

Systematic Review of Studies on The Emotional Intelligence of School Principals

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Emotional intelligence, which forms the basis for individuals to cope with emotions effectively, can also contribute to how effectively leaders address the needs of the individuals they serve, how they motivate others, and how they develop a sense of belonging in the workplace. This research aimed to examine the studies on the emotional intelligence of school principals who lead education through systematic analysis and to draw attention to the importance of emotional intelligence in educational management. Studies published in peer-reviewed journals aiming to explore the emotional intelligence of school principals were analyzed. The study results show that research on the emotional intelligence of school principals has increased in recent years; descriptive, correlational, and predictive designs are followed in studies, and self-assessment tools are preferred for data collection. Moreover, there are significant relationships between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, political skills, workplace happiness, crisis management, and conflict resolution of principals. Principals' emotional intelligence can predict organizational synergy, conflict management, leadership, managing differences, time management, organizational citizenship, and job satisfaction

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Keywords: Emotional intelligence, educational management, school management, school principal, educational leadership.

INTRODUCTION

School management has a dynamic structure includes constant interactions with students, teachers, and other employees, unexpected changes, risks, and responsible decision-making. Massive developments such as digital developments brought by science and technology, pandemics, and natural disasters reveal that school management must be better equipped for growth, change, and adaptation. Principals should be able to produce reforms that will show an autonomous, creative, and collaborative structure that suits the needs of students and teachers in line with changes and developments, should be able to motivate their team in the implementation of reforms, and should be able to adopt leadership qualities rather than management. This makes it inevitable that school management's emotional skills must be as strong as their professional skills (Brina, 2014; Chen & Guo, 2020; Moore, 2009). For this reason, skills in recognizing, understanding, and managing emotions must be developed.

Emotional intelligence includes the individual's performance in perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions (Mayer et al., 2008). Individuals with high emotional intelligence can distinguish emotions, show emotions appropriate to the social context, understand the causes and consequences of emotional experiences, and regulate emotions (Bar-On, 2006). Bar-On (1997) defines emotional intelligence as "a set of non-cognitive abilities, competencies, and skills that influence a person's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (p.14). Dealing effectively with emotions can contribute to how effectively leaders address individuals' needs, motivate others, and foster a sense of belonging in the workplace (Goleman, 1995). Studies have shown that emotional intelligence increases motivation and job satisfaction (Li et al., 2018), enables finding and using appropriate coping strategies (Brackett et al., 2011; Brinia et al., 2014; Chan, 2008), establishing positive interpersonal relationships and improving interpersonal skills. It is stated that it increases coping with difficulties (Bracett et al., 2010).

The education process requires the harmonious work of administrators, teachers, students, parents, support staff, and other stakeholders. In this process, educational administrators have the difficult task of trying to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions while trying to bridge all stakeholders, including parents, students, and staff, and find ways to cope with their feelings (Brinia et al., 2014; Gómez-Leal et al. 2022; Sala, 2003). However, school administrators occasionally need support dealing with emotions and conflict (Patti et al. 2015). Blaik Hourani et al. (2021) revealed the need to strengthen the emotional intelligence of school leaders and principals. They emphasized the need for emotional intelligence to enable, facilitate, and develop change in the school.

Many interactions with stakeholders create unwanted emotional pressures. Directing teachers from individuality to collaboration, changing the educational focus from teaching to student learning, implementing structures and processes that systematically monitor students' learning, increasing accountability, and distributing leadership are among the challenges for principals. Leaders who cannot manage their own and others' emotions in such conditions will experience much personal stress and cannot sustain or tolerate the process of change or determination (Chen & Guo, 2020; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Moore,

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Table 7. Correlational Studies Examining Emotional Intelligence of Principals

