocacy
Data planning	Curriculum and teaching	External advocacy
		Evaluation and liability

Source: Adapted from ETS (2016), SLLA.

Having a certificate of administration does not guarantee that the school leader will stay in the position of leadership for the rest of his professional life which assures persistent self-improvement. In order to be able to renew their certificates, school leaders have to take classes that are worth six credits in universities every 4 to 8 years, attend conferences and meetings and contribute to the research they are assigned by the universities (Aykut, 2006).

5. Conclusion

The criteria for training and appointing school leaders in the USA vary in different counties. Criteria for appointing headmasters in the TRNC are the same all around the country, which is due to the fact that the country and the population are small.

It is necessary to have a Master's degree in order to be appointed as a school leader in the USA. However, in the TRNC, the position of school leadership does not require a Master's degree. In the TRNC, a candidate with a doctorate degree in educational administration is given only 50 points out of the 650 points graded for additional qualifications. In the USA, school leadership is regarded as a learned profession, while the absence of obligation for a graduate or postgraduate degree in the field indicates that this is not the case in the TRNC. Ulug (2010) stressed the importance of executive training and its role in helping the person acquire leadership behaviour, providing the administrator with professional assurance and prestige, improving the productivity and efficiency of an organisation and increasing the pace of organisational development.

As long as a headmaster in the TRNC does not have a misbehaviour that violates the Teachers Law of the TRNC, he can maintain his professional position. On the other hand, in the USA, school leaders have to sustain their professional development in order to renew their certificates to stay in the position. In the TRNC, attendance to in-service training for school leaders is optional. Ozcan and Bakioglu (2010) stated that by emphasising in-service training, it would be possible for school leaders to keep up with the changes. School leaders are the first to face the conflicts that are caused by change and they need to resolve them.

In the TRNC, the qualifying examination to determine school leaders includes legislation and administrative sciences with the former having a higher proportion. Nevertheless, in the USA, the questions to evaluate the candidate for a certificate of administration focus on the administrative competency. In the TRNC, the percentage of the points for Master's and doctorate degrees is far less than the percentage of the points for years of service. This is the result of valuing years of service to be much more important than the expertise. This result is also supported by the fact that TRNC requires at least 15 years of service to be promoted as a school leader, but it is sufficient to have 1–3 years of service in the USA.

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6. Recommendations

- 'Leadership standards for school leaders' need to be set in the TRNC and pre-service training should be imposed in the TRNC.

- In order to support professional development and update knowledge in educational administration, attendance to in-service training courses for school leaders should be compulsory.

- In certain intervals, it is necessary to test the school leaders according to the pre-set leadership standards. The results of the test should determine whether they are to stay in the position or not. In this way, school leaders will have to maintain their professional development to remain in the position.

- It should be kept in mind that school leadership is a learned profession and having a Master's degree in educational administration must be a precondition for the candidates of the profession.

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