Research	Aim	Result
Bayraktar (2023)	Examining the relationship between school principals' self-efficacy and political skills	It has been determined that there is a weak but positive relationship between the self-efficacy of school principals and their political skills.
Karayaman (2021)	To reveal whether there is a significant relationship between the emotional intelligence levels of school principals and their workplace happiness.	It has been determined that there is a relationship between the emotional intelligence levels of school principals and their workplace happiness. As their emotional intelligence increases, their workplace happiness increases.
Karayaman (2020)	To determine the relationship between school principals' emotional intelligence levels and ethical decision-making.	It has been observed that there is no significant relationship between school principals' emotional intelligence and their ethical decision-making.
Yılmaz and Yıldırım (2020)	Determining the relationship between school principals' crisis management skills and emotional intelligence levels	There is a significant relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and crisis management levels. It was determined that there was a positive significant relationship between the expression of emotions dimension and before the crisis.
Atay (2002)	Examining the correlations between emotional intelligence and conflict resolution strategies of primary school principals.	The emotional intelligence levels of school principals were below expectations; they had the highest score in the self-awareness dimension and the lowest score in the sympathy dimension. It has been determined that there are significant relationships between emotional intelligence sub-dimensions and conflict resolution strategies.

Studies examining the relationship between school principals' emotional intelligence and other characteristics indicate significant relationships between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, political skills, workplace happiness, crisis management, and conflict resolution. On the other hand, there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and ethics.

Table 8. Exploratory Correlational Studies on The Predictive Role of Emotional Intelligence

Research	Aim	Result
Bilgivar and Topal (2023)	Investigating the effect of school principals' emotional intelligence perceptions on school synergy level	It has been observed that there is a relationship between school principals' perceptions of emotional intelligence and their perceptions of organizational synergy, and that emotional intelligence predicts organizational synergy at a low level.
Karamuk and Dulay (2023)	Examining whether school principals' emotional intelligence skills predict conflict management strategies from the teachers' perspective.	It has been revealed that there is a significant relationship between school principals' emotional intelligence skills and conflict management strategies, and emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of conflict management strategies.
Yıldız et al. (2022)	To determine whether emotional intelligence and social intelligence abilities significantly predict leadership styles.	It was determined that the emotional intelligence abilities of educational principals predicted the transformational leadership style and the laissez-faire leadership style but did not predict the maintenance leadership style. Social intelligence abilities have been determined to predict the scores of transformational, maintenance, and laissez-faire leadership styles.
Çayak and Eskici (2021)	Examining the mediating role of emotional intelligence on the sustainable leadership behaviors of school principals and their ability to manage differences.	Teachers rated sustainable leadership behavior, diversity management, and emotional intelligence of principles high. It was found a positive and significant relationship between sustainable leadership, diversity management, and emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence had a full mediator role in the relationship between sustainable leadership and diversity management.
Yıldız et al. (2021)	Determining the mediating role of self-enhancing humor style in the relationship between school principals' emotional intelligence and life satisfaction.	It was observed that there was a significant positive relationship between the variables of emotional intelligence, self-enhancing humor style, and life satisfaction. The self-enhancing humor style partially mediated the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction.
Yıldırım and Tokgöz (2021)	Examining the effect of principals' emotional intelligence on time management skills	There are significant relationships between the dimensions of emotional intelligence and time management skills; as the self-control, emotionality, sociability, and well-being dimensions of emotional intelligence increase, the skills related to time planning and time attitude dimensions of time management increase, there is a decrease in the time-wasting dimension. The emotionality dimension of emotional intelligence increases the significance of time management. It was determined to be a significant predictor of self-control, sociability, and well-being.
Şahin and Ayık (2020)	To determine the predictive power of school principals' emotional intelligence and school culture's organizational citizenship behavior according to teachers' perceptions.	A moderate positive relationship exists between school principals' emotional intelligence levels and organizational citizenship behaviors. There is a moderate positive relationship between the school culture created in secondary schools and organizational citizenship. It has been observed that the variables of professional development, common goals, and emotional intelligence, which are school culture dimensions, are significant predictors of organizational citizenship behavior.
Toprak and Savaş (2020)	Determining the effect of teachers' emotional labor on the emotional intelligence of school administrators and teachers' job satisfaction.	It has been determined that school principals' Emotional intelligence and emotional labor competencies significantly predict teachers' job satisfaction levels, and teachers' emotional labor regulates the relationship between principals' Emotional Intelligence and teachers' job satisfaction.
Karadavut and Çetin (2018)	Examine the emotional intelligence competencies of school principals to determine whether emotional intelligence differs according to gender and to what extent it predicts transformational and interactional leadership.	Female school principals' self-awareness and social awareness competencies are significantly higher than those of male school principals. Among the emotional intelligence competencies, drive to achieve and emotional self-awareness are significant predictors of transformational leadership; Agreeableness, developing others, and conflict management were found to predict transactional leadership significantly.
Yıldırım and Eriçok (2015)	To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and managerial competence levels of school principals.	It has been observed that school principals' emotional intelligence levels significantly predict all sub-dimensions and managerial competence levels and sub-dimensions.
Savaş (2012)	To determine the effect of primary school principals' emotional intelligence and emotional labor competencies on teachers' job satisfaction levels.	It has been determined that school principals' emotional intelligence and emotional labor competencies significantly predict teachers' job satisfaction.

The studies on school principals' emotional intelligence predicting personal or institutional characteristics indicate that emotional intelligence predicts organizational synergy, conflict management, leadership, managing differences, time management, organizational citizenship, and job satisfaction.

RESULT and DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the studies conducted in Turkey on the emotional intelligence of school principals. Twenty-three studies published in peer-reviewed journals were evaluated according to their publication years, design, study group, data collection tools, aims, and results. Study findings reveal that emotional intelligence research in school principals has increased in recent years. Since emotional intelligence studies started with studies of Salovey and Mayer (1990), this increase has occurred in recent years with Goleman's (1995) book. Emphasizing emotional intelligence for happiness not only in academic life but also in life and emphasizing that emotional intelligence can be developed throughout life increases the interest in researching emotional intelligence.

In the studies examined, it was observed that while data was collected from the principals and teachers as the sample group, no data was collected from the students. In future studies, assessments can also be taken from students, parents, and other employees. Thus, in addition to self-evaluation, school principals can review the effects of emotion regulation strategies by evaluating themselves through the eyes of others.

The design of the studies is survey-oriented and consists of descriptive, correlational, and predictive studies. When this finding is evaluated with the findings obtained from the research that emotional intelligence is related to and predictive of personal and institutional characteristics, the need to include experimental studies emerges. Principals with low emotional intelligence can be trained, and comparisons can be made before and after the training.

The Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale, Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), Emotional Intelligence Scale, Managers' Emotional Intelligence Skills Evaluation Scale, and Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory were found to be frequently used data collecting tools. In addition to these tools, Mayer and Salovey's (2002) MSCEIT is also available to evaluate emotional intelligence. However, the fact that this tool is performance-based and the difficulties in obtaining it may have caused it to be limited to tools based on self-report. Developing performance-based tools in future studies will contribute to the Turkish emotional intelligence literature.

There was a difference in some studies and no difference in others regarding principals' emotional intelligence according to gender, age, educational status, and seniority. It is expected that individuals' emotional intelligence is affected by their characteristics. Although emotional intelligence is innate, it has a structure open to development throughout life. Therefore, while some studies may have found a difference in emotional intelligence according to demographic factors, some may not have. There may be environmental variables that may cause differences in the emotional intelligence of school principals. For example, in future studies, principals' emotional intelligence can also be compared depending on the type of organization (official or private), management score, and staff number.

Studies examining the relationship between school principals' emotional intelligence and other characteristics have shed light on the significant relationships between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, political skills, workplace happiness, crisis management, and conflict resolution. In addition, relationships can be investigated according to characteristics such as dedication, mindfulness, creativity, innovation, and digital literacy.

Studies on school principals' emotional intelligence predicting other personal or institutional skills have revealed that emotional intelligence can predict organizational synergy, conflict management, leadership, managing differences, time management, organizational citizenship, and job satisfaction. Based on the predictive power of emotional intelligence, seminars, and training can be given to support the emotional competencies of managers. Emotional intelligence might be used to choose the principals or leaders.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflicts of interest were disclosed by the author(s) concerning this article's research, authorship, or publication.

Ethics Approval

Since this study is based on searching published peer-reviewed articles in the literature, it is not among the studies requiring Ethics Committee Permission.

